THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION RESOURCES OF FEMALE DATING VIOLENCE VICTIMS: A COMPARISON OF WOMEN WHO USE MUTUAL VIOLENCE AND WOMEN WHO REMAIN NONVIOLENT

by

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(ABSTRACT)

Social science research has consistently revealed that dating violence victims differ in their use of violence against their dating partners. Some victims use violence in mutually violent dating relationships while other victims remain nonviolent in unilaterally violent dating relationships. The present study sought to understand how mutually violent victims, unilateral victims and women in nonviolent relationships differ in their use of conflict resolution resources. Findings indicated that mutually violent victims used more direct and confrontational resources when resolving conflict with their partners than did women in nonviolent dating relationships. However, there were no differences between the mutually violent victims and the unilateral victims, nor between unilateral victims and women in nonviolent relationships. Although conflict resolution resources did not discriminate between mutually violent victims and unilateral victims, broader
contextual and systemic factors may contribute to the likelihood that a victim will or will not use violence when resolving violent conflict in her dating relationship. Future research should examine the contextual and systemic factors that may lead to the use of mutual violence by victims in dating relationships.
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CHAPTER ONE: FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Social science research has revealed that violence is highly prevalent among dating partners. Reported rates of dating violence vary from study to study, due to variations in violence definition, research design and statistical analyses (Gelles, 1983; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). Roscoe and Callahan (1985) reported that 9% of their participants experience violence at some point during their dating careers, while McKinney (1986) reported a rate of 66%. Most research studies have found that between 30 and 40% of their participants have experienced violence at some point during their dating careers (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989).

Early research on dating violence compared individuals in violent and non-violent dating relationships on characteristics such as self-esteem, power, sex-role values, coping strategies, negotiation styles, and family of origin experiences. With these comparisons, researchers attempted to identify a general profile of characteristics common to all individuals who have experienced violence in their dating relationships. As a result, researchers treated the victim and aggressor populations as homogeneous, and did not explore the differences among individuals within these populations.

Recently, however, researchers have changed the focus of their studies from a comparison of individuals in violent and non-violent dating relationships to a more specific focus on how individuals within the violent dating population differ (Billingham, 1987; Makepeace, 1989; Stets & Straus, 1989; Stith, Jester & Bird, in press).
Preliminary findings have indicated that individuals within the violent dating population differ from one another along many important dimensions (Billingham, 1987; Makepeace, 1989; Stith et al., in press).

Several researchers have found that victims of dating violence differ from one another according to their own use of violence against their dating partner. Contrary to the unilateral assault model (male as perpetrator, female as victim) discussed in much of the domestic violence literature, several researchers have reported that dating violence is not always unilaterally perpetrated by the male. Violence within dating relationships is very often mutual, with the female victim expressing violence along with the male (Cate, Henton, Koval, Christopher & Lloyd, 1982; Gryl, Stith & Bird, 1991; Makepeace, 1986; Peterson, 1983). According to Sugarman and Hotaling (1989), a majority of dating violence studies have reported that women express violence in dating relationships as often as do men.

However, research findings have also indicated that not all women resort to violence when faced with physical and/or sexual aggression from their partner (Cate et al., 1982; Gryl et al., 1991; Makepeace, 1986). Many female victims rely only on nonviolent means to cope with the violence they receive from their dating partner (Carlson, 1987; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989; Pirog-Good & Stets, 1989).

Despite the consistent finding that victims differ in their use of mutual violence, researchers have rarely examined the differences in use of violence by victims. Several researchers have hypothesized that the nonviolent resources available to victims, and the
effectiveness of those resources, determine whether or not they will resort to violence to resolve conflict in their dating relationships. To test this hypothesis, the present study compared female victims who used mutual violence to female victims who did not use violence on nonviolent resources such as coping strategies, negotiation styles, self-esteem, and mastery.

In addition to comparing subgroups of female victims on resource dimensions, the present study compared both subgroups of victims with a control group of women in nonviolent dating relationships. Such a comparison was important to determine which resources differentiated between the two victim subgroups, and which resources differentiated between the two subgroups of victims and women in non-violent dating relationships. Even though some victims may have resources that help them avoid their own use of violence, they may still lack the resources necessary to resolve conflict and violence in their dating relationships.

Definitions

Research studies have differed in their definitions of violence. Some studies have defined violence as the actual use of physical aggression against a partner, while other studies have included use and threats of physical, verbal and sexual aggression in their definitions (Gelles, 1983; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). Some studies have defined an aggressive act as violence only if the aggressor intended to injure his or her partner. Other studies have defined aggressive acts as violent regardless of whether or not the
aggressor intended to injure his or her partner (Gelles, 1983; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989).

Research studies have also measured violence differently. Although most researchers have used the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) to measure dating violence, they have used the scale in different ways (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). Some studies used the CTS to measure violent acts only in their participants’ current dating relationship (Arias, Samios & O’Leary, 1987; Deal & Wampler, 1986; Gryl et al., 1991; Lloyd, Koval & Pittman, 1987), while other studies used the CTS to measure violent acts in participants’ current and past relationships (Arias et al., 1987; Bogal-Allbritten & Allbritten, 1985; Deal & Wampler, 1986).

The definition of dating relationships has also varied throughout the dating violence literature. The definition of dating relationships has been broad and has referred to a number of different levels of commitment ranging from first date to steady dating to cohabiting and engagement (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989).

Studies that define violence and dating relationships differently have revealed very different findings. Differences in the definition and measurement of violence have led to differing reports of violence rates (Gelles, 1983; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). For example, studies that measured broad categories of dating violence (i.e., physical, verbal and sexual abuse) in participants’ current and past dating relationships reported higher violence rates than studies that measured narrower categories of dating violence (i.e.,
physical abuse only) in their participants' current dating relationships (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989).

As with differing definitions of violence, research studies using differing definitions of dating relationships have reported different findings. For example, in a study comparing dating relationships at differing levels of commitment, Makepeace (1989) revealed that "casual" dating relationships differed significantly from "steady" dating relationships on measures of violence frequency and severity, violence precipitants, and consequences of the violence. The lack of consistency in definitions, and the variability in findings that result, have created problems for dating violence researchers. According to Gelles (1983), the wide variation in definitions of violence have hindered the development of a theoretical model of dating violence by limiting the development of a large base of knowledge about one uniform type of violent behavior.

Due to the number of definitions that are possible, it is important for researchers to clearly identify their definitions of violence and dating relationships. Research publications should clearly state their violence definitions so that researchers can identify which studies can be compared and examine how different definitions lead to different findings. Eventually, clarification of definitions and measurements in each dating violence study will lead to the development of a larger and larger base of knowledge for each type of violence, and thus towards the development of theoretical models that explain dating violence.
For clarification, the present study defined dating violence as the use of physical force (i.e., pushing, clawing, throwing an object, slapping, punching, kicking, using a lethal weapon) or physical restraint (i.e., wrestling, pinning down, strangling) by an individual against his or her current, exclusive dating partner. Threats of physical force or restraint were not defined as dating violence unless the individual threatened to use a gun, knife or other lethal weapon. Acts of verbal aggression (i.e., insulting or swearing at), sexual aggression (i.e., forced sex), and emotional aggression (i.e., threat to destroy dating partner's favored object) were not defined as dating violence in this study.

Victims were defined as women who had received physical violence from their current exclusive dating partner. Mutually violent victims were defined as those women who both received and expressed physical violence in their current, exclusive dating relationship. Unilateral victims were defined as those women who only received physical violence from their current, exclusive dating partner. Unilateral victims reported that they had never expressed physical violence towards their dating partner. Females in nonviolent relationships were those women who neither received or expressed violence in their current, exclusive dating relationship.

A current, exclusive dating relationship was defined in this study as a relationship in which an individual had an emotional commitment and heterosexual romantic and/or sexual involvement with only one partner. This definition included dating partners who are engaged. It excluded dating partners who were also dating others, dating partners
who lived together, dating partners who had only been on one date, married couples, and divorced couples.

**Theoretical Framework**

Because conflict is an inevitable part of all human interaction, all individuals will experience conflict at some point in their dating relationships (Bersani & Chen, 1988). According to Braiker and Kelley (1979), conflict is inevitable in the development of close relationships because each partner brings unique expectations and priorities to the relationship. As intimacy develops, each partner reveals more and more of his or her unique expectations about the relationship and his or her preferences for the behavior of the partner. At some point, the partners’ expectations and preferences are bound to conflict, requiring compromise and negotiation to resolve the conflict.

Braiker and Kelley (1979), argue that resolution of conflict is vital to the development of close relationships because it promotes interdependence and intimacy. As two partners resolve a conflict together, they develop new behaviors, norms and personal goals that are unique to the relationship. Conflict provides partners with an opportunity to think about and understand their priorities in the relationship and often leads to compromise and the development of mutual goals. Even if the couple does not create new norms and goals in the relationship, "the experiences they share in thrashing out their differences are likely to lead them to feel that their arrangements are unique and that there is 'something special' about their relationship" (p. 163). Thus, interpersonal conflict and the subsequent conflict resolution process provides couples with an
opportunity to increase their commitment to the relationship and develop their intimacy with one another.

Braiker & Kelley (1979) add, however, that the manner in which each partner attempts to resolve the conflict is crucial to the constructiveness of the conflict for the relationship. "The development [of the relationship] will depend on the couple's competencies to deal with the conflict and their flexibility to give up old behavioral guidelines and adopt new ones" (p. 160). When individuals in a relationship use ineffective conflict resolution strategies to resolve a conflict, the conflict remains unresolved, and the relationship suffers. Individuals who fail to resolve conflicts with their partner may see their relationship as more costly than rewarding and may retreat towards individual priorities that are more rewarding. Thus, when future conflict arises, each individual is less willing to compromise towards developing shared goals in the relationship.

In the present study, conflict resolution resources were defined as the strategies or psychological qualities that individuals had available to them when resolving conflict in their dating relationships. Research findings have indicated that coping strategies (Billingham, 1987; Bird, Stith, & Schladale, 1991; Gryl, et al., 1991), negotiation styles (Billingham, 1987; Bird et al., 1991; Gryl, et al., 1991), self-esteem (Bird, et al., 1991; Deal & Wampler, 1986; Lloyd et al., 1987) and mastery (Bird et al., 1991) were all resources that individuals used when faced with conflict in their relationships. Findings have also indicated that some individuals used violence as a resource when dealing with
conflicts with their dating partner (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Deal & Wampler, 1986; Shields & Hanneke, 1983; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987).

Conflict theory explains why some individuals resort to violence as a resource to resolve conflict while others do not. According to conflict theory, an individual uses violence as a resource when all other nonviolent resources available to that individual fail to resolve the conflict (Bersani & Chen, 1988; Steinmetz, 1987). Thus, an individual who has effective nonviolent resources and uses those resources to resolve relationship conflict will be successful in resolving the conflict without the use of violence. On the other hand, an individual who lacks effective nonviolent resources, or who fails to use these resources during times of conflict, will be unsuccessful in resolving the conflict and may resort to violence to restore order in the relationship (Bird et al., 1991).

Hypotheses

According to conflict theory, what differentiates violent from nonviolent relationships is not whether conflict exists, but what nonviolent resources individuals use and how effective those resources are in resolving the relationship conflict (Bersani & Chen, 1988; Bird et al., 1991; Lloyd et al., 1987; Steinmetz, 1987). Therefore, non-violent resources should differentiate between victims who resort to violence and victims who do not (Bird et al., 1991).

The present study hypothesized that mutually violent victims would differ from unilateral victims on conflict resolution resources (i.e., coping strategies, negotiation styles, self-esteem, and mastery). Likewise, the study hypothesized that mutually violent
victims would differ from women in nonviolent dating relationships in their use of conflict resolution resources.

The present study also hypothesized that unilateral victims would differ from women in nonviolent dating relationships in their use of conflict resolution resources. Although some female victims do not use violence themselves, previous research has indicated that victims lack resources to end their violent relationships (Aizenman & Kelley, 1988; Burke, Stets & Pirog-Good, 1989; Claerhout, Elder & Janes, 1982; Finn, 1985; Mitchell & Hodson, 1986; Schladale & Bird, 1988; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987; Walker, 1979).

**Purpose**

The purposes of this study were to:

1. **Enhance the understanding of the differences among individuals within the violent dating population.**

2. **Determine which nonviolent resources differentiate between mutually violent victims and unilateral victims.** How are nonviolent resources related to the use of violence by female dating violence victims?

3. **Determine which resource dimensions differentiate further between both subgroups of victims and women in nonviolent relationships.** What are the additional resources held by women in nonviolent dating relationships that are not held by female victims of dating violence?
4. Determine whether conflict theory is useful in explaining why some female victims resort to violence while others remain nonviolent?

5. Determine whether conflict theory is useful in explaining differences in the use of resources to resolve conflict by female victims and women in nonviolent dating relationships.

**Rationale**

Researchers have consistently reported that a substantial number of dating violence victims use violence to resolve conflict and violence in their relationships (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). In a descriptive study about several aspects of college students' violent dating relationships, Cate et al. (1982) found that 68% of the respondents who had experienced violence in their dating relationships reported that the violence was mutual (i.e., the male and the female both express and receive violence). Similarly, Deal and Wampler (1986) and Makepeace (1986) reported that mutual violence was the most common form of violence in their participants' dating relationships.

The finding that victims of dating violence very often use violence contrasts sharply with the stereotype of the victim as passive and helpless. While some victims may indeed remain passive and do not use violence against their dating partner, it appears that a substantial number of victims are using mutual violence against their dating partners. As a result of these findings, researchers have suggested that future research examine the differences among victims of dating violence.
A study of the differences among victims of dating violence may help dispel the stereotype that all victims are passive, defenseless women who have few resources to change their violent situations. Such a stereotype may prevent victims from seeing themselves as strong and resourceful enough to leave their abusive dating partners.

In addition, the stereotype of a victim as passive and helpless may prevent some women from identifying themselves as victims of dating violence, because their violent experience may be very different from the experience described in victim stereotypes. In a study about women's own definitions of violence, Kelly (1988) revealed that the stereotype of the victim of violence did not always fit her participants' experience with violence. For example, a woman in the study who established a refuge for battered women in her town failed to recognize herself as a battered wife because her experience did not fit the stereotypic image of a battered wife who is poor, weak and downtrodden. Women may have very different experiences with violence that may not fit into a generalized stereotypic profile of a victim of violence. Thus, they may not identify themselves as victims of violence and may fail to take the steps necessary to protect themselves from future violence.

One woman from the Kelly (1988) study called out for more to be written about the differing experiences of victims of violence:

I feel now that the sort of image of the battered woman being basically ill-educated, inarticulate and poor is totally misconceived. Not nearly enough is written and talked about women who are not beaten up by drunken husbands every week, but who were in my situation (p. 124).
Thus, in order to ensure that all victims of dating violence can identify themselves as victims and reach out for help, researchers must examine and report the differences that exist among dating violence victims. Victims who respond to their partner's violence in a noncharacteristic way, say by using mutual violence, must understand that while their experience differs from the stereotypic experience of the victim, it is still a violent experience for which they deserve to receive help.

The present study extended the research on differences among victims of dating violence by comparing victims who used violence to victims who remained nonviolent on the resources they used to resolve conflict and violence in their relationships. This study may help dispel the stereotype that all victims use similar resources when resolving conflict and violence in their dating relationships. By challenging stereotypical expectations that there is only one type of victim, this study may make it easier for women who have different experiences to recognize they are victims of violence and reach out for help.

Understanding how victims of dating violence differ from one another will also be important in the continuing drive for the development of a theory to explain dating violence. According to Bersani and Chen (1988), examining the commonalities and differences among subgroups in the violent population will enrich theory and research by denoting areas where theory can be generalized and where it needs to be specific. For example, understanding that discrepant findings on the relationship between self-esteem and violence are due to differences between subgroups of victims in violent dating
relationships may help researchers more clearly theorize about how self-esteem is associated with victimization. A broader understanding of the different profiles of characteristics associated with dating violence will expand our knowledge base and improve theoretical insight into the causes of dating violence (Gelles, 1983).

An understanding of how victims differ from one another may also lead to the improvement of services to women in violent and dangerous dating relationships. Clinicians who understand how victims differ from one another in their use of violent and nonviolent resources will be better able to assess victims of dating violence and help them develop the resources that will improve their ability to resolve conflict and violence in their relationships (Cadsky & Crawford, 1988; Gondolf, 1988). For example, female victims who use violence in response to their dating partners' aggression may use very different resources to resolve conflict than female victims who do not use violence when hit by their dating partner. Thus, treatment for each victim subgroup would focus on the development of the resources that each subgroup needs to resolve conflict and violence in their relationships. Clinicians who understand the heterogeneity of the victim population and the differences in use of resources will be better able to help victims resolve conflict and protect themselves from future violence.

Although previous research has found significant differences between male and female victims of violence (Gryl et al., 1991; Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1987), it is beyond the scope of this study to examine how male and female victims differ with
respect to use or nonuse of mutual violence. Thus, this study focused exclusively on female victims of dating violence.

Several researchers have criticized previous studies on female victims who use violence against their dating partner. Individuals who promote protection and allocation of resources to female victims of violence are concerned that a focus on female-perpetrated violence may distract from the plight of women who are victims of severe, ongoing violence in their marital or dating relationships (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Deal & Wampler, 1986; Dekeseredy, 1988). These researchers have criticized research findings that women unilaterally initiate violence in dating relationships, arguing that the studies did not include a measure of sexual aggression and thus did not eliminate the possibility that the women initiated violence in response to a sexual attack.

Researchers who have broached the subject of women’s use of violence in dating relationships have done so with caution. Most of these studies have warned that although women sometimes use violence in their relationships, this violence is less serious than a man’s violence because a woman is physically weaker and less capable of inflicting serious harm on her partner (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Gelles, 1983; Wardell, Gillespie & Leffler, 1983). Most of these studies have concluded that women use violence in self-defense, either in response to their partner’s physical, emotional or sexual aggression (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Deal & Wampler, 1986; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987).

Thus, the present study examined female victims who use mutual violence. The study examines victims’ use of violence as a conflict resolution resource, and how the
use of violence relates to the other resources they have to resolve the conflict and violence they experience in their dating relationships. Because this study only measured physical aggression and lacked measures of other forms of violence, such as sexual victimization (date rape, sexual harassment) and emotional abuse (threats to destroy a favored object), it does not examine the women who reported that they used violence unilaterally in their relationships. It is unclear whether the women who reported that they used physical violence unilaterally in this study were not actually defending against sexual or emotional abuse from their dating partner. Likewise, it is unclear whether the women who reported that they were unilateral victims were truly unilateral victims. It is possible that their partners used violence in response to another type of violence that they had imposed.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review describes previous research on victims of dating violence. It summarizes descriptive research on the types of violence victims experience, empirical research on the resources victims use to resolve conflict in their relationships, and the more recent research on differences among subgroups of the victim population. The literature review provides the background for the focus of the present research study and the hypotheses that will be tested.

Previous descriptive research on victims of dating violence has focused on the types of violence victims received, the frequency and severity with which the violence was inflicted, and the effects of the violence on the victim. Findings have indicated that dating violence can have serious physical and emotional consequences for its victims.

When describing the types of violence that victims have received from their dating partners, researchers have consistently classified specific violent behaviors as minor or severe based on the risk of injury to the victim (Makepeace, 1981). For example, these studies usually classify a shove as minor violence because it is most likely to result in minor injury for the victim. Other forms of minor violence have included pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, throwing an object, kicking, biting, and hitting or trying to hit with something (Cate et al., 1982; Henton, Cate, Koval, Lloyd & Christopher, 1983; Makepeace, 1981; Matthews, 1984; O’Leary et al., 1989, Roscoe & Benaske, 1985). Severe forms of violence have included choking (Roscoe & Benaske, 1985), beating, threatening assault with a lethal weapon, and use of a lethal weapon (Cate et al., 1982;

Although researchers have classified slaps, shoves, kicks and thrown objects as minor forms of violence, these forms of violence may vary in severity from relationship to relationship. Shoves, kicks, slaps and thrown objects can result in bruises and broken bones. A simple shove can occur at a location where the victim falls down the stairs and experiences severe injury such as concussion, a broken back, and even death (Makepeace, 1981).

Research studies have consistently reported that victims of dating violence experience minor forms of violence more often than severe forms of violence (Cate et al., 1982; Henton et al., 1983; Makepeace, 1981; Matthews, 1984; O'Leary et al., 1989; Roscoe & Benaske, 1985). In his groundbreaking study on dating violence, Makepeace (1981) reported that aggressors most often pushed (13.9%) and slapped (12.9%) their victims, but infrequently struck their victims with an object (3.5%) or assaulted them with a lethal weapon (1.0%). Cate et al. (1982) reported that victims most often experienced pushing and shoving (78%) and slapping (61%), in addition to other forms of minor violence such as kicking, biting or hitting with fists (38%) and hitting or trying to hit with something (33%) with moderate frequency. Less than 1% of the victims in their study reported that they had received beatings from their dating partner, and less than 1% reported that their partner had threatened to assault them with a lethal weapon. Several other researchers also revealed that victims more often received minor forms of
violence from their dating partners (Henton et al., 1983; Matthews, 1984; O'Leary et al., 1989; Roscoe & Benaske, 1983).

Although rare in dating relationships, severe forms of violence occur often enough to warrant concern. As Makepeace (1981) and Carlson (1987) argue, if the 1% to 4% incidence rate of severe violence is accurate, then several hundred students on a university campus of 10,000 are victims of life-threatening violence in their dating relationships.

The physical consequences of violence are often more significant for women than for men. Because women are typically smaller and physically weaker than men, women are more at risk of severe injury from dating violence than are men (Dekeseredy, 1988; Gelles, 1983; Miller, 1990; O'Leary et al., 1989). In a study of the gender differences in courtship violence victimization, Makepeace (1986) reported that women sustained three times as much mild injury and two times as much moderate injury than men. In addition, women suffered all of the severe injury. Women were more often struck with an object or beaten up by their partner, while men more often received lower levels of violence such as slaps, bites and kicks from their partner. Men also reported that they threatened their partner with a weapon more often than did women.

Victims experience much more than debilitating physical injuries from the abuse they receive from their dating partner (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1987). The emotional consequences of violence are more difficult to see, but no less important to the well-being of the victim. Research studies have reported that victims responded most often
to violence with anger, hurt (Henton et al., 1983; Matthews, 1984), and fear (Carlson, 1987; Henton et al., 1983; Matthews, 1984).

According to Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1987), being attacked aggressively by another individual challenges a victim's basic assumptions about the world. When an individual is hit by a dating partner, the world is no longer seen as a safe, benevolent place and their dating partner is no longer seen as a person whom they can trust. The victim is left feeling vulnerable, unprotected, fearful and distrustful of others.

Janoff-Bulman & Frieze (1987) also suggest that dating violence challenges victims' assumptions about themselves. Victims often blame themselves for the violent incident, questioning their worth and doubting their previous beliefs about their strength and ability to protect themselves from harm. Victims often see themselves as weak, frightened and out of control. The violence leads them to question their autonomy and the power they have to control their lives.

Men and women also suffer different emotional consequences from the violence they experience in dating relationships. According to Gelles (1983), because men are bigger than women, they can use violence against their partner without fear of being struck back hard enough to be injured. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to feel victimized by dating violence (Makepeace, 1981) and to fear further abuse (O'Leary et al., 1989).

In addition to finding that the physical and emotional consequences of violence can be severe and long lasting for victims, research has also indicated that victims'
interpretations of the violence in their relationships prevented them from seeing the negative impact of the violence on their lives (Cate et al., 1982; Henton et al., 1983; Makepeace, 1981; Matthews, 1984). In a study of 644 high school students, Henton et al. (1983) reported that 27% of dating violence victims interpreted their partners’ violent behavior as a form of love, while only 4% interpreted their partners’ violence as a form of hate. Cate et al. (1982) revealed that 29% of victims interpreted their partners’ violence as a form of love, while only a small percentage (8%) of victims interpreted the violence as hate. Matthews (1984) also reported that 28% of dating violence victims interpreted their partner’s violence as a form of love. Clearly, victims often rationalize that violent behavior is consistent with their partner’s love for them.

Research findings have also indicated that victims minimized the impact that the violence had on their dating relationships (Bogal-Allbritten & Allbritten, 1985; Cate et al., 1982; Gryl et al., 1991; Henton et al., 1983; Makepeace, 1981; Matthews, 1984). Makepeace (1981) revealed that 16% of the victims in his study believed that violence did not change their relationships, and that 29% believed that they became more deeply involved with their partner after the violence occurred. Similarly, Matthews (1984) reported that 43% of victims felt that their relationship improved after the violence occurred and 26% felt that the violence did not change their relationships. In addition, Gryl et al. (1991) reported that 85% of college students in violent relationships felt that their relationships stayed the same or improved after the violent incidents occurred, while only 15% felt that the violence hurt their relationships. Several other researchers also
reported that substantial numbers of victims perceived that violence either improved or did not change their relationships (Bogal-Allbritten & Allbritten, 1985; Cate et al., 1982; Henton et al., 1983).

Thus, when victims experience dating violence, they often interpret the violence as a form of love and minimize the impact that the violence has on their relationships. Such rationalizations allow victims to develop and maintain strong feelings of closeness and attachment for their partner, and prevent them from seeing the threat that the violence poses for them.

Several researchers have speculated that victims minimize the violence in their relationships in order to maintain their belief in the myth of romantic love that prevails in our society (Henton et al., 1983; Makepeace, 1981). Henton et al. (1983) argue that television shows, popular songs, romance novels, movies and soap operas all promote the myth that romantic love has the power to lift couples outside the world of reality and set them apart to dwell in mutual admiration. The myth promotes the idea that no matter what problem occurs, the dating partners’ unwavering devotion to each other will help them conquer the problem together. Makepeace (1981) suggests that the media consistently depict young couples who overcome nearly insurmountable odds to achieve a successful and loving relationship.

Thus, young adults in our society perceive dating relationships as a carefree experience to be enjoyed. Society teaches them that their extreme caring, constant
affection and loyalty to one another will help them conquer difficulties in their relationships without negative consequences such as conflict and violence.

Dating violence challenges the myth that a dating relationship is a romantic haven in the lives of young adults. In order to continue to believe in the myth of romantic love, victims of dating violence who experience pain, anger, hurt and apologies will need to disregard or greatly minimize the violence and the impact it has on their lives (Henton et al., 1983). Minimization allows victims to believe that the consequences of the violence are not serious, that the violence will not occur again, and that the nonabusive times in their relationships are the true indicators of how good their relationship is with their partner (Kelly, 1988).

Thus, despite the serious emotional and physical consequences of violence that they experience, victims often minimize the impact of the violence and interpret it as a form of love. These interpretations increase the chances that victims will stay in abusive relationships and place themselves at risk of further injury.

Because victims stay in their relationships despite the violence they experience, researchers have focused much of their study on the resources that victims have to resolve the conflict and violence in their relationships. Researchers have hypothesized that the resources dating partners use to resolve conflict in their relationships determine whether or not the conflict can be resolved, and thus whether or not a partner will have to resort to violence to resolve the conflict.
Previous research on the resources of the dating violence population has not focused specifically on victims. Most previous studies examined the conflict resolution resources of all individuals who had experienced dating violence, regardless of whether they were the victim or the aggressor in the relationship. The goal of these studies was to understand which resources individuals in violent dating relationships typically used when resolving conflict in their relationships, and how those resources were associated with the experience of violence. The following discussion outlines the research on several of the resources that may be related to violence in dating relationships.

Self-Esteem

Violence researchers have typically defined self-esteem as an intrapsychic personality characteristic that may contribute to an individual’s use or receipt of violence (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). Burke et al. (1989) suggest that low self-esteem contributes to victimization because it influences the victim’s willingness to accept aggression as a means of conflict resolution. Low self-esteem may contribute to an individuals’ decision to use violence against a dating partner because it affects the individual’s perception of himself or herself as able to resolve conflict successfully. Not believing that one can resolve conflict successfully may lead to the use of violence to restore order in the relationship.

Several empirical studies have compared individuals in violent and nonviolent dating relationships on self-esteem. Findings have been mixed. Several researchers reported that individuals in violent dating relationships had lower self-esteem than did
individuals in nonviolent dating relationships (Comins, 1984; Deal & Wampler, 1986; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). However, Bird et al. (1991) reported that self-esteem was not related to experience with violence. Walker (1979, 1984) also reported discrepant findings about the relationship between self-esteem and violence. In her 1979 study on spouse abuse, she revealed that experience with violence was associated with low self-esteem. However, in her 1984 spouse abuse study, Walker reported that self-esteem and violence were unrelated.

Two studies examined the self-esteem of victims of dating violence as compared with individuals who do not experience violence in their dating relationships (Burke et al., 1989; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). Both studies revealed that dating violence victims had lower self-esteem scores than did individuals in nonviolent relationships.

Thus, previous studies have failed to clarify the relationship between violence and self-esteem, perhaps because they did not explore the differences among subgroups of the violent population. Studies that examined victims and aggressors as a homogeneous group may have found discrepant results because they did not explore the differences among victims and aggressors on self-esteem. Although several studies did reveal that victims had lower self-esteem than do individuals in nonviolent dating relationships, little is known about how victims differ from aggressors, or whether all victims have similar levels of self-esteem.
Mastery

Mastery is another intrapsychic resource that may be associated with an individual’s experience with violence in a dating relationship. Mastery is a generalized belief that outcomes of importance are within one’s control rather than contingent upon external forces such as luck, fate or chance (Cohen & Edwards, 1989; Folkman, 1984; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). When individuals face conflict in a dating relationship, a sense of mastery may help them withstand the threat of disagreement and resolve the conflict successfully. The stronger the sense of mastery and the corresponding expectation of being able to control the situation, the more active an individual’s efforts will be to resolve the conflict, and thus the more likely it will be that the conflict will be resolved (Folkman, 1984). Success in resolving the conflict may help the individual avoid using violence.

Other researchers speculate, however, that a strong sense of mastery may lead an individual to persist in rather than withdraw from conflictual interaction (Bird et al., 1991). Bandura (1977) argues that an individual with a strong sense of mastery will persist longer in the face of conflict than an individual with a weak sense of mastery. Such persistence may place the victim at risk for violence from her dating partner. Thus, it is unclear whether mastery guards against or promotes the escalation of conflict to violence in dating relationships.

Only a few research studies have examined the relationship between mastery and dating violence. In a comparison of individuals in violent and nonviolent dating
relationships, Bird et al. (1991) reported that mastery was not related to dating violence. However, Aizenman & Kelley (1988) reported that victims of dating violence had a lower sense of mastery than did those in nonviolent dating relationships.

Again, the discrepancy in findings about the relationship between mastery and dating violence may have resulted from the focus of researchers on the generalities of the entire population of individuals in violent dating relationships and not on particular subgroups and how they differ from one another. Aizenman & Kelley (1988) compared female victims with individuals in nonviolent relationships, while Bird et al. (1991) compared a homogeneous group of violent daters with individuals in nonviolent dating relationships. Neither study compared subgroups within the violent population. Thus, it is unknown whether findings differ due to differences among subgroups.

**Coping Strategies**

According to Folkman (1984), coping strategies are cognitive, affective and behavioral resources that an individual uses to deal with demanding life situations such as conflict with a dating partner. The use of effective coping strategies may help individuals resolve conflict with their dating partners without resorting to violence.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify two types of coping that individuals use to deal with relationship conflict, problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Individuals use problem-focused coping to change problematic situations in relationships. Problem-focused coping includes strategies such as problem-solving, decision making, and direct action (Folkman, 1984; Menegan, 1983). Individuals use emotion-focused
coping to control their emotional response to a conflictual situation. Emotion-focused coping includes strategies such as selective ignoring, denial, passive acceptance, withdrawal, magical thinking and blind faith (Folkman, 1984; Menegan, 1983).

Bird et al. (1991) argue that reliance on emotion-focused coping strategies such as denial, passive acceptance, and/or magical thinking may prevent a dating partner from utilizing problem-focused coping that would eliminate the conflict from their relationship and prevent the escalation of the conflict to violence. Conversely, those who rely on problem-focused coping strategies are more likely to be successful in resolving the conflict in their relationship and avoiding the occurrence of violence.

Very little research has examined the coping strategies of individuals in violent dating relationships. Several studies on battered wives have confirmed that battered women use less effective coping strategies than women in nonviolent marital relationships (Claerhout et al., 1982; Finn, 1985; Mitchell & Hodson, 1986; Schladale & Bird, 1988; Walker, 1979). In one of the few studies of the coping strategies of individuals in violent dating relationships, Bird et al. (1991) reported that individuals who used problem-focused coping strategies such as asking a friend or relative for advice, seeking sympathy and understanding from someone else, and bolstering their own morale were more likely to succeed in avoiding dating violence in their relationships than were individuals who used emotion-focused coping.

Another study on the coping strategies of individuals in violent dating relationships revealed that individuals in violent dating relationships were more likely to
use emotion-focused coping strategies (i.e., expressing anger, blaming their partners, and withdrawing) than were individuals in nonviolent relationships (Gryl et al., 1991). Again, when individuals in violent relationships feel they can do little to alter their situation, they may use emotion-focused coping strategies that often lead to the escalation of conflict and the occurrence of violence.

Thus, studies that compared individuals in violent and nonviolent relationships have indicated that individuals in violent dating relationships more often use ineffective emotion-focused coping strategies when dealing with conflict. Such emotion-focused coping strategies may prevent resolution of conflict and lead to violence.

**Negotiation Styles**

According to Pearlin and Schooler (1978), negotiation styles are also resources available to dating partners when resolving conflictual interaction. Negotiation styles are strategies used to influence one’s partner in the presence of implicit or explicit opposition (Scanzoni & Polonko, 1980). There are several different types of negotiation styles. Direct negotiation styles include strategies such as overtly asking, stating, telling, or discussing, and compromise. Indirect negotiation styles include strategies such as pouting, withdrawal, hinting, and being especially affectionate. Coercive negotiation strategies include name calling, pursuing the issue over and over, confrontation, and use of threats.

Direct negotiation styles require a partner’s cooperation and are likely to lead to conflict resolution. In a study of conflict resolution in intimate relationships, Lloyd
(1987) reported that individuals who used direct negotiation styles reported fewer relationship conflicts and a higher rate of conflict resolution. On the other hand, coercive and indirect negotiation styles do not require a partner's cooperation and are used when the goal is important and noncompliance is expected (Falbo & Peplau, 1980). Coercive and indirect negotiation styles are less likely to lead to conflict resolution and may contribute to the escalation of the conflict to violence (Bird et al., 1991; Lloyd, Koval & Cate, 1989; Scanzoni & Polonko, 1980).

Several studies have compared the negotiation styles of individuals in violent and nonviolent dating relationships. Bird, et al. (1991) revealed that individuals in violent dating relationships relied more often on the indirect and coercive negotiation styles of negative affect (i.e., being especially disagreeable, becoming cold and silent, insulting or swearing at partner), blaming and confrontation when resolving conflict with their dating partners.

In a study comparing violent and nonviolent relationships in which there was a great deal of conflict, Lloyd et al. (1989) reported that the use of persistence (i.e., repeated attempts to persuade the partner that one's own way is right) was the strongest contributor to the difference between individuals in violent and nonviolent relationships. Individuals in violent dating relationships used persistence to negotiate conflict significantly more often than did individuals in nonviolent dating relationships. Gryl et al. (1991) also compared individuals in violent and nonviolent relationships on their negotiation styles. These researchers reported that individuals in violent dating
relationships used more coercive and indirect negotiation styles such as negative affect (i.e., being especially disagreeable, becoming cold and silent, insulting or swearing at partner), emotional appeal (i.e., crying, threatening to break up), and indirect appeal (i.e., hinting and being especially affectionate).

Thus, previous research on the negotiation styles of individuals in violent and nonviolent dating relationships has consistently revealed that individuals in violent dating relationships more often used indirect and coercive negotiation styles when resolving conflict with a dating partner. Such indirect and coercive negotiation may contribute to the escalation of the conflict to violence.

Summary of previous research on resources

Previous research on the resources of individuals in violent dating relationships focused primarily on the development of a homogeneous profile of all individuals who experience violence. This research indicated that individuals who have experienced violence in their dating relationships typically used coercive and indirect negotiation styles and emotion-focused coping strategies that prevented them from resolving conflict in their relationships and resulted in their use of violence. It is still unclear how the intrapsychic resources of mastery and self-esteem are related to the experience of dating violence.

Researchers are now questioning the study of the violent population as a homogeneous group (Cadsky & Crawford, 1988; Follingstad, Rutledge, Polek & McNeill-Hawkins, 1988; Gondolf, 1988; Snyder & Fruchtman, 1981; Stith et al., in
press). Some of these researchers speculate that inconsistent findings in the search for a common set of resources for the violent population are due to the fact that the population is not homogeneous, and that there are important differences between subgroups of individuals who experience dating violence (Cadsky & Crawford, 1988; Snyder & Fruchtman, 1981). Gondolf (1988) goes further to argue that subgroups of the violent population may differ not only on the resources they use to resolve conflict, but in the entire set of causal factors that lead to violence in their dating relationships. He suggests that researchers examine the differences among subgroups of the violent population and develop subtheories to explain violence for each subgroup as a separate epiphenomenon.

As a result of speculation that the violent population may not be homogeneous, several researchers have studied how groups in the violent population differ from one another. Researchers have looked for differences among males and females, victims and aggressors, subgroups of male batterers, and subgroups of female victims. The following literature review will summarize the research comparing subgroups of female victims.

Several spouse abuse studies have examined the differences among subgroups of battered wives. In his development of a typology of male batterers, Gondolf (1988) also developed a preliminary typology of the wives of these batterers. Gondolf (1988) reported that wives of severe batterers were almost twice as likely to actively seek help from police, lawyers or other support systems as were women whose husbands were minor batterers. In addition, wives of severe batterers were somewhat less likely to
return to their husband after leaving a spouse abuse shelter than were wives of minor batterers. Gondolf's (1988) findings contradicted the stereotype that all victims generally return to abusive husbands. It appears that the more violent and pathological the husband, the more likely the battered wife will be to seek help and never return to the batterer again.

In a study of 119 women living in spouse abuse shelters, Snyder and Fruchtmann (1981) developed a typology of battered wives. These researchers identified five distinct subgroups of battered wives that differed from one another in the type of relationship they had with their abusive husband, the frequency and severity of the abuse they received, the types of abuse their husband perpetrated, their response to the abuse, and the likelihood that they would return to their abusive husband after leaving the shelter.

Type One battered wives had stable relationships with their abusive husband. Their husbands abused them infrequently and rarely abused their children. Their husband never forced sex on them either during or after the physically abusive incident. The Type One battered wives were most likely to have rationalized their husbands' abuse and were most likely to have used retaliatory violence. These women were far more likely to return to their husbands after leaving the shelter than were the other subgroups of battered wives.

The Type Two battered wife reported that her relationship with her abusive husband was highly unstable and explosive and was characterized by recurrent separations. This battered wife received the most frequent and severe abuse, including
sexual violence. The Type Two battered wife was most likely to report that she suffered
some type of injury from her husbands' abuse. Similar to Gondolf's finding that the
wives of severe batterers were less likely to return to their abusive husbands, the Type
Two battered wife was less likely to return to her husband after leaving a spouse abuse
shelter than were the Type One battered wives.

Type Three battered wives suffered the most chronic and severe forms of physical
violence from their husbands. These wives reported that they lived in fear and constant
threat due to the abuse they received from their husbands and the abuse their husbands
inflicted upon their children. Type Three wives were the least likely of the subgroups
to report that they used retaliatory violence against their husbands and were the least
likely group to return to their husband after leaving a shelter.

Type Four battered wives reported that their husband mainly perpetuated violence
against their children. These wives reported that they received infrequent and minimal
violence from their husbands that rarely resulted in injury. These battered wives sought
refuge in spouse abuse shelters only for their children and stayed only briefly. However,
most of these women did not return to their husbands.

Type Five battered wives reported an extensive history of violence in their family
of origin and reported that their husband abused them prior to marriage. These wives
also reported that they received violence from other partners as well. Snyder and
Fruchtman (1988) speculated that these women expected violence and accepted it as part
of their lives. They did seek out short term help from spouse abuse shelters, but usually returned to their violent husbands.

Clearly, different subgroups of victims have different violent experiences in their relationships and seek different kinds of support based on those experiences. Characteristics of the abuser, such as the severity of the violence he inflicts, seem to play a role in the victims' interpretation of whether she needs help and whether she returns to the assailant after leaving a spouse abuse shelter. Wives who receive less severe violence seek out more short-term help and return to their husbands more often than wives that receive severe, ongoing and pervasive abuse. Clearly, not all battered wives fit the stereotype of the helpless victim who does not have the strength or the resources to seek outside help and leave her abusive relationship.

Dating violence researchers have also examined how subgroups of dating violence victims differ from one another. Follingstad et al. (1988) divided victims into subgroups based on the frequency with which they had experienced violence in their dating relationships. These researchers compared victims who experienced one-time violence in their relationships (one-time victims), victims who received ongoing violence from their dating partner (on-going victims), and individuals who had never experienced violence in their dating relationships.

Findings indicated that ongoing victims differed significantly from both one-time victims and individuals in nonviolent relationships. Ongoing victims were more likely to allow their partners to engage in controlling behaviors and were more likely to have
actually experienced controlling behaviors from their partner (i.e., jealousy, monitoring of activities, criticism, physical violence and forced sex). The ongoing victims reported higher levels of commitment to their relationships and love for their violent partners and were more likely to have had a history of physical violence in their family of origin.

Follingstad et al. (1988) reported that one-time victims of violence did not differ significantly from individuals who had never experienced violence in their relationships. Both one-time victims and individuals in nonviolent relationships allowed similar amounts of controlling behaviors, reported similar levels of commitment and love, and similar histories of parental violence.

Follingstad et al. (1988) revealed an important distinction in their comparison of victims who receive one-time violence and victims who receive ongoing violence. Clearly, all victims in this study did not fit the stereotype of being powerless and allowing their partners to control them. One-time victims did have the strength and resources to resolve conflict and violence in their relationships, and had similar qualities to women who had not experienced violence in their dating relationships.

Makepeace (1989) also studied the heterogeneity of the victim population by comparing victims at different levels of commitment to their dating partners. Makepeace (1989) identified six subgroups of victims who reported that their relationships are at the following stages of commitment; first date, casual dating, steady dating, cohabitation, engagement and other.
Makepeace (1989) revealed that victims at differing levels of relationship commitment had experienced different types of relationship violence and had responded differently to the violence. First date victims experienced "predatory violence" that was characterized by severe levels of physical, emotional and sexual violence. First date victims quickly ended their relationships, perhaps because there was little investment or emotional commitment in the volatile dating partner.

Casual and steady daters usually experienced "relational violence" that differed from predatory violence in that it was less severe and more varied. Relational violence was typically characterized by minor levels of physical violence. Casual and steady daters were often able to leave their relationships, perhaps because they only had a moderate commitment to their dating partner.

Cohabiting and engaged victims experienced "relational violence" that was very different from the "relational violence" that casual and steady daters had experienced. The cohabiting and engaged victims experienced more severe physical violence and also received emotional abuse from their partners. In addition to the increasing severity of the violence, the cohabiters and engaged were much more likely to stay in their abusive relationships, perhaps because of their increased commitment and investment to their partner.

Clearly, victims have different experiences in their relationships that might require different conflict resolution resources. Victims who experience one-time violence or violence on a first date may use very different resources to resolve conflict than do
victims who experience ongoing abuse in more committed relationships. Several researchers have tested this hypothesis by examining how victims differ in their use of conflict resolution resources.

Several researchers have compared victims who used mutual violence with victims who remained nonviolent to determine whether they differed in their use of nonviolent resources as well as in their use of violence. Deal and Wampler (1986) compared victims who use mutual violence (mutually violent victims) to victims who remain nonviolent (victims-only) on their sex role attitudes and dominance. These researchers reported that there were no significant differences between the two victim subgroups. However, Deal and Wampler did not control for level of commitment. Given the finding by Makepeace (1989) that victims differed significantly according to level of commitment, it is possible that level of commitment may have confounded the comparison of mutually violent victims and unilateral victims in the Deal and Wampler (1986) study.

Billingham (1987) compared victims who used violence (mutually violent victims) to victims who remain nonviolent (unilateral victims) on the resources that they used to resolve conflict in their dating relationships (i.e., verbal aggression, reasoning and violence). Billingham added level of commitment to his analyses, comparing victims at the following stages of commitment: casual dating, dating but not emotionally attached, emotionally attached but not in love, in love, in love and would like to marry, in love and have discussed marriage, and engaged. Findings indicated that there was an
interaction effect between victim type (mutually violent vs. unilateral victim) and level of commitment.

Throughout the commitment continuum, the mutually violent victims used verbal aggression more often than did the unilateral victims. Especially at the later stages of emotional commitment (i.e., emotional attachment to engagement), the mutually violent victims used significantly more verbal aggression than did the unilateral victims.

The mutually violent victims and the victims-only subgroup also differed in their use of reasoning only at higher levels of relationship commitment (in love, in love and would like to marry, in love and have discussed marriage, and engaged). At the in-love stage, the unilateral victims used less reasoning than did the mutually-violent victims. At the next level of commitment (in-love and would like to marry), the reasoning scores of both victim subgroups increased sharply, with the unilateral victims using more reasoning than did the mutually violent victims. At the next two stages (the in love and discussing marriage stage and the engagement stage), the unilateral victims used less reasoning than did the mutually violent victims. At all other levels of commitment (casual dating, dating but not emotionally attached, emotionally attached but not in love), the unilateral victims and the mutually-violent victims used similar levels of reasoning when faced with conflict and violence in their relationships.

Thus, at greater stages of relationship commitment, mutually violent victims differed from the unilateral victims in their use of violent and nonviolent resources to resolve conflict. Mutually violent victims’ greater use of verbal aggression may increase
the likelihood that the conflict will go unresolved and result in the use of violence by both the victim and the aggressor. The relationship between the use of reasoning and the use of violence by the victim remains unclear, as the two subgroups of victims differ in their use of reasoning at differing relationship stages.

**Summary**

Research on differences among dating violence victims has revealed some important information. Victims of dating violence differed significantly from one another in the types of violence they experienced, the amount of commitment they had to their relationships, the types of support they sought, and whether they stayed in their abusive relationships. Given the fact that victims had such differing experiences in their violent relationships, it is likely that researchers will continue to discover other ways in which victims differ.

Billingham's research made major inroads into the study of how victims differ in their use of resources to resolve conflictual interaction. His findings have provided preliminary support for the conflict theory hypothesis that the strategies victims use to resolve conflict in their dating relationships are related to their use or nonuse of violence. For example, verbal aggression, a coercive reasoning tactic, is used more often by those victims who also use violence against their dating partners. It is possible that the victims' use of verbal aggression prevents them from resolving the violent conflict with their dating partner and thus leads to their use of violence to restore order in their relationships.
What remains unclear from Billingham's (1987) research is how victims' use of reasoning is related to their use or nonuse of violence. Victims who used violence against their dating partner differed from victims who did not use violence on reasoning, but the differences were not consistent throughout the continuum of relationship commitment. It appears that relationship commitment is an important confounding variable that may complicate the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and the use of violence.

The present study extended Billingham's (1987) research by examining more closely the relationship between nonviolent conflict resolution resources and victims' use of violence. The present study compared mutually violent victims to unilateral victims on a wider range of nonviolent resources used to resolve conflict. The study compared the victim subgroups on resource measures that have been studied in other research that compared individuals in violent and nonviolent relationships (coping strategies, negotiation styles, self-esteem and mastery). The goal of the study was to clarify previous discrepant findings and determine whether victims who differ in their use of violence also differ in their use of conflict resolution resources.

Because Billingham (1987) and Makepeace (1989) reported significant differences among victims at different stages of relationship commitment, the present study examined only those victims who reported that they were seriously committed to one dating partner. In addition, length of relationship was also controlled in the statistical analyses. The present study examined victims at the level of serious commitment because
Billingham (1987) only reported significant differences between the victim subgroups at the later stages of relationship commitment.

Following in the footsteps of Follingstad et al. (1988), the present study compared both victim subgroups to a group of women in nonviolent dating relationships. Because Follingstad reported that some victim subgroups had similar characteristics to individuals in nonviolent dating relationships, while other victim subgroups were significantly different from individuals in nonviolent relationships, the present study compared the mutually violent victims and the unilateral victims to a group of females in nonviolent relationships. Such a comparison allows the researcher to look for the resources that some victims may have that are similar to the resources of females in nonviolent relationships, thus identifying the strengths that some victims may have to resolve conflict and violence in their dating relationships.
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Sample

The present study collected two waves of data from college students at a large mid-Atlantic university. The first wave of data came from a random sample of 600 first-year dormitory students. The sample was limited to first-year students to reduce age variation and to screen out students in cohabiting relationships. The questionnaire was distributed to students through the mail and students were asked to return it anonymously in a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the research team.

The second wave of data came from a sample of 245 students participating in social science classes. The study selected social science classes because they attract a diverse range of students with different backgrounds, academic majors and ages. Students were given class time to complete the questionnaire and were asked to return the questionnaires anonymously in a box when leaving class for the day.

The final sample for the present study included only those females who reported that they were dating one person exclusively (N=298). In addition, length of relationship was held constant in statistical analyses. The length and seriousness of the dating relationship were held constant to reduce the variability that results from examining individuals at different stages of their dating relationships (Billingham, 1987; Makepeace, 1989; Stets & Straus, 1989).
Measures

The questionnaire included measures of demographic characteristics, coping, strategies, negotiation styles, self-esteem, mastery and violence. Violence was measured with the violence subscale of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) with the modifications suggested by Walker (1984) (See Part E of questionnaire, pp. 100-101). Verbal abuse was not included in this scale. The violence subscale of the CTS contained 10 items, each of which indicates a violent tactic. The violent tactics ranged from slapping with an open hand to punching with a fist, to use of a knife or gun. Each respondent was asked to respond to the 10-item CTS twice, once to report on the frequency of their own violent behavior and once to report on the frequency of partner’s violent behavior. Participants rated the frequency of violent behavior in their relationships on a scale of 1-5 (1=never done; 2=threatened only; 3=rarely done; 4=occasionally done; 5=frequently done). A number of studies on violent relationships have demonstrated the validity of the CTS (Bullcroft & Straus, 1975; Steinmetz, 1977; Walker, 1984).

Scores on the CTS were used to determine membership in the two groups of female victims and the control group of females in nonviolent dating relationships. The mutually violent victim subgroup consisted of females who reported that both they and their partner used one or more of the violent tactics in their current exclusive dating relationship. It was unknown whether the mutually violent victims had initiated the violence in the relationship or whether they had retaliated for violence they received from
their partner. The unilateral victims subgroup consisted of females who reported that only their partner had used one or more of the violent tactics in their current exclusive dating relationship. The subgroup of females in nonviolent relationships consisted of those females who reported that neither they nor their current dating partner had used any of the violent tactics listed on the CTS. This type of scoring on the CTS was consistent with previous analyses of CTS data (DeMaris, 1987; Kalmuss, 1984; Kalmuss & Straus, 1982).

The Ways of Coping Scale (WOC), as revised by Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, Delongis and Gruen (1986) was used to measure the process of coping for respondents in the study (See Part D of questionnaire, pp. 98-100). The present study deleted the items that comprised the positive reappraisal subscale because they evaluated the result of coping rather than the process of coping. On the Ways of Coping Scale, respondents indicated how often they had used each of the 41 strategies after an argument with their dating partner in which nothing was resolved and they felt upset. The 7-point likert-type response scale ranged from 1 (never) to 7 (always). Folkman and Lazarus (1980) reported a reliability of .80 using Cronbach’s alpha for this inventory. Reliability of this scale with this sample was ??.

The present study measured negotiation styles with Falbo and Peplau’s (1980) Power Strategies Scale and the supplemental items suggested by Scanzoni (1978) (See Part C of questionnaire, pp. 97-98). The study asked participants to report how often they used each of the power strategies to influence their partner when they both felt very
strongly about a situation. Responses to each of the 21 negotiation strategies were reported on a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always). Reliability of the Power Strategies Scale with this sample was 7.

The present study used Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale to measure self-esteem (See Part G of questionnaire, p. 103). Participants responded to the 10-item instrument on a 7-point likert-type response scale that ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The Self-Esteem Scale was well validated by McCarthy & Hoge (1982) who tested the scale in an analysis of adolescent self-esteem. Past research reported that test-retest reliability was .85, reproducibility was 92% and scalability was 72% (Simons & Murphy, 1985). Items on the scale included statements such as, "On the whole, I'm satisfied with myself" and "I am able to do things as well as most other people." Mean scores on the Self-Esteem Scale were used in the analysis. The reliability of the Self-Esteem Scale for this sample was .90 using Cronbach's alpha.

Pearlin and Schooler's (1978) Mastery Scale was used to assess mastery (See Part G of questionnaire, p. 103). Participants reported their extent of agreement on a 7-point likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The 7 items on the Mastery Scale included items such as, "There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life" and "I have little control over the things that happen to me." Mean scores on the Mastery Scale were used in the analysis. Reliability of this scale with this sample was .80 using Cronbach's alpha.
The present study measured the following demographic variables: age, gender and race of the respondent, length of the respondent's current dating relationship, and parents' income, level of education and marital status (See Part A of questionnaire, pp. 93-95).

Data analysis

Principal factoring with iteration was used in the original study (N = ???) to reduce and organize responses to the coping strategies measured into eight different factors. This method extracted the number of factors with eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1.0. The axis was rotated orthogonally using the varimax technique. Only items which had loadings greater than .40 were included in each factor. The eight identified factors were: denial/distancing (9 items), accepting responsibility (8 items), problem solving (8 items), confrontation (3 items), social support (3 items), spiritual belief/fantasy (4 items), self-control (2 items) and escape/avoidance (3 items). These factors accounted for 52.28 percent of the explained variance in coping. Reliability scores for each of the coping factors for this sample using Cronbach's alpha were: denial (.79), accepting responsibility (.78), problem solving (.70), confrontation (.67), social support (.64), fantasy (.56), self-control (.53), and escape (.47).

Principal factoring with iteration was also used to reduce and organize the responses to the Power Strategies Scale into specific negotiation styles. Five negotiation styles were identified: direct appeal (4 items), bargaining/compromise (2 items), indirect appeal (2 items), negative affect (6 items) and emotional appeal (5 items). These five
styles accounted for 60.07 percent of the explained variance in negotiation. Reliability scores for each of the negotiation factors for this sample using Cronbach’s alpha were: negative affect (.80), direct appeal (.64), bargaining (.64), emotional appeal (.65), and indirect appeal (.53).

The present study conducted a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) with length of relationship held constant to determine whether there was an overall significant difference ($p < .05$) between the three subgroups on the conflict resolution resources. The study then conducted a series of univariate F-tests with length of relationship held constant (ANCOVAs) to determine whether the subgroups differed from one another significantly ($p < .05$) on each of the conflict resolution resources. The univariate F-tests (ANOVA) used membership in female subgroup (i.e., mutually violent victims, unilateral victims, and females in nonviolent relationships) as the independent variable and resource measures (i.e., negotiation styles, coping strategies, self-esteem, and mastery) as dependent variables. Each factor from the principal factoring with iteration analysis served as an independent measure of either coping or negotiation. Thus, the present study conducted independent univariate F-tests (ANOVAs) on each of the coping and negotiation factors.

The study also conducted a series of Scheffe multiple comparison tests to determine more specifically which groups differed significantly ($p < .05$) on each of the resource measures. The Scheffe multiple comparison test is the most robust test for studies with unequal sample sizes.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

There were 298 females in the present study who reported that they were dating one person exclusively. Of these 298 females, 196 (66%) were in nonviolent dating relationships, while 102 (34%) were in violent dating relationships. Of those 102 females in violent dating relationships, 62 (61%) reported that they both received and expressed violence in their relationships (mutually violent victims), 12 (12%) reported that they had only received violence from their partner (unilateral victims) and 28 (28%) reported that they had only used violence towards their partner but had not received violence.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed that subgroups in the present study differed on length of relationship, $F(2,263) = 7.58, p < .001$. As shown in Table 1 (p. 57), the females in nonviolent relationships reported a significantly shorter length of relationship ($M = 15.75$ months) than did the unilateral victims ($M = 20.94$ months) or the mutually violent victims ($M = 19.81$ months). Thus, length of relationship was held constant in further analyses to prevent it from confounding the comparisons between the three subgroups.

Multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVA) with length of relationship as a covariate revealed significant main effects by victim subgroup (Hotellings $F = 2.09$, df=34, $p = .0001$). Post hoc one way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAS) with length of relationship held constant revealed significant differences between the mutually violent
victims and the females in nonviolent relationships on several of the conflict resolution resources (See Table 1).

The mean score for mutually violent victims on negative affect was 2.56, indicating that they rarely used negative affect when negotiating with their dating partner. However, mutually violent victims used negative affect significantly more often ($M = 2.56$) than did females in nonviolent dating relationships ($M = 1.89$), $F(2, 267) = 14.38, p < .0001$. Thus, mutually violent victims more often tried to influence their partner by doing some "fast talking", withdrawing, becoming especially disagreeable, discussing the conflict heatedly, and insulting or swearing at their partner.

The mean score for mutually violent victims on direct appeal was 4.70 which indicated that they often negotiated with direct appeal during conflictual situations. Mutually violent victims used direct appeal significantly more often ($M = 4.70$) than did females in nonviolent relationships ($M = 4.30$), $F(2, 267) = 3.84, p < .05$. Thus, mutually violent victims more often tried to persuade their partner by making their point repeatedly, explaining logically why their way was best, and asking directly for what they wanted and needed.

As shown in Table 1, mutually violent victims often used negotiation styles such as bargaining ($M = 5.24$), indirect appeal ($M = 3.90$) and emotional appeal ($M = 3.13$). Mutually violent victims did not differ significantly from females in nonviolent relationships in their use of these negotiation styles. Females in nonviolent relationships used similar amounts of bargaining ($M = 5.25$), indirect appeal ($M = 3.56$) and
emotional appeal ($M = 2.86$). Both groups of women reported that they sometimes compromised and discussed differences with their partner (bargaining), that they sometimes hinted and became especially affectionate with their partner (indirect appeal), and that they sometimes cried or threatened to break up with their partner (emotional appeal).

The mutually violent victims reported a mean of 3.64 on their use of confrontation, indicating that they often used confrontation when coping with conflict in their relationships. Mutually violent victims used confrontation significantly more often ($M = 3.64$) than did women in nonviolent relationships ($M = 2.97$). Thus mutually violent victims coped more frequently by attempting to change their partner, expressing their anger directly, and blaming their partner for the problem.

Mutually violent victims sometimes used the other coping strategies of denial ($M = 3.40$), accepting responsibility ($M = 3.94$), problem solving ($M = 4.57$), social support ($M = 4.09$), fantasy ($M = 3.55$), self-control ($M = 4.25$), and escape ($M = 3.09$). Mutually violent victims used similar levels of these coping strategies as did women in nonviolent relationships. Women in nonviolent relationships reported similar mean scores on the coping strategies of denial ($M = 3.34$), accepting responsibility ($M = 3.85$), problem solving ($M = 4.53$), social support ($M = 3.95$), fantasy ($M = 3.20$), self-control ($M = 4.57$), and escape ($M = 2.89$). When coping with conflictual situations in their relationships, both mutually violent victims and females in nonviolent relationships sometimes turned to another activity to take their mind off things and went
on as if nothing happened (deny), blamed themselves and apologized (accept responsibility), developed a couple of different solutions to the problem and tried to see things from their partner's point of view (problem solve), asked a relative or friend for advice (social support), daydreamed or imagined a better time in their relationship (fantasize), tried not to do anything they might regret (self-control), and slept more than usual and avoided other people (escape).

The mean scores for mutually violent female victims on self-esteem and mastery were 5.09 and 5.33 respectively, indicating that they had moderate levels of self-esteem and mastery. However, the mutually violent victims reported a significantly lower sense of self-esteem ($M = 5.09$) than did females in nonviolent relationships ($M = 5.60$), $F(2, 265) = 6.57, p < .05$. The mutually violent victims also reported a significantly lower sense of mastery ($M = 5.33$) than did the females in nonviolent relationships ($M = 5.70$), $F(2, 264) = 3.39, p < .05$. Thus, the mutually violent victims were less satisfied with themselves and were less confident about their ability to do things as well as others.

Although the mutually violent victims differed significantly from the females in nonviolent relationships on negative affect, direct appeal, confrontation, self-esteem and mastery, the mutually violent victims did not differ from the unilateral victims on any of the resource measures. Mutually violent victims and unilateral victims used similar coping and negotiation strategies and have similar levels of self-esteem and mastery.

When negotiating with a dating partner, both mutually violent victims and unilateral victims reported that they rarely withdraw or insult their partner (negative
affect), \((M = 2.56, M = 2.31)\). Both mutually violent victims and unilateral victims reported that they sometimes used logic and reasoning to make their point (direct appeal) \((M = 4.70, M = 4.50)\), compromised (bargaining) \((M = 5.24, M = 5.21)\), threatened to break up with their partner (emotional appeal) \((M = 3.13, M = 3.33)\), and hinted or became especially affectionate (indirect appeal), \((M = 3.90, M = 3.04)\).

Mutually violent victims and unilateral victims used similar coping strategies after an argument with their dating partner. Both mutually violent victims and unilateral victims reported that they sometimes denied the problem existed and went on as if nothing happened (denial) \((M = 3.40, M = 3.27)\), apologized to their partner (accept responsibility) \((M = 3.94, M = 3.82)\), developed a couple of solutions to the problem (problem solve) \((M = 4.57, M = 4.07)\), blamed their partner for the problem (confront) \((M = 3.64, M = 3.53)\), asked a friend or relative for advice (social support) \((M = 4.09, M = 3.22)\), hoped for a miracle that would solve everything (fantasize) \((M = 3.55, M = 3.06)\), tried not to act too hastily (self-control) \((M = 4.25, M = 4.38)\), and avoided being around other people (escape) \((M = 3.09, M = 3.19)\).

The two subgroups of victims also reported similar levels of self-esteem and mastery. The mutually violent victims reported that they "somewhat agreed" \((M = 5.08)\) with self-esteem statements such as, "I am able to do things as well as most other people" and "I feel I have a number of good qualities". The unilateral victims reported that they agreed more strongly with such self-esteem statements \((M = 5.34)\), indicating that they may have a higher level of self-esteem than the mutually violent victims.
However, there was not enough difference between the subgroups on self-esteem to reach significance.

The mutually violent subgroup also reported that they "somewhat agreed" ($M = 5.33$) with mastery statements such as, " Sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life," and "I have little control over things that happen to me." The unilateral victims reported that they agreed more strongly with the above mastery statements ($M = 5.84$), indicating that they may have a higher sense of mastery than the mutually violent victims. Again, there was not enough difference between the subgroups on mastery to reach significance.

Thus, the resource measures of negotiation styles, coping strategies, self-esteem and mastery failed to discriminate between the mutually violent victims and the unilateral victims in the present study. The resource measures also failed to discriminate between the unilateral victims and the females in nonviolent relationships.

The unilateral victims and the females in nonviolent relationships reported that they used similar levels of all the negotiation styles. Both unilateral victims and females in nonviolent relationships reported that they rarely withdrew or insulted their partner (negative affect) ($M = 2.31$, $M = 1.89$), and that they sometimes used logic and reason to persuade their partner (direct appeal) ($M = 4.50$, $M = 4.30$), compromised (bargaining) ($M = 5.21$, $M = 5.25$), threatened to break up with their partner (emotional appeal) ($M = 3.33$, $M = 2.86$), and hinted or became especially affectionate (indirect appeal) ($M = 3.04$, $M = 3.55$).
The unilateral victims and females in nonviolent relationships also used similar coping strategies when faced with conflictual situations in their relationships. Both unilateral victims and females in nonviolent relationships reported that they sometimes denied the problem existed and went on as if nothing happened (denial) \( \bar{M} = 3.27, \Sigma = 3.34 \), apologized to their partner (accept responsibility) \( \bar{M} = 3.83, \Sigma = 3.85 \), developed a couple of solutions to the problem (problem solve) \( \bar{M} = 4.07, \Sigma = 4.53 \), blamed their partner for the problem (confront) \( \bar{M} = 3.53, \Sigma = 2.97 \), asked a friend or relative for advice (social support) \( \bar{M} = 3.22, \Sigma = 3.95 \), hoped for a miracle that would solve everything (fantasize) \( \bar{M} = 3.06, \Sigma = 3.20 \), tried not to act too hastily (self-control) \( \bar{M} = 4.38, \Sigma = 4.57 \), and avoided being around other people (escape) \( \bar{M} = 3.19, \Sigma = 2.89 \).

The unilateral victims reported that they "somewhat agreed" \( \bar{M} = 5.34 \) with self-esteem statements such as, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" and "I feel that I have a number of good qualities". The females in nonviolent relationships agreed more strongly with the above statements \( \bar{M} = 5.60 \), but there was not enough difference between the two subgroups on self-esteem to reach significance.

The unilateral victims and females in nonviolent relationships also reported similar levels of mastery. Both unilateral victims \( \bar{M} = 5.84 \) and females in nonviolent relationships \( \bar{M} = 5.70 \) reported that they agreed with mastery statements such as, "I have control over things that happen to me", thus indicating that both subgroups had a high sense of mastery over events in their lives.
In summary, significant differences existed between the mutually violent victims and females in nonviolent relationships on the conflict resolution resources of direct appeal, negative affect, confrontation, self-esteem and mastery. However, the unilateral victims did not differ significantly from either the mutually violent victims or the females in nonviolent relationships on any of the resource measures.

It appears that the unilateral victims were more similar to women in nonviolent dating relationships than were the mutually violent victims. Most of the mean scores of the unilateral victims fell in between the scores of the mutually violent victims and the females in nonviolent relationships. The only exception to this was on the measure of mastery. Although the difference was not significant, the unilateral victims scored higher on mastery ($M = 5.84$) than did the mutually violent victims ($M = 5.33$) or the females in nonviolent relationships ($M = 5.70$).
Table 1: MANCOVA on female subgroup membership with length of relationship held constant (N = 298)

Multivariate $F (34,476) = 2.09^{***}$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unilateral Victims</th>
<th>Mutually Violent Victims</th>
<th>Females in non-violent</th>
<th>$F$-test</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Negotiation Styles</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td>4.702</td>
<td>4.300</td>
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<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Bargaining</td>
<td>5.208</td>
<td>5.242</td>
<td>5.245</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Appeal</td>
<td>3.333</td>
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<td>2.856</td>
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<td>Indirect Appeal</td>
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<td><strong>Coping Strategies</strong></td>
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<td>Denial</td>
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<td>Accept Responsibility</td>
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<td>Problem Solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confrontation</td>
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<td>Social Support</td>
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<td>Fantasy</td>
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*Multiple range test results: Subgroups with different letters differ significantly ($p < .05$).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Table 1: MANCOVA on Female Subgroup Membership, continued (N=298)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unilateral Victims</th>
<th>Mutually Violent Victims</th>
<th>Females in non-violent</th>
<th>E-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>Coping Strategies, Continued</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Control</td>
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<td>4.250</td>
<td>4.573</td>
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<td>Escape</td>
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<td>2.893</td>
<td>1.09</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>5.342</td>
<td>5.088</td>
<td>5.602</td>
<td>6.57**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a,b</td>
<td>b</td>
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<td>Mastery</td>
<td>5.838</td>
<td>5.330</td>
<td>5.695</td>
<td>3.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Factors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Length</td>
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<td>19.81</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>7.58***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner Minor Violence</td>
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<td>2.499</td>
<td>1.987</td>
<td>48.69***</td>
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<td>Partner Severe Violence</td>
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<td>1.990</td>
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* Multiple range test results: Subgroups with different letters differ significantly (p < .05).
* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

A majority of the women in the present study (61%) reported that they had been mutually violent. This finding is consistent with previous research. Cate et al. (1982) and Deal and Wampler (1986) also reported that a majority of the victims in their studies (60-68%) were mutually violent.

The high prevalence of mutually violent female victims contradicts the unilateral assault model presented in much of the violence literature. Dating violence is not always unilaterally perpetrated by the male. Very often, the female victim uses violence as well. Thus, researchers must increase their efforts to understand why some victims use mutual violence against their dating partners while others do not. The present study provided a preliminary understanding of how resources may be related to the use of mutual violence by victims.

In the present study, mutually violent victims differed from females in nonviolent relationships in the resources they used to resolve conflict with their dating partners. Mutually violent victims used more negative affect, direct appeal and confrontation than females in nonviolent relationships. They also had a lower sense of self-esteem and mastery to bring with them to conflict negotiation efforts. These differences suggest that resources may be related to the use of violence by victims.

In the present study, mutually violent victims scored significantly lower on self-esteem than did the females in nonviolent relationships. This finding is consistent with previous research reports that individuals in violent relationships had lower self-esteem
than did individuals in nonviolent relationships (Burke et al., 1989; Comins, 1984; Deal & Wampler, 1986; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989; Walker, 1979).

This finding contradicts other research on the relationship between self-esteem and dating violence. Bird et al. (1991) and Walker (1984) both reported that individuals in violent and nonviolent relationships had similar levels of self-esteem. These contradictory findings may be due to differences among subgroups of the violent population. The self-esteem scores of mutually violent victims in the present study suggest that at least one subgroup of victims may score lower on self-esteem than do females in nonviolent relationships. However, the present study also shows that all victims may not have a lower sense of self-esteem than females in nonviolent relationships. There was a trend toward the unilateral victims having similar levels of self-esteem to those of females in nonviolent relationships. Confirmation of such findings may indicate that differences among victim subgroups contribute to the contradictory research findings about self-esteem.

The finding that mutually violent victims have lower self-esteem than females in nonviolent relationships suggests that low self-esteem may contribute to or be a result of a victim’s use of violence. Feelings of being no good, incapable and unworthy may prevent victims from feeling competent to handle the conflict in their relationships. They may feel that they don’t have the right to persuade their partner or that they won’t succeed in conflict negotiations. Such feelings may be self-fulfilling. The victim may
fail to resolve the conflict using nonviolent conflict resources and may resort to violence to restore order in the relationship. Using mutual violence may then contribute to the victim feeling worse about herself and lead to future feelings that she is incompetent in handling conflict. Then, the cycle may start again.

Mutually violent victims also scored significantly lower on mastery than did females in nonviolent relationships in the present study. This finding is consistent with the Aizenman and Kelly (1988) findings that victims have a lower sense of mastery than do individuals in nonviolent dating relationships. However, the present findings are inconsistent with the Bird et al. (1991) findings that individuals in violent and nonviolent relationships do not differ on mastery.

The inconsistency with the Bird et al. (1991) findings may again be due to the differences among victim subgroups. The finding that mutually violent victims have lower mastery scores suggests that at least one victim subgroup has a lower sense of mastery than do females in nonviolent relationships. However, the present study also shows that different subgroups of victims may have different levels of mastery. There was a trend toward the unilateral victims having a higher sense of mastery than both the mutually violent victims and the females in nonviolent relationships. Such a trend suggests that differences among victim subgroups may have contributed to the contradictory findings about the relationship between mastery and dating violence.

The trend towards unilateral victims and mutually violent victims having different levels of self-esteem also suggests that both theories about the relationship between
mastery and violence may be correct. Victims who have a low sense of mastery may feel as if they have little control over things that happen to them. Such feelings may damage their expectation that they can control a conflictual situation with their dating partner and may prevent them from using conflict resources that would resolve the conflict. Thus, they may feel frustrated and turn to mutual violence as a final effort to resolve the conflictual situation in their relationship. However, victims who have a higher sense of mastery may persist in their nonviolent efforts to resolve violent conflict in their relationships. Although a high sense of mastery may prevent these victims from using violence themselves, their persistence may place them at risk for violence from their partner. Thus, the difference among victim subgroups may explain how mastery can both guard against and promote use of mutual violence by a victims.

The finding that mutually violent victims have a lower sense of self esteem suggests that mastery may help a victim avoid using mutual violence. Victims with a strong sense that they can control outcomes of importance will feel competent in their use of nonviolent conflict negotiation strategies, and may often avoid using mutual violence in their dating relationships. However, victims that do not have a strong sense of mastery may not feel competent in their use of nonviolent conflict resolution strategies, and may resort to mutual violence to resolve the conflict in their relationships.

In the present study, mutually violent victims also differed from females in nonviolent relationships in their style of negotiation. Mutually violent victims more often used the indirect negotiation style of negative affect than did females in nonviolent
relationships. Thus, mutually violent victims more often attempted to influence their partner by withdrawing, becoming especially disagreeable, discussing the conflict heatedly, and insulting or swearing at their partner. This finding is consistent with previous findings that individuals in violent dating relationships use indirect negotiation styles more often than do individuals in nonviolent dating relationships (Bird et al., 1991; Gryll et al., 1991).

The finding that mutually violent victims more often negotiate with negative affect suggests that negative affect may contribute to a victims' use of violence. Because negative affect is an indirect style of negotiation, it may hinder the resolution of conflict in the relationship, leaving the victim to resort to violence to resolve the conflict.

Negative affect may also hinder the resolution of conflict and increase the likelihood that the victim will use violence because it is a confrontational and aggressive form of negotiation. Research conducted by Straus (1974) revealed that the more individuals use verbal aggression, the more they use physical aggression as well. This finding goes contrary to the "catharsis" theory that expressing ones feelings with verbal aggression, (i.e., "letting it all hang out") will allow individuals to vent their frustration and avoid using violence (Straus, 1974). On the contrary, it appears that using verbal aggression may lead to an escalation of conflict and the use of violence.

Mutually violent victims in the present study also negotiated with more direct appeal than did females in nonviolent relationships. Thus, mutually violent victims more often mad their point repeatedly, explained logically why their way is best, and asked
directly for what they want and need. This finding contradicts previous research findings that individuals in nonviolent relationships use more direct negotiation than individuals in violent relationships (Bird et al., 1991; Gryl et al., 1991). These researchers conclude that direct appeal helps individuals successfully resolve conflict without the use of violence.

However, findings from this study indicate that direct appeal may not always help victims resolve conflict without the use of violence. The association of direct appeal with mutually violent victims suggests that direct appeal may lead to the use of violence for some victims. Direct appeal may have similar effects as persistence and confrontation in a violent relationship. Several researchers suggest that persistence and confrontation may lead to a victim's use of mutual violence because they increase frustration and tension in a relationship. Such frustration and tension may hinder conflict resolution and make the victim more likely to use mutual violence to restore order (Bird et al., 1991; Lloyd et al., 1989). Perhaps when victims use direct appeal in an already volatile relationship, the direct appeal increases frustration and tension and leads to the victim's use of mutual violence.

Interestingly, the mutually violent victims and females in nonviolent relationships in the present study did differ in their use of confrontation. The mutually violent victims used significantly more confrontation when coping with conflict than do the females in nonviolent relationships. Thus, mutually violent victims more often coped with conflict by attempting to change their partner, expressing anger directly at their partner, and blaming their partner for the problem.
This finding is consistent with previous research reports that individuals in violent
dating relationships use more emotion-focused strategies, such as confrontation, than do
individuals in nonviolent dating relationships (Bird et al., 1991; Gryl et al., 1991). This
finding is also consistent with the Straus (1974) finding that verbal aggression is
associated with the use of physical aggression. Confrontation may lead to the victim’s
use of mutual violence because it is a direct action based on blaming which is not
conducive to successful problem-solving efforts (Bird et al., 1991). Frustrated by their
failed attempts to resolve conflict through confrontation, some victims may resort to
mutual violence.

Thus, the above findings support the conflict theory hypothesis that mutually
violent victims use different resources to resolve conflict than do females in nonviolent
relationships. Mutually violent victims may often enter conflictual situations with a
lower sense of mastery and self-esteem and use a style of conflict resolution that is direct
and confrontational. Such conflict resolution resources may make the victims more likely
to use mutual violence as an additional resource in their dating relationships.

There are no significant differences between the unilateral victims and the females
in nonviolent relationships in the present study. This finding contradicts research that
consistently reveals significant differences between individuals in violent and nonviolent
relationships on coping strategies and negotiation styles (Bird et al., 1991; Gryl et al.,
These findings confirm and contradict research studies on self-esteem and mastery. The findings are consistent with some research reports that individuals in violent dating relationships have lower self-esteem and mastery than individuals in nonviolent dating relationships (Lloyd et al., 1989; Walker, 1979). However, these findings contradict other research reports that individuals in violent relationships do not differ from individuals in nonviolent relationships on mastery (Bird et al., 1991) and self-esteem (Bird et al., 1991; Walker, 1984). As discussed in the previous section, inconsistent findings with regard to self-esteem and mastery may be due to the differences among victim subgroups within the violent dating population.

Unilateral victims also did not differ significantly from mutually violent victims in the present study. These findings are consistent with the Deal and Wampler (1986) findings that there are no significant differences between mutually violent victims and the unilateral victims.

However, these results contradict the Billingham (1987) findings that mutually violent victims differed from unilateral victims in their use of verbal aggression and reasoning. The two subgroups of victims in the present study did not differ significantly in their use of negative affect, confrontation, or direct appeal, variables that all measure verbal aggression. In addition, the two subgroups of victims did not differ in their use of any of the variables that measure reasoning during conflict (i.e., negotiation styles).

The present findings also contradicted the Gondolf (1988) and Snyder and Fruchtman (1981) findings that subgroups of victims differed in their use of social
support. The two victim subgroups in the present study did not differ in their use of social support as a coping strategy.

Thus, the present study only partially upholds the conflict theory hypothesis that resource dimensions would discriminate between unilateral victims, mutually violent victims and females in nonviolent relationships. Conflict resolution resources did appear to discriminate between mutually violent victims and females in nonviolent relationships. However, the conflict resolution resources measured in the present study did not discriminate between mutually violent victims and unilateral victims, nor between unilateral victims and females in nonviolent relationships.

It is likely that the present study did not find significant differences between the unilateral victims and the other two subgroups due to the small sample size of unilateral victims. The sample of 12 unilateral victims may not have been large enough to reach statistical significance in the ANCOVA comparisons. Thus, the nonsignificant findings from the present study are tentative and should be tested further by studies that have larger samples of unilateral victims.

It is also possible that this study does not reveal significant differences between the unilateral victims and the other two subgroups of victims because conflict resources do not discriminate between these subgroups. Other factors may discriminate between unilateral victims and the other two subgroups.

Results from the present study provide preliminary support for the notion that contextual factors may discriminate between unilateral victims and mutually violent
victims. The severity of the violence inflicted by the victim's partner is one contextual factor that discriminates among victims in previous research. In Billingham's (1987) study, mutually violent victims experienced more severe levels of violence than did other subgroups of individuals in violent dating relationships. Results from the present study suggested that the severity and frequency of the violence inflicted by victims' dating partners may discriminate between mutually violent victims and unilateral victims. Although the difference was not significant, the mutually violent victims tended to receive more severe violence ($M = 2.08$) from their partner than did the unilateral victims ($M = 2.00$). The mutually violent victims also tended to receive more minor violence ($M = 2.50$) than did the unilateral victims ($M = 2.28$). Thus, victims may use mutual violence when they are threatened by more severe and frequent levels of violence from their partner.

The severity of the violence is not the only contextual factor that may discriminate between mutually violent victims and unilateral victims. The type of violence a victim receives may also contribute to the likelihood that she will use mutual violence. In a study of battered wives, Shields & Hanneke (1983) examined the responses of battered wives to physical and sexual abuse from their husbands. One of the responses that these researchers examined was the victim's use of mutual violence against her husband. Shields and Hanneke (1983) reported that wives who received both physical and sexual abuse had more severe responses to their husbands' violence than did wives who received only physical abuse. Thus, the wives who received both physical and sexual abuse may
have been more likely to use mutual violence against their partner. The present study
did not include measures of sexual violence and thus could not examine whether mutually
violent victims experienced more varied types of abuse than unilateral victims.

There is also evidence from previous research that relationship commitment is
another contextual factor that may discriminate between mutually violent victims and
unilateral victims. As mentioned in the literature review, Billingham (1987) reported that
mutually violent victims differed from unilateral victims according to the level of
commitment in their relationships. The present study only examined victims at serious
levels of commitment, and thus could not determine whether mutually violent victims
differed from unilateral victims in their level of relationship commitment.

In addition to contextual factors such as the type and severity of violence
experienced, it is possible that systemic processes may contribute to the differences
among mutually violent victims and unilateral victims. Walker (1979) advanced the cycle
of violence, a systemic theory that explains how violence develops and is maintained in
relationships. According to Walker (1979), the process of violence in a relationship
flows from a tension building stage to the eruption of violence to a honeymoon stage
where the abuser promises to change and then into a tension building stage where the
process begins again. Given the findings that a substantial number of violent dating
relationships contain mutual violence, it may be necessary for researchers to develop a
new cycle of violence that explains how mutually violent interaction develops and is
maintained. A victim’s decision to use mutual violence may be related to interaction processes in her relationship.

Systemic processes may also contribute to the differences between victims and females in nonviolent dating relationships. Early on in relationships, these subgroups may form very different patterns of interaction around conflict, intimacy, and play. The females in nonviolent dating relationships may form interaction patterns that allow them to resolve conflict, form appropriate intimacy and play without using violence against their dating partner. However, victims may become locked into different interaction processes that lead to the escalation of conflict and their use of mutual violence.

The values and beliefs advanced by our society should also be included in a systemic study of the differences among the mutually violent victims, unilateral victims and females in nonviolent relationships. It is possible that mutual violence is common in dating relationships because it is socially acceptable for female victims to retaliate against their partner with mutual violence. It is possible that patriarchal values contribute to the victimization of females in our society. Such societal values should be factored into any systemic theory about how individuals come to accept or reject the process of violence in their relationships.

Thus, the differences among victim subgroups and females in nonviolent relationships may be related to more than just the resources they use to resolve conflict in their relationships. Contextual factors and systemic interaction processes may
contribute to whether or not violence will occur in a dating relationship, and whether or not a victim will use mutual violence against her dating partner.

Limitations

The small number of unilateral victims presents major limitations for the present study. The sample of 12 unilateral victims may not have been large enough to find statistical significance in the ANCOVA analyses. Thus, the nonsignificant findings reported in this study are tentative and should be tested further by studies that have larger samples of unilateral victims.

The discussion in present study assumed that the mutually violent victims used violence in self-defense and that none of the victims initiated violence in their relationships. This assumption was made due to previous research findings that women typically used violence in self-defense (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Dea & Wampler, 1986; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). However, because the present study did not ask respondents to report precursors to the violence, it could not be determined whether all mutually violent victims used violence only in retaliation to their partners’ violence. Some of the mutual victims in our study may initiate the violence in their relationships. Thus, the findings in this study may be further developed by future studies that divide the mutually violent victim subgroup into those that initiate violence and those who only use violence in self-defense.

The present study did not control for the number of times the victims experienced violence in their relationships. Previous research by Follingstad et al. (1988) indicated
that victims who experienced ongoing violence differed significantly from victims who experienced one-time violence. Thus, it is unknown whether the failure to control for frequency of violence confounded the comparison of victims in the present study. Future research on the differences among victims of dating violence should control for the number of times victims experience violence in their relationships.

The present study examined a predominantly white, college-aged sample, and thus could not determine whether cultural differences contributed to the experience of mutual violence. It is likely that different cultural values, such as Hispanic or African American values may contribute to differences in the experience of dating violence. Some cultures may have values that make mutual violence by women more or less acceptable than others. Future research should examine how cultural differences impact mutual violence in dating relationships.

This study used the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) to measure the incidence and frequency of violence within participants' dating relationships. Scores on the CTS were used to determine membership in the two victims subgroups and the subgroup of women in nonviolent relationships. However, due to limitations of the CTS discussed below, the incidence of violence and subgroup membership may not accurately reflect the reality of experience for women in the present sample.

One flaw in the way the present study used the CTS is that it only measured participants' perception of violence in their relationship at one point in time, when the survey was taken. However, due to the impact of violence on the individual and the way
in which society defines violence, a one-time measurement of participants' perception of violence may have failed to accurately reflect the violence that has actually occurred in their relationships.

In a study of women's perceptions of their violent experiences, Kelly (1988) revealed that women's definitions of what acts constitute abuse from their partners change over time. Sixty percent of the women in her study reported that they did not initially define their experience as violent. Kelly (1988) reported that 70% of women relabeled the incident as violent after a period of time.

Kelly (1988) argues that women's definitions of violence change over time due to their coping responses. Women often cope with violence by minimizing its seriousness and/or forgetting that the incident occurred. In Kelly's (1988) study, 60% of the women reported experiences with rape and 62% of the women who reported experiences with incest forgot their experiences for a period of time. Kelly concluded that it is impossible to accurately assess the incidence of violence with survey questionnaires that are distributed at a single point in time. Research designs that allow for repeated contact with questions about violence may trigger information for participants that would have been forgotten or minimized with only one contact with an investigator. For instance, a woman who is slapped by her dating partner might initially minimize the incident in her own mind, feeling perhaps that a slap is nothing compared to the battering that happens in marital relationships. Such minimization may even help the woman forget that the violence occurred. Upon initial contact with a researcher, the
woman's minimization and/or memory lapse about the event may result in her failing to identify an incident for the researcher that was indeed abusive. However, repeated contact with a researcher who asks different questions may trigger the woman to remember the slapping incident.

Single item survey questions asked at a specific point in time may also serve to perpetuate stereotypical definitions of violence. Such survey questions may limit a woman to reporting only those experiences that are listed in the paper and pencil survey. A woman may experience a violent incident with her dating partner, such as forced intercourse, but the survey she receives may not list forced intercourse as a type of violence. Thus, the survey’s failure to measure this woman’s experience with forced intercourse, a very violent incident may perpetuate her belief in the societal stereotype that forced sex does not constitute a violent experience in an established dating relationship. Thus, the study will have overlooked a woman who experienced violence because her experience did not fit the predetermined types of violence represented on the survey. Worse, this woman may reinterpret her experience with forced intercourse as nonviolent because it is not listed by the researcher as a type of violent experience. Contact with a researcher or less restrictive survey might allow this woman to redefine her experience as date rape and to seek the support she needs to deal with the violent incident.

In summary, the CTS is limited because it surveys participants about a limited number of specific events at a single time in their lives. The CTS fails to measure
changes in the definition and perception of violence over time, and it fails to measure the experiences women may have that feel abusive to them but are not listed as violent experiences on the survey. The present study may have suffered from these limitations of the CTS and thus may have failed to identify some women who experienced abusive acts in their dating relationships that were not included in the CTS. In addition, the study may have failed to identify women who minimized or forgot abusive dating experiences because the CTS was administered at only one point in time.

Future Research

Given the prevalence of mutual violence in dating relationships, future researchers should continue to study mutually violent victims and how they differ from unilateral victims and women in nonviolent relationships. A replication of the present study using adequate numbers of unilateral victims may reveal more clearly whether unilateral victims and mutually violent victims differ in their use of conflict resolution resources. Findings from such a study might further clarify whether differences among victim subgroups have contributed to previous contradictory findings about the relationship between self-esteem, mastery and violence. Findings from such a study would also be an important building block in the development of a larger systemic theory about mutual violence.

Most of the research comparing mutually violent victims to unilateral victims has examined the resources of the two subgroups and how these resources might contribute to their use or nonuse of violence. However, little is known about the effects of victims
mutual violence. Does the use of mutual violence place a victim at risk of further and more serious abuse by her partner, or does a victim's use of mutual violence discourage her partner from using further violence? The present study suggests that mutually violent victims may receive more severe and frequent violence from their partners, but it is unknown whether this severe violence is an effect or a cause of their mutual violence. Thus, research into the differences between mutually violent victims and unilateral victims should also include questions about the effects of victims' violent and nonviolent responses to their partners' violence, and how those responses contribute to the maintenance and/or escalation of violence in their relationships.

In addition to examining whether mutual violence is a protective or harmful resource for victims to use during conflict, researchers should also examine whether direct and confrontational nonviolent resources (i.e., direct appeal, negative affect, verbal aggression) are protective or harmful. Findings from the present study suggested that direct and confrontational resources may be associated with the use of violence by mutually violent victims. However, it is unknown whether the use of these resources places the victim at further risk of abuse.

Longitudinal studies would also be helpful in understanding the development of mutual violence over the course of a dating relationship. Billingham (1987) revealed that mutually violent victims and unilateral victims differed according to their levels of relationship commitment, thus suggesting that mutual violence may change over the course of a relationship. It is unknown whether unilateral victims eventually hit back as
the relationship progresses and the violence becomes more severe, or whether mutually violent victims stop hitting when the relationship becomes more serious.

Future studies should also look at the differences between men and women with regard to mutual violence. Given the substantial number of victims who use mutual violence, it would be interesting to learn how male batterers who receive mutual violence differ from male batterers who are not hit by their partners. Clearly, male batterers who receive mutual violence are also at risk of injury, and it would be important to understand their experience so that violence can be eliminated from their lives as well.

Future research that compares unilateral victims and mutually violent victims on conflict resolution resources, the effects of their responses, their gender and their relationship commitment could be the first building blocks in the development of a systemic theory of violence in dating relationships. Future researchers should also examine other contextual factors such as societal values and social support networks to understand how they may contribute to a victim’s use or nonuse of mutual violence. An understanding of the individual and contextual factors associated with mutual violence in dating relationships will aid researchers in the development of a systemic theory that explains the process of mutual violence and how it differs from the process of unilateral violence in dating relationships.

The development of a theory that takes systemic interaction into consideration moves away from labeling victims as responsible for the violence they receive, and towards an understanding of the interaction processes in relationships that maintain
violence. Understanding that contextual factors contribute to a victim’s use of retaliatory violence, moves away from blaming the victim for her own continued abuse and towards an understanding that she is involved in a powerful interaction process that maintains violence in her relationship.

Future research that seeks to examine the violent experiences of women in dating relationships should use violence measures that include broad definitions of violence. Such broad definitions will allow women to explore events in their lives and report events that they experienced as abusive (Kelly, 1988). Such measurement of violence may narrow the gap that exists between our stereotypical definitions of what constitutes abuse and what women are actually experiencing in their relationships.

An excellent example of such research is the study conducted by Kelly (1988). Using open-ended, qualitative interviews, Kelly allowed women to report events they perceived as abusive but had not labeled as a particular form of violence. Kelly’s definition of abuse was broad, and included a continuum of abuse from physical to verbal to sexual. She allowed women to define any assault they received from a man as a form of violence. In addition, she met with women on several different occasions to allow them to remember, process, and redefine abusive incidents in ways that are meaningful to them.

Kelly believed that definitions prevent women from sharing their specific experiences. By allowing women freedom from predetermined, stereotypical definitions of violence, Kelly allowed women to report their unique experiences and gained a greater
understanding of the unique and varied experiences that victims have. Future studies of the heterogeneity of the violent dating population should include broader definitions that allow individuals to report specifics and nuances particular to their violent experience.

**Clinical Implications**

The present study adds to previous research on the heterogeneity of the violent population, revealing that victims use different resources when resolving conflict and violence in their relationships. Contrary to the stereotype of the victim as passive and helpless, the present study revealed that there were a substantial number of victims that confronted and directly addressed the conflict and violence in their dating relationships. Research findings also suggested that some victims may have similar resources to women who have not experienced violence in their dating relationships.

Thus, clinicians should strive to leave their stereotypical impressions of victims behind and focus instead on allowing victims to share their unique experiences with violence in their dating relationships. Clinicians should not assume that victims don’t have resources, but instead should ask what types of resources they do have. Such a question will be an important reframe for the victim who may have bought into the stereotype that she is helpless to change her situation. Such a question can move the clinician and victim together towards strengthening the resources the victim does have to end the violence in her relationship and removing the barriers that prevent the victim from using these resources successfully.
It has long been taught that clinicians should work with victims to set a bottom line and stop the abuse in their dating relationships. However, findings from the present study indicate that some victims may stand up to their partner by using direct and confrontational strategies such as negative affect, verbal aggression and mutual violence. It is unknown whether these confrontational strategies actually allow victims to set a bottom line and stop the abuse in their relationships, or whether these strategies place the victims at risk for further abuse.

Until researchers examine the effects of confrontational strategies on victims' safety, clinicians should work with victims to find safer, less aggressive ways to interact with their abusive dating partner. When encountering a victim who uses direct and confrontational conflict resolution resources with her partner, a clinician could help this victim channel her energy and will into productive conflict resolution resources such as seeking social support and enhancing her self-esteem. The clinician could work to help the victim focus on improving her own strength, rather than focusing on blaming or changing her partner.

Knowing that the use of mutual violence by victim is powerful, clinicians should also recognize that the male batterers they treat may also be victims of violence. These male batterers may need help in learning how to respond nonviolently to the mutual violence they receive from their dating partner, so that they can stop the cycle of mutual violence in their relationships.
Summary

The present study has shown that examining subgroups of victims within the violent dating population is valuable. The present study clearly revealed that there are a substantial number of dating violence victims that confront and directly negotiate with their partners despite their feelings of low self-esteem and mastery. This finding contradicts the stereotype of the victim as passive and defenseless. Thus, researchers, clinicians, school personnel and other individuals that come into contact with young adults who have experienced dating violence must carry the message that experiences with dating violence differ substantially. Victims who respond with retaliatory violence must understand that even though their experience doesn’t fit the traditional stereotype of the victim, they are still victims of dating violence and deserve to receive help.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

DATING RELATIONSHIPS RESEARCH PROJECT

College students today, unlike their parent's generation, are dating for longer periods of time before considering marriage. This study is designed to find out more about student attitudes and behaviors in regard to dating relationships in 1990.

Please accept our sincere appreciation for taking the time to complete this survey. Thank you.
PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY. THE RESEARCH FINDINGS WILL REPORT GROUP TRENDS AND NOT INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES. WE WANT YOUR RESPONSE TO BE COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS.

PART A

First, we would like to request some general information needed to help interpret the results of the study.

1. How old are you? (years) ____________

2. Which one of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identification? (circle number)
   1 Black
   2 White (Caucasian)
   3 Other (specify) ________________________

3. What is your sex? (circle number)
   1 Female
   2 Male

4. To what extent do your parents support you financially? (circle number)
   1 100% Supported By My Parents
   2 They Mostly Support Me, But I Have Some Income Of My Own
   3 About 50% Supported By My Parents
   4 I Am Mostly Independent, But I Receive Some Support
   5 100% Financially Independent

5. What is the employment status of your parents? (circle number)

   **Mother**
   1 Employed Full-Time (more than 35 hrs/wk)
   2 Employed Part-Time (less than 35 hrs/wk)
   3 Not Employed Outside The Home
   4 Retired
   5 Other ______________

   **Father**
   1 Employed Full-Time (more than 35 hrs/wk)
   2 Employed Part-Time (less than 35 hrs/wk)
   3 Not Employed Outside The Home
   4 Retired
   5 Other ______________

6. Where are your parents employed? (Leave blank if not employed)

   **Mother** ______________________________

   **Father** ______________________________

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7. What are your parents' occupations? (Leave blank if not employed)
   Mother
   ________________________________________________
   Father
   ________________________________________________

8. What is the marital status of your parents? (Circle number for each parent)
   
   Mother
   1 Married (first marriage)
   2 Remarried
   3 Separated
   4 Divorced
   5 Widowed
   6 Other (please specify) ___________________________
   
   Father
   1 Married (first marriage)
   2 Remarried
   3 Separated
   4 Divorced
   5 Widowed
   6 Other (please specify) ___________________________

9. What are the education levels of your parents? (Circle number for each parent)
   
   Mother
   1 Some high school
   2 High school degree
   3 Vocational/technical school
   4 Some college
   5 Bachelor's degree
   6 Some graduate credits
   7 Master's degree
   8 Doctoral degree
   
   Father
   1 Some high school
   2 High school degree
   3 Vocational/technical school
   4 Some college
   5 Bachelor's degree
   6 Some graduate credits
   7 Master's degree
   8 Doctoral degree

10. What was the approximate income of your family last year? (Circle number)
   1 Less than $20,000
   2 $20,000 - $29,999
   3 $30,000 - $39,999
   4 $40,000 - $49,999
   5 $50,000 - $59,999
   6 $60,000 - $69,999
   7 $70,000 - $79,999
   8 $80,000 - $89,999
   9 $90,000 - $99,999
   10 $100,000 or More

11. What is your academic major? (Circle number)
   1 Business
   2 Physical or Biological Sciences
   3 Social Sciences
   4 Math or Engineering
   5 Human Resources
   6 The Arts or Humanities
   7 Other (Please specify) __________________________

12. What is your academic classification? (Circle number)
   1 Freshman
   2 Sophomore
   3 Junior
   4 Senior
   5 Other (please specify) ____________________________
13. What is your current grade point average? [GPA]

14. What is your current marital status? (circle number)

1 Single; Have never been married
2 Single; Divorced or separated
3 Widowed
4 Married -- If you are married, thank you very much for responding to the previous questions. Because our primary interest is in current dating relationships among single college students, we do not need your responses to the remainder of the survey. Please give your questionnaire to the project coordinator. Thank you for participating.

15. Which of the following statements best describes your current relationship status? (circle one number)

1 ENGAGED

2 SERIOUS DATING. I am currently dating someone I am serious about. I am not seeing anyone else.

3 CASUAL DATING. I am dating one or more people right now, but we are not serious. HOWEVER, I have dated someone seriously (exclusively) within the past year and I will respond to the survey based on my experiences in that relationship.

4 CASUAL DATING. I am dating one or more people right now, but we are not serious. AND, I have not dated anyone seriously (exclusively) within the past year.

5 NOT DATING. I am not dating anyone at this time and have not dated anyone seriously (exclusively) during the past year.

If you answered 4 or 5, thank you very much for responding to the previous questions. Because our primary interest is in serious dating relationships, we do not need your responses to the remainder of the survey. Please give your questionnaire to the project coordinator. Thank you for participating.

16. What is your current living arrangement? (circle number)

1 Fraternity or sorority
2 Dormitory
3 At home with parents
4 Off-campus with dating partner
5 Off-campus with roommate(s)
6 Off-campus, alone
7 Other (please specify) ______________________
17. How long have you been in (or were you in) the relationship you are going to be responding about in the remainder of the survey? (months/years)

**PART B**

Next, it is important that we gain a greater understanding of the nature of your dating relationship, (i.e., how you feel about the relationship, what you discuss with each other). Circle numbers to the right and left of each of the items to indicate how often both you and your dating partner do the following things.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How Often Do You**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
<th>How Often Does Your Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk about the quality of the relationship (how good it is, how satisfying, how to improve it)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss how much each person gives to the relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell the other what is wanted, or needed from the relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about how close you feel to the other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell the other how special this relationship is, compared with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about feeling that what happens to one also affects the other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say that there is a sense of &quot;belonging&quot; with each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express feelings of commitment to the relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time discussing and trying to work out problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say how much the other is needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclose very intimate things to the other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell the other how much in love you are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to change behavior to help solve problems between you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In your relationship with your dating partner, (circle number)
How often do you:

Never Often Very

1. Get confused about how you feel ..... 1 2 3 4 5

2. Think or worry about losing some of your independence ..... 1 2 3 4 5

3. Feel unsure about continuing the relationship ..... 1 2 3 4 5

4. Feel that your dating partner demands or requires too much time and attention . 1 2 3 4 5

5. Argue with each other ............... 1 2 3 4 5

6. Try to change things about your partner that bother you ............... 1 2 3 4 5

7. Feel "trapped" or pressured to continue the relationship ............... 1 2 3 4 5

8. Feel angry or resentful toward your dating partner ............... 1 2 3 4 5

9. Communicate negative feelings (anger, dissatisfaction, frustration) toward your partner ............... 1 2 3 4 5

10. Have serious disagreements about problems that threaten to lead to a breakup .. 1 2 3 4 5

PART C

In close relationships most people experience instances where both partners feel very strongly about a situation. Each feels compelled to influence the other to do what he/she wants. When you want to influence your partner to do things your way, to what extent do you use the following strategies? (Circle number)

Never Sometimes Always

1. Simply ask for what I want or need .. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Try to persuade ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Repeatedly make my point until he/she gives in ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Use logic and reason; give all the reasons my way is best ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Bring it up in an indirect way; hint or make suggestions ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. Say how very important my request is; how much it means to me ........ ..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. Say it is in her/his best interest .. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. Talk about it; discuss our differences and needs ..................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. Use my expertise; claim I have a lot of experience in such matters ....... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. Be especially affectionate; be loving and romantic ...................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. Appeal to a sense of fairness; say it's the only fair and right thing to do .. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. Try to negotiate something agreeable to both of us ...................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. Do some "fast talking" ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. Tell a "little white lie" ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. Withdraw; become cold and silent .... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. Be especially disagreeable .................. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. Discuss the issue heatedly; use harsh, angry words ...................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. Insult or swear at ...................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. Leave the room, house, etc. ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. Get very emotional; let him/her see how this affects me ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. Threaten to break up ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. Ignore him/her; refuse to respond until he/she sees reason .......... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. Say what I will do in exchange ....... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. Withhold something he/she takes pleasure in .......................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. Bargain or compromise to resolve our differences ................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. In general, to what extent do you think you can influence your partner's behavior?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27. Who usually wins major disagreements in your relationship?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner Always</th>
<th>Partner Usually</th>
<th>About Equal</th>
<th>Me Usually</th>
<th>Me Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART D**

After an argument with your dating partner, when nothing is really settled and you feel very upset, to what extent do you? (Circle number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Just concentrate on what I have to do next</th>
<th>2. Try to analyze the situation in order to understand it better</th>
<th>3. Turn to school or a substitute activity to take my mind off things</th>
<th>4. Understand that time will make a difference; the only thing to do is wait</th>
<th>5. Try to get my partner to change</th>
<th>6. Blame myself</th>
<th>7. Don’t do anything I might regret</th>
<th>8. Hope a miracle will happen to solve everything</th>
<th>9. Go on as if nothing had happened</th>
<th>10. Try to keep my feelings to myself</th>
<th>11. Sleep more than usual</th>
<th>12. Express anger to my partner about how I feel</th>
<th>13. Get sympathy and understanding from someone else</th>
<th>14. Tell myself things that help me to feel better</th>
<th>15. Wait to see what will happen</th>
<th>16. Apologize or do something to make up</th>
<th>17. Make a plan of action and follow it</th>
<th>18. Let my feelings out somehow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
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<td>Sometimes</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Realize I brought the problem on myself</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs, etc</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Try not to act too hastily</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Change something so things will turn out all right</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Avoid being around other people</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Don't let it get to me; refuse to think too much about it</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Ask a relative or friend I respect for advice</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Keep others from knowing how bad things are</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Make light of the situation; refuse to get too serious about it</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Blame my partner</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Make a promise to myself that things will be different next time</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Come up with a couple of different solutions to the problem</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Accept it, since nothing can be done</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Wish that I could change what had happened or how I feel</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Vow to change something about myself</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Daydream or imagine a better time in our relationship</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Wish that the situation would go away or somehow be over with</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Pray</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Prepare myself for the worst</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Exercise to relieve tension</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>Go over in my mind what I will say or do</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Try to see things from my partner's point of view</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>Remind myself that things could be worse</td>
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</table>
42. Drink enough alcohol to get drunk . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
43. Use drugs to get high . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

PART E

When other means of communication don't work, physical arguments may result. The following list describes things that dating partners have sometimes done during such an argument. Please indicate whether you or your partner have done any of the following. (Circle numbers to the right and left of each of the items to indicate your response).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never Done</th>
<th>Threatened Only</th>
<th>Rarely Done</th>
<th>Occasionally Done</th>
<th>Frequently Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

You
1 2 3 4 5 Pushed, shoved, grabbed       Your Partner 1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Wrestled or pinned down       1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Threw an object at            1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Clawed, scratched, but        1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Slapped                        1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Punched with fist              1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Hit with object                1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Kicked                         1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Attempted to strangle          1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 Used lethal weapon (knife, gun, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5

15. Have you ever experienced a physical argument with any dating partners other than your current partner? (Circle Number)

1 NO
2 YES If yes, in how many relationships have you experienced physical arguments?

(number)

How old were you when you first experienced a physical argument with a dating partner?

(age)

16. Did you ever see or hear your parents use physical arguments to deal with conflict in their relationship with each other or with other partners? (Circle Number)
1 YES
2 NO
IF YOU ARE (OR HAVE BEEN) IN A RELATIONSHIP WHERE A PHYSICAL ARGUMENT HAS OCCURRED, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING 5 QUESTIONS. IF NOT, SKIP TO PART F.

17. How is the physical argument maintained? (circle number)
   1 Partner initiates; I try to get away
   2 Partner initiates; I try to protect myself
   3 Partner initiates; I fight back
   4 I initiate; Partner tries to get away
   5 I initiate; Partner tries to protect self
   6 I initiate; Partner fights back

18. What is the most common source of physical arguments in your relationship?
   (Circle number)
   1 Jealousy over involvement, or perceived involvement, with another person
   2 Use of alcohol or drugs
   3 Sexual pressure
   4 Other (please specify)

19. In what stage of the relationship did physical arguing begin?
   (circle number)
   1 Casual dating
   2 Serious dating
   3 Engaged
   4 Other (please specify)

20. What was the effect of the physical arguing on your relationship?
   (circle number)
   1 Relationship got worse
   2 Relationship stayed the same
   3 Relationship improved

21. How hopeful are you that things will (or have) improved in your relationship?
   (circle number)
   1 Extremely discouraged
   2 Discouraged
   3 Uncertain
   4 Encouraged
   5 Extremely encouraged
PART F

Because dating relationships set the stage for marriage we would like to know how you feel about the following family roles: Husband, wife, mother, and father. (Circle number)

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<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
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<th>Always</th>
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<td>5 6 7</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
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</table>
16. A father should be just as willing as a mother to miss work to care for a sick child . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. A father can parent a child just as well as a mother . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. A husband should not be upset if his wife's career sometimes requires her to be away from home overnight . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. A married man's greatest reward and satisfaction should come from his career 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. A husband should not be disturbed if his wife makes more money than he does . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. A husband should have final authority in making major family decisions . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. A husband should turn down a promotion if it means spending less time with his family . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. Husbands of wives employed full-time should equally share household tasks (i.e., doing the laundry, vacuuming, preparing meals) . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. If both spouses are employed full-time, the husband should equally share child care tasks (i.e., changing diapers, bathing children, taking children to and from day care) . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. A husband should be willing to move if his wife is offered a better job in another town . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

PART G

Now, it's important that we know more about how you view yourself. Please give an honest appraisal of your feelings by reacting to the next few items. (circle number)

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<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. On the whole, I'm satisfied with myself</td>
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<td>2. I am able to do things as well as most other people</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I take a positive attitude toward myself</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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</table>
5. I am very independent                  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. Being alone doesn’t bother me                  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. I have many inner resources                   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. I enjoy doing things by myself                1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I feel that I’m a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. At times I think I’m no good at all           1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. I feel I don’t have much to be proud of      1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. Sometimes I feel that I’m being pushed around in life               1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. All in all, I’m inclined to feel that I’m a failure          1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have           1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. I have little control over the things that happen to me                   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. I wish I had more respect for myself                  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I certainly feel useless at times                1 2 3 4 5 6 7
VITA

STEPHANIE BARASCH JESTER

EDUCATION:

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

M.S. in Marriage & Family Therapy expected June 1992
GPA: 3.98

University of Virginia

B.A. in Psychology, May 1989
GPA: 3.5

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE:

Center for Family Services, Virginia Polytechnic Institute

9/90 - Present  Therapist Intern

Perform systemic, competency-based therapy under AAMFT Approved Supervision. Have worked with a broad range of individuals, couples and families with a broad range of problems including domestic violence, divorce, remarriage, child behavior problems, alcohol abuse, recovery, and incest.

9/89 - 12/91  CFS Coordinator

Assisted with the daily operations of the Center for Family Services. Duties included:

- Coordinated a Hispanic Outreach Grant awarded to the Center for Family Services by the Junior League of Northern Virginia.

* Worked with Junior League members to complete grant requirements
* Coordinated with main campus on purchasing requirements
* Wrote semi-annual status reports
* Created data base for budget spending.
CLINICAL EXPERIENCE, CONTINUED

9/89 - 12/91  CFS Coordinator, Continued
- Conducted telephone intakes with potential clients
- Scheduled therapist interns
- Assigned cases to therapist interns
- Monitored client files and AAMFT records
- Assisted in the development of record forms and fee schedules

Virginia Family Counseling, Vienna, Virginia
9/91 - Present  Group Co-Facilitator

Co-lead a weekly group for adult children of alcoholics. Group is conceptualized as a "laboratory" where clients can experiment with new ways of interacting. Incorporate gestalt therapy, competency-based therapy and group counseling techniques.

Girls Attention Home, Charlottesville, Virginia
9/88 - 5/89  Intern

In this group home for troubled female adolescents, I counseled and educated the girls about sex, contributed to weekly community meetings and recreation activities, and supervised the residents.

University of Virginia Student Health, Charlottesville, Virginia
1/88 - 5/89  Peer Sexuality Educator

Counseled and educated students about relationships, birth control and sexually transmitted diseases both privately during office hours and in large groups during dorm presentations.
**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:**

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**

9/89 - Present  **Graduate Research Assistant**

Worked with several Department Faculty on the following projects:

- Assisted with conceptualization, data collection, statistical analysis and writing of several published research papers.

- Assisted with the development and writing of several research proposals to different organizations including the Guggenheim Foundation and the Women’s Research Institute.


- Assisted with the AAMFT Accreditation process for the Family and Child Development program.

**University of Virginia**

9/87 - 12/88  **Research Assistant for Dr. E.M. Hetherington**

"The Effects of Divorce and Remarriage on Children":

- Observed and coded videotapes of family interaction

- Assisted in the development and refinement of coding manual

- Conducted statistical computer analysis
Nichols Research Corporation

7/86 - 12/89  Engineering Aide

- Government Clearance - SECRET level
- Assisted research engineers with presentations - developed graphics layouts, charts, graphs using Macintosh computer software

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS:

Stith, S.M., Jester, S.B., & Lynn, J. (revision requested). Guidelines for Student Faculty Collaborative Research. Family Relations.


PRESENTATIONS:


MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Virginia Association of Marriage and Family Therapy

9/90 - 12/91 Student-Associate Representative to the Board of VAMFT

- Coordinated student presentations for VAMFT Annual Conference in Williamsburg, Virginia

- Enhanced relations between students in southern and northern Virginia.

- Worked with Northern Virginia Vice President of VAMFT to organize a luncheon discussion and fundraiser for MFT licensure in Virginia

American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy

9/89 - Present Student Member

National Council on Family Relations

9/89 - Present Student Member

Stephanie Barasch Jester