

2020

## Victims of Intimate Partner Violence and Workplace Instability

Robert Boyd Cannon Jr  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Victims of Intimate Partner Violence and Workplace Instability

by

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MA, Southern University at New Orleans, 2012

BS, Southern University at New Orleans, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Criminal Justice

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## Abstract

The effects of intimate partner violence (IPV) on victims' employment status is well-documented. The purpose of this study was to examine the implications of domestic violence on the status and stability of employment for victims who work in the public sector. The study's 2 research questions asked how victims' perspectives on IPV could provide insights to (a) help public sector employers improve victims' employment stability and (b) create policies and practices that support victim disclosure. A phenomenological approach was used to understand the experience of victims of IPV and unstable employment. The theoretical framework derived from feminist theory and focused on gender, power, control, and abuse. Fifteen adult females living in the South who were victims of IPV at their place of employment in the public sector were interviewed. The majority of the participants in this study reported that public sector organizations reactively approached instances of IPV by terminating the employee instead of proactively dealing with the problem through administrative regulations or policies that provide legal protection to victims. Based on the results of the study, public employers need to educate employees and create policies to protect the job stability and well-being of people who experience IPV in the workplace.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Interpersonal violence at a victim's place of work can create a pernicious environment if not addressed and can affect a woman's job stability. Though all perpetrators are not men and all victims are not women, this study focused on female victims and their employment stability.

Workplace disruption because of abuse is known as employment interference (Al-Modallal, Al-Omari, Abujilban, & Mrayan, 2016), for example, the abuser repeatedly calls the victim at work for no significant reason (Al-Modallal et al., 2016). This interference can make the workplace an emotionally negative environment for the victim.

Since 2014 IPV accounted for 21% of all violent crime in the United States (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). According to Truman and Morgan (2014), it was the fifth leading cause of all violent victimizations between 2003 and 2012. Fifteen percent of IPV acts were committed by a partner, while 4% and 2% of cases involved an immediate family member or relative, respectively. Most acts of intimate partner violence are committed by people who are currently involved with the victim, as well as past boyfriends and girlfriends. Men were eliminated from this study. Females are 3x greater than males of being victimized than males (24%).. According to Workplace Survey (2011), 19% of reported family violence carried over into the workplace; in 12% of cases, IPV took the form of abusive phone calls and emails, and in 11% of cases, the abuser visited the victim's workplace.

The act of IPV can become a vicious cycle of abuse, and its effects can negatively impact a victim's safety at the workplace (Castro-González, Arias Díaz, & Irizarry Quintero, 2016). Due to the adverse effects of IPV in the workplace, companies may suffer losses in productivity, unexcused absences by employees, or victims leaving their jobs out of fear (Mollica & Danehower, 2014). In the United States, 35%–56% of adult female victims of IPV are harassed at work by their abusers (Castro-González et al., 2016).

The purpose of this study was to inform the academic field. This study sought to raise awareness of the impact of IPV on employment instability. Understanding and defining the relationship between IPV and employment instability may inform public policy and thus reduce rates of IPV and protect victims in the workplace. IPV in the public work sector can cause a female employee to leave their place of employment. Every female has the right to work, to a free choice of employment that protects them against IPV at the workplace.

The researcher interviewed victims of IPV in order to gain insights that can help businesses develop policies and practices that support victims and reduce IPV in the public sector. Presenting victims' experiences in their own words legitimizes and humanizes the issue of IPV. The victims interviewed in this study suggested that there is a thin veneer of protection from an abuser at a place of employment. Therefore, a public sector work policy on IPV is needed.

Businesses may be involved in lawsuits because they may become liable if an employee is harmed at work. Once a victim discloses an act of IPV it may be the employer's responsibility to offer help or services, including relocation to another job, time off for treatment, or legal assistance, such as court ordered restraints (Mollica & Danehower, 2014). Employers can also be legally liable for injuries and deaths when acts of domestic violence occur at work (Mollica & Danehower, 2014).

Researchers have explored IPV in the private sector, but not the public sector. This study will fill a gap in the literature. Chapter 1 includes a discussion of domestic violence in intimate partnerships and explains IPV's effects on employment stability, particularly among female victims. This chapter also discusses: (a) background of the study, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose of the study, (d) research questions, (e) theoretical framework, (f) nature of study, (g) definition of key terms, (h) assumptions, (i) scope of the study, (j) limitation, and (k) significance of the study. Background of the Study

When a victim is exposed to IPV at work may feel threatened. Job instability can be partly is as a negative economic consequence of IPV, and its effects can last for up three years after the IPV has ended (Adams et al., 2012). For this study, job stability is defined as the length of employment (Adams, Tolman, Bybee, Sullivan, & Kennedy, 2012). IPV in the workplace can undermine and diminish the rights of a female employee. Adams et al. (2012) examined the mediating roles of job instability, IPV, and economic well-being among 503 women. Adams et al. illustrated a need for services and

policies that address means of improving the economic stability of women with abusive partners. Adam et al.,(2012) examined women's annual work hours and concluded that, after controlling for health status, extreme physical violence occurring over a one year period, women who had been exposed to IPV worked 137 fewer hours than women who had not experienced IPV. Research on the effects of IPV in the workplace has failed to include the voices of women who have experienced IPV and its effects on employment. The gap in research is filled through victims' narratives on domestic violence and employment stability. Researchers have focused on the effects of IPV and how it can contribute to a victim's job loss, but there are still gaps in knowledge about the sustained effects of IPV on employment stability (Adams et al., 2012). Adams et al. (2012) contributed to understanding the relationship between adult female job stability and IPV. Adams et al.'s (2012) did not take into account various lesser forms of abuse that can interfere with an adult female's employment.

Employment stability can be improved through creating policies that can benefit victims who experience IPV in their public sector workplaces. Once an IPV victim reports violence, the employer can intervene. All victims' and witnesses' accounts of Intimate Partner violence in some cases can affect a victims.

Violence and harassment at work disproportionately affect women employment (Pillinger, 2016). Judgments from coworkers may also prevent women from reporting abuse.

Some unions are beginning to cover the issue intimate partner violence, for example:

- 1) Talking points
- 2) How to give aid to victims of IPV
- 3) Model clauses that can be sued for negotiating agreements
- 4) Training for union representatives on how to sensitively negotiate practical support with the employer
- 5) Ensuring that the prevention of domestic violence at work is included (a) in workplace risk assessments and (b) on the agendas of safety and health committees, (Pillinger,2016).

By encouraging unions to play a role in workplace safety as it relates to IPV, employers may become safer places for victims of IPV. Employers can ensure that IPV victims are offered safety advice, job relocation, safe parking or office spaces that prevent IPV stalking, harassment or violence, and that they can leave work to attend counseling services, solicitor's appointments, move to a safe house (Pillinger, 2016).

To improve policies that enhance workplace safety, it is essential to understand the experiences of IPV victims and employment stability. Pillinger (2016) found that on average, one-third of female employees reported exposure to IPV, about half of the victims believed their job performance was adversely affected by it, and three out of four had a difficult time meeting job expectations.

The Australian National Retail Association indicated that domestic violence cost the Australian retail industry AUD \$62 billion in 2014 and 2015 (Pillinger, 2016). A report by the Canadian Federal Justice Department estimated that IPV cost employers CAD \$78 million in 2009 (Pillinger, 2016). Victims in the United States have been estimated to take a collective 8 million days off work a year due to issues related to IPV, resulting in a \$2.5 billion loss in work capacity (Pillinger, 2016) Estimates from the United Kingdom suggest that IPV abuse entails a loss of 1.9 pounds of economic output and leads to lower productivity, greater absenteeism, and higher employee turnover (Pillinger, 2016).

IPV is an occupational safety and physical risk in the world of work (Pillinger et al., 2016). Protecting employees from IPV recognizes the interconnection between work and private life (Pillinger, 2016). In the relationship between IPV and employment, extensive research is needed into the roles of mental health, race and ethnicity, and types of violence (Crowne et al., 2011). This qualitative study examined the effects of IPV on workplace stability.

### **Problem Statement**

Victims of IPV often experience workplace instability. After becoming a victim of domestic violence, a worker's job status can become unstable due to underperformance. VandeWeerd, Coulter, and Mercado-Crespo (2011) noted a complex affiliation between IPV and employment that is based on the interactions of multiple demographic (e.g. age,



education, race, home environment) and mediating factors (e.g., social support, physical and mental health, parenting stress). Some employers may find it challenging to address IPV in the workplace, which may cause them to delay taking responsibility (Swanberg, Ohja, & Macke, 2012). State and national policies need to be implemented to increase workplace accountability (Swanberg et al., 2012).

Studies on the magnitude of IPV perpetration in the workplace are limited; most have focused on the private sector (Mollica & Danehower, 2014). Interventions in the workplace to address IPV would be beneficial and could involve significant portion of the population (Mollica & Danehower, 2014). Purpose of the Study

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of domestic violence on the employment instability of female victims in the public sector. I used a phenomenological design that involved gathering detailed accounts about victims' experiences with IPV in the public sector workplace. Globalization and Transnational Feminist theories provided a framework for understanding participants' life experiences.

The voices of IPV victims about employment stability are underreported. There is a need for more research to explore policies about IPV at the workplace. Studies like this one, along with policy development related to IPV in public sector workplaces, can help employers respond to IPV within the public sector. In some cases, by disclosing acts of domestic violence to their employers. Helen (2013) explained that the combination of

labor market inequities may make it difficult for women to free themselves from IPV and, in fact, contributes to homelessness and poverty, which many women are likely to experience during and after their experience in the process of, and after, leaving their partner.

This research provided information about the gravity of the effects of IPV on victims' employment instability. Homicide is the most extreme effect of IPV; over one-third (38%) of all female murders in the United States between 1982 and 2011 occurred in the workplace and were committed by an intimate partner (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

### **Research Questions**

This study was based on two research questions. The overarching research question was: How can victims' perspectives on IPV provide insights to help public sector employers improve victims' employment stability? The supplementary research question was: How can victims' perspectives on IPV provide insights to help public employers create policies and practices that support victim disclosure?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was derived from feminist theory, mainly because the underlying concept of this research was how issues of gender, power, and control can contribute to the abuse of women (Javaid, 2015). In general, feminist theory analyzes power and gender inequality within opposite-sex relationships (Javaid, 2015).

Feminist theory was essential in the research to help victims get the proper support they need. Feminist theory was used as a foundation in this research to discuss the themes of power and control.

### **Nature of Study**

This phenomenological study used a sample of 15 participants. I sought an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon by collecting rich data (Dworkin, 2012). The use of a small sample was relevant to this qualitative study. Women were selected for this study. Women are significantly more likely than men to be victims of domestic violence, including rape, physical violence, and stalking; and they are significantly more likely to be victims of workplace intimate partner homicide (Breiding, Chen, & Black, 2014; U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). Female victims of IPV are particularly vulnerable to employment instability. Data were collected through individual interviews with participants. The aim of the interviews was to understand victims' experiences. The data obtained from the interviews were used to discern themes and answer research questions as it relates to the issues of employment stability. Participants in public sector organizations were recruited through a partnership with a domestic violence agency, by email, and by oral requests to public human resource departments, personnel departments. All were issued a letter, via mail and email, explaining the research process.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The key terms for this research are below:

*Exposed:* The witnessing or viewing of domestic violence by another party (National Center for Victims of Crime, 2011).

*Feminist theory:* The suffrage women and their specific experiences from all forms of oppression and exploitation in all their complexity (Moi, 2015).

*Intimate partner violence (IPV):* IPV refers to domestic violence by a spouse or partner against the other spouse or partner (Chen, Yu, Luo, & Huang, 2016).

*Physical altercation:* This term refers to a physical attack that may include an individual pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting, butting, throwing an object, or striking another individual (Linette & Francis, 2011).

*Stalking:* This term refers to repeated and unwanted attention that causes a victim to fear for their personal safety or for the safety of someone they know (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018).

*Victim:* This term refers to the direct or indirect target of violence.

### **Assumptions**

This study was based on four assumptions. It was assumed that (a) participants would be willing to discuss their experiences of domestic violence that took place at their place of work. It was assumed that (b) employed women in the state of Louisiana would agree to partake in the study. (c) Participants would rely on their own experiences and perspectives; (d) participants would answer the interview questions openly and honestly.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of this qualitative study was to understand the relationship between IPV and employment stability among women in the public sector in Louisiana who were victims of IPV. Interviewing these victims revealed insights that could be used to improve policies to support them. This involved women employed in the public sector who had experienced IPV at the workplace. All participants had experiences with domestic violence and employment issues.

This research created an engaging blueprint of procedures that can retroactively be assembled for employed women who experienced IPV, which impacted their social-economic status, and occupational status. Overall, this study contributes to understanding the consequences of IPV for women at work.

### **Limitations**

It is important to consider limitations of a study (Murray et al., 2015). As it pertained to this study there was only one limitation related to the sample size. The sample size could have been larger, to gain a better understanding of IPV in a public work sector. There were no limitations to the design or methodology. There were no issues related to validity.

### **Significance of the Study**

Domestic violence adversely affects some employees in their workplace. In 2012, President Obama wrote a memo promoting assistance and support for employees of

domestic violence (Zoller, 2013). Often domestic violence happens at work but goes undocumented, and this may cause personal safety issues in the workplace for both victims and other employees. The study contributes knowledge and aware of IPV in the public work sector. The study also identifies the need for policies in the public work sector that address IPV in the workplace to protect women.

Once IPV starts there is no stopping it. The apprehension of abusers at work has no lasting effect on repeat domestic violence (Sherman & Harris, 2013). There is a need for the public sector to offer support for victims who report experiencing IPV. There are gaps in the literature on policies to help victims of IPV and employment stability. The United States has no laws that make public sector employers accountable for employees who have experienced IPV at the workplace.

### **Summary**

The exposure of female employees to IPV at work and the effects of IPV in the public sector have not been. This study used a phenomenological approach to study the experiences of women who have been victims of IPV in the public sector. This group of women has a wealth of knowledge and experience that can help other such victims. Ultimately this is an implication of positive and social change, I hope that this study will be used to develop public sector work policies to protect female victims of IPV in the workplace.

Chapter 2 provides a review of literature on IPV in the public sector. It examines the following areas: (a) history of domestic violence at a place of employment, (b) concerns of female employed victims, (c) the empowerment of women employees in a safe environment, and (d) previews of all remaining chapters.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

IPV and employment instability can affect women in the public sector. This research aimed to give voice to victims of IPV and their experience of employment instability. Learning about victims' experiences can the way IPV victims are affected. IPV can affect a victims, co-workers, and a worksite. Allowing victims to voice their experiences of IPV and employment can also help establish a measure to address IPV and employment stability

The effects of gender violence are often visible outside the home. When an abuser arrives at a victim's place of employment, it can create a threatening and hostile environment (Castro-González et al., 2016). Domestic disturbance, domestic dispute, and domestic violence are used to describe incidents that occur between family members or intimate partners at any location (Kercher, Swedler, Pollack, & Webster, 2013).

The scope of this study is limited to developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between IPV and employment stability. The literature review examined the following areas: (a) history of domestic violence at a place of employment; (b) concerns of the victims; and, (c) the empowerment of women working in a safe environment.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

To identify prospective, peer-reviewed articles (as well as books and grey literature), the following electronic databases—ProQuest and EBSCO—were searched for the years 2017- 2020 using the following keywords: *Intimate partner violence*,



*employment instability*, and *homelessness*. Several articles through the filters that was accessible in some search engines.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This qualitative study was grounded in feminist theory. Feminist theory has influenced family scholars to conceive gender as central to their understanding of family structures and processes (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015). In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a push to advance women into an ethical picture that had previously prevented them as moral agents, some significant previous work focused on difference, and on what had been left out of moral theorizing done mostly by men (Riley, 2013).

The feminist perspective views domestic violence and employment stability as a complex issue. It proposes that IPV is an effect of living in a society that condones abusive behavior committed by males and socializes females to be nonviolent (Javaid, 2015). There is validation and advancement in the use of qualitative methodologies as it relates to phenomenology and family process and grounded theory among family scholars (Goldberg & Allen 2015). Gender and power are factors involved in domestic violence situations in the workplace.

Society's understanding of IPV has shifted dramatically. There has been a transition from understanding IPV as a private relationship problem managed through counseling techniques to a conception of IPV that configures IPV as a lawful offense (Houston, 2014). A certain degree of intervention is necessary to protect adult female

victims (Houston (2014). The feminist theory has identified and used the interpretation of IPV that guides feminists to first endorse criminal law as a method of solving and later give support mandatory policies (Houston, 2014).

The feminist ethical humanistic agency was instrumental in understanding power, questioning who is recognized as a moral agent, and exploring how agency is constrained or helped by power relations (Riley, 2013). It delivered a more powerful and encompassing analysis of this issue. Feminist theory uses an interdisciplinary approach. It is a culmination of work by scholars whose research spans several social and behavioral science disciplines such as human development and family studies, psychology, sociology, anthropology, public policy, communications, and social work (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015). Placed at the center of the feminist approaches is a concern about power (Riley, 2013). The feminist theoretical approach examines how domestic violence and employment can be a key element in a male system of power (Javaid, 2015). Javaid's (2015) research findings suggested that adult males are usually perpetrators while women are victims. Therefore, feminist theory was applicable in the use of this research when critically examining IPV (Javaid, 2015). Feminist theory encompasses IPV stresses, power, and inequality that can be intricately involved within opposite-sex relationships (Javaid, 2015). The feminist perspective theory sees men as well as women perpetrators in the workplace who commit domestic violence acts. The feminist theory often used experiences that were generally specific to an adult female's domain—caring, nurturance,

and motherhood—and seeks to highlight the rationale that is absent in traditional ethics (Riley, 2013). The feminist perspective theory, as it relates to domestic violence, can transcend the public work sector to an antecedent and a more collaborative. The feminist theory can be insightful in this inquiry IPV within the workplace.

The use of qualitative methodologies in retrospect to phenomenology, and the grounded theory, is commonly used by family scholars (Goldberg & Allen 2015). Family scholars work from the perspective that gender is essential to the comprehension of family structures and processes (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015). However, there is no single definition that satisfactorily explains IPV (Javaid, 2015). Current definitions of IPV tend to connect it with other types of violence, confusing understandings and producing ambiguity (Javaid, 2015). A clear definition could improve validity and reliability of research, as well as strengthen policies and practices aimed at challenging IPV (Javaid, 2015). Javaid (2015) critically evaluated the feminist theory of patriarchy because, in this research, professionals believe that IPV refers to adult male abusers executing power and control onto their victims. The feminist position situates IPV within the realm of a complex social structure of gender and power relations (Javaid, 2015).

### **Literature Review**

Previous research illustrates various factors related to IPV. Several themes are articulated in this literature review: (1) the effects of employment and IPV; (2) coping

with IPV and employment; (3) the relationship between IPV and employment stability; policies for to IPV victims; and (4) signs and symptoms of IPV in the workplace.

### **The Effects of Employment and IPV**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission estimated that 56% of those enduring abuse are often late for work and 54% miss at least 3 days a year due to abuse (Silcox, 2013). The observable behaviors of victims of domestic violence at the workplace may include: (a) sudden request to change departments; (b) unexplainable marks and injuries, usage of heavily concealing garments; (c) inappropriate accessories and makeup (to cover wounds); (d) uneasiness due to abrupt visits; (e) calls from the abusive partner; (f) visits by the current partner to the workplace, sudden isolation; (g) lack of participation in the company's social events; and, (h) withholding of funds accumulated from work (Castro-González et al., 2016). Working with a co-worker that is an abuser can prove challenging not only because of the emotive charge it may generate but also because of the intricate, complex, practical, ethical, and practice issues it presents (Lawrence, 2014).

Several essential factors are associated with situations of domestic violence at a place of employment. For example, there is a high rate of absenteeism of victims. This can cause additional workloads on others, pressure on the victim, as well as a sense of helplessness, and lack of support by management. The most extreme outcome of IPV is homicide; over one-third (38%) of all murders of females occurring in the U.S.

workplace from 1982 to 2011 were carried out by an intimate partner (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). According to the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries at a place of employment, murder among U.S. women from 2003 to 2008 were categorized into several categories: type the researcher (criminal intent), type I (customer/client), type II (coworker), or type IV (personal relations) (Tiesman, Gurka, Konda, Coben, & Amandus, 2012). Fatality rates can be analyzed and observed as workplace violence (WPV) types, occupations, and characteristics including location of homicide, type of workplace, time of day, and weapon used (Tiesman et al., 2018) Domestic violence can be deadly; four women die every day in the United States because of IPV (Baughman, 2014).

IPV makes it difficult for victims to be productive in the workplace; more than 75% of those who endure domestic violence were subjected to threatening phone calls, texts, emails and visits while they were at work (Payne, 2013). Katula (2012) hypothesized that IPV can compound an employee's health, legal, and financial issues. Companies can improve response time for IPV issues in the public sector. Additionally, an employer has a moral responsibility to understand and respond to issues of domestic violence in the workplace. Katula's (2012) study suggested that moral obligation should be viewed as a private issue and should not be addressed at work. However, domestic violence does take place at work. Katula's (2012) study expounded on the idea that a proactive approach by employers can increase employees' safety and reduce the number of missed workdays.

IPV can have a financial impact on an individual's net worth. If an abuser reports to a victim's job, this can affect coworkers. An abuser's behavior can be threatening, physically harmful, and in extreme cases, cause death. Katula's (2012) provided an example of a legal case that addressed domestic violence in the workplace. Katula's (2012) study explained that an employer can be responsible in the act of violence even though IPV can be prevalent at home and happens at work. Katula (2012) suggested that IPV programs in the workplace are necessary. Katula (2012) also suggested that policies should be put in place to help businesses and organizations actively deal with domestic violence through security personnel management, leadership, human resource departments, and management/leadership personnel training.

### **Coping with Intimate Partner Violence and Employment**

Victims of IPV should seek injunctions that can protect them from repeated abuse, relationship violence, and intimate violence. By emotionally masking and concealing signs of IPV abuse, the victim can decrease questions, suspicion, and judgment from supervisors and coworkers (Katula, 2012). Embarrassed victims may quit their jobs. Work performance may decline as victims' have trouble making decisions, take frequent work breaks, struggle with general distraction, absenteeism (especially on Mondays due to an increase of abuse by the perpetrator over the weekend), and tardiness (Katula, 2012). Immediate action should be taken to help victims of IPV in a public work sector. Injunction assistance should be used to help victims cope with domestic violence, as

victims may need to obtain health care and counseling for IPV-related mental health issues. Undoubtedly, employers must consider repeated instances of IPV and retroactive addressing healing.

The literature on coping with IPV predominantly originates from social psychology and reaffirms the importance of adopting an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the relationship between employment and coping strategies used by female adult victims who have been exposed to IPV (Beecham, 2014). Identifying abuse can be constructive for employers of IPV victims, although some may have a negative view of help given to employees coping with IPV. Help from employers can be a difficult issue for management and supervisors, specifically if the abuse occurs at the workplace. Coworkers may feel resentful because a victim's absenteeism from work adds to the workload of other employees. Absenteeism from work is a coping mechanism for victims of domestic violence and employment. However, for some women, emotion-focused coping strategies may be more appropriate, particularly if they believe problem-solving strategies could endanger some aspect of their lives, such as their employment (Beecham, 2014).

Victims of domestic violence face financially challenging situations. Beecham's (2014) qualitative study found that compartmentalizing, identification of an immersive construct, a can possibly be a negative perception by fellow employees, supervisors. Some supervisors can be affected by abusive when IPV situations at a place of

employment. IPV can cause supervisors to work extra hours when the victim is absent from work or is unable to meet workplace expectations. A theoretical standpoint can give a construct in studies in the field of organization as it relates to the role of identification in addition to boundary theory, and coping literature, deriving from the social psycho, an interdisciplinary approach is important to further understanding about the intricate relationship between employment and the coping strategies adopted by women experiencing IPV (Beecham, 2014).

Beecham's (2014) study acknowledged that several key elements can be used to mitigate IPV in the public work sector. For example, training can help create inclusive organizational approaches towards domestic violence situations with employees. Training can help the organization take proactive and reactive approaches to decision making and problem solving as it relates to IPV in a public work sector. Soliciting feedback from victims of IPV can also provide support to improve communication between employees and employers. Beecham (2014) concluded there is a multivariate increasing amount of implicated psychological factors of IPV at a victim's place of work.

Beecham (2014) used the findings and draws from the exploration of implicating impact factors of IPV on women's employment by offering insights into the theoretical arduous augmentation within the avocation of alignment of studies. Beecham's (2014) study provided women with resources to help them cope with emotional imbalance and distribution. Beecham (2014) explored the paradoxical nature of coping strategies that



participants embraced, and acknowledged the need for further research that explores the role of employment in women's coping strategies. One limitation of the study was that Beecham (2014) did not address the different levels of psychological factors that are associated with domestic violence and employment. Beecham (2014) suggested that all forms of employment should offer women emotional or practical resources. For example, Beecham (2014) discussed a self-employed respondent whose business partner was her abuser; therefore, she did not have the ability to physically or emotionally separate herself from the abuse.

When helping victims that are facing domestic violence it is a priority to help them cope with the situation of domestic violence. Company trainings can give help organizations approach domestic violence situations. An open line of communication between employers and employees can encourage proactive approaches to decision making and problem solving. Indeed, the theoretical insights developed in organizational studies can further knowledge of coping strategies in terms of the resources available to employed women and how these differ depending on their occupational status, employment sector, workplace environment, and socioeconomic status (Beecham, 2014).

Employers can be provisional with emotional resources to help women cope with domestic violence and employment stability. A proactive approach is a form of communication that states that a victim's success is a derivative of understanding their social psychology. Scholars that study coping emphasize employment as providing

particular resources for coping. The workplace can provide access to formal or informal support networks that allow women to psychologically disengage from the abuse (Beecham, 2014). Yet, employers can work to proactively facilitate these coping strategies (Beecham, 2014). There are parallels between the literature on organizations and coping that are associated with domestic violence and employment. Hayes' (2013) study suggested that domestic violence at the workplace exists and should be constructively studied and evaluated across different work settings.

### **Intimate Partner Violence and Employment Stability**

IPV impacts employment stability. Adams et al. (2012) hypothesized that there are pathway to the way IPV is inversely related to job instability (Path a), positively related to objective material hardship (Path b), positively related to anticipated hardship (Path c), and inversely related to job benefits (Path d), such that the effects were strongest for women experiencing the most recent abuse and attenuating over time. Further, they hypothesized that job stability was inversely related to objective material hardship (Path e), inversely related to anticipated hardship (Path f), and positively related to job benefits (Path g). The next affair of attachment in affiliation to domestic violence and employment instability is addressed in the healthcare field.

Adams et al. (2012) explained that an increasing number of female victims on the lower end of the economic spectrum have been victims of IPV. Low-income, female IPV victims tend to struggle with their economic state because as long as they are in abusive

relationships, they may be vulnerable to financial challenges. The conciliating personification of stability in the account of the extended impact of IPV on the financial advantage was documented in a longitudinal cross section study that included participants who received financial aid from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. This literature established that IPV has a direct effect on an employee's job stability. The focus of this study the consequences of domestic violence and employment that happened two years prior in order to understand the long-term effects of IPV on victims. IPV is arguably responsible for adult female victims' unstable financial status, but this has not been unequivocally proven. The results indicated that female participants were strongly affected by their experiences of recent abuse, suggesting that abuse affects employment and financial stability.

Employment stability has a conjectural relationship with IPV, monetary hardship, and job pension plans. In the absence of reliable income, background of past work, or loans, gives women fewer choices to expurgate themselves from their relationship of abuse. Female domestic violence victims tend to struggle economically. The conclusive evidence demonstrated that baseline economic abuse was correlated related to baseline financial resources, and within-woman change in economic abuse caused a significant reduction in financial resources over time (Adams, Beeble, & Gregory, 2015). Adams et al. (2012) explained that the impact of IPV on women's employment is comparatively swift but may continue to have an impact a victim's life long after the abuse ends. The

effects of IPV at the place of employment can also have significant consequences for the employer (Rayner-Thomas, Dixon, Fanslow, & Tse, 2016).

Adams et al. (2012) conducted a cross sectional survey in which 54% of women reported that they had experienced at least one form of material hardship in the 12 months preceding their final interview. The study showed that 12% had their utilities shut off and 31% had their phone disconnected or went without a phone because they were unable to afford the cost. Seventeen percent reported that their family did not have enough food to eat. Housing was also a problem for some women: 6% had been evicted, 19% moved in with someone to share the household expenses, and 6% had been homeless in the past year. To support themselves and their families, 29% of participants reported that they turned to a community charity for food or shelter. Along with the hardship the participants were exposed to, the women were asked whether they anticipated the difficulties they experienced in the two months. While 48% said “not at all,” 37% said they anticipated future hardships “a little” or “some,” and 15% said “pretty much” or “a great deal” (Adams et al., 2012).

### **Financial Security and Domestic Violence**

Scholars have acknowledged the connection between financial stability and IPV. The federal government's 2015 announcement of \$100 million in funding to boost front line services and education into domestic/family violence raised the question of whether woman can escape IPV and homelessness (Laharnar, Perrin, Hanson, Anger, & Glass,

2015). Coworkers have varied responses to women who accessed services to enrich their job productivity, or who sought help in securing work (McLaren, 2013). Employees from two service for accommodative purposes types advised that one third of women who used their services requested employment-related assistance at the time of intake or soon after (McLaren, 2013). In 2009–2010, U.S. school districts identified 939,903 children experiencing homelessness, with 179,863 (19 %) of the children naming shelters, including domestic violence shelters, as their primary residence (Bowman, Dukes, & Moore, 2012). A small group of participants in this study acquired support to accommodate their needs.

McLaren (2013) identified structural barriers for women looking for employment associated with labor market inequities, casualization of labor, and social ideologies that discriminate against women. McLaren's (2013) pilot study explored the relationship between financial security and domestic violence and asked whether women can escape domestic violence and homelessness. McLaren (2013) included participants that were workers from a general service for homelessness. It was a response to Australia's response to those requesting employment (McLaren 2013). McLaren (2013) explained that although a small group of women had access to work following their requests, assistance was four times more likely for women using general homelessness services than those using domestic violence services. McLaren (2013) discussed the need to evaluate how agencies are addressing women's needs, specifically in terms of

establishing employment for IPV victims. McLaren (2013) noted that women experiencing stable employment while still using social services were more dauntless in their efforts to gain independence than other women. The study showed that outreach and follow ups helped women.

One limitation of this study was that there was no elaboration of methodology or suggested framework to study woman's stability in terms of housing and financial security. Another limitation was no following of expurgation from IPV and employment stability. Also engaging women on safety issues and obstacles that might lead to instabilities related to domestic violence at the workplace. It is of great significance to constantly aid women who value caring for their children over and above labor market engagement (McLaren, 2013). A limitation of the McLaren (2013) study was the confinement in responses from workers as it relates to woman referred to services with aspiration for employment as well as women who asked for supportive services to enrich and develop capacity of employment.

McLaren's (2013) small scaled research contributes to social policy agendas as it highlights the experiences of women who have experienced domestic violence, homelessness, and socio-economic disadvantage. The study pointed out that follow-ups and outreach encouraged success, and that these things can also take place in a woman's natural social setting (McLaren, 2013).

IPV affects 30% of women worldwide and may affect employment and workplace safety. In all, 16 states in the United States adopted laws providing leave for employed survivors of abuse (Laharnar et al., 2015). Participants agreed that IPV has an effect on work (Laharnar et al., 2015). First, there is pressure from being a victim. Furthermore, victims feel helpless. Finally, there is a lack of support from management. In some cases, intimate partners stalk or harm other employees at work.

A review of workplace safety is necessary to ensure that the work site is not inadvertently supporting abusers (Silcox, 2013). Presently there is no public workplace policy that specifically engages the point of employees that have been exposed to act of IPV at their place of employment. However, there are a growing number of municipalities that have formulated provisional laws with some types of mandates with the inclusion of off-time for employees recovering from abuse.

In most cases, IPV abusers are men, and victims/survivors are usually women and children (Hearty, Forsdike-Young, Tarzia, Schweitzer, & Vlasis, 2016). Domestic violence has many dimensions that collectively create a climate of tension and fear (Schiffrin, 2014). The federal government's recently announced \$100 million in funding to boost front line services and education into domestic violence/family violence to help women fleeing domestic violence (Lantrip, Luginbuhl, Chronister, & Lindstrom, 2015). Raising awareness about the effects of IPV on victims and employers has been a contribution in the advancement of recognition to address the impact domestic violence has on the

workplace (Rayner-Thomas et al., 2016). Physical violence in most cases is not limited to only an ordinary scale; it often expands to a much wider scale (Khan, 2014). Findings support that the higher the sexism of participants, the more they believe that the man will act aggressively, often because the woman is stepping out of her traditional role (Herrera, Expósito, Moya, & Houston, 2012).

A plan to address IPV at the workplace was developed by the Decent Work Country Program (2012). Three priorities emerged from the discussions held with the social partners, namely government, trade unions and employers:

1. Creating dependable and productive employment with an insight of adequate social protection;
2. Strengthening social dialogue
3. Ending of all levels of discrimination.

Under Priority 3, one specified activity was to create a high-quality training of trainers program on gender so that trainers could collaborate with stakeholders and groups such as civil society organizations to advance the platform at the national level (Koodoruth, 2013).

Domestic and intimate partner violence, human trafficking, violence in conflict, emotional abuse, and sexual assault including rape, are generally understood, but dating violence, stalking, violence against immigrant and refugee women, honor-based violence, violence against women at work, and violence against women with disabilities are not as



well- documented (Park & Ross, 2014). IPV impacted victims' career development in numerous ways, including women's job search and career planning, daily work activities, career advancement, and career identity and reputation (Lantrip et al., 2015).

In the past decades, there has been a scholarly focus on the impacts of partner violence on women's work activities, financial well-being, and employment stability (Lantrip et al., 2015). Public workplace IPV intervention strategies that aid abuse survivors have been set up in several countries (Koodoruth, 2013). Additional feedback can provide support and improve communication between victims and their employers. For example, there have been efforts by Lancashire Constabulary and Victim Support to use a "common tool" Disability Arm Shoulder and Hand survey to identify high-risk cases of IPV for MARACs in order to improve consistency across agencies (Khan et al., 2015).

There are similarities between families in which abuse occurs. Abuse generally happens more often in family settings where unemployment and economic deprivation are serious problems; in families which are more patriarchal in organization; and in families that are isolated from community ties, friends, and organizational affiliations (Swani, 2013). An increasing number of situations demonstrated the need for security personnel to be called to address issues of IPV spilling over into the workplace that were once thought to be confined to the home environment (Savard & Kennedy, 2013).

It is important for victims to have access to benefits, medical care, and leave in case of illness. This article considers the barriers women face in terms of systemic dynamics, including ignoring and hiding of abuse by governments and states and the implications of stringent fiscal retrenchment that put women at increased risk of domestic violence (Aldridge, 2013). Accusations of IPV were highlighted as being particularly arduous situations to react to, although interagency adult safeguarding and domestic violence policies provided clear pathways for referral (Joly, Cornes, & Manthorpe, 2014). Clarinet (2013) conducted a study where there was a small group of women who acquired support to accommodate their entirety.

There are cumulative effects of IPV and abuse on women (MacIntosh, Wuest, Ford-Gilboe, & Varcoe, 2015). IPV can give an employee cause to seek medical treatment, counseling, legal assistance, attend court hearings, or relocate without fear of loss of employment. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) addresses discrimination against abuse survivors and their families while aiming to prevent domestic violence. All acts of provisional insight, however the risk can become meaningless without proper implementation (Buchanan, 2013). Employees should request proper workplace programs in the areas of policy, comprehensive learning, and management programs to help improve situations of IPV in the public work sector. Employers need to address situations of violence at work in their training plans (Blake, 2015). Solidifying forms of intervention in the areas of mental and physical health can

help co-workers that expurgating themselves from a job as a strategy. Reactive approaches can increase employees' safety and reduce victims' number of missed workdays.

In some states IPV is a crime; however, most states do not require professionals to report suspected cases of IPV (Zeman, Dreuth, & Swanke, 2013). Care should be taken when identifying a domestic violence situation because IPV is stigmatizing for adults and minors. IPV victims may fear for their safety if they disclose the violence, so specific conditions must be met (García-Moreno et al., 2015).

Mothers that live in low-income, urban areas experience many challenges in their domestic, environmental, and working conditions that may affect their mental health (Travasso, Rajaraman, & Heymann, 2014). Oregon also has a law for six or more employees as it relates to reasonable leave. Oregon statutes grant rights to employed victims, parents, and guardians of domestic violence victims, including minors or children who are victims of stalking and sexual violence. There are shared circumstances of obtaining assistance from law enforcement. There are also inclusionary aspects such as seeking mental health counseling or medical treatment and protection orders. The mitigating effects of IPV may be swift and focused (such as death and injury), extensive and direct (such as disability and chronic illness), indirect (such as self-perceived health and health behaviors), or all three (Wong & Mellor, 2014). Under Oregon law, an employer can place limitations on the reasons that an employee can use hardship

absenteeism. There is evidence that women who only experience mental abuse by an intimate partner shows similarity reports that are asymptomatic of mental health problems as physically abused women has important programmatic implications (Meekers, Pallin, & Hutchinson, 2013). Laharnar et al. (2015) documented workplace reactions to IPV disclosure (93% positive, 52% negative). Negative reactions were usually related to lack of information, confidentiality, and supervisor support. Several implicating factors specific to management were classified, including workload, being untrained, being a mandatory reporter, workplace safety, and confidentiality (Laharnar et al., 2015).

The elevation of levels in population supersedes documentation from preexisting studies because of its inclusion of emotional violence, perpetrators who were not primary or domestic partners, and a sensitive screening instrument (Riley et al., 2014).

Interventions should include well-organized meetings, training classes, and extensive ongoing training delivered by a multidisciplinary team (Santoveña, Esquivel, & da Silva, 2016). Support should be given to victims through employment training, hiring agencies, learning that pertains to vocation, and support for employment related to actions within the scope of obtaining a job, and the arrangement daycare for children.

### **Policies for Victims of Intimate Partner Violence**

Policies for victims of IPV could be more effective if they were backed by a law designed to prevent IPV. IPV is a pertinent issue of public health with serious

consequences for the workplace (Tiesman et al., 2012). Women are killed at work by intimate partners just as often as they are killed by strangers (Tiesman et al. (2012). There should be more research conducted on the connection between IPV and the victim's work to develop public policies that help both employees and employers mitigate threat of intimate partner homicide (Tiesman et al., 2012).

The U.S.'s public employment sector has expanded job opportunities for all workers (Laird, 2017). A solid and successful intimate partner prevention program stratagem should incorporate strategies to prevent and respond to IPV (Tiesman et al., 2012). Mills, Barocas, and Ariel (2013) used feminist theory to assert that female, adult victims of IPV should be identified as victims and perpetrators to be considered men strongly influenced the Duluth model which was developed over 30 years ago. The creators of the Duluth model believed that patriarchal beliefs give men a false sense of power and control over their female partners through psychological and physical abuse (Mills et al., 2013). With respect to public policy, the Circles of Peace (CP) was a pioneering effort towards court-referred IPV treatment programs. CP used a restorative justice circle approach to help reduce IPV in the United States as an alternative to traditional batterer intervention programs (Mills et al., 2013). The CP model used a proactive approach towards IPV. The program was intended to address IPV on a state public policy level. The CP model engaged flexibility in addressing key issues that cause intimate partner and family violence cases that ranged from a single incident to ongoing

patterns of abuse (Mills et al., 2013). In the state of Arizona, the CP model adhered to all the relevant state law mandates on treating domestic violence offenders and related court procedures (Mills et al., 2013). Since the creation of CP, all criminal laws related to IPV in Arizona have been circulated at conferences or circles (Mills et al., 2013).

To create better public policies, correctional officers participated in the Law Enforcement Partnership. This project may contribute to future abuse prevention work (Valentine, Oehme, & Martin, 2012). Research among correctional officers offers opportunities for outside researchers to study programs, with the potential benefit of finding ways to reduce negative outcomes in officers' personal and family lives (Valentine et al., 2013). An initial descriptive exploration was provided of how correctional officers deal with incidents of IPV Valentine et al. (2013). Bivariate and multivariate analyses highlighted the pressing need to continue exploring the complex relationship between correctional officers and domestic violence (Valentine et al., 2013).

The Alabama Department of Corrections has provided two regulations to address the issue of IPV and employment. The Alabama Department of Corrections administrative regulation 220 is a departmental leave policy, and the Alabama Department of Correction administrative regulation 228 a sexual misconduct policy. The Family Medical Leave Act. Alabama department of corrections Administrative Regulation 220, 2000) lists specific reasons for leave, but domestic violence is not listed as a reason. The FMLA has been used to balance the demands of leave at the facility.

There is the potential to include IPV as a reason for family leave. The Department of Correction administrative regulation 228 (2004) relates to sexual misconduct and sexual harassment. This policy states that employees who experience or witness any form of sexual misconduct or harassment must notify their immediate supervisor provided that the immediate supervisor is not the offender. ADM reg 228 (2004) also explains that if the offending staff member is the immediate supervisor, or if the immediate supervisor is not available, then the employee must report sexual misconduct harassment or abuse to next highest ranking official. ADM reg 228 (2004) states that all warden directors and deputy commissioners shall endeavor to interact with the charging of any employee in such a manner as to try and remove any fear of restraint interference reprisal or coercion because of employee claiming sexual misconduct a harassment procedure of action. Programs like LEP, along with public policy regulations, can support the development of public policy focused on reducing IPV at places of employment.

Adams et al. (2012) investigated how victims of IPV in public work sectors often have no benefits that would retroactively engage their employment such as financial needs, medical services, and sick days. This affects employment stability because employers can take measures against employees affected by domestic violence. Many employees are terminated due to domestic violence situations and related issues that occur at their place of employment. In Maryland, employees experiencing domestic violence are protected under an inclusive statute that allows them to use leave sick.

Oregon grants employees the permission to use paid leave for illness, vacation, and absences related to IPV (Hayes, 2013). This clause prevents employers from treating the absence as unpaid (Hayes, 2013). Other reasons for leave include seeking legal assistance to address court related issues stemming from domestic violence (Hayes, 2013).

Florida's 2007 law grants coverage to employers that have fifty or more employees that compares to coverage provided by FMLA. Oregon also has a law relating to reasonable leave for companies with six or more employees. Both states' laws address the privacy of employers and the need to maintain confidentiality for victims' requests for leave due to domestic violence. In Maryland, employees are protected from IPV-related repercussions through an inclusive statute that includes an anti-retaliation component for employees who are IPV victims and need to use leave.

There can be help given through the form allocated Leave should be allocated for employed women that experience domestic violence (Rayner-Thomas et al., 2016). However, many victims do not use leave for fear of job loss, lack of payment, and stigma (Laharnar et al., 2015). There can be positive gains in the area of workplace protection of victims of IPV. The total economic impact of IPV will be at least \$3.7 billion over the next 10 years (Baughman, 2014).

This study revealed different views regarding the effects of IPV in the workplace regarding issues of safety, barriers of usage (confidentiality, denial), workplace resources



(availability of resources, supervisor conflicts in support), and barriers of law implementation (undefined time, unawareness). Thus, training for supervisors on IPV is needed in order to effectively implement laws and support employees (Laharnar et al., 2015). Laharnar et al.'s (2015) study illustrated that IPV spills over to places of employment and can have negative implication of the physical well-being of employees and affect the productivity and safety of the victim and possibly other employees. When situations require that the abuser and victim appear in court, judges have the power to reinforce the seriousness of laws and to send the clear message that U.S. society does not condone and will not tolerate interpersonal violence (Baughman, 2014). The employee has the right to hospital treatment consultation assistance as it relates to a legal nature due process of the law, and relocation without apprehension as it relates to the deprivation of employment.

Laharnar et al. (2015) indicated that 74% of participants had no knowledge of leave and that 65% of survivors would have used it if they had known about it. Participants were mainly concerned about employment security, lost pay, and stigmatizing of victims. Participants requested more efforts to raise IPV awareness and supervisor training (Laharnar et al., 2015).

Currently, 16 U.S. states have laws providing leave for employed survivors of IPV (Laharnar et al., 2015). For example, the Oregon law (Domestic Violence, Harassment, Sexual Assault or Stalking Protections, Oregon Revised Statute § 659A.270, passed in

2007, provides employed survivors, or parents/guardians of a minor child who is a survivor of IPV, sexual assault, criminal harassment or stalking with reasonable, unpaid leave. The employee may seek medical treatment, counseling, legal assistance, attend court hearings, or relocate without fear of loss of employment. Victims of IPV in companies with more than five employees are eligible for this assistance (Hayes, 2013).

### **Leave for Intimate Partner Violence Victims**

Katula (2012) argued that IPV victims should be eligible to receive workplace programs, policies, education, and supervisor trainings to help improve the situation of IPV in the public work sector. For some employees and employers, leaving is the only effective strategy. Some victims of IPV can use disability leave because of anxiety caused by abuse (Katula, 2012). Katula (2012) indicated that an employee experiencing domestic violence can experience mental health problems such as, depression, post-traumatic stress, low self-esteem, and anxiety.

Katula's 2012 study gave examples of leave trends related to domestic violence in Oregon, Florida, Kansas, North Carolina, Washington State, Washington, DC, and Maryland. Washington, DC introduced laws in 2008 that are similar to those in Oregon. Katula (2012) indicated that there is a pending bill in the House of Representatives that would allow thirty days of unpaid leave to employees who are the victims of domestic violence.

Hayes (2013) suggested that if victims' right to paid leave can be extended in a conservative state like North Carolina, then victims' right to paid leave should also occur in liberal states such as Maryland. Employers influence the employment stability of employees impacted by domestic violence. However, many employees are terminated due to IPV situations and issues at their place of employment. Implicated actions IPV have been witnessed in public work sectors. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) adapted the stress-coping model, which distinguishes between emotion and problem-solving coping strategies and the resources available for women to cope with the effects of abuse (Beecham, 2014).

### **Laws that Protect Women Employed in the Public Sector**

Runge (2012) suggested that laws should address domestic violence and employment instability. Maryland laws on leave clearly address employee leave as related to domestic violence. The state of Maryland's laws are a good example of how laws can protect IPV victims and their job stability.

### **Policies Related to Leave for Victims of IPV**

Employees experiencing IPV should be protected by laws implemented on state and federal laws. There are several reasons employees might need to take leave because of domestic violence. An employee can seek an injunction for protection within a domestic violence situation. An employee can receive protection from abusers.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Domestic Violence in the Workplace**

Previous studies have focused on identifying signs and symptoms of domestic violence within the workplace. Employees who are IPV victims may have a conciliatory way of dealing with abuse by ignoring and concealing its physical and emotional symptoms. Employees may also appear less involved in their work, and embarrassed victims may even quit their jobs (Katula, 2012). Workers should request supportive employment programs, regulations, comprehensive annual training, and management training to help improve situations of IPV in the public work sector. After it is confirmed that an employee has been a victim of abuse, organizational efforts to take appropriate action can become difficult.

Katula (2012) hypothesized that regardless of an employee's health, legal, and financial issues due to IPV, acts of domestic violence can impact a company. An employer has a moral responsibility to understand the issues of domestic violence in the workplace. If an employer creates a public policy to address IPV in a public work sector, it can increase employee safety. When victims of IPV and employers realize that abuse extends beyond the home, they can create proper policies and support systems. HR and key managers can be trained to spot the tell-tale signs of domestic violence abuse, including absences and performance and behavioral issues. Companies can also post a series of striking images in every toilet cubicle with short stories about how both men and women have been helped by sharing their problems with their employer (Payne, 2013).

## **Summary**

This literature review showed that there is a need for further examination of IPV and employment stability. The scope of this qualitative research was to explore how domestic violence affects adult females in their employment in the public sector. This research aimed to inform policy and practices related to the cycle of intimate partner violence. The literature reviewed was interdisciplinary and included literature on IPV and employment and an exploration of feminist theory. The feminist perspective engaged the diverse situations of women exposed to domestic violence at their place of employment. The reviewed studies demonstrated that education level, socioeconomic status, and geography do not influence domestic violence. Women do have ambitions to leave abusive situations, but there are barriers that prevent them from leaving abusive relationships such as fear of being physically harmed or unemployed.

Social change can take place through educating employees, employers, and stakeholders in all public work sectors on the negative effects of IPV on women in the workplace. Education can foster awareness of IPV in the public sector and minimize occurrences in the future. IPV in the workplace weakens the rights of female employees and contributes to employment instability.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in this study.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

The focus of this study was to understand the effects of IPV on women's employment stability in the public sector. I used a phenomenological design to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon and how it is experienced in a particular setting, rather than drawing broad conclusions about a particular aspect of human behavior (Neuman, 2014). A qualitative approach was used to give voice to victims' experiences of IPV and their employment stability. Snowball sampling was used to select participants.

This chapter includes the rationale for the study design; it addresses the role of the researcher, and describes the methods for data collection and analysis. The chapter also includes the expectations of participants, instruments used to conduct the research, and a synopsis of ethical procedures.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

The study's overarching research question was: How can victims' perspectives on IPV provide insights to help public sector employers improve victims' employment stability? The study's supplementary research question was: How can victims' perspectives on IPV provide insights to help public employers create policies and practices that support victim disclosure?

A qualitative methodology provided data on the social effects of domestic violence and employment instability, and a phenomenological design allowed me to focus on understanding the experience (Kruth, 2015). Phenomenology involves a

comprehensive examination of daily life and emphasizes the ways that consciousness relates to other objects to reveal “hidden aspects” of experiences (Wertz, Charmaz, & McMullen, 2011). Thus, phenomenology gave specificity to the issue of IPV in public sector workplaces.

Qualitative research methods are designed to collect information about participants and their experiences, but they are not limited by the strictly controlled laboratory methods that involve numerical data and are prevalent in quantitative research (Kruth, 2015). A qualitative research method was used for this study to provide valuable insights into the nuanced and complex ways a survivor negotiates her position and the strategies she may adopt to protect employment stability (Beech, 2014).

Interviews were conducted to obtain the victims’ perspectives, to understand the how IPV affects socioeconomic stability. Qualitative research is subjective (but nonjudgmental) and the majority of qualitative investigations occur in natural settings where participants are relaxed (Kruth, 2015). Qualitative data includes words, pictures, and body language, and insights rather than numbers and algorithms (Neuman, 2014).

### **Role of the Researcher**

I conducted all of the interviews with adult women who have been exposed to IPV in the public work sector. The process of gathering information through interviews allowed me to collect information and feedback, and find ways to continuously improve interviews to increase alignment with participants' experiences and solicit relevant

information for the study (Hurst et al., 2015). I did not bring any biases to the research that may shape and/or affect the findings or interpretation of the findings.

### **Methodology**

Interviews were essential to this research to gain an understanding of how victims of IPV experiences employment stability. There are several models of phenomenological research designs, and each model focuses on the experience that is being examined, not on any individuals who are having the experience (Kruth, 2015).

### **Participant Selection**

Selected participants were public employees who have been victims of IPV in which at least one incident of violence took place while at work. I used a snowball technique to find participants for this study and address the lack of trust among participants. To create a snowball sample, the researcher requested that the first subject recruited provide multiple referrals to other participants. Every new referral was screened, and new candidates were added until sufficient primary data was collected (Basiouka & Potsiou, 2014).

To solicit participants, a flyer was placed at a domestic violence shelter for women located in the South. The flier included details of the research, details on how to enroll as a participant, requirements for participants, and IRB approval # 07-11-19-0590768. Due to the fear and stigma associated with being a victim of abuse, all prospective participants were issued a letter explaining the process of research and



types of correspondence, such as a face-to-face interview(s), e-mail, consent form, or a telephone response. Five individuals who contacted me did not meet the criteria for the study. This study included 15 female public employees in the South who had been victims of IPV at their place of employment. The participants were 18 to 42 years old and had varied socioeconomic backgrounds and levels of education.

The criteria for participant selection were as follows: (a) must be a female public employee (determined by self-disclosure); (b) must be 18 years of age or older; (c) must have been victim of IPV at their placement of employment; (d) must consent to partake in a telephone or a face-to-face interview; (e) must consent to audio taping of interview; and, (f) must be willing to sign the consent form. Selected participants received a letter inviting them to participate in the study (see Appendix B). Participants were notified in person or via e-mail that they had been selected for the study, and were issued an informed consent form (see Appendix C).

Once consent forms were returned, the researcher signed all forms, and for those participants that were unable to provide an electronic signature, the researcher made physical duplications of their forms and provide them with a copy. Once the researcher obtained signatures from all participants, he secured all consent forms in a password-sensitive computer file and in a secured file cabinet.

## **Instrumentation**

The primary instruments for this study were individual, semi-structured interviews. One-on-one interviews were conducted to obtain information about participants' experiences of IPV and employment. Interviews were conducted using open-ended questions which were developed in order to maintain consistency throughout the interviews. This will lend validity to the study. Interviews are a common way to collect qualitative data and be conducted in-person, online, or by telephone (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014).

The interview protocol included a list of questions that the researcher asked to each participant (see Appendix B). During interviews, the researcher cultivated a conducive atmosphere so that participants felt comfortable being open without feeling degraded, shamed, or fearful.

## **Data Analysis**

I used Moustakas's (1994) steps for phenomenological transcendental analysis. Moustakas (1994) indicated that the central processes of transcendental phenomenology research are: (a) epoché; (b) phenomenological reduction; (c) imaginative variation; and, (d) synthesis of meanings and essences. The epoché encompasses the removal of judgments and beliefs about an issue in order to carefully and respectfully pay attention to the way the issue is presented by a participant (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological reduction follows the epoché process and includes the perspective that an individual

experiences in its entirety, but as a separate individual unit of itself in a manner that is open-minded and new (Moustakas, 1994).

I analyzed the interviews through a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), a qualitative research tool (Iovu & Runcan, 2012). NVivo software was used to assist in the analysis of data derived from interviews. First, I transcribed the interviews. Secondly, the researcher identified themes. Next, the researcher coded themes, and finally, the researcher grouped certain themes together into larger categories in which subthemes were created. Through this iterative process, the researcher used a code review, gave specificity to emerging themes, and resolved any instances of disagreement between values and data that were localized to NVivo. I also created memos help with coding of data. The researcher used the NVivo classification function, which extended the identification to my themes.

I used a four-phase process that included: (1) assurance of alignment with research questions; (2) a construct of conversations that are inquiry-based; (3) receiving feedback on interview protocols; and, (4) piloting the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Supportive efforts were used through the IRP methods to the reliability of interview protocols used for qualitative research and thereby contribute to improving the strength to the consistency of data obtained from research interviews (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The process of analyzing data in which ideas are used to make sense of data, and data are used to change the ideas (Sarma, 2012).

Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and then imported into NVivo (Iovu & Runcan, 2012). NVivo aids in collection of data, creating memos, note taking, and categorizing to involve themes (Iovu & Runcan, 2012). NVivo software enhances the transferability of findings and helps to move the analysis from description to interpretation (Iovu & Runcan, 2012). Dependability of the data was enhanced through verbatim transcription of the interviews to prevent distortion of the narratives (Iovu & Runcan, 2012).

Throughout interviews, the researcher looked for ways to improve interviews to increase alignment with participants' experiences and solicit relevant information for the study (Hurst et al., 2015). The researcher posed five open-ended questions along with several other probing questions, which identified words or phrases that could be misrepresented or misunderstood. These probing questions provided an opportunity to ask the respondent to rephrase the question in their own words (Hofmeyer, Sheingold, & Taylor, 2015). To address the matter of discrepant cases, I solicited more participants when it was necessary.

### **Ethical Procedures**

To ensure that the rights of participants were protected, the researcher closely followed several qualitative approaches that have been outlined. Participants who experienced any form of emotional discomfort had the opportunity to stop participating in

the study. All participants were also provided with resources for help through a local domestic violence organization. All participants received a certificate of confidentiality to ensure that the information obtained during the interviews would not be used against them. Participants were advised that their privacy would be respected. Participants were told that their information and personal details would be kept private. It was essential to guarantee all promises to participants in order to make them feel comfortable sharing sensitive information that could be legally, economically, or socially damaging to them, but that is vital to answering the study's research questions (Wolf et al., 2012). All participants were informed about the phenomenological aspects of domestic violence and employment.

I interviewed a vulnerable population, and therefore needed to safeguard them from being traumatized by interviewing. Interviews took place in locations selected by participants that were deemed comfortable and private, such as the domestic violence shelters, libraries, and coffee shops. Domestic violence shelters are particularly secure places, as there are cameras at the front door to ensure safety of those inside the domestic violence shelter. There are also intercom systems that screen visitors and give entry only to those that are approved by the facility.

I contacted all selected participants via e-mail, telephone, or in person. Once contacted, I issued them a consent form and a participant letter. The next phase was schedule interviews. Interviews took place over a four-week period. Interviews were

audio recorded and transcribed. The collection of data and transcriptions included initial notes from interview transcriptions.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

I conducted data collection and analysis in ways that ensure the study's dependability, confirmability, transferability, and credibility. Credibility was established through confidentiality and triangulation. The triangulation technique was used in the review of all auditory recordings and transcription of interviews. The researcher used triangulation to show the research study's findings are credible.

Transferability was demonstrated through the findings that will be applicable to all contextual situations. Trustworthiness for quantitative studies includes validity and reliability. This qualitative study used detailed descriptions to illustrate the findings so that the findings may be applied to other circumstantial, contextual incidents of IPV in the public sector. This study's confirmability was met through a degree of neutrality in the findings. All findings were based on responses of participants, not on potential bias or the researcher's personal motivations. I clearly presented data collection techniques to enhance the study's dependability so that other researchers can repeat the study.

### **Summary**

This qualitative study used a phenomenological methodology to research the experiences of women who were victims of IPV in their public sector workplaces in order to better understand the relationship between IPV and employment stability. This

methodology is comprehensive in understanding the effects of IPV and employment instability among women working in the public sector. Semi-structured interviews was the primary instruments. In orders to obtain information about participants' experiences of IPV and employment one-ono-one interviews were conducted. Selected participants were public employees who have been victims of IPV at the public sector. Chapter 3 also described the criteria and process for participant selection, the role of the researcher, the research design, ethical considerations, and data collection and analysis procedures.

## Chapter 4: Results

The study's purpose was to share examples of how exposure to IPV in public sector workplaces can impact a woman's employment status and enhance existing status literature related to policies in the public sector and to. The overarching research question was: How can victims' perspectives on IPV provide insights to help public sector employers improve victims' employment stability? The supplementary research question was: How can victims' perspectives on IPV provide insights to help public employers create policies and practices that support victim disclosure?

I explored the thoughts and observations of 15 adult women that had experienced IPV as a public sector employee. IPV in the public sector can produce job instability and economic struggle. IPV can place adult female victims at an unfair disadvantage in terms of income. The experiences of the victims documented in this chapter paint a bleak picture. Women who are victims of IPV often do not get help because they do not know how to address the situation, and this often has effects on victims' employment stability. The subject of IPV at the public sector has been acknowledged by researchers, who explained that the effects of IPV and victims employment stability need to be studied. The gap in literature pertained to the paucity of documentation on the voices of the victims of IPV in the public sector. The phenomenological design was selected for this research. Women in the public sector experience IPV as employees.

This chapter includes descriptive information on the demographics and



participants' characteristics, data collection, and methodology. This chapter provides a descriptive account of the process of the data analysis, the evidence of this study.

### **Settings**

There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced participants or their experience at time of study. As it related to influence and interpretation of the study's results there were no changes in personnel. During this study there was no other trauma witnessed or experienced by myself, participants, or personnel at the shelter.

### **Demographics**

All 15 female participants acknowledged that they were a victim of IPV at their place of employment: 11 were abused by an ex-boyfriend, 2 were abused by an ex-husband, and 2 were abused by a supervisor with whom they were in an intimate relationship. All were African American and were from the south. Participants were 20-42 years of age.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

All verification steps were paramount in the collection of data that was consistent to the standard rule of collection of content, which was vital to the construction of identified themes. The information obtained from this study contributes to the knowledge on IPV exposure in public sector workplaces. It may have the capacity to help change practices and policies related to domestic violence prevention in the public sector setting. As it pertains to this study, IPV extends farther than physical abuse, stalking, and kicking.

IPV is inclusive of all acts of sexual psychological and economic violence that may be committed by a family member or an inmate partner (Vandana, 2016).

Snowball sampling was the technique method of process used in the recruitment. An invitation letter was posted on the bulletin board at a shelter in the south to solicit women who qualified with the study criteria of while being employed in the public sector. The researcher could not get approval to post a flier at any public agencies. All participants were adult female victims had diverse economic statuses. Participants of the study were either residents of the women's shelter or recruited after the details of the study were shared by others after observing the invitation letter. The incorporated sampling technique was instrumental in finding adult female victims exposed to IPV and employment stability. During the study's screening process, participants self-disclosed that they were victims of IPV prior to this study.

All participatory candidates were issued a letter informing them that this particular study was voluntary, and that the researcher could be contacted using contact information from the letter. The letter of invitation (see Appendix A) included my telephone number and my e-mail address for perspective participatory candidate that had any posing questions or any influencing aspects of the study as it pertains to them.

Fifteen participants met the qualification to participate in the study. All participants that were involved in this study gave consent to sessions that included interview. All participants gave their personal signature to a form that acknowledged

consent and given to me all forms were personally or electronically signed by myself. A copy was then issued to all participants. All interviews were recorded electronically collection of data, and securely stored with in a data base with security on a digitized disk securely placed in a safe locked place at my home. The amount of accumulated qualitative data materialized from extensive interviews. The 15 participants were all females of African American decent, in total every female had some personal experience and exposure to IPV at their place of employment.

The interviews consisted of five predetermined, open-ended questions with several probing questions. Each participant received a numerical code and a pseudonym for all interviews. All initial interviews took place over the phone or face-to-face. All participants received a transcript of all summarization, and a phone number to nonprofit statewide organization that support IPV.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness was addressed in a number of ways (Cope et al., 2014). Trustworthiness leads to the value of qualitative research. Transparency regarding the conduct of a study is especially important to the usefulness and integrity of the results (Cope et al., 2014). Credibility was established through confidentiality and member checking. Member checking was an important step in this qualitative study that substantially enhances credibility (Cope et al., 2014).

I used several methods of data collection to gain a comprehensive view of the

phenomenon (Cope et al., 2014). Methods of data collection included interviews, observation, and notes and journaling throughout the research process (Cope et al., 2014). I established confirmation through explanation of conclusions and interpretations and exemplified the results that came directly from the data (Cope et al., 2014). Rich quotes were documented in this qualitative study and can be found in the discussion of each theme (Cope et al., 2014).

This study focused on the life experiences of adult females working in the public sector who have experienced IPV at their place of employment. By analyzing their narratives, the researcher sought to understand how IPV in the public sector workplaces impacts women's physical, social, and psychological well-being and their job instability. Transferability as it relates to this qualitative researcher was demonstrated through the findings that are applicable to all contextual situations. This qualitative study used detailed description to illustrate the findings from this research study so that they can be applicable to other circumstantial, contextual incidents of IPV in the public sector. This study's confirmability was met through a degree of neutrality in the findings of this research. All findings were based on responses of participants. There was no bias or researcher's personal motivations. Confirmability relates to findings that emerge from the data and are not influenced by the research bias, or bias in interpretation of findings. Reflexivity was used to address awareness of my values, background, and previous experience with the phenomenon so that there was no effect on the process of research (Cope et

al., 2014). Bracketing was used in this qualitative in a journal to address any preconceived thoughts (Cope et al., 2014).

Study participants had an opportunistic window of provisions of clarification and to support or strengthen facts by way of member checking. All study participants were issued a copy of the transcript of their interview in person or via-email. Member checking is a procedure that allows the researcher to further develop and maintain validity (Candela, 2019). Researchers should consider participants' exposure and indicate how the member check can be used as a reflective experience (Candela 2019). After all interviews were transcribed and coded, themes were developed. The feminist theory was aligned with this study because it engages the discovering of participant's exposure and experience as of perceived prevalence of IPV as an employee of the public sector, such verbal abuse, physical abuse, stalking, and job termination. To prevent participant bias, none of the participants receives any material pertaining to the feminist theory. As it pertains to feminist theory, the Victorian context gives explanation to the discourse of gender difference is powerfully illustrated in the public sector policy and practice (Candela, 2019).

Research indicates that there is an advancement of stress by places of employment in the public sector (Candela, 2019). It has been acknowledged that it can be an arduous task for one unit to hold the banner on women's issues especially since resources and funding distribution is scarce (Candela, 2019).

### **Results of the Study**

After interviews were conducted, transcribed, and uploaded to NVivo, I comprised a list of 10 themes that emerged from the transcribed text. Themes were determined by grouping similar participant responses to questions asked during the interview phase. Themes were grouped and descriptions were created, and then the themes were cross-referenced using peer-reviewed articles to authenticate coding. The ten themes and their explanations are shown in Table 1. In addition, any data that contradicted the major themes were identified, analyzed, and notated (Holsapple, Carpenters, Sutkus, Finelli, & Harding, 2012).

Table 1

*Emergent themes from the Data*

Theme	Explanation of Theme
1. Lack of support to address IPV in the public sector	There is a lack of support to address IPV in the public sector. There is lack of policies and there are no federal laws to protect victims of IPV in the public sector.
2. Attitudes of coworkers and others	Victims can experience negative attitudes from supervisors as well as coworkers about their struggles with IPV.
3. Public sector work cultures' acceptance of IPV	The public sector has a difficult time accepting the issue of IPV in the public sector.
4. Termination	Employees involved in IPV in the public sector often have their jobs terminated.
5. Exposure to IPV in the workplace	Employees (both victims and coworkers) in the public sector can be exposed to IPV at work.
6. Lack of services for victims	There is a lack of social services to help victims of IPV in the public sector.
7. Impact of IPV on workplace culture	Instances of IPV can have a direct, negative impact on workplace culture.
8. Economic implications	IPV can have negative implications on victims' finances.
9. Refusing to remain a victim	Victims in this study refused to remain victims.
10. Looking towards the future	Victims in this study believed educating others could help future victims get help for IPV in the public sector.

**Theme 1: Lack of Support to Address IPV in the Public Sector**

Twelve of the study's fifteen participants stated that the public sector organizations where they worked did not have policies in place to help employees deal with IPV. They also communicated a general lack of awareness about IPV among supervisors and administrators. Participants explained that the lack of policies created issues when they sought protection. Three participants in the study explained that they had to go to the police about their abuse. Participants in this study reported that they left jobs due to the lack of support from supervisors and administrators regarding IPV and employment.

P1: When I was grabbed by my boss, I had no idea that domestic violence could take place at work. I reported my boss to administration, but no one could help. They thought I was making things up.

P2: I had no support when my ex tried to fire me. The culture of my job was hostile because he was the boss. I needed to leave.

P3: At first, my job had a hard time accepting my ex was stalking while at work.

P7: My coworker was well liked. Everyone had expectations that everything was ok, he would get angry and threatened me if I talked to anyone at work.

Seven of the participants said that they were helpless to deal with IPV and their employment. For some, feelings of helplessness as made participants think they needed to



quit their jobs because there was no policy to protect them.

P3: I was helpless. I called the police to let them know that my ex shoved me in the wall. If I left him, they told me to get a restraining order. I was fired the next day from my job.

P4: My ex-boyfriend, who was my boss, kept coming to my house kicking and banging on the door. I went to work the next day and filed a complaint to his supervisor, and they separated us at work. But he still was my supervisor and he still threatened me when he came around to supervise others. I don't believe administration had the proper training to deal with this.

P6: My ex-husband was convicted of assault in another state. I moved away and some kind of way he found me. He keeps showing up at my job. I called the police, and when they came, I shown them a copy of my protection order and they told me that it was from another state and it had no power here. I also was informed to file a new restraining order, but my job would not allow me time off to do so. I took off and anyway and they fired me.

P7: I did not know who to talk to I just got the job and when I got off work he tried to pull me in his car by gunpoint. I open the door and ran. He pulled my blouse off and I ran into the building. The security guard could not do anything. He called my supervisor and the next day I was fired.

P8: Everything was just unraveling. He thought I was cheating with another

coworker because I was at work late and [he] pulled in front of the van and threaten our coworker. I was terminated without any policy to help me. I was helpless.

P9: When I was dating my ex, he was my supervisor. He also was married—that part I did not know. When I wanted to break up with him, he came to my cubicles and told me I will never move up at this institution. The end result: I was transferred 3 hours away and it was ordered from the department of correction. If I did not comply, I could be terminated.

P10: My ex- boyfriend was mad because I was leaving. He kept sitting outside for hours. It made administration uncomfortable. They told me not to call the police because the street is free parking. They did, however, issue me terminations papers. I really needed that job.

P11: My ex kept calling my job. My ex beat me up real bad. I needed to go the hospital and it was determined he broke my jaw. I lost my job because I could not get any approved leave. Domestic violence was not covered in my job's leave policy. I was fired; they told me that it was job abandonment.

## **Theme 2: Attitudes of Co-workers and Others**

Participants in the study frequently mentioned conditions that influenced coworkers' reactions to victims. Supervisors' attitudes made many feel isolated. Nine

participants thought that it was typically believed that IPV only takes place at home. Nine participants clearly communicated the challenges of dealing with IPV at their public sector workplace.

P1: My job did not support me while I was experiencing domestic violence.

P3: I was treated with rejection by administration.

P4: I was ostracized from my peers because my pastor called my job to get me some help.

P5: When I was working helping at my job, my ex-boyfriend pulled up in front of the van and threatened my supervisor. I explained to my supervisor I was sorry, but I was terminated the next day. I told them I needed help. Before this incident they thought was making things up. They just kept their distance from me.

P6: There were supervisors whispering to other employees about my situation with my husband and IPV.

P8: I told them I needed a day off to get a restraining order. They told me I needed to go on my own time. They gave me a regulation on the leave policy that had nothing to do with having an off-day for domestic violence situations. They also told me there is a work shortage [and] if I did not show up, that would be grounds to be terminated.

P10: Most of my challenges [came from] for getting help from my job.

P11: I told my job I needed an officer to walk me to my car because of threats. I

produced paperwork that I was experiencing a problem with my ex. I also informed them how he was threatening me. I explained to them could I have a closer parking space to the building by the camera for safety reasons. My job told me all parking space was for supervisor.

P15: I needed them to help me and they flat out told me, “We can’t have this type of situation here.”

Participants also discussed the level of abuse they endured and perceptions of how it affected the likelihood of getting support at their place of employment.

P2: I placed all my trust that my job would support me in my time of abuse; unfortunately, they left me vulnerable. When I got fired from my job, I had no money and it forced me to go back home to an abusive relationship. I believed by telling my supervisor that I was experiencing domestic violence issues at work that they would help me, but that was not the case all. They did tell my business to people and it started gossip and rumors. I really felt betrayed by [my] place of employment.

P4: I really was upset with myself for getting involved with a domestic violence situation at work but I remember the pain of being down and out. There was no person to talk to get support from at work. I refused to let myself become so far down that I could not make it to work. However, the impact of the abuse was more than I could bear. There was no support system at my job for me.

P6: I was attacked by my ex-husband girlfriend. I got in my car to hit her, and he jumped in front her to save her. I did not hit him, but he fell on her and broke her leg. He got out the car and started shaking me. I was arrested and put in jail. I had to take a business trip for my job and was able to make it. My mom had to lie and say I was having complications with my pregnancy. I could never tell my job that I was arrested for domestic violence situation. They would have fired me. They would never understand. They did, however, find out because he called and told them I went to jail so I could get fired and have to come back home. They questioned me about it and I said he lied. I knew that if I told them I lied about the incident as it related, it would be ground for termination. He came to my classroom pushing on me after school about the situation. If there was some form of support, I would have told the truth. Deep down I knew I would be fired.

### **Theme 3: Public Sector Work Cultures' Acceptance of IPV**

Some participants described poor levels of acceptance from various coworkers. Six participants were told they should leave before their ex harmed someone in the building.

P1: My supervisor kept shouting kept shouting have him arrested for he kills someone there. Like I can control him.

P3: Basically everyone had this idea that I was doing him something to make him keep harassing me at the job.

P4: My abuser was well-liked. He was my supervisor. A lot of employees believed him. He said negative things and he was the abuser. I could not file because my situation did not fall in the lines of sexual harassment

P7: Co-workers saw us screaming and having attitudes towards each other, and they thought it was it was a little lover's spat till he hit me in the break room. No one understood he was an animal.

P12: You would expect if you worked somewhere 6 months, people would believe you and have the integrity to believe you about what [was] wrong at your work environment.

#### **Theme 4: Termination**

Five participants said that they were terminated from their place of employment because of IPV at the workplace.

P2: When I got fired from my job, I had no money and it forced me to go back home to an abusive relationship.

P3: I was fired the next day from my job. When I was fired because of the IPV situation, it drastically cut into my finances.

P4: Eventually I was fired because I was unable to get transportation, and I felt so helpless at work. I did not feel safe.

P10: They told me not to call the police because the street is free parking. They did, however, issue me terminations papers.

P8: I was terminated without any policy to help me. I was helpless.

P11: Domestic violence was not covered in my job's leave policy. I was fired.

They told me that it was job abandonment and it was documented.

### **Theme 5: Exposure to IPV in the Workplace**

All fifteen participants experienced IPV while at work. Different forms of IPV abuse were experienced by participants. Participants discussed experiencing stalking and psychological impacts as a result of IPV.

P1: Since I got that job, my husband was jealous of me working. He slapped me in the car and told me I was his slave and all I better be doing is working.

P2: I was brutalized by an ex who was my boss. We would be at work, he would grab me and squeeze my shoulder so hard. He said he did not want to leave any marks.

P3: When I told him I reported him to administration [and] that I needed help, he came to my office. He slapped me in my office and I asked, "What you did that for?"

P4: One time it was my birthday. He brought me a cake and flowers and asked to be alone. I went in my break with him to my office and he choked me and told me, 'I better be your only man. I own you.'

P5: I had car trouble in the parking lot at my job while at work. I called him to help. He got upset. He was furious. I told him I was sorry. He took his belt off and

started hitting me on the legs. He said, 'You act like child, I am going to treat you like [one].'

P6: He came to classroom on Saturday while I was working on my lesson plans. He said, 'I know you here with someone.' I explained to him that there were several teachers here and three coaches. He said, 'So you sexing him.' I told him I have my four-year-old and my three-year-old and my 11-month-old. So I said, 'How I am cheating?' He pushed me down and said, 'Wait till you get home.'

P7: I had been feeling bad one day at work. I called my ex and told him I was sick and needed the rest of the day off. He said, 'We need you here,' and hung up the phone. Fifteen minutes later when the officers left the unit, he came and punched me in the leg and said, 'You trying to leave early to be with someone else.'

P8: I am afraid of abuse and he knew it. We were having lunch in the break room. When everyone left out, he came and sat next to me, and he put his hands between my legs, squeezed my thigh, and said, 'You are not eating with no one else.'

P9: We he found out I put a restraining order on him, he came to our job and security let him in. When I came out, my security he punched me in the back of the head. He screamed I had no rights and left out the back door.

P10: I talked to my pastor about my ex-boyfriend abusing me at work and at home. He tried to talk to my ex. After he left, he was furious. Came to my job with a smile and gave me hug. While hugging me he said, 'You feel that gun in



my pocket? If you tell anyone else, I am going to come to this job next and kill you.'

P11: When I was in the elevator, he started choking me for no reason.

P12: They arrested him at home. I filed a restraining order. He came to my job a week later and walked behind me in the parking lot at my job and slapped me so hard on the right side of face and my earring.

P13: He would always push and shove on me in the car in the parking lot at work.

P14: I got sick at work and called him to pick me. When he picked me up, he started screaming, 'You need to be at work to make some money.'

### **Stalking**

Five participants said that they were stalked, and that stalking was difficult to deal with at work, especially at work.

P1: He kept coming to my job and would sit in the parking lot like no one knew he was there.

P2: He would come an hour early to work thinking I met someone at work. He told me, 'I am always watching you.'

P5: He kept calling my work phone to see if I was with a man.

P6: Some kind of way, he kept checking the visitor log to see if another man was seeing me.

P15: He would go through my work email. To see who I was talking to. He told me, 'I

keep my eyes on you.’

### **Psychological Impacts on Victims**

Seven participants discussed psychological difficulties related to IPV in the workplace. Several of the participants pointed out symptoms of psychological disposition caused by IPV and stress.

P1: I was an emotional mess, cried a lot. I was never sure what was going to happen next. I didn’t want to let my fellow coworkers know how I felt. Being in an abusive situation is never easy.

P3: Sometimes I will lock my office door. I was emotionally stressed out. I knew if I was fired, I would not be able to take care of myself or my kids.

P4: My work kept falling behind. I tried to stay on task but I was too stressed out. My mind was unable to focus on my job expectations.

P12: I experienced so much anxiety because of the fact that safety is such an issue with me. I even heard of some people dying at the hands of their abuser. I was mentally drained.

### **Theme 6: Lack of Appropriate Services for Victims**

Eight participants explained that the public sector entity they worked for lacked appropriate services for mitigating IPV at work. Participants described difficulties assessing policies and getting help with interventions after they experienced IPV at their place of employment. Eight participants explained they tried to seek protection for

themselves.

P4: It was rough when it first began. There was no services offered at my job to help protect me from me from my ex. Eventually, I had met with a domestic violence counselor at the YMCA. I had to learn about how to get help as far as it related to restraining orders and some type of protection while I am at work.

P6: I had no idea what to do. He was all I, ok how I can get some help knew. I started looking online for some help. I even YouTube it. I even Googled it. I did not have any idea where to go. As related to the local government, there was nothing offered as it related to a policy. My job offered me nothing. I was really alone.

P8: There was person that I thought was a good supervisor. I felt like I could tell to him. He made me provide proof of the incident. When I could not, he laughed, called me liar and laughed.

P10: I reported my ex to administration. They said, 'We can't have this here.' They said I was not even a permanent employee yet. They told me they could not relocate me and if the abuse matter continues, its grounds to be terminated.

P12: There are no services for domestic violence at this job or government policy programs. All this is nonexistent. I had to start researching on my own to get help.

### **Theme 7: IPV Impact on Workplace Culture**

Several participants described how IPV affected them and their fellow coworkers.

Participants identified ways their responsibilities, participation, and job roles were impacted by IPV. Seven participants also identified ways that IPV affected the roles of other coworkers.

P1: It was more or less like I was in a tunnel. All I could do was focus on protecting myself. I didn't want to bring things up at my job. I figured that if I didn't pay attention to it, it would go away. I was no longer concentrating on my job responsibilities, or for that matter, what my coworkers needed me to do. I started shutting down. My work effected my coworkers, because they had to pull my slack.

P2: I was not paying attention at work. I was at work physically all the time, but mentally I was not. Before the abuse I was very responsible at work. But I was barely able to meet my own basic needs after the abuse.

P3: I tried to stay to myself. My coworkers started not speaking to me because of my work performance declining due to the abuse.

P6: I had withdrawn myself from my fellow coworkers at the workplace. My ex-boyfriend and I had issues of IPV, and it manifested and came to my job. People started isolating themselves from me because they do not want to deal with my problem.

P11: I needed more money and tried to get some overtime, but they refused to give me overtime because there was no security to protect my coworkers after

hours.

P15: I started getting a lot of write-ups because I was unable to focus.

### **Theme 8: Economic Implications**

Thirteen participants explained that there were economic implications related to IPV and their resulting employment instability.

P1: When I was fired, I could not afford to maintain my monthly expenses, such as food, childcare and housing.

P2: Being a single parent was expensive. I could no longer afford transportation to look for a new job. Also, the domestic violence incidents that were documented stopped me from getting a job at some places. Pretty soon we were on the streets.

P3: I had to go to food banks to get food to feed my family.

P4: After a couple of weeks, I realized that I was not able to buy things because I was in a financial bind.

P6: When I put a restraining order on him, he refused to help pay the bills. [I was] unable to pay childcare and bills.

P8: When I was terminated, I was unable to pay my house note and my car note.

### **Theme 9: Refusing to Remain a Victim**

Eight participants discussing theirs' or others' refusal to remain a victim of IPV.

These women discussed how they educated others about IPV in the public sector.

Participants provided their efforts to overcome the effects of IPV.

P1: Even though I was abused at work, I felt like I was victim everywhere I went: home, church, and even visiting with friends. I tried to explain to anyone that I was a victim and I refused to stay in that situation. Every chance I get, I explain that it is not about love it's about how a person wants to put power over you. I then try to explain some things about domestic violence and work.

P2: There are very little things I do because of my finances. Sometimes when I am invited to job functions I stay in a corner to myself, showing them you can make it. A good example showing I am not afraid of anyone.

P3: As it relates to being a victim and knowing I was a victim that took a little work. I had to accept that that and own up to the fact I was a victim. I decided to talk to people about IPV every chance I get. I feel like it helps me and helps someone else.

P6: Sometimes you just have to say, Enough is enough, and you have to refuse to be treated that way. If he tries again, I will call the police.

P7: Every chance I get, when I notice someone that could possibly be a victim, I try to talk to them about physical abuse and how can happen at work.

### **Theme 10: Looking Towards the Future**

All participants acknowledged there is a need for organizational policies that address IPV. Public policy can increase education and awareness about IPV and increase support for victims. Participants expounded on the point that there should be a federal

law that outlines victims' rights and requires supervisor education about prevention and upholding policies.

P1: There should be some way to inform the society and the public work sector on information that pertains to IPV and employment. If people are informed about IPV in the public work sector they it can possibly be easier from them to come forward and get help.

P2: When all the public workplace is educated about domestic violence, it is a strong possibility we can solve this issue.

P6: There should be some kind of support officer within the public work sector that specifically was trained in IPV incidents.

P9: Employees that are victims can be better service by helping them become awareness of being does not make you are an outcast. The government can support this by creating a law that address IPV and employment.

P15: The only way we can be helped is by having a law that can help us so we can have a safe future at work and able to continue employment without fears of being fired.

### **Discrepancies in Data**

There were some discrepancies in the data on victims' IPV and workplace stability. For example, Participant 12 explained different effects of IPV on her employment. She reported that her life was not altered by IPV; she had saved enough

money to sustain her until she found another job, and she never was homeless.

Participant14 explained that she really was okay despite everything, and that she did not feel like a broken person. All participants that had any discrepancies have noted within the instance of apprehending the mental discernment of IPV as it relates to other participants, and their experiences with IPV and employment stability in the public work sector. Data that was deemed discrepant was notated, but discrepancies should be expected in qualitative research, as all lived experiences are individualized and based on perception.

### **Summary**

. It is imperative to systematically advance the information and comprehension of practitioners about the intricacy and underlying issues of pragmatically working with abusers, and how they do not take full responsibility for their actions Study participants conveyed they experienced challenges related to acts of IPV at their workplaces. Participants had limited understanding of how their employers could help manage IPV in the workplace, and supervisors were inconsistent in their approaches to handling IPV at public sector workplaces. Participants in this study reported that they tried to seek help and secure their employment as they dealt with IPV, but their voices were not heard. The participants noted that supervisors and administrators had limited experience and comprehension of IPV, and that this limited knowledge contributed to negative situations at work. The participants in the study also reported that there was lack of training for



employees and supervisors. Even worse, they were ostracized, ignored at work, or surreptitiously terminated from their place of employment. Most participants reported that IPV significantly affected their finances; many voluntary or involuntary left their jobs because of issues related to IPV.

The majority of the participants in this study reported that public sector organizations reactively approached instances of IPV by terminating the employee instead of proactively dealing with the problem through administrative regulations or policies that provide legal protection to victims. Being fired is unusual for public sector employees due to civil service and union protections. However, participants who were terminated from their employment were not of permanent status, as they had not completed the probationary period of 6 months. As a result, these participants did not have the same employment protections as permanent employees.

The majority of the participants believed that the cultural normality at their place of employment and supervisors take on the sentiment of administration as it relates the issue of IPV and victims' employment stability in the public work sector.

The majority of the participants of this study reported poor attitudes toward their safety and well-being as they dealt with IPV. The majority of the participants reported that the common cultural belief was that domestic violence only happens at home, and that this belief made it difficult for them to receive proactive help at work. The belief that IPV only occurs at home also contributed to a lack of supportive efforts, isolation, and

job termination. Participants in this study reported that fellow coworkers were not helpful, believed that victims were lying, or ignored the victim's requests for help until something serious happened. Although they did not receive help at work, all participants believed that consulting with a qualified domestic violence counselor was very helpful. All participants believe that having a domestic violence counselor can improve one's chances of defeating IPV at work. Participants explained that getting help gave them a sense of empowerment and showed them that they can be helpful to other victims or help educate their communities about IPV prevention.

Participants noted that they suffered from the stigmas surrounding IPV, especially after they reported abuse to a supervisor. As Participant 6 said, "You just don't know what people think of you." Participants explained that they had trouble receiving any form of intervention. Receiving support was especially difficult for participants whose abusers were coworkers or supervisors.

IPV affected participants' physical and psychological wellbeing, financial stability, and job security. In some cases, it made them homeless. Finances were a key factor in making a decision to come forward and report abuse; all 15 of the participants in this study explained that being a victim of IPV can affect employment status and financial stability. There was no legal way for victims to take time off work to deal with IPV situations.

The majority of participants of this study explained that IPV in the public work

sector can happen at any time. Definitely if a victim is terminate because of IPV there is a loss of income. Participants explained it is hard financially when you are unemployed because of termination. Participant 6 explained when you are terminated you cannot use that job for a reference. Participant 6 also explained I just wanted to take my life. I cannot stand me and my kids on the streets like this.

Participant 15 explained to they had no money for childcare.

It was conveyed by participants that once they exited their relationship there were definite effects of them being the head of household. P 10 when you leave them it's hard because you are all alone and it's all on you financially. More than half of the participants in this study were homeless due to domestic violence in the public work sector.

Participant 6 explained I just wanted to take my life. I cannot stand me and my kids on the streets like this. Participants explained that they refused to be victims of their abuser.

To improve situation of IPV in the public sector, participants stated that there needs to be education, training, laws, and policies implemented at multiple levels: office, organization, state, and federal.

Chapter 5 offers an interpretation of results and compares this study's results to those of previous studies. Chapter 5 also discusses the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for practice and positive social change.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

The goal of this phenomenological study was to closely examine experiences of women who were victims of IPV in their public sector workplaces in order to better understand the relationship between IPV and employment stability. The goal of the study was to increase awareness about IPV in the public work sector by highlighting the voices and experiences of IPV victims.

All interviews were individual, face to face, confidential, and 60–90 minutes long. Moustakas's (1994) the used of steps was formatted through the transcendental phenomenological process of analysis. This basic conclusion of this study manifested 10 themes related to female victims of IPV in the public sector.

The 10 themes that emerged from this research were: (1) lack of support to address IPV in the public sector; (2) attitudes of co-workers and others; (3) public sector work cultures' acceptance of IPV and employment; (4) termination; (5) exposure to IPV at the workplace; (6) lack of appropriate services for victims; (7) IPV impact on work culture; (8) economic implications; (9) refusing to remain a victim; and, (10) looking towards the future. The participants in this study expounded on the stigmas associated with IPV in the public sector.

The findings of this study as it relates to IPV awareness at the workplace were consistent with Rayner-Thomas et al. (2016). Rayner- Thomas et al. (2016) related that

raising awareness about the effects of IPV on victims and employers has advanced of recognition on the workplace. A majority of participants explained that they refused to be in isolation in the public sector. Participants stated that education within the public sector about IPV and employment can give a voice to victims and provide protection. All participants recognized a law is needed.

The majority of the participants lacked awareness of the need for a policy to address IPV in the public sector. The participants in this study provided information on the lack of services for victims and training.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

It was described by participants that there needs to be a continuous effort to heighten consciousness. Another participant articulated that the process of educating the public workforce about IPV at work should also be not limited to just employees but supervisors and administrators as well. Establishing a law for IPV in the public workplace to ensure every employed person within a public facility receives training on IPV at the place of employment. This conclusion was conclusive with the literature that was peer reviewed (Laharnar et, al. 2015).

This study expounded on the voices of the victims of IPV and employment stability. The awareness of IPV in the public work sector grants victims the opportunity to receive protection. This study is unlike previous studies because it expounded on the economic impact of IPV that victims face in the public work sector, and how a public

policy on this issue retrospectively could ultimately produce positive change in the effects of IPV, in the public sector for employees that experience this phenomena.

### **Theme 1: Lack of Support to Address IPV in the Public Sector**

The majority of participants indicated a low level of support as they tried address IPV in their public sector workplaces. Participants also explained that low levels of concern regarding the need for IPV-related policies made it difficult to deal with administration when IPV happened at the workplace. There is a gap in knowledge as it relates supervisors and administration in the public work sector. Nine participants explained that they were assaulted because of the way administrators dealt with their situations. Participants in this study reported leaving their job because they did not feel protected from their abusers. The results of this confirms McLaren (2013). McLaren (2013) related that workers have varied responses to women who accessed services to ask for aid to enrich their job productivity, or who sought support in securing work (McLaren, 2013). McLaren (2013) discussed the need to evaluate how agencies are addressing women's needs, specifically in terms of establishing employment for IPV victims. McLaren (2013) noted that women experiencing stable employment while still using social services were more dauntless in their efforts to gain independence than other women. The study showed that outreach and follow ups helped women.

### **Theme 2: Attitudes of Co-Workers and Others**

The majority of participants in this study acknowledged that they were victims

and that IPV commonly takes place in work environments. IPV affects many points on the spectrum of a victim's life, this is inclusive of the work environments (Castro-González et al., 2016). The lack of knowledge about IPV prevention and intervention at the workplace exacerbated the participants' abusive situations. IPV and victims' employment stability coincide with (Laharnar et al., 2015). The results of this study reflect the findings of previous scholars that women are subject to IPV at their places of employment, and that IPV at work affects employment stability.

IPV can potentially affect the safety of a workplace (Laharnar et al., 2015). Abusers can use interference tactics while at work, such as harassing coworkers, and affect employee's ability to stay at work (Laharnar et al., 2015).

### **Theme 3: Public Sector Work Cultures' Acceptance of IPV**

The majority of participants noted that they were treated differently supervisors and coworkers learned about their struggles with IPV. Participants in this study explained that they were either terminated by administration or isolated by other coworkers due to attitudes about domestic violence. All participants explained that their supervisors were not trained to deal with IPV, and many participants indicated that they were blamed for incidents that happened in the workplace. The majority of the participants explained that there should have been a policy set in place to help protect them from negative attitudes of supervisors. This data demonstrates the need for proactive policies that protect victims of IPV in the public sector from negative attitudes and a lack of supervisor training

(Laharnar et al., 2015). Furthermore, 8 out of 15 participants explained that they were stigmatized. Stigmatization compounded effects of abuse and ultimately contributed to participants' decisions to quit their jobs. The trend of abused women quitting their jobs is also reflected in the research of Laharnar et al. (2015).

#### **Theme 4: Termination**

Five participants in this study were terminated from their place of employment as a result of experiencing IPV. The participants said they were not permanent employees, so they were not eligible for the protections that permanent state employees have. The participants explained that if they were permanent employees, they would have been more help as it relates to termination. Some believe that this is not a reason to fire someone (Laharnar et al., 2015). They can possibly come up with another reason to circumvent the issues without saying it out loud (Laharnar et al., 2015). However, this can be a reason why an employer explains this will not be tolerated because they are going to be trouble (Laharnar et al., 2015), so they are continually having problems so let's just get rid of them (Laharnar et al., 2015). The results of this study are adherent and accordant to researchers that have preceded this study which gave revelation that women and employment stability and issues and is aligned with Laharnar et al.'s (2015) study. The findings of this study were similar to the Pillinger (2016), who found that on average, one-third of female employee reported exposure to IPV, about half of the victims believed their job performance was adversely affected, and three out of four had a



difficult time focusing on the completion of job expectations.

### **Theme 5: Exposure to IPV in the Workplace**

All participants in this study described exposure to domestic violence at their public sector workplace; abusers were coworkers, supervisors, spouses, or boyfriends. The participants said that their abuser committed different forms of abuse at work including stalking, hitting, punching, and threats. This was aligned with previously done research by Castro-González et al., 2016 that explained that IPV victims may be fearful of being harmed, and as a result, instances of IPV often go unreported. In the United States, between 35%–56% of adult female victims of IPV are harassed at work by their abusers. These acts were committed in the office or in the parking lot outside the building. The participants explained that denial and lack of knowledge about the subject of IPV in the public work sector was a serious factor as it related to the abuse, the findings as it pertains to this study are congruent with (Laharnar et al., 2015). Several of the participants pointed out symptoms of psychological disposition caused by IPV and stress. This was aligned with previously done research by (Katula, 2012) emotionally masking and concealing signs of IPV abuse, the victim can decrease questions, suspicion, and judgment from supervisors and coworkers.

This was also aligned with previously finding as it relates to previous research by Beecham (2014) there is a multivariate increasing amount of implicated psychological factors of IPV at a victim's place of work.

This was also aligned with previously finding as it relates to previous research by Beecham (2014) there is a multivariate increasing amount of implicated psychological factors of IPV at a victim's place of work.

### **Theme 6: Lack of Appropriate Services for Victims**

The majority of participants in this study noted that there were no assessments or policies for intervention after they told administrators they were victims of IPV in the workplace. Houston (2014) claimed that certain degree of intervention is necessary to protect adult female victims. Participant 1 explained her situation was so bad that she was fired and had to stay at a shelter. She divulged that if there was a policy or services offered at her place of employment for IPV victims, she could have had some legal grounds to fight to keep her job. Another participant explained it would have been tremendously helpful for her supervisor to have been properly trained on how to manage IPV. Some participants explained there was no information at their job about IPV, which led them to research the situation on their own in order to find help. This finding was consisted with previous research by Katula (2012) that suggested policies should be implemented to help businesses and organizations actively deal with domestic violence through security personnel management. Overall, this study revealed that there was a paucity of information and materials for victims of IPV in public sector workplaces.

### **Theme 7: IPV Impact on Workplace Culture**

Study participants indicted that IPV impacted their workplace culture, job

responsibilities, professional roles, focus, and efficiency. All study participants described how IPV had devastating effects on their economic stability, in some cases because they were terminated from their jobs. One revelation of a participant was not being able to support housing or afford meals for their children. Previous research has not mentioned inflated housing costs and the relation a variation to what homeless individual earns individual earns that is affected by IPV and employment and economic stability issues was not also mentioned.

Participants also reported that they experienced psychological issues, including depression, stress, anxiety, and excessive worry, as a result of being an IPV victim at work. This was aligned with previous research by Wong & Mellor, 2014 on the mitigating effects of IPV may be extensive and direct (such as disability and chronic illness), indirect (such as self-perceived health and health behaviors), or all three (Wong & Mellor, 2014). Participants revealed that psychological effects can be experienced by them opposing force of victims of IPV in the public work sector. Previous research mentions that there are implicated psychological effects on victims of IPV in the public work sector (Laharnar et al., 2015).

### **Theme 8: Economic Implications**

Thirteen participants explained IPV, and the resulting employment instability, caused economic hardship. This was aligned with previous research Bowman, Dukes, & Moore, 2012. In 2009–2010, U.S. school districts identified 939,903 children

experiencing homelessness, with 179,863 (19 %) of the children naming shelters, including domestic violence shelters, as their primary residence. Some participants revealed that economic implications were so drastic that they were unable to afford basic necessities. This finding was consistent to previously done research by Adams et al. (2012) there was conducted a cross sectional survey in which 54% of women reported that they had experienced at least one form of material hardship in the 12 months preceding their final interview. Adams et al. (2012) revealed that 12% had their utilities shut off and 31% had their phone disconnected or went without a phone because they were unable to afford the cost. Seventeen percent reported that their family did not have enough food to eat. Housing was also a problem for some women: 6% had been evicted, 19% moved in with someone to share the household expenses, and 6% had been homeless in the past year and had to move into a shelter some found themselves unable to take care of basic needs. Three participants highlighted that they never want to be in a situation where they cannot afford to do for their children again.

### **Theme 9: Refusing to Remain a Victim in the Public Work Sector**

Eight participants gave descriptions of them or others refusal of `remaining a victim in the public work sector. Participants revealed that they educated others about IPV in the public work sector. Participants provided a description of efforts of not remaining a victim but being a role model to other victims. Two participants in the study highlighted as long as they are living, they are going to seek out others and help them.

One participant explained she will tell her story to help others seek help and let them know they are not alone. Two participants reported that they refused to be a victim again, and if they are exposed to IPV they are going to get a lawyer. As it relates to this finding the information documented in this theme, was not the literature of origination as a contribution on IPV and victim's employment stability. Victims of IPV within the public sector that are exposed to negative behavior have been highlighted by this study and can empower and commend others to assimilate in their behavioral and motivational outlook. This aligned with previously done research by (McLaren, 2013) that pointed out that follow-ups and outreach encouraged success, and that these things can also take place in a woman's natural social settings

#### **Theme 10: Looking Towards the Future**

All participants in this study mentioned the need for continuous efforts to raise consciousness, disseminate knowledge, and develop education and training related to IPV intervention and prevention in the public sector. One participant noted that in order to reduce the impact of domestic violence at the workplace, you must educate employees as well as supervisors. Another participant explained if there was a federal law protecting victims, all abused women could be protected from IPV at the workplace. This aligned with previous research by (Rayner-Thomas et al., 2016) raising awareness about the effects of IPV on victims and employers has been a contribution in the advancement of recognition to address the impact domestic violence has on the workplace.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One limitation of the study was its small sample size, as I only interviewed 15 domestic violence victims who had experienced IPV at their public place of employment. The participants in this study ages ranged from 20- 42, All individualized accounts by participants were descriptive through their provisional representation of the phenomenon of IPV in the public work sector. The voices of the participants along with personal experience of being a victim of IPV in the public work sector, were a contributory asset in in the spectrum of accountability to the characterization of ramifications that IPV victims experience.

The experiences of the victims as it relates to their perceptual conceptualized understanding and perceived thoughts were a depiction of the population in direct relation to the issue of IPV in the public work sector and employment stability. Another limitation was related to the nature of the data collected. The study relied on participants' individual thoughts, experiences, and perceptions. In addition, the focus of the study was on female victims of IPV in the public sector workplaces in south and the general conditions of the public work sector may not be accurately depicted in this particular sample. An additional major limitation to this study was it pertained to just the public sector.

The potential of my professional and personal experiences was used to avoid researcher bias. My intent was to adhere to the voices of the participants and their experiences in order to raise awareness about the plight of IPV victims who experience

abuse at work. Bracketing was used in my field notes to prevent my judgments or opinions from influencing my interpretation of the data.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The study was an effort to engage the voices of victims about the phenomenon of IPV and its effects on employment in the public work sector. There were 15 participants in this study, and all were victims of IPV in the public work sector. All believed that there is a need for a sound proactive public policy to address abuse in the workplace. All participants believed that a proactive IPV policy could emancipate women from the economic instability caused by disclosing instances of abuse and asking for help from employers. Future research on the phenomenon of IPV should further explore the trend of firing abuse victims who ask for help. Further research is also needed on the lack of state and city regulations law to help victims of IPV in the public work sector. Some local laws provide protection for female IPV victims at the workplace. However, victims can be considered partly protected since there is no established public policy that focuses on IPV employment issues faced by the public work sector of this dossier that can help provide a platform for victims. Further research could focus on various aspects of victims' experiences with IPV in the workplace.

Victims' voices can be used to advocate for employee protection by providing important insight into how IPV is dealt with in the public work sector. Victims of IPV, employers, and public work sector administration can take joint ownership in developing

protection for victims. Studies like this one can be used to urge organizations, policymakers, and lawmakers to create protections for people who experience IPV in the workplace.

Future research on IPV in the public sector can help women face how it can be an undermining confidence within the margins of the blueprint on the eternal dynamics of safety. Some victims can be paralyzed by the fear of losing their jobs. Internal discourse and discord of the different considerations demonstrate a need for an internal from the top down. Further research could address the strain of credibility when a public work entity addresses the visceral emotion caused by IPV.

Further research is a push to give victims of IPV and employment the hope that a public work sector policy can help with mounting tensions of IPV and employment stability. Having a sound policy work sector policy on IPV can provide support so victims can survive the cycle of pain produced by IPV and employment instability. However, this explains the fact that facilitates should construct a policy based on public work sector application that institute information of an architectural design to facilitate chronic conditions of IPV in the public sector.

Additional research could give more transparency to the reinforcement of safety of victim's echo chambers as it relates to the extracted experience of abuse that becomes a filter prism. This reservoir of voices provides commentary on the deepening peril of synergy that victims of IPV face, and as it relates employment stability. Employment



instability can create a hold of precarious employment tenure under the arbitrary judgment of the public work sector emphasizes the gravity. This study pertains to participants' experience of deep insidious acts of IPV and the belief that educating employees there can be a prevention inject toxicity and can possibly prevent the sowing discourse in the public work. Despite the fact that IPV victims have their own personal experiences, public sector policymakers should be resolute and unambiguous in their approaches to mitigating the effects of IPV on employment stability.

This research is not an abstract public workplace policy argument, it is an attempt to promote further research, as well as policies, to protect victims of IPV at work. IPV and victim's employment stability can bring victims into ridicule and disgrace. As it relates to legal issues, all considerations and avenues need to be open and compulsively optimistic as it relates honest and realistic discussion on the effects of IPV and employment stability are directionally accurate. Further research on IPV and employment in the public work sector can provide useful insights for administrators.

## **Implications**

### **Implications for Positive Social Change**

This study was unique from past conclusions because it highlighted the voices of victims as they discussed IPV and employment instability in the public sector. The awareness of IPV in the public work sector grants victims the opportunity to receive protection. This study expands on previous research by focusing on the economic impact

of IPV for victims in the public work sector. It demonstrates how public policy on this issue could produce positive changes for women dealing with IPV at work.

This study may increase awareness of the issue of IPV in public sector workplaces. By providing detailed narratives from IPV victims, the study gives voice to IPV survivors and breaks down the dynamics between IPV and employment instability. The victims of IPV are protected in the public work sector. The potential impact of IPV on the public work sector can be Protractive from an optics prospective of scathing situations coupled with a range of employment issues.

### **Conclusion**

The victims' narratives presented in this study reflect their lived experiences with IPV in the workplace and demonstrate the urgency of developing organizational and legal protections for victims. The pain that victims of IPV revealed should prompt policymakers and organizations to create solid public workplace IPV policies. All entities in the public work sector should help women exist in safety by not standing by as passive observers of abuse. Effective public policies related to IPV in the public work sector can help victims avoid isolation, frustration, and decreased work performance. Workplace policies that address IPV could minimize the experience of being abused by employers and aid help victims navigate tumultuous situations of IPV.

The data from this study indicated that victims experience various degrees of unemployment, interpersonal conflict. Victims who have been affected by IPV abusers

can be invaluable information in the public work sector. It is upon administrators in the public work sector. This study can be used for training and educating supervisors on the issues IPV in the workplace, and for the importance of administrators' roles as empathetic leaders.

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## Appendix A: Study Invitation Flyer

***Would you like to share your story about intimate partner violence within a public work sector?***

You May Qualify for This Study If:

- You are between the ages of 18-60 years and older living in Louisiana.
- You have at least one Intimate partner violence incident that transpired in the public work sector
- You are willing to take part in a one-on-one interview.

The purpose of the study is to describe the experiences of being exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV) and employment stability. The purpose of this study is to learn more about how public employers can improve policies and practices to better support victim and their employment stability. The focus of this study is about your journey, which is inclusive of the disparities as an IPV victim in the environment of the public work sector.

Sharing your story can improve upon the awareness of IPV in the environment of the public sector work environment. This may lead to the creation of sound proactive public work sector policies, programs, and services for individuals that experience IPV and employment issues.

What You Will Be Asked to Do:

If there is agreement on your part, as a participant you will be asked to participate in one on one audio recorded interview that will about 60–90 minutes. The interview will be conducted at the domestic violence shelter when it is of a convenient for you. Any post follows up that may be needed may take place by phone. The information that will be recorded will be confidential and used only for this study purpose.

This part of a dissertation study will be conducted by Robert Cannon Jr. a Walden University doctoral candidate. If you have any level of interest, please contact Robert Cannon at xxx-xxx-xxxx or by e-mail at xxxxxxxxxxxx.

### **Appendix B: Interview Questions**

- 1) Consider an incident of IPV that occurred during your working hours, what was your employer's response to the incident?
- 2) How did the incident impact your work environment?
- 3) How did the incident of IPV at your place of employment impact your ability to perform your role of being an employee?
- 4) How did the incident impact your ability complete your assigned task at work?
- 5) What are some of the intimate partner violence policies at your place of employment?
- 6) Tell me your perspective on policies or procedures that can be implemented to better equip employers to assist individuals who were victims of IPV within a public work sector.
- 7) Is there anything else that you would like to share with me that would help me further understand your experience as a victim of IPV within a public work sector?

## Appendix C: Agency Letter

**CELEBRATING 10 YEARS**  
of breaking the cycle of homelessness

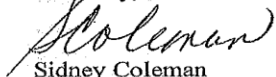
Date 7/24/18

Robert Cannon

Dear: Robert Cannon,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct a study entitled \_\_\_\_\_ As part of this study, I authorize you to post recruitment flyers on shelter bulletin boards and recruit participants from the shelter for interviews. I also authorize you the use of a designated area within the administrative building for interviews with participants. I understand that individual participation will be voluntary and at the participants' discretion. I understand that the organization's responsibility in this study includes: Opening the building to allow access to a classroom for interviews during business hours. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change. I understand that you will not name our organization in the doctoral project report that will be published in Proquest. I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies. I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Sidney Coleman  
Administrative Coordinator