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# Collegiate dating violence: A quantitative analysis of attachment style and help-seeking behavior by gender and sexual orientation

Kathleen Elizabeth Kline  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

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2009



ABSTRACT

Collegiate Dating Violence: A Quantitative Analysis of Attachment Style and Help-Seeking Behavior by Gender and Sexual Orientation

by

Kathleen Elizabeth Kline

M.S.S.A., Case Western Reserve University, 1982  
B.A., Alderson-Broaddus College, 1980

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Clinical Psychology

Walden University  
November 2009

## ABSTRACT

Previous research has indicated few victims of dating violence seek help for abuse or violence experienced at the hands of a dating partner, a failure that has led to rising healthcare costs and unreported crime. Attachment theory and the social support network orientation model have been used in understanding differences in attachment style and help-seeking behavior among individuals seeking help for medical and psychological problems, but the differences in these variables among victims of dating violence have not been examined. The purpose of this quantitative web-based study was to examine differences in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style, and help-seeking behavior between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. A sample of 149 collegiate males and females involved in heterosexual and same-sex relationships completed the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2), the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ), and the General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)/Actual Help Seeking Questionnaire (AHSQ) to measure the effect of the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, on the dependent variables, type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style, and help-seeking behavior. The results of the MANOVA and chi-square analyses revealed: (a) no significant effect between one's gender and sexual orientation and type of abuse or violence experienced and style of attachment, (b) male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were less likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims in heterosexual relationships, and (c) type of actual help secured is independent of help-seeking behavior. The results of this study demonstrate a need for social change in the way victimization by dating violence is perceived and may aid helping professionals in developing culturally sensitive screening tools to identify and assist a population who might not otherwise seek help.

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who have assisted and sustained me on this academic journey:

To my mother, Ms. Wilma (Shay) Haver and in memory of my father Reverend James M. Shay, who would tell me, “I always knew you could do it.”

To my beloved husband and best friend, Robert Vincent Kline, who encouraged me to begin this journey and believed that I could finish it to the very end. I thank him for taking the time out of our very busy life to edit this dissertation with his infamous red pencil and his enduring love, patience and support.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### Introduction

Many remember their college years as being the “best years of life”; a time of both hard work and play. Most people who enter college are in a state of transition from adolescence to young adulthood, which is a time of significant physiological and psychological change, when many are leaving home for the first time, separating from their family, and striving to maintain a sense of attachment and interdependence with parents while forming new attachment relationships at the same time (Beulow, Schrieber, & Range, 2000). During this college experience, many experience their first romance that may develop into a serious courtship and for some result in marriage. According to Weisz, Tolman, Callahan, Saunders & Black (2006), these young romantic relationships set the stage for future adulthood relationships.

Dating is an integral part of the college experience and important to an individual’s social development. Amar and Gennaro (2005) described dating as a “carefree period of romantic experimentation” (p. 235). Yet, dating in college can be a complicated, painful, and in some cases, a dangerous experience. According to Amar & Alexy (2005) and Rickert, Vaughan & Weimann (2002) few are aware of the abuse and violence in approximately one-third of these relationships.

Dating violence, also referred to in the literature, as *courtship violence*, is a form of intimate partner violence thought to parallel the dynamics of violence observed among adult marital or cohabitating pairs (Roscoe & Benaske, 1985, p. 424). Simply defined, it

is the physical, psychological, or sexual behavior by one partner toward another that is intended to cause injury or pain (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Acts of male-to-female perpetrated violence and violence between non intimate high school students have captured the attention of the public eye, but little is known about the violence that thrives among young college-educated men and women, especially between same-sex partners. Often obscured from public view, these acts of dating violence occur in approximately 15% to 40% of young adult heterosexual pairs with the result ranging from mild physical or psychological injury to death (Amar & Alexy, 2005). Consequences of dating violence often result in deep-seated psychological wounds that may have lasting toxic effects on future romantic relationships. Durant et al., (2007) reported as a consequence of dating violence, victims may engage in health risk behaviors, such as alcohol or drug use, which may interfere with one's optimal academic performance and quality of life (p.291).

When people think of dating violence, an image of a male partner physically assaulting a woman most often comes to mind. Many cling to the popular assumption that dating violence only occurs between an "aggressive" male and a "passive" female (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). This assumption is deeply embedded in biologically oriented theoretical frameworks of domestic violence, which claim males are genetically predisposed to aggressive behavior and among theories of the feministic tradition, which view domestic violence as resulting from a power and control dynamic of male dominance over women (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Current research on dating violence suggests victimization by dating violence is not a gender issue, but rather is best understood from a social developmental framework that associates variables of

romanticism and attachment as underlying factors contributing to the dynamics of violence that characterize these early romantic relationships (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). Burke and Follingstad (1999) reported attachment theory best explains intimate partner violence as resulting from an underlying insecurity in one partner who uses violence as a means to control, manipulate, or intimidate his or her partner believing such an action will preserve or protect the attachment bond.

A review of the literature produced many studies on dating violence which have reported prevalence rates and type of violence experienced (Damlo, 2006; Few & Rosen, 2005; James, West, Deters, Ezzre, & Armijo, 2000; Jouriles, McDonald, Garrido, Rosenfeld, & Brown, 2005; Shook, Gerrity, Jurich & Segrist, 2000; Smith, White & Holland, 2003; Spencer & Bryant, 2000), but limited in scope to the study of a White, heterosexual, female high school and collegiate population. Few studies have reported prevalence rates and type of violence experienced by male victims in heterosexual relationships (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005) and gay male and lesbian relationships (Brendgen, Vitaro & Tremblay, 2002; Hamel & Nichols, 2006). Because a paucity of literature exists on dating violence among these populations, few believe female partners victimize males in heterosexual relationships and even fewer believe violence exists among same-sex dating pairs. However, based on the work of Balsam, Rothblum, and Beauchaine (2005), who found evidence of domestic violence trauma among lesbian, gay male and bisexual intimate partners, it can be assumed victimization from acts of dating violence does exist among gay male and lesbian dating partners.

Because approximately 95% of the general population traditionally view women as victims of dating violence (Hamel & Nichols, 2006), the majority of victims of dating violence are assumed to be female. However, several studies (Brendgen et al., 2002; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005) have challenged this assumption. For example, in a study among adolescent dating pairs in the United States and Canada, Brendgen et al. (2002) found 39% of adolescents engaged in or sustained physical violence in their dating relationships regardless of gender; the researchers concluded, "Victimization by dating violence is not strictly a male phenomenon." (p. 225). In a survey among an adolescent dating population, Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) reported prevalence rates of 25% among heterosexual dating relationships with both male and female partners reporting being perpetrators and victims of violence in the relationships. More contemporary research by Hamel and Nichols (2006) found evidence to contradict earlier studies of dating violence that claim the majority of victims of dating violence are female; these researchers empirically demonstrated male victimization by female partners occurs at equal or greater frequency compared with female victimization by male dating partners and perhaps at greater frequency among dating partners in same-sex relationships. The intent of this study was to create awareness victimization by dating violence *exists* regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation among a collegiate population.

#### Statement of the Problem

Victimization by dating violence exists across boundaries of gender and sexual orientation (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Hamel & Nichols, 2006), but little is known

about the help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. A problem exists when a victim of dating violence does not disclose their victimization to a potential helper and when a potential helper fails to inquire about it. One of the major reasons why victimization by dating violence has become a major social problem among college campuses is that the majority of victims do not report or disclose their experiences of abuse or violence at the hands of their dating partner (Bergman, 1992; Nightingale & Morrissette, 1993; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Weisz et al., 2006), which fuels the faulty assumption dating violence does not exist, and, if it does, it is not serious (Wolitzky-Taylor, et al., 2008). In addition, in the mind of a potential helper, if the abuse or violence is not reported, it does not exist. As a consequence of not reporting an incident of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse or violence by a dating partner, it is nearly impossible for a potential helper to respond or intervene. Revictimization is possible as a consequence of a “disconnect” between help-seeker (victim) and potential source of help.

A number of studies have sought to understand why male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships do not seek help for the abuse or violence they experience experienced (Gutierrez, n.d.; Ocampo et al., 2007; Schumaker & Slep, 2004; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Researchers have found victims of dating violence avoid seeking help out of a sense of embarrassment or shame, a fear that their disclosure will not be held confidential, a fear that the abuse or violence will be minimized by adults, a fear of being stigmatized, or because many victims of dating violence do not view the abuse or violence by their dating partner as serious or problematic in their

relationship (Ferguson, 1998; Gutierrez, n.d.; Ocampo, et al., 2007; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Vogel, Wade & Ascherman, 2009). In addition, male victims of dating violence may deny or fail to report acts of abuse or violence experienced from a female partner because they may not perceive themselves as victims; this perception is largely the result of the widespread assumption that victimization by dating violence is a “male to female” perpetrated phenomenon (Burke & Follingstad, 1999; Damlo, 2006; Few & Rosen, 2005; James et al., 2000; Jouriles, et al., 2005; Shook, et al., 2000; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Smith et al., 2003; Spencer & Bryant, 2000). Yet, this assumption is contradicted by other researchers (Freedner, Freed, Yang & Austin, 2002; Katz, Kuffel, & Coblenz, 2002; Miller & White, 2003; Nightingale & Morrisette, 1993) who empirically established victimization by dating violence occurs regardless of one’s gender or sexual orientation.

Victims of dating violence may be apprehensive about reporting acts of abuse or violence to law enforcement officials or other sources of legal agency because they fear they will not be believed or because they think police officers will not be able to assist them (Miller & Simpson, 1991). Felson, Ackerman & Gallagher (2005) reported 22% of female victims of dating violence and 39% of male victims of dating violence did not seek help from law enforcement officials because they feared reprisal from their partner, 12% of female victims and 5% of male victims because they desired to protect their partner ; and 14% of female victims compared with 16% of male victims believed that even if they reported their victimization to the police, the police would not do anything to help them (Buzawala, Hotaling, Klein & Byrnes, 1999). Miller and Simpson (1991)

reported male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships are hesitant to respond to violence by their dating partner with formal legal action.

Interestingly, Buzawala, et al. 1999 reported young women in dating relationships were less likely than young men to call the police, but Pirog-Good and Stets (1989) reported female college students are more likely to report abuse or violence in their dating relationship than male college students although these statistics decrease with sex-related incidents of dating violence. In a national study conducted among a female college student population, less than 5% reported incidents of rape to law enforcement officials (Wasserman, 2004), which is indicative of widespread underreporting on college campuses. Underreporting of dating violence to law enforcement is predictably lower among male than female victims of dating violence.

The perception that law enforcement will not be able to assist a victim of dating violence may not be an unrealistic one given the prevailing attitudes held by the judicial system toward dating violence and the failure of some states to recognize dating violence as a crime (Miller & Simpson, 1991; Suarez, 1994). In fact, in a recent study, Jenson (2007) reported only 33 states in the United States allow victims of dating violence to file civil protection orders under domestic violence law, while the other 17 states do not recognize dating violence in their domestic violence statutes even though the highest prevalence of intimate partner violence is experienced among individuals aged 16-24 in dating relationships.

A social problem exists when a victim of dating violence cannot trust or approach an informal (e.g., friend, peer, family) or a formal (e.g., law enforcement official,

physician, mental health professional) for help. In a recent study, Silber-Ashley & Foshee (2005) investigated help-seeking behavior between male and female perpetrators and victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships and concluded that, if they sought help at all, it would be from informal sources such as friends or peers. While seeking help from informal sources is better than seeking no help at all, Ocampo et al. (2007) reported informal sources tend not to want to get involved in dating violence situations and the quality of their help is limited.

Virtually no studies have examined or compared help-seeking efforts between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Research among the medical and psychiatric help-seeking literature established attachment style as a determining factor among individuals seeking help for a variety of medical or psychiatric problems and psychological issues (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian, Mikulincer, & Bulcholtz, 1995; Lopez, Melendez, Sauer, Berger & Wyssman, 1998; Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005; Schmidt, Nachtigall, Wuethrich-Martone & Strauss, 2002; Vogel & Wei, 2005). The results of these studies demonstrated the need to make available and accessible resources to adolescents and adults who would not otherwise seek or secure help for their medical or mental health problems based on an “insecure” style of attachment (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Dean et al., 2005; Vogel & Wei, 2005). It was the intent of this study to examine if differences exist between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured not only to advance the

knowledge in this line of research, but to encourage a change in the way victimization by dating violence is viewed today and enable potential helpers to render their assistance appropriately and effectively.

### Purpose of the Study

An empirical link has been established between the variables attachment style and help-seeking behavior among an adult and adolescent general healthcare population which has led to the development of creative and innovative resources and interventions specifically designed to identify and assist those who might not otherwise seek help (Lewis et al., 2005; Hunter & Maunder, 2001; Huntsinger & Leucken, 2004; Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). I found a gap in the literature that examined the variables attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The purpose of this quantitative study was not only to create awareness victimization by dating violence exists regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation, but to determine if differences existed in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior among these four relationship groups studied.

Amar and Alexy (2005) reported many studies on dating violence among a college or university setting have concentrated on prevalence rates and incidents of dating violence, but few studies have explored the reactions of victims in terms of help-seeking behavior. Cattaneo, Stuewig, Goodman, Kaltman and Dutton (2007) concluded from their longitudinal study of help-seeking behavior patterns among female victims of intimate

partner violence that further research is needed to better understand help-seeking behavior patterns among populations often not considered in the literature, such as victims in same-sex relationships and male victims of intimate partner violence. According to Holtfreter and Boyd (2006) it is important to examine what services victims of dating violence among a college population seek help from non police sources. No studies were found among the review of the literature that have investigated attachment style as a mediating factor in the help-seeking process between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a collegiate population.

A logical connection between attachment style and help-seeking behavior has been explored among adult female victims of domestic violence in heterosexual relationships (Vogel & Wei, 2005), but not among males who are victimized by their marital or cohabitating female romantic partner. Vogel and Wei (2005) posited those with an insecure attachment style will generally fail to disclose their experience of abuse or violence and will not report the same willingness to seek help as do those with a secure attachment style. Among an adolescent population who reported experiencing mental health problems, Howard and Medway (2004) found those with a secure attachment style engaged in adaptive coping behaviors (e.g., help-seeking behavior) and accepted interpersonal support compared with adolescents with an insecure attachment style who engaged in maladaptive coping responses such as alcohol or drug use.

Victimization by dating violence is a serious, traumatic event and it has been well documented that the lack of help-seeking behavior or the failure to mobilize and secure

social support is associated with the development of psychopathology among young people (McLewin & Muller, 2006). Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) reported help-seeking behavior is crucial to the physical safety and psychological well being among male and female victims of dating violence. Yet, few studies have focused on where young people seek help, who they turn to for help, and what type of problems they seek help for (Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2001). Vogel and Wei (2005) reported many studies on help-seeking behavior that have examined help-seeking intentions and attitudes, but have failed to investigate actual help sought among victims of dating violence. Rickwood et al. (2005) studied help-seeking behavior among young people, particularly males who reported experiencing psychological distress and suicidal ideation, and reported the importance of understanding which factors facilitate and inhibit help-seeking behavior in order to make professional services more accessible and attractive to young people who experience a variety of personal and emotional problems. Further, there is a need to identify specific populations at risk for dating violence so that researchers, clinicians and other youth serving professionals know where to focus efforts for further assessment and when and with whom to intervene (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2008, p. 756). The results of this study provided clues into where and from whom male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships are most likely to seek help and whether or not differences exist in the type of help secured by style of attachment.

### Nature of the Study, Research Questions, and Hypotheses

This study is quantitative in nature and design. A descriptive and inferential approach was used to investigate differences in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex and heterosexual relationship groups. While previous research has claimed the majority of victims of dating violence are female, current dating violence research has found a significant number of males being victimized at equal or greater frequency by their female partners (Hamberger, 2005; Molidor & Tolman, 1998). It was the intent of this study to empirically support this previous research and demonstrate victimization by dating violence occurs regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation, even though victims may differ in the type of violence they experience at the hands of their dating partner. Previous research on domestic violence between adult marital and cohabitating pairs has also found that male victims of domestic violence are less likely to engage in help-seeking behavior than female victims of domestic violence in heterosexual relationships and both male and female victims of domestic and dating violence in same-sex relationships may not seek help at all (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Hamel and Nichols (2006) found this to be the case among dating pairs in same-sex relationships. But currently it is unknown whether type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking patterns differ by gender or sexual orientation among dating pairs.

Schmitt (2003) conducted research among an adult population of 17, 804 romantic partners from 62 cultural regions and reported in some cultures men may be

more dismissing in style of attachment than women, but the results of this study were not significant across all cultural regions. Only one article was found in the literature review that examined a relationship between sexual orientation and coping styles among a gay, lesbian and bisexual community high school population (Lock & Steiner, 1999). Lock and Steiner (1999) found gay, lesbian and bisexual youth may use more avoidant coping strategies, which are suggestive of an insecure/fearful-avoidant style of attachment. This research supports the hypothesis that male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships are most likely to avoid help-seeking behavior.

A comparison of differences in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships have not been studied to my knowledge. This quantitative study sought to answer the following research questions and test the associated hypotheses:

*Research Question 1.* Are there differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups?

*Research Hypothesis 1.* There are differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

*Null Hypothesis 1.* There are no differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

*Research Question 2.* Are there differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups?

*Research Hypothesis 2.* There are differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

*Null Hypothesis 2.* There are no differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

*Research Question 3.* Are male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships?

*Research Hypothesis 3.* Male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships are less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships.

*Null Hypothesis 3.* Male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships are not less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships.

### Theoretical Frameworks

Theories regarding dating violence are traditionally grounded in domestic violence theory. In this section, several frameworks of domestic violence are presented; these frameworks have been used as a base for explaining the etiology of violence between adult marital or cohabitating pairs and, have been useful in the development of a theory on dating violence. Out of current research on dating violence, a major theoretical framework has emerged which has explained the dynamics of dating violence from a social developmental perspective. Hence, the social developmental model of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999) was used as a major conceptual framework underpinning this study because it best captures the romanticism and influence of attachment style associated with the violence experienced in these early romantic relationships.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, an attachment theory framework has been applied to study the dynamics of domestic violence between adult intimate partners in marital and cohabitating relationships (Burke & Follingstad, 1999) and served as a major theoretical framework underlying this study. Specifically, Bowlby's attachment theory has been applied to the understanding of male-to-female perpetrated violence as a power

and control dynamic resulting from an underlying insecurity between partners (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). A basic assumption fundamental to this theory is the idea individuals who experience a negative parent-child interaction in childhood will continue to experience unhealthy attachment patterns in adolescence and adulthood (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). This theory is applicable to understanding help-seeking behavior because one's style of attachment is thought to influence one's decision to seek help or support. For example, children who experience a negative interaction with parents or other early attachment figures may develop a hypersensitivity to real or imagined threats of separation, rejection, abandonment or harm resulting in avoidance of help-seeking behavior (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). This theory would support the notion that under the threat of relationship loss, male or female intimate partners may become aggressive toward their partner and may partially explain why a victim of intimate partner violence may not leave an abusive relationship or seek help.

Earlier in this chapter, numerous studies among the medical and psychiatric literature reported an empirical link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among those seeking help for various medical and psychiatric conditions (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian & Mikulir, 1995; Lopez, et al., 1998; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Saranson, Pierce, & Sarason, 1990). Vogel and Wei (2005) extended attachment theory to help-seeking behavior and reported individuals with a secure attachment style are oriented toward help-seeking behavior because of a "felt" comfort with intimacy and closeness compared to individuals with an insecure attachment style who tend to avoid help-seeking efforts.

The decision to seek help and select a source of help is a complex one that cannot be explained solely by one's style of attachment. Factors such as self-blame on part of the victim for his or her experience of abuse or violence, or being the recipient of "blaming the victim" attitudes held by others, may strongly influence a victim's decision whether or not to seek help (Garimella, Plichta, Houseman, & Garzon, 2000; Weisz et al., 2006). Such factors may also influence to whom or where a victim chooses to turn for help or support. A general help-seeking process model developed by Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Narra and Weintraub (2005) illustrates the help-seeking process that can be applicable to the study of help-seeking behavior among victims of dating violence. Underlying this model of help-seeking behavior, is the theory that individuals engage in a rational decision making process which leads to the selection and engagement of social support (Liang et al., 2005). This model is instrumental in explaining the factors, which influence help-seeking behavior or avoidance within the psyche of a victim of dating violence, but fails to consider attachment style as a mediating variable in the help-seeking process.

Other theoretical frameworks that have contributed to understanding the help-seeking process will be briefly discussed in chapter 2 as they are also relevant to this study. Gender socialization theory predicts who will seek help or avoid it based on gender as prescribed by one's culture (Ang, Lim & Tan, 2004). Trauma theory posits individuals will seek or avoid help as determined by the nature of the event and the intensity of psychological distress experienced as a result of a traumatic event (Haden, Scarpa, Jones & Ollendick, 2007). But this study drew heavily from the social support

network orientation model developed by Wallace & Vaux (1993) because it ties together the psychological constructs of attachment style and the seeking of social support. Role relationships theory (Agneensens, Waege & Lievens, 2006) was presented and briefly discussed in the literature review because it holds the selection of both formal and informal sources of help is governed by societal rules and limits between an individual and his or her personal network which may influence the type of help sought by a victim of dating violence.

#### Significance of the Study and Implications for Social Change

Moran (2007) argued the challenge of future intervention is to find ways of reaching those who are least likely to seek help. Vogel, Wade, Wester, Larson, and Hackler (2007) stated,

Less than 40% of individuals seek any type of professional help within a year of the onset of a psychological disorder. . . mental health professionals need to recognize that to reduce barriers of help-seeking, they need to understand what keeps people from seeking help. (p. 234)

Help-seeking behavior is thought to be a necessary condition for physical and psychological wellness.

This quantitative study makes a significant contribution to research and clinical practice in the field of Psychology. First, this study attempted to dispel an erroneous assumption which exists among scholars, practitioners and lay persons alike that female partners in heterosexual relationships are the only victims in an abusive or violent dating relationship (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). By quantitatively demonstrating differences in

types of violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships, the results of this study created an awareness that male partners in heterosexual dating relationships and male and female partners in same-sex relationships are equally or more so victimized by their dating partners.

Second, Rothblum (1994) reported researchers have historically been reluctant to study mental health problems and psychological adjustment among stigmatized groups such as the gay male and lesbian population. It was assumed that types of violence experienced and coping methods among gay and lesbian populations were similar to those of heterosexual women and men and exploring differences would only further pathologize an already stigmatized group (Rothblum, 1994). Rothblum advocated for researchers to create a safe and accepting climate where differences in type of violence experienced could be further studied in order to detect factors unique to the gay and lesbian population. This study considered Rothblum's recommendations and focused not only on examining similarities between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships, but to quantified differences in type of violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior which exist among these unique subsets of a college sample victimized by dating violence.

Third, previous research has found a rationale for why victims of dating violence fail to seek help, but a paucity of literature exists which has examined actual help-seeking behavior among victims of dating violence. No study to this researcher's knowledge has compared differences in actual help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of

dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex dating relationships. Therefore, this study attempted to fill in a gap in the literature by seeking an answer to the following question: Are there differences in attachment style and help-seeking behavior among both male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships?

An examination of the differences in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style, and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships will help distinguish which victims of dating violence are more likely to voluntarily seek help from those who are more likely to avoid help-seeking efforts. It was assumed that the results of this study would yield fruitful data as to who or from where male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships would be more likely to turn to for help or support. Conversely, was anticipated the results of this study would show which victims of dating violence among these four relationship groups were least likely to seek help or support based on style of attachment.

Fourth, the findings of this study may enable others to view victims of dating violence through a new lens. Many acts of dating violence go undetected or unreported due to a failure of victims to disclose or report experiences of abuse or violence by their dating partner to another, yet Seimer (2004) found victims of dating violence will report or disclose their victimization, if asked. The failure of potential helpers to inquire about acts of dating violence is partially explained by stereotypes or misconceptions rooted in traditional feministic theory which are held toward victims of dating violence such as, “If

he was abused by his female partner, she must have acted out of self-defense “or “Violence does not occur between females because females are not violent.” Failure of potential helpers to ask about abuse or violence in a dating relationship may discourage victims from disclosing their experiences of abuse or violence by their dating partner (Seimer, 2004). Victims who do not feel safe or comfortable in disclosing their experiences of abuse or violence to another will lead to many acts of dating violence going undetected and victims unassisted. The results of this study can encourage psychologists and other potential helpers to recognize the need to carefully create a safe environment of trust so victims of dating violence may feel comfortable disclosing their personal experiences of abuse or violence at the hands of partners and mobilize them to seek other services beyond their initial help-seeking efforts (Howard & Medway, 2004).

Last, the findings of this study can be instrumental in effecting positive social change in the following ways: (a) to dispel the myth that dating violence victimization only exists among female victims in heterosexual relationships, and (b) to inform and educate potential helpers of the need to be available and responsive when encountering a victim of dating violence in their daily life and work. By better understanding differences in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style, and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships, further research may advance along these lines which could lead to the development and design of effective screening protocols to identify and assist victims of dating violence among a college population, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Creative interventions could be specifically designed to reach out to this population who might not otherwise seek help.

Kimmel (2002) summed up what is one of the most important social change implications of this study, “All victims of violence deserve compassion, support and intervention. . . . compassion and adequate intervention strategies which fully explore the full range of domestic violence . . . as both men and women are capable of using violence” (p. 4). And it is only through the act of help-seeking behavior on part of the victim of dating violence and the accessibility of potential helpers can tremendous costs and consequences of dating violence to individual victims and society at large be greatly reduced.

### Definitions of Theoretical Constructs and Terms

#### *Theoretical Constructs*

*Dating violence and domestic violence* fall under the umbrella of intimate partner violence and are defined by Burke and Follingstad (1999) as an act of violent physical, psychological or sexual behavior by one partner toward another. Dating violence is a distinct psychological construct which differs from domestic violence because it only occurs among adolescent or young adult, single, dating partners who live independently as opposed to the domestic violence which occurs between adult marital or cohabitating partners who share a same domicile (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Durant et al., (2007) theorized dating violence parallels domestic violence incorporating a range of behaviors

on a continuum from verbal and emotional threats or intimidation to physical fighting, sexual assault and murder.

*Attachment* is a psychological construct and is defined as “an emotional tie between people” and attachment behavior has been defined as “a natural response to any distress or uncertainty” (Reber & Reber, 2001, p. 61). It refers to “one’s internal working models of relatedness and bonding quality” (Beuelow, McClain & McIntosh, 1996, p. 606). Attachment style is a psychological construct derived from Attachment theory and has been defined in Reber and Reber as “a pattern of attachment behavior which characterizes the extent to which an individual will seek close proximity or contact with a caregiver as a natural response to any distress or uncertainty “(pp. 61-62). Shaver and Mikulincer (2002) conceptualized attachment styles as systematic patterns of expectations, needs, emotions, emotional regulation strategies, and social behavior which result from the interaction of an innate “attachment behavior system” and a particular history of attachment experiences, usually beginning in early childhood relationships with parents.

*Help-seeking behavior*, by definition, is a far more complex psychological construct to define. Hinson and Swanson (1993) defined help seeking behavior as seeking help from anyone including friends, family, ministers or mental health counselors. For the purposes of this study, help-seeking behavior will be defined as an individual’s attempt to cope with an incident (s) of dating violence by an act of selecting a source of help, formal and/or informal, in order to obtain information or direct assistance which leads to an immediate or tangible result (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005).

### *Terms*

*Attachment anxiety:* Refers to a dimension of attachment characterized by an excessive need for approval from others and a fear of rejection or abandonment by others (Vogel & Wei, 2005). High levels of attachment anxiety are characterized by emotional hyperarousal and preoccupation with the fear of abandonment by one's attachment figures (Mohr & Fassinger, 2003). Vogel and Wei (2005) reported individuals with an insecure attachment style demonstrate high levels of attachment anxiety whereas those with a secure attachment style demonstrate low levels of attachment anxiety.

*Attachment avoidance:* Refers to a dimension of attachment characterized by an excessive need for self-reliance and the fear of depending on others (Vogel & Wei, 2005). It is the extent to which individuals are willing to rely on the help of others (Mohr & Fassinger, 2003). Vogel and Wei (2005) reported individuals with an insecure attachment style tend to express high levels of attachment avoidance as opposed to individuals with a secure attachment style.

*Dismissing attachment style:* An insecure attachment style characterized by a positive internal working model of self (i.e., a view of self as worthy and loveable), but a negative internal working model of others (i.e., view of others as unreliable, untrustworthy, unresponsive, etc.; Lapsley, Varshney, & Aalsma, 2000). Individuals with an insecure dismissing attachment style are not likely to seek help or support from another.

*Fearful/avoidant attachment style:* An insecure attachment style characterized by a negative internal working model of self (i.e., view of self as unworthy and unlovable) and a negative internal working model of others (i.e., a view of others as rejecting, unresponsive, untrustworthy, and unavailable; Lapsley et al., 2000). Individuals with an insecure fearful/avoidant attachment style are least likely to seek help or support from another.

*Female victim of dating violence:* For the purposes of this study, refers to any single female between the ages of 18 and 25 who is enrolled in a college or university and who has been involved in a heterosexual or same-sex romantic relationship and who has reported experiencing at least one act of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse or violence by their dating partner.

*Formal sources of help:* Formal helpers are professionals or paraprofessionals with specialized training or experience in the provision of help (Lewis et al., 2005). Examples of formal sources of help include professors, school counselors, psychologists, mental health professionals, physicians, emergency room nurse/doctors, lawyers, police officers, telephone hotline worker, clergy, staff at student health clinic, health department, and other professional or paraprofessional agencies of help.

*Heterosexual relationship:* Refers to the romantic involvement between two opposite sex dating partners.

*Informal sources of help:* Informal helpers are ordinary individuals offering help in a pedestrian setting and are non-professionals (Lewis et al., 2005). Examples of

informal sources of support include but are not limited to parents, siblings, college roommates, peers, friends, partners and others.

*Internal working model:* An internalized represented set of expectations about a potential helper's or caregiver's availability and responsiveness resulting from individual differences in an infant's perceptions about his or her ability to elicit care giving behavior from caregivers or attachment figures (Bradford & Lyddon, 1994). Bowlby reported internal working models are not "stamped" on an individual but persist through development and dictate how an individual construes self in relation to others (Bradford & Lyddon). Beuelow et al. (1996) stated, "Internal working models determine what sorts of persons and situations are sought after and what sorts are shunned...in this way an individual comes to influence the selection of his or her environment" (p. 605).

*Male victims of dating violence:* For purposes of this study, refers to any single male between the ages of 18 and 25 who is enrolled in a college or university and who has been involved in a heterosexual or same-sex romantic relationship and who has reported experiencing at least one act of physical, psychological, and/or sexual violence by their dating partner.

*Physical violence:* Burke and Follingstad (1999) defined physical violence as any use of physical force to control or intimidate a dating partner and includes acts of pushing, grabbing, slapping, biting, throwing an object at a person, punching, assault with a weapon, and so on.

*Preoccupied attachment style:* An insecure attachment style characterized by a negative internal working model of self (i.e., a view of self as unlovable or unworthy of

help) but a positive internal working model of other (i.e., a view of others as reliable, trustworthy and responsive; Lapsley et al., 2000). According to Lapsley et al. (2000), individuals with an insecure preoccupied attachment style are likely to seek help or support because of a low self-worth and insecurity and an excessive interpersonal dependency on others, but at the same time may reject help offered.

*Psychological abuse:* Burke and Follingstad (1999) defined psychological abuse as those verbal and non-verbal behaviors intended to isolate, humiliate, demean, intimidate or control an intimate partner such as “put downs”, threats of violence, name calling, stalking, and so on.

*Same-sex relationship:* Refers to the romantic involvement between two same-sex dating partners.

*Secure attachment style:* A secure attachment style is characterized by a positive sense of self-worth (i.e., a positive internal working model of self) and an expectation that others are trustworthy, reliable and available (i.e., a positive internal working model of other; Lapsley et al., 2000). Lapsley et al. (2000) reported individuals with a secure attachment style have a positive internal working model of self and other that enables them to feel comfortable with closeness and intimacy and will be most likely to seek and accept help.

*Sexual abuse or violence:* Refers to the forcing of another to engage in sexual activities against his or her will through the use of verbal or physical actions, threats or intimidation (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Sexual assault is generally defined as forced or coerced vaginal or anal penetration by object, finger or penis, oral sex, breast or genitalia

fondling, or forced or coerced touching of another person's genitalia (Danielson & Holmes, 2004). Examples include verbal pressure to have sex, unwanted touching, kissing, fondling, rape, and so on.

*Social support:* Florian and Mikulir (1995) referred to social support as the comfort, assistance, and/or information one receives through formal or informal social contacts.

*Trauma:* Baynard and Cantor (2004) defined trauma as an event or range of events that overwhelm an individual's coping capacity and involve threats of serious injury or death to self or someone close to the individual.

#### Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The following assumptions were made about this quantitative web-based study:

(a) it was assumed the results of the web-based survey were obtained from a random sample of students from a number of rural/urban and public/private collegiate institutions world-wide and representative of a larger, more culturally diverse collegiate population; (b) this study assumed the respondents were truthful in answering items on all the questionnaires administered in this study to the best of their abilities; and (c) it was assumed with the use of confidential, anonymous, self-administered questionnaires the effect of social desirability was minimized.

The following limitations were inherent in this quantitative web-based study:

(a) the sample for this study was drawn from college and university populations and therefore the results of this study cannot be generalizable to a non-collegiate dating

population; (b) because participation in this study was voluntary, the sample may not be representative of all victims of dating violence; (c) it was beyond the scope and capabilities to control all confounding variables associated with help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships such as ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, academic standing, personality factors; (d) the study is was not qualitative in design and therefore cannot establish a cause-effect relationship between the variables of attachment style and help-seeking behavior; (e) because this study was not longitudinal in design, it cannot show consistency in attachment style and help-seeking behavior patterns over time, across situations, and within different contexts; (f) an uneven balance in gender and sexual orientation is expected among the total sample which limited the generalizability of results to these populations; (g) due to the sensitive nature of this study, results may not accurately reflect one's true attachment style or help-seeking behavior patterns ; and (h) participants in this study may under or over report acts of violence or abuse by their dating partners. Kimmel (2002) argued men are more likely to under report being hit by a female partner while women are more likely to over report, but other available data suggest men will likely over estimate their victimization, while women may tend to underestimate theirs (pp. 2-3). The significance of victimization studies have been found to be limited due to errors in remembering, a lack of willingness to report, and "dubious" credibility (e.g., exaggeration or withholding information) on part of the respondents (Schneider, n.d.), which may compromise the validity of this study. Because this study is based on a convenience sample, statistical inferences cannot be supported, but responses

from this convenience sample can be useful in developing hypotheses for further study along this line of research and possibly provide other non-inferential data about this target population (Schonlau, Fricker & Elliot, 2002).

Although there are limitations associated with use of a web-based survey method, it was chosen for this study because of its many advantages over other survey methods (e.g., paper-and-pencil surveys, postal mail surveys) such as the ability to access a larger more culturally diverse population, reduced response time, and respondent acceptance of the format among college students and men (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). But low response rates have been associated with the web based survey method compared with the traditional paper-and-pencil method (Kroth et al., 2009). In addition, possible technical difficulties, measurement error, and lack of substantive research involving the psychometrics of electronic survey methods potentially affect validity of a study's findings (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). Because no personal identifiers were linked to the participation in this web-based study, it was impossible to identify from what geographic regions those who participated in this study originated from.

### Summary

In the beginning of this chapter, dating violence was introduced as a unique psychological construct which is similar to domestic violence, but differs in dynamics and function. The literature emphasized an important distinction between dating violence and domestic violence: violence among dating pairs tends to be more mutual than one-sided, while the violence that occurs between adult marital and cohabitating partners is

usually one-sided (Gray & Foshee, 1997; Peterson & Thomas, 1992). Thus, based on this research, it may be safe to assume that acts of abuse or violence between dating partners do exist regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation. However, while frequency of abuse or violence between male and female dating partners may not differ significantly, (Gryl, Stith & Bird, 1991), a review of the literature suggested the type of abuse or violence experienced may vary between gender and sexual orientation (Gray & Foshee, 1997; Holt & Espelage, 2005). However, Ristock (2003) reported the frequency and type of abuse or violence experienced between same-sex adult gay and lesbian couples is comparable to that experienced between heterosexual couples. In addition, Kuehne & Sullivan (2003) established acts of domestic violence occurs at nearly the same frequency between partners in heterosexual and same-sex relationships, but a comparative analysis on frequency and type of abuse or violence experienced between heterosexual and same-sex dating pairs has not been well studied. Therefore, one of the purposes of this quantitative, web-based study was to determine if differences exist in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The results of this study might dispel the myth the majority of victims of dating violence are female in heterosexual relationships.

In summary, this chapter introduced literature supporting a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among individuals seeking help for various medical conditions and mental health related problems (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian, Mikulincer & Bucholtz, 1995; Lopez, et al., 1998; Rickwood, et al., 2005; Schmidt, et al., 2002; Vogel & Wei, 2005). A major thrust of this quantitative study was to determine if

differences exist between attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups. The research hypothesis is that male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships will differ in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style, and help-seeking behavior defined in terms of help-seeking intentions and type of actual help secured (i.e., informal and formal).

This chapter also introduced the major theoretical frameworks underpinning this study: the social developmental model of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973), the general help-seeking process model (Liang et al, 2005), and the social support network orientation model (Wallace & Vaux, 1993). Theoretical constructs of dating violence, attachment theory and help-seeking behavior were defined for the purposes of this study.

This study was designed to address a major social problem today, which is the fact that the majority of victims of dating violence fail to report or disclose their victimization by a dating partner to a potential helper (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Contemporary research has suggested a secure attachment style as a mediating factor determining whether or not one will report or disclose an act of violence within the context of a dating relationship to another (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian et al., 1995; Lopez et al., 1998; Rickwood et al, 2005; Schmidt, et al., 2002; Vogel & Wei, 2005). This study was pioneered to extend the current literature to include an examination of differences between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate

heterosexual and same-sex relationships. This chapter introduced social change implications and the assumptions and limitations inherent in this study.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the related literature pertinent to this study. Theoretical frameworks grounded in previous research and relevant to the purposes of this present study are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3 will open with a brief introduction to the chapter, a review of the statement of the problem under investigation, a rationale for the research design and approach chosen for this study, a description of the setting and sample chosen for the study, the research procedure and instrumentation used to collect the data, an analysis of the data and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 will begin with a description of the sample and the descriptive statistics which characterize the sample followed by the results of a descriptive analysis which examined the frequency of incidents of physical, psychological and sexual abuse or violence characteristic of the total sample. The next section of the chapter describes the procedures used to collect the data and the statistical analyses conducted to analyze the data and present the results in terms of type of abuse or violence experienced attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Chapter 5 will present an overview of the study, a review of the research questions and hypotheses followed by an interpretation of the results. Limitations of the study will be discussed in this chapter. This chapter will also discuss social change implications and recommendations for social action and clinical practice based on the

results of this study. A summary will conclude this chapter followed by a personal reflection by this writer.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

In her work, *Love Medicine*, “Where I ought to be”, Louise Erdrich, a Native American writer and poet wrote,

In our beginnings we are formed out of the body’s interior landscape. For a short while, our mother’s bodies are the boundaries and personal geography which is all that we know of the world . . . once we no longer live beneath our mother’s heart, it is the earth with which we form the same dependent relationship, relying on its cycles and elements, helpless without its protective embrace (In Smith, 1991, p. 14).

This sentiment illustrates the main theme of this study, which is that in the best of worlds, children secure a relationship with a primary caregiver, or attachment figure, most often the mother who provides them with a sense of safety and security from a threatening world. This relationship influences the development of a secure and healthy attachment style in later life, facilitating a connection between self and other. In the process of becoming an adolescent or young adult, there is a need to “venture out” from this haven of safety, seeking and securing the help or support of another. During infancy, Weinraub, Brooks, and Lewis (1977) as cited in Cotterell, 1992), theorized affectional bonds are established with a primary caregiver and then transformed in later development to include an emotional closeness with “trusted others” in his or her world. Through a positive interaction with a primary caregiver, a child builds self-confidence in the responsiveness and availability of others (Offer & Offer, 1975, p. 27). And it is in

the process of interaction with multiple attachments, youth experience a cultivation of trust, acceptance, understanding and respect for their individuality characteristic of a secure attachment style (Armsden & Greenburg (1987) as cited in Cotterell, 1992, p. 30). For others who do not share this experience, they will potentially develop an insecure style of attachment affecting his or her ability to seek or secure help. Thus, attachment theory offers a plausible explanation why the majority of victims fail to seek or secure help for acts of abuse or violence experienced by a dating partner (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005).

Dating violence is one of the most common, yet hidden forms of intimate partner violence which thrives among a college or university population. Acts of dating violence threaten the security and well-being of all those victimized by it (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Danielson & Holmes, 2004; Keenan-Miller, Hammen, & Brennan, 2007). Violence between young, dating partners has become a growing social problem partially because many victims of dating violence fail to disclose acts of violence perpetrated by their dating partners (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005) or to seek the necessary help or support to recover from such trauma. As a result, acts of dating violence may go undetected.

The purpose of this literature review was to build a theoretical base to support the theory that dating violence exists among a college population regardless of gender or sexual orientation and to test the following research hypotheses:

1. There are differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.
2. There are differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.
3. Male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationship are less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships.

In chapter 1, attachment style was determined as a mediating factor in the help-seeking process was discussed (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian et al., 1995; Lopez et al., 1998; Rickwood et al., 2005; Schmidt, et al., 2002; Vogel & Wei, 2005). One of the purposes of the literature review was to present an overview of existing medical, psychiatric and psychological research that has established the link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior and empirical study drawn from the literature in the field of medicine, psychiatry and psychological which has established this link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior. The literature review was also intended to provide a basis for extending this link to male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Research on domestic violence has also found a significant correlation between attachment style and male perpetration of domestic violence toward a female partner (Gormley, 2005; Kesner & McKenry, 1998), but it has yet to demonstrate a link between

attachment styles of male victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships and among female victims of dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships. A few studies found among the literature have investigated help-seeking behavior patterns among an adolescent or young adult population seeking help for mental health related issues (Deane et al., 2001; Florian & Mikulir, 1995; Haden et al., 2007). Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) investigated help-seeking patterns among male and female victims and perpetrators of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, but no existing studies were found that examined attachment style as a mediating factor in the help-seeking process between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. This quantitative study was an attempt to fill this gap in the dating violence literature.

This chapter is organized in the following manner: Chapter 2 will open with an operational definition of dating violence as a unique theoretical construct to be distinguished from domestic violence. Dating violence and domestic violence fall under the same umbrella as intimate partner violence, but dating violence is differentiated from domestic violence in definition and dynamic as postulated by the social developmental model of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). This section of the literature review presents a brief comparison of the similarities and differences that exist between the type of abuse or violence occurring between adult marital or cohabitating partners and single dating pairs.

The construct of dating violence has emerged out of traditional domestic violence theory and the next section of this literature review presented an overview of the

historical roots of dating violence. Several prominent traditional theories of domestic violence are presented in this review of the literature which has been instrumental in the development of a theory of dating violence as these theories have been useful in understanding how one becomes a victim of intimate partner violence. For example, the cycle of violence theory which emerged from the *Battered Women's Syndrome*, (Walker, 1977), and other early research on domestic violence, explains the dynamics of violence between intimate pairs and how one becomes a victim and why a victim may fail to leave an abusive relationship or engage in help-seeking behavior. Because dating violence research is in its infancy, no one theoretical framework has sufficiently explained the dynamics of violence unique to single dating partners. An Ericksonian-based social developmental model of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999) has emerged out of current dating violence research and will be used as a theoretical framework in this study because it best explains the etiology of violence between young, single, dating pairs from a social developmental perspective (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). Many believe dating violence to be a rare event among a collegiate population, but the next section of this literature review will present empirical evidence to support the theory those at greatest risk for dating violence are among the college population regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation. There is an erroneous assumption that dating violence only victimizes females in heterosexual dating relationships (Hamel & Nichols, 2006). This section of the literature review presents empirical evidence which describes the most commonly experienced types of dating violence between dating pairs in order to create an awareness

dating violence does exist among college students regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation.

Costs and consequences of dating violence will follow in the next section of this chapter to dispel the myth dating violence is not as serious as the violence which occurs between adult marital or cohabitating pairs. Previous researchers who studied violence have reported devastating consequences as a result of such violence not only to the individual victim (Alpert, 1995; Amar & Genaro, 2005; Holt & Espelage, 2005; Jouriles, et al., 2005; Rickert et al., 2002; Taylor & Sorenson, 2004), but to the romantic relationship (Cleveland, Herrera & Stuewig, 2003; Katz, et al., 2002; Feld & Straus, 1989), and to the community and society at large (Amar & Alexy, 2005; Dutton et al., 2006; Schieman & Zeoli, 2003; Silverman, Raj, Mucci, & Hathaway, 2001) implicating a need for social change in how victimization by dating violence is perceived and modifying existing service delivery systems for victims who might not otherwise seek help or support. Social change will not occur if victims of dating violence do not feel safe or comfortable enough to seek the help or support of others to disclose their experiences of abuse or violence by their dating partner and potential helpers fail to inquire.

Research has indicated a growing interest in the psychology of help-seeking behavior among scholars and practitioners (DePaulo, Nadler & Fisher, 1983; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). The next section of this literature review presents an overview of the psychology of help-seeking behavior and a number of theories which underlie the constructs of help seeking versus help-avoidance. A model of the help-seeking process (Liang et al., 2005) is introduced in this section of the literature review, which explains

factors influencing an individual's decision to seek help and select a source of help or support. This model is applicable to this study because it describes what goes on within the psyche of an individual from his or her quest for help to the selection of support or help. However, it does not include the variable of attachment style which was added to the model for the purpose of this study.

The construct of social support has been closely related to attachment theory among the literature. The social support network orientation model (Wallace & Vaux, 1993) is presented in the next section of the literature review as a major theoretical framework underpinning this study because it presumes an individual is oriented toward help-seeking behavior based on his or her style of attachment. Role relations theory which assumes an individual will seek help from others within his or her own personal network based on rules and limits inherent within a construct of social support (Agneensens et al., 2006). According to this theory, even though an individual will select a particular source of informal or formal help, it does not mean the source of support selected will be appropriate or proficient (Agneensens et al., 2006).

Collins & Feeney (2000) discussed a help seeking and care giving attachment system as a dyadic, interactional experience between a help-seeker and potential helper. According to Collins and Feeney, the help-seeking process is not complete without a help seeking and a care giving system. This research is relevant to this study because it suggests the engagement of support or help may also be influenced by the attachment style of a potential helper or caregiver. This will be briefly discussed in this chapter, but not in detail as it is beyond the scope of this study.

The next section of this chapter presents the methodology used in previous and similar research studies investigating attachment style and help-seeking behavior among adolescent and adult individuals seeking help or support for various medical conditions and mental health problems (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian et al., 1995; Lopez et al., 1998; Rickwood et al., 2005; Schmidt, et al., 2002; Vogel & Wei, 2005). This research is extended to this study to investigate differences in attachment style and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Chapter 2 will conclude with a summary of the main findings of this literature review as they pertain to the hypotheses of this study, highlighting the need for further study along this line of research and discuss implications for helping professionals and lay persons alike who may encounter a male or female victim of dating violence in their daily life or work.

This literature review was conducted through a multiple web-based search using the Walden University Library, the Kelvin Smith Library of Case Western Reserve University's electronic journal database, and the Clinical Library of Kaiser Permanente, a national health care maintenance organization. The search included the following databases: OVID, EBSCOhost (Psychology and Behavioral Science Collection, PsychInfo, PsycArticles, Academic Search Premier and SocINDEX with full text), PubMed, Science Direct, and CINAHL with full text. Keywords included *domestic violence, dating violence, courtship violence, male and female victims of domestic violence, attachment style, attachment theory, help-seeking behavior, gay and lesbian*

*violence, attachment style, help-seeking behavior, college students, adolescence, victims and social support.*

### An Operational Definition of Dating Violence

Both dating violence and domestic violence fall under the same umbrella as intimate partner violence, which has been defined in Amar and Gennaro (2005) as:

A pattern of purposeful and coercive behaviors, which may include physical injury, psychological abuse, sexual coercion or assault, progressive social isolation, economic deprivation, stalking, intimidation and threats perpetrated by someone who is, was, or wishes to be involved in an intimate relationship with an adult or adolescent victim and is aimed at establishing control of one partner over the other. (p. 236)

Intimate partner violence is not confined to adults as it is regarded as a feature of an adolescent's earliest intimate experience (Moffit & Caspi, 1998). Dating violence has been conceptualized as a type of violence, which only occurs between single adolescent and young adult dating pairs as compared with domestic violence, which occurs between adult partners sharing a common domicile (Moffit & Caspi, 1998). Historically, dating violence has been defined as "those acts of physical aggression occurring between unmarried adolescents and young adults in romantic relationships (Graves, Sechrist, White & Paradise, 2005, p. 278), but this definition has been extended to include more salient and commonly experienced acts of dating violence which include psychological or emotional abuse, sexual coercion or assault, and stalking; all of which are often hidden from public view. Coker et al. (2000) observed such acts of violence occur most commonly among dating pairs than marital or cohabitating partners.

Dating violence is similar to domestic violence but differs due to relationship length and degree of emotional commitment found in dating relationships versus adult marital or cohabitating relationships (Pedersen & Thomas, 1992). Relationships among dating pairs are generally shorter in duration than those between adult marital and cohabitating pairs and usually are characterized by an intensified emotional commitment involving a high degree of anger and jealousy (Pedersen & Thomas, 1992). Anger and jealousy propels this type of violence under the threat of relationship loss (Pedersen & Thomas, Miller & White, 2003). Those individuals in dating relationships who have a jealous or controlling partner are at greatest risk for dating violence and stalking (Sampson, 2007). Another factor, which has been found to differentiate violence that occurs between dating pairs from violence between adult marital or cohabitating pairs is that it, tends to be mutual or reciprocal in the former and “one-sided” in the latter (Pedersen & Thomas, 1992). In an early study conducted on dating violence among an adolescent population, Henton and Cate (1983) found 71% of adolescents and young adults in a college population who experienced abusive behavior within their intimate relationship claimed the abuse was reciprocal. Pedersen and Thomas (1992) found evidence to substantiate these findings in a study conducted among a college dating population and found the violence which occurred between dating partners who reported violence within their intimate relationship was reciprocal as opposed to the one-sided violence more commonly observed between marital or cohabitating pairs. Pedersen and Thomas (1992) also found women reported more frequent expressions of physical and verbal aggression toward their male partners and men were more likely than women to

report being targets of verbal and physical aggression by their female partners. Together, the results of these studies have found evidence to support the theory male victimization of dating violence exists and may occur more frequently among male partners than female partners in dating relationships.

#### From Domestic Violence to Dating Violence: Historical Roots

The study of domestic violence, which began in the early 1970s, has produced an abundance of literature about male-to-female perpetrated violence among adult, heterosexual, marital couples. Even though the phenomenon of dating violence was first observed in the 1930s among college campuses (Makepeace, 1981), but it has only been within the past two decades has there been an interest among researchers to investigate the violence which occurs between dating pairs (Jenkins & Aube, 2002). Traditional domestic violence theory was first applied in the study of dating violence because it was believed the dynamics of dating violence closely parallel the violence which occurred between adult marital or cohabitating pairs (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). This belief originated in the theory that violence in dating relationships is a precursor to domestic violence in future adult relationships (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Traditional theories of domestic violence have offered an explanation about how female partners became victims of dating violence, but fail to sufficiently explain how males become victimized in dating relationships.

Several of the most prominent theories of domestic violence that have been instrumental in the development of a theory about dating violence are presented in this

section of the literature review. Among these traditional theories of domestic violence is the cycle of violence theory which is grounded in the feministic tradition and illustrates the development and maintenance of a cycle of violence between adult marital and cohabitating pairs (Rothenberg, 2003). Originally, the cycle of violence theory posited violence between an adult male perpetrator and a female victim originated from a power and control dynamic which functioned to develop and maintain an abusive relationship (Rothenberg, 2003). Later, this theory was extended to explain a power and control dynamic between dating pairs and between those adult partners in same-sex cohabitating relationships.

Another popular theory of domestic violence is Bandura's (1973) social learning theory which has been instrumental in explaining how perpetrators become perpetrators and victims become victims of domestic violence. Mihalic and Eliot (1997) reported through a process of observing violence between adults, children mimic this behavior in their own dating relationships. Closely related to this theory is the intergenerational transmission of violence theory (Kwong, Bartholomew, Henderson, & Trinke, 2003), which posited children who witness abusive relationships between parents, or directly experience acts of child abuse, may become perpetrators and/or victims of violence in their adult lives. While these traditional theories of domestic violence have served to explain the dynamics of domestic violence between adult marital and cohabitating pairs, Sharpe and Taylor (1999) claimed these frameworks have failed to consider the more complex dynamics unique to dating pairs. Sharpe and Taylor (1999) argued traditional domestic violence theories have not considered social developmental factors of

adolescence and young adulthood which fully capture a link between romanticism and violence characteristic among young, intimate dating partners. An Ericksonian-based social developmental model of dating violence developed by Sharpe and Taylor was used as a major theoretical framework in this study because it best explains the etiology of abuse or violence between dating pairs.

### *The Cycle of Violence Theory*

The *Battered Women's Syndrome* (Walker, 1977), is a popular concept in the field of domestic violence. It arose from the cycle of violence theory which gained popularity in the early 1970s (Walker, 1977). The battered women's syndrome is characterized by a "cycle of violence" developed and maintained by a sense of power and control on the behalf of a male perpetrator over a female victim who is believed to express a sense of "learned helplessness" (Hirato & Seligman, 1975). Hirato and Seligman defined learned helplessness as a process by which one learns they cannot control or predict an outcome and therefore will behave in a passive or unresponsive way. According to the cycle of violence theory, a combination of power and control on part of the male perpetrator of domestic violence and the learned helplessness on behalf of the victim is believed to fuel and maintain this cycle of violence. This theory is relevant to this study because such a dynamic creates feelings of entrapment within the victim and prevents him or her from leaving an abusive relationship or seeking help or support (Rothenberg, 2003).

Pence (1987) developed the Power and Control Wheel to illustrate the cycle of violence theory which portrays the intentional use of abusive tactics and physical force

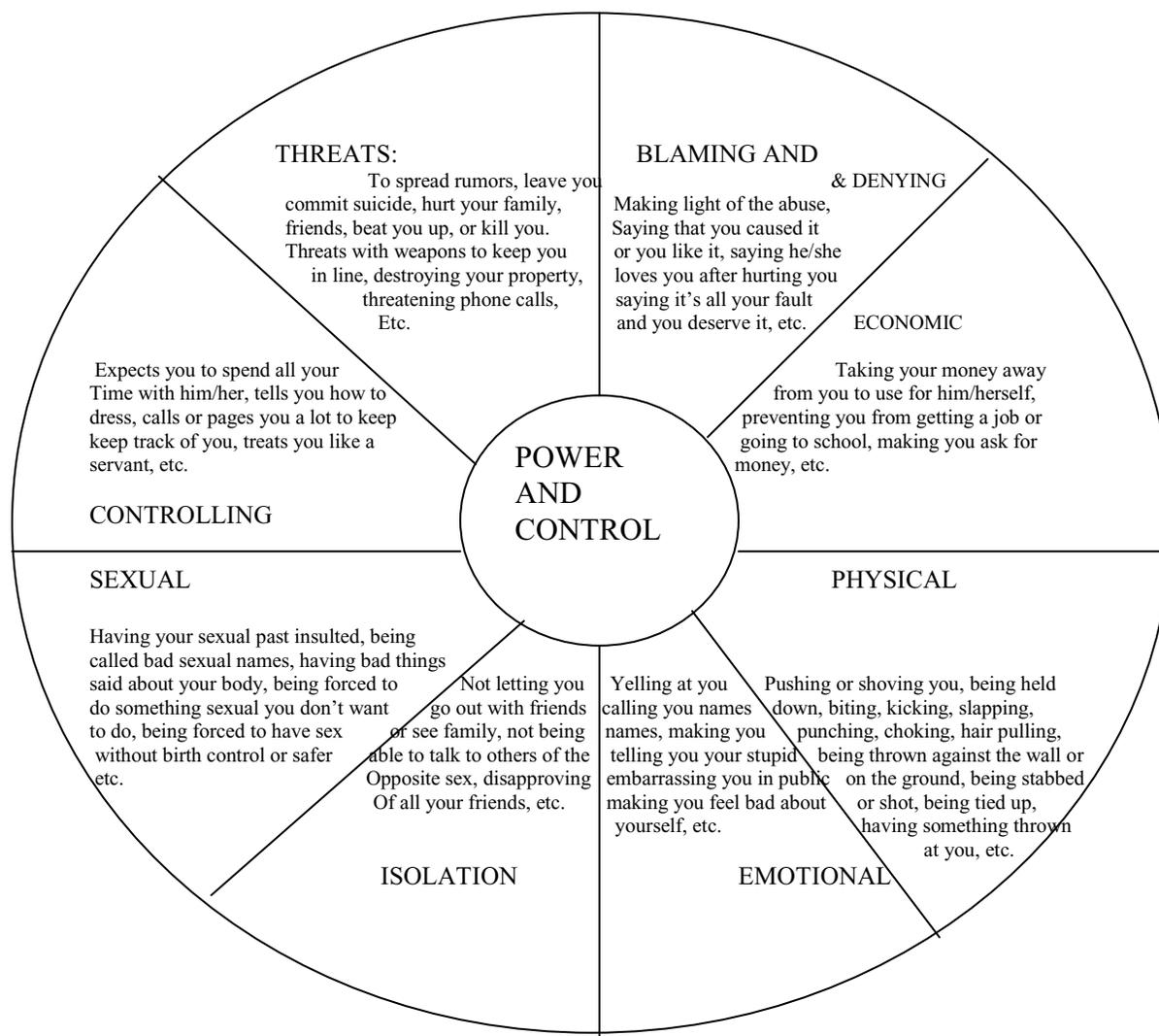
by a perpetrator to execute and maintain power and control over an intimate partner. This visual concept was developed by Pence (1987) based on a 1984 study of interviews among a group of battered women and male perpetrators in a batterer's group (Pence, 1987). The group of survivors of domestic violence was asked to identify the ways in which they felt controlled by their partners and the group in the batterer's group was asked to identify what tactics they used to maintain an environment of fear and control over their female victim (Pence, 1987). Based on the results of these interviews, Pence claimed that power and control is at the center of this wheel. Each spoke of the wheel represents a particular tactic to maintain power and control. At the rim of the Power and Control Wheel is the physical and/or sexual violence which holds the cycle of violence together. According to Pence, psychological abuse spills over into physical and sexual violence with the purpose to instill fear into the victim, enabling the perpetrator to have full power and control over the victim.

The cycle of violence theory has been criticized for being a "gender-based" theoretical framework of domestic violence, which assumes a male perpetrator and a female victim based on principles of misogyny and patriarchy (Ristock, 2003). This traditional view of domestic violence does not adequately explain the dynamics of dating violence between adolescent and young adult dating pairs (O'Keefe & Treister, 1998). O'Keefe and Treister argued there is little support for the cycle of violence theory in explaining the dynamics of dating violence because no gender differences have been found in the power and control dynamic among both males and females. In a study among dating partners, O'Keefe and Treister (1998) found females are just as prone to

exert power and control over their male partners. Moreover, in Dutton's (2007) most recent article, Dutton reported the stereotypical "battering pattern" (severe violence) by a male perpetrator to a nonviolent female victim) is only half as common as the opposite pattern: female severe violence to a male nonviolent victim (p.708). Moffit, Caspi, Rutter and Silva (2001) in Dutton's article, reported longitudinal studies have demonstrated contradictory evidence for the "self-defense" theory of female violence as stereotypically believed, but, in fact, female violence develops throughout adolescence as a form of developmental trajectory (p.708). Among dating pairs, Dutton (2007) discovered aggressive girls are more likely to select aggressive men as adults and are more likely to use intimate partner violence independent of the man's response.

According to Teen Voice magazine (2006), the applicability of the cycle of violence theory to dating violence has been an issue of controversy, but a power and control wheel model has been developed to illustrate the dynamics of dating violence (see Figure 1). This model is similar in function to the power and control wheel that illustrates the cycle of domestic violence between adult marital and cohabitating pairs. The model delineates types of abuse or violence occurring between dating pairs. Though similar in function, the cycle of violence between dating partners has been trivialized because of a widely held view such behavior is characteristic of young romantic relationships. Many discount the "power and control" dynamic among dating relationships believing dating partners who engage in such violence or abuse are merely "behaving irrationally or immaturely" or this behavior is merely a "product of hormones gone wild" (Teen Voice, 2006). As a consequence of such misconceptions of dating violence, the potency of

violence between dating pairs is seriously misunderstood. O'Keefe, Brockupp and Chew (1986) conceptualized acts of dating violence as "rehearsal" in response to future marital conflict and failure to recognize the potency of this type of violence has led to a lack of available resources to aid these victims.



*Figure 1.* Power and control wheel for dating violence.

<sup>1</sup>From "Dating violence Power and Control Wheel" by Safe House Center. *Teen Voice* (2006). Reproduced in original form with permission of the author.

The cycle of violence theory is limited in its applicability toward explaining the violence between same-sex intimate partners because of its gender-based framework. The “power and control” dynamic takes on a different form in same-sex relationships as Delsordi (2005) reported extant studies have shown homosexual couples experience greater “equality” and do not conform to stereotypical gender roles. Eldridge (1987) stated the assumed “butch/femme” pattern where male and female roles are clear is rare in such relationships (Ristock, 2003). However, a study which compared male-male and male-female battering, Jennings and Murphy (2000) found in a potentially violent conflict, the “weaker male” and “stronger male” will know their roles in the exchange (p. 27). The weaker male will back down when challenged and the stronger male may allow the weaker male to escape, but continued attacks on esteem may serve as a cue for violent escalation (p. 28).

In response to this criticism a power and control wheel has been developed to illustrate the cycle of violence present among same-sex adult domestic partners (Hoff, 1998). It differs from the power and control wheel used to illustrate the dynamics of intimate partner violence between heterosexual couples with the inclusion of the variables of internalized homophobia and external heterosexism which further functions to perpetrate power and control of abuser over victim (Hoff, 1998). Perpetrators of intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships use “outing”, which is defined as “the revealing or the threat of revealing someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity to the government, local authorities, friends, family members” (Dolan-Soto, 2002, p.3). Outing and heterosexism which are located on the outer ring of the power and control wheel play

on the awareness of social biases in order to convince the victim they will not receive help or support from legal, social or medical providers based on who they are (Dolan-Soto, 2002). Burke and Owen (2006) stated “outing” is distinguishes same-sex violence from violence among heterosexual partners and it is a weapon commonly used by gay males in abusive relationships to exert power and control over their partner. The power and control model has yet to be extended to the dynamics of violence among same-sex dating partners. While the cycle of violence has been useful in explaining why victims of intimate partner violence fail to leave their abusive relationship or seek help, it fails to consider the victims of intimate partner violence who do seek help or support.

### *Social Learning Theory*

Bandura’s (1973) social learning theory has been applied to the development of a theory of dating violence. Social learning theory postulates children learn violent behavior indirectly by observing violent behavior between their parents, other adults, siblings, boyfriends/girlfriends. Having observed these models, children go on to exhibit this behavior in their adult relationships (Foshee, Linder, MacDougall, & Bangdiwala, 2001; Mihalic & Eliot, 1997). O’Keefe and Treister (1998) reported children who witness violence between their parents are more likely to repeat this behavior in their dating relationships. Sappington, Pharr, Tunstall and Rickert (1997) theorized a child may recreate their “parental home” in their dating relationships, develop a high tolerance for violence, model their parent’s behavior as perpetrator and/or victim, and, as a consequence, fail to learn needed skills for resolving conflict in their dating relationships.

Social learning theory assumes perpetrators of domestic violence have learned techniques of violence through their experiences in their family learning that violence is acceptable and to be tolerated as a result of being exposed to parental abuse or violence (Mihalic & Eliot, 1997; Sappington et al., 1997). During this process, the victim learns to accept the violent behavior of the perpetrator as normal and deserved (Sappington et al., 1997). Langhirichsen-Roling, Hankla and Stormberg (2004) found individuals who grew up learning violence is “typical” tend to mimic this behavior in their adult relationships as compared with individuals who did not. Sappington et al. (1997) noted a reciprocal relationship of abuse among dating partners and reported that young female adults who have experienced verbal abuse by their parents in childhood are at an increased risk for sexual, physical or psychological abuse by a male dating partner. This increases the risk of verbal or psychological abuse toward her dating partner.

An interesting finding in the research of Foshee et al. (2001) and O’Keefe & Treister (1998), both male and female perpetrators of dating violence can be influenced by a friend’s violent behavior toward his or her dating partner and this was found to be particularly significant among female perpetrators of dating violence. While the social learning theory has offered a plausible explanation for the perpetration of violence between dating pairs, Sharpe and Taylor (1999) reported most recent studies on dating violence have not shown a significant relationship between the observation of violence between parents and dating violence. Jackson (1999) supported this argument reporting that not all children who observe aggression between parents become perpetrators or

victims of dating violence, because there are some children who do not observe violence in their family go on to perpetrate violence in their dating relationships.

### *Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory*

The intergenerational transmission of violence theory which supports the notion, “violence begets violence” is closely related to the social learning theory (Kwong et al., 2003). The principle underlying this theory is that a perpetrator of violence becomes a perpetrator of violence by directly experiencing it in their family through acts of child abuse or neglect (Kwong et al., 2003). In nearly half of high school students surveyed, O’Keefe et al. (1986) reported those victimized by their dating partner also reported being exposed to violence in their homes as either a victim or a witness. Graves et al. (2005) reported that a history of childhood abuse has been found to increase the risk for intimate partner violence and victimization in adolescent and adulthood relationships as evidenced by the results of a longitudinal study conducted among a population of 1300 college women who reported physical and sexual victimization in childhood continuing into dating relationships throughout their four years of college.

The concept of attachment is implied within the intergenerational transmission of violence theory. Weber (2003) stated an interaction with one’s parents influences the type of attachment style one will assume in adult life. Infants and children who have experienced mistreatment by attachment figures may develop an insecure attachment style which may lead to what is referred to as a “relational psychopathology” which places him or her at risk for offending behavior or victimization in adolescent or

adulthood romantic relationships (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1998). Closely related to this theory of perpetration and victimization of intimate partner violence, is the traumatic bonding theory (Sampson, 2007), which holds battered women who experience unhealthy or anxious attachment to parents who abused or neglected them may develop unhealthy attachment in their adult relationships by accepting or tolerating violence from their intimate partner.

Kwong et al. (2003) stated that the intergenerational transmission of violence theory might best explain how a perpetrator becomes a perpetrator and how a victim becomes a victim of intimate partner violence. Underlying this theory is the principle that “relational cognitive processes” are at the root of violence, which are encoded and stored in memory of earlier familial events that ascribe meaning to violence. Together, memories of these early familial events and one’s relational cognitive processes form an association leading to an act of violence to reduce stress or conflict in a relationship (Kwong et al., 2003; Langhinrichsen-Roling et al., 2004). In support of this theory, O’Keefe et al. (1986) argued that violence which occurs between young intimates in dating relationship can be viewed as a learned coping response to reduce stress or conflict in their relationship similar to the violence experienced between adult marital and cohabitating pairs. In an early study on parent-to-child violence, Marshall and Rose (1988) found male children who were abused or neglected predicted both perpetration and victimization, but only the victimization and not perpetration of violence among female children. Recently, Balsam and Syzmanski (2005) reported the intergenerational transmission of violence theory has been applied to explain domestic violence among

lesbian partners in adult cohabitating relationships, linking childhood victimization experiences to both perpetration and victimization among these couples.

Sharpe and Taylor (1999) criticized the Intergenerational Transmission of Violence theory in explaining the etiology of dating violence arguing that a number of studies on dating violence have failed to support a significant relationship between acts of dating violence and the experience of violence in one's family. In a study among male and female victims of dating violence who reported witnessing interparental violence or parent-to-child abuse using a multiple regression analysis, O'Keefe and Treister (1998) did not find strong support for the Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory. Cruz and Firestone (1998) concluded intergenerational transmission of violence was not a significant predictor of abuse or violence among gay male relationships. Johnson and Ferraro (2000) reported findings from a National Family Violence Survey conducted among a sample of adult sons whose parents were violent did not necessarily become violent themselves and 80% of these men did not once commit acts of severe violence within a 12 month period.

### *The Revictimization Hypothesis*

The theory one who is a victim of child abuse or neglect is at greater risk for victimization within the context of a dating relationship is assumed by the revictimization hypothesis which suggests a significant link between childhood abuse or maltreatment and sexual victimization of adult women (Messman & Long, 1996). Underlying this hypothesis is the theory that developmental processes in childhood are affected by abuse

or maltreatment which interfere with or alter an individual's ability to form healthy relationships with others (Wolfe, Werkele, Scott, & Straatman, 2004). According to this theory, victims of childhood abuse or neglect will develop poor interpersonal adjustment (fear, mistrust, and hostility) and limited personal resources (poor problem solving skills, lack of self-efficacy, and distorted beliefs about relationships) within the context of their peer and dating relationships (Wolfe, Scott, Werkele & Pittman, 2001, p. 406). Other research has indicated although a history of childhood abuse is not directly associated with an increased risk of sexual victimization in adulthood, it has been found to predict sexual victimization in adolescent girls or precollege women (Krahe, 2000). But Wolfe et al. (2001) argued that perpetrators of dating violence who experienced maltreatment and harsh parenting practices may exhibit similar patterns of abusive behavior toward their peers or romantic partners.

According to Himelein (1995) all evidence supporting the revictimization hypothesis refers to female victims with a childhood history of sexual abuse. Little is known regarding the link between childhood sexual abuse and sexual victimization in male or female victims in lesbian dating relationships. However, Himelein reported one study which found homosexual men with a history of childhood sexual abuse history reported significant severe sexual victimization in subsequent relationships compared with men who were not abused as children.

Among the literature review, less empirical research associated revictimization within dating relationships as predicted by other forms of childhood abuse or neglect. However, severe abuse in childhood has been associated with generalized abuse in

adulthood (Card, Petruchenitch, Feder, Cherng, Richardson & Moorey, 2001).

Malinosky-Rummell and Hansen (1993) documented a relationship between childhood physical abuse and the perpetration and victimization of physical abuse within dating relationships among a college student population. Marshall and Rose (1988) reported childhood abuse among men significantly predicted perpetration and victimization by dating violence, whereas childhood abuse among women only predicted victimization by dating violence. In a more recent study, Smith, et al., 2003, examined physical assault in dating relationships and its concurrence with sexual assault from high school through four years of college and found adolescent victimization was a better predictor of victimization in dating relationships among college women than a history of childhood victimization.

#### *The Social Developmental Model of Dating Violence*

Sharpe and Taylor (1999) developed the social developmental model of dating Violence out of a concern that traditional theories of domestic violence have failed to sufficiently explain how and why violence occurs between dating partners. This model best describes how perpetrators become perpetrators and victims become victims of dating violence and distinguishes the dynamics of violence among dating pairs from adult marital or cohabitating pairs based on socio-developmental factors. The social developmental model of dating violence was chosen as a theoretical framework underpinning this proposed study because it links the variables of attachment with the violence experienced within these young romantic relationships.

The social developmental model of dating violence is relevant to this proposed study because it postulates that as an individual becomes of age and separates from his or her family, the romantic partner becomes a new attachment figure which both influences and shapes one's identity and plays a role in intimacy formation (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). During mid to late adolescence, an increase in heterosexual interaction begins in the pursuit of romantic interests and a romantic relationship emerges (Kuttler & La Greca, 2004). An underlying principle of the social developmental model of dating violence is that one's sense of self-worth in this stage of development is closely related to one's perceptions of social competence and esteem are dependent on an involvement in a romantic relationship (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). Sharpe and Taylor (1999) theorized a romantic relationship is central to a young adult's sense of connection and esteem and if a relationship is threatened or lost, depression or violence may ensue.

According to the social developmental model of dating violence, adolescents or young adults in a dating relationship could enter into a "dangerous passage" whereby love is equated with abuse or violence (Jackson, Cram & Seymour, 2000). Because of such mythical notions that violence represents an "act of love," young adults are at increased risk for victimization by dating violence. According to Jackson et al. (2000), perpetrators may internalize a perception of special importance within the confines of a dating relationship inflicting possessiveness or control onto his or her victim in order to preserve an attachment bond.

The concept of "common couple violence" is a type of abuse or violence occurring within a dating relationship that results as a consequence of "relationship

dependency” rather than a power and control dynamic which has been observed between adult marital or cohabitating pairs (Charkow & Nelson, 2000; Orcutt, Garcia & Pickett, 2005). This type of abuse or violence which is characteristic of dating relationships is thought to be less severe than the “intimate terrorism” which is a more severe, pattern or abuse or violence with a purpose to control a partner and more commonly observed between older adult marital and cohabitating pairs (Orcutt et al., 2005). Relationship dependency is a concept based on the belief that a relationship brings personal happiness and one must fulfill a partner’s needs at the expense of one’s own is thought to be more characteristic of dating relationships (Charkow & Nelson, 2000). This theory is closely related to the concept of “codependency” defined by Cermak (1986) as a continued investment of self-esteem in the ability to control feelings and behavior, whether in self or other in the face of adverse consequences. . . an exaggerated sense of responsibility to meet the needs of others at the expense of one’s own needs (Stafford, 2001). In fact, Stafford observed codependency as operating in many young adult relationships and this may explain why dating partners are invested to preserve or protect an attachment bond. Acts of dating violence have been positively correlated with relationship dependency which is characterized by the following: (a) a belief that a partner is necessary for survival, (b) feelings of low self-worth and self-control with increasing efforts to control the partner, (c) care taking of the partner, (d) difficulty ending an unsatisfying relationship, (e) obsession with the relationship,( f) perceiving love as a refuge from a harsh world, (g) withdrawal from other activities, and ( h) living vicariously through the partner’s accomplishments (Charkow & Nelson, 2000). Wells, Hill, Brack, Brack and

Firestone (2006) found traces of codependency among these individuals who exhibited tendencies toward self-defeating behavior and covert patterns of narcissistic tendency (e.g., rejection sensitivity, attachment to painful relationships, shame proneness, and care taking behavior), which has been found to be associated with a preoccupied concern over maintaining or controlling a sense of security within a relationship. From a social developmental perspective, a dating partner may fail to establish an identity separate from his or her partner. When an attachment bond is threatened or lost, an act of dating violence may result (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). Physical violence and psychological abuse in dating relationships has been theorized as a means of protecting and preserving an attachment bond when real or perceived rejection or abandonment is apparent (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). According to Sharpe and Taylor, one or both dating partners may seek to dominate or control a relationship through the use of violence and/or psychological abuse. Burke, Stets, Pirog-Good (1988) theorized gender drives one's social structural position and view of self. According to this theory, women who perceive themselves as the "weaker actor" in their social position within the structure of their intimate relationship than men are more likely to use coercive tactics (e.g. physical aggression) to gain control over their partner (p. 31). This theory may explain why females in dating relationships may hit their male partner as opposed to the more traditional theory of self-defense (p. 31). Ryan (1998) surveyed a sample of 656 college students, including 245 men and 411 women using the Conflicts Tactics Scale found 34% of women and 40% of men reported being victims of their partner's physical violence or aggression.

From this research, it can be speculated that relationship dependency may be characteristic of an insecure attachment style and a mediating factor blocking help-seeking efforts among victims of dating violence. In a study among a sample of 178 female college students, Charkow and Nelson (2000) found relationship dependency to be significantly and positively correlated with the experience of dating violence between both victim and perpetrator. Charkow and Nelson (2000) reported consequences of relationship dependency is a distortion of true intimacy, stress related health problems, poor academic performance and the acceptance of violence in future adulthood relationships.

Romance and violence are intertwined and associated among dating pairs because this is a stage of development where partners develop a strong, emotional attachment bond, but lack the emotional maturity to handle such intimate relationships (James et al., 2000; Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). The construct of romanticism has been associated with violence in dating relationships and the jealousy that ensues from it has been cited as the most common cause of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). Nightingale and Morrisette (1993) reported the act of “forgiveness” characteristic among dating partners which plays a role in overlooking abuse or violence between dating pairs and may also serve as the function that holds an abusive relationship together.

Sex is also confused with romance and is associated with the violence between dating partners. According to the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (2002), a study of 1,600 juvenile sexual assault offenders nationwide measuring perceptions of sex in dating relationships found 33% of the respondents viewed sex as a way of

demonstrating love and caring for their partner, 23% of the respondents perceived sex as a way to exercise power and control over their partner, 9.4% viewed sex as a means to dissipate anger and only 8.4% perceived the use of violence and sex as a way to punish a dating partner. Among these young romantic dating relationships, victims may interpret a perpetrator's jealousy and controlling behavior as signs of love and affection and interpret their protectiveness as a sign they are special to their partners rather than a view such behaviors as abusive (Spencer & Bryant, 2000). Williams and Frieze (2005) reported within the context of courtship, violence and stalking may be interpreted by the victim as a sign of caring. In a study conducted by Cate, Henton, Koval, Christopher and Lloyd (1982) a group of high school students who were victimized by their dating partners were asked, "What does physical aggression mean?" approximately one-third of the respondents reported it meant their perpetrators loved them and few of these respondents reported it was an indicator of hatred. After an act of abuse or violence by a dating partner, Lloyd and Emery (2000) reported victims of dating violence tend to easily "forgive and forget" and externalize their victimization or emotional pain to outside sources.

Attachment style has been implicated as playing a role in the perpetration of violence in young romantic relationships (Nightingale & Morrisette, 1993). Within an intimate relationship, a romantic partner becomes a new attachment figure who seeks proximity towards the other partner and, if this is not successful, an individual may employ strategies such as stalking to seek closeness and proximity in order to obtain a sense of relationship security (Nightingale & Morrisette, 1993). Orcutt et al. (2005) when

a dating partner experiences “attachment anxiety” (i.e., the real or perceived threat of relationship loss), he or she may experience an intensity of affect leading up to an act of dating abuse or violence. Another factor, which has been associated with the severity of acts of dating violence, has been the intensity of an attachment bond and the length of a dating relationship (Nightingale & Morrisette, 1993). Nightingale and Morrisette (1993) found an insecure attachment style among perpetrators of dating violence predicted greater emotional commitment toward their dating partner and when there was a real or perceived threat of relationship loss, perpetration of violence was most likely to occur. James et al. (2000) reported among dating partners, the greater level of emotional commitment between the partners, the greater the risk for episodes of dating violence. The length of a dating relationship has also been correlated with the severity of dating violence. Katz et al. (2002) reported the most severe acts of dating violence are more likely to occur in steady as opposed to casual dating situations. However, Cleveland, et al. (2003), reported the level of emotional commitment alone does not predict abuse or violence among dating pairs, but may influence the perpetration of abuse or violence in some dating relationships. Bergman (1992) reported contradictory findings, which suggested dating violence is more characteristic of relationships shorter in duration (e.g. less than six months) as opposed to longer term dating relationships (e.g. greater than two years) and compared with domestic violence in adult marital or cohabitating relationships. Callahan, Tolman and Saunders (2003) reported about one-third of high school students in grades 9 through 12, reported experiencing some forms of physical abuse in both casual and serious (longer term) dating relationships. This research appears

to suggest a link between severity of violence, level of emotional intensity and level of commitment in an attachment bond. Based on the social developmental model of dating violence, leaving an abusive relationship or seeking help may be avoided out of a fear of ungluing an attachment bond.

The next section of this literature review will present an overview of prevalence rates of dating violence victimization and types of violence most frequently experienced by victims of dating violence followed by a discussion of dating violence victimization by gender and sexual orientation.

### Prevalence Rates of Dating Violence

Researchers have used the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) as a reliable and valid instrument to report types of violence experienced by adult marital and cohabitating partners of domestic violence. The CTS2 has been used in quantitative research that has investigated prevalence rates and types of violence experienced between adult marital and cohabitating pairs. In a recent national survey, Lipskey, Caetano, Field and Larkin (2006) reported prevalence rates of as many as 52% of women in adult marital or cohabitating relationships each year fall victim to intimate partner violence. Coker et al. (2000) reported the results of epidemiological surveys which found 20% to 50% of young dating couples engage in some form of physical violence, but severe acts of violence, defined as being hit, kicked, beaten or attacked with a weapon occurred less frequently among 20% to 50% among dating pairs.

Community-based samples have consistently found that 20% to 47% of teenage and young adult couples have experienced at least one act of physical violence (Keenan-Miller et al., 2007). It is assumed acts of violence are more frequent among adult marital or cohabitating pairs, but according to Nightingale and Morrissette (1993) acts of physical violence between adult marital and cohabitating pairs may only appear more frequent because they are more frequently reported than violence between dating pairs. Thus, dating violence has been considered less serious and therefore, less important.

As noted earlier in this chapter, acts of dating violence were first observed on college campuses in the 1930's (Makepeace, 1981) and it has only been within the past two decades such acts of dating violence have captured the attention of researchers and practitioners alike. Between a high school student and collegiate population, Jackson (1999) reported approximately 12% of high school students and 36% of college students encounter some form of physical, psychological and/or sexual violence or abuse. Straus (2004) reported in Nabors, Dietz, and Jasinski (2006) reported college students experience extremely high rates of domestic violence ranging from 20% to 50% and 4% to 20% of dating partners use severe forms of violence such as use of a gun or knife, punching or hitting with a solid object, choking, repeatedly beating up their partner or kicking their partner, but only 2% of college students seek medical attention because of injuries inflicted by a partner (p. 780). But the scarcity of literature on dating violence compared with the abundance of literature on domestic violence indicates many incidents of dating violence go unreported or undetected. As a result, others or the victims themselves do not take these acts of abuse or aggression between young dating partners

seriously. Amar and Alexy (2005) reported the prevalence and total impact of this type of violence is still currently unknown.

Only fatal acts of dating violence have captured public attention and have been displayed in the media, but Jackson (1999) reported incidents of non-fatal dating violence are most commonly experienced among individuals 18 through 25 years of age. A recent study conducted by Sampson (2007) found evidence to support the proposition that females aged 16 to 24 constitute the group greatest at risk for dating violence victimization. Amar and Gennaro (2005) found among a convenience sample of 863 college women, those 16 years of age tend to be at greatest risk for experiencing non-fatal acts of dating violence by their male dating partner, but most studies among this literature review supported the findings of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Schieman & Zeoli), which reported those individuals between 16 and 24 years old to be at greatest risk for experiencing violence by an intimate dating partner.

There is consensus among the dating violence research, dating violence occurs early in adolescence, as young as 15 years of age (Holt & Espelage, 2005), but Williams and Martinez (1999) reported adolescents as young as 12 years old report being victimized by dating partners. Other research has found those at greatest risk for dating violence is between the ages of 18 and 25 years old (Jackson, 1999), the majority being representative of the college population. Williams and Martinez (1999) reported estimates between 15% and 28% of the college population reported at least one episode of dating violence within their intimate relationships, but Kreiter et al. (1999), reported a higher rate of dating assault among a white, college-aged population. A similar study

conducted by Pedersen and Thomas (1992) found prevalence rates of dating violence among a college population to be approximately 23% to 35% of dating couples. Among a female college population, Sappington et al. (1997) found 48% of the participants reported having experienced some form of physical violence by their male partners, 20% to 50% reported experiencing forcible attempts at sex which led to their screaming, fighting, crying, or pleading. Results from a number of other studies cited in Sappington et al. reported between 11% and 20% of college women being forced or threatened into having sex with their partner. A longitudinal study conducted by Smith et al. (2003), among a female college population, reported 88% of women experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual victimization between their adolescent years and their fourth year of college.

Previous research in the area of dating violence has mainly focused on physical violence between dating partners because it is the type of violence most reported by victims, but this has undermined the significance of other forms of dating violence *equally* as serious (Sears, Byers & Price, 2006). Emotional abuse, a form of dating violence, may not be considered as serious as physical violence because there are no signs of visible injury. Sampson (2007), however, reported a strong link between the threat of bodily injury and actual bodily injury. In fact, many victims of dating violence sustain more than one form of abuse with females more frequently than males perpetrating more than one form of abuse over their male partner (Sears et al., 2006). In a study conducted by Sears et al. among a sample of dating partners, found 43% of males and 51% of females reported using one form of abusive behavior toward their dating

partner compared with only 19% of males and 51% of females reported using two or more forms of dating violence toward their partner.

Using the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979), of which the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale 2 was derived, Spencer and Bryant (2000) measured prevalence rates of dating violence and estimated the occurrence of violence between opposite-sex dating pairs to range from 17% to 62%. Among a national representative sample of adolescents, Halpern, Young, Waller, Martin and Kupper (2004) found approximately three out of ten adolescents in opposite-sex relationships reported experiencing some type of dating violence with approximately 12% of victims reporting minor physical violence and 29% reported experiencing psychological abuse. These findings were found to be similar for both male and female victims of dating violence. A study conducted by Silverman, et al. (2001) found as a result of a Massachusetts statewide Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 186 female, adolescent high school students, 9% of the respondents reported being physically harmed by their dating partner and 5% of the respondents reported being physically and sexually harmed by their male dating partner which approximated one in five high school females having experienced physical and/or sexual abuse at the hands of their male dating partner. In the research of Williams-Evans and Meyers (2004), these statistics were compatible with one out of every six marital couples who have reported experiencing some form of violence in their intimate partner relationship. However, a paucity of literature exists studying the prevalence rates and types of violence experienced among same-sex dating relationships. Hines (2007) reported among adult victims of intimate partner violence, the majority of men who sustain violence are in

relationships with women, but men in gay relationships experience violence by their partners at least comparable to the rates experienced by men in heterosexual relationships. Burke and Owen (2006) reported statistics from a 2003 Analysis of National Crime Victimization Survey, higher rates of domestic violence involving same-sex couples than heterosexual ones (p. 6). Research conducted by Burke (1998) has estimated as many as 42% to 79% of men and 25% to 50% of women in same-sex relationships have experienced some form of domestic violence. This leads to the conclusion that prevalence of dating violence among same-sex partners may be underestimated among the literature. Research on male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships is rare and less commonly researched is the victimization of gay male and lesbian partners in dating relationships (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Thus, the dynamics of dating violence among same-sex partners has been poorly understood.

Most of the research on dating violence found among this literature review was conducted among a white, heterosexual, high school and college population and few of these studies have explored the occurrence of dating violence among minority groups, including the gay male and lesbian population. This does not mean that dating violence among same-sex partners does not occur. Letellier (1994) reported between gay male and lesbian partners in adult cohabitating relationships, approximately 30% of all gay male and lesbians in intimate relationships have experienced some form of intimate partner violence. Burke, Jordan and Owen (2002) compared rates of intimate partner violence between heterosexual and same-sex victims of adult marital or cohabitating relationships and found violence between same-sex partners is comparable to violence experienced

among heterosexual couples with approximately 47% of gay male and lesbian partners reported being victims of domestic violence. Other study among this literature review cited the occurrence of “lesbian battering” among adult cohabitating partners in both heterosexual and female homosexual dyads (Brand & Kidd, 1986), but studies that have explored prevalence rates of domestic violence between gay male partners are rare. Researchers, Burke et al. (2002), discovered among all male and female victims of intimate partner violence in adult marital or cohabitating relationships, gay males in intimate partner relationships experienced higher rates of physical violence ranging between 42% and 79%.

Among an adolescent dating population, Halpern et al. (2004) found acts of psychological and minor physical violence to be common not only among adolescents in opposite sex relationships, but also among those in same-sex relationships. Freedner, et al., (2002) surveyed 521 gay male and lesbian adolescents who attended a gay rights rally in a community found 37% of female respondents and 41.5% of male respondents reported having experienced at least one form of abuse by their dating partners. These studies, together, have found empirical evidence to dispel the myth violence does not exist between gay male and lesbian partners or among a mature and highly educated college population.

#### Types of Abuse or Violence Experienced by Victims of Dating Violence

Previous research on domestic violence has focused mainly on male-to-female violence among marital or cohabitating pairs which support feministic theory that more

females than males are impacted by dating violence (Ristock, 2003), but this is not to suggest males do not experience injury from acts of violence by their female partners in their dating relationship. Recent research in the area of dating violence (Gray & Foshee, 1997), suggested males may experience physical violence at greater frequency than their female counterparts, but female victims may receive more severe physical injury from violence perpetrated by their male partners partly due to their male partner's physical strength or size.

Conflicting information was found among this literature review as to gender differences in the experience of psychological abuse among dating pairs. Holt and Espelage (2005) stated some studies have found males experiencing at a greater frequency of psychological abuse as opposed to physical violence by their partners than females which contradicts an earlier study conducted by Makepeace (1981) who found female victims of dating violence experience more psychological abuse in their dating relationships than males.

### *Physical Violence*

Physical violence may not be the most commonly experienced type of dating violence, but it is the most frequently reported form of dating violence by victims. Compared with physical violence experienced by adult female victims in marital or cohabitating relationships, an act of physical violence among victims of dating violence has been considered less severe usually involving behaviors such as pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping or throwing objects at one's partner (Katz et al., 2002). Often, those

who observe them may mistake acts of physical violence among dating couples or even among the dating partners themselves as “rough housing” or “teasing” (Katz et al., 2002). Acts of physical violence between adult or marital cohabitating partners are more frequently reported because acts of physical violence between dating pairs are considered less serious than adult marital pairs, and therefore, less important (Nightingale & Morrisette, 1993). However, there is evidence of severe physical violence occurring between dating pairs as evidenced by victims who seek help from emergency room departments or physician’s offices, but they might not report this physical injury as caused by dating violence (Cleveland et al., 2003). High school students surveyed in a study conducted by Cleveland et al. found between 9% and 57% of adolescents reported experiencing at least one incident of physical aggression in their dating relationship and more than one-fifth of dating partners among a university population reported incidents of physical violence by their partners, which included reports made by male victims. However, Brendgen et al. (2002) noted female victims of dating violence sustain significantly more physical injuries from their partners than male victims of dating violence.

Researchers have suggested current statistics on the prevalence and type of abuse or violence experienced by victims of dating violence may be inaccurate because these estimates fail to take into account other types of violence which include psychological abuse, sexual coercion or assault, and stalking which is less reported among victims and this may play a role in perpetuating the myth dating violence is rare or does not exist (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Holt & Espelage, 2005; James et al., 2000; Jenkins & Aube,

2002). Scott and Straus (2007) studied the denial and minimization which occurs in perpetrators of dating violence which could potentially skew the accuracy of current statistics on prevalence rates of dating violence, but no research was found among the literature review which addressed the denial and minimization of abuse or violence by victims of dating violence as a possible factor effecting the accuracy of current prevalence rates of dating violence victimization. The occurring but unreported incidents of victimization by dating violence are of utmost social concern.

### *Psychological Abuse*

Physical violence is *not* the only type of violence experienced by victims of dating violence. A larger number of adolescent victims of dating violence have reported experiencing more psychological abuse than physical violence by their dating partners. Compared with adult victims of domestic violence in marital or cohabitating relationships, psychological abuse tends to be common among dating partners (James et al., 2000; Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). Current research on dating violence has indicated physical violence is often accompanied by or preceded by acts of psychological or sexual abuse among dating relationships (Amar & Gennaro, 2005). Among dating pairs, psychological abuse has been the most common type of dating violence experienced, but the least reported or researched (Amar & Gennaro, 2005). Amar and Gennaro found among a sample of 863 college women who reported experiencing dating violence, approximately 30% experienced physical violence, 90% experienced psychological

abuse, 20% experienced sexual violence and 8% experienced stalking by their dating partners.

Studies among this literature review have reported contradictory results in the degree of harm experienced from psychological abuse by male and female victims of dating violence. In the early years of dating violence research, Makepeace (1981) reported both male and females experience emotional trauma as a result of abuse or violence in their dating relationships. Makepeace found 50% of female victims who suffered physical injury from the violence perpetrated by their male partner, 30% of these victims reported this experience to be emotionally traumatic as compared with 19% of males physically abused by their female dating partners, but only 15% of males reported the physical abuse to be emotionally traumatic. Jenkins and Aube (2002) reported even though psychological abuse may be under reported by male victims of dating violence, it has been found to be a precursor of physical acts of aggression, and in many cases, psychological acts of abuse or aggression cause more serious and long lasting effects than wounds from physical assault alone regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation.

#### *Sexual Coercion or Assault*

Sexual coercion or, "date rape," is considered one of the more hidden forms of dating violence, but the least reported between male and female victims of dating violence (Koss, 1985). In the article, "The Hidden Rape Victim," Koss (1985) reported the results of a study conducted among a sample of college women who reported varying levels of sexual victimization by a dating partner. Koss (1985) reported only 10% to 50%

of the sample reported their experiences of sexual victimization to authorities and approximately 13% of the victims visited a rape crisis center for help (p. 193). Koss (1985) reported such encounters were not reported to the authorities because the victims perceived the acts of sexual victimization to be private, personal matters to embarrassing to report or did not perceive themselves to be victims of sexual coercion or rape. Men may be less likely to report sexual victimization by their female partners because they may feel less victimized by sexual aggression than women (Ryan, 1998). In addition, Koss (1985) found most victims of “hidden rape” were assaulted by a romantic partner than an acquaintance or total stranger.

A report from a 1984 Bureau of Justice Statistics found “date” or “acquaintance” rape most frequently occurred among adolescents and young adult women aged 16 to 24 years old (Mills & Granoff, 1992). Rickert et al. (2005) reported adolescent and young adult women are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted than any other age group, but often will not report their victimization because they are more likely to be assaulted by a dating partner as a consequence of their disclosure. Silverman et al. (2001) reported approximately one in five female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner. Sears et al. (2006) reported 10% to 13% of all perpetrators of dating violence reported having been sexually abusive toward their dating partners. Dunn, Vail-Smith, Fisher, Cullen and Turner (1999) reported date rape accounts for approximately 80% of all rapes on college campuses, but a significant number of victims fail to report or seek help for their victimization perhaps out of self-blame or embarrassment. Among a college population, Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski

(1987) found approximately 28% of college-aged women reported having experienced at least one incident of sexual victimization since the age of 14 and almost 8% of college-aged men reported perpetrating such acts with 57% of these rapes occurring while on dates.

A myth exists men cannot be victims of sexual coercion or assault, but this literature review found otherwise. Such a myth is embedded in the stereotype men cannot be forced to have sex against their will, men who are sexually assaulted by other men must be “gay” and men are less affected emotionally by sexual assault than women (Stermac, Del Bove & Addison, 2004). Several studies found among this literature review have documented the existence of sexual coercion or assault among male victims. Jackson, Cram, and Seymour (2000) reported 77% of female and 67% of male high school students experienced some form of sexual coercion, including unwanted kissing, hugging, genital contact and sexual intercourse by their dating partner. Stermac et al. (2004) reported the majority of male victims of sexual assault (approximately 58%-100%) are Caucasian and relatively young in age, but a percentage of sexual assaults against men may be committed by strangers, and not dating partners. However, in a 1987 survey conducted by Sorenson, Stein, Siegal, Goldberg and Burnam (1987) found 7.2% of the 1480 men surveyed reported being sexually assaulted by a female partner. Struckman-Johnson (1988) found among a sample of male undergraduate college students, 16% reported having been pressured or forced to have sex in dating situations. In another study conducted by Struckman-Johnson (1997), 43% of a sample of 314 men reported at least one incident of pressured or forced sexual contact with a woman since

16 years of age. Of the 21 male victims who were asked to categorize how they felt about being forced to have sexual intercourse at the time that it happened, Struckman and Struckman reported 25% reported it felt good, 50% reported they felt neutral about it and 25% reported it felt bad, and 115 of the victims claimed long-term psychological effects had occurred.

Both male and female perpetrators of sexual assault use dating circumstances to carry out their sexual assaults (Davies, 2002). A National Survey of Youth conducted across the United States which compared prevalence rates of sexual coercion among male and female students and found 5.4% to 11.0% of the participants surveyed reported having been coerced into sexual intercourse and 11.9% of female students compared with 6.1% of male students reported having been forced to engage in intercourse at least once over the past year. A more recent study conducted by the National College Women Sexual Victimization Survey (NCWSVS) reported the rate of sexual assault for college women to be 27.7 rapes per 1000 female students and lifetime prevalence estimates of sexual assaults among men ranged from 3% to 10% of all sexual assault victims (Sable, Danis, Mauzy & Gallagher, 2006). It can be concluded from the review of the literature men are less likely to report victimization from sexual coercion or assault by their female dating partners, but this does not mean men in dating relationships do not experience sexual abuse or violence (Koss et al., 1987; Sable, et al., 2006). Sable et al. (2006) reported findings of researchers who found among a large urban population, approximately 5% to 10% of rape victims are male, but men are more likely than women not to report a rape or sexual assault. Scarce (1997) reported approximately 5% to 10% of

rapes committed in the United States involve male victims, but this estimate may not be accurate because male victims are less likely to report their victimization or seek treatment for their assault partly due to the lack of resources afforded only to women.

### *Stalking*

Williams and Frieze (2005) conceptualized stalking as a repeated and unwanted pursuit behavior characterized by such actions as spying, sending notes or gifts, unannounced visits, calls, or attempts to scare or harass the person being stalked. Among a probability sample of college women who reported being stalked by their male partner, Fisher, Diagle, Cullen and Turner (2003) reported a 13% stalking rate over a seven-month period. Williams and Frieze (2005) found stalking to be a common college experience with prevalence rates ranging from 2% to 33% with more females than males being victimized by it.

Stalking is considered an unusual form of psychological dating violence because it is not considered abusive behavior early in courtship and therefore may go unreported (Williams & Frieze, 2005). Williams and Frieze (2005) stated stalking generally does not become intimidating or violent until after the end of a relationship. In addition, Williams and Frieze (2005) reported stalking may or may not be accompanied by threat of serious harm, but may be accompanied by courtship behaviors such as approach, surveillance, intimidation, hurting the self, and mild verbal and physical aggression (p. 248). Even though about 80% of stalking incidents occur within the context of a dating relationship, most are likely to occur after a relationship has ended (Tjaden & Theonnes, 1998).

Griffin and Koss (2002) reported stalking is believed to be an attempt made by an individual to reestablish a connection with a former dating partner. Dye and Davis (2003) associated an insecure-anxious attachment style with the perpetration of violence toward a dating partner and the angrier an individual was over the breakup of a relationship, the more likely her or she would stalk his or her ex-partner.

### Gender Differences and Dating Violence Victimization

Consistent with feministic thought, many believe females are more frequently victimized by dating violence than males. This belief has triggered considerable debate among researchers as to whether or not women are as capable of violence as men within the context of intimate relationships (Hamberger, 2005). Traditional domestic violence theory supports the belief; women are basically “non-aggressive” by nature (Richardson, 2005). Silverman et al. (2001) argued most intimate partner violence is directed by men towards women and reported male-to-female perpetrated violence occurs three to six times that of female-to-male perpetrated violence. Many support this theory as evidenced by empirical study which has demonstrated two thirds of all clients seeking psychological services are women and estimates of 1 in 3 women seek help from mental health professionals compared with only 1 in 7 men doing the same (McCarthy & Holliday, 2004). But, according to Hines and Malley-Morrison (2001) such findings rest on the belief that if a woman is aggressive toward her male partner, she must be doing so out of self-defense. This assumption is supported by the concept of the battered women syndrome which claims violence perpetrated by women toward their male partner are acts

of reprisal against their victimization (Weizmann-Henelius, Viemero, & Eronen, 2003). This traditional masculine ideology is rooted in feminist tradition that assumes male aggression and domination over females and erroneously claims men with traditional gender related attitudes are more likely to be perpetrators of violence (Jenkins & Aube, 2002). These widely held beliefs or assumptions support the theory a woman's violence toward a man is an act of self-defense or retaliation (Miller & White, 2003).

Recent research refutes the myth men are more aggressive toward their female partners and argue women may be equally as aggressive within the context of an intimate relationship. Dutton (1994) concluded based on the results of a study among lesbian relationships; intimate partner violence is based in intimacy and psychopathology independent of gender or gender roles. According to Dutton's theory, intimate partner violence is the result of the impact of attachment and other related factors (e.g., psychopathology, anger, alcohol abuse, biochemical correlates, attitudes, feelings of powerlessness, stress, personality, etc.), which produces mutual violence and abuse between intimate pairs. Using the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) the results of a meta-analytic study conducted by Archer (2000) found women are slightly more likely to use violence toward their mate. A recent study conducted by Graves et al. (2005) found both men and women inflict and sustain physical violence and psychological abuse at least of equal frequency within their intimate relationship. Gormley (2005) substantiated this research concluding recent meta-analytic studies have empirically demonstrated women are victims as well as perpetrators of intimate partner violence at least of equal frequency as that of men. An interesting study conducted by Hines, Brown and Dunning

(2003), who examined calls from men to a national (U.S.) Domestic Violence Hotline for men found among a sample of 158 men who were asked a series of questions pertaining to violence by their female partners, 43.7% (69) reported being slapped or hit by their female partner and 74.1% (109) reported being controlled by their female partner through emotional abuse and 77.6% (114) reported being controlled by their female partners through coercion and threats. In a quantitative study, Durant et al. (2007) administered a web-based survey among 3,920 college students from 10 universities in North Carolina reported among college men, 5.6% reported “date fight” (physical fight) victimization and 1% reported date fight perpetration as compared with a 4.2% occurrence of female college student victimization and a 6.7% occurrence of perpetration (p. 294). Even when controlling for the use of violence for self-defense, Foshee (1996) found women were more likely to report dating violence perpetration than men.

Empirical evidence to support the theory women are equally as likely than men to perpetrate abuse or violence within the context of a dating relationship has been substantiated in the research of Foshee et al. (2001). In a recent longitudinal study among a high-risk, community sample of adolescents which examined early adolescent psychosocial markers of risk for severe intimate partner violence during the transition to adulthood, Keenan-Miller et al. (2007) found women were more likely than men to have experienced severe consequences as a result of victimization within their romantic relationships, but overall women reported more often than men that they had been perpetrators of violence that resulted in injury. Simonelli and Igram (1998) conducted a study among a sample of male college students who reported being physically abused by

their girlfriend and 29% of the sample reported receiving severe physical abuse from their female dating partner. Among a male and female dating population, Foshee et al. (2001) found empirical support for Dutton's research (1994), which asserted intimate partner violence, is the result of intimacy and psychopathology independent of gender. Foshee et al. (2001) reported female adolescents used as much violence toward their male partners as did male adolescents toward their female partners or even more. Among an adolescent population, Miller and White (2005) found a high rate of female-to-male perpetrated violence.

The most common type of violence between dating pairs is reciprocal whereby both partners initiate and sustain violence (Gray & Foshee, 1997). Gray and Foshee (1997), reported from the findings of their study, 53% to 72% of dating couples sampled reported the violence experienced within their dating relationship was mutual. An earlier study conducted by Rickert et al. (2002) which surveyed an undergraduate and graduate college sample supported Gray and Foshee's findings when these respondents were asked about victimization and perpetration within their dating relationship. Rickert et al. (2001) further reported comparable amounts of aggression between male and female dating partners, but differed in type of abuse or violence experienced.

However, acts of female-to-male violence in dating relationships are more likely to go undetected or unreported compared with acts of male-to-female violence. It is believed female perpetration of violence toward their male partners is not as frequent or severe as male perpetrated violence toward their female partners. A study among adult male and female perpetrators of domestic violence conducted by Busch and Rosenberg

(2004) demonstrated men and women share a wide range of problems including their use of violence in intimate relationships and women are just as likely as men to inflict serious injury onto their male partners. Busch and Rosenberg (2004) compared a sample of adult men and women arrested for domestic violence and reported the following differences:

1. Men were more likely to have a prior history of domestic violence and on the average used a greater number of severely violent tactics (e.g., punching, kicking, choking, etc.) than women, but 90% of both men and women used severe violence when they assaulted their partner.
2. Women were more likely to report their victimization to the police than were men.
3. Men were more likely than women to have committed at least one prior non-violent crime than women.
4. Women were equally likely as men to show evidence of substance abuse problems (pp. 54-55).

Although much can be said for the self-defense theory regarding female perpetrators of domestic violence, recent research has demonstrated female perpetration of violence is not always the product of self-defense because a study conducted by Moffitt and Caspi (1998) found women reported striking their male partners half of the time and men reported hitting their female partners the other half of the time. Wiezmann-Henelius

et al. (2003) conducted a study among 61 incarcerated females and found no evidence to support the belief female offending occurred primarily out of self-defense and female perpetrated violence may lead to the death of a male victim particularly if the female perpetrator and male victim were closely related. Jenkins and Aube (2002) reported women with non-traditional gender expectations were more likely to choose male partners with feminine-like traits who were less apt to be dominant in order to assume a position of dominance within their intimate relationship. Jenkins and Aube concluded from their study, it is a “sense of masculinity” not gender, which is relevant to the perpetration of acts of aggression toward one’s partner. This research supports the research conducted by Hines and Malley-Morrison (2001), which concluded female acts of violence, cannot always be dismissed as self-defense because women have reported other motives for violence against their male partners.

Among dating couples, Lento (2006) reported violence cannot be viewed as a gender issue, but best understood as a type of “relational aggression”; an outgrowth of aggression initiated by peers in childhood also observed among young adults. Forms of relational aggression may include, but are not limited to, ostracism, exclusion, and manipulation which cause psychological harm by controlling another or damaging the relationship in some way (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996). Lento (2006) reported this relational aggression is uncharacteristic of domestic violence observed between adult marital or cohabitating pairs because females toward both male and female peers often initiate it. In a study conducted by Crick, Casas, and Nelson (2002) male respondents reported higher levels of relational aggression victimization than females. Archer (2000) reported even

though females in dating relationships are more likely to be targets of male perpetrated aggression, a substantial amount of research suggests a “bi-directional” pattern of aggression within the context of a dating relationship.

Within the context of dating relationships, there is empirical evidence to dismiss the self-defense theory of female perpetrated violence toward male partners. Foshee (1996) addressed the self-defense theory in a study conducted among adolescents and found 15% of females and 28% of males reported inflicting violence on their partner, but *not* as a form of self-defense and 16% of males and 5% of females reported inflicting violence against their partners in self-defense. While controlling for self-defense, Kreiter et al. (2005) recruited a sample of grade high school students (grades 8 through 12), who completed a self-administered questionnaire, found female respondents reported initiating as much physical aggression compared with male respondents, but females reported using milder forms of physical aggression such as pushing and slapping whereas males reported having perpetrated more acts of sexual violence or aggression than did the female respondents in this study. Sharpe and Taylor (1999) found men more likely to report being recipients of physical violence by their dating partners and females more likely to inflict violence which has been supported by other studies on physical and psychological dating violence which have found females inflicted more physical and psychological aggression toward their male partners.

Among a college dating population, Gryl et al. (1991) reported both males and females sustain and inflict violence on their dating partners. While female victims in committed dating relationships may experience the worst of partner violence and

significantly more females reporting being victims of physical abuse, 25% of adolescent victims of dating violence reported having experienced both physical and psychological abuse in their dating relationships (James et al., 2000; Katz et al., 2002). Among a sample of male college students who reported physical abuse by their girlfriends, 29% of this sample reported experiencing serious physical abuse (Archer, 2000). However, Archer (2000) added women were slightly more likely to use one or more acts of physical aggression against their male partner. O’Keefe et al. (1986), reported female-to-male perpetration in dating relationships may be partially explained by the theory adolescents have not yet adopted “expected” feminine gender role behavior and compared with their adult counterparts have less at stake emotionally and materially and therefore be willing to take greater risks in their intimate relationships.

Based on the research, it can be concluded males are also victims of dating violence. Richardson (2005) dismissed the myth of “female passivity” and claimed, “Women are not merely passive creatures but are perpetrators as well as victims of intimate partner violence “(p. 245). Richardson (2005) concluded aggression is not merely a product of gender, but an interaction of an individual’s motivations and inclinations (p. 244). According to Hamberger (2005) acts of dating violence are not explained by gender per se, but gender differences in motive for the initiation of violence toward an intimate partner. Barnett, Lee and Thelen (1997) found men used violence significantly more than women “to show their partner who is boss”, to tease their female partner, or try to get her attention while women used violence significantly more than men to “protect” themselves which supports the self-defense theory, but Hamberger

argued women use violence also as a means of expressing their feelings toward their male partner or as a way of reducing tension in the relationship.

### Dating Violence Victimization by Sexual Orientation

Researchers have only begun to investigate the violence between gay male and lesbian partners. The definition of intimate partner violence between gay male and lesbian partners does not differ much from intimate partner violence experienced between heterosexual pairs. Violence experienced in same-sex relationships has been defined by Burke (1998) as a means to control others through power using physical and psychological threats, injury, isolation, economic deprivation, sexual assault or coercion, vandalism and any combination of these methods.

Many have assumed violence between gay male and lesbian partners does not exist because such relationships only represent a small segment of the general population, but research has suggested otherwise. Burke and Follingstad (1999) reported the gay male and lesbian population may be larger than thought and it is estimated 4% to 17% of American adults have experienced romantic relationships with same-sex partners. Burke and Follingstad (1999) reported because there is faulty assumption that members of the gay and lesbian population only represent a fraction of the total population, many believe that if acts of abuse or violence do occur, it is not as serious compared with members of the heterosexual community.

Recent research has found evidence of domestic violence among same-sex partners, which contradicts the belief violence between gay male and lesbian partners, is

rare or non-existent (Burke, 1998). Ristock (2003) in a New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project reported the incidence of violence among gay and lesbian couples matched those in heterosexual relationships, approximately one in four. Brand and Kidd (1986) reported 25% of a sample of 55 self-identified lesbian women reported physical abuse by their lesbian partner. Coleman (1994) found that among 90 lesbian couples surveyed, 46% reported having experienced acts of violence in their intimate relationships. Previous studies which have been conducted on same-sex battering (Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2003), have established domestic violence occurs within same-sex relationships with the same degree of frequency as in heterosexual relationships.

Burke and Follingstad (1999) reported an empirical study that has yielded inconsistent and contradictory results exist between the type of violence experienced between heterosexual and same-sex couples because violence in same-sex relationships is largely unreported. Burke et al. (2002) reported subtle differences between type of abuse or violence experienced between heterosexual and same-sex couples. Several studies (Cruz & Firestone, 1998; Island & Letellier, 1991; and Renzetti (1992) reported intimate partner violence between gay and lesbian pairs has been found to be similar in comparison with heterosexual partners who experience domestic violence because they both share similar dysfunctional coping styles and relational deficits as do heterosexual partners. Burke (1998) differentiated domestic violence victimization between same-sex pairs from heterosexual couples because the former is often characterized by the experience of external heterosexism, internalized homophobia, and a threat of being “outed” by the gay community. Kuehnle and Sullivan (2003) found similarities between

victims of domestic violence in heterosexual relationships, victims of domestic violence in same-sex relationships including physical abuse and neglect, psychological abuse, economic control and property damage by their partners, but Letellier (1994) found gay men more at risk to be killed by their partners than strangers in comparison with other victims of domestic violence.

In a 2002 study conducted by the New York City Anti-Violence Project (APV), Dolan-Soto (2002) presented results illustrating prevalence rates of domestic violence victimization by gender, sexual orientation, age, and race/ethnicity among a lesbian, gay, transsexual and bisexual population in Table 1.

Table 1

*Domestic Violence Statistics Among LGBT Population in NYC*

Item	Percentage	Item	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Age</b>	
Male	55	Under 18	12
Female	45	18-22	8
		23-29	16
		30-44	44
		45-64	10
		65 and over	1
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Gay	44	Latino/Hispanic	31
Lesbian	27	African American	23
Bisexual	4	Caucasian	27
Heterosexual	9	Multi-racial	5
		Mideastern	1
		Unknown	8

Note. From "A report of the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project," by D.R. Dolan-Soto,

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Findings from Dolan-Soto's (2002) study support the theory intimate partner violence is greater among the gay male population than the lesbian and male or female heterosexual population. A paucity of research has been found among this review of the literature examining the prevalence or type of violence experienced between same-sex adolescent dating pairs or between gay male and lesbian dating partners among a college population. Accounts of dating violence between male and female partners in same-sex relationships may be more difficult to observe or detect and less likely to be reported than

violence between heterosexual dating pairs. Based on what has been discovered about domestic violence between same-sex partners in adult marital or cohabitating pairs, it can only be assumed dating violence does exist between college aged same-sex dating pairs. Halpern et al. (2004) reported in a study among gay, lesbian and bisexual adolescents, youths involved in same-sex dating relationships are just as likely to experience dating violence as youths in opposite sex dating relationships. Cruz and Firestone (1998) reported among a college population, acts of dating violence might periodically surface only in community newspapers or books written for gay and lesbian students.

#### Reporting Trends and Attachment Style Among Victims of Dating Violence

Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) concluded that the majority of victims of dating violence fail to report their experiences of abuse or violence to another. But a scarcity of literature exists reflecting reporting trends among victims of dating violence, particularly among those victims in same-sex dating relationships. The lack of research available on reporting trends among victims of dating violence, especially among same-sex dating pairs, fuels the notion that victimization by dating violence does not exist. However, this literature review evidenced support for the theory dating violence does exist between same-sex pairs, but these victims often fail to report their experience of abuse or violence by their intimate partners (Grossman & Kerner, 1998). Victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships may experience double the consequences as compared with their peers in heterosexual relationships because it involves “coming out of the closet” and exposing their sexual orientation in addition to their experience of violence or abuse

(Grossman & Kerner, 1998). Even though “coming out” with one’s sexual orientation is considered to be the hallmark of developing a secure sexual identity, young adults who come out without an adequate social support system in place renders them vulnerable to psychological distress as they encounter homophobic reactions and other forms of harassment and discrimination (Grossman & Kerner, 1998). Because of this factor, Grossman and Kerner (1998) theorized victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships face different challenges than victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships making it less likely they will report their victimization.

Differences in reporting patterns have been found among adult victims of intimate partner violence in marital or cohabitating heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Burke and Follingstad (1999) reported while heterosexual victims fail to report or disclose their victimization to another out of fear of retaliation from their abusive partner, gay men and lesbian women may fail to report their victimization out of a fear of confronting homophobic reactions or being “outed” by the gay community. Unique to the experiences of domestic violence in same-sex relationships is the inequality of legal protection afforded to female victims of intimate partner violence. Many state statutes do not cover unmarried persons or those not currently in cohabitating relationships which would disqualify victims of dating violence from the same protection under the law (Seelau & Seelau, 2005). Burke et al. (2002) stated gay males and lesbian women who experience domestic violence have been excluded from applying for domestic violence protection orders which may be another reason why these victims fail to report their experience of abuse or violence by their partners due to real or perceived homophobic

reactions of the criminal justice system. In a study by Renzetti (1992) among a majority of lesbian victims of domestic violence reported they perceived the police to be unhelpful in their efforts to seek protection from domestic violence with justifiable reason. Seelau and Seelau reported police are less likely to arrest perpetrators or enforce protection orders in cases that do not involve male-to-female perpetrated violence and even less likely to intervene in cases which involve gay male or lesbian couples, perhaps due to homophobia or gender role stereotyping which say women cannot be abusers and men cannot be abused regardless of sexual orientation.

The fear of being judged, coupled with the fear of homophobic reactions, is enough to serve as a major barrier to the disclosure and help-seeking efforts among not only male victims of dating violence in heterosexual dating relationships, but especially male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships among a college population. D'Augelli (1992) reported these victims might avoid disclosing their experiences of abuse or violence by their partners to their social support network (e.g. friends, acquaintances, peers, faculty, staff, campus administrators, etc.) because of the fear of homophobic comments, harassment and other forms of overt and subtle discrimination and prejudice they might observe or directly experience. In a study conducted by Mohr and Fassinger (2003) among 489 lesbian, gay and bisexual adults found those who had difficulties accepting their sexual orientation were more likely than others to exhibit a pattern of high avoidance and high anxiety characteristic of a fearful/avoidant attachment style which may play a role in their reluctance to report or seek help.

A link between symptom reporting and attachment style has been well established among researchers studying health behavior among the general population (Armitage & Harris, 2006). This current study sought to extend the findings among the medical and psychiatric literature (Armitage & Harris, 2006; Kidd & Sheffield, 2005), which has empirically demonstrated a correlation between attachment style and symptom reporting, or health behavior, to male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. (health behavior) to male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Kibeck and Sceery (1988) reported attachment style is closely associated with the learning from caregivers on how to regulate stress (Armitage & Harris, 2006; Kibeck & Sceery, 1998). Differences in style of attachment have been shown to have a mediating effect among individuals seeking help for various medical conditions and psychological problems among the general population (Armitage & Harris, 2006). Feeney (2000) reported,

Secure children learn to acknowledge their distress and seek help from others, avoidant children learn to deny or suppress their distress, so as not to risk further distancing or alienation on part of their caregivers, and anxious-ambivalent children tend to be overly vigilant to negative events and express their upset very strongly, to ensure a response from inconsistent caregivers. (p. 280)

In previous study, a relationship has been found between style of attachment and the seeking of social support (Wallace & Vaux, 1993). Social support has been designated as a mediating variable which is defined in research as “ a variable which represents the general mechanism through which the focal independent variable is able to

influence the dependent variable of interest “ (Armitage & Harris, 2006, p. 353). Not only does attachment style influence help-seeking behavior among the general population, but Armitage and Harris reported researchers have found that social support mediated the relationship between attachment style and symptom reporting. A study conducted by Schwartz, Waldo and Higgins (2004) among 170 male undergraduate students who completed the Gender Role Conflict Scale and the Relationship Scales Questionnaire, demonstrated men with secure attachment styles experienced significantly less gender role conflict with restrictive emotionality when compared with men with preoccupied, dismissive, or fearful attachment styles. The results of this research conducted by Schwartz et al. implicate the role of attachment style in the reporting of acts of dating violence. The results of the study conducted by Schwartz et al. indicate insecure attachment experiences among males in early childhood engender feelings of negative self-worth and distrust in others which may cause men to over identify with traditional attitudes about what constitutes masculinity and prevent the expression of emotion or self-disclosure to another. In a study conducted by Kidd and Sheffield (2005) among 141 college women and 50 college men who completed questionnaires examining attachment style, anger expression and experience, perceived social support and symptom reporting, found preoccupied and fearful/avoidant attachment styles associated with increased symptom reporting, but social support and anger mediated the relationship between attachment style and symptom reporting. However, Mohr and Fassinger (2003) reported that the results of their study found fearful/ avoidant individuals less likely to believe

others will respond to them in a trustworthy, sensitive and accepting manner and thus less likely to report their victimization or seek help or support from others.

Armitage and Harris (2006) who studied the attachment style-symptom reporting relationship among the general population found results consistent with samples among the undergraduate population: (a) securely attached people reported fewer symptoms, but experienced greater social support, more positive affect and greater self-esteem than insecurely attached individuals, and (b) attachment styles are associated with a range of resourcefulness for coping (p.362). But, Armitage and Harris reported the results of their study supported previous research among the medical literature which has discovered a link between attachment style, hypochondriasis and somatization and symptom-reporting, an effect of greater symptom reporting among less securely attached individuals mediated by the variable of negative affect (p. 363). Based on previous research, (Collins and Feeney, 2000; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Wallace and Vaux, 1993), it would seem those with an insecure style of attachment would be more likely to report their symptoms to another, but this researcher speculates male and female victims of dating violence with a secure attachment style will be more likely to report or disclose their experiences of abuse or violence by their dating partner based on the findings of previous research which has found that securely attached individuals demonstrate greater self-esteem/worth and a keener sense of social support and resourcefulness for coping.

### Help Experiences Among Victims of Dating Violence

Individuals among a college population represent a distinct cultural group, but are rich in cultural diversity. Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Gollust (2007) reported even though a majority of college students experience high levels of psychological distress, only a minority of students seek or secure help making it important to study access and utilization of mental health services among this population. Among an adolescent population experiencing emotional distress, a recent study conducted by Suris, Jeannin, Chossis and Michaud (2005) reported a sizeable percent of adolescents report needing help, but only about one-tenth seek it. Similar research conducted by Cauce et al. (2002), the authors reported 7 out of 10 American adolescents who suffer mental health problems do not receive help perhaps due to a failure to seek or accept help even when it is offered or available. Based on these statistics among adolescents who seek help for various mental health problems, it is assumed the majority of male and female victims of dating violence among a college population may share similar help experiences.

Little is known about the actual help experiences among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample. Therefore, it can only be deduced based on empirical study among the help experiences of adolescents and young adults who have sought and secured help for various medical conditions and mental health related issues the help experiences among this population. Furthermore, no existing research was found among this literature review which examined the help experiences specific to victims of dating violence in same sex relationships among a college sample.

Several researchers have studied the experiences with help among a college population. Among a sample of 49 college men in seven focus groups of a university campus setting, Davies et al. (2000), studied the help experiences among these participants and found college men are less likely than college women to seek medical care mainly in response to gender role expectations such as “men are to be strong, self-reliant, stoic, and aggressive” (p. 260). In addition, Davies et al. (2000) reported men will not seek help unless in extreme physical or emotional pain. Among the gay/bisexual participants in this study, Davies et al. reported these participants expressed concerns about feeling safe, accepted, understood, and about the competence of counseling staff to work with students from culturally diverse backgrounds (p.263). Buston (2002), however, among a majority of adolescents surveyed who received actual help from healthcare providers for mental health problems, reported both positive and negative experiences with their healthcare providers. Nevertheless, contemporary research as a rule claims the majority of adolescents or young adults fail to seek or secure help and if they do, it is mainly from informal sources such as family and peers (Marcell & Halpern-Feisher, 2007; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). This leaves a large gap in the literature about the actual help seeking and receipt of help among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample. An even larger gap in the literature exists which has examined among those victims of dating violence seek help for their experiences of abuse or violence within the context of their dating relationship, how many actually receive or accept help.

No one theory among the existing research on help-seeking behavior among an adolescent or young adult population thoroughly explains why some adolescents and young adults seek or actually obtain help, while others do not. Cause et al. (2002) presented a help-seeking pathway model which accounts for cultural and contextual factors involved in the help-seeking behavior among a culturally diverse adolescent population experiencing mental health problems. This model posited help-seeking behavior among a culturally diverse adolescent population involves three steps, but not necessarily in direct order: problem recognition, the decision to seek help and the selection of service or support.

Boldero and Fallon (1995) concluded from their study on adolescent help-seeking, help-seeking among adolescents is associated with gender and problem type. Among a population of 210 high school students who completed a survey of four separate age and gender specific health case scenarios ranking the importance of getting help from specific resources, Marcell and Halpern-Feisher (2007) reported the following results: (a) the selection of help will depend on the type of help issue in question, (b) adolescents prefer informal sources of help (friends and peers) than significant adults to for help for risk-behavior type and mental health concerns, but physicians are preferred for physical health-related issues, (c) females have a greater network of both formal and informal resources than males and therefore are more likely to seek and secure help than males, (d) the decision to seek and secure help was related to age and comfort with or past history of help from specific resources. Suris et al. (2005) surveyed 7,248 adolescents ranging from 16-20 years in age and experiencing emotional distress found through a multivariate

analysis, predictors of help seeking were those participants who were older and in more distress. Suris et al. concluded being in contact with the health care system was the strongest predictor of formal help seeking among emotionally distressed adolescents.

The help-seeking pathway model (Cause et al., 2002) can be easily applied to understanding why some victims of dating violence seek and secure help, while others do not. For example, if an individual does not perceive the violence occurring within the context of his or her relationship, he or she is not likely to seek or accept help. Victims of dating violence who struggle for a sense of autonomy or self-reliance characteristic of this stage of psychological development may be least likely to seek or secure help from both informal and formal sources (Cauce et al., 2002). Male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships may decide to “tough it out” or try to resolve the problem on their own seeking nor accepting any help at all based on culturally determined beliefs about help-seeking and the male gender (Cauce et al., 2002). Davies et al. (2002) found more than half of coping strategies employed by 49 college men who participated in a focus group study included strategies which involved escaping with stress rather than dealing with it effectively, but the most common coping strategies discussed among these male participants included: (a) trying to resolve issues on their own or venting feelings through physical activity; (b) use of alcohol or nicotine, swearing, yelling or violence; (c) talking to a trusted friend, family member or peer going through a similar situation; and (d) seeking professional help as a last resort (p. 263). Davies et al. (2002) concluded seeking and securing help among young men may counter their goal of independence even though being independent knows when to ask for help (p. 265).

Although the help-seeking pathway model (Cause et al., 2002) explains how culture and contextual factors influence the help-seeking experiences among adolescents or young adults, it fails to take into consideration other factors such as style of attachment which has become a newly discovered variable among the help-seeking literature. Attachment style has been conceptualized as a “state of mind” and coping has been defined as “an active and purposive process of responding to stimuli appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person” (Seiffge-Krenke and Beyers, 2005, p. 562). The act of seeking and securing of help is an example of an adaptive coping response. In a longitudinal study among 112 adolescents aged 14 through 21 years old, Seiffge-Krenke and Beyers determined a link between coping and style of attachment. In addition, Seiffge-Krenke and Beyers reported individuals classified with a secure style of attachment dealt with their problems more actively by seeking out and using their social network. However, the authors of this study found both secure and dismissing individuals used more internal coping methods than those with a preoccupied state of mind (p. 561).

Based on a review of the literature, this study proposes attachment style, strongly influenced by past experiences with help, as another critical factor influencing the help experiences in the lives of male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample.

### Costs and Consequences of Dating Violence

A significant amount of literature was found providing evidence to support the theory dating violence is a traumatic event which has devastating consequences to its

victims regardless of race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status (Hamed, 2002). However, according to Jackson et al. (2000) the research available on dating violence has failed to adequately explore the meaning of dating violence and its consequences.

Male and female victims of dating violence alike in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships may experience a wide array of consequences which threaten one's physical and psychological well-being. The costs and consequences of dating violence involve harm to the victim, the romantic relationship itself, significant others in the lives of the victim and the community and society at large.

#### *Physical Consequences of Dating Violence*

Similar to victims of domestic violence in adult marital or cohabitating relationships, victims of dating violence are vulnerable to physical abuse or injury. The National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS), conducted a telephone crime survey among a sample of 8,000 adult men and women and found most women reported experiencing mild injuries such as scratches, bruises, and welts (66-73%), fewer women reported more serious injuries including lacerations, broken bones, dislocated joints, head or spinal cord injuries, broken teeth and internal injuries (2-17%) as a result of acts of domestic violence (Amar & Gennaro, 2005). Victims of domestic violence may present their physician with multiple somatic complaints, chronic abdominal pain or chronic headaches (Alpert, 1995). Dutton et al. (2006) reported head injury and chronic pain

syndromes have been associated but an unrecognized manifestation of domestic violence in women who have experienced intimate partner violence.

Few studies found among this literature review reported statistics regarding the type of physical injury experienced by victims of dating violence, but it has been assumed victims of dating violence do not experience as severe physical injuries compared with victims of domestic violence in adult marital or cohabitating relationships. Few studies have examined the nature and extent of physical injury among male victims of intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships and even fewer have explored the nature and extent of physical injury among male and female victims of intimate partner violence in gay male and lesbian relationships. Among heterosexual relationships, it has been found significantly more women (63%) than men (27%) suffer physical injury from mild and severe forms of violence, but women are more likely than men to seek medical attention for their injury, so these statistics may be skewed (Hamberger, 2005). Previous research on domestic violence has reported gay male victims of domestic violence experience more vicious levels of physical violence as compared with their lesbian counterparts or male victims of domestic violence among heterosexual relationships (Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2003). Among a sample of 49 male participants identified as victims of intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships, 33% of the participants reported no physical injury as a result of their partner's violence, 45% reported minor physical injuries, and 22% reported more serious injuries ranging from severe bruising to broken bones (Stanley, Bartholomew, Taylor, Oram, & Landolt, 2006). One participant in this study conducted by Stanley et al. reported receiving a swollen lip,

a sprained finger, a deep knife wound to his hand after his partner attempted to stab him and another participant in this study reported waking up in a pool of blood after his partner hit him in the head with a dumbbell (p.37).

### *Psychological Consequences of Dating Violence*

The few studies available on the consequences of dating violence have been focused on physical injury experienced by victims of dating violence because physical injury sustained from acts of dating violence are most commonly reported by victims (McLewin & Muller, 2006), but several researchers (Callahan et al., 2003; McLewin & Muller, 2006; Stanley et al., 2006) cited the most commonly type of abuse or violence reported by victims of dating violence is psychological abuse that places victims of dating violence at greater risk for the development of psychopathology than other forms or types of abuse or violence that occurs within the context of a dating relationship.

In a study conducted by Stanley et al. (2006), the majority of victims of intimate partner violence among marital or cohabitating adults report higher rates of psychological abuse than physical injury. It is assumed, however, victims of dating violence are not only at risk for severe physical injury, but are vulnerable to deep and enduring psychological wounds which may precede, co-occur, or result from acts of physical violence. Deep intrapsychic wound resulting from only one act of dating violence, can distort one's view of self (Taylor & Sorenson, 2004) and interfere with one's daily life or functioning in his or her social world. Many studies among the domestic violence literature have reported physical violence to co-occur with emotional or psychological

abuse (Stanley et al., 2006). Among a sample of male victims of same-sex intimate partner violence, Stanley et al. found as psychological abuse increased so did the severity of physical and emotional impact on the victim. It has been speculated among this review of the literature, psychological abuse leaves longer lasting scars and has more negative long-term effects on the life of a victim of dating violence, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, than physical injury.

Adolescent victims of dating violence are prone to experience psychological, behavioral and physical health problems which include but are not limited to, lowered self-esteem and efficacy, eating disorders, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, alcohol and drug abuse, risky sexual behaviors leading to sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy, suicidal ideation and/or attempts, somatic complaints, anger along with a lowered quality of life than their non-victimized peers (Alpert, 1995, Amar & Genaro, 2005 ;Jouriles, et al., 2005; Taylor & Sorenson, 2004). Holt and Espelage (2005) found psychological abuse in dating relationships linked to the experience of anxiety and depression by the victim. According to a study conducted by Ackard and Nuemark-Sztainer (2002), 50% of youth reporting dating violence and rape also reported attempting suicide compared to 12.5% of non-abused girls and 5.4% of non-abused boys. Female victims of intimate partner violence tend to have lowered self-esteem and a decreased sense of control or safety in reaction to psychological abuse perpetrated by their male partner, but due to a strong emotional attachment to their abusive partner, many fail to leave their abusive relationship (Kasian & Painter, 1992). Psychological abuse experienced by female victims of domestic violence has also been correlated with

chronic pain and poor physical health (Dutton et al., 2006). An investigation conducted by Huckle (1995) reported between a sample of adult male rape survivors and almost half the participants in the study met criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Aguilar and Nightingale (1994) reported psychological consequences from stalking include stress, anxiety, depression, fear, repulsion, shock, self-blame, lowered self-esteem and loss of trust in others.

Victimization from acts of dating violence has also been correlated with poor academic performance and school dropout rates (Rickert et al., 2002). According to a recent study conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which analyzed data from a 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, found 14% of 14, 956 high school students surveyed who reported being victimized by dating violence received D's and F's as compared with the findings in a similar study by Damlo (2006) that reported only 6% of the students reported grades of A's. The results of these studies assume a significant correlation between victimization by dating violence and academic performance.

This literature review suggested gender differences in the experience of psychological abuse by an intimate partner. It is generally believed female victims of intimate partner violence experience greater psychological distress than men. Molidor and Tolman (1998) reported after an examination of the worst scenarios of dating violence, male participants reported the violence experienced by their partner had minimal or no psychological effect among 90% of the violent incidents reported in the study. However, Dye and Davis (2003) reported a lifetime prevalence of psychological

disturbance resulting from intimate partner violence to be approximately 31.7% for men and 28.7% for women. In a study conducted by Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd and Sebastian (1991) depression and anxiety were the most commonly reported psychological reactions from dating violence experienced among male and female victims, but female victims reported greater fear and anxiety than male participants, but Follingstad et al. concluded these findings may be misleading due to the tendency for male victims of dating violence to underreport their psychological symptoms. Jackson et al. (2000) reported this effect may be partially explained by the fact male victims may not perceive their victimization by their female perpetrators as abusive or they may accept or tolerate violence more so than female victims. Many studies among the dating violence literature have reported fewer male victims than female victims report psychological injury, but in a study conducted among a sample of 49 male participants who experienced episodes of intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships, Stanley et al. (2006) found 23% of participants reported a strong emotional response to their partner's violence and one victim reported feeling "terrified" and another reported feeling "scared for his life."

Among a sample of gay male victims of intimate partner violence, Stanley et al (2006) reported the threat of relationship loss as a result of intimate partner violence resulted in more psychological pain than physical injury. Burke and Follingstad (1999) reported when lesbian victims of partner abuse were separated from their partner, they experienced strong dependency needs, lowered self-esteem, and a high incidence of depression as a consequence of psychological abuse. Garnets, Herek & Levy (1990) reported male victims of intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships and to a

greater extent in same-sex relationships experience psychological distress as a consequence of intimate partner violence as they confront their own “vulnerability, helplessness and dependence” on others. The psychological distress is produced by a gender role conflict (Garnets et al., 1990) can be emotionally devastating to them.

Recent findings suggest males are at greater risk for psychological injury as a result of intimate partner violence than traditionally believed. Male victims have reported both physical and psychological devastation such as shock, humiliation, and rape related phobias years after experiencing a sexual assault (Stermac et al., 2004). Davies (2002) reported many male victims of sexual assault experience negative emotion such as reported by one male who stated, “Afterwards, I felt very scared, used and abused...the feeling is that you’ve been used and trespassed on. It’s a very hollow, dirty, feeling” (p. 206).

Hines and Malley-Morrison (2001) reported both male and female victims of intimate partner violence are vulnerable to developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a consequence of their victimization. Hines and Malley-Morrison assessed the incidence of PTSD and alcoholism symptoms in 116 college men who identified themselves as victims of dating violence and found the more psychological abuse they experienced, the higher the symptom count for PTSD and alcoholism. An “internalized homophobia” compounds psychological consequences of intimate partner abuse among gay male and lesbian victims as they may interpret their victimization as punishment for their sexual orientation and in turn may react by “joining with their aggressor” agreeing with homophobic attitudes conveyed in the violent act and as a result suffer tremendous

psychological pain, guilt and feelings of demoralization (Davies, 2002; Garnets et al., 1990).

Russell and Consolacion (2003) reported adolescent victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships might be particularly vulnerable to psychological injury as a consequence of dating violence because they are more likely to be targets of harassment and victimization due to their sexual minority status which jeopardizes their psychological well being. A gap was found in this literature review examining psychological consequences of dating violence victimization among those in same-sex dating relationships.

Researchers have cautioned not all victims of dating violence will experience severe physical or psychological injury as a consequence of dating violence victimization as some victims of dating violence may be “psychologically resilient” to their experience of abuse or violence (Amar & Gennaro, 2005). Amar and Gennaro reported current research on dating violence has failed to take into account pre-existing psychiatric disorders such as personality factors and prior history of childhood abuse which may contribute to severe or intense psychological reactions and this may explain why some victims of dating violence are more psychologically vulnerable than others.

#### *Consequences of Dating Violence to the Romantic Relationship*

Dating violence not only harms the mind and body of an individual, but There is also research which suggests dating violence damages the romantic relationship itself. Among college students, romantic relationships are an integral part of life. Russell

and Consolacion (2003) stated the initiation of intimacy in the dating years represent a core developmental process during adolescence and young adulthood. Attachment theory holds mothers are the most important attachment figures in early life and a girlfriend or boyfriend becomes a new attachment figure in adolescence or young adulthood (Aspelmeier & Kerns, 2003). The development of romantic relationships have been conceptualized as an attachment process where individuals transfer attachment functions from the parent-child bond to peers and later to romantic partners who come to serve as attachment figures (Aspelmeier & Kerns, 2003). Cassidy (2001) reported most people view their romantic relationship as most important: at the core of this attachment bond is intimacy, which promotes self-disclosure, a concept that Cassidy (2001) defined as:

Making one's innermost known, sharing one's core, one's truth, one's heart with another. It is being able to tell both good and bad parts of oneself, to tell of anger, ambivalence, love, and to accept both the good and bad parts of another. It is to share the self; one's excitement, longings, fears and neediness, and to hear these in another. (p. 122)

With the formation of a romantic relationship bond, an individual separates from a personal network of family, friends, and peers and becomes interdependent and reliant on a dating partner for support (Kutler and LaGreca, 2004). The formation of this relationship bond is integral to a social developmental task of adolescence and young adulthood and important to psychological development because such romantic involvement in this stage of life has been tied to one's feelings of self-worth and identity (Kuttler & LaGreca). Mikulincer and Selinger (20019) reported such romantic relationships provide adolescence and young adults with an opportunity to work through

issues of identity, build self-esteem and develop skills needed for emotional adjustment or regulation.

Acts of dating violence interfere with the process of developing healthy romantic relationships and may threaten to unglue the attachment bond formed by such a relationship. Researchers have established as dating relationships grow more intimate and serious a sense of emotional commitment increases between dating partners, there is a greater risk for dating violence as opposed to a casual dating situation (Katz et al., 2002). Acts of dating violence not only threaten to sever a relationship bond and damage the relationship, but also have been found to foster distorted views of what is healthy and normal within an intimate relationship (Katz et al., 2002). Cleveland et al. (2003) reported if such acts of dating violence go undetected, early patterns of dating violence may set the stage for domestic violence in adult marital or cohabitating relationships.

Toxicity incurred from acts of dating violence may spill over into other relationships in a victim's life damaging future healthy and supportive relationships. The severity of violence among intimate partners has been shown to increase if a pattern of dating violence has been established in adolescence (Feld & Straus, 1989) and dating violence patterns beginning early in adolescence may persist into future adulthood relationships (Foshee, 1996). Hines and Malley-Morrison (2001) stated many victims of dating violence become psychologically bound and dependent in these unhealthy relationships and many perceive it is far less risky to stay in an abusive relationship than to not be in a relationship at all. Even if an abusive relationship ends, stalking may ensue as a means of reconnecting with the lost dating partner. William and Frieze (2005) stated

if a relationship bond is threatened, stalking behavior, which may have been present during pre-courtship, might now become a source of intimidation and violence in attempt to reengage the lost romantic relationship.

### *Significant Others in the Life of the Victim*

Consequences to significant others in the lives of victims of dating violence is not usually considered. Family and friends may be a potential source of support, but may find it difficult to detach and cope with the harm done to a loved one; the hardship imposed on them by the victimization, and may begin to view their world as an unsafe place (Garnets et al., 1990). Significant others in the life of the victim may experience feelings of powerlessness and helplessness as often they may not know how to cope or assist their loved one who has been victimized by acts of dating violence or trauma and therefore may not respond to them in times of need as a potential informal source of help (Garnets et al., 1990).

### *Costs of Dating Violence to Society at Large*

Dating violence poses a major public health risk to the community largely resulting in mainly resulting in rising health care costs and unreported crime. According to a recent report from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), expenses for intimate partner rape, physical assault and stalking have exceeded \$5.8 billion dollars each year of which \$4.1 billion are costs for direct medical care and mental health services (Amar &

Alexy, 2005). Those at greatest risk for intimate partner violence are between the ages of 18 and 25 years old (Amar & Alexy) which is representative of the college population.

Several studies found among this literature review reported female victims of dating violence may engage in adverse health behaviors and experience long-term health related consequences (Dutton et al., 2006; Schieman & Zeoli, 2003; Silverman et al., 2001). Silverman et al. (2001) administered a Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to a population of 5, 026 female high school victims of dating violence and found there to be at an elevated risk for a broad range of serious health problems including the use of tobacco, alcohol, cocaine, unhealthy weight control and eating disorders, engagement in high risk sexual activity, unwanted pregnancy and suicidal behaviors. Female victims who reported experiencing fighting with a date were more likely than non-victims to report suicide attempts, pregnancy, multiple sex partners, and engage in risky behaviors associated with drug use such as riding in cars with drunk drivers (Krieter et al., 1999).

Alcohol consumption was found to be associated with lesbian partner abuse consistent with similar findings among the heterosexual intimate partner violence (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). In addition, Silverman et al. (2001) reported adolescent girls who experienced dating violence were at greater risk for sexually transmitted disease including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) than adolescent girls not abused by their dating partners. Physical and sexual violence between dating partners increased the odds of engagement in sexual intercourse by the age of 15 years resulting in an increased risk of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (Silverman et al., 2001).

Based on the current dating violence literature, one might speculate that today's teen victims of dating violence become tomorrow's adult victims of domestic violence. Psychological and relational dysfunctions in later adulthood are assumed to follow aggression patterns experienced in adolescent dating relationships (Jouriles et al., 2005). Smith et al., (2003) reported in a longitudinal study that surveyed a sample of women from their childhood through four years of college, women who were at greater risk for victimization and co-victimization during their freshman year of college were victimized by dating violence earlier in their adolescent years. Thus, it can be surmised by this longitudinal study (Smith et al., 2003) a prior history of dating abuse is a predictor for revictimization during one's college years.

Hines and Malley-Morrison (2001) stated male victims abused by their female partners experience physical and psychological injury such as depression and psychosomatic symptoms in response to their victimization, but few cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have substantiated the nature and extent of physical and psychological injury sustained by male victims. Male victims may tend to externalize or mask these symptoms through the use of alcohol or drug use increasing health care utilization costs because an underlying problem of intimate partner violence victimization has not been assessed or treated.

## Theoretical Frameworks Linking Attachment Style and Help-Seeking Behavior

### *The Psychology of Help-Seeking Behavior*

Help-seeking behavior is initiated by a help-seeker with the goal of obtaining information or assistance leading to a tangible result (Lenz, 1984). An act of help-seeking behavior is critical to interrupting the “cycle of violence” between dating partners. Therefore, it is important to study help-seeking behavior among victims of dating violence. Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) studied help-seeking behavior among an adolescent population and reported help-seeking behavior leads to three pathways of social support or help: (a) emotional support such as empathy, acceptance, understanding and encouragement; (b) informational support (e.g., advice to aid in problem-solving); and (c) instrumental assistance (e.g. aids with tasks and material resources). Kaukinen (2004) reported help-seeking behavior leads to social support, adaptive coping strategies, and positive mental health outcomes leading to more formal types of assistance.

Up until the 1980’s, little attention was paid to how people sought help for problems or issues and their utilization of agencies of social support in the process of coping (DePaulo, et al., 1983). Early studies of help-seeking behavior were largely conducted among an adult population seeking help for various medical conditions, such as chronic pain. Only recently has there been a focus on studying the help-seeking behavior of adolescents for various emotional and mental health problems, medical problems, academic tasks and the like (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) built on studies which examined perceptions of help-seeking behavior

among and adolescent population by studying actual help-seeking behavior such as what sources of help adolescents are most likely to access or utilize.

Adolescent victims of dating violence seek help for different reasons than adult victims of domestic violence in marital or cohabitating relationships (Amar & Gennaro, 2005). Many are under the assumption that when an adolescent seeks help, they do so involuntarily. Among a sample of 863 college women, Amar and Gennaro (2005) found approximately 40% of the participants sought healthcare assistance for physical injury resulting from acts of dating violence, approximately 7% sought outpatient help from an outpatient healthcare provider, 4% sought medical attention from an emergency room, 3% sought help from a mental health provider, and about 1% contacted paramedics for help with their victimization. Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) found adolescents may fail to seek help for the following reasons: (a) a belief that the problem is too personal to tell anyone, (b) fatalistic beliefs such as the belief one is personally responsible for one's misfortune, and (c) the belief one must accept one's fate or one's fate is beyond one's control (p. 26). All of which are similar to beliefs expressed by adult victims of domestic violence in marital or cohabitating relationships. Most adolescents are less likely to seek help for fear that their confidence will be betrayed (e.g. the fear the helper will tell their parents or other authority figures), out of a need to "exercise" their independence, or out of a belief that he or she should be able to handle problems on his or her own (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Moffit and Caspi (1998) reported adolescent victims of dating violence may avoid help-seeking behavior out of a fear adult helpers will force them to end their relationship with their dating partner. Consistent with the social developmental

model of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999), cognitively, dating partners perceive help-seeking behavior as an action threatening the security of an attachment bond.

This literature review found evidence to contradict the belief many adolescents or young adults fail to seek help for physical or psychological injury resulting from acts of dating violence. Weisz et al. (2006) conducted interviews among a sample of adolescent survivors of dating violence and reported 62.5% of male and female victims interviewed, reported talking to someone about their experience. Reportedly, the participants of this study viewed help-seeking behavior as a positive action because they felt understood, supported, and better able to sort out their problems (Weisz et al., 2006). Amar and Gennaro (2005) discovered over half of the victims of dating violence in their study reported their experience of violence, but most of the victims told friends followed by family, and least often told clergy or mental health counselors.

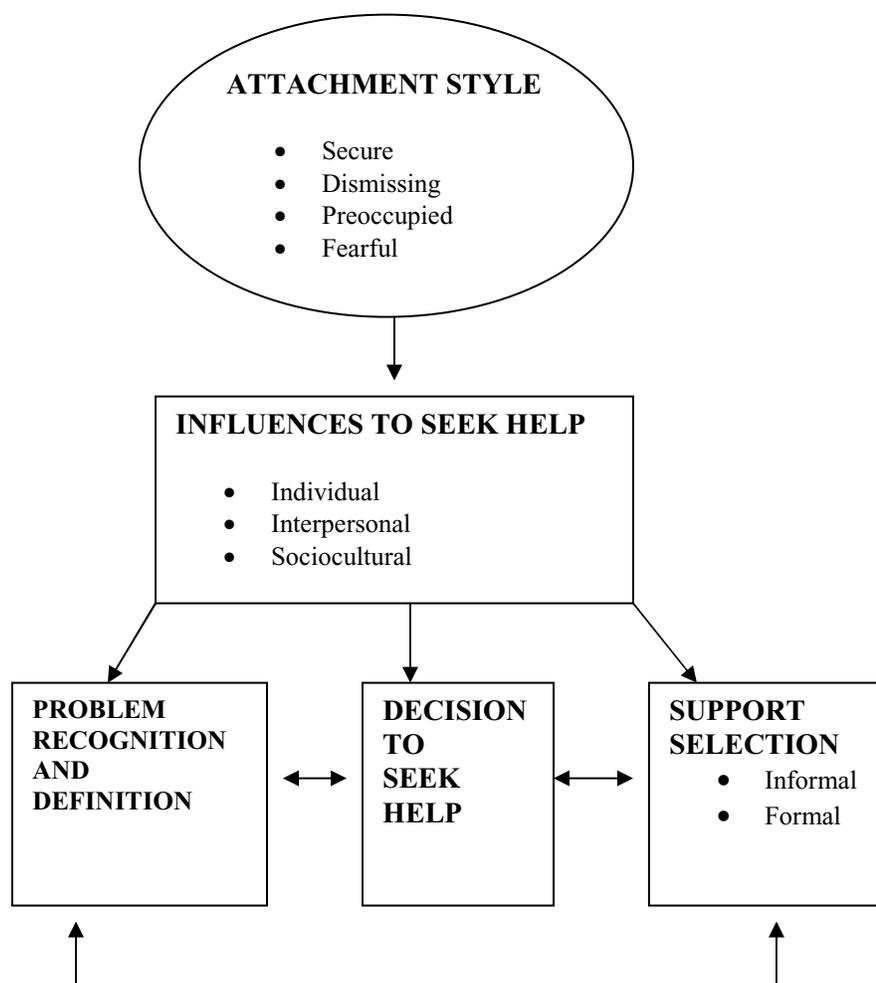
Adolescents or young adult victims of dating violence may differ from adult victims of domestic violence in marital or cohabitating relationships by source of help sought. Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) found adolescents generally preferred seeking help from informal sources or support including peers, friends and close family members, but found older, female adolescents are more likely to seek help than younger adolescents and males in minority groups. Wiesz et al. (2006) conducted a study among a Midwestern population of 224 high school students and found adolescents were more likely to disclose problems to their friends rather than other potential sources of help. Male and female victims of dating violence may tend to seek help from friends and peers because they perceive informal sources of help as more empathic and non-judgmental and less

likely to respond in an intrusive or irrelevant manner even though this action may not be enough to immediately reduce their distress (Wiesz et al., 2006). Turkum (2005) reported among an educated Turkish college population, those determined to succeed academically, evolved into independent, self-contained individuals who were most likely to take responsibility for them, make sound decisions and seek help when needed from both informal and formal help sources. Turkum (2005) concluded that level of education might be a mediating factor influencing help-seeking behavior among a young adult population.

#### *A Model of the Help-Seeking Process*

A model of the help-seeking process has been developed by Liang et al. (2005) which illustrates the process of help-seeking and change among survivors of intimate partner violence (see Figure 2), which is applicable to illustrating the help-seeking process among victims of dating violence. Liang et al. (2005) reported the help-seeking process involves three stages: (a) definition and recognition of a problem; (b) the decision to seek help; and (c) the selection of a source of support. This model assumes the help-seeking process to be a multi-layered experience which varies from individual to individual depending on a broad range of individual, interpersonal and socio-cultural factors including, but not limited to, individual trauma history, coercion, intimidation by an abusive partner, identification with cultural and religious groups, access to economic resources, perception, exposure to formal and informal support systems and general

attitudes and beliefs toward help-seeking (Liang et al., 2005). Figure 2 illustrates the model of the help-seeking process (Liang et al., 2005) factoring in style of attachment.



*Figure 2.* The model of the help-seeking process and attachment style.

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<sup>2</sup> From “A theoretical framework for understanding help-seeking processes among survivors of intimate partner violence,” by B. Liang, L. Goodman, P. Tummala-Narra and S. Weintraub, 2005, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 36, pp. 71-84. Adapted with permission of the author.

It was necessary to adapt this model to the purpose of this study which is to include attachment style as a variable in the help-seeking process because this literature

review found a wealth of empirical support for the theory one's attachment style is a mediating factor in the help-seeking process. The following section of this literature review will provide a brief introduction to several theories underpinning a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior according to this model of the help-seeking process.

### *Attachment Theory and the Model of the Help-Seeking Process*

John Bowlby's famous work on attachment style focused on the nature of the infant-caregiver relationship and claimed from the beginning of life this attachment forms a "relational blueprint" which serves as a template for how individuals will relate to others in adulthood (Deummler & Koback, 2001; Fraley, Brumbaugh & Marks, 2005). Attachment Theory has been used in previous research to explain individual differences in the ways infants regulate inner distress and relate to others, and have examined the role attachment style plays in the way adults disclose themselves to others (Mikulincer & Nachson, 1991). Central to Bowlby's attachment theory is the principle children develop *internal working models*, or blueprints, of close relationships as a result of earlier experiences with care giving figures such as parents or teachers (Lopez et al., 1998). These internal working models are embodied into a *self* model which contains basic perceptions of self-worth, lovability, and competence and the *other* model which contains core expectations regarding the essential goodness, trustworthiness, and dependability of significant others in his or her social world (Lopez et al., 1998). Bartholomew's model of attachment (1990) as cited in Berry, Wearden, Barrowclough and Liversidge (2006)

depicts the model of self and other in reference to orientation toward and away from help-seeking behavior dependent on style of attachment (see Figure 3). According to Bartholomew's four category model of attachment (Bartholomew, 1990), victims of dating violence who would be most unlikely to seek or secure help would be those with a fearful/avoidant style of attachment because with their negative model of self (high anxiety) and negative model of others (high avoidance) and would avoid seeking help or support because they perceive themselves as undeserving of help (Bartholomew, 1990). Victims of dating violence with a dismissing style of attachment possessing a positive model of self (low anxiety), but a negative model of others (high avoidance) would avoid seeking help because they tend to minimize his or her own distress and the need for social support (Bartholomew, 1990). Those most likely to seek or secure help for victimization by dating violence would be those with a secure style of attachment because possess a positive model of self with low anxiety and a positive model of other with low avoidance which enable them to perceive themselves as worthy of help or support (Bartholomew, 1990).

Theoretically, it would appear only victims of dating violence with a secure attachment style would seek or secure help from a potential helper. However, according to Bartholomew's four category model of attachment, those with a preoccupied (insecure) attachment style might seek help because of their negative model of self (high anxiety), but at the same time reject support or help offered because of their negative model of others (high avoidance) (Bartholomew, 1990). On the anxiety-avoidance dimension of Bartholomew's four category model of attachment, Kafetsios and Sideridis (2006)

studied the relationship between attachment style, social support and well-being between a male and female young adult sample (aged 18-34) and an older adult sample (aged 35-66). Kafetsios and Sideridis found a strong link between insecure attachment, social support and wellness among the young adult sample than the adult sample (Kafetsios & Sideridis, 2006). The authors, Kafetsios and Sideridis, interpreted this finding as younger adults tend to exhibit higher traits of anxiety and irritability, activating their attachment system than older adults. Further, Kafetsios and Sideridis postulated young adults with preoccupied and fearful/avoidant attachment styles high on the anxious dimensions may be more open to modification of internal working models than older adults with a dismissing style of attachment with cognitive defensive strategies of high avoidance less amenable to revision (p.871). Based on this research, a slight variance, if any, could be detectable between the variables attachment style, help-seeking-behavior, gender and sexual orientation among the sample of this current study. Hypothetically, male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships might be as likely to seek or secure help independent of style of attachment.

**MODEL OF SELF**  
(Anxiety)

*Positive (Low)*                      *Negative (High)*

<b>MODEL OF OTHER</b> (Avoidance)	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>PREOCCUPIED</b>
	High self-worth, believes others will be responsive, comfortable with autonomy and in forming close relationships with others  Orientation toward help-seeking behavior	A sense of self-worth that is Dependent on gaining the approval and acceptance of others  May be oriented toward help-seeking behavior, but dependent and “clingy” in relationship to potential care giver
<i>Negative (High)</i>	<b>DISMISSING</b>	<b>FEARFUL/AVOIDANT</b>
	Overt positive self-view, denies feelings of subjective distress and dismisses the importance of close relationships  Orientation away toward help-seeking behavior	Negative self-view, lack of trust in others, subsequent apprehension about close relationships and high levels of distress  Orientation away toward help-seeking behavior

Figure 3. Bartholomew’s (1990) model of attachment.

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<sup>3</sup>From “Attachment styles, interpersonal relationships and psychotic phenomenon in a non-clinical sample,”

by K. Berry, A. Wearden, C. Barrowclough, and T. Liversidge, 2006, *Personality and Individual*

*Differences*, 41, p. 709. Adapted with permission of the author.

The internal working models are representative of a cognitive map from where cognitive distortions may be drawn through early and accumulative attachment experiences containing “scripts” and automatic thoughts forming the base for one’s ideas, attitudes, beliefs and behavior (Rich, 2006). Early attachment relationships formed in

childhood will influence how an adult views themselves and their expectations of others in future relationship from adolescence and beyond (Schwartz & Buboltz, 2004).

Attachment theory is based on an evolutionary framework which implies dating partners are attracted to each other by a sexual mating system which promotes *proximity* (i.e., closeness or intimacy) between partners which facilitates the formation of an attachment bond by allowing partners to test their relationship as a potential source of safety, or “safe haven” from which to explore a “secure base” (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Rich (2006) reported Attachment Theory is rooted in biology and the psychological component of the theory forms a psychodynamic model for the development of human personality and relationships which offers a theoretical framework in understanding how individuals construct and deconstruct their world and act upon the world as shaped by their emotional and cognitive images they hold of the world, which in turn, dictates how they should behave. Through this process, dating partners become “attached” to their partner and an act of abuse or violence on behalf of a perpetrator and the help-seeking behavior on behalf of a victim may threaten the security of a relationship which traces back to a fear of separation from parents or early caregivers (Schwartz & Buboltz, 2004). McClellan and Reed (2000) stated when a couple is separated or a relationship bond is threatened, jealousy, anger, anxiety and fear of abandonment may trigger intimate partner violence.

John Bowlby’s attachment theory has been considered a valid framework for the study of interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomena because it has been used to examine the association between individual differences in attachment style and the way people

relate to others and cope with stress from infancy throughout life (Huntsinger & Luecken, 2004; Mikulincer & Selinger, 2001). Schmidt et al. (2002) claimed attachment theory has been suitably applied to the construct of coping within a medical context. Schmidt et al. (2002) argued attachment theory best explains certain internal motivational factors involved in the help-seeking process. An insecure attachment style has been associated with maladaptive health behavior whereas a secure attachment style is considered an important inner motivational resource in the adaptation to chronic disease might be considered an important inner motivational resource in the adaptation to chronic disease (Schmidt et al., 2002).

Attachment theory has been instrumental in explaining why a male perpetrator of domestic violence might inflict harm onto a female victim based on his style of attachment (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1998). Bowlby's attachment theory depicts individual differences which can explain why some people become the perpetrator of abuse or violence in a romantic relationship (Gormley, 2005). In a study conducted by Wekerle and Wolfe (1998), male offending behavior was found to be associated with an interaction between a history of early childhood maltreatment and an avoidant attachment style among dating partnerships. Attachment theory has formed a basis for understanding conflict, anxiety, grief, and loneliness within the context of a romantic relationship (Gormley, 2005). Gormley (2005) concluded, "attachment anxiety" might be suggestive of a pattern of affect deregulation and jealousy leading up to the psychological and physical violence of an intimate partner. However, a gap in the literature was found that

considered the attachment style of victims of intimate partner violence and taking into account the effect of differences in gender and sexual orientation.

Attachment style is associated with help-seeking behavior because attachment theory defines processes by which one forms mental representations of self and others, a process by which one develops beliefs and expectations about social interactions building a foundation for social behavior (Rich, 2006). One's style of attachment plays a role in shaping perceptions and attitudes toward help-seeking which in turn influences the decision whether to seek help or not. According to Attachment Theory, one's attachment style will determine whether one will seek help or avoid it. Collins and Feeney (2000) as cited in Moller, Fouladi, McCarthy and Hatch (2003), reported among those with a self-reported secure style of attachment will be more likely to seek and secure help in times of need and report satisfaction with their social support network than those with insecure attachment styles (p. 354). A positive connection between a male or female victim of dating violence in a collegiate heterosexual or same-sex relationship will require an affectional bond between them which promotes a sense of psychological security (Cotterell, 1992). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) reported an attachment anxiety-avoidance dimension which will determine a level of closeness or interdependency on others. The *attachment anxiety-avoidance dimension* represents the degree to which one approaches or avoids intimacy and interdependence on others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). According to Collins and Feeney (2000), attachment style determines where an individual will rank on the attachment-avoidance dimension and this theory may predict four possible help-seeking patterns:

1. Securely attached individuals will rank low in attachment related anxiety and avoidance and be more likely to seek help or support.
2. Individuals with an insecure preoccupied attachment style will rank high in attachment anxiety and low in avoidance and because of their desire for closeness and dependence, they will tend to seek help, but fear rejection.
3. Individuals with an insecure dismissing attachment style will rank low in attachment related anxiety but high in avoidance as they tend to value self-reliance and view helping relationships as unimportant.
4. Individuals with an insecure fearful/avoidant attachment style will rank high in both attachment anxiety and avoidance as they desire closeness in relationships and approval of others but will tend to avoid help-seeking behavior because of the fear of being rejected and difficulty trusting others to care for them (pp. 1067-1070).

Wekerle and Wolfe (1998) conducted a study which explored the association between attachment style of female victims of intimate partner violence and help-seeking behavior and found females with an avoidant attachment style less likely to seek help due to the inability to convey their distress which otherwise promotes helping behaviors from others. Wekerle and Wolfe also reported male victimization from female partners was

predicted by an interaction of an anxious/ambivalent or dismissing attachment style and maltreatment associated with a heightened fear of abandonment and low self-esteem.

Previous research has demonstrated a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among individuals experiencing a variety of medical problems and mental health issues. Bowlby emphasized a need for attachment relationships which are activated by events such as illness and stated, “When we have a baby . . . someone close to us departs or dies, a limb is lost or sight fails. . .” and illness is often accompanied by an increased need or wish to be close to another” (Hunter & Maunder, 2001).

Attachment theory holds that when individual experiences a stressful event, such as an act of dating violence, an “attachment system” is activated and the coping response will depend on a person’s style of attachment (Kemp & Neimeyer, 1999). Huntsinger and Luecken (2004) stated among the substance abuse literature, a secure attachment style was associated with those who demonstrated better health seeking behaviors (coping) than insecure avoidant or preoccupied attachment styles. Attachment theory has been applied to understanding social support seeking processes and adjustment during adolescence (Larose & Bernier, 2001). Bowlby’s theory of attachment is relevant to this proposed study because it has been instrumental in studying the development and function of romantic relationships between intimate partners and in understanding the dynamics between couples who experience domestic violence (Duemmler & Kobak, 2001). Therefore, it is the intent of this proposed study to apply Bowlby’s attachment theory to determine if differences exist between attachment style and help-seeking

behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college population.

### Bowlby's Attachment System

In Bowlby's famous work, *Attachment and Loss* (1973), Bowlby observed children who were separated from their parents frequently experienced intense distress and tried to regain their missing caregiver by crying, clinging, and searching for them (Fraley et al., 2005). Bowlby drew on the work of ethnologists who believed attachment behaviors were organized into an "attachment behavioral system" influenced by genetics, but sensitive and adaptable to environmental pressures. Weber (2003) reported this attachment behavioral system activates inherent, species-specific behavior, which results in a positive outcome. Thus, the attachment system represents a biologically based system of behaviors activated in times of stress or threat. Bowlby postulated this attachment system is part of a motivational system involved in the coping process (Schmidt et al., 2002).

Attachment theory posits human infants form and maintain primary relationships with caregivers early in life because they are physically and psychologically helpless for months after birth and their survival depends on it (Thompson & Cienchanowski, 2003). Bowlby theorized human beings are genetically programmed not only to become intimate with one another, but to "seek help" or support in times when the "heart is hurt" and in order to do this, the attachment system must be functioning normally (Cassidy, 2001). This attachment system is thought to be operating like other human systems such as those

which regulate reproductive behavior and feeding, but with a goal to monitor proximity between self and a caregiver (Fraley et al., 2005). Thus, in times of danger, stress or novelty (Crowell & Treboux, 1995), the primary goal of the attachment system is to gain and maintain proximity to an attachment figure or potential source of help when a situation demands it. Bowlby argued, the desire to maintain feelings of security is universal, though strategies (e.g., emotion-focused, support-seeking, distancing, etc.) may differ among individuals based on their attachment history (Cooper et al., 1998). Ainsworth (1989) and Collins and Feeney (2001) conceptualized help-seeking behavior as a function of an operational attachment system and considered it to be a basic process of functioning universal to human nature and irrespective of differences in constitution, culture or individual experience. Viewing help-seeking behavior from this perspective, it would appear little if any differences in help-seeking would exist between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Individuals with a secure attachment style are believed to have normal functioning attachment systems that are automatically activated in times of physical/and or psychological threat (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). These individuals are driven to maintain or restore proximity to those who can provide help or support in managing their distress (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Weber (2003) suggested specific patterns of insecure attachment are formed by deficiencies in infancy and childhood, which adversely affect the development of healthy interpersonal relationships later in life.

Attachment theory holds an individual with either pursue *proximity seeking* behaviors (e.g., help-seeking) or engage in *proximity avoidance* (e.g., avoidance of help)

dependent on the configuration of one's internal working models (Lopez et al., 1998). Help is secured when an attachment figure promotes attachment behaviors by being available, responsive, protective and comforting when a help-seeker encounters a stressor or experiences a threat (Crowell & Treboux, 1995). From Bowlby's theory of attachment, differences in attachment style can at least partially account for differences in help-seeking behavior.

In Bartholomew's model of attachment, attachment styles are measured along two orthogonal dimensions: *attachment avoidance* and *attachment anxiety* (Berry et al., 2006). A person's position on the attachment avoidance dimension indicates to what extent he or she will distrust another; strive to maintain behavioral independence, and emotional distance (Mikulincer, Shaver, Gillath, & Nitzberg, 2005). Similarly, Mikulincer et al. (2005) reported one's position on the attachment anxiety dimension indicates the degree to which he or she worries another will be available or unresponsive in times of need.

#### Attachment Styles and Help-Seeking Behavior

Among the medical and psychiatric literature, attachment styles have been positively correlated with help-seeking behavior. Lopez et.al (1998) reported those with an *insecure attachment* style as compared with those with a *secure* attachment style, inhibits a person from seeking help or interferes with a person's ability to use help when it is offered (Coble, Gantt & Mallinckrodt, 1996; Florian et al., 1995; Kobak & Sceery, 1988). Individuals with an insecure attachment style tend to view others as unreliable or

indifferent stemming from early interactions with caregivers that they are unavailable to them in times of need. According to attachment theorists (Florian et al., 1995; Koback & Sreery, 1988; Wallace & Vaux, 1993), this perception leads to an avoidance of disclosing problems to others and help-seeking behavior.

John Bowlby (1973) and Mary Satler Ainsworth (1989), founders of attachment theory, human infants are born into the world with a fundamental capacity to form a secure sense of self and the world through interaction with primary caregivers who are consistently accessible and responsive to bids of comfort and protection. As noted earlier, deficiencies in care giving during the formative years effect the development of viable relationships later in life (Bradford & Lyddon, 1994). Figure 3 depicts an interaction between an individual and primary attachment figures in the help-seeking process through three major stages of development (i.e., infancy, adolescence/young adulthood, and adulthood).

Attachment theory holds that infants are born into the world in a state of physical and psychological helplessness. Depending on the quality of interaction with the mother, the primary attachment figure in infancy, he or she will develop a secure or insecure style of attachment. By adolescence and young adulthood, an individual directs his or her attachment behaviors toward peers than parents (Cooper et al., 1998). However, the parent is never completely displaced as an attachment figure, but becomes what is called an “attachment figure in reserve” (p. 1380). It is believed by adulthood, most individuals will settle on a single romantic partner who will serve for years, if not the remainder of one’s life, as a primary attachment figure (p. 1380). Help-seeking behavior or avoidance

of help will be strongly influenced by style of attachment based on one's previous attachment experiences. Figure 4 depicts the interaction between three major developmental stages in an individual's life, attachment styles formed by interactions with attachment figures, and the influence on help-seeking behavior. Solid lines in Figure 3 represent a secure attachment bond which characterizes individuals who are generally self-confident, socially skilled, and open to intimacy and closeness in relationships with others (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Broken lines represent an insecure attachment bond which characteristic of individuals who generally lack self-confidence, worry about rejection and abandonment by others, are prone to bouts of jealousy and anger/hostility, and are uncomfortable with intimacy and closeness (Hazan & Shaver). Yet, at the same time, individuals who are insecurely attached tend to be dependent on others (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). For example, an individual with a preoccupied attachment style may tend to seek help (as indicated by a solid line), but simultaneously reject help or support (as indicated by a parallel broken line).

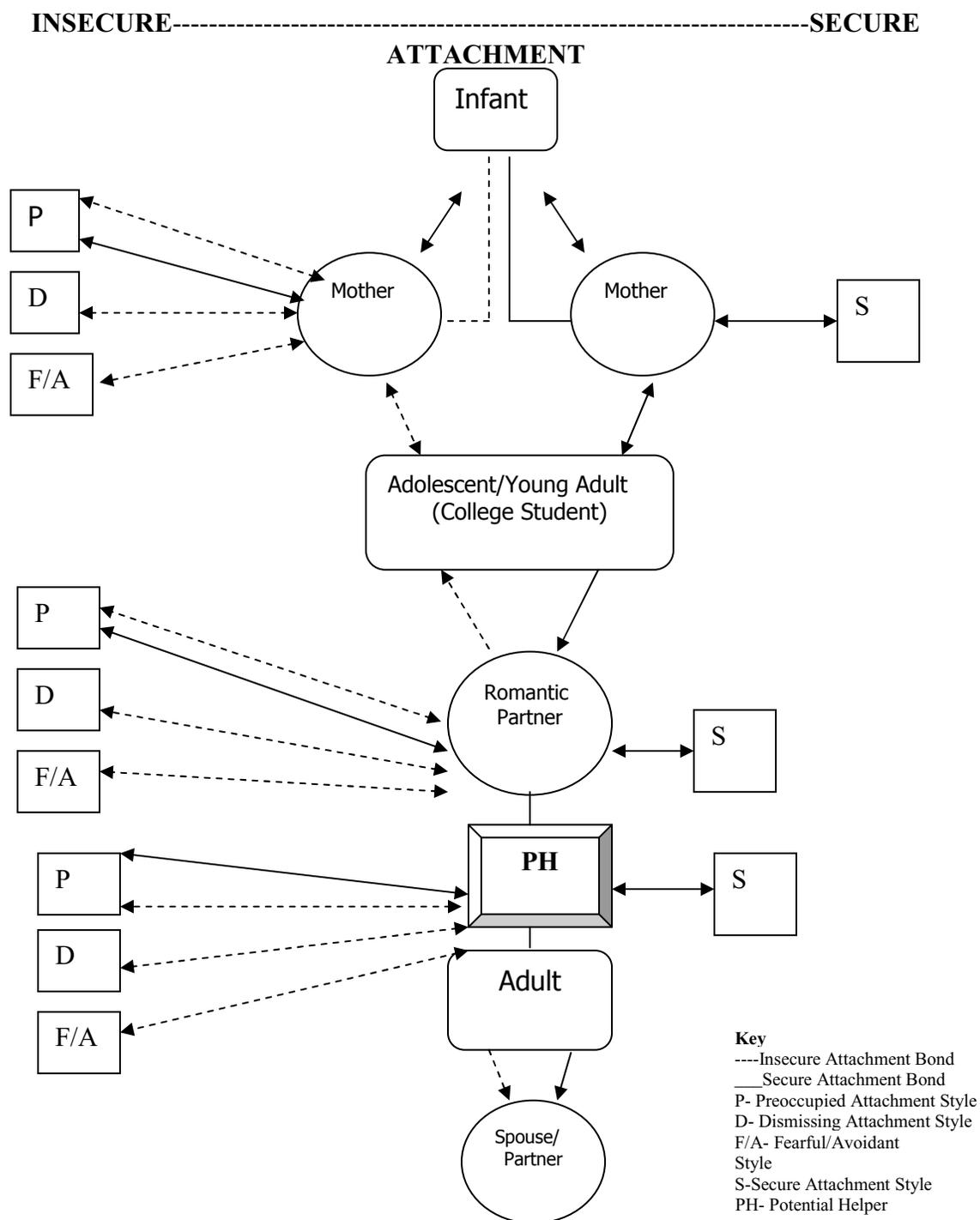


Figure 4. Attachment style and help-seeking/avoidance from a developmental paradigm.

Mary Satler Ainsworth (1978), in her work, *The Strange Situation*, proposed a three group model of attachment based on the observation of mother-infant dyads from Uganda. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall (1978) reported the majority of the Ganda babies fell into the securely attached category, and grouped the insecurely attached infants into anxious- ambivalent and avoidant categories (Cooper et al., 1998). She observed infants with a *secure* attachment style displayed a positive relationship with their mother, sought comfort, and were soothed by her. Following Ainsworth's *Strange Situation* study, in a replicated study, Waters (n.d.), after observing *Senkumba* (aged 37 weeks) noted:

He played actively on the floor during our visit, made excursions away from his mother, but then returned to lie back against her and smile up at her. His mother said he was quite willing to leave her to cross the room when someone else invited him to play. (p.8)

Ainsworth and colleagues (1978), discovered infants with an *ambivalent* attachment style, tended to exhibit distress and helplessness toward their mother and were unable or resistant to being comforted by their caregiver. When *Sulaimani* (aged 28 weeks) was taken outside to be photographed, Waters (n.d.) reported, "he was distressed when left alone on a mat to be photographed. When his mother moved closer, he crept toward her and stopped crying as soon as she took him up" (p. 9). But Ainsworth found infants with ambivalent attachment

style exhibited distress and helplessness toward their caregiver and were unable or resistant to being comforted by their caregiver (Huntsinger & Leuken, 2004; Weber, 2003). Waters (n.d.) observed the behavior of Sulaimani, a forty-week-old Ganda baby, and reported,

He cried immediately when his mother put him down but stopped when she picked him up again. Again, she tried to put him down, he screamed, and did not stop this time even when she took him up again. Later he permitted her to set him down on the floor, but he played in a desultory way and protested whenever she moved. (p.10)

Ainsworth and her colleagues (1978) observed infants with an avoidant attachment style tended to display minimal affect or distress and avoided their mother. Upon observing the behavior of another Ganda baby, Waters (n.d.) observed and reported, “. . . Nakiku was held standing by her mother. Her mother kissed her repeatedly and tenderly, on the cheek or the back of the neck, seemingly absent-mindedly. But we never observed Nakiku reciprocating” (p. 8). Among the mother-infant dyads in the *Strange Situation*, Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) found differences among the infants regarding the way they handled the stress of being alone in a laboratory room equipped with a host of novel toys and away from their mothers (Cooper et al., 1998). Nakiku represents an example of an avoidant style of attachment because she did not respond to her mother’s comforting gestures. Cooper et al. (1998) stated these individuals are prone to grow up as “prematurely self-reliant” adults.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) built on the work of Mary Ainsworth's three group model of attachment and proposed a taxonomy of adult attachment patterns which include four distinct attachment styles: secure, dismissing, preoccupied, and fearful/avoidant (Duemmler & Kobak, 2001; Huntsinger & Lueken, 2004). This model was based on the belief that attachment style can be determined by a person's model of self (positive or negative) and a model of others (positive or negative; Duemmler & Kobak, 2001). Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) stated these attachment styles are based on relative balances (i.e., positive-negative poles) of an individual's internal working model of self and others. McLewin and Muller (2006) reported different combinations of positive-negative poles exist and work to produce four attachment style categories: secure (positive-self, positive other), dismissing (positive-self, negative other), preoccupied (negative-self, positive-other) and fearful/avoidant (negative-self, negative-other). One criticism of this four-category model of attachment styles is it assumes individuals are neatly categorized within the four styles of attachment, but research has demonstrated the existence of individual differences in attachment patterns (Thompson & Cierchanowski, 2003). Thompson and Cierchanowski reported children and adults differ markedly in response to distressing physical symptoms based on style of attachment. Recent research has indicated treatment response to medical illness may differ among adult patients due to specific attachment patterns (Thompson & Cierchanowski, 2003). Individual attachment patterns are believed to be related to the attachment behavior of primary attachment figures earlier in an individual's life (Crowell & Treboux, 1995). In

Figure 3, a two-way arrow between the individual and primary attachment figure illustrates this theory.

Even though attachment theory claims universality among the human species with regard to attachment style, not all individuals will be willing to disclose their distress to another or seek help in an adaptive way based on attachment pattern only (Collins & Feeney, 2000). Bowlby stated when an infant is met with rejecting, inconsistent, or threatening behavior by a primary attachment figure; an insecure attachment pattern may emerge creating anxiety and fear in the infant's behavior which has been observed to compliment the behavior of the caregiver (Crowell & Treboux, 1995). Crowell and Treboux (1995) hypothesized this behavioral pattern may serve as an adaptive ploy within that particular relationship.

Researchers have cautioned against categorizing individuals into one attachment style as most people demonstrate a complex attachment profile (Brown & Wright, 2001). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) suggested fluidity of attachment styles, as an individual may possess characteristics of all four attachment styles. Considerable debate among the literature review was found as to whether attachment style is a fixed, stable trait (Ross & Spinner, 2001) or is transient and fluid across situations or circumstances. Mohr and Fassinger (2003) stated that Bowlby recognized one's internal working model may be "updated" based on new attachment experiences. Ross and Spinner (2001) found empirical evidence from developmental studies showing variance in infant's attachment styles with different significant others and variability in attachment patterns over time with the same primary caregiver. Adults have been observed to experience a variety of

interpersonal situations and may be guided by multiple internal working models and have reported a variety of attachment patterns among different relationships (Ross & Spinner, 2001). Hunter and Maunder (1998) found among a sample of college aged individuals, prevalence rates of insecure/anxious attachment patterns to be about 20% but attachment patterns may change or decrease as people age. Ross and Spinner (2001) supported the theory individuals may be influenced by multiple as opposed to single internal working models signaling different attachment style patterns in different relationships at different points in time.

Among an adolescent population, attachment style differences have been observed in times of coping and personal adjustment (Mikulincer & Selinger, 2001). In a study conducted by Mikulincer and Selinger, differences in coping and attachment style among an adolescent population were discovered: adolescents with a secure attachment style tended to engage in support seeking behavior hold higher self-esteem and reported psychological well-being as compared with adolescents with an insecure-ambivalent attachment style who exhibited a “felt security” and negative affect. In addition, Mikulincer and Selinger reported that adolescents with an insecure-avoidant attachment style “deactivated” their attachment system in times of stress and tended to suppress negative thoughts and emotion resulting in avoidance of help-seeking behavior.

Research indicated men and women may differ in attachment patterns or style, but differences in attachment style by sexual orientation may not differ significantly (Schwartz & Buboltz, 2004). Schwartz and Buboltz found gender differences in the process of attachment and separation, which may result from differences in attachment

patterns, but Ridge and Feeney (1998), found similarities as opposed to differences in attachment style between gay male and lesbian participants as compared with their heterosexual counterparts.

### *Secure Attachment Style*

Of Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) taxonomy of adult attachment patterns, individuals with a secure attachment style will most likely seek help or support from another when experiencing physical or psychological pain (Cassidy, 2001). Cassidy (2001) added infants who develop a secure attachment style have been reared by parents who respond to them when they signal for comfort and they grow up with a mental representation of parent as loving, responsive, sensitive and comforting and are likely to internalize a positive representation of self and other in adolescence and adult life. In addition, Cassidy reported those with a secure attachment style have experienced parents who have responded to them when they signaled for comfort and as a result have learned to trust self and other. Persons with a secure attachment style will experience a high level of attachment security characterized by a feeling of being accepted by others, feeling close to others, and an ability to trust others (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 2000). Researchers have found those with a secure attachment style score low on the attachment anxiety-avoidance dimension (Weber, 2003). As a result of their attachment history, Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002; Weber, 2003) reported securely attached individuals will more likely build a balance between self-reliance and help seeking which is characteristic of good mental health.

Researchers, who have studied individuals seeking help for medical problems, have reported those with a secure attachment style “make the best patients” (Hunter & Maunder, 1998). Securely attached individuals tend to view themselves as being worthy of help because past experience with early attachment figures were positive because when they turned to them for help, they felt accepted and in turn, can trust others in a state of crisis (Cassidy, 2001). Such individuals can also acknowledge their distress and are willing to turn to others for instrumental and emotional support (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). Kemp and Neimeyer (1999) reported professionals who encounter a patient with a secure attachment style would have a positive interaction because these individuals will be comfortable with closeness or intimacy and be more willing to share and discuss their problems in an open and honest manner. Because individuals with a secure attachment style possess high levels of attachment security, Shaver and Mikulincer reported he or she will be open to problem solving strategies to cope with a variety of personal and interpersonal stressors and will more likely accept help.

Individuals with a secure attachment style are more likely to find ease in self-disclosure and feel comfortable with depending on self and others for help (Zech, DeRee, Berenschot & Stroebe, 2006). However, attachment styles are not always so neatly categorized. For example, according to Lopez et al., (1998) it is possible and individual with a secure attachment style may display a dismissive attachment pattern because of a positive model of self, but a negative model of others which may lead them to discount or deny the importance of close relationships and avoid seeking help.

This study proposed, in general, male and female victims of dating violence with a secure attachment style will be most likely to seek help than male and female victims of dating violence with an insecure style of attachment. Support for this hypothesis was found in the research by Mikulincer and Nachshon (1991) who reported individuals with a secure attachment style are most likely to self-disclose when appropriate and expect others to respond in times of distress because they feel loved and cared for by others.

### *Dismissing Attachment Style*

In the *Strange Situation* study, Ainsworth et al. (1978) found infants with an insecure dismissing attachment style experienced inconsistent parenting (mothering). Sometimes mothers were observed to be loving and responsive, but not always in tune with their infant's signal. Adolescent and adult individuals with a dismissing attachment style have a positive self-model which allows them to consider themselves as worthy of help, but have a negative model of others and they will tend to dismiss relationships in order to escape rejection or abandonment. Generally, they will maintain a "stance of pseudo-independence" and "invulnerability" which deters them from seeking help or support from another (Ainsworth, et al, 1978). Among a college population, Hunter & Maunder, 1998; McLewin & Muller, 2006) an insecure-dismissive attachment style was found among approximately 15% of this college aged cohort.

Among a medical patient population, physicians who encounter patients with a dismissing attachment style will appear "compulsively self-reliant" refuting the need for a close relationship or help, display a distrust of others, and may be prone to depression

and psychosomatic complaints (Lapsley et al., 2000; Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). This compulsive self-reliance is believed to be a coping mechanism underlying a dismissing attachment style, which results from a history of emotional rejection or unavailability of caretakers (Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). In order to maintain a relationship with a caregiver, Thompson and Ciechanowski reported these individuals will “deactivate” their attachment system. By doing so, they will distract themselves from experiencing negative affect when confronted with stress and minimize the importance of their problems and need of help from others (Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). Individuals who have a dismissing attachment style will often express negative emotions such as anger, indirectly or aggressively, and their attachment needs may be displaced into areas of work, food, alcohol, drugs or hobbies (Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). Individuals with an insecure attachment style tend to avoid help-seeking behavior because of a lack of anxiety about abandonment or rejection from another (Zech et al., 2006). In this study, it is hypothesized male and female victims of dating violence with a dismissing attachment style will avoid engaging in help-seeking behavior or tend not to seek help at all.

#### *Preoccupied Attachment Style*

Individuals with an insecure-preoccupied attachment style tend to be ambivalent about closeness and intimacy with others because they perceive others as reluctant to get close to them, but at the same time they worry about their own desire to get close to others. Those with an insecure-preoccupied attachment style have negative internalized

models of self which leads them to doubt their own coping abilities, but given their positive model of others, they seek help often, but at the same time, fear rejection and abandonment (Hunter & Maunder, 1998; Lapsley et al., 2000; Lopez et al., 1998). Because of a strong fear of rejection or abandonment, individuals with a preoccupied style of attachment will dismiss the possibility of another being helpful to them in times of stress.

The “hyper activation” of the attachment system within an individual with a preoccupied style of attachment propels one to seek help, but their extreme fear of rejection or abandonment often results in a caretaker’s lack of confidence and ability to help them with a problem (Cassidy, 2001). In adult romantic relationships, a hyper activation of the attachment system leads to an “insatiability” for closeness and intimacy characterized by an expectation that someone else will satisfy all one’s needs (Cassidy, 2001).

Among a medical patient population, Schmidt et al. (2002) found individuals with a preoccupied attachment style visit health care providers more often than securely attached individuals and may express a higher degree of psychiatric complaints and unexplained physical symptoms due to a maladaptive coping response. Individuals with a preoccupied attachment style often engage in a “push-pull” interaction with a potential helper because their internalized negative models of self lead them to doubt their own coping abilities. Even though they seek help often because of their internalized positive models of other, they reject help for fear of disappointment or abandonment. As a result, several researchers (Hunter & Maunder, 1998; Lapsley et al., 2000; Lopez et al., 1998)

discovered these individuals will dismiss the possibility that another might be helpful to them in times of stress.

Thompson and Ciechanowski (2003) found that individuals with an insecure preoccupied attachment style tend to exhibit “compulsive” help-seeking behavior, a coping strategy induced by the hyper activation of the attachment system resulting from an exaggeration of the expression of attachment needs in hope of provoking consistent and predictable support or care from the caregiver. This is thought to come from a lack of consistent care giving responses in early life which causes the individual to turn their attention toward distress in a hyper vigilant way forming dependent and “clingy” relationships with others which exacerbates attachment anxiety and may “scare others away” (Kobak & Sceery, 1988) from rendering help or assistance.

Caregivers or potential helpers who encounter an individual with a preoccupied attachment style often view them as needy and dependent, lacking in self-confidence in caring for themselves (Thompson & Cierchanowski, 2003). These individuals have an internal working model which predicts a constant distress signal as the best way of keeping an attachment figure at close proximity, but will find another’s help or support insufficient leaving them in a state of constant anxiety and an “unquenchable need for soothing” (Hunter & Maunder, 1998). Thompson and Cierchanowski (2003) reported this strategy is a compensatory mechanism developed to seek and maintain closeness or proximity with a caregiver which might not have been experienced consistently in an early relationship with a primary attachment figure. Within the context of a helping relationship, individuals with an insecure preoccupied style of attachment may self-

disclose and discuss their problems, but they will tend to exaggerate their difficulties and depend on another's acceptance of them for their well being (Kemp & Neimeyer, 1999). Thus, male and female victims of dating violence in a heterosexual or same-sex collegiate relationship with a preoccupied attachment style might seek help or support, but may not accept the help offered. Mikulincer and Nachshon (1991) stated individuals with a preoccupied attachment style are likely to self-disclose to others out of a compulsive need for attachment, but their low self-esteem may interfere with their ability to accept help.

#### *Fearful/Avoidant Attachment Style*

Mary Ainsworth (1989) from natural observation studies among Ganda mother-infant dyads in the *Strange Situation* found some of the infants sought comfort from their mothers, but were rejected (Cassidy, 2001). Ainsworth reported when these infant's attachment systems were activated, this led to painful rejection and they developed a strategy in which the activation of the attachment system was suppressed which resulted in difficulty seeking help or care (Cassidy, 2001). As infants, these individuals perceived their mothers as frightening, which resulted in a tendency to flee the parent as a "safe haven" and to experience the parent as a source of alarm (Cassidy, 2001). Neither proximity seeking nor proximity avoidance is an option nor does the infant seek care from the person who frightens him or her resulting in a freezing, disoriented or disorganized response (Cassidy, 2001). Bowlby found when infants engaged in bids for contact and comfort; these bids were met by rejection from the mother (Cassidy, 2001). In response, the infant turned defensively toward play activity, but was not observed to be

shifting their attention toward the toys, but away from the mother (Cassidy, 2001). In Cassidy (2001), Bowlby (1973) coined this phenomenon as a “diversionary activity” characteristic of infants with an insecure-fearful/avoidant attachment style.

Those with an insecure-fearful/avoidant attachment style have the most severe difficulty in help-seeking because they have an internalized negative self-model and an internalized negative model of other which is most associated with those who have a history of psychological trauma and lack of resolution of traumatic experience (Cassidy, 2001; Hunter & Maunder, 1998). Kobak & Sceery (1998) reported individuals with a fearful/avoidant attachment style will modulate their distress by dismissing the importance of helping relationships and maintain distance from others by inhibiting any emotional display.

Individuals with a fearful/avoidant attachment style possess an internal working model which predicts another is not reliable or available in terms of help or support and they are better off relying on themselves than depend on another who will “only let them down” (Hunter & Maunder, 1998). They also tend to lack self-confidence in their own coping abilities and are prone to indirect support seeking strategies such as through alcohol or drug abuse or employ distancing strategies such as “trying to forget the whole thing” (Cassidy, 2001). Individuals with an insecure fearful/avoidant attachment style would feel uncomfortable with others, find it difficult to trust or depend on others and avoid seeking help from them (Zech et al., 2006). Such persons are likely to fail to report or underreport experiences of personal problems in their lives and make poor use out of treatment services (Lopez et al., 1998). It is hypothesized in this study, male and female

victims of dating violence with a fearful/avoidant attachment style will avoid help-seeking behavior or fail to report or disclose their experiences of abuse or violence by their dating partner. Mikulincer and Nachshon (1991) stated individuals with a fearful/avoidant attachment style are most likely to avoid self-disclosure in an effort to maintain distance from others, which leads to a lack of self-disclosure and help-seeking behavior.

Kobak and Sceery (1988) summarized the impact of attachment style on help-seeking behavior in the quote below:

Secure attachment is organized by rules that allow acknowledgment of distress and turning to others for support, avoidant attachment by rules that restrict acknowledgment of distress and the associated attachment attempts to seek comfort and support, and anxious/ambivalent attachment by rules direct attention toward distress and attachment figures in a hyper vigilant manner which inhibits the development of autonomy and self confidence. (p. 142)

### Theories of Help-Seeking Versus Help-Avoidance

Help-seeking behavior is best understood within the context of approach vs. avoidant behavior (Cellucci, Krogh & Vik, 2006). Factors associated with increase or decrease help-seeking behavior are referred to as “approach and avoidance” (Sharkin, Piageman, & Coulter, 2005). According to the help-seeking process model (Liang et al., 2005), a victim of dating violence will engage in a rational decision making process weighing the pros and cons of disclosing their experiences of abuse or violence by their dating partner or seeking help. In a study conducted by Thompson and Langley (2004), many victims failed to report or disclose their experience of abuse or violence by their

dating partner because the real or perceived costs outweighed the benefits of disclosure. Ang et al (2004) conducted a study on gender and sex role orientation and the seeking of psychological services and reported three major barriers to help-seeking behavior: (a) a lack of trust in helping professionals and their services, (b) a lack of knowledge about the availability of services, (c) the stigma associated with help-seeking. Recent research in the area of domestic violence (Amar & Gennaro, 2005) has identified barriers toward disclosing or reporting abuse or violence among victims of domestic violence, but few studies (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005) have explored barriers toward help-seeking behavior among an adolescent or young adult victim of dating violence population.

A review of the dating violence literature revealed many victims of dating violence fail to seek help for their victimization. Similar research conducted by Cellucci et al. (2006) among a college population seeking professional help for alcohol-related difficulties, found only a small segment of this population (approximately 15%) sought professional help. In a recent study conducted among 3, 000 individuals aged 12 years or older who were identified victims of attempted or completed rape, Sable et al. (2006) only 460 of these individuals reported their victimization to law enforcement officials. According to a National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) conducted among a sample of college women who were victims of attempted or completed rape, fewer than 5% of college women reported their victimization to law enforcement officials and the majority of victims (66%) told their friends, but not family members or school officials about their victimization (Sable et al, 2006). In another study, Sable et al. reported of 650 college women, 42% reported they were victims of sexual coercion, but only 28% of

these victims sought help and among those who did seek help, approximately 75% sought help from a friend than a professional and 42% of college female rape victims never told anyone about the incident. Nightingale and Morrisette (1993) estimated on the average only 1 in 25 victims of dating violence seek the assistance of a counselor, teacher, clergy or law enforcement officer and those who do seek help tend to consult with their friends and less frequently their family members.

The act of reporting abuse or violence to another can be considered the first effort in help seeking and ending a cycle of violence or abuse. Kaukinen (2004) stated reporting or disclosing acts of abuse or violence by a victim of dating violence might provide a young adult with tangible solutions and mechanisms to put an end to the cycle of violence. This is accomplished through a process of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure has been defined as a process by which a person lets themselves be known to others and results in the exchange of information which refers to the self including emotion, disposition, and events past, present and future (Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991). An individual's decision to seek help or not to seek help has been strongly associated with one's level of comfort with self-disclosure and the perceived risk or utility in disclosing one's problems to another (Vogel & Wester, 2003). Mikulincer and Nachshon reported self-disclosure as a determining factor in the help-seeking process and the comfort with self-disclosing one's problems is closely associated with style of attachment. Attachment styles are linked to an infant's expectations about whether or not a caregiver will be emotionally available and responsive and whether one is worthy of love and care (Ainsworth et al., 1978). These expectations represent the internal working

models of self and other and are generalized from infancy to new relationships in young adulthood (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby (1973) reported the internal working models of self and other serve the purpose to organize cognitions, affect and behaviors, which guide reactions in coping with a stressful event or situation such as help-seeking behavior.

Attachment theory was the major theoretical framework underpinning this study which has been instrumental in predicting help-seeking behavior or avoidance of help determined by one's attachment style among individuals seeking help for various medical problems and mental health related issues. However, this chapter briefly presented other theoretical frameworks associated with the help-seeking and help-avoidance phenomenon that describe other factors influencing help-seeking or help avoidance between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships: theory of individual differences (Form, 1953), gender role socialization theory (Celluci et al., 2006), and trauma theory (Baynard & Cantor, 2004).

The theory of individual differences considers intra psychic factors influencing one's decision to seek or avoid help (Form, 1953; Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). Gender role socialization is a theoretical framework among the domestic violence literature, which has been instrumental in understanding help-seeking behavior within the context of gender differences (Celluci et al., 2006; Turkum, 2005), a critical variable in this study. Trauma theory purports whether or not one seeks help for a problem is largely influenced by the intensity of psychological distress one experiences in reaction to a traumatic event (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Liang et al., 2005). Trauma theory is also relevant to the purpose of this study because it implies help-seeking behavior is strongly influenced by

the nature and intensity of traumatic experience among individuals traumatized by acts of dating violence. Vogel and Wei (2005) found the amount of psychological distress following a traumatic event, such as an act of dating violence, is a mediating factor in one's decision to seek help. The greater level of psychological distress, the greater likelihood one will seek help (Vogel & Wei, 2005). Among a sample of Taiwanese undergraduates, Cherng (1988) respondents reported a tendency to postpone seeking mental health services until problems escalated out of control and among those who did seek help, preferred to seek help from their social network including friends, parents, and siblings because of the social stigma associated with seeking professional help.

### *Theory of Individual Differences*

Differences operating within the psyche of an individual influence the decision to seek help. With reference to a college population, Form (1953) said, "many prefer to solve their own difficulties in their own way or seek advice from other sources when confronted with a problem" (p. 209). Among college students, Sharkin et al. (2005) reported perceptions, which college students hold about themselves in comparison with their perceptions of peers, play a key role in understanding help-seeking behavior (p. 65). The theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) suggests an individual's behavior is guided, in part, by a function of his or her subjective perceptions of normalcy.

An individual's coping style influences one's decision to seek or avoid help. There are two fundamental coping styles: *approach and avoidance* (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). An individual who uses "approach coping" will confront a source of stress and

react to it, whereas one who uses “avoidance coping” will orient his or her attention away from the source of stress and react to it (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). Celluci et al. (2006) stated a tendency to conceal instead of disclose is a personality style associated with the avoidance of help-seeking behavior. Problem solving is an example of an approach coping style. Individuals with an approach coping style are more likely to seek help than those who employ avoidance coping when confronted with a problem (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). While the approach style of coping is generally considered adaptive, Sheu and Sedlacek stated an avoidant coping style is not necessarily maladaptive if understood within one’s cultural context.

Vogel and Wei (2005) suggested a strong correlation between one’s approach-avoidance coping style and attachment style. As noted earlier in this chapter, according to attachment theory, individuals fall along an attachment “anxiety-avoidance” dimension; this may influence an approach-avoidance coping style. Vogel and Wei (2005) reported, as a general rule, individuals low in attachment anxiety and avoidance will exhibit a secure attachment style, which will enable them to seek help as opposed to individuals high in attachment anxiety and avoidance that will exhibit an insecure attachment style and avoid help-seeking efforts.

Cirrochi and Deane (2001) reported one’s level of “emotional competence” (i.e., the ability to manage or regulate emotion) has been associated with help-seeking behavior. Of the 300 undergraduate students surveyed, Cirrochi and Deane found those who felt less skilled at managing or regulating emotion were less likely to seek help from family and friends or health professionals for suicidal ideation. These results are

consistent with those exhibiting an insecure attachment style that are most likely to have difficulty managing high anxiety levels and avoid help-seeking behavior (Vogel & Wei, 2005). Cirrochi and Deane (2001) concluded individuals who are in most need of help are less likely to seek it. This is a disturbing result.

Individual differences in help seeking or avoidance are not only reflected in one's coping style, but also influenced by whatever one's peer or cultural group considers being "normal." Scheu and Sedlacek (2004) presented research which demonstrated females exhibit more positive attitudes toward help-seeking behavior than males because it is more "culturally acceptable" for women to seek help than men. Attitudes toward help-seeking behavior are shaped through such variables as "cultural mistrust" (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). Persons closest to the individual play an important role in help-seeking behavior (Vogel et al., 2007). In a study among those seeking medical care, Cameron, Leventhal and Leventhal (1993) found 92% of those who sought medical care as opposed to 61% of those who did not, reported talking to at least one person about his or her problem before seeking help. Fifty percent of those seeking medical services were prompted to do so by a significant other (Cameron et al., 1993). Among a college population of 678 first year college students of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, Scheu & Sedlacek found those who indicated a certain level of cultural mistrust tended to seek help only for impersonal reasons (i.e., school related concerns), but not for personal or emotional issues that resulted in an underutilization of mental health services. Rickwood and Braithwaite (1994) stated individuals are more likely to seek help if they have a social network that accepts and encourages help-seeking behavior. A discriminant

analysis conducted by Dew, Bromet, Schulberg and Parkinson (1991) in an earlier study, predicted these results by finding those who sought help were more likely to have family and friends recommend they get help than those who did not seek help. Horowitz (1977) reported people usually talk to at least four members of their social network before seeking help.

### *Gender Role Socialization Theory*

Gender role socialization theory is a popular theory which has been used to explain differences in help-seeking behavior among victims of intimate partner violence from a socio-cultural standpoint. This theory posits help-seeking behavior is strongly influenced by the process of socialization into one's culture. Positive attitudes toward help-seeking behavior are acquired through a socialization process, which includes gender role orientation (Celluci et al., 2006). Gender role socialization theory holds a culture defines behaviors, expectations, and role sets appropriate to male and female gender which are deeply embedded in the psyche and behavior of men and women (Turkum, 2005). Of the domestic violence literature reviewed, help-seeking behavior is strongly influenced by one's gender. Among a rural population of adolescents who sought help for mental health related issues, Sears (2004) found female adolescents were more likely to report or disclose their problems than male adolescents possibly reflecting a pressure to behave in gender appropriate ways. Among rape or sexual assault victims, Sable et al. (2006) reported women are more likely than men to report a rape or sexual assault predicted by the process of socialization within one's cultural milieu.

Culture plays a significant role in the development of gender roles, which influence attitudes toward help-seeking behavior (Turkum, 2005). Among a review of current domestic violence literature, this researcher discovered male victims of domestic violence regardless of sexual orientation are less likely to report or disclose their victimization to another than female victims of domestic violence regardless of sexual orientation. However, O'Keefe and Treister (1998) found adult male victims of domestic violence are more likely to report their victimization only if the violence they experienced in their intimate relationship was not reciprocal. McCarthy and Holliday (2004) found among an adult clinical mental health population, about two-thirds of patients seeking help for psychological problems were women, but men reported similar or higher levels of psychological distress than women. In a study conducted among dating partners, Howard and Wang (2003) found adolescent males are less likely to report violent interactions by their female dating partners than female adolescents by their male dating partners.

Turkum (2005) argued it is not gender per se (i.e., male or female) which influences one's decision to seek help, but gender roles assumed by the socialization process. Turkum (2005) classified gender roles into three categories: feminine, masculine and androgynous (i.e., masculine-feminine). Turkum stated it is the androgynous individual who is more likely to seek help and is better adjusted psychologically than those who maintain rigid masculine stereotyped roles. Among a Turkish male student college population, Turkum found males with androgynous and female gender roles tended to seek help from various sources (e.g., parents, peers, siblings, girlfriends, etc.)

but tended not to seek help from professionals. Turkum (2005) found males with a masculine gender role rarely accessed or utilized help or support.

In a recent, qualitative study among dating couples, Weisz et al. (2006) concluded female partners are significantly more likely to seek help than male partners for problems they encounter or experience in their dating relationship. However, Weisz et al. found boys talked about going to their friends for help with their dating problems because they perceived their friends as understanding them best, even though they reported that seeking help from peers about dating problems was ineffective because it often resulted in gossip.

Among a population of male survivors of rape and sexual assault, Sable et al. (2006) found males reported sentiments with regard to their rape experience such as “it was a private matter and I took care of it myself”. Other participants in this study tended to minimize their rape incident and reported they did not feel the police would take their victimization seriously as compared with women who may not report their victimization out of guilt, self-blame, or fear of retaliation by their perpetrator (Sable et al., 2006). Sable et al. (2006) noted shame, guilt, embarrassment and not wanting significant others to know about the rape or sexual assault influenced both male and female victims to avoid engaging in help-seeking efforts. Among a sample of male college students who reported being victimized by rape or sexual assault, many failed to disclose their victimization because it was perceived as something that would jeopardize their masculine self-identity (Sable et al., 2006). Baynard and Cantor (2004) stated it is possible male victims of trauma avoid seeking help because of sex-role stereotypes,

which inhibit them from confiding in others about their experiences. On the other hand, Moffitt & Caspi (1998) reported females victimized by dating violence may avoid help-seeking behavior because they perceive themselves as sharing the blame for the violence and a sense of “shared blame” may stop young women from seeking help or support.

The amount of distress associated with the experience of abuse or violence has been found to differ by gender. Boldero and Fallen (1995) reported males tend to seek help only if the injury from violence is severe enough compared with female victims of domestic violence. Molidor and Tolman (1998) reported among a study of 635 high school students surveyed using a dating violence questionnaire, found males and female adolescents did not differ in overall frequency of violence experienced within their dating relationships, but girls perceived acts of violence as serious assaults with damaging physical and psychological effects while boys in the study were much more likely to respond in ways which indicated the violence was not perceived as threatening or damaging but a small significant percentage of boys did report the violence they experienced by their female partner had significant negative consequences for them. Boldero and Fallen (1995) concluded among an adolescent dating population, the type of problem and amount of distress experienced influenced who they would seek help from, but Burke and Follingstad (1999) found gender differences among male and female victims in help-seeking behavior. Boldero and Fallon (1995) argued help-seeking behavior has been found to be associated with the nature and intensity of violence experienced by a victim, and not solely determined by gender.

The type of abuse or violence experienced also influences help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence. According to Burke et al. (2002) many victims believe psychological abuse is not as serious as physical violence and will not seek help for psychological abuse. Burke et al.(2002) stated even if there is no observable injury such as bruises, psychological abuse is still damaging to an individual and a relationship even though victims themselves may not consider it serious enough to warrant help seeking.

Gender role socialization theory has also been used to explain differences by gender upon learning of the disclosure made by a victim of dating violence (Seelau & Seelau, 2005). Gender role stereotypes have been known to influence a response by others toward victims of domestic violence as evidenced by the findings of a study conducted by Seelau and Seelau found among 112 female and 80 college undergraduate participants found domestic violence perpetrated by men against women was judged more seriously than violence perpetrated by women against men and female victims of domestic violence were found to be more deserving of help consistent with gender role stereotypes. Weisz et al. (2006) found female victims reported receiving more nurturing responses than minimizing responses by others toward their less severe experiences of domestic violence than male victims who received more minimizing than avoidance responses from sources of help or support. Weisz et al. (2006) reported helpers might respond differently to disclosures of violence from male and female victims of dating violence because of their perceptions and expectations of the neediness of each gender and their willingness to accept help. Thus, according to gender role socialization theory,

Weisz et al, 2006) concluded socialization processes historically have encouraged males to present themselves as strong and non-emotional which in turn leads male victims to trivialize the violence they experience in less emotional ways, which may in turn, result in minimizing the response from a potential helper.

### *Trauma Theory*

Trauma has been defined as a range of life threatening events which involve threats of serious injury to self or other which overwhelm an individual's capacity to cope (Baynard & Cantor, 2004). Individuals who experience trauma early in life are thought to be at risk for victimization of dating violence on college campuses (Baynard & Cantor, 2004). A connection between childhood abuse or maltreatment and revictimization in dating relationships has been established (Wolfe, et al., 2004). Victims of dating violence, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, may find it not only difficult to cope with the ordinary challenges of college life, but the experience of abuse or violence by their dating partner may force them to leave school (Baynard & Cantor, 2004).

The nature and intensity of trauma has been associated with one's decision of whether or not to seek help for a problem because whether or not one seeks help for a problem is largely influenced by the intensity of psychological distress one experiences in reaction to a traumatic event or how distressing one perceives the trauma to be (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Liang et al., 2005) Among the most current research, Dutton (2007) stated it is not the case women are more traumatized by violence than men and the extent of exposure to trauma, not gender, predicts long-term consequences.

Attachment theory has been used in research to explore and explain patterns of response to threatening situations such as loss, trauma and illness (Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). Attachment style has been associated with the promotion or hindrance of help-seeking behavior among adults with various medical conditions or mental health related issues, but a review of the literature found no studies which have specifically examined this association among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college dating population.

Based on a review of the trauma literature, an insecure attachment style has been associated with early childhood experiences of abuse or neglect (Wolfe et al., 2004) which may hinder help-seeking efforts between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Bowlby (1973) stated children internalize their interactions with caregivers, which inform them of the nature of future relationships (Williams, 2006) including interactions with potential helpers. The following quote by Kagan (2004) in Williams (2006) illustrates this point:

A pathological environment of childhood dysfunction and threat is not a place of healthy development. Children who grow up in an unpredictable place of violence and live with fear and anguish adapt by becoming attuned to their abuser's inner states and realize powerful adult figures are dangerous and unavailable . . . they are frozen in a hyperaroused state, unable to engage in social activities which might be able to soothe them. (pp. 323-324)

Help-seeking behavior has been conceptualized as a form of adaptive coping and “psychological resilience” (Ong, Bergman, Bisconti & Wallace, 2006). Resilience is believed to be a relatively stable personality trait characterized by an ability to overcome,

steer through, or bounce back in the face of adversity (Ong, et al., 2006). Heuber, Thomas, and Berven (1999) defined resilience as a successful adaptation to trauma, but style of attachment and interpersonal skill determines the risk and protective factors associated with psychological distress and resilience.

Baynard and Cantor (2004) reported resilience from trauma depends on one's ability to cope and access a social network or support system. Individuals with a secure attachment style have been able to rely on early attachment figures who provided them with a "safe haven" and "secure base" from which to explore in times of stress and this is considered to be a mark of healthy psychological development (Collins & Feeney, 2000). Individuals with a secure attachment style will demonstrate levels of resilience in coping with trauma, which is deduced from a review of the help-seeking literature. However, Williams (2006) stated many children who are deprived of a secure attachment will search for other figures (e.g. neighbors, teachers, friends) that will provide a healthy bond to compensate for what was missed in childhood, and therefore, may be more likely to seek help from informal sources of support than formal sources of help.

Myers and Vetere (2002) stated the way people cope with stress or trauma is based on differences in attachment style. Lock and Steiner (1999) reported help-seeking behavior is closely tied to coping and depending on one's style of attachment, an individual will either "face a problem square on (approach) or divert attention away from the problem (avoidance). Based on this theory, an individual with a secure attachment style would be more likely to seek help than an individual with an insecure attachment style because the individual with a secure attachment style is more likely to confront a

problem than dismiss or avoid it. Meyers and Vetere (2002) found individuals with a secure attachment style were more likely to utilize coping resources than those with an insecure attachment style. Among chronic pain patients, Mikulincer and Florian (1997) found patients who identified as having a secure attachment style engaged in problem solving strategies including help-seeking behavior than those with an insecure attachment style who resorted to more emotionally focused problem strategies. Lock and Steiner (1999) found among a sample of gay and lesbian youth, evidence of coping avoidance strategies characteristic of an avoidant coping style resulting from a sense of self-hatred stemming from internalized homophobia. Klasner and Pistole (2003) conducted a study among a convenience sample of 367 college students who completed a questionnaire which asked questions about their adjustment to college life and traumatic events and found those students with a secure attachment style to parents had an internal locus of control and engaged in higher levels of social support which was associated with positive adjustment as compared with students who reported an insecure attachment style to parents who were less resilient. Gender differences between male and female college students on a measure of attachment to parents and report seeking in the face of stress was observed in a study conducted by Klasner and Pistole (2003). Klasner and Pistole (2003) reported female college students scored higher than male college students on a measure of attachment to parents and reported seeking more social support in the face of stress than males, even though Turner and Butler (2003) found male college students reported a higher number of trauma related experiences than female college students.

Kemp and Neimeyer (1999) found people with a secure attachment style only demonstrated help-seeking behavior when under high levels of stress as opposed to low levels of stress. Perhaps those with a secure attachment style have a tendency to rely on self (at least initially) and seek help only as a last resort. Accurate appraisal of problems or issues as distressing or stressful tends to encourage the seeking of help or support from another (Collins and Feeney, 2000). Among adults traumatized by intimate partner violence, Sears (2004) found the level of distress was significant in the reporting of violent acts, but not in other help-seeking efforts. A study conducted by Haden et al. (2007) found participants who viewed their situation as amenable to change engaged in active coping strategies such as help-seeking behavior as opposed to help avoidance.

#### Attachment Theory and the Social Support Network Orientation Model

Attachment theory and the social support network orientation model are intricately related and serve as two major theoretical frameworks underpinning this study because together they link the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation with the dependent variables, attachment style and help-seeking behavior. Florian et al. (1995) reported attachment theory has been instrumental in the study of how a sense of social support originates out of one's earlier relationships with caregivers or attachment figures. Sarason et al. (1990) professed a link between attachment style and social support, claiming a sense of social support is inherent in an individual with a secure attachment style. Florian and Mikulir (1995) conceptualized a link between attachment style and social support as a relationship between an individual and one or more

significant others in his or her personal network who are perceived as “stronger and wiser” and will offer a “safe haven” from danger as well as a secure base to explore other potential help sources in one’s environment.

Attachment theory posits if a child has a positive experience with at least one caring and trusting adult (e.g., parent, teacher, neighbor, etc.), he or she will be oriented towards seeking social support compared with children who have not had this experience (Holt & Espelage, 2005). By virtue of a secure attachment bond, the child will develop a sense of social support, which will orient him or her toward help-seeking behavior. Results from several empirical studies have supported this theory. Ainsworth, a pioneer in attachment theory, and her colleagues reported children with a secure attachment style will grow to develop a sense of social support and will be more likely to seek help compared with children with an insecure attachment style who will grow to develop a doubt in the ability of others to comfort them in time of stress (Ainsworth et al., 1989). Cognitively, insecurely attached individuals have internalized a belief the world is not a supportive place (Ainsworth et al., 1989). Florian and Mikulir (1995) found individuals with a secure attachment style would differ in their perception and orientation toward emotional and instrumental support from significant others in their social network than those individuals with an insecure attachment style. Sarason et al. (1990) stated attachment style and the seeking of social support are related to the development of a sense of social support or the perception of social support being available to an individual. Sarason et al. (1990) stated a sense of social support is associated with the development of a personality characteristic arising from early relational experiences with

an attachment figure. Characteristically, according to Sarason et al. securely attached individuals are more likely to seek help from close relationships when under stress, perceive a higher level of available social support, are satisfied with the results of help-seeking, and are more apt to cope effectively with problems than those with an insecure attachment style who have not developed a sense of support.

Trauma survivors with an insecure attachment style tend to exhibit negative attitudes toward available social support, employ avoidant coping strategies and have lower perceptions of available support than those with a secure attachment style (Ezzel, Swenson & Brodino, 2000; Joseph, Yule & Williams, 1993). However, Sarason et al. (1990) found trauma survivors with a secure attachment style developed an internal working model involving rules and representations which allowed them to acknowledge a problem and level of distress which enabled them to orient toward others for support and comfort compared to those individuals who reported an insecure attachment coping style. Sarason et al. (1990) reported among those trauma survivors with an insecure attachment style developed coping strategies based on unpredictable experiences of affection or rejection by previous attachment figures inhibiting within them a sense of self-efficacy and autonomy. Among a sample of college students, Larose, Bernier, Soucy, and Duchesne (1999) found a link between attachment style and the effect of an individual's social support network orientation which influenced the process of seeking help from instructors with their academic tasks.

Referring back to the help-seeking process model presented earlier in this chapter, after one decides to seek help or support, the goal is to select and secure help or support.

Social support has been positively correlated with physical and psychological well-being promoting longevity in the life of an individual (Agneessens, et al., 2006; Schumm, Vranceanu, & Hobfoll, 2004). Social support has been defined as the comfort, assistance and/or information one receives through formal or informal support systems (Florian & Mikulir, 1995). One's social support network orientation involves a set of beliefs, attitudes and expectations within the psyche of an individual regarding the usefulness of one's social network in providing help with a variety of problems (Wallace & Vaux, 1993). In a meta-analytic study conducted among trauma victims, Brewin, Andrews and Valentine (2000), found social support or the perception of social support as an important factor in the prediction of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and those victims of trauma who perceived inadequate social support were found to be at risk for a negative outcome.

Collins and Feeney (2000) studied the processes of help-seeking and care giving among intimate relationships and indicated the social support network orientation model is useful in understanding the connection between attachment style of the help-seeker (i.e., attachment system) and the caregiving response (i.e., the caregiving system). Collins and Feeney (2000) conceptualized the help seeking and care giving process as an interpersonal, transactional process necessary to produce a desired and predictable outcome for the help-seeker. An individual's social support network orientation is conceptualized as one's propensity to utilize his or her support system in time of need (LaRose et al., 1999). A basic principle underlying the social support network orientation model is the help-seeking process is triggered by an event perceived by an individual as stressful or threatening which activates the attachment system (Collins & Feeney, 2000).

Collins and Feeney (2000) reported the activation of the attachment system motivates an individual to express his or her distress and seek help from a potential helper, which in turn, elicits a caregiving response. Conversely, a deactivation of the attachment system would lead to an avoidance of help-seeking behavior and a disconnection with a potential helper. Social support has been found to have a potential moderating effect on those traumatized by dating violence (Holt & Espelage, 2005). McLewin & Muller (2006) reported social support is a mediating factor in those who recover from trauma compared with those who go on to develop psychopathology. An empirical study conducted among adults with a history of maltreatment found a significant correlation between a lack of social support and increased psychopathology, between a negative view of self and increased psychopathology, but a negative view of others was not significantly related to a development of psychopathology (Muller & Lemieux, 2000). Research on social support among an adult population has found social support buffers the impact of stress and reduces risk of illness, but this has not been well-studied among an adolescent or young adult population (Walker & Greene, 1987). This research only exemplifies the necessity of exploring the link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Florian et al. (1995) conducted a study among a sample of 150 undergraduate students who completed self-report scales which tapped into their attachment styles and the extent to which they perceived social support from significant others and the extent to which they looked for help in times of need and found empirical support for an

association between adult attachment style and a sense of social support. Differences were reported among attachment groups (i.e., secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful/avoidant) on perception of available social support from others in their social network system. Using attachment theory and the social support network orientation model as theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, it is hypothesized male and female victims of dating violence with a secure attachment style will express a positive social support network orientation and seek help or support compared with those victims of dating violence with an insecure attachment style who will express a negative social support network orientation and either avoid seeking help or support or not seek help at all. In a study conducted by Sarason et al. (1990), among an adolescent population, those who exhibited a secure attachment style viewed others as accessible, reliable, trustworthy, well-intentioned, supportive, and felt comfortable depending on them and disclosing personal information in times of stress, but those who exhibited a dismissing or fearful/avoidant attachment style tended to view others as undependable, unsupportive and untrustworthy and were reluctant to get close to or disclose to others their problems or issues. Florian and Mikulir (1995) reported young adults with a history of insecure attachment experiences with early adult attachment figures who were not responsive or available in times of need will perceive the world as an unsafe, threatening place and may be fearful or unwilling to rely on social interactions or engage the support of others in coping with their problems.

### Attachment Theory and the Selection of Social Support

Young adulthood is a time of transition and a period of development where attachment and care giving systems become important in the life of an individual (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1998). When a young adult enters college, their social support system is in a “state of flux” marked by a shift in orientation away from parents and family as main sources of help or support toward peers, romantic partners or potential others in an individual’s life (Kuttler & La Greca, 2004). Cooper et al. (1998) reported during adolescence and young adulthood, the hierarchy of attachment figures is gradually reshuffled as young adults increasingly direct their attachment behaviors and concerns toward peers than parents (p. 1380). There was virtually no literature which has examined the relationship between differences in style of attachment and the selection of informal and/or formal social support between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Although the attachment style of the potential helper is not a focus of this study, the perception and role of a potential helper is a critical factor in the help-seeking process. Bowlby viewed any therapeutic relationship as a “potential attachment relationship” in which the potential helper becomes a primary attachment figure and a “secure base” from which one can explore other potential helping relationships (Weber, 2003). The quality of this interaction between help-seeker and potential helper depends on earlier childhood experiences which lay the foundation for later relationships with peers and other adults, including potential helpers (Brown & Wright, 2001). A secure

attachment style has been linked with positive interpersonal relationships including therapeutic ones (Weber, 2003).

Role relations theory may be instrumental in predicting from whom or where a victim of dating violence will turn for help or support depending on his or her “ego” and his or her relationship with significant others in his or her personal network system (i.e., family, friends, peers, coworkers, neighbors, physicians, law enforcement officials or other members of one’s community or society). An assumption of this theory is that one’s personal network system is comprised of all who perform a specific role or function based on the rules or limits inherent within a construct of social support (Agneessens, et al. 2006). The amount or type of help or support afforded to the help-seeker by a potential help source is contingent upon the type of relationship the individual, or ego, has with significant others within his or her own personal network system, or alters (Agneessens et al., 2006). Theoretically, according to role relations theory, a victim of dating violence would predictably seek comfort or emotional support from a friend or family member as opposed to a professional because they are capable of providing this type of support. A victim of dating violence who sustains a physical injury from an act of dating violence would seek help primarily from a physician who is capable of providing medical care for the injury, but would not be capable or competent in providing safety and protection, which could only be secured by seeking help from a police officer or attorney. Role relations theory appears to assume an individual victimized by dating violence would almost instinctively know from whom or where to seek a particular source of help or support, but it fails to take into account individual differences in the selection of social support such

as gender, sexual orientation, style of attachment or other psychological factors among victims of dating violence.

This literature review found research which described patterns of selection of social support or help among adult victims of intimate partners in marital or cohabitating relationships by gender. Some research has indicated in general victims of domestic violence fail to seek help from formal sources, but other studies have concluded female victims of domestic violence seek help from both formal and informal sources (Fisher et al., 2003; Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Seimer, 2004; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Sears (2004) found females more frequently sought help for intimate partner violence because they tended to view their victimization as more problematic than male victims of intimate partner violence. Kaukien (2004) stated female victims of intimate partner violence are most likely to utilize informal sources of help (e.g. family, friends) because women have more opportunity to interact with family and friends as compared with male victims of domestic violence. Other studies indicate that female victims of intimate partner violence may fail to report their victimization to the police, but may seek help from other more formal help sources (e.g. physicians, clergy, psychiatrists, professional counselors, crisis agencies/hotlines, social service organizations, etc.; Kaukien, 2004). Hollenshad, Dai, Ragsdale, Massey and Scott (2006) stated ethnicity may be a mediating factor in the selection of social support as female victims of domestic violence among an African American population are more likely to seek help from law enforcement officials than share their victimization with family and friends.

Little research has been conducted which has studies the help-seeking behavior patterns among male and female victims of dating violence, especially those in same-sex relationships. Research has suggested female victims of intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships tend to avoid help-seeking from formal sources of help, but in a study conducted by Schilit, Lie and Montagne (1990) found help-seeking to be a frequent occurrence among female victims of intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships as compared with female victims who reported being battered in heterosexual relationships. A study conducted by Roy (1997) found among lesbian partners who reported being battered by their partners, 60% sought help from informal help sources as compared with 80% of participants who reported seeking help from formal source of help.

Eliason and Schope (2001) conducted research among a gay and lesbian medical patient population seeking medical care and reported gay and lesbian patients face challenges not experienced by heterosexual patients who do not have to worry about discrimination, poor health care, rejection or even violence by health care professionals upon disclosure of their physical and/or psychological concerns. In a study conducted among 33 lesbian medical patients, Eliason and Schope observed these patients to be scanning their environment and monitoring their health care providers reactions looking for clues of rejection or acceptance and when interviewed the majority described their help-seeking experiences with their health care providers to be “terrifying”, “traumatizing”, “unsafe” and “vulnerable” (p. 126). Eliason and Schope reported among the gay and lesbian medical patients studied, most of them felt it was easier to disclose

their problems to parents than to health care providers and 38% of the respondents avoided questions asked about their sexuality by their health care provider and only 37% of the participants directly informed their healthcare provider of their sexual orientation with female patients disclosing more frequently to health care providers than gay males.

A number of studies were cited in Burke and Follingstad (1999), which reported among female victims of domestic violence in same-sex relationships, sought help from sources similar to female victims of domestic violence in heterosexual relationships, with the exception of seeking help from battered women's organizations and friends.

Professional counselors, clergy, women's organizations, medical providers, and police were rated as less than helpful among female victims of domestic violence in same-sex relationships (Burke & Follingstad). Merrill and Wolfe (2000) conducted one of the first studies which investigated adult gay male victims of intimate partner violence and help-seeking behavior and found similar to their lesbian counterparts, gay male victims of domestic violence infrequently sought assistance from battered women's services and perceived these services as unhelpful, but individual counselors were rated quite helpful and as a source of help or support sought by gay male victims.

A gap in the literature exists which has investigated help-seeking behavior of male and female victims of dating violence among a college population and who and from where they turn to for help. Several studies have investigated where male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships tend to seek help from. Among these studies is a study conducted by Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) who concluded most adolescent victims of dating violence (60%) and perpetrators (79%) do

not seek help, but older male adolescent perpetrators were more likely to seek help than female perpetrators and family and friends than professionals were more frequently sought as helping sources and both male victims and perpetrators of dating violence were more likely to seek help from professionals than female victims and perpetrators of dating violence.

#### *Attachment Style and the Response of the Potential Helper*

Flynn and Lake (2008) reported help-seeking for the majority of individuals is experienced as an uncomfortable and embarrassing action and requires courage (p. 141). Many avoid seeking help out of fear of rejection or judgment (Flynn & Lake, 2008). Flynn and Lake reported even if potential helpers offer help, the interest in helping may be driven by “saving face” than altruistic motives or by meeting social role obligations (Agneensens et al., 2006). Even if victims of dating violence disclose their experiences of abuse or violence by their dating partner to another, this action does not necessarily guarantee he or she will receive help or support (Weisz et al., 2006). Weisz et al. (2006) discovered when potential helpers encounter a disclosure made by a victim of dating violence; he or she may react with minimization or avoidance possibly out of a feeling of not being competent to assist the victim with the problem, especially if the problem was not perceived as serious. If a victim discloses an act of abuse or violence by their dating partner to another and he or she is met with minimization or avoidance, this may negatively affect a victim’s feelings, perceptions of social support, or attitude toward

further help-seeking behavior (Weisz et al., 2006). Nevertheless, such a disclosure made by a victim represents a window of opportunity to help or intervene.

In order for a helping process to be complete, individuals must not only decide to seek help, but also must secure the help or support of a potential helper who is willing and capable to render it. Research by Collins and Feeney (2000) who studied caregiver responses to efforts of help-seeking behavior reported the ability to provide help or support may be strongly influenced by the caregiver's style of attachment. Westmaas and Silver (2001) reported the presence of one who has encountered a serious negative life event might arouse feelings of anxiety, helplessness, vulnerability, frustration or guilt in a potential helper. This may lead some to act unsupportively, such as demonstrating discomfort, making unhelpful comments or purposely avoiding the victim based on attachment style (Westmaas & Silver, 2001). Collins and Feeney (2000) theorized not only will attachment style of the help-seeker influence help-seeking behavior or avoidance, but also the attachment style of the potential helper may influence the type or amount of help offered. In a later experimental study among 247 undergraduate female students from the University of California found empirical evidence to support Collins and Feeney's theory. Westmaas and Silver (2001) concluded attachment style to be a predictor of interpersonal response in non-romantic stressful encounters with a victim going through a negative life crisis. These authors reported participants who perceived a victim with a fearful/avoidant or dismissing attachment style behaved in a rejecting way toward the victim than those who perceived a victim with a secure or preoccupied style of

attachment. Further, Westmaas and Silver (2001) observed the degree of participant rejection was partially determined by the participant's own attachment style.

Attachment theory holds human beings are innately equipped with both attachment systems (help-seeking) and behavioral care giving systems and the help-seeking process is a reciprocal one (Mikulincer et al., 2005). Collins and Feeney (2000) stated whether one secures help or support is strongly influenced by a potential helper's own attachment style because of the interaction between the help-seeker (attachment system) and the potential helper (care giving system) of which the goal of the help-seeker is to reduce the risk of harm and danger which in turn activates the care giving system (potential helper) to respond to the need of another. An attachment bond is formed when an individual seeks help (activation of the attachment system) and the potential helper or caregiver (care giving system) responds with sensitivity to the expressed need of another (Collins & Feeney, 2000). In essence, the response of a care giving system (potential helper) is a byproduct of an attachment system designed to provide protection and support to those who are either chronically dependent or in need of temporary help with a goals to reduce pain and suffering in the help-seeker and provide a "safe haven" fostering personal growth or development and a "secure base" for the exploration of other potential sources of help (Mikulincer et al., 2005).

Researchers (Collins & Feeney, 2000) observed when individuals with an insecure attachment style seek help involuntarily; they may encounter anger or frustration on part of the potential helper or caregiver, which is influenced by his or her attachment style. Collins and Feeney (2000) stated the care giving system is activated by the

presence of a person in distress and the aim of this system is to alter a needy person's condition until signs of safety, well-being, and security are evident but this may only be activated if the potential helper or caregiver deems the problem as serious. Collins and Feeney (2000) who used an attachment framework to investigate help-seeking and care giving responses among a sample of 93 dating couples found when help-seekers perceived or reported their problem as stressful or serious, this led to a more helpful care giving response from their dating partner.

Cassidy (2001) stated, "giving care means being available in times of trouble, recognizing when a person needs care and doing what it takes to provide it...it means being loving, accepting a range of ways of being, openness, flexibility and acceptance" (p. 130). Just as individual differences exist among behavior of help-seekers, not everyone is equally motivated or skilled to be a responsive caregiver or potential source of help (Collins & Feeney, 2000). Role relations theory holds potential helpers are only capable of providing the amount and type of support governed by social rules or limits (Agnessens et al., 2006). The engagement of help or support is also influenced a potential helper's own attachment experiences in childhood which will determine whether or not the potential helper is capable of responding and the type of help or support an individual in distress will receive from them (Collins & Feeney, 2000). According to an attachment framework, the ability to offer help or support and render the type of help or support to an individual in need is dependent upon having witnessed or benefited from good care by one's own attachment figures which influences one's ability to provide help or support to others (Mikulincer et al., 2005).

A potential helper or caregiver with a secure attachment style would be more responsive than a caregiver with an insecure/avoidant attachment style who would offer less support or any support at all (Collins and Feeney, 2000). Mikulincer et al. (2005) reported potential helpers with an insecure/avoidant attachment style may be uncomfortable with closeness or interdependence and in turn display cynical and disapproving behavior in response to another person's signals for help, vulnerability, weaknesses and neediness interfering with his or her compassion and appropriate helping response. Adults with insecure avoidant attachment styles may provide "care at a distance" because they tend to dismiss or devalue attachment needs of another and are uncomfortable with the expression of emotion, vulnerability, or distress in another and may view themselves as less than competent to provide care (Edelstein et al., 2004). Weisz et al. (2006) added a potential helper with an insecure attachment style might avoid or minimize a victim's disclosure of abuse or violence because they may feel uncomfortable with such a strong emotional reaction from a victim, especially if the victim is male. Mikulincer et al. (2005) found caregivers with a secure attachment style tended to express care-oriented feelings as compared with caregivers with an insecure attachment style who may suppress compassion and an appropriate care giving response.

Thompson and Ciechanowski (2003) studied the reactions of physicians to medical patients with an insecure attachment style and found patients with an insecure/dismissing attachment style appeared to their physicians as invulnerable, cold, and aloof when reporting troublesome or stressful events and this in turn elicited a reaction by the physicians of spending less time with these patients because the physician

perceived them to be self-reliant and minimized their pain or discomfort. Physicians who encountered patients with an insecure/preoccupied attachment style reported feelings of powerlessness in aiding the patient because these patients came across to them as excessively needy and demanding which elicited feelings of annoyance, anger, anxiety and confusion within the physicians who reacted by rendering an inconsistent pattern of care (Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). In a study conducted among dating partners, Collins and Feeney (2000) reported dating partners with an insecure dismissing attachment style predicted ineffective help-seeking efforts and those with a fearful/avoidant attachment style predicted a poor care giving response. Young adults with an insecure attachment style when seeking help may engage in a “push-pull” or help-seeking/help-rejecting type of behavior, which may anger, frustrate or distance a potential helper influencing his or her care giving response (Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). Thompson and Ciechanowski (2003) concluded from the results of their study, physicians when assessing or caring for patients, an awareness of attachment style in both help-seeker and within them is invaluable because this knowledge may assist in directing an individual to an appropriate helping source or enable them to adapt their care giving response.

#### *Potential Sources of Help*

Macy, Nurius, Kernic and Holt (2005) raised the question, “If most women in violent relationships are not seeking domestic violence services, where are they going for help?” (p. 137). This study raised a similar question about male and female victims of

dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college population. To cite a quote about help-seeking among a college student population by Roberts and Roberts (2005) in Holtfreter and Boyd (2006):

College students are vulnerable to abusive relationships and situations because of the nature of the college environment and the fact many students are removed from the support of family...college freshman are at high risk for physical and emotional abuse from boyfriends and in particular for date rape. As a whole, college administrators are slow to recognize this reality. (p. 111)

The majority of literature has revealed most young adult victims seek help from informal sources such as parents and peers, but a paucity of literature exists which has explored the prevalence of help-seeking behavior by victims of dating violence among formal sources of help. A theory exists which holds informal sources of help may be mobilized as a “gateway” to further help seeking among formal help sources (Vogel, Wester, Wei and Boysen, 2005). It is important to note while the following section of this literature review presents an overview of the most common informal and formal sources of help, the majority of research available largely involves sampling from an adult female victim of domestic violence population.

### Formal Sources of Help

#### *Law Enforcement and the Legal System*

Even though many laws have afforded protection for adult victims of domestic violence in marital and cohabitating relationships, a review of the literature indicates

shortcomings in the current legal system to be responsive to the help-seeking efforts of victims of dating violence among a college student population (Holtfreter & Boyd, 2006). A study found among the domestic violence literature revealed some adult female victims of domestic violence have sought the assistance from law enforcement officials and reported this endeavor as helpful, while others have perceived the response from law enforcement officials as hostile as and less helpful than other formal sources of help (Saunders, 1995). Among a sample of 1,000 abused women, Hollenshad et al. (2006) found 39% of these women reported the police were helpful in reducing or stopping their abuse, but 19% reported going to the police only increased their partner's violence toward them and 50% reported lawyers to be more helpful than psychologists, psychiatrists or clergy in assisting them to end or stop the abuse. Among a college student population, Holtfreter and Boyd reported only 35% of college students victimized by dating violence report this crime to the police. Research has indicated female victims of domestic violence are more likely to call the police than male victims of domestic violence, but young females under the age of twenty are less likely to seek assistance from the police (Kaukien, 2004; Thompson & Langley, 2004). Researchers, Thompson and Langley (2004), reported victims of dating violence are more likely to report their victimization to the police if they perceive their assault to be serious, if they perceive themselves as a victim, and if they feel confident the police will believe them and protect them.

Gender differences have been found in the likelihood a victim of intimate partner violence would seek police assistance. Felson, Messner, Hoskin, and Deane (2002)

reported female victims of intimate partner violence are more likely to seek police assistance for their victimization than male victims because they are more likely to desire police protection, less likely to think their partner's violence is a private matter, and they are less likely to view their violence as "trivial", but tend not to report their abuse or violence to the police if they fear reprisal from their offending partner. Davies (2002) found male victims of intimate partner violence, regardless of sexual orientation, will fail to report rape to the police or medical personnel because they perceive their reactions to be negative, but may report sexual assault if they have experienced severe physical injury. Stermac et al. (2004) in a study among male victims of rape reported a majority of law enforcement officials hold stereotypes against men such as "men who are raped are raped because they want to be raped" (p.903).

Over the past two decades with the event of mandatory arrest laws and more women being arrested for domestic violence against a male partner, it is still commonly believed she was acting out of self-defense (Henning & Renauer, 2005). In a study conducted by Henning and Renauer involving the arrest of female perpetrators of intimate partner abuse, found almost one-half of 47% of cases of female perpetration against a male victim in heterosexual were rejected by prosecutors and another 16% were dismissed by a judge and female defendants arrested for offending against a male partner were treated more leniently than male defendants who perpetrated violence against their female intimate partners. Saunders (1995) stated law enforcement officials might arrest male victims of intimate partner violence if they believe the violence was justified or as a result of adhering to negative stereotypes and attitudes toward them. Saunders also

reported law enforcement officials may feel discomfort in talking with a male victim of intimate partner violence and express a lack of confidence in being able to assist them effectively.

### *Social Agencies of Help*

In a study conducted among 1,000 abused women, Hollenshad et al. (2006) found battered women's shelters or similar organizations to be the least contacted by battered women as a source of help, but these resources were also rated most helpful and effective in coping with abuse. Stermac et al. (2004) reported among male victims of sexual assault are unlikely to seek help from rape crisis centers because these services are geared more toward the needs of women and less than 5% of all programs in the United States have programming specifically designed to assist male victims. According to Davies (2004) it is not uncommon of staff working within these organizations to adhere to the myth men are not victims of violence as quoted by one rape crisis worker who stated, "Honey, we don't do men...men cannot be raped" (p.205). A quote from a man who called a crisis line to report his wife "beat him up" was found in the book titled, *Wife Beating: The Silent Crisis* authored by Langley and Levy (1977) reads as follows:

He said, "My woman drinks...and every Friday night when I come home From work, she starts pounding on me"...He said he'd been severely beaten up by her several times and he was big enough to fight back but did not want to...and did not know where to turn to solve his problem.  
(pp.189-190)

The beliefs or stereotypes held of male victims of domestic violence are inconsistent with recent research conducted by Hines et al. (2003) which found over 90% of male victims reported experiencing sexual abuse by their female partners and were stalked by them, but these participants also described their female perpetrators to be “controlling” individuals and who had a history of trauma, alcohol and drug problems, mental illness and suicidal and homicidal tendencies.

#### *Psychologists and Other Mental Health Professionals*

Several studies among this literature review found few victims of intimate partner violence seek the support or help of mental health professionals. However, among a sample of battered women, Hollenshad et al. (2006) found female victims of intimate partner violence frequently sought the help or support from formal sources (e.g. police, social service agencies, crisis counselors, lawyers, physicians, psychologists, and mental health counselors). But Moffitt and Caspi (1998) reported among a sample of 1200 university students surveyed, only 1% of the students surveyed told a counselor or a physician of their victimization. Amar and Gennaro (2005) stated victims might fear scorn or judgment from a provider of mental health services or believe that the mental health professional would lack the resources to help them. One might assume mental health professionals would be skilled in helping a victim of intimate partner violence, but some victims have reported receiving non-empathic, judgmental, victim blaming response from the mental health professional or physician (Alpert, 1995). Dutton (2007) implied professional psychologists to be less empathic to male victims of intimate partner

violence because studies have demonstrated that they have rated aggression as less serious when performed by women even when it is psychological aggression. Alpert (1995) cited a few examples of responses from physicians who encountered a victim of intimate partner violence: “If it was me, I would not stay with him,” or “What keeps you with a person like that?” or “I just can’t help you if you aren’t going to do something about your situation” (p. 776). More often, victims fail to disclose their victimization to a physician or mental health professional because the clinician fails to ask them about it. In this researcher’s opinion based on clinical experience, mental health professionals have failed to explore male victimization of intimate partner violence as a result of clinging to a traditional “gender paradigm” of domestic violence, which in Dutton’s opinion has misinformed the profession (Dutton, 2007).

### *Healthcare Professionals*

Garimella et al. (2000) reported healthcare providers (e.g., nurses, physicians, etc.) are frequently among the first to encounter a victim of intimate partner violence. Most of the research among this literature review found even though healthcare providers may be the first to encounter a victim of intimate partner violence, many victims do not openly discuss their victimization with a physician (Amar & Gennaro, 2005). Even though the healthcare system is a critical point of service for the identification, treatment and prevention of intimate partner violence, many healthcare professionals do not routinely screen for interpersonal violence due to the lack of adequate training and education about intimate partner violence and a belief screening is not an effective

measure in stopping the violence (Schieman & Zeoli, 2003). Alpert (1995) stated, often, physicians will fail to ask about violence or victimization during a regular medical encounter or physical examination.

It was found among the research conducted on domestic violence, many patients do not perceive physicians to be knowledgeable about domestic violence or would even care about it and unless the patient is directly asked about it, a victim will generally not report it (Alpert, 1995). Alpert listed several reasons why a physician may fail to ask a patient about intimate partner abuse: (a) a fear of offending the patient, (b) the physician may have been or is a victim or perpetrator of intimate partner violence, (c) a sense of powerlessness or lack of control, (d) a lack of education or skill, and (e) a fear of precipitating more violence by assisting the victim to seek safety or suggest they leave their relationship.

A review of the literature found the response of the medical system to victims of intimate partner violence to be generally unresponsive and inadequate. Garimella et al. (2000) reported among a survey of 1000 abused women reported healthcare professionals to be less effective than almost all other professionals in addressing their abuse, and other studies conveyed victims often encounter poor communication, blame, misinformed advice, and punitive responses when they sought help from healthcare system. Garimella et al.(2000) argued failure to appropriately identify victims of intimate partner abuse is likely to lead to a failure to refer them to appropriate resources.

Survivors of rape reported encountering victim-blaming attitudes from both medical and legal personnel who made them feel guilty, depressed, anxious and

distrustful after reporting their experience or abuse (Campbell 2005). According to the results of Campbell's study, the responses of rape survivors regarding their encounters with the medical and legal system personnel and corresponding accounts of these experiences among physicians, nurses, and police officers were unmatched. The physicians and police officers in Campbell's study among rape survivors, minimized the rape survivor's distress and reported they did not think their behavior caused their distress because they considered their response to be normal and within their role and responsibilities (Campbell, 2005).

### *Clergy*

A study conducted by Rotunda, Williamson, and Penfold (2004) among 41 clergy members, 47 female victims aged 17 – 54 ( $M = 33.6$ ) of domestic violence and 70 court ordered perpetrators of domestic violence who completed a packet of questionnaires reported 43% of victims sought help from clergy compared with 20% of perpetrators of domestic violence and 80% of clergy reported a violence related contact within the past year. Rotunda et al. (2004) reported almost all of the victims in their study reported satisfaction with the help they received from clergy, which indicates clergy may potentially encounter a victim of dating violence, and be a potential helping source. Another finding of this study was most of the clergy who encountered a victim of domestic violence recommended marriage counseling to the victims and their partners, but their advice may be helpful in encouraging victims to leave an abusive relationship or promote them to remain in a potentially harmful relationship (Rotunda et al, 2004) Only

half of the victims in Rotunda's study reported clergy referred them for specialized domestic violence services. Other than this article, this literature review yielded little if any information on prevalence of help seeking by adolescent and young adult victims of dating violence seeking help from clergy.

### Informal Sources of Help

#### *Family and Peers*

It was well documented among this literature review, friends and peers are the most frequently rated source of help among adolescents and young adults who have sought help for acts of dating violence. Parents are often unaware or uninformed about dating violence. According to a study conducted by the Family Violence Prevention Fund and Advocates for Youth, 81% of parents surveyed either believe dating violence is not an issue or admit they do not know if it is an issue (Women's Health, 2004). Based on findings of numerous studies across the dating violence literature, victims of dating violence primarily seek the support of informal sources; friends followed by family members. Zwick (2002) reported when female high school students were asked whom they would talk to if someone they date is attempting to control them, insult or physically harm them, 86% reported they would confide in a friend, while only 7% reported they would go to the police for assistance. Adolescents and young adults may not seek help from formal sources of support because they might not have easy access to these helping sources, as do adult victims of domestic violence in marital or cohabitating relationships. It has been found in many cases of dating violence victimization, support from family

and friends positively influenced one's ability to cope with the trauma (Haden et al., 2007), but researchers (Walker & Greene, 1987) have observed among adolescents and young adults generally turn to friends and peers as opposed to family members in managing feelings, changing behavior and coping with their problems.

A study conducted by Kaplan, Robbins and Martin (1983) reported between a sample of adolescent males, support from friends and not family members were an important buffer against the accumulation of stressful life events. Grossman and Kerner (1998) found among a sample of 90 gay male and lesbian youth surveyed, close friends were most frequently rated as a valuable supportive resource. Among 234 adolescent participants who identified themselves as victims of physical assault by their partner, Thompson and Langley (2004) 63% of the respondents to the survey indicated this was the first time they reported their physical assault and they were more likely to tell friends and family about their assault than police.

Many would believe seeking help for dating violence victimization from an informal source of help is better than seeking no help at all, but Weisz et al. (2006) reported friends and family may be unhelpful sources of support in assisting a victim of dating violence because they may tend to minimize the victim's emotional pain or they may try to "cheer up" the victim which may discourage the victim from seeking professional help which in response, the victim may continue in the abusive relationship. Weisz et al. (2006) reported among studies involving adult survivors of rape, it was not uncommon for victims to report their experience of rape to family and friends who played a role in perpetrating the abuse because they blamed the victim in some way or

encouraged the victim to remain in the violent or abusive relationship by telling them to “try and work it out” with their abusive partner. Davies (2002) reported when male victims of rape turned to their family and friends for help regarding a sexual assault, they encountered blame and rejection.

Grossman and Kerner (1998) reported parents and siblings of gay and lesbian youth may be considered the last resort of help sought because they may react with verbal abuse upon disclosure of their sexual orientation and because of their disapproval of their sexual orientation, they may not be able to provide them with the support they need regarding their victimization. Ridge and Feeney (1998) conducted a study among gay and lesbian individuals who disclosed their sexual orientation to their parents and found parents may react negatively to their disclosure of their homosexuality and fathers had more difficulty accepting this disclosure than mothers. Grossman and Kerner (1998) concluded close friends, parents, partners, siblings and other informal sources of help may be potential helpers to gay male and lesbian victims of intimate partner violence only if there is an open and honest relationship between these individuals and these members of their personal support system.

There was research among the dating violence literature which suggested peers may not be a potential source of help or support to victims of dating violence. A recent study conducted by Charron (2005) investigated heterosexual teens in an abusive dating relationship and found 73% of victims of dating violence sought the help of a friend, but the friends rarely know what to say or do to help the victim. Charron (2005) reported

33% of teens who were in an abusive relationship, reported they knew of a friend in an abusive relationship, but they did not talk to anyone about it.

A number of researchers who have studied the response of peers to victims of bullying found bystanders (peers) of bullying may fail to take a supportive action toward a victim of bullying because they may not know what to do or they may fear they might do the wrong thing creating more problems which may lead to an avoidance or help or becoming desensitized to another's suffering (Cowie, 2000; Hazler, 1996). Cowie found in a study among victims of bullying, peers were perceived by the victim as helpful, but male peers were less inclined to help because an act of caring may be perceived by others as not "masculine" behavior and male victims of bullying tend not to turn to a friend or peer for support out of a fear of being labeled a "sissy."

On the contrary, other research has reported informal sources of help may encourage victims of dating violence to seek help from formal sources such as mental health counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, domestic violence organizations/agencies, lawyers, physicians, etc. who may be of help if they respond to the victim in an empathic, non-judgmental and nurturing manner (Weisz et al., 2006). Among a sample of 780 college students from a large Midwestern university who reported seeking help from a mental health professional, Vogel et al. (2007) reported one's social network strongly influences an individual's decision to seek help for a psychological disorder. Vogel et al. reported of those participants who sought help, approximately 75% reported someone recommended they seek help and 94% knew someone who had sought help. An earlier study conducted by Friedson (1961) among a medical community found the influence of

peer judgment on how an individual evaluates physical symptoms and whether or not he or she will seek medical help which supports Vogel's later findings that one's social network strongly influences help-seeking behavior. Friedson found at least a significant other prompted 50% of those seeking help for medical services. Based on the results of the study conducted by Vogel et al., it can be assumed family and friends may have a significant influence on the help-seeking behavior among victims of dating violence. Ironically, victims of dating violence may turn to their romantic partners for help or support as Weisz et al. found a tendency among adolescents and young adults to turn to their friends for help early on in their romantic relationship, but later turn to their partners for help with their problems.

Age may play a role in the intention to seek help from peers and family among victims of dating violence. Silber-Ashley and Foshee (2005) reported among a sample of adolescents attending a rural high school who reported experiencing mental health issues, the older the adolescent and the more serious the problem, the more likely he or she would turn to family members for support. Among those who did seek professional help, Silber-Ashley and Foshee reported those who sought professional help were more likely to be seniors in high school or older adolescents.

### *The Internet*

The Internet, including chat rooms and support groups, are a source of support that cannot be neatly categorized as "formal" or "informal" sources of support because it has not been well researched among the literature. Gould, Munfakh, Lubell, Kleinman

and Parker (2002) conducted a self-report survey among adolescents in six New York high schools (N =519) and found nearly one fifth (18.2%) of the adolescents who sought help for emotional problems did so through the Internet, but many combined Internet help-seeking with other sources of help, rather than substituting it for other resources (p. 1182). Kaukien (2004) reported the internet as a potential source of help or support utilized by victims of intimate partner violence as evidenced by the number of on-line self-help groups and chat rooms which may provide a link to other resources, services and care among those seeking help for dating violence. The results of a survey conducted among 2010 participants aged 12 years or older by Ybarra and Suman (2006) implicated the Internet as a possible conduit to connect individuals to a healthcare provider or encourage them in the seeking of social support or help.

#### A Methodological Review of the Literature and the Current Study

A link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior has been well established across previous research and empirical study among the medical and psychological literature (Feeney, 2000). Previous studies along this line of research have employed both quantitative and correlational approaches which have demonstrated a significant relationship between one's attachment style, symptom reporting and health care utilization while qualitative and longitudinal studies have reported individual differences in emotional and behavioral responses to stress such as help-seeking behavior (Feeney, 2000). Based on an attachment framework, using a correlational approach, Feeney presented a model of chronic pain and help-seeking behavior linking together the

variables of attachment style and help-seeking behavior. Feeney (2000) presented a model of chronic pain and help-seeking behavior and found through a correlational study, which linked together the variables of attachment style and help-seeking behavior. Individuals with a secure attachment style were less susceptible to chronic pain because of a willingness to seek help and mobilize their social support system in times of need compared to those individuals with an insecure attachment style (Feeney, 2000). Feeney (2000) found individuals with a preoccupied attachment style idealized potential helpers, but tended to engage in self-blaming behavior sabotaging their help-seeking efforts. Individuals with a dismissing attachment style demonstrated a reluctance to seek help for their chronic pain, exhibited hostility toward potential helpers, and failed to accept the help offered to them (Feeney, 2000). Feeney (2000) also reported individuals with a fearful/avoidant attachment style sought help only when highly distressed and adopted a stance of hopelessness and unwillingness to give up on their suffering.

Among the psychiatric literature, correlational studies have been used to demonstrate a correlation between an insecure attachment style and poor mental health outcome reflective of the theory differences in attachment style influence an individual's ability to establish and utilize support systems, which would enable them to cope with daily life events (Feeney, 2000). Myers and Vetere (2002) reported numerous studies among the coping literature have established a positive correlation between adult attachment style and coping, but no quantitative study to this researcher's knowledge have investigated differences in attachment style and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships

among a college sample. Previous study along the help-seeking literature has been criticized for sampling individuals of European American descent who are of upper middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds and represent a heterosexual population (McCarthy & Holliday, 2004) and predominantly female. This study proposed to sample a culturally diverse population which includes *both* male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships, making it a first of its kind.

A few studies among this literature review have employed qualitative and longitudinal methods, but the majority of studies on attachment style and help-seeking behavior have been quantitative in design employing a survey method using self-report instruments to measure variables of attachment style and help-seeking behavior of individuals seeking help for various medical conditions and mental health related issues (Armitage & Harris, 2006; Cotterell, 1992; Larose, et al., 1999; Moller, et al., 2003) Quantitative studies have been subject to criticism because of unknown confounding variables and self-enhancing bias, which pose a threat to the internal validity of a study (Mitchell & Jolly, 2004). An experimental laboratory design has been used to control for such variables and biases, but this may compromise external validity and participant anonymity (Mikulincer & Florian, 1997). For example, Mikulincer and Florian (1997) conducted an experimental study in a laboratory setting which investigated a relationship between the variables of attachment style and its effect on the seeking of social support in coping with a stressful event by having participants handle a snake and observed and measured the social interaction between the participant and his or her partner. Mikulincer and Florian (1997) reported while there was control over the social interaction, external

validity was diminished because of a limited and forced social interaction which made it difficult to measure attachment style differences among the groups and the actual behavior of mobilizing social support in real life situations.

Quantitative and correlational studies have also been criticized for not being able to make any causal inferences or conclusions (Mitchell & Jolly, 2004), which can limit validity and generalizability of the observations of attachment style and help-seeking behavior among the sample of this study. The majority of studies along this line of research have employed statistical procedures such as ANOVA, MANOVA, multiple regression, but this study demands the use of non-parametric statistics, chi-square and k independent samples test to determine differences between the categorical variables of attachment style and type of help sought. This study was modeled after similar studies found among this literature review (Macy et al., 2005; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Macy et al. (2005) conducted a similar quantitative study which examined help-seeking behavior among a sample of battered women (N = 448) following an incident of partner violence and used *t* tests and chi squares to determine group differences and employed a correlational and regression analysis to determine the relationship among partner violence and biopsychosocial and demographic factors with help-seeking indices to show how battered women's needs differentially relate across a range of service types. The results of Macy's study show distinctive profile of needs and resources among battered women who seek violence, legal, health, economic, substance abuse, and religious helping services (p. 137).

Qualitative and longitudinal studies may be used to determine a cause-effect relationship between attachment style and help-seeking behavior or a mixed method design may yield fruitful data in understanding the relationship between differences of attachment style and help-seeking behavior in the “real world” but these are beyond the scope and time limit of this proposed study. Qualitative methods may offer insight as to why a person with a particular attachment style would choose one source of help over another or how they feel about the type of help received from informal and/or formal sources of support. Therefore, although this quantitative study may yield data instrumental toward identifying differences in attachment style and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships, it is limited in its usability in determining any cause-effect relationships or generalizing the results to real life situations.

Despite these limitations of this quantitative study, this study ventures beyond research which has examined the variables of attachment style and help-seeking behavior among those seeking help for various medical and psychiatric conditions (Huntsinger & Leuken, 2004; Lopez et al., 1998; Mikulincer & Selinger, 2001; Schmidt et al., 2002; Wallace & Vaux, 1993). Wekerle and Wolfe (1998) investigated the relationship between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among a largely white, female, heterosexual population victimized by dating violence, but the results have limited generalizability to male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships.

The advantage to using a web-based quantitative survey method is its accessibility to this largely culturally diverse and difficult to reach population.

### Summary

This literature review began with an operational definition of dating violence distinguishing it as a unique construct from domestic violence. Reviews of the most prominent traditional theories of domestic violence were presented in this chapter because dating violence research has been truly grounded in traditional domestic violence theory. However, it is apparent from a review of the literature; the dynamics of dating violence cannot be sufficiently explained by traditional domestic violence theory. Sharpe and Taylor (1999) argued traditional domestic violence theories insufficiently explain the dynamics unique to dating pairs. This chapter introduced a model which has emerged out of current dating violence research, and Ericksonian-based social developmental model of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor), which best explains the dynamics of dating violence from a socio-developmental perspective. The basic philosophy underlying this theoretical framework of dating violence is that dating violence is not all about power and control between dating partners as proposed by traditional domestic violence theory, but the violence or abuse which occurs in these young romantic relationships has been conceptualized as more of an attempt to preserve and maintain an attachment bond formed by such early romantic interactions (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). This social developmental model of dating violence assumes acts of dating violence are associated with a high levels of emotional intensity (e.g. jealousy, fear, anxiety, anger, insecurity,

etc.) and a high degree of emotional commitment over a short period of time which functions to maintain and secure an attachment bond as opposed to a power and control dynamic which characterizes domestic violence between adult marital or cohabitating pairs (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). The social developmental model of dating violence was chosen as a theoretical framework for this proposed study because it takes into account the unique developmental processes and the romance characteristic of these early romantic relationships among a college population and serves to explain why a vast majority of victims of dating violence fail to leave their abusive partners or seek help.

There was a consensus among the dating violence literature that the majority of victims of dating violence attempt to cope with their physical, sexual and/or psychological distress on their own and seek help only as a last resort (Andrews, Issakidis, & Carter, 2001; Hinson & Swanson, 1993). Thus, a disturbing conclusion arose out of this literature review was the majority of victims of dating violence would fail to disclose their experiences of abuse or violence within the context of their young, romantic relationships, yet research by Seimer (2004) found victims of dating violence will disclose their victimization, if asked. If this is true, failure of potential helpers to ask potential victims of dating violence will result in acts of dating violence to go undetected and victims unidentified interfering with the ability of potential helpers to offer help or support to those who need it or want it.

A review of the literature also revealed consensus among researchers who study dating violence, that those at greatest risk for victimization by dating violence are among an educated, college population, yet acts of dating violence among this population is most

hidden and least studied. It was disturbing to learn that this is partially due to the faulty assumption held by scholars, professionals and lay persons alike that dating violence does not exist and if it does it is believed to be a largely female, heterosexual phenomenon.

An interesting discovery found among the dating violence literature contradicts the erroneous assumption most victims of dating violence are females in heterosexual relationships. A growing consensus among researchers who study dating violence assert women are as capable of initiating violence toward their male partners for motivations other than self-defense”(Richardson, 2005). These findings appear to support Richardson’s argument aggression is not a “gender issue” because it does not reside in “male or female” but within an interaction between those who provoke and the provoked (Richardson, 2005). This research also gives weight to researchers who assert the dynamics of dating violence are the product of a mutual or reciprocal interaction between dating partners compared with the “one-sided” type of violence most commonly observed among adult victims of domestic violence in marital or cohabitating pairs (Gray & Foshee, 1997). This literature supports the theory of this proposed study that victimization by dating violence occurs regardless of one’s gender or sexual orientation. An overview of the prevalence rates and types of abuse or violence experienced among male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships further challenges the assumption dating violence does not exist or is rarely experienced among these four victim groups.

This chapter described costs and consequences of dating violence not only to the individual victim but to society at large dispelling the myth dating violence is less serious

than victimization by domestic violence among adult marital or cohabitating pairs. The research accumulated in this chapter makes a sound argument for social change in the way victims of dating violence are approached and served by both formal and informal agencies of help.

A significant amount of research among the domestic violence literature substantiated the existence of domestic violence among gay male and female cohabitating partners in gay male and lesbian relationships (Burke & Follingstad, 1999), but an exhaustive search of the literature on dating violence has failed to locate studies which substantiate the prevalence and type of abuse or violence experienced among male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships. A review of the domestic violence literature implicates partners in gay male dating relationships may be at most risk for dating violence. This study aimed to build on the current dating violence research which argues for the existence of dating violence victimization regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation.

This chapter portrayed several theoretical frameworks found among the domestic violence literature which have provided a convincing rationale in explaining individual differences in help-seeking behavior, but attachment theory has emerged as a more viable explanation for understanding differences in help-seeking behavior among those seeking help for various medical conditions and mental health related problems. In this study, attachment theory was applied to the understanding of help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

It was clear from the results of this literature review, a social problem exists when victims of dating violence do not feel safe or secure to entrust their disclosure of abuse or violence by their dating partner to another who may respond in an ineffective or inappropriate way. Attachment theory and the social support network orientation model, may together, hold the keys to unlock a deeper understanding of why victims of dating violence fail to seek or secure help and a convincing framework explaining the dynamic and reciprocal interaction that takes place between help-seeker and potential helper. An interesting, but unanticipated finding, among this literature review was the influence of the potential helper's attachment style on the help-seeking process reported in the work of Collins and Feeney (2000). Although this study is not focused on the attachment style and the response of the potential helper, this will be an important factor for further study in the help-seeking behavior among victims of dating violence and in identifying and treating male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

This study utilized principles adopted from help-seeking process model by Liang et al. (2005), but it incorporated the variable of attachment style because this is important in the study of the help-seeking process between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate and same-sex relationships. This study was built on empirical research that has demonstrated a link between variables of attachment style and help-seeking behavior among those seeking help for various medical conditions and mental health related issues which can easily be applied to victims of dating violence.

This chapter also discussed the selection of social support as a critical element involved in the help-seeking process. For the purpose of this study, sources help have been operationally defined in terms of formal and informal. Results of previous research study have indicated young adults are more likely to seek help form informal than formal sources of help, but a gap in the literature exists from whom or where do male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships turn to for help or support.

A critical analysis of this literature review led this researcher to conclude even though it was reported those at greatest risk for dating violence are among a college population (Jackson, 1999; Sampson, 2007), most existing studies on dating violence have been conducted among a white, female high school or college dating population (Damlo, 2006; Few & Rosen, 2005; James et.al., 2000; Jouriles al., 2005; Shook et al., 2000; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Smith et al., 2003; Spencer & Bryant, 2000)) which excludes minority groups including members of the gay male and lesbian dating community. Therefore, this study may yield groundbreaking results in the dating violence literature because it studies differences in type of violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior or type of help sought drawn from a college population culturally diverse and by gender and sexual orientation. A college population was most appropriate for this study as it was reported among this literature review acts of dating violence peak among this age group and attachment patterns are in a “state of flux” as college students leave their previous personal support systems and seek to develop new attachment bonds (Larose & Bovian, 1998). For many, college represents a

time of transition and adjustment which has been conceptualized as a process of separation-individuation from family which may create great anxiety and lead to an “acting out” of attachment patterns (Larose & Bovian, 1998). Larose and Bernier (2001) stated the time of college transition is thought to be a relevant context for studying the impact of attachment style on personal adjustment through social support processes because the attachment system is likely to be activated by an increasing level of social and personal stress experienced by adolescents and young adults providing rich data for the purposes of this proposed study. Another reason why this study is being conducted among a college population is contrary to widespread belief, college students have fewer social support resources available to them as do adults (Coker et al., 2000), so little is known about where and from whom victims of dating violence among the college population turn to for help or support if they seek help at all. Researchers, Grossman and Kerner (1998) and James (2006) reported this is an age where young adult men and women come out with their sexuality for the first time and as this process unfolds, acts of dating violence between same-sex dating partners may become more visible.

In conclusion, this study is a timely one with the event of increasing rates of dating violence among college and university campuses and with the event of gay marriage demanding a need for further study in the area of dating violence which may be instrumental in the development of screening protocols and treatment intervention geared to meet the needs of a largely ignored and underserved population. The intent of this study was two-fold: (a) to build on existent empirical study among this literature review in order to create an awareness of the prevalence of dating violence as well as type of

abuse or violence experienced among a college sample regardless of gender or sexual orientation; and (b) to demonstrate a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured, between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships based on previous research which has empirically demonstrated a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior of adolescents and adults seeking help for various medical conditions and mental health related problems (Huntsinger & Leuken, 2004; Lopez et al., 1998; Mikulincer & Selinger, 2001; Schmidt et al., 2002; Wallace & Vaux, 1993).

Because Hamberger and Ambuel (1997) reported health care providers today do not routinely ask about violence in intimate relationships, many victims of dating violence may go undetected which makes it difficult or nearly impossible to assist them. The results of this study may be instrumental in paving the way toward the development of screening tools and outreach services to victims of dating violence regardless of gender or sexual orientation who would not otherwise seek help.

It was also the intention of this study to implicate the need for social change by not only challenging erroneous beliefs and assumptions harbored toward victims of dating violence, but to raise an awareness of the need to ask young adults about the violence in their dating relationships and to direct or refer them to an appropriate source of help. Sable et al. (2006) suggested many victims of intimate partner violence fail to seek help because they do not know where or who to turn to for help or support. It was also clear from the review of current literature on dating violence; victims of dating violence may seek help from primarily informal sources of help, but avoid seeking help

from more formal sources of help who may also play an important role crucial to their recovery from acts of violence by their dating partner.

The results of this study may have implications for future research investigating relationships between victims of dating violence and potential caregivers useful in matching male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships to appropriate informal and formal sources of help. In turn, this knowledge can facilitate an important connection or attachment bond between help-seeker and potential helper or caregiver. Existing research has found young adults seeking help for mental health related issues are more likely to seek help from friends or peers (Molidor and Toliman, 1998). Peers, in turn, through this research, can be educated to encourage victims of dating violence to seek help from formal sources of support such as psychologists, physicians, police officers, and so on. Peer networks have been a gateway for encouraging victims of dating violence to seek or utilize professional sources of support (Molidor and Toliman, 1998), and this may be a need among the gay and lesbian dating population. Friends and peers may be instrumental in assisting victims of dating violence to challenge any negative perceptions or attitudes toward the help-seeking process as a normal, healthy and corrective experience encouraging them to pursue more formal sources of help or support (Schaffer, Vogel, & Wei, 2006). This study will make an invaluable contribution to the field of psychology by serving as a stepping stone for future research challenging the way potential helpers view victims of dating violence regardless of gender or sexual orientation challenging them to respond to their signals for help or support in a more appropriate and effective way.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, including design, sampling plan, instrumentation, data collection and analysis and ethical considerations of this proposed study.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

Chapter 3 opens with a brief statement of the purpose of the study. This chapter will also include an overview of the study's research design and a rationale as to why this particular design was chosen for this study. A description of the setting and characteristics of the sample selected for this proposed study will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the research procedure and instrumentation used in collecting the data for the study. An analysis of the data will be discussed in this chapter and the chapter will conclude with a summary of the ethical measures which were taken to protect the rights of the participants of this study.

### Purpose of the Study

Researchers have established a need to better understand individual differences in help-seeking behavior in order for potential helpers to reach out to those who need or want help and would not otherwise seek it (Komiya, Good & Sherrod, 2000). The purpose of this study was to fill in a gap among the dating violence literature by determining whether differences exist between type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style, and help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought and secured between four relationship groups : male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships, female victims of dating

violence in heterosexual relationships and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships among a college sample.

### Research Design and Approach

This quantitative study is descriptive, exploratory and inferential in design. The intent of this study was to examine if differences exist in the type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample. This study was conducted with the approval of the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), approval number 05-19-08-0283304.

A survey method was selected to collect the data for this study. Royce (1991) stated the survey method is the most single most important way of gathering information in the social sciences and “produces a photograph or portrait of attitudes, beliefs or behaviors taken at one point in time” (p. 102). Since little is known about the type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex dating relationships, the survey method was chosen because it is used when there is little information known about a specific topic or problem (Royce, 1991). According to the American Association for Public Opinion Research (2003), the survey method is the only method capable of providing generalizable information in a variety of aspects of the human condition (p. 1). In quantitative research, Grinnell (2001) advocated the use of the survey method as a

“useful and convenient way to acquire large amounts of data about unobservable variables which involve what people know, believe, feel and what they intend to do” (p. 182). Most importantly, the survey method was chosen for this proposed study because it has been widely used in domestic violence research such as exploring why battered women return to their spouses and instrumental in teen violence research (Royce, 1991).

Pittenger (2003) reported the web-based survey method has become a new and viable tool in psychological research for collecting data and offers not particularly exceptional ethical challenge. The web-based survey design was chosen for this current study as opposed to the traditional paper-and-pen survey method for the following reasons: (a) it has been demonstrated web-based surveys are useful in accessing larger samples; (b) participants are more likely to disclose sensitive information through a web-based approach; (c) a web-based survey approach has been found to reduce non-response bias and increase participation among college student populations who have easy access to a computer and the internet; (d) research has demonstrated greater anonymity and confidentiality using a web-based survey method design; (e) it has been demonstrated through empirical research web-based survey designs are no more risky to human participants than traditional paper-and-pen survey methods; (f) internet populations are a more heterogeneous group; and (g) unlike traditional paper-and-pen survey methods, web-based surveys have been found to be more flexible and less prone to error (Duffy, 2002; Kraut, Olsen, Banaji, Bruckman, Cohen, & Couper, 2004; Kypri, Gallagher, & Cashell-Smith, 2004). A major advantage to using a web-based survey method is that it provides access to groups or individuals who would be difficult, if not impossible, to

reach through other channels (Wright, 2005) such as male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Also, web-based surveys have been found to entice or reach out to those who may be hesitant to meet face-to-face with the researcher (Wright, 2005). Fowler (2000) stated it has been consistently found that respondents are more likely to give socially undesirable answers on a self-administered form than when reporting to an interviewer whether this is through a paper-and-pen survey method or a web-based survey method design. The strength of using a web-based study, according to Edmunds (1999), is in its ability to reach participants around the globe very quickly collecting data from vast numbers reaching diverse geographical regions which aids in better convergent and divergent construct validity. Larger sample sizes increase the power and validity of a study and reduce sampling bias (Edmunds). For example, Kypri et al. (2004) found the web-based survey method an effective means of eliciting information about sensitive issues such as alcohol and drug use. Victimization by dating violence can also be conceptualized as a sensitive issue. Several researchers advocated the use of a web-based survey method in the collection of data. Kypri et al. (2004) used a web-based survey method and randomly assigned male adolescent participants in a national household survey regarding their use of alcohol and drugs to a web-survey design method and the traditional paper-and-pen method and found rates of reporting heavy, episodic drinking were higher among male adolescents assigned to the web-based survey method than the paper-and-pen survey method and no significant differences in these methods were found in the quality of data, level of disclosure, and the reports of consumption among these formats.

In another quantitative study, Schonlau et al. (2002) found among 7,000 University of Michigan students who were randomized to receive a survey about drug and alcohol use, of 3,500 potential participants who received a mail survey and 3,500 who were instructed to use an equivalent web-based survey, the results of the web-based survey achieved nearly a 62% response rate compared with a response rate of slightly less than 41% for the mailed survey. In addition, Hayslett and Wildermuth (2004) conducted a study among participants using a computer web-based survey method and those who used a traditional paper-and-pen survey method and found those participants who used the web-based survey method were more cooperative in returning the surveys and within a shorter period of time (i.e., the majority of responses were received within 1 to 2 weeks of posting the survey and some participants completed the survey within 20 minutes of its release.

Although the use of a web-based survey design has many advantages and conveniences, there are limitations in using a web-based survey method, but are not unique to the internet (Pittenger, 2003). These limitations include: (a) sampling bias (self-selection of on-line participants) and generalizability, (b) multiple submissions from the same participants, and (c) veracity of the data collected and, (d) larger non-response rate or “drop out” rate (Pittenger, 2003; Birnbaum, 2004). These limitations could pose compromise internal and external validity of a study. Web-based survey methods have been criticized because not everyone has access to a computer and the Internet, but it is assumed college students have relatively easy access to a computer and the Internet. Birbaum (2004) emphasized there are no fool proof methods in the random recruitment

of on-line research participants, but this does not differ from the recruitment of non-internet samples.

Multiple submissions have been noted as a limitation of the web-based survey method. In order to reduce the chance of multiple submissions, a secured survey service (surveymonkey) was employed to collect and analyze the data for this study. Through the technology of this survey, repeated submissions are traced through identifiers (i.e., e-mail addresses, IP addresses) securely stored within the system and allowing a participant to enter the survey only once. Weber and Bradley (2006) supported the use of web-based internet survey services for data collection because they provide assistance in validating original responses by tracking e-mail addresses reducing the chance of multiple responses.

Another criticism of web-based survey research is that it encourages a larger dropout rate, but this has been debatable among samplings of college students who tend to prefer an internet survey to the traditional paper-and-pen format (O'Neil, Penrod & Bornstein, 2003). According to O'Neil et al., (2003), factors most associated with "drop out" rates tend to be non-student status, lack of incentives to participate in the research project, and asking for personal information on the first page of a survey questionnaire. Although controversial among researchers, incentives have been found to increase response rates (Wright, 2005). The use of incentives was considered in this study with the purpose to increase response rate, but it was decided not to use incentives in order to protect complete confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and reduce the chance individuals would participate in the study just to win a prize.

Another limitation of the use of a web-based survey method is that the results need to be interpreted with caution because other potential sources of bias regarding web-based survey methods are not yet known (Pittenger, 2003). Lyons, Cude, Lawrence and Gutter (2005) recommended a number of ways to mitigate non-response biases such as: (a) advance notice using a cover letter to potential participants, (b) e-mail reminders to participate in the study and, c) the use of incentives to participate. A dissertation flyer (Appendix A) was e-mailed to various faculty and administrators of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations to distribute to potential participants informing them of the study in advance. Because it was not possible to contact participants directly to remind them to participate in this study, a follow up e-mail reminder (Appendix B) was sent to the faculty and administrators who had agreed to advertise the study to students and members of their organization and encourage them to participate in the study.

Sampling bias is another limitation of using a web-based survey (Hayslett & Wildermuth, 2004). For example, the overall number of individuals who viewed the dissertation flyer versus the number of individuals who actually responded to it could not be determined. As a result, the true characteristics of this current study's sample could not be assessed in this way (Hayslett & Wildermuth, 2004). But the greatest advantage of using a web-based survey method is that it would reach a college student population beyond any one geographical region increasing the generalizability of the results of this study.

### Setting and Sample

Because this study was conducted using a web-based survey method, participants were free to complete the packet of web-based questionnaires in a setting of their choosing. The ability of respondents to choose where and when they want to participate in the study may increase response rates among a college population (Hewson, Yule, Laurent, & Vogel, 2003).

A convenience sample of  $N = 163$  male and female college students in both heterosexual and same-sex dating relationships was needed to constitute the sample for this study. This sample size was calculated based on a 4 x 4 chi square analysis using a .30 medium effect and .05 level of significance with nine degrees of freedom (Cohen, 1992). A convenience sampling method was chosen for this study to ensure that the participants met the following inclusion criteria: (a) participants had to be between 18 and 25 years old; (b) they must be enrolled in a college or university; (c) they must be currently in a dating relationship or have had a dating relationship; and (d) they must report at least one incident of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse or violence within the context of their dating relationship. Individuals who are cohabitating or married were excluded from the study. The sample was representative of male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds.

A college population was specifically chosen for this study for the following reasons: (a) college students represent an accessible population; (b) college students 18 years of age and older are able to provide informed consent; (c) college-aged students

are at greatest risk for acts of dating violence (Nabors et al., 2006); (d) college students aged 18-25 years old are in a period of developmental transition where attachment behaviors are observable and measureable (Sharpe & Taylor); (e) according to the 2005 Bureau of Justice Statistics, compared with a non-student population, college students are less likely to seek medical or mental health treatment after victimization (Holtfreter & Boyd, 2006); and (f) using college samples for studying life events is a reasonable strategy (Smyth, Hockenmeyer, Heron, Wonderlich, and Pennebaker (2008).

### Research Procedure and Data Collection

The research procedure was modeled after a study conducted by Kypri et al. (2004) who used an Internet web-based survey method approach for collecting data regarding drinking research among a college student population. As noted earlier in this chapter, Kypri et al. concluded that the web-based survey method was a feasible way of conducting research among a college population because of its ability to yield a high response rate (p.45).

The first step in this research procedure was to contact faculty chairs/instructors of various undergraduate and graduate programs and administrators of national gay and lesbian collegiate organizations across the United States and beyond via a personalized study letter via e-mail soliciting their cooperation to assist this researcher in recruiting participants for this study. This e-mail included an attached dissertation flyer which they could distribute to their students or members of their gay/lesbian organizations inviting them to participate in this study. This personalized letter which was e-mailed informing

faculty chairs /instructors and administrators of national gay and lesbian collegiate organizations of this study included a brief description and purpose of the study, the researcher's credentials and contact information which will enhance the credibility of this proposed study (Wright, 2005). Recruiting participants through faculty and/or administrators of gay/lesbian administrators than the students directly reduced the risk of potential participants from perceiving the announcement of this study as unsolicited e-mail or spam which could increase non-response error (Lakeman, 1997; Skitka & Sargis, 2006). Advertising the study in college newspapers was considered, but was not chosen as a method of recruiting participants for the following reasons: (a) Roberts, Hayley, Nanda and Zenilman (2006) conducted a study involving effective and ineffective means of recruiting college students for HSV-2 testing research and found advertising in campus newsletters an ineffective means of recruiting a college population; and (b) Lakeman (1997) suggested a better strategy of recruiting college students for a study is to go through faculty and administrators who are usually happy to send e-mail to students including links to questionnaires benefiting a social cause.

Next, those interested individuals who were interested in participating in this voluntary study clicked on the hyperlink located on the flyer which connected them to the secured website, (surveymonkey), which hosted the packet of questionnaires which needed to be completed for the study. The participants typed in a password located on the flyer to access the questionnaires which helped ensure their confidentiality. Upon arriving at the survey, the participants completed the Brief Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix C) designed for the purpose of determining an individual's eligibility to

participate in this web-based study. This Brief Demographic Questionnaire included such variables as age, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, class rank (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate student), the length of their dating relationship which are pertinent to the validity of the study. Only eligible participants meeting the inclusion criteria were allowed to continue completing the questionnaires in this study. Those interested participants not meeting the eligibility criteria obtained by the Brief Demographic Questionnaire were automatically directed to the last page in the survey, thanked for their interest in participating in the study, and exited the survey. This avoided the event of devious participation in the study. Using the technology available from the survey service, (surveymonkey) prevented an individual from logging onto the survey multiple times from the same computer. Prior to completing the package of questionnaires, each participant reviewed and electronically sign an Informed Consent page (Appendix D).

Next, with informed consent, each participant was asked to complete a packet of questionnaires which included the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (Appendix E) which measured the variable, type of abuse or violence experienced, the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (Appendix F), which measured the variable, attachment style, and the General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)/Actual Help-Seeking Questionnaire (Appendix G), which measured the variable, help-seeking behavior or type of help sought or secured (i.e., formal and informal) between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups. Instructions were provided on the top of the first page of each questionnaire. The responses to the items on

the web-based questionnaires were selected by using radial buttons and/or checkboxes and for those items on the GHSQ/AHSQ which required a response to an open-ended question, a free-text box was provided. On the final page of the web-based survey, a hypertext link was used to indicate completion of the packet of questionnaires in order to prevent the participant or any other person from overwriting the data or making multiple submissions. Upon completion of the packet of questionnaires, respondents reached a thank-you page/ reminder e-mail (Appendix H) was sent out to various faculty and administrators of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations to reduce non-response rate. Faculty members and administrators of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations were informed that they could receive a summary of the results of the study by e-mailing this researcher and participants were informed a summary of the results would be posted on a publicly accessible website when available.

## Instrumentation

### *Brief Demographic Questionnaire*

Each participant in the study completed a brief demographic questionnaire to obtain information on age, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, class rank, currently involved in or have been involved in a dating relationship, length of dating relationship, and incidence of physical, psychological and /or sexual abuse or violence.

*The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale 2 (CTS2)*

Differences between the independent variables of this study, gender and sexual orientation, and the variable, type of abuse or violence experienced, was assessed by the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale 2 (CTS2) which is a self-administered questionnaire Likert-scale type instrument developed by Straus et al. (1996). The CTS2 is revised version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) which is a widely used, reliable and valid instrument most commonly used to measure intimate partner violence. This instrument is considered “gold standard” among the social science and medical literature for measuring the extent to which partners in dating, cohabitating or marital relationships engage in physical or psychological attacks on each other along with their reasoning or negotiating ability in dealing with conflict (Mills, Avegno, & Haydel, 2006; Straus, 1979). Straus, Hamby & Warren, 2003, p. 72) reported researchers have used the CTS2 for estimating prevalence and chronicity rates for violence conflict tactics among samples of interest.

Among the college population, the CTS2 has been used for measuring the use of abuse within their dating relationships (Hines & Saudino, 2003). For example, Hines and Saudino used the CTS2 among a sample of 481 college students ( $N = 302$  females,  $N = 179$  males) to assess incidents of perpetration of violence within their dating relationships and reported the following results: 29% of males and 35% of females reported perpetrating physical aggression, 12.5% of males and 4.5% of females reported receiving severe physical aggression, and 14% of females reported they were the sole perpetrator of aggression. Using the CTS2, Hines and Saudino found no significant gender differences in perpetration of either psychological abuse or severe physical aggression.

Administration of the CTS2 among adolescents in dating relationships has consistently found similar or higher rates of female perpetration than male perpetration of physical violence (Gray & Foshee, 1997; O'Keefe & Triester, 1998). Using the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), Morse (1995) found adolescent females more likely than adolescent males to engage in severe violent behavior toward their partners.

The CTS2 was chosen over the CTS for the purpose of this study because unlike the CTS, the CTS2 includes new scales to measure additional types of violence, sexual coercion and physical injury from assaults by a partner (Straus et al., 1996). It is actually two tests in one consisting of 78 items divided into two groups of 39 items in which participants rate their own behavior on 39 items and then rate their partner's behavior during conflict on the other 39 items (Lucente, Fals-Stewart, Richards & Gosha, 2001). The scales on the CTS2 also refer to concrete acts or events (Straus et al., 1996). The CTS2 is a self-administered test designed in a matrix format which has been demonstrated to work well among highly educated participants such as college students (Straus et al., 1996).

Table 2 illustrates the factor structure of the CTS2 which includes perpetration and victimization items broken into categories which form the five scales of the instrument each representing major areas of intimate partner violence: Negotiation (N), Psychological Aggression (Pag), Physical Assault (Pas), Sexual Coercion (Sc) and Injury (I) (Lucente, Fals-Stewart, Richards & Gosha, 2001). On the CTS2, four out of five of these subscales (i.e., Psychological Aggression, Physical Assault, Injury, and Sexual Coercion) are broken down into "minor" and "severe" types of violence (Lucente et al.,

2001). The Negotiation (N) scale is broken down into “cognitive” (3 items) and “emotional” (3 items) (Straus, Hamby, & Warren, 2003). Examples of the 78 subscale items within the five scales of the CTS2 are illustrated in Table 2. The 39-paired items are interspersed throughout the test yielding a rating of self-behavior (perpetration) and partner behavior (victimization) (Lucente et al., 2001). To assess types of violence experienced by the participants within their dating relationship, all five scales and 78 subscale items of the CTS2 was administered, but only four scales most pertinent to the results of this study (i.e., Psychological Aggression, Physical Assault, Injury, and Sexual Coercion) was analyzed.

Table 2

Example of Scale Items from the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2)

Scale Items	Perpetration Items	Victimization Items
Negotiation (N)	Showed I cared	Showed I cared
	Explained my side	Explained my side
	Showed respect	Showed respect
Psychological Aggression (Pag)	Insulted or swore	Insulted or swore
Physical Assault (Pas)	Called partner fat or ugly	Called my partner fat or ugly
	Threatened to hit or throw something	Threatened to hit or throw something
	Threw something at partner	Threw something at partner

Table 2 (continued)	Example of scale items from the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2)	
	Used knife or gun	Used knife or gun
	Beat up	Beat up
Sexual Coercion (Sc)	Forced sex without a condom	Forced sex without a condom
	Insisted on sex (No force)	Insisted on sex (No force)
	Used threats to have sex	Used threats to have sex
Physical Injury (I)	Had sprain, bruise or small cut due to fight	Had sprain, bruise or small cut due to fight
	Went to doctor because of a fight	Went to doctor because of a fight

*Note.* From “Factor Structure and Reliability of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scales for Incarcerated Female Substance Abusers,” by S.W. Lucente, W. Fals-Stewart, H.J. Richards and J. Gosha, 2001, *Journal of Family Violence*, 16, 4, pp. 442-443. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Each respondent in the study assessed the frequency of each action for himself or herself and their partner on a 78-item, self-report, 8-point, Likert type scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*more than 20 times*). The CTS2 is scored by adding the midpoints for the response categories chosen by the participant (Straus et al., 2003, p. 64). The CTS2 obtains information on behavior of both partners in a dating relationship, even when only one of the partners in the dating relationship is tested (Straus et al., 2003, p. 63). It also

yields a summary of the kinds of violent or abusive partner interactions and an estimate of their frequency as reported by the participant (p. 65).

### Reliability and Validity of the CTS2

One of the reasons why the CTS2 was chosen to measure the variable type of abuse or violence experienced in this proposed study is because there is extensive support regarding the reliability and validity of the scales which do not seem to correlate with the social desirability factor (Fisher & Corcoran, 2007).

Reliability for the CTS2 was assessed by calculating the alpha coefficients for the entire test including the individual subscales of the test (Lucente et al., 2001). The reliability alpha coefficients on the individual subscales ranged from .79 to .95 (Straus et al., 1996). Internal consistency was performed by finding the average correlation among items within the test (Lucente et al., 2001). The scales of the CTS2 have good internal consistency with alpha coefficients for the following scales: Negotiation (alpha = .86), Psychological Aggression (alpha = .79), Physical Assault (alpha = .86), Sexual Coercion (alpha = .87) and Physical Injury (alpha = .95) (Straus et al., 1996). Straus et al. (2003) reported good internal consistency among a college student sample (N = 317) that responded to perpetration items on the CTS2 scales ranging from .79 for the Psychological Aggression Scale to .95 for the Injury scale (p. 44).

Evidence of construct validity on the CTS2 has been established (Straus et al., 1996). Based on an  $n = 113$  (men) and an  $n = 204$  (women) construct and discriminant validity for the CTS2 scales have been established with correlations of .25 or higher at

the .01 significance level for men and .18 or higher for women and correlations between .20 and .24 or higher at the .05 level for men and between .14 and .17 or higher at the .05 significance level for women (Straus et al., p. 300). Permission from the authors to use the CTS2 for purposes of this study was secured through the purchase of the manual, CTS2 protocols and scoring kit through the publisher, Western Psychological Services (WPS).

#### *The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ)*

Differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation and the dependent variable attachment style were measured using the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) which is a self-administered, Likert-type questionnaire authored by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) based on their four-category model of adult attachment. Attachment Style was categorized on four levels for data analysis: secure attachment style, preoccupied attachment style, dismissing attachment style and fearful/avoidant attachment style. The RSQ was chosen for this proposed study because of its established frequency of use among the adult attachment literature (Ross, McKim & DiTommaso, 2006). The RSQ consists of 30 short statements drawn from Hazen and Shaver's (1987) attachment measure and Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) which consists of four short paragraphs describing four attachment styles where respondents rate themselves on a 7-point Likert scale as to the degree to which they resemble each of the four styles (Ross, et al., 2006). The RSQ was developed from the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) (Collins and Read, 1990) in which participants rate how

typical the items compare with his or her behavior in close relationships (Ross et al., 2006).

The RSQ is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *very uncharacteristic* to 5 = *very characteristic* and is designed to measure four attachment prototypes (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful/avoidant) each reflecting a specific relationship style (Ross et al., 2006). A secure attachment style prototype is reflected by a response to such items as “It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others,” and “I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me” (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991, p. 244). The dismissing style of attachment prototype is reflected by a response to such items as “I am comfortable without close relationships,” “It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient,” and “I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me” (p. 244). A preoccupied attachment style prototype is reflected by responses to such items as “I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like” and “I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don’t value me as much as I value them” (p. 244). The fearful/avoidant attachment style prototype is reflected in response to such items as “I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others”, “I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them”, and “I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others” (p. 244).

This measure results in four continuous attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful/avoidant) scores, which provide a profile of an individual’s

attachment feelings and behaviors (Ross et al., 2006). Although originally designed as a continuous measure of attachment style, the RSQ can be used to categorize participants into their best fitting attachment pattern by the use of the highest of four attachment prototype ratings (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

#### Reliability and Validity of the RSQ

Norms, stability, reliability and validity statistics were unavailable for the RSQ, but according to Waldinger, Schultz, Barsky and Ahern (2006), the RSQ has demonstrated good reliability and convergent validity. Muller, Lemeux and Sicoli (2001) reported moderate to high test-retest reliability and stability of the RSQ demonstrated over an 8 month period ranging from  $r = .81$  to  $r = .84$  for view of self and from  $r = .72$  to  $r = .85$  for view of other. Written permission to use the RSQ was secured by the author for use in this proposed study (Appendix I).

#### *The General Help Seeking Questionnaire/Actual Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ/AHSQ)*

Differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, and the dependent variable, help- seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured, was measured by the General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)/Actual Help Seeking Questionnaire (AHSQ) which is a two part self-administered questionnaire type instrument developed by Wilson, Deane, Ciarrochi, and Rickwood (2005). This measure has been widely used in previous research and “has demonstrated a positive association

with aspects of emotional competence in addition to prospective help-seeking behavior “(p. 19). The GHSQ is a measurement of help-seeking intentions that have been defined by its authors as “a function of both the particular issues in question and the source of help” and the AHSQ is a measure of actual help sought (p. 19). This instrument was chosen for purpose of this study because it is noted for its flexibility and sensitive format to measure help seeking intentions or behavior and supplementary questions to assess past help-seeking experience (Wilson et al., 2005). Cusac, Deane, Wilson & Ciarrochi (2006) stated types of problems and helping sources can be varied according to the research context and nature of the sample under study. Although the GHSQ was developed formally to assess willingness to seek help for non-suicidal and suicidal problems on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *extremely unlikely* to 7 = *extremely likely*), Wilson et al. stated the GHSQ might be modified according to the purposes and need of the researcher.

The GHSQ is a flexible and adaptable matrix style self-report instrument, which includes three sub-scales of help-seeking intentions: (a) level of intention for seeking informal help, (b) level of intention for seeking formal help, and (c) level of intention to seek help from no-one (Rickwood et al., 2005). Future intentions to seek help are measured by a listing of potential help sources and asking participants how likely it is that they would seek help from that source for a specified problem on a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from no intention to seek help (1 = *extremely unlikely*) to a very high likelihood of seeking help (7 = *extremely likely*) for personal-emotional problems from a variety of help sources (Rickwood et al., 2005). Prompts for this measure include “If you

were having a personal-emotional problem, how likely is it you would seek help from the following people” and “If you have suicidal thoughts, how likely it is you would seek help from the following people (i.e., a list of 10 specific help sources and including an item “I would not seek help from anyone;” Ciarrochi & Deane, 2001; Cusac et al, 2006). Higher scores equal higher help-seeking intentions (Wilson, Deane & Ciarrochi, 2005).

The GHSQ assesses past help seeking intentions by asking whether professional help has been sought in the past for a specified problem and, if help has been sought, how many times it was sought, what specific sources of help were sought and whether help obtained was evaluated as worthwhile on a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = *extremely unhelpful* to 5 = *extremely helpful*; Rickwood et al., 2005, p. 7; Wilson et al., 2005). All scales of the GHSQ were used for purposes of the study to assess both past and future help-seeking behavior.

The Actual Help-Seeking Questionnaire (AHSQ) is an extension of the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ) and was developed by Deane, Ciarrochi, Wilson, Rickwood and Anderson (2001). It is designed to measure recent actual help seeking behavior by listing a number of potential help sources and asking whether or not help has been sought from each of the sources within a previous two week time frame for a specified problem (Deane et al., Rickwood et al., 2005). Participants asked to elaborate on the nature of the problem for which help was sought and may indicate they had a problem, but sought help from no one (Rickwood et al., 2005). If help was sought, the AHSQ asks the respondent to specify the source of help sought (e.g. mother, counselor, clergy, etc) and indicate the category of the problem. Participants provide a “yes” or

“no” response for each help source option that matched those listed in the GHSQ (Wilson et al., 2005). Recent or actual help sought is reported as three sub-scales: whether or not informal help has been sought; whether or not formal help has been sought; and whether no help has been sought (Rickwood et al 2005). All scales on the AHSQ will be used to assess actual help sought or secured. Written permission to use the GHSQ/AHSQ was secured by the authors (Appendix J).

### Reliability and Validity of the GHSQ/AHSQ

Support has been found for the reliability and validity of the GHSQ/AHSQ (Wilson et al., 2005). The predictive and construct validity of this measure has been evidenced by significant associations between help-seeking intentions and actual help-seeking behavior (Wilson et al., 2005). Internal consistency reliability of the GHSQ items are supported by Cronbach’s alphas for suicidal and non-suicidal problems of .82 with a test-retest reliability assessed over a three week period = .92 and Cronbach’s alpha for personal-emotional problems = .70 with a test-retest reliability assessed over a three week period = .86 (Wilson et al., 2005). Cusac et al. (2006) reported the validity of the GHSQ/AHSQ has been supported by the GHSQ intentions which are positively correlated with both prior and prospective help-seeking behavior.

### Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis was conducted between the demographic variable, type of abuse or violence experienced (item 8 of the Brief Demographic Questionnaire). The

purpose of this analysis was to determine an individual's eligibility to participate in the study, to obtain information about what percentage of the sample reported or did not report incidents of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse of violence. Another purpose of this analysis was to determine which type of abuse or violence experienced was most characteristic of the total sample.

Data was obtained by using the CTS2 which measured differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, and the dependent variable type of abuse or violence experienced, the RSQ which measured differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation and the dependent variable, attachment style, and the GHSQ/AHSQ which measured differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, and the dependent variable, help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured. It should be noted, among the help-seeking literature, the selection of "informal" and "formal" help are conceptualized as two distinct forms of help-seeking behavior (Lewis, et al., 2005). Therefore, this distinction served to operationally define the dependent variable, help-seeking behavior, as help-seeking intentions and type of actual help sought or secured from informal and formal help sources for the purpose of this study. The data from these instruments was exported from the EXCEL program into the SPSS program data base (SPSS Version 17.0).

## Review of the Hypotheses and Statistical Tests

### *Null Hypothesis 1.*

There are no differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships as measured by the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus et al., 1996).

### *Research Hypothesis 1.*

There are differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships as measured by the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) (Straus et al., 1996).

### *Null Hypothesis 2:*

There are no differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships as measured by the Relationships Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

### *Research Hypothesis 2.*

There are differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships as measured by the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

### *Null Hypothesis 3.*

Male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships will not be less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of

dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships as measured by the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire/ Actual Help-seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ/AHSQ) (Wilson, Deane, Ciarrochi, & Rickwood, 2005).

*Research Hypothesis 3.*

Male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships will be less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships as measured by the General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)/Actual Help Seeking Questionnaire (AHSQ) (Wilson, Deane, Ciarrochi, & Rickwood, 2005).

The hypotheses of this current study were generated based on what has been discovered in previous research, which has found a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among individuals seeking help for various medical conditions and psychological problems (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Declercq & Palmans, 2006; Florian et al., 1995; Howard & Medway, 2004; Hunter & Maunder, 2001; Huntsinger & Lueken, 2004; Lopez et al., 1998; Larose & Bernier, 2001; Larose, Bernier, Soucy & Duchesne, 1999; Meyers & Vetere, 2002; Rickwood et al., 2005; Thompson & Ciechanowski, 2003). Rickwood et al. (2005) studied help-seeking behavior patterns among an adolescent and young adult population seeking help for mental health related issues reported the majority sought help from informal sources of support such as family members, friends, or peers. What is not known is whether these individuals sought help beyond informal sources of help (e.g., friends, family members) to formal sources of help

(e.g., psychologists, physicians, clergy, etc.) Other research conducted on help seeking behavior patterns among an adolescent population seeking help for mental health related problems found up to 90% of adolescents tell their peers rather than professionals about their psychological distress (Kalafat, 1997; Kalafat & Elias, 1995). Boldero and Fallon (1995) reported gender differences among adolescent males who were more likely to seek help from peers when experiencing emotional distress. A few studies have examined help-seeking behavior patterns among adult female victims of domestic violence (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). These studies reported female victims of domestic violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships were more likely to seek help from both formal and informal sources of help than male victims of domestic violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships who tended to seek help from a professional counselor (Burke & Follingstad, 1999) or not seek help at all.

Based on the findings of previous research, this study predicts the following results: Female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships will be more likely to seek help from both formal and informal sources of support as compared with male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships who may be more likely to turn to peers or friends for help or support. It is predicted male by the results of this study, male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships will be least likely to seek or secure help from formal sources of help (e.g. physicians, psychologists, law enforcement officials, etc.) than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships. This study also predicted differences in type of abuse or violence experienced but not frequency of violence between male and

female victims of dating violence based on previous literature which has asserted male victims of dating violence are likely to be victimized at equal or greater frequency than female victims of dating violence (Gray & Foshee, 1997). It is further hypothesized by this study, differences in attachment style among collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships with a secure attachment style and a preoccupied attachment style will be more likely to seek help or support from formal and/or informal sources as compared with those victims of dating violence who have an insecure dismissing or fearful/avoidant style of attachment regardless of sexual orientation or gender.

A one-way MANOVA was the statistical test chosen to test differences in gender and sexual orientation (independent variables) on type of abuse or violence experienced (dependent variable).

A chi-square analysis is recommended for nominal (categorical) data and the purpose is to test if there is a significant relationship between a nominal independent and dependent variable (Mitchell & Jolly, 2004). Saluhu-Din (2003) stated a chi-square analysis is appropriate to determine whether a proportion of people with a specific attribute (e.g. attachment style, help-seeking behavior) are the same for one group as for another (e.g. male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships). Thus, a chi-square analysis was appropriate for the purpose of this study which is to test the differences between attachment style and help-seeking behavior or type of help sought among the relationship groups of male and female victims in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. A 4 x 4 chi-square analysis will be

used to test differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, and the dependent variable, attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. A 3x 4 chi-square analysis will be used to examine differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation and the dependent variable, help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured (i.e., informal and formal) between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, and the dependent variable, help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured (i.e., informal, formal and both informal/formal) were analyzed using a 3x4 chi-square test and a series of 2 x 2 chi-square analyses was conducted to determine which groups were most likely to seek or secure help from what source (informal and formal).

Frequency tables are used to compare responses and describe complex relationships among three or more nominal (categorical) variables (Mitchell & Jolly, 2004) and a series of frequency tables and bar graphs will be presented in this study to summarize and display differences in type of violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior among the four victim groups of this study.

### Ethical Considerations

Using a web-based survey method design poses no more risk to human participants than a traditional paper-and-pen mailed survey method (Kraut et al., 2004). According to the American Association for Public Opinion Research (2003), web-based

surveys rarely put respondents at more than the minimal risks of daily life (p.1).

However, it was this researcher's responsibility to ensure measures are taken to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of all those who participate in this study. Participants were informed this researcher made every attempt to preserve and protect privacy, confidentiality and anonymity through the following action. This researcher employed the use of a secured and protected Internet survey service (surveymonkey), which technology reduces the chance of unauthorized persons from accessing the data, the sensitive data collected from the survey is securely stored within the technology of the surveymonkey service and therefore no personal identifiers was known to this researcher or any other, and security measures, such as encryption during transmission making files unreadable to unauthorized persons and the storage of data secured and protected through the technology of [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

Each participant prior to participating in the study will obtain informed consent. Pittenger (2003) stated Internet research requires participants to acknowledge that they understand the intent of the study and the nature of their participation in the study before proceeding with the data collection. Although this study involves targeting a traumatized population, college students are assumed to be healthy and capable of understanding the principles of autonomy and can exercise the ability to decide if participation in this study is in their best interest and whether it involves risks they are willing to take. Since participants of this study were recruited from various institutions of higher learning and gay/lesbian collegiate organizations across the United States and abroad, it was assumed all respondents were aged 18 and over. Through this process of informed consent, this

researcher will demonstrated respect for the autonomy of each participant by meeting three conditions: (a) the participants were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study; (b) the participant's privacy was protected through various security measures; and (c) each participant was informed that participation in this proposed study is strictly voluntary and they may terminate their participation in this study at any time without penalty (Clark & McCann, 2005). Informed consent was confirmed by the participant's electronic signature and by clicking on an "I agree to participate" or "I do not agree to participate" button on the survey website. Using a web-based survey method, participants were free to withdraw from the study by electronically exiting the survey. Pittenger (2003) stated it is easy for a participant to withdraw from a web-based study by simply breaking the link to the web page the survey is hosted upon.

Although this proposed study involved no deception, one ethical consideration this researcher had was asking participants sensitive questions about their experiences of abuse and violence by their dating partner. This researcher is aware of the possibility of eliciting information which may be psychologically distressing. It was noted in Black and Black (2007), there is a common belief or assumption among many that asking about one's experience of abuse or violence is upsetting, harmful or stigmatizing. However, according to the results of a study on intimate partner violence conducted by Becker-Blease and Freyd (2006) demonstrated the majority of the respondents who self-reported their experiences of sexual or physical violence entrusted the research with the truth about their experiences as victims and were grateful to know others cared about these issues. Black and Black (2007) reported results of a National Center for Injury

Prevention Control survey on intimate partner violence and found very few of the participants reported feeling upset or fearful as a result of being asked about violence and abuse and other participants reported receiving personal benefits from being part of the study. According to Becker-Blease and Freyd (2006), if a researcher does not ask questions about violence and abuse this plays into the social forces that perpetuate intimate partner violence. According to the American Association for Public Research (2003) there is no known case of any person sustaining lasting physical or psychological harm from a survey interview (p.2). In the event, psychological distress is experienced by a participating in this proposed study each participant will be informed of a national toll free number for a Domestic Violence Hotline which can assist them and direct them to an appropriate local resource within their geographical region.

## Summary

This chapter presented a discussion of the methodology employed in this current study. The chapter opened with a statement regarding the main purpose of the study which is to examine differences between type of violence experienced, attachment style, and help-seeking behavior among four distinct groups of victims of dating violence: male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. Among the medical and psychological literature, attachment style has been implicated as a mediating factor in the seeking of help for various medical conditions and mental health related issues (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian et al., 1995; Lopez et al., 1998; Rickwood et al, 2005; Schmidt, et al., 2002; Vogel & Wei, 2005), but no study has examined attachment style and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. This chapter discussed a rationale for using a quantitative, web-based survey method to examine differences in types of violence or abuse experienced attachment style and help-seeking behavior among a culturally diverse college sample. Next, this chapter presented an overview of the research procedures, method of data collection, and how the data will be analyzed. The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale 2 (CTS2), the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) and the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)/Actual Help-Seeking Questionnaire (AHSQ) are the three instruments used to collect the data in this study. Reliability and validity of

these three measures were described. This chapter also discussed the statistics used to test the hypotheses of this proposed study and analyze the data. A MANOVA and chi-square analysis were the statistical tests used to demonstrate differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation and the dependent variables, type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior, or type of actual help sought or secured (informal and formal). The chapter closed with a discussion of the ethical measures taken to protect the confidentiality and the anonymity of those who participated in this study.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative, web based study, was to examine if differences exist among the variables type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups. This chapter opens with a description of the sample and the descriptive statistics obtained from the Brief Demographic Questionnaire which categorizes the sample. The next section of this chapter is an overview of the data analysis conducted in this study which is categorized into three subsections under each of the three variables under investigation: (a) type of abuse or violence experienced, (b) attachment style, and (c) help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured (informal or formal). Each subsection includes a restatement of each research question, the accompanying hypothesis, and the statistical analysis performed to test each hypothesis under examination. A summary of the results will conclude this chapter.

### Brief Demographic Questionnaire

#### *Sample Demographics and Descriptive Statistics*

Out of a total number of interested participants ( $N=858$ ) who entered the web-based survey, 611 (71.2%) at least partially completed the survey. A convenience sample of ( $N= 149$ ) was obtained from the total number of participants who entered the survey and completed it in full. The majority of respondents who participated in this study

exhibited the following characteristics : older than 24 years of age (34.9%), female (67.8%), female in heterosexual dating relationships (34.2%), female in same-sex dating relationships (33.6%), Caucasian (67.8%), graduate students (40.3%), were not currently in a dating relationship, but had been in one in the past (60.4%), were in a dating relationship over two years (36.9%) and experienced at least one incident of physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse or violence within the context of a dating relationship. Table 3 illustrates the sample demographics and the frequencies for each demographic variable contained in the Brief Demographic Questionnaire.

Table 3

*Sample Demographics and Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Age</b>		
18-19 years	33	22 (22.1)
20-21 years	36	24 (24.2)
22-24 years	28	19 (18.8)
Older than 24 years	52	35 (34.9)
Total	149	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48	32 (32.2)
Female	101	68 (67.8)
Total	149	

Table 3 (continued)

## Sample Demographics and Descriptive Statistics

## Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual Female	51	34 (34.2)
Heterosexual Male	29	20 (19.5)
Same-Sex Male	19	13 (12.8)
Same-Sex Female	50	34 (33.6)
Total	149	

## Ethnicity

Caucasian/White	101	68 (67.8)
African American	16	11 (10.7)
Asian	9	6 (6.0)
Hispanic	9	6 (6.0)
Native American	4	3 (2.7)
Other	10	7 (6.7)
Total	149	

## Class Rank

Freshman	27	18 (18.1)
Sophomore	18	12 (12.1)
Junior	22	15 (14.8)
Senior	22	15 (14.8)
Graduate Student	60	40 (40.3)
Total	149	

## Dating Relationship

Yes	59	40 (39.6)
No	90	60 (60.4)
Total	149	

Table 3 (continued)

## Sample Demographics and Descriptive Statistics

## Relationship Length

Less than one month	3	2 (2.0)
1-3 months	16	11 (10.7)
3-6 months	13	9 (8.7)
6-12 months	29	20 (19.5)
1-2 years	33	22 (22.1)
Over 2 years	55	37 (36.9)
Total	149	

Type of Abuse or  
Violence Experienced

## Physical

Yes	75	50 (50.3)
No response	74	50 (49.7)
Total	149	

## Psychological

Yes	129	87 (86.6)
No response	20	13 (13.4)
Total	149	

## Sexual

Yes	47	32 (31.5)
No response	102	69 (68.5)
Total	149	

*Frequency Distribution of Type of Abuse or Violence Experienced Among the Total Sample*

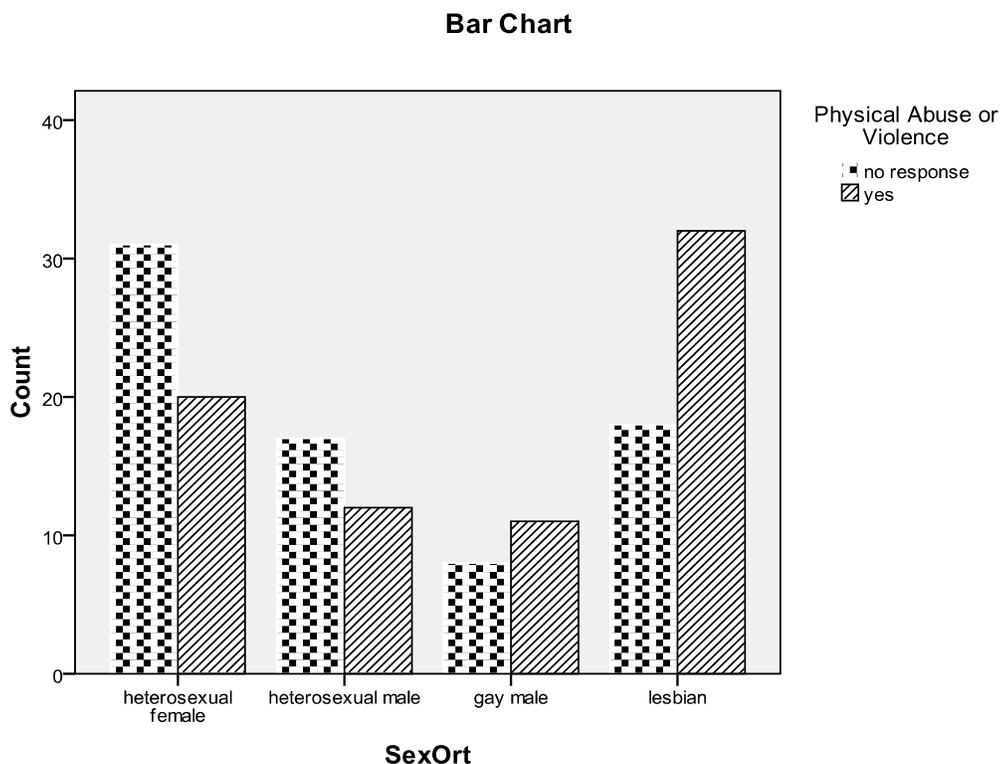
Each participant responded to item 8 of the Brief Demographic Questionnaire which asked, “Have you experienced at least one incident of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse or violence over the course of your dating relationship?” This

question was designed to not only determine eligibility to participate in the study, but to explore which type of abuse or violence was most frequently reported or disclosed among the total sample. In response to item 8 on the Brief Demographic Questionnaire, a respondent chose one or more of the following choices: (a) “at least one incident of physical abuse or violence by my dating partner;” (b) at least one incident of psychological abuse or violence by my dating partner;” and (c) “at least one incident of sexual abuse or violence by my dating partner.” In order to code this item for analysis, if a respondent checked one or more of the three choices above in item 8 on the Brief Demographic Questionnaire, a value of “1” was assigned to each choice selected which indicated the respondent experienced one or more of the three types of abuse or violence studied. However, if a respondent did not check one or more of the three choices in item 8, a value of “0” was assigned to each choice not checked which indicated a respondent did not experience or wish to report he or she experienced that particular type of abuse or violence within the context of their dating relationship. The choices not checked and given a value of “0” were calculated into the “no response” category shown in the figures below, which illustrate the results of each of the chi-square analyses performed between the demographic variable, type of abuse or violence experienced, and the categorical variable, gender and sexual orientation.

#### Physical Abuse or Violence

Among the total sample ( $N= 149$ ), the results of a chi-square analysis of the demographic variables revealed no significant differences in the frequency of self-

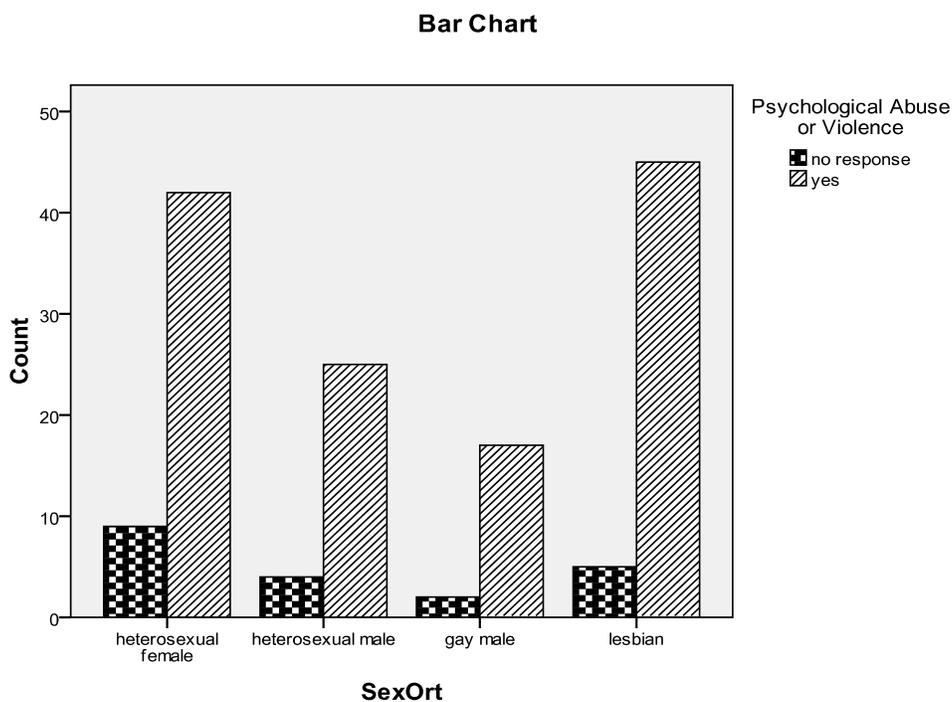
reported incidents of physical abuse or violence by respondents across the four relationship groups studied,  $\chi^2(3, N=149) = 7.622, p = .055$ . However, an interesting observation was made from this data. A greater number of female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships (64%) reported experiencing incidents of physical abuse or violence than female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships (39%). Figure 5 illustrates the frequency of incidents of physical abuse or violence reported among the sample.



*Figure 5.* Frequency of incidents of physical abuse or violence reported by relationship group.

### Psychological Abuse or Violence

Similarly, a chi-square analysis revealed no significant differences in the self-reporting of incidents of psychological abuse,  $\chi^2(3, N=149)=1.428, p=.699$  among the total sample ( $N=149$ ). Figure 6 illustrates the frequency of incidents of psychological abuse or violence reported between the four relationship groups among the total sample.

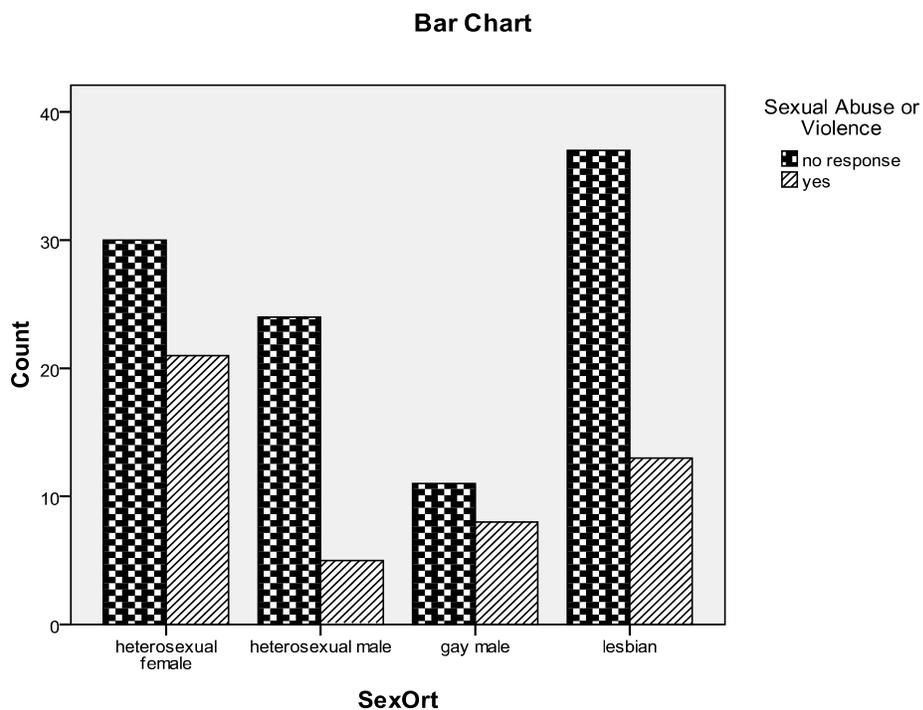


*Figure 6.* Frequency of incidents of psychological abuse or violence reported by relationship group.

### Sexual Abuse or Violence

Lastly, a chi-square test of independence was performed on the demographic variable of sexual abuse or violence across the four relationship groups among the total

sample. The results of this analysis did not find significant differences in the self-reported incidents of sexual abuse or violence,  $\chi^2 (3, N=149) = 6.632, p = .085$ . Figure 7 presents the frequency of incidents of sexual abuse or violence reported among the total sample. However, based on this analysis, a greater number of female victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships (41%) reported experiencing incidents of sexual abuse or violence compared with male victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships (17%) which is not a surprising observation given male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships are found to be less likely to report being victimized by sexual abuse or violence than their female counterparts (Koss et al, 1987; Sable et al., 2006) perhaps out of shame or embarrassment or at the risk of being perceived by others as being “gay” (Stermac et al., 2004). Figure 7 illustrates the frequency of incidents of sexual abuse or violence reported among the four relationship groups of this study.



*Figure 7.* Frequency of incidents of sexual abuse or violence reported by relationship group.

The results of the descriptive analysis from the data collected from item 8 of the Brief Demographic Questionnaire clearly indicated psychological abuse was the most frequently type of abuse or violence reported (86.6%), followed by physical abuse or violence (50.3%) and sexual abuse or violence (31.6%) across the total sample of this study.

## Analysis of the Data

### *Type of Abuse or Violence Experienced*

#### Research Question and Hypothesis 1

The first research question in this study asked, “Are there differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups?” In response to the first research question, it was hypothesized:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There are no significant differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

Ha<sub>1</sub>: There are significant differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

#### Hypothesis Testing

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine the relationship between gender and sexual orientation, the independent factors, which included four levels: female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships

and four levels of the dependent variable, type of abuse or violence experienced, (Psychological Aggression, Physical Assault, Injury and Sexual Coercion).

Acknowledging from previous research that victimization by dating violence is a *reciprocal* as opposed to a “one-sided” phenomenon, occurring between adult marital and cohabitating pairs engaging in acts of domestic violence (Bookwala, Frieze, Smith & Ryan, 1992, Billingham & Sack, 1986, Burke, Stets, & Pirog-Good, 1988, Callahan, et al., 2003, Cercone, Beach & Arias, 2005). A separate MANOVA analysis was conducted on both dimensions on the CTS2, “Partner” (incidents of abuse or violence by partner toward self (victim) and “Self” (incidents of abuse or violence perpetrated onto partner by self (victim)). Men and women in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate dating relationships are potentially a perpetrator and victim of dating violence by the theory of reciprocity of abuse or violence which occurs in dating relationships. Thus, the results of the MANOVA analysis conducted in this study provided data not only about the frequency of abuse or violence perpetrated by a dating partner on self (victim), but also about the frequency of abuse or violence perpetrated by self (victim) on his or her dating partner.

#### *Perpetration of Abuse or Violence by Partner toward Self (Victim)*

The “Partner” dimension of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) yields a total mean score which represents the frequency of incidents of psychological aggression, physical assault, injury and sexual coercion perpetrated by a dating partner toward self (victim). A descriptive analysis was conducted to compare the total mean scores and

standard deviations among the sample of male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships as derived from the “Partner” dimension on the CTS2. Table 4 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 4

*Mean and Standard Deviations for Type of Abuse or Violence Experienced Perpetrated Partner Toward Self (Victim) Among Relationship Groups*

Relationship Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Psychological Aggression		
Female Heterosexual	41.67	45.00
Male Heterosexual	37.59	35.47
Same Sex Male	49.11	46.58
Same Sex Female	37.84	37.08
Physical Assault		
Female Heterosexual	20.84	47.38
Male Heterosexual	16.86	21.49
Same-Sex Male	22.53	28.97
Same-Sex Female	17.94	31.04
Injury		
Female Heterosexual	2.45	6.25
Male Heterosexual	2.31	7.10
Same-Sex Male	2.42	5.93
Same-Sex Female	1.90	7.39
Sexual Coercion		
Female Heterosexual	14.14	30.11
Male Heterosexual	9.14	13.65
Same-Sex Male	23.58	24.60
Same-Sex Female	9.08	23.93

Although the results of this descriptive analysis derived from the total mean scores the CTS2 revealed a near equal frequency of incidents of physical, psychological and sexual abuse or violence between the four relationship groups among the sample, male victims of dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships reported a slightly greater incidence of abuse or violence by their dating partner compared with the other three relationship groups. Although no similar studies were found among a review of the literature from which to compare this result to, this result validated other research findings which have reported gay men experience acts of abuse or violence within their intimate partner relationships at the same degree of frequency as those in heterosexual relationships (Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2003) or at higher rates (Burke et al., 2002).

A one-way MANOVA analysis conducted to examine differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships did not reveal significant differences or a multivariate main effect, Pillai's trace = .049,  $F(12, 432) = .597, p < .845$ . Thus, the results of the MANOVA analysis failed to reject the null hypothesis of no differences in type of abuse or violence experienced by male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships by their dating partners among a college sample (see Table 5).

Table 5

*MANOVA Results for Relationship Group on Type of Abuse or Violence Perpetrated by Partner Toward Self (Victim)*

Effect	Value	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	$\rho$	$\eta^2$
Between Subjects					
Relationship	.049	.597	12	.845	.016
Intercept	.489	33.979	4	.000	.489

*Note.*  $\rho = < .05$ , Pillai's Trace

*Perpetration of Abuse or Violence Perpetrated by Self (Victim) toward Partner*

The "Self" dimension of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) yields a total mean score which represents the frequency of incidents of psychological aggression, physical assault, injury and sexual coercion perpetrated by a self (victim) toward a dating partner. A descriptive analysis was conducted to compare the total mean scores and standard deviations among the sample of male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships as derived from the "Self" dimension on the CTS2. Table 6 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 6

*Mean and Standard Deviations for Type of Abuse or Violence Perpetrated by "Self" (Victim) onto "Partner" Among Relationship Groups*

Relationship Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Psychological Aggression		
Heterosexual Female	30.94	32.42
Heterosexual Male	25.66	24.73
Same-Sex Male	24.26	23.36
Same-Sex Female	24.06	27.09
Physical Assault		
Heterosexual Female	6.98	12.72
Heterosexual Male	5.21	10.43
Same-Sex Male	5.63	8.48
Same-Sex Female	5.12	9.51
Injury		
Heterosexual Female	6.08	17.40
Heterosexual Male	3.34	7.40
Same-Sex Male	5.68	7.17
Same-Sex Female	4.38	10.02
Sexual Coercion		
Heterosexual Female	3.51	8.79
Heterosexual Male	3.41	7.75
Same-Sex Male	7.68	14.08
Same-Sex Female	.80	1.81

Similar to the previous analysis which examined the frequency of incidents in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships, the results of this descriptive analysis revealed a near equal frequency in the incidence of abuse or violence perpetrated by self (victim) toward partner among the total sample ( $N= 149$ ). Some interesting patterns were observed from this analysis: (a) female victims of dating violence perpetrated a greater number of incidents of psychological aggression toward their male dating partner (perpetrator), and (b) female victims in same-sex relationships perpetrated the least number of incidents of sexual abuse or violence toward their partner (perpetrator) when compared with the other three relationship groups.

A one-way MANOVA analysis was conducted to examine differences in type of abuse or violence experienced toward partner (perpetrator) by self (victim), did not reveal significant differences or a multivariate main effect among the relationship groups, Pillai's trace = .99,  $F(12, 432) = 1.23, p < .58$ . Table 7 displays the results of the one-way MANOVA analysis that failed to reject the null hypothesis of no differences in type of abuse or violence experienced among by male and female perpetrators of dating violence in both collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships by their dating partner (victim).

Table 7

*MANOVA Results for Relationship Groups on Type of Abuse or Violence Perpetrated by Self (Victim) Toward Partner*

Effect	Value	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	$\rho$	$\eta^2$
Between Subjects					
Relationship	.099	1.23	12.00	2.58	.033
Intercept	.480	32.78	4.00	.000	.480

Note:  $\rho = < .05$ , Pillai's Trace

### *Attachment Style*

#### Research Question and Hypothesis 2

The second research question asked, "Are there differences in style of attachment between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups?" In response to this second research question, it was hypothesized:

H<sub>02</sub>: There are no differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

H<sub>a2</sub>: There are differences in style of attachment between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

Table 8 represents the frequency of attachment style categories between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships reported on the RSQ among the entire sample of the study.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for Attachment Style and Relationship Group (N=149)*

Relationship Group x Attachment Style	N	%
Female Heterosexual		
Secure	12	32.4%
Preoccupied	12	29.4%
Dismissing	12	22.2%
Fearful/ Avoidant	14	50.0%
Male Heterosexual		
Secure	7	24.3%
Preoccupied	7	17.6%
Dismissing	7	25.0%
Fearful/Avoidant	8	11.9%
Same-Sex Male		
Secure	5	13.5%
Preoccupied	4	14.7%
Dismissing	5	13.9%
Fearful/Avoidant	5	9.5%
Same-Sex Female		
Secure	12	29.7%
Preoccupied	11	38.2%
Dismissing	12	38.9%
Fearful/Avoidant	14	28.6%

### Hypothesis Testing

A 4 x 4 chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, on four levels: female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships on the dependent variable, attachment style, defined on four levels: secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful/avoidant. The relationship between these variables was found insignificant, attachment style did not differ by gender and sexual orientation,  $\chi^2 (9, N = 149) = 8.638, p = .471$ .

#### *Help-Seeking Behavior*

##### Research Question and Hypothesis 3

The third research question asked, “Are male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same sex relationships less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships?” In response to this third research question, it was hypothesized:

H<sub>03</sub>: Male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships are not less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships.

Ha<sub>3</sub>: Male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships are less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships.

### Hypothesis Testing

#### *Help-Seeking Intentions*

A 3 x 4 chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation and help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought (help-seeking intentions) between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, were defined on four levels: female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in same sex relationships and female victims of dating violence in same sex relationships. The dependent variable, help seeking behavior (help-seeking intentions), was defined on three levels: informal, formal, and both informal/formal help sources. The results of the 3 x 4 chi square test of independence found significant differences in help-seeking intentions between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships,  $\chi^2 (6, N= 149) = 19.49, p <.01$  are presented in Table 9. The results supported the research hypothesis that male and female victims in collegiate same-sex

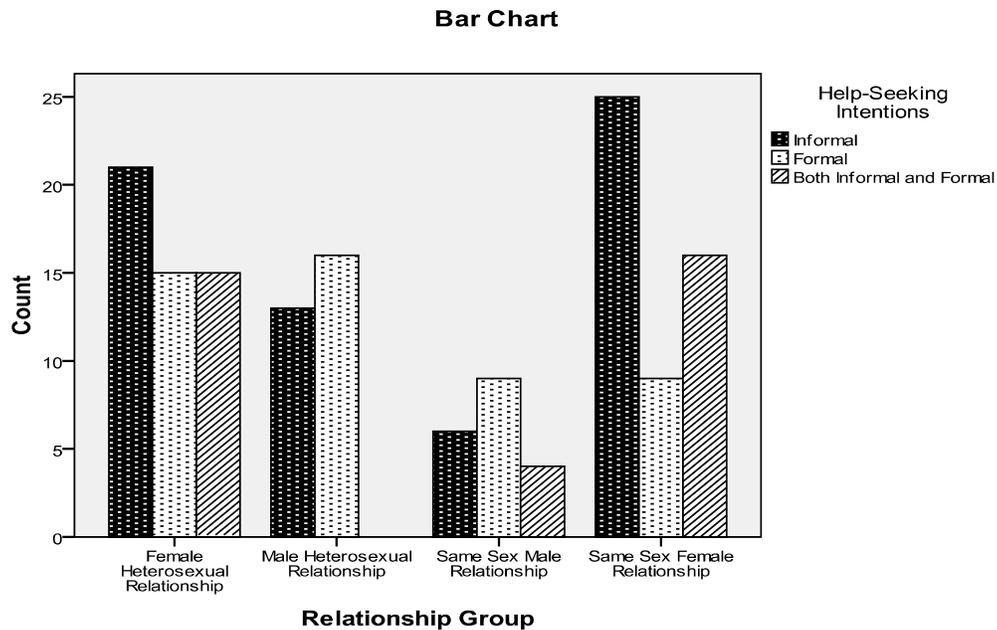
relationships are less likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships.

Table 9

*Crosstabulation of Differences in Help-seeking Intentions Between Male and Female Victims of Dating Violence in Both Heterosexual and Same-sex Relationships on Informal and Formal Help Sources*

Relationship Group	Informal		Formal		Both Informal/Formal	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Female Heterosexual	21 (22.2)	32.3%	15 (16.8)	30.6%	15 (12.0)	42.9%
Male Heterosexual	13 (12.7)	20.0%	16 (9.5)	55.2%	0 (6.8)	.0%
Same-sex Male	6 (8.3)	9.2%	9 (6.2)	18.4%	4 (4.5)	11.4%
Same-sex Female	25 (21.8)	38.5%	9 (16.4)	18.4%	16 (11.7)	45.7%

Figure 8 illustrates the results of the analysis of differences between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships and help-seeking intentions among a college sample.



*Figure 8.* Differences in help-seeking intentions among relationship groups.

In order to determine which of the relationship groups differed significantly with regard to help-seeking intentions, the 3 x 4 chi square contingency table was sub-partitioned into a series of 2 x 2 independent sub-tables (Pett, 1997). The results of the chi square analyses indicated a significant, but weak, association between relationship group and help-seeking intention,  $\chi^2(6, N=149) = 19.49, p = .003$ , Cramer's  $V = .26$ . Examination of the sub-partitioning of the contingency table revealed the following results (p. 197). Female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships were significantly more likely to seek help from both informal and formal sources than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, but female victims of dating violence were significantly more likely to seek help from informal sources than male

victims of dating violence between these groups,  $\chi^2 (1, n=49) = 7.81, p = .005$ . Male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were significantly more likely to seek help from informal and formal sources than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, but male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships were more likely to intend to seek help from informal sources than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships  $\chi^2 (1, n=23) = 6.30, p = .012$ . When male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships were compared with female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships, female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were significantly more likely to seek help from both informal and formal sources than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships,  $\chi^2 (1, n=54) = 7.21, p = .007$ , but more male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships intended to seek help from formal sources than female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships who intended to seek help from informal sources at a greater rate,  $\chi^2 (1, n=63) = 5.39, p = .020$ . Both male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were equally as likely to seek help from both informal and formal sources of help, but female victims in same-sex relationships were significantly more likely to seek help from informal sources than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships,  $\chi^2 (1, n=49) = 5.04, p = .025$ . Table 10 presents the results of the chi-square test for  $k$  independent samples in tabular form (p. 197).

Table 10

*Presentation of the Chi-Square Test Analyses of Differences in Help-seeking Intentions Among Relationship Groups*

Relationship Group	<i>Informal</i>		<i>Formal</i>		<i>Both Informal And Formal</i>		$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>			
Female Hetero. Vs. Male Hetero	21	61.8	15	48.4	-	-	1.17	1	.279
Female Hetero. Vs. Male Hetero.	21	61.8	-	-	15	100	7.81	1	.005*
Female Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Male	21	77.8	15	62.5	-	-	1.43	1	.232
Female Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Male	21	77.8	-	-	15	78.8	.009	1	.925
Male Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Male	13	68.4	16	64.0	-	-	.094	1	.759
Male Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Male	13	68.4	-	-	0	.0	6.30	1	.012*
Male Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Female	13	34.2	16	64.0	-	-	5.39	1	.020*
Male Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Female	13	34.2	-	-	0	.0	7.21	1	.007*
Same-sex Male Vs. Same-sex Female	6	19.4	9	50.0	-	-	5.04	1	.025*
Same-sex Male Vs. Same-sex Female	6	19.4	-	-	4	20.0	.003	1	.955

Table 10 (Continued) Presentation of chi-square test analysis of differences in Help-seeking intentions among relationship groups

Female Hetero.	21	45.7	15	62.5	-	-	1.79	1	.181
Vs. Same-sex Female	25	54.3	9	37.5					
Female Hetero.	21	45.7	-	-	15	48.4	.056	1	.814
Vs. Same-sex Female	25	54.3			16	51.6			

Note. \* $p < .05$

#### *Type of Actual Help Secured*

A 3 x 4 chi square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, and *help-seeking behavior*, or type of actual help sought between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, was defined on four levels: female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships, and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. The dependent variable, type of actual help secured, was defined on three levels: informal, formal and both formal

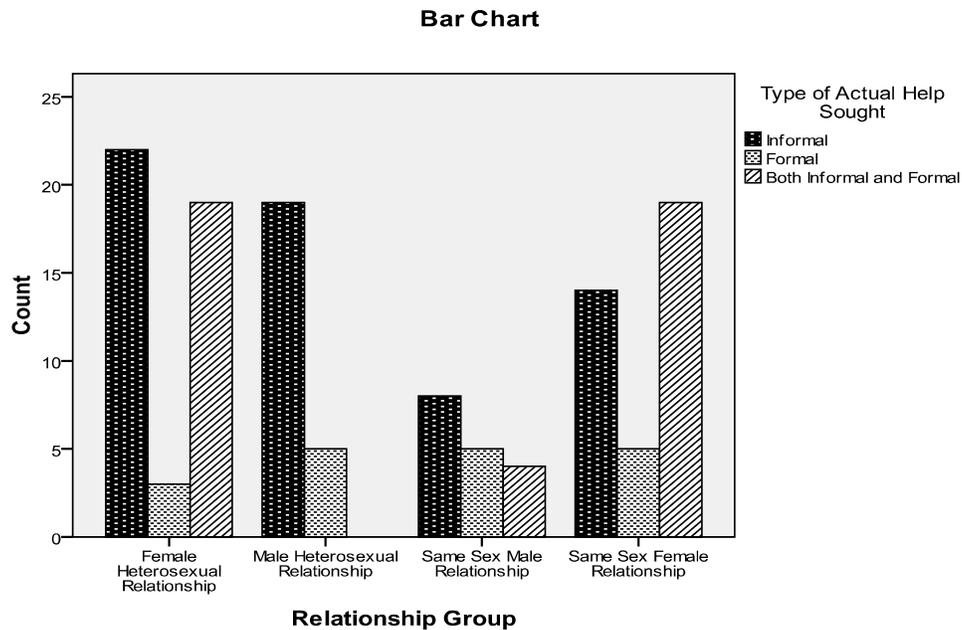
and informal help. The relationship between these variables was found significant,  $\chi^2$  (6,  $N = 149$ ) = 22.93,  $p = .001$  (see Table 11)

Table 11

*Crosstabulation of Differences in Type of Actual Help Secured Between Male and Female Victims of Dating Violence in Both Heterosexual and Same-sex Relationships on Informal and Formal Help Sources*

Relationship Group	Informal		Formal		Both Informal and Formal	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Female Heterosexual	22 (22.5)	34.9%	3 (6.4)	16.7%	19 (15.0)	45.2%
Male Heterosexual	19 (12.3)	30.2%	5 (3.5)	27.8%	0 (8.2)	.0%
Same-Sex Male	8 (8.7)	12.7%	5 (2.5)	27.8 %	4 (5.8)	9.5%
Same-Sex Female	14 (19.5)	22.2 %	5 (5.6)	27.8%	19 (13.0)	45.2%

Figure 9 illustrates the results of the analysis of differences between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships and type of actual help sought among a college sample.



*Figure 9.* Differences in actual help sought and relationship groups.

In order to determine which of the relationship groups differed significantly from the other, the 3 x 4 chi square contingency table was sub-partitioned into a series of 2 x 2 independent sub-tables (Pett, 1997). The results of the chi-square analyses indicated a significant but weak association between relationship group and actual type of help sought,  $\chi^2 (6, n= 123) = 22.93, p=.001$ , Cramer's  $V= .31$ . Examination of sub-partitioning of the contingency table revealed the following results (p. 197): Female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought help from both informal and formal sources, however, female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships significantly secured help at a greater rate from informal sources compared with male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships  $\chi^2 (1, n= 60) = 12.89, p= .000$ . In

addition, female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships differed significantly from male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships, female victims of dating violence secured help from informal sources than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships who actually sought help from formal sources,  $\chi^2 (1, n=38)= 3.60, p= .058$ . Male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were more likely to secure help from both informal and formal sources than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, but male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships were significantly more likely to actually secure help from informal sources at greater frequency,  $\chi^2 (1, n=31)= 7.27, p= .007$ . Between the male heterosexual and same-sex female victims of dating violence groups, female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were significantly more likely to secure help from both informal and formal sources, but male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships were significantly more likely to secure help from informal sources than female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships,  $\chi^2 (1, n=52) = 17.24, p=.000$ . Table 12 presents the results of the chi-square test for  $k$  independent samples in tabular form (p.197).

Table 12

*Presentation of the Chi-Square Test Analyses of Differences in Type of Actual Help Sought or Secured Among Relationship Groups*

Relationship Group	<i>Informal</i>		<i>Formal</i>		<i>Both Informal And Formal</i>		$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>			
Female Hetero. Vs. Male Hetero	22 19	53.7 46.3	3 5	37.5 62.5	- -	- -	.699	1	.403
Female Hetero. Vs. Male Hetero.	22 19	53.7 46.3	- -	- -	19 0	100 .0	12.89	1	.000*
Female Hetero. Vs. Same Sex Male	22 8	73.3 26.7	3 5	37.5 38.5	- -	- -	3.60	1	.058*
Female Hetero. Vs. Same-Sex Male	22 8	73.3 26.7	- -	- -	19 4	82.6 17.4	.639	1	.424
Male Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Male	19 8	70.4 29.6	5 5	50.0 50.0	- -	- -	1.33	1	.249
Male Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Male	19 8	70.4 29.6	- -	- -	0 4	.0 100	7.27	1	.007*
Male Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Female	19 14	57.6 42.4	5 5	50.0 50.0	- -	- -	.179	1	.673
Male Hetero. Vs. Same-sex Female	19 14	57.6 42.4	- -	- -	0 19	.0 100	17.24	1	.000*
Same-sex Male Vs. Same-sex Female	8 14	36.4 63.6	5 5	50.0 50.0	- -	- -	.530	1	.467

Table 12 (continued)

Presentation of chi-square test of independence analysis of differences in type of actual help sought or secured among relationship groups

Same-sex Male	8	36.4	-	-	4	17.4	2.07	1	.150
Vs. Same-sex Female	14	63.6			19	82.6			
Female Hetero.	22	61.1	3	37.5	-	-	1.49	1	.223
Vs. Same-sex Female	14	38.9	5	62.5					
Female Hetero.	22	61.1	-	-	19	50.0	.924	1	.337
Vs. Same-sex Female	14	38.9			19	50.0			

Note. \* $p < .05$

### Summary of the Results

This chapter opened with a brief introduction followed by a description of the sample characteristics and accompanying descriptive statistics. Out of a total ( $N= 858$ ) who entered the web-based survey, only a total of ( $N= 149$ ) completed the survey in its entirety which formed the convenience sample in this study. Eight demographic variables were assessed across the four relationship groups under study which included age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class rank, dating relationship (in a current dating relationship or not in a current dating relationship, but had been in the past), relationship length and type of abuse or violence experienced. A descriptive analysis using the data obtained from the Brief Demographic Questionnaire found the average respondent of the study to be 24 years or older, female, either heterosexual female or lesbian in sexual orientation, Caucasian, graduate students, who were in a dating relationship for over two

years and have experienced at least one incident of physical, psychological, and or sexual abuse or violence at the hands of a dating partner. A chi-square analysis revealed psychological abuse or violence to be most characteristic among the total sample of this study.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine whether differences existed between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships. The three dependent variables examined in this study were type of abuse or violence experienced (psychological aggression, physical assault, injury and sexual coercion), attachment style (secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful/avoidant) and help-seeking behavior (help seeking intentions and type of actual help sought or secured). The independent variable, relationship *group* was defined on four levels: male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships among a collegiate sample.

Several statistical analyses were performed to test each of the three null hypotheses under study:

1. There are no differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.
2. There are no differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

3. Male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships are not less likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to examine whether differences exist in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships. The results of the MANOVA analysis indicated male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships do not differ in type of abuse or violence experienced by a dating partner. Further, no significant differences were detected in the type of abuse or violence perpetrated by a victim of dating violence toward their partner (perpetrator) based on the data obtained from the CTS2.

Style of attachment did not differ significantly between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships as revealed by a 4 x 4 chi square test of Independence on the data obtained from the RSQ.

The results of a 3 x 4 chi square test of independence analysis did find significant differences in type of help-seeking intentions and type of actual help sought or secured between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The results of this study found evidence to support the research hypothesis that collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships are less likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female

victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships. A few noteworthy assumptions could be made based on the results of this study:

First, it could be surmised from the results of this analysis, help-seeking intentions might largely be determined by gender than sexual orientation. In general, female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships reported seeking help at greater rates than male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships from both informal and formal sources. Between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, the results of this study supported previous research which found female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships are more likely than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships to seek help from *informal* sources (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005), but these groups in this present study did not differ significantly in the seeking of help from formal sources. A series of 2 x 2 chi square analyses that examined which groups differed significantly in help-seeking intentions revealed the following results:

1. Female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships intended to seek help from informal sources at a greater rate than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships.
2. Male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships intended to seek help from informal sources at greater rate than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships.
3. Male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships intended to seek help from formal help sources at greater frequency than female victims of dating

violence in same-sex relationships who are more likely to seek help from informal sources.

4. Female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships intended to seek help from informal sources at a greater frequency than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships.

Second, while the results of this study supported the research hypothesis that male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships are less likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, a 3 x 4 chi square analysis revealed gender differences in actual help sought or secured. According to the data obtained from the responses on the GHSQ/AHSQ, female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships actually sought or secured help at greater frequency than male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships from both informal and formal help sources. However, when a series of 2 x 2 Chi-square analyses were performed which examined which groups differed in terms of type of actual help sought or secured (i.e., informal versus formal), the results of this analysis suggested type of actual help sought or secured might be largely influenced by sexual orientation than gender. Based on these analyses, the following significant results were obtained:

1. Female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought or secured help from informal sources at greater frequency than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships.

2. Male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships actually sought or secured help at greater frequency from formal sources of help than female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships.
3. Male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought or secured help from informal sources at a greater frequency than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships.
4. Male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought or secured help from informal sources at greater frequency than female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships.

By gender, the only significant result revealed by the 2 x 2 chi square analyses was that female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought and secured help from both informal and formal help sources at a greater frequency than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships.

Third, a considerable discrepancy was observed among the responses of participants on the GHSQ/AHSQ between the type of help they intended to seek and the type of help actually sought or secured. Based on this observation, it can be speculated that the type of actual help sought between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships is independent of help-seeking intentions. In other words, the type of actual help sought or secured, was not necessarily consistent with the type of help the respondents intended to seek. For example, while

male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships intended to seek help from informal sources at greater frequency than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships, the results of this study indicated male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually secured help at a lesser frequency from informal sources than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. Although female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships intended to seek help from both informal and formal sources of help than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships, male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships actually sought or secured help from informal sources than female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships.

It can be concluded while no significant differences between type of abuse or violence experienced and attachment style were found between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships, significant differences were found among these four relationship groups in their help-seeking intentions and type of actual help sought or secured. Chapter 5 will open with an introduction followed by an overview of the study, a review of the research questions and hypothesis, and an interpretation of the results of this study, social change implications, recommendations for future research and clinical practice and will close with a summary and conclusion.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

### Introduction

This chapter opens with a brief overview of the study and a review of the research questions and the three hypotheses underlying this study. The next section presents an interpretation of the findings which are categorized by the three variables under study: type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior defined in terms of help-seeking intentions and type of actual help sought or secured. Implications for social change are presented in this chapter based on the results of the study. Limitations of the study are addressed in this chapter followed by recommendations for future research and social action. A summary of the study will conclude this chapter.

### Overview of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, web-based study was not only to create awareness that victimization by dating violence is a major social problem across college and university communities to examine if differences exist in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and the help-seeking behavior of male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample.

Since victimization by dating violence was first discovered among young adult women on college campuses in the 1930's (Makepeace, 1981), it has been learned that the incidence of such violence has crossed boundaries of gender and sexual orientation.

The results of this study will show male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships are at near equal risk for experiencing at least one incident of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse or violence by a dating partner, resulting in negative consequences ranging from mild physical injury to deep, enduring, psychological wounds which negatively impact academic performance and overall quality of life (Durant et al., 2007).

Victimization by dating violence *is* major social problem across college and university campuses partially because the majority of its victims do not report or disclose acts of abuse or violence by their dating partner to another (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). A major question which prompted this dissertation study was, “If the majority of victims of dating violence do not report or disclose acts of abuse or violence by a dating partner to another, then how can a potential helper assist them?”

First, it is important to understand why victims of dating violence might not seek help or assistance. The social developmental model of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999) offered a plausible explanation. Unique to dating relationships, this model posited abuse or violence functions to preserve an attachment bond between self and partner rather than out of a power-control dynamic observed between adult marital and cohabitating partners victimized by domestic violence and grounded in traditional feminist theory (Pence, 1987; Rothenberg, 2003; Walker, 1977). From an attachment perspective, abuse or violence between dating partners is conceptualized as a dysfunctional form of protest behavior directed toward maintaining or regaining contact with an attachment figure and those victimized by dating violence are likely to be

anxiously attached both as a consequence of the abuse and as a risk factor for having difficulty in recognizing and leaving an abusive relationship (Bartholomew, Regan, Oram & White, 2008, p. 346). The social developmental model of dating violence (Sharpe and Taylor, 1999) also theorized that abuse or violence between dating partners is perpetuated by insecurity or jealousy between dating pairs and out of a fear of the loss of an attachment bond. Other theorists have reported abuse or violence occurs between dating partners out of a narcissistic perception of being of special importance to one's dating partner (Jackson et al., 2000), relationship dependency (Charkow & Nelson, 2000) and out of a sense of need for relationship security (Nightingale & Morrissette, 1993).

Obstacles or barriers toward help-seeking behavior among victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships include the fear of not being believed, understood, supported or assisted, or judged (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). The fear of being told what they should do, or advice giving, such as leaving an abusive partner (Moffit & Caspi, 1998), attitudes toward help-seeking behavior based on gender role prescriptions (Agneessens et al., 2006; Ang et al., 2004; Davies et al., 2000) , or as a consequence of a negative social support network orientation or insecure attachment style ( Armitage et al., 2006, Collins & Feeney, 2000; Cooper et al., 1998, Schwartz et al., 2004, Wallace & Vaux, 1993) are other barriers toward help-seeking between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships. The fear of being "outed" or rejected by the gay/lesbian community or a fear of a homophobic reaction from a potential help source has been cited as the major barrier toward help-seeking behavior among gay and lesbian victims of domestic violence (Burke & Follingstad, 1999; D'Augelli, 1992; Grossman & Kerner,

1998). Based on these theories, it is understandable why a victim of dating violence would not be motivated to seek or secure help from a potential help source.

Based on a review of the literature, this study is based on an assumption that a “disconnect” exists between help-seeker (victim) and potential helper. Not only are the majority of collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships unlikely to report or disclose an act of abuse or violence by a dating partner to another, but potential helpers fail to render assistance or support when encountering a disclosure by a victim of dating violence in their daily life or work. Potential helpers who cling to myths about dating violence victimization or harbor stereotypic attitudes or prejudicial biases toward victims of dating violence such as victimization by dating violence is strictly a “male-to-female” perpetrated phenomenon . Thus, they miss “windows of opportunity” to render support or assistance to a victim in need. Feelings of helplessness or incompetence or differences in attachment style among potential helpers might also explain why potential helpers fail to render support or assistance to victims of dating violence (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Thompson & Cierchanowski, 2003). Potential helpers often ignore signs of intimate partner violence or respond unsupportively or with helplessness because they are uncertain of what to say or do upon encountering a disclosure (Zietler et al., 2006).

Recent research has challenged the notion only young women in heterosexual dating relationships are victimized by dating violence (Brendgen et al., 2002). Brendgen et al. concluded victimization by dating violence is not a “one-sided” phenomenon which is commonly observed between adult marital and cohabitating partners who experience

acts of domestic violence, but tends to be reciprocal in dynamic which is unique to dating couples both in heterosexual and same-sex relationships (Gray & Foshee, 1997). Hence, current victimization rates of dating violence which fail to take into the account the reciprocity of abuse or violence between dating pairs are likely to be grossly underestimated statistics. Conceptually, the number of male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among the college and university population could be at least doubled.

This dissertation study was also inspired out of the recent scholarly medical and psychiatric literature on help-seeking behavior which has evidenced a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among the adolescent and general healthcare population who might not otherwise seek help for a variety of medical or psychiatric/psychological conditions or problems (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian et al., 1995; Lopez et al., 1998; Rickwood et al., 2005; Schmidt et al., 2002; Vogel & Wei, 2005). This research has led to innovative interventions designed to assist those who might not otherwise seek help among the general healthcare population. This present study was a preliminary attempt to examine if differences exist among the variables type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships in order to extend this research to another population and to stimulate future research endeavors to determine a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among victims of dating violence who might not otherwise seek help.

Trauma theory posited that help and healing begins with self-disclosure (Tang, Freyd & Wang, 2008) and self-disclosure is a first step toward seeking and securing help (Kaukinen, 2004; Vogel & Webster, 2003). As stated earlier in this dissertation, a social problem exists if the majority of male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships will not disclose acts of abuse or violence by a dating partner to a potential help source. Based on Freyd's betrayal trauma theory, self-disclosure is predicted by the closeness of a bond between victim and perpetrator. .Foynes, Freyd and DePrince (2009) observed an association between attachment style and self-disclosure among a sample of undergraduate students (N= 202) who experienced a history of childhood abuse reported:

There was a noted decreased awareness (denial) of abuse and delayed disclosure which served as a protective mechanism that helped the victim to maintain attachment with an abusive caregiver and "keeping the secret" served to sustain the necessary attachment (p. 210). The degree of closeness (attachment) between victim and perpetrator triumphed over other variables such as onset of abuse, gender, or severity of abuse which contributed significantly to the prediction of delayed disclosure among the sample. (p. 215)

Based on this theory, it can be assumed the more intense (close) an attachment bond is between a male or female victim of dating violence in either a heterosexual or same-sex dating relationship is, the less prone a victim of dating violence would be to disclose even one incident of physical, psychological and/or sexual violence by a dating partner to a potential help source. It is assumed by this research that self-disclosure is a

predictor in help-seeking behavior and this has important social change implications for the results of this present study.

This study was also predicated on the principles of Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory and the social support network orientation model (Wallace & Vaux, 1993), which postulated that attachment style is intricately linked to the seeking of social support or help. The social support network orientation model defined social support as "an individual's propensity toward utilizing his or her support network in time of need (Larose et al., 1999, p. 226). According to this model, those with a negative network orientation and an insecure attachment style may believe they need to be careful with whom they disclose personal information to, believe that they will not be understood by others and will be taken advantage of if they confide in another. This can be compared with those who exhibit a positive network orientation (characteristic of a secure attachment style), who possess high levels of trust, affiliation, and nurturance (p. 226). Thus, individuals with a positive social network orientation (i.e., secure attachment style) would be more likely to seek help than those with a negative social network orientation, or insecure attachment style (Wallace & Vaux, 1993). Among a general healthcare population, adolescents and adults seeking help for various medical, psychiatric and psychological problems or conditions, those with a secure attachment style were most likely to seek help than those with an insecure attachment style (Howard & Medway, 2004; Larose et al., 1999); Schmidt et al., 2002). Howard and Medway (2004) found adolescents with a secure attachment style engaged in adaptive coping behaviors (e.g., help-seeking behavior) and were more accepting of social support compared with those

who possessed an insecure style of attachment who engaged in more maladaptive coping responses, such as alcohol or drug use.

This study sought to determine if differences exist between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex dating relationships in attachment style and help-seeking behavior as defined in terms of help-seeking intentions and type of actual help sought or secured. A quantitative, web-based survey method was chosen to examine if differences existed in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Out of a total of 858 college and graduate students who initially entered the web-based survey, 149 completed the survey in its entirety which formed the convenience sample of this study. The participants were recruited with the assistance of various college and university faculty and administrators of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations via the internet which gave access to a widely cultural and diverse population across the United States and abroad. As expected, the average participant was female, Caucasian, and was in or had been in a heterosexual dating relationship.

Each participant who was eligible to participate gave informed consent and completed a packet of web-based questionnaires which included a Brief Demographic Questionnaire, the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) which measured differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, and the dependent variable, type of abuse or violence experienced, the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) which measured differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual

orientation, and the dependent variable, attachment style and the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire/Actual Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ/AHSQ) which measured differences between the independent variables, gender and sexual orientation, dependent variable, help-seeking behavior defined in terms of type of help sought ( help-seeking intentions) and type of actual help secured. There were four levels of the independent variables in this study, gender and sexual orientation: male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships and male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. The dependent variable, help-seeking behavior, or type of help sought or secured, was defined on two levels: informal and formal help.

A MANOVA analysis was conducted to determine if differences existed in type of abuse or violence experienced between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The results of this analysis supported the null hypothesis of no differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. A 4 x 4 chi-square test of independence analysis was conducted to determine if differences existed in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Again, the results of this analysis supported the null hypothesis of no differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample. Significant differences were detectable by a chi-

square test of independence analyses in help-seeking behavior (help-seeking intentions and type of actual help sought or secured). Collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships are less likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships among a college sample.

### Review of the Research Questions and Hypotheses

The first research question asked in this study was, “Are there differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups?” The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis in response to this research question are stated below.

H<sub>0</sub>: There are no differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

H<sub>1</sub>: There are differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

The second research question asked in this study was, “Are there differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups?” The null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis are stated below in response to the second research question.

H<sub>0</sub>: There are no differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

H<sub>2</sub>: There are differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.

The third research question in this study asked, “Are male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships?” The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis in response to this research question are stated below.

H<sub>0</sub>: Male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships are not less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships.

H<sub>3</sub>: Male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships are less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships.

## Interpretation of the Findings

### *Type of Abuse or Violence Experienced*

Several researchers have documented the existence of physical abuse or violence (Brendgen et al., 2002; Cleveland et al., 2003; Katz et al., 2002), psychological abuse (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Jenkins & Aube, 2002; Makepeace, 1981) sexual abuse or violence (Dunn, et al., 1999; Koss, 1985; Mills & Granoff, 1992; Rickert et al., 2009; Sears et al., 2006) in heterosexual adolescent dating relationships and between same-sex dating partners (Freedner et al., 2002; Katz et al., 2002; Miller & White, 2003), but no studies have examined differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Among same-sex adult couples, a 2003 study found 2% of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual cohabitating adults reported experiencing abuse or violence at the hands of their intimate partner (Contemporary Sexuality, 2007). Among an adult, cohabiting population, Burke and Follingstad (1999) suggested abuse or violence in same-sex relationship tends to occur at greater intensity and frequency than in adult, marital or cohabiting heterosexual relationships. Hamel and Nichols (2006) concluded abuse or violence may occur at greater frequency between same-sex than heterosexual dating partners. With increased public knowledge and acceptance of same-sex dating relationships on college and university campuses, an increase in the prevalence of abuse or violence experienced between same-sex partners can be expected to rise.

The MANOVA analysis conducted in this study did not support the research hypothesis, “There are differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationship groups.” However, it can be assumed by the results of this research, male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships are at equal risk for experiencing at least one incident of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse or violence during the course of a dating relationship. This finding might be explained by previous research conducted by Cruz and Firestone (1998) who reported abusive heterosexual and same-sex relationships share similar dynamics and other factors influencing abusive dynamics such as demographic variables, childhood history of family violence, substance abuse and attachment orientation (Bartholomew et al., 2008). These results are also supported by previous research which has found male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships experience at least near equal rates and frequency of abuse or violence within the context of their dating relationship than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships (Halpern et al., 2004; Freedner et al., 2002) in contrast with other research findings which suggested a higher incidence of abuse or violence and at greater severity among cohabitating adults in same-sex relationships and a same-sex high school dating population (Burke & Follingstad, 1999; Hamel & Nichols, 2006). Among a gay and lesbian adult population ( $N= 499$ ), Turell (2000) found differences in type of abuse or violence experienced using the Conflicts Scale (CTS), an earlier version of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) which was used in this study to measure type of abuse or violence experienced. The

sample consisted of individuals in gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered relationships and among the results of the study, Turell reported only 9% of the total sample reported experiencing physical violence in both current and past relationships, 1% and 9% of the sample reported experiencing incidents of sexual abuse and coercion in current and past relationships, respectively, but 83% of the sample reported experiencing emotional or psychological abuse within the context of their intimate relationship (Turell, 2000).

A recent study conducted by Forke et al.(2008) compared gender differences in type of abuse or violence perpetrated and experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships among an undergraduate college student population (N= 910) aged 17-22 years old. Forke et al. (2008) concluded while women experienced greater victimization rates overall, victimization by women toward their male partners were substantial (27.2%). In addition, Forke et al. (2008) reported while male partners perpetrated more acts of sexual abuse or violence toward their female partners, female partners perpetrated more acts of physical violence toward their male partners, but both male and female partners were likely to experience a greater incidence of psychological abuse or violence over sexual abuse or violence at the hands of their dating partner during their college experience. However, the findings of this current study contradict findings of earlier research which reported male victims of dating violence experience a greater of psychological abuse than female victims (Holt & Espelage, 2005) and the finding physical abuse or violence is most frequently reported type of abuse or violence among dating pairs (Katz et al., 2002). This unique study which examined differences in type of abuse or violence experienced across gender and sexual orientation

of dating pairs, found 87% of the participants in this study reported experiencing at least one incident of psychological abuse or violence compared with 50% reporting at least one act of physical abuse or violence and only 32% reporting at least one incident of sexual abuse or violence by a current or past dating partner.

Although no significant differences were detectable in the type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships, psychological abuse or violence was the most commonly type of abuse or violence reported or disclosed between the four relationship groups of this study. This coincides with previous research which has documented psychological abuse as the most commonly type of abuse or violence experienced within the context of an intimate relationship regardless of gender or sexual orientation (James et al., 2000; Sharpe & Taylor, 1999; Turell, 2000; Forke, et al., 2008). This observation has significant importance because psychological abuse or violence has been established as a potent precursor to other forms of abuse or violence between dating pairs (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Jenkins & Aube, 2002). Psychological abuse or violence is considered to be equally as serious, but less visible to the naked eye (Sears et al., 2006). The results of this study suggest that male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships that report or disclose psychological abuse to another are equally vulnerable to experiencing other types of abuse or violence within the context of their dating relationship. If psychological abuse or violence occurs within the context of a dating relationship, Sears et al (2006) concluded other forms of abuse or violence potentially exist with females perpetrating more than one form of abuse over

their male partners than males over female partners. However, it was not clear by the results of the statistical analyses conducted in this study whether participants actually experienced a number of incidents of psychological abuse or violence reported by their dating partner, or if one relationship group over another was more likely to report incidents of psychological abuse or violence over other types of abuse or violence occurring within the context of a past or current dating relationship.

If male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships are more likely to self-report acts of psychological abuse than other types of abuse or violence experienced by their dating partner, implications for social change are apparent in current assessment procedures by medical and mental health professionals. Victims of dating violence, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, reporting psychological abuse or violence occurring within a context of a dating relationship, might be more likely to report or disclose other forms of abuse or violence by their dating partner, if asked (Siemer, 2004). While a potential helper might look for physical injury when screening for dating violence, other acts of physical and/or sexual abuse or violence may be camouflaged as psychological symptoms or complaints.

#### *Attachment Style*

The chi-square analysis conducted in this study did not support the research hypothesis, “There are differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationship groups.” A plausible explanation for this result was found in the recent research conducted by Matte,

Lemieux and LaFontaine (2009) who reported individuals in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships do not differ by style of attachment. Ridge and Feeney (1998) found similarities as opposed to differences in attachment style between gay male and lesbian women when compared with their heterosexual counterparts. Another factor which could explain the finding of no differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence might be attributed to the possibility that the all the respondents possessed characteristics of all four attachment styles and style of attachment is not so easily categorized or clearly defined (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Bartholomew and Horowitz reported the fluidity of attachment styles. Brown and Wright (2001) theorized most people demonstrate a complex attachment profile and do not belong to any one category of attachment at any one point in time.

Although Elwood & Williams (2007) reported attachment style is a universal construct among a diversity of cultures which serves as a guide to an individual's contact with others into adulthood and relatively stable across a person's lifespan (p. 1191). It is important that the results of this study be interpreted with caution for the following reasons. First, the results of this one quantitative study alone cannot prove that variations in attachment style *do not exist* between male and female victims of dating violence in both collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships because other Attachment theorists have posited attachment style is not a static phenomenon, but susceptible to change over the course of a developmental lifespan (Hunter & Mauder, 1998) and under different sets of circumstance (Mikulincer & Selinger, 2001; Ross & Spinner, 2001). This might be particularly true for college students who are in a

transitional developmental period where a number of physiological, psychological, emotional and/or social changes occur and their social support system is in a “state of flux” (Kuttler & LaGreca, 2004).

Although no significant differences in attachment style were detectable by the analysis conducted in this present study, there were a few observations noted among the data worthy of mention. Of the total sample in this study, a greater number of female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships scored higher than male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. This observation supported what was found in previous research which suggests attachment style might vary significantly by gender than sexual orientation (Schwartz & Bulboltz, 2004). It was also observed a greater number of female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships responded to the survey than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. One of the most salient characteristics of a secure attachment style is the ability or comfort with self-disclosure or the reporting of symptoms to another. This does not imply, however, more women than men possess a secure style of attachment, but women are presumably by virtue of their constitution, more likely than men to self-disclose. Although not conclusive, these observations made from the data imply attachment style might vary by gender than sexual orientation.

It is speculated that differences in attachment style between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships were not found due to the small, unequal sample size among the four relationship groups. It is

possible by replicating this study using a larger, more equal sample size among the relationship groups might yield significant variations in attachment style. Replicating this study using a longitudinal approach might be sensitive enough to detect not only significant differences in attachment style where the results of the analysis of this current study failed to find them, but also to determine if attachment style fluctuates over time and under different sets of circumstance.

### *Help-Seeking Behavior*

Boldero and Fallon (1995) suggested a profitable line of research would investigate adolescent decision making about whether or not they would seek help and if they decided to get help, from whom they would seek it (p. 207). The results of the chi square analyses did find support for the research hypothesis, "Male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships are less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships." Significant differences were found in both help-seeking intentions and actual type of help secured (informal and formal) between the four relationship groups studied.

### Help-Seeking Intentions

Previous research found among gay men and lesbian women in adult cohabitating relationships who were battered by their intimate partner, were less likely to seek help from formal sources including police and other legal services, crisis hotlines, clergy and domestic violence shelters and agencies and more likely to seek the support or help from

friends and relatives perhaps out of a fear of encountering a homophobic response by a formal help source (Turell & Cornell-Swanson, 2005, p. 73-4). Burke and Follingstad (1999) reported same-sex partners are less likely to seek help from others within the larger gay and lesbian community for fear of being “outed.” The results of this study found male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships intend to seek help more from informal sources than formal sources if they seek help at all, which supports the research hypothesis of this study. This finding is illustrated in a comment in response to the GHSQ/AHSQ used in this study by a young female participant in a same-sex dating relationship, “When bruised and battered I went to a doctor, but I was in the military at the time (and I’m lesbian) so I had to tell the doctor I was being abused by a male...so I couldn’t report the abuse either or I’d have been kicked out of the military for being gay.” Another male respondent in a same-sex dating relationship who experienced abuse or violence by his partner, responded to the GHSQ/AHSQ in this study commented, “I was afraid my partner was not out, and I felt like I could not talk to anyone, because I didn't want to out my partner.”

By gender and sexual orientation, the chi-square analyses conducted in this study detected observable differences in help-seeking intentions. A greater number of female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships intended to seek help from informal sources compared with the male victims of dating violence in the heterosexual relationship group who intended to seek help from formal sources among the total sample of this study. This finding is supported by previous research which has found, in general, female adolescents are more likely to seek help than male adolescents

among the general help-seeking population (Sullivan, Marshall, & Schonert-Reichl, 2002). A similar result was found between male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. Female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were more likely to seek help from informal sources than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. This result may reflect the theory that similar gender-role attitudes and biases toward help-seeking behavior are found among both heterosexual and same-sex dating pairs (Simonsen, Blazina & Watkins, 2000). Among a sample of 311 college students, Komiya et al. (2000) reported emotional openness was a predictor of help-seeking behavior and factors associated with reluctance to seek help were: a) male gender, b) perception of stigma, c) lack of openness to expressing emotions, and d) lower psychological symptom severity (p. 141). It may be culturally more acceptable for female victims of dating violence than male victims of dating violence to seek help, regardless of sexual orientation. Among the adult lesbian population, Turell and Cornell-Swanson reported lesbian women are more likely to seek help than gay men because historically they have been largely involved in domestic violence and sexual assault awareness movements grounded in feminist theory which make it more likely for women to seek help than men (p. 82). Simonsen et al. reported gay men with less gender role conflict expressed a more positive attitude toward help-seeking behavior and reported fewer symptoms of anger, anxiety and depression (p. 85).

By sexual orientation, a significant difference in help-seeking intentions was observed between male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships and male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. Male victims of dating violence in

heterosexual collegiate relationships intended to seek help from both informal and formal sources than male victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships perhaps because male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships fear a homophobic reaction upon self-disclosure to an informal or formal source or a real or perceived threat of being “outed” by the gay community which has been documented in previous research among an adult male, cohabitating population who have experienced domestic violence by their partner (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Another possible explanation is that those who do seek help may be representative of the gay male population who have already “come out” with their homosexuality than many of male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships who do not intend to seek help and still remain “in the closet.”

#### Type of Actual Help Secured

An interesting and unexpected outcome was observed among the findings of the Chi-square analysis which supported the research hypothesis, “ Male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships are less likely to seek or secure help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships. While the findings of this study indicated male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships are least likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships, help-seeking intentions differed from actual type of help secured among the four relationship groups among the total sample. Specifically, a near equal number of male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships and

male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships actually secured help from formal sources when compared with the type of actual help secured by female victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships. Ocampo et al.

2007) reported female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships tend to share a greater level of intimacy with friends and less likely to confide in formal help sources. This finding is important because although male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate same-sex relationships were less likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual relationships, when they do seek help, they actually secure it from formal sources. This result also confirms the notion, at least by gender, male victims of dating violence might prefer to seek help from formal sources as opposed to informal sources at the expense of appearing “unmasculine” or “weak” to family members or friends (Ocampo et al., 2007).

However, formal sources help might be reluctant to render help or support to male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships or male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships out of stereotypic, gender-based beliefs only females in heterosexual relationships are victimized by dating violence (Ocampo et al., 2007). Another interesting observation was made between help-seeking intentions and type of actual help sought. While male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships were less likely to *secure* help from informal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual collegiate relationships, it can be concluded from the findings of this current study both male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships do not necessarily

secure the type of help than they intend to seek. By gender, the results of the 2x2 chi-square analysis conducted in this study found female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought or secured help they intended to seek from *informal* at greater frequency than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, while male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought help the help they intended to seek at greater frequency from formal than female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships. When compared with male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships, female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships intended to seek help at greater frequency from informal sources, but they actually secured help from formal sources at similar rates. As noted earlier, female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were more likely to seek help from informal sources than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, but when these groups were compared regarding the type of actual help sought or secured, male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought or secured help from informal sources more than female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. Burke (1998) offered a possible explanation for this result: female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships may fear a homophobic response or bias from people known to them within their informal system of support, an experience unique to same-sex dating pairs.

By sexual orientation, the only significant difference in type of actual help sought or secured was that male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships differed significantly from male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. The results

of the 2 x 2 chi square analysis showed male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships actually sought help at greater frequency from informal sources (e.g., peers, parents) than male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. Sullivan et al. (2002) compared the help-seeking behavior between a heterosexual male and female adolescent population and reported adolescent males who intended to seek help from informal sources considered the nurturance of friends and expertise of mothers in accepting help for a relationship problem with friend or peer (p. 526). Researchers who studied help-seeking behavior among the general gay male population reported gay men, in general, prefer to seek help from formal sources than risk humiliation, shame, rejection or abandonment from informal sources such as friends or family members who might condemn their sexuality or by their gay community who might not tolerate acts of abuse or violence between same-sex partners (Burke & Follingstad, 1999; D'Augelli, 1992; Grossman & Kerner, 1998). While collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships are less likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, female victims of dating violence in both same-sex relationships actually secured help at greater rates from both informal and formal sources of help than male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample. This result appears consistent with findings of previous research (Burke & Follingstad, 1999), which found that an adult gays and lesbians who have experienced abuse or violence by an intimate partner would be less likely to seek help from formal sources out of a fear of a homophobic reaction from formal help sources.

An important observation made from the analysis of this data suggest the results in this study suggest while help-seeking intentions between the four relationship groups studied appeared largely influenced by gender, type of actual help secured might be largely determined by sexual orientation. While collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were least likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships intended to seek help from both informal and formal at a greater rate than male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. This finding is consistent with previous research which found women are more likely to seek and accept help than men among the general help-seeking population as a whole (Pederson & Vogel, 2007). An interesting and unexpected finding of this research study showed male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships were more likely to seek and secure help than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships if they sought help at all. This result contradicts the finding that adult gay male victims of domestic violence avoid help-seeking behavior perhaps out of a fear of a homophobic reaction (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Attitudes toward securing help from other sources among victims of dating violence may largely mimic help-seeking attitudes dictated by gender role expectations among college students seeking help for other psychosocial issues or problems (Pederson & Vogel, 2007). This discrepancy between help-seeking intentions and actual help sought or secured suggests that the type of actual help sought or secured suggested is independent of help seeking intentions. Thus, the help that a victim of dating

violence intends to seek may not be the type of help actually secured. Future research using a mixed method approach might explain why male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships would secure help from a source (s) they did not intentionally seek.

#### Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

This web-based, quantitative study represented a preliminary investigation into the exploration of differences in the type of abuse or violence experienced attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in both collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The next several paragraphs report the several limitations inherent in the methodology and design of this study affecting the response rate, power of the statistical analysis conducted in the study, and the reliability, validity and generalizability of the results. These limitations implicate recommendations for future study along this line of research.

A convenience sampling method was chosen over a random sampling method because of its convenience and practicality in targeting a specific population of study. For the purpose of this study, it was necessary to target college and graduate students and members of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations who either have been or were currently in a dating relationship. Jung (1969) reported the sampling of college students restricts generalizability to a universal population because college students differ substantially from the non-collegiate population based on a number of factors such as intelligence, age, social backgrounds, and patterns of attitudes, values, and interests (p. 280). The

convenience sampling method conducted in this study limits generalizability to a larger more heterogeneous dating population (Pruchno et al., 2008). Another factor limiting generalizability is the sampling of members of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations or clubs whose responses are likely to be skewed toward persons open about their sexual orientation and more likely to participate in the study because they are politically and consciously motivated toward a cause (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Thus, the results of this study might limit generalizability to male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships unaffiliated with a collegiate gay/lesbian organization and who have not publicly disclosed their sexual orientation.

During the data collection process, a few respondents questioned why there was not a category for bi-sexual or transsexual orientation on the Brief Demographic Questionnaire. This study was limited to four categories of sexual orientation: female heterosexual, male heterosexual, gay male and lesbian relationship groups. Turell and Cornell-Swanson (2005) reported it is rare among research to include bisexual or transgendered people in same-sex relationships because of the small number of respondents available. A definitional problem around sexual orientation was expected and this was addressed by using a forced choice format because it was beyond the scope of this study to include all categories of sexual orientation. However, this limited participation by those victimized by dating violence in other groups based on sexual orientation (e.g., those in bi-sexual or transgendered relationships). Future researchers interested in replicating this study might consider including individuals who are bisexual

or transgendered in sexual orientation to further increase generalizability of results to a larger more culturally diverse population.

A web-based survey design was chosen to access a large, culturally diverse college student population from various colleges and universities across the United States and abroad. Out of the total number of participants who initially entered the survey ( $N=858$ ) the response rate of those who completed the entire survey ( $N=149$ ) was low. This was not anticipated. This resulted in a small, unequal sample size among the four relationship groups under study. Future researchers interested in replicating this study should consider using a mixed-method survey approach (i.e., internet and postal mail based survey) to increase an adequate response rate crucial to establishing internal validity of the results (Kroth et al., 2009, p. 247).

During the data collection process, a few respondents commented on the length of the survey and this could be one of the factors resulting in a low response rate. In retrospect, it might have been helpful to test the survey on a small sample of participants meeting eligibility criteria before beginning the actual survey which is especially important for on-line surveys (Dillman, 2000). A trend observed during the data collection phase of this study was a majority of participants would enter the survey but not complete it beyond the Brief Demographic Questionnaire. This might have been due to technological problems associated with the use of a web-based survey or the length of the survey itself. The use of briefer questionnaires was considered to reduce “drop out” rate, but there was only a limited number of existing reliable and valid instruments available for measuring complex psychological constructs such as attachment style and

help-seeking behavior. Although an option was considered for participants to re-enter the survey and complete it at another time, in order to reduce the risk of multiple responding, a technological feature available through the technology of surveymonkey did not allow one to exit the survey and re-enter it at another time.

Although participants were informed of complete confidentiality and anonymity, a low response rate was obtained especially from male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. However, notable was the number of respondents who *did* the entire survey (N= 149) without omitting data given the fact victimization by dating violence is often hidden from others. Not unexpected was that the greatest response rate was among female graduate students in heterosexual relationships. In order to obtain a larger, more equal sample representative of the four relationship groups under study, the data collection process was extended, but this did not result in an increased response rate among the group of male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Replicating this study with a larger, equal sample size among the four relationship groups might yield the power necessary to reveal significant differences in type of abuse or violence experienced and attachment style where this study failed to find them. In order to better understand the dynamics of abuse or violence between male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships, further study is recommended to investigate the nature and severity of abuse or violence experienced between dating partners, which partner initiated the aggressive act, under what circumstances, and the motive. This might be best understood by replicating this study using a mixed method approach. Another avenue for

further which was beyond the scope of this study would be to investigate the impact of attachment style of a potential helper which has been found to be a significant factor associated with the securing of help among help-seekers (Collins & Feeney, 2000).

Another factor affecting response rate and sample size was the relatively low number of faculty from various institutions of higher education and administrators of gay/lesbian organizations who agreed to assist with recruiting participants for this research study. Few agreed to assist with only the approval of the Walden University IRB. One of the obstacles in the data collection process was that this researcher was not affiliated with the other colleges or universities asked to assist with this study and it was not practical due to the time constraints of this research project to make application to each and every institution for IRB approval to conduct the study among their students or members of their gay/lesbian organizations. Future researchers wishing to replicate this study might consider conducting this study among a small number of large colleges or universities and obtaining IRB approval prior to conducting the study, or if time allows, becoming affiliated with a particular college or university of interest. Because this web-based study was completely anonymous and confidential it was not possible to ascertain the geographical location or what colleges or universities provided the sample of the study.

A higher response rate and larger, more equal, sample size might have been achieved through the use of an incentive for participation. Researchers Cobanoglu and Cobanoglu (2003) and Dillman (2000) recommended the use of an incentive in web-based survey studies to achieve a higher response rate. It was decided against the use of

an incentive to reduce the chance participants would respond to the survey just in order to win a prize and knowing personal identifiers of the participants in order to award the prize would compromise complete anonymity and confidentiality of the participants needed to ensure honest responses to otherwise sensitive items or questions contained within the instruments used in the survey.

It is common knowledge among the field of research; results obtained from quantitative studies using a survey method with self-report questionnaires are subject to response and social desirability bias. Rothman and Silverman (2007) reported responses from self-report type instruments are also subject to under reporting and over reporting bias which limits the validity of a study's findings. To minimize the risk of response bias, only familiar, widely used, reliable and valid self-report type instruments were used in this study to measure the complex psychological constructs such as type of abuse or violence experienced attachment style and help-seeking behavior. For example, the Revised Conflict Tactics Questionnaire (CTS2) used to measure type of abuse or violence experienced has a built-in feature to minimize social desirability bias. This tool is limited because it is not possible to determine from this instrument information such as which partner initiated the act of aggression first or under what context or circumstance it had occurred. One of the advantages in using a completely confidential and anonymous web-based survey is the absence of direct contact with the researcher which helps to reduce social desirability responding.

The data obtained from the responses to the instruments used in this study need to be interpreted with caution. For example, although inter-partner agreement on the

Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) ranges from near medium to large using Cohen's guide for correlations of low (0.10), medium (0.30) and large (0.50) and test-retest reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.81, but the statistics obtained in this present study which measured type of abuse or violence experienced needs to be interpreted with caution because their reliability may have been impacted by the differences in the definition of the concept measured (i.e., psychological aggression, physical assault, injury and sexual coercion), the motivation of each respondent which might influence the self-reporting of abuse or violence experienced or perpetrated toward a dating partner (e.g. social desirability), or the perception of negative consequences in responding to the survey (Vega & O'Leary, 2007, p. 704). In addition, the reliability of the data obtained from the CTS2 in this particular study might have been compromised by an inconsistency between the respondent's self report of abuse or violence experienced or perpetrated which might not reflect true estimates of actual behavior if reported by their partner. A more accurate account of the frequency of incidents in type of abuse or violence experienced between partners might be obtained by conducting a study among dating pairs across the four relationship pairs and administering the CTS2 to both partners within the context of their dating relationship.

Differences in notions among the respondents of what constitutes physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse could have tainted the validity and reliability of the results of this study. Zeitler et al. (2006) reported intimate partner violence is still not clearly defined through the eyes of the victim. For example, in a study by Dull and Giacopassi (1987) college and universities report an increase in "date rape" incidents at

the hands of a steady boyfriend, but incidents or frequency of sexual coercion were least reported of the type of abuse or violence experienced by a dating partner among the college sample in this current study. It was also impossible to control for the number of intrapsychic and environmental confounding variables which might have influenced the results of the study such as personality type, level of self-esteem, cognitive deficits or distortions, affect, mood, income, time, personal definitions of what constitutes abuse or violence within the context of a dating relationship further limits the validity of the results of this study.

The results of the statistical analyses conducted in this study are limited in generalizability to the greater non dating population and are valuable to the extent they demonstrated trends among the data, but a causal link between the variables type of abuse or violence experienced remains inconclusive based on the findings of this one quantitative study alone. The results of this study do not explain why an individual would seek or secure help from a particular informal or formal help source. Adding a qualitative component to the base of this study might yield fruitful clinical data necessary to draw more interesting conclusions about the help-seeking experiences of male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate dating relationships such as what factors motivated an individual to chose to seek or secure help from one particular help source over another. By interviewing participants about their help seeking experiences from their personal perspective can produce useful information into what might increase the chance of a victim disclosing their victimization to a potential helper.

Another interesting avenue for future research would be to conduct focus groups among the four relationship groups in a college or university setting. Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvick & Alberts (2006) used a focus group method to study workplace bullying and reported this method to be both an effective and ethical venue for collecting data which psychologically empowered individuals (p. 155). This approach, in conjunction with a quantitative method, might be useful in increasing sample size among the same-sex dating population on campus. Tracy et al. (2006) reported this method to be powerful in persuading organizational policy makers to pay attention to a phenomenon (p. 150). Tracy et al. (2006) further commented, “even the strongest argument based on the measurable costs of bullying is not likely to move people toward action without engagement of emotion . . . understanding what bullying feels like is necessary for motivating change” (p. 150). Perhaps a similar approach to the further study of the type of abuse or violence, attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships could be tried through organizing focus groups among gay/lesbian collegiate organizations, sororities and fraternities on campus interested in effecting social change.

In summary, the results of this study offer a stepping stone for future researchers who share with this researcher an interest in further investigating a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior between collegiate male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships, a belief male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships also experience abuse

or violence within the context of their dating relationship, and a passion to assist all victims of dating violence, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

### Social Change Implications

The major thrust of this study was to create an awareness that victimization by dating violence exists regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation and to examine if differences exist between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample. Several social change implications were apparent from the results of this study.

Rothblum (1994) recommended researchers to extend the study of mental health problems and psychological adjustment to stigmatized groups such as the gay and lesbian population. This researcher considered Rothblum's recommendation in the development and design in this study to extend the research which evidenced the existence of the type of abuse and violence which occurring between male and female partners in heterosexual dating relationships to the study of the type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female dating partners in same-sex relationships. The results of this study have several social change implications.

First, the results of this quantitative web-based study found both male and female college students in both heterosexual and same-sex dating relationships are equally vulnerable to experience at least one incident of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse within the context of a dating relationship. Together, with the results of previous

research, (Brendgen et al, 2002; Hamel & Nichols, 2006; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005), the results of this study presented a convincing argument to dispel the myth only female students in heterosexual dating relationships experience abuse or violence by a dating partner. Because same-sex relationships are becoming more visible in the college and university community, the results of this study advocate for a change in the way victims of dating violence are viewed today and how they might be assisted more effectively and appropriately. The finding of no significant differences in the type of abuse or violence experienced by both male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships point to the need to address victimization by dating violence proactively and more aggressively including members of the gay and lesbian collegiate community.

Second, by observation of the small, unequal sample size of this study's sample, it can be presumed from the results of this study the majority of victims of dating violence do not report or disclose acts of abuse or violence experienced by a dating partner (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005). As a consequence, many victims of dating violence go unidentified and unassisted resulting in academic problems, a higher dropout rate and increased medical and healthcare costs among the college student population (Amar & Alexy, 2005; Durant et al., 2007). Vogel, Wade & Ascherman (2009) suggested future research endeavors might consider increasing the sample size among the four relationship groups in this study to further investigate the relationship between the variables attachment style and help-seeking behavior between the four relationship groups used in

this study toward a modification of the social stigma associated with help-seeking behavior among college students (p. 306).

Third, although the method and design used in this study could not determine a causal link between the variables of attachment style and help-seeking behavior, the results did indicate significant differences in not only help-seeking intentions and actual help sought between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Using a larger, more equal sample size among the four relationship groups and other methodological approaches, future researchers interested in this line of research could empirically establish a link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior which has led to creative and innovative strategies designed specifically to assist those among the medical and psychiatric population who might not otherwise seek help and from what source (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Florian et al., 1995; Lopez et al., 1998; Rickwood et al., 2005; Schmidt et al., 2002; Vogel & Wei, 2005). The results obtained from this study and in conjunction with the findings of future could yield fruitful information in predicting which informal and/or formal help sources would most appropriately and effectively assist all victims of dating violence among a college or university community based on type of abuse or violence experienced and style of attachment. If differences in attachment style and help-seeking behavior could be determined by future study, victims of dating violence of all gender and sexual orientation could be matched to appropriate sources of help who will encourage self-disclosure and effectively guide them to other appropriate informal and formal sources of help. For example, the results of this study indicated female victims of dating violence in

heterosexual relationships were more likely to seek and secure help from informal sources of help than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships who tend to seek or secure help from formal sources. A stronger emphasis on peer education and support needs to incorporate into dating violence victimization programming across college and university campuses to encourage female victims of dating violence to avail themselves to formal sources of help when appropriate. Conversely, the results of this study implicate formal sources of help need to be educated on the fact victimization by dating violence occurs regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation and orient male victims of dating violence to more informal sources of help or support when appropriate. Informal and formal help sources inside the college community and outside need to reframe help-seeking behavior as an action toward personal wellness rather than weakness.

Fourth, and most importantly, the results of this study indicate a need for social change in creating a “connection” between help-seeker (victim) and potential helper within and outside of the collegiate community. While existing preventative efforts have led to an overall reduction in victimization rates through dating violence, they have only targeted and assisted female victims of dating violence in heterosexual dating relationships (Foshee et al., 1998). Since the majority of victims of dating violence will not report or disclose their experience of abuse or violence by a dating partner, potential helpers need to inquire. Seimer (2004) found a number of victims of dating violence will report or disclose their experiences of abuse or violence by a dating partner, if asked. This finding implicates a need for potential helpers to challenge existing stereotypic

attitudes toward victimization by dating violence and create a safe environment whereby all victims of dating violence can entrust their experiences of abuse or violence to another so potential helpers can “motivate them to seek other services or support beyond their initial help seeking efforts “(Howard & Medway, 2004). McMahon (2008) reported a number of methods to encourage self-disclosure which include but are not limited to: (a) validating a victim’s experience, (b) provide on-and-of campus services and resources, and, (c) develop written protocols on managing victimization by dating violence between campus and local law enforcement agencies (p. 363). Efforts focused solely on educational campaigning and preventative measures will not affect the social change needed to identify and assist all who are victimized by dating violence among the college community.

In summary, for social change to occur in both the reporting of victimization by dating violence and the rendering of appropriate help or assistance, the results of this study indicate the following recommendations for the college or university community which will have an impact on society as a whole: (a) the development of a safe, validating environment to encourage and promote self-disclosure among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships; (b) the development of a gender and culturally sensitive screening tool to identify all victims of dating violence; and (c) a multisystemic, collaborative, effort between informal and formal help sources to guide and assist all victims of dating violence to appropriate sources of help and support available within and outside of the college or university community (Sullivan et al., 2002).

### Recommendations for Social Action

Earlier in this chapter, general social change implications were presented based on the findings of this study. This section presents a more in-depth analysis of what social actions are recommended to identify and assist all victims of dating violence, regardless of gender or sexual orientation who thrive among college and university campuses. Based on the results of this study, the focus of social action must be on promoting a climate conducive to self-disclosure among both male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships. Without self-disclosure, a potential helper cannot render appropriate and timely assistance.

Since victimization by dating violence was first defined as a social problem across college and university campuses in the 1930's (Makepeace, 1981), efforts at reducing victimization by dating violence have generally been preventative. Virtually no research among the review of the literature have studied the impact of these preventative initiatives in promoting self-disclosure among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships. While a number of preventative programs such as The Dating Violence Prevention Program and The Safe Dates Project (Foshee et al., 1998) have been demonstrated effective in reducing victimization rates, they also have been subject to criticism by other researchers. Schwartz, Griffin, Russell, and Frontuara-Duck (2006) reported these programs have been limited to targeting only female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships. Fontes (2006) reported existing domestic violence treatment programs

designed to assist victims of dating violence are ineffective or those known to be effective are unavailable to abused men because they are intended to assist only female victims of domestic violence. For example, a male survivor of domestic violence reported his own personal experience with dating violence in the article, “Why Have Domestic Violence Programs Failed to Stop Partner Abuse?” (2008):

I am a male survivor and former victim of relationship abuse. I was mentally hijacked, emotionally destroyed, and physically beaten by my girlfriend for almost 3 years...I remember being huddled on the floor... as I felt her beat me I watched how she couldn't lift her arms anymore. After a year of treatment, I still could not find a support group for abused men. (p. 5)

Murray and Kardatzke (2007) reported that few existing domestic violence programs have been evaluated for treatment outcome efficacy among the scholarly literature. If preventative programming and resources exist on college campuses it can be speculated they are not well publicized and underutilized by students. Among a sample of college students who have experienced psychological abuse, Yorganson, Linville and Zitman (2008), compared utilization rates of mental health services with an untreated cohort. Yorganson et al. found that although male students were more likely to experience psychological distress, they were least likely to access and utilize mental health services available to them on campus. Rothman and Silverman (2007) studied existing sexual assault prevention programs across college campuses and reported the need for general preventative initiatives to target all victims of dating violence including those in same-sex relationships to reduce victimization rates among the general college population. Nothing was found in the literature review which explored or studied

preventative initiatives or resources which specifically targeted victims of same-sex dating violence among a college or university population perhaps because same-sex dating is still viewed as “taboo” by the community at large and is obscured from public view. If these acts of abuse or violence are visible, they are generally not taken seriously (Bergman, 1992; Nightingale & Morrissette, 1993; Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Weisz, et al., 2006). The results of this study showed that social action among the college or university community needs to focus on extending preventative initiatives to both male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships and avenues to promote self-disclosure.

#### *Therapeutic Community*

This study was based on the premise implied by the social developmental model of dating violence (Sharpe & Taylor, 1999), which posited acts of abuse or violence between dating pairs are sustained and covered up by a secret desire of the victim to preserve an attachment bond between self and partner. If this theory is true, it is understandable why the majority of victims of dating violence would not be likely to report or disclose an act of abuse or violence to another without the assurance of trust and confidentiality. A successful outcome of any preventive measure designed to target male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships would be self-disclosure. According to trauma theory, help and healing from a traumatic event, such as dating violence begins with self-disclosure (Tang et al., 2008). Among the help-seeking literature, self-disclosure is the first step in seeking or securing help or

assistance (Kaukinen, 2004; Vogel & Wester, 2003). This study indicates that a key to assisting male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college or university community would be to develop a “safe haven” or “therapeutic community” which could promote self-disclosure. The concept of therapeutic community was founded by two British psychoanalysts, John Rickman and Wilfred Rupecht Bion who reported, “Psychiatry must focus its attention on the social manifestations of mental illness” (p. 23) and further wrote about the therapeutic community:

What distinguishes a therapeutic community from other comparable treatment centers is the way in which the institution's total resources, staff, patients, relatives are self-consciously pooled in furthering treatment. . . it is a “living-learning” situation where everything happens between members (staff and patients) in the course of living and working together. . . if a particular crisis occurs, it is used as a learning opportunity and there is a “culture of inquiry” a phrase that highlights the need not only for efficient structures, but for a basic culture among the staff of “honest inquiry into difficulty” and a conscious effort to identify and challenge dogmatic assertions or accepted wisdom.  
(Mills & Harrison, 2007, p. 23-24)

Integrated within the concept of therapeutic community is Herman’s principle which holds, “social wounds require social healing, and thus healing must take place within a social context” (pp. 81-82).

Recently, this concept of therapeutic community has been applied to assisting college students who engage in self-injurious behavior (Bigard & Rappaport, 2006). Conceptually, self-injurious behavior is analogous to victimization by dating violence because it is often kept a secret and there is fear or shame associated with disclosing it to another. Developmentally, college students are in a process of change and transition as

the majority are leaving home for the first time and seek help from new attachment relationships (Bigard & Rapaport (2006). In this process, Bigard and Rapaport reported,

In principle, the university community emerges as a possible attachment bond and a system of new attachment figures readily available to assist those seeking help. The university potentially becomes a therapeutic community which is designed as “a framework to create and maintain a living and learning environment conducive to the health and well being of students, guide clinical practice and inform the development of policies and procedures that support a university response to intervene when when students self-injure. (p. 80)

A connection between help-seeker (victim) and potential help source can be made by incorporating principles of therapeutic community into established healthcare systems within the college or university community.

### *Individual Victims*

The results of this study indicate that action needs to educate all college or university students about the value of help-seeking behavior and the healing which can take place as a result of self-disclosure of acts of abuse or violence experienced at the hands of a dating partner. It is predicted many students who are victimized by dating violence will have difficulty deciding whether they need or want help and from who or where they will secure it. Education can be provided through classes or seminars about dating relationships which can teach students not only about what constitutes abuse or violence in the context of a dating relationship but also on the steps in the help-seeking process (Liang et al., 2005). Even though Flynn and Lake (2008) reported there is a risk for rejection in help-seeking, victims of dating violence

need to be educated that most people are willing to help than those might assume (p. 141).

Pirog-Good & Stets (1989) reported the probability of reporting of abuse or violence increases when a victim recognizes the abuse as serious. Help-seeking includes: (a) problem recognition and definition; (b) making the decision to seek help; and (c) reducing potential barriers or obstacles toward seeking and securing help and, (d) which type of help or support to select (e.g., informal, formal and/or both informal and formal). An individual's motivation to seek or secure help is increased when he or she feels part of the decision-making process including what type of help to seek and when. While it may be tempting for well-intentioned helpers to give advice and tell a victim of dating violence to leave their abusive relationship, this "advice" does not allow for self-determination and is likely to thwart further help-seeking efforts. Most students are not likely to pay attention to "lectures" about dating violence, but encouraging them to challenge their beliefs about dating violence victimization and to educate them about potential consequences to themselves might stimulate self-awareness and in turn, orient one toward self-disclosure and other help-seeking behaviors. Zietler et al (2006) reported that among a sample of young adult women who experienced intimate partner violence, healthcare providers who encountered a disclosure of victimization told the victim to leave the abusive relationship which was not only perceived by the victim as unhelpful, but such a response could potentially lead to further damage or danger. One of the participants in this present study commented on an item on the GHSQ/AHSQ which asked about why he or she would not seek help or support:

Too ashamed, and I don't want to be pitied either. I know I am doing something wrong by staying in the relationship and I don't want someone telling me that I'm wrong because I already know that! I just can't get out of it because maybe it gives me a (be it false) sense of love. I know there are "better" people out there, but I am a weaker person, I believe, and I guess I am more drawn to those men who "prey" on innocent victims, whom they can control. Only I can help myself, but I'm not ready and I probably won't ever be ready.

### *Parent and Family Education*

Adolescents consider the response of parents and friends when seeking a potential helper but the older the adolescent, the more likely help will be sought from a close friend or peer rather than parent or older sibling (Sullivan et al., 2002). Older adolescents tend to talk about school, health, money matters and career issues than personal issues, relationship issues and sexuality (Seiffge-Krenge, 1995). A small number of respondents among the sample of this study thought about or actually sought help from a parent, particularly their mothers, who might be perceived as more available, nurturing and supportive (Sullivan et al., 2002). It could be argued that female victims of dating violence may turn to a father for help if security or protection is the issue. These results recommend parents also be educated on the facts of victimization through dating violence, perhaps during freshman student health orientation as parents can be instrumental in guiding their son or daughter to other informal or formal help sources.

Not surprising, was the result no male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships reported approaching a parent or family member for help in this current study. A possible explanation might be that victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships might be fearful of reporting victimization by dating violence to a

parent or family member out of a fear of rejection, not necessarily because of the act of abuse or violence itself, but because of the fear of disclosing their sexual orientation (Ryan, 2009). Ryan reported among gay teens that experience rejection by family members of their sexual orientation are at most risk for mental health problems. Ryan (2009) reported among a sample of gay, lesbian and bi-sexual adolescents who experienced family rejection of their homosexuality, 8.4% attempted suicide, 5.9% experienced depression, 3.4% engaged in illegal drug use and 3.4% engaged in unprotected sex. Ryan (2009) recommended that parents be educated to express care for their son or daughter, than try to change their sexuality (pp. 8-9).

#### *Peer Education*

Silber-Ashley & Foshee (2005) concluded most adolescent dating violence victims and perpetrators do not seek help, but friends and family members were the most common sources sought for help than professionals, except for males, who most commonly sought help from professional sources (p. 25). While the results of this study found female victims in heterosexual and same-sex relationships tended to seek help from informal sources (e.g., peers, friends, family members), male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships tended to seek help, if at all from formal sources of help (e.g., helping professionals).

It is apparent from the results of this study that the peer group is the most important informal help source sought by peers who experience abuse or violence by a dating partner as opposed to another informal or formal source of help (e.g., support

group, physician, psychologist, law enforcement official, etc.). Peers and friends uneducated about the facts of dating violence may hinder help-seeking efforts because they might minimize the seriousness of the abusive act, or unintentionally, influence a peer to stay in an abusive relationship (Weisz et al., 2006). Educational efforts on the facts of dating violence, including education that victimization by dating violence exists regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation, needs to reach the general college community to orient peers toward advising victims to seek help from other more appropriate informal or formal sources of help.

“Peer Health Education” is a growing concept among college and university campuses and is based on the premise students learn and retain information better when taught by their peers (Peer Health Education Program, n.d.). “Peer health educators” exist in college and university communities. Their role is to provide information, peer support and counsel, and conduct outreach programming for various psychosocial problems on campus (Brack, Millard and Shah, 2008). It is unknown if, and to what extent, peer health education among college and university communities includes the psychosocial problem of dating violence victimization. Peer health educators have been influential in motivating students to seek help who might not otherwise seek help for a variety of psychosocial issues because he or she shares similar values and personality temperaments as their fellow students (Brack et al., 2008). In fact, a positive outcome of the efficacy of peer education programming was found in a violence and sexual assault prevention program which targeted a general college population (p. 568). Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that peer health educators in college and university

communities be educated on the facts of dating violence and incorporate them into their educational curriculum.

Peer health educators armed with the real facts of victimization by dating violence could provide outreach to victims of dating violence who might not otherwise seek help from peers or other informal sources. This would include male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships who are oriented away from help-seeking efforts out of a fear of being viewed as “un-masculine” by friends or peers or the fear of being “outed” as a member of the gay/lesbian community. Peer health educators can educate both male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships and the college or university community at large about the value of help-seeking behavior (Komiya et al., 2000). They could be employed through fraternal or sorority organizations and gay/lesbian collegiate organizations vested in political action and social change. The peer health educator could be an importance source of help particularly for “closeted” male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships who seldom go to parents and other family members who might not be accepting of their homosexuality (Pochankis & Goldfried, 2004). The peer health educator can serve as a bridge between informal and formal sources of help, validate a victim’s experience, and guide them to other appropriate help sources on and off campus.

### *Clinical Practice*

Often, healthcare providers are the first among formal sources of help to encounter a disclosure of abuse or violence in an individual’s dating relationship (Zietler

et al., 2006). However, a “disconnect” exists between help-seeker (victim) and potential helper because the majority of victims of dating violence are not likely to report or disclose incidents of abuse or violence by a dating partner (Silber-Ashley & Foshee, 2005) and a potential helper will often fail to inquire (Weisz et al., 2006). The establishment of a strong therapeutic relationship is indicated by the results of this study. This will require healthcare professionals, including psychologists to challenge their stereotypic attitudes and prejudicial biases toward those victimized by dating violence.

Bowlby’s (1973) attachment theory might best explain how a connection between help-seeker (victim) and potential helper is made. At the heart of Bowlby’s theory is effective communication between infant and parent influences the relationship between help-seeker (victim) and caregiver. Walker (2008) reported this dynamic occurs in the process of normal development between an infant and primary caregiver (e.g. parent) and influences the help-seeking behavior of an individual throughout one’s life. Fosha (2003) reported an individual with a secure attachment style, oriented toward help-seeking behavior, will have gone through a sequence of “attunement, rupture and repair” (Fosha; Solomon, 2003) beginning in the early relationship between infant and parent and repeated in future interactions with potential caregivers. Fosha (2003) described this process as:

Attuned mutual co-ordination between mother and infant occurs when the infant’s squeal of delight is matched by mother’s excited clapping and sparkling eyes. The baby then becomes overstimulated, arches its back and looks away from the mother. A disruption has occurred and there is a miscoordination: the mother still excited, is leaning forward, while the baby, now serious, pulls away. However, the mother then picks up the cue and begins the repair; she stops laughing and with a little sigh

quietens down. The baby comes back and makes eye contact again. Mother and baby gently smile. They are back in sync. Again, in tune with each other. (p. 6)

It is important for helping professionals to understand that individuals traumatized by abuse or violence may have come from invalidating environments characterized by historical interactions with primary caregivers or attachment figures that did not render support or assistance when called upon (Walker, 2008). In the life of a traumatized individual, there are often intense, long lasting, periods of “attunement and rupture without repair” which occurs when discomfort and anxiety is triggered by the infant in distress who seeks attunement from a caregiver who responds with omission (e.g., withdrawal, distancing, neglect) or commission (e.g., blaming punishing or attacking) which results in repeated experiences of disruption between infant and parent repeated in later interactions with future caregivers or attachment figures leading one to feel vulnerable, misunderstood and not listened to (p. 6). This implies that help-seeking can be a “traumatic” experience if a potential helper is not attuned to the needs of a help-seeker. Walker implied that traumatized individuals with insecure attachment styles harbor a deep sense of shame about self, but this sense of shame is an emotional reflection of the loss of connection with a primary caregiver, drawing its power from a need to stay connected for survival (p.7). Instead of responding with withdrawal, blaming or punishing a victim in response to a report or disclosure of abuse or violence by a dating partner, potential sources of support or help need to focus on protection and developing a sense of meaning from one’s traumatic experience (Baynard & Cantor,

2004). Kagan (2004) reported safety and emotional attunement can be fostered by paying close attention to a person's inner states and experiences through eye contact, tone of voice, caring gestures, and facial expressions to sense and soothe pain (p. 46).

Healthcare professionals, including psychologists, must provide a "safe haven", or a validating environment to promote self-disclosure especially among male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships who might seek help, but not report or disclose an act of abuse or violence by a dating partner.

A secure connection between help-seeker (victim) and potential help source (e.g., healthcare professional) will depend on the ability of a potential helper to challenge existing beliefs and prejudicial biases internalized or harbored toward male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships in order to respond to their "attunement" and inquire into the specific needs of the victim at the time of disclosure. Ross and Spinner (2001) reported attachment style fluctuates across the developmental life span or under different sets of circumstances. This presents a window of opportunity for potential helpers to intervene in a way which alters the sequence of "attunement and rupture without repair", characteristic among individuals with an insecure attachment style. Alexander (1992) reported potential helpers might intervene to alter the internal working models of relationships of survivors of abuse or violence by focusing on current attachment relationships. Walker (2008) stated, "a secure attachment style may be transformed into the allowing of help and support from a potential helper" (p. 6). Walker further wrote:

Although this sequence of attunement, rupture and repair is repeated countless times, as long as the periods of rupture are not too intense or long-lasting, the process of repair helps the infant to transform negative effects into positive affects and disconnection into reconnection. Success with efforts to repair rupture leads to emotional “stick-to-it-ness” in the face of adversity, which is at the heart of resilience. In these terms, one aspect of resilience is the ability to connect with another after a period of rupture. (p. 6)

If the majority of victims of dating violence are not likely to report or disclose acts of dating violence to a potential helper (e.g., medical or mental health professional), self-disclosure could be encouraged through appropriate and careful screening protocols or procedures. Screening protocols have been developed to detect other psychological problems or issues, such as depression and are effective in combating “hidden morbidity” (Witkamp, et al., 2008). Yet, Brown, Puster, Vazquez, Hunter and Lescano (2007) found only a minority of child and adolescent psychiatrists screen patients for dating violence. Rickert, et al. (2009) reported the use of a screening tool can promote self-disclosure. Rickert et al. reported among a sample of ( $N=699$ ) female healthcare patients aged 15-24; positive patient and provider satisfaction were found with relationship screening (p. 163). However, the use of a bi-directional screening tool (e.g., CTS2), with questions framed within the context of a relationship as opposed to directly asking about violent behavior by a partner, and in a yes /no format was the recommended approach (p. 165).

The results of this study suggest healthcare professionals should carefully screen for dating violence whenever a student presents them with a psychological symptom or issue or a medical injury because of the possibility of abuse or violence by a dating partner as the underlying cause. Adolescents or young adults in same-sex dating

relationships generally will not broach the topic of their sexual orientation and it is important for clinicians to ask patients or clients about their sexual orientation (Coker, Byrn & Shuster, 2009). Allen, Glick, Beach and Naylor (1998) reported among a gay and lesbian healthcare population aged 18-23 surveyed, 78% did not disclose their sexual orientation to their clinician, but 67% of the sample reported that they would have liked to. A gender-neutral and culturally sensitive screening tool might make it easier for helping professionals to inquire about acts of abuse or violence which might be occurring within the context of a dating relationship, as well as assess the students views about dating violence victimization. Theoretically, victims of dating violence might be willing to disclose acts of abuse or violence by a dating partner, if asked (Siemer, 2004; Zeitler et al., 2006). In fact, Zietler et al. (2006) found when asked about who should screen for violence, among a sample of young women who experienced dating violence, healthcare providers were the most popular choice (95%), mothers were the next popular choice (90%) followed by counselor/social worker (89%) and father (73%), but the younger cohort (aged 15-18) were more likely to report concerns with anyone other than a health care provider (p. 5).

The nature and extent of disclosure might depend on how one is asked about abuse or violence occurring within the context of a dating relationship. et al. (2006) reported that young women seeking help for intimate partner violence, in general, do not mind being asked about dating violence in the context of a trusting relationship (p. 7). Hamburger and Ambuel (1997) recommended the use of open-ended questions about relationships with peers in general, such as how they resolve conflict with peers, followed

by direct questions about specific behaviors ( e.g., pushing, hitting, fearfulness, being hurt or forced to have sexual contact), and avoiding the use of emotionally loaded terms such as abuse, violence or rape. A participant in the study by Zeitler et al (2006) reported, “If health care providers ask, they should try to find a way to be nurturing and not interrogative” (p.6). Future research might consider studying views and attitudes toward screening for dating violence victimization among male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. There are a number of screening tools which have been developed, but they mainly target female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships such as the Red Flags Universal Teen Dating Violence Screen (Nelson, 2009). The results of this study militate for the development of an evidence-based, gender-neutral and culturally sensitive screening tool to detect victimization by dating violence among male and female college students in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Healthcare professionals might be more willing to screen for dating violence if they are knowledgeable about available resources both within and without the college community which would further orient victims of dating violence toward appropriate informal and formal help sources based on a positive help-seeking experience with a healthcare professional. Based on a review of the literature, there is a need to develop culturally specific resources to aid victims of dating violence who differ by gender or sexual orientation.

*Law Enforcement*

The justice system has a moral and social responsibility to protect all victims of dating violence (Suarez, 1994) regardless of one's gender and sexual orientation. Police are regarded as "the gatekeepers to the criminal justice system" and have an ability to arrest perpetrators of intimate partner violence which has been thought to be the most effective strategy in curtailing revictimization rates (Danis, 2003, p. 240).

But virtually no research was found among the review of the literature which specifically studied law enforcement's response to victimization by dating violence across college and university campuses and especially among those victimized by dating violence in same-sex collegiate relationships, perhaps because victims are not likely to report acts of abuse or violence by their partner to law enforcement officials (Miller & Simpson, 1991). The response by law enforcement officials toward dating violence victimization among male and female victims in collegiate same-sex relationships can only be assumed by the research on the response of law enforcement to adult victims of domestic violence in cohabitating gay or lesbian relationships. For example, Renzetti (1992) found among a sample of adults in cohabitating lesbian relationships reported when they sought assistance for their abuse or violence by their intimate partners, police officers, attorneys and medical professionals were among the least helpful. Among a lesbian and gay male adult sample who experienced domestic violence, police officers and attorneys were the least likely source of help sought, perhaps because of the perceived invisibility of the lesbian and gay male population and the fear of homophobic reactions by providers (Potoczniak, Mourot, Crosbie-Burnett, & Potoczniak, 2003; Turell & Cornell-Swanson,

2005). Similarly, responses by participants in this current study to the GHSQ/AHSQ indicated few, if any, male or female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual or same-sex relationships will seek or secure help from law enforcement officials, including campus security.

Based on previous research, it can be assumed the majority of male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships would be apprehensive of seeking or securing help from law enforcement officials because of fear of retaliation by their dating partner toward self (Joyce, n.d.), fear of adverse consequences toward their partner (e.g., legal consequences, academic suspension or expulsion from college, etc), or the breakup of a romantic relationship (Moller, et al., 2003). Miller and Simpson (1991) found female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships are more likely to seek out “formal” justice if assaulted by a male dating partner than male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships who are assaulted by a female partner because male victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships might harbor cavalier attitudes such as “no woman would be arrested for hitting her partner” (p. 352).

If male and female victims of dating violence in collegiate heterosexual and same-sex relationships could trust law enforcement officials with their disclosure of abuse or violence experienced by their dating partner, it is possible the legal system *can* serve to protect all victims of dating violence by such actions as “appropriate” arrest of perpetrators and assisting victims of dating violence to appropriate resources (Suarez, 1994). An interesting comment was found in Suarez (1994) regarding the issue of

“appropriate” arrest of a perpetrator of dating violence and the potential for revictimization:

Once someone finds violence is the way to get what you want and feel powerful, it is hard to change unless there is a sense something is really wrong with it or you experience some sanctions like an arrest...a lot of kids. . . say that getting caught made a difference. (p. 450)

Suarez (1994) stated for justice to occur in the lives of victims of teen dating violence, victimization by dating violence needs to be recognized as a crime by police, attorneys, judges and other law enforcement professionals.

Based on the findings of this study and the previous research noted above, it is recommended that that campus security, who are likely to encounter a dating violence situation, be educated on the facts of dating violence victimization and that it occurs among both male and female college students in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Students might be more willing to confide in campus security as part of a therapeutic community than local police officers unfamiliar to them. Campus security, in turn, can serve as educators to local law enforcement officials on victimization by dating violence and refer victims to local police officers or other legal services (e.g., attorneys) if and when appropriate. Appropriately educated and trained campus police can take the necessary steps to ensure victim safety, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, by transporting them to appropriate medical care, a safe place or “haven”, inform them of their legal rights and refer them to appropriate victim services on campus (Suarez, 1994, p. 459). “Zero-tolerance” policies on college and university campuses should be

instituted within the student government or judicial system with regard to dating violence regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation.

### *Gay/Lesbian Collegiate Organizations*

The literature revealed a disparity of research into the attitudes and response of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations toward same-sex dating violence and services available to male and female victims of dating violence among the college or university community. Further research might explore the responses by the gay/lesbian collegiate community to the incidents of abuse or violence between same-sex partners among its members. A disturbing finding is that research studying help-seeking efforts among adult gay and lesbian victims of domestic violence was thwarted because of the fear of being "outed" by the gay/lesbian community upon disclosing an incident of abuse or violence by a same-sex partner and the scarcity of resources culturally specific to meet the needs of this population (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). The results of this study showed that while male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships are less likely to seek help than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships, it was observed that male victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships are least likely to seek or secure help from an informal or formal potential help source than the other three relationship groups. In a previous dissertation study among gay men in same-sex abusive relationships, Nava (1998) found most gay men in abusive relationships sought very little support and tend not to leave the abusive partner after the initial incident (p. 48). Among an ethnic African-American group who

experienced acts of domestic violence, Morrison, Luchok, Richter and Parra-Medina (2006) reported these victims were not likely to seek emotional support from informal sources who were perceived as willing to offer instrumental support (e.g., monetary support, legal, medical), but not emotional support.

The results of this study could be utilized to educate administrators of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations to create awareness that abuse or violence by a dating partner occurs in at least as frequency in same-sex dating relationships. Based on this knowledge, administrators of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations could be trained in detecting abuse or violence between same-sex partners among the members of their organization and act as both an informal and formal support system for victims to turn to for assistance, emotional support, and advocacy. Administrators and officials of the gay/lesbian collegiate community can take part in a needs assessment to determine what kind of programming or resources would be appropriate and therapeutic to promote self-disclosure and serve the needs of this population (e.g., support group, parent/peer education training, etc.). Further, they could be trained to disseminate knowledge about the occurrence of abuse or violence in same-sex relationships to the campus community at large.

### Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative, web-based, study was create an awareness of the abuse or violence which exists among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships and to examine whether differences

exist in type of abuse or violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample.

Despite the limitations of this web-based quantitative study, the results of this study contribute to the advancement of knowledge across academic disciplines such as a Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Medicine, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement and various healthcare professions others by creating an awareness victimization by dating violence occurs regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation. While the results of the statistical analyses did not reveal significant differences in type of abuse or violence experienced between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships, this finding was interpreted to mean all victims of dating violence, regardless of gender or sexual orientation are at equal risk for experiencing at least one incident of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse or violence within the context of a dating relationship.

A major limitation of this study was a link between the variables of attachment style and help-seeking behavior could not be established by this one quantitative study alone. Although significant differences in attachment style were not found by the statistical analyses conducted in this study, it does not mean that they do not exist between male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships. Future researchers interested in replicating this study using a larger, more equal sample size and in combination with other methodological approaches

could find detectable differences in style of attachment as attachment style is known to fluctuate over time or under different sets of circumstance.

The results of this web-based quantitative study did reveal significant differences in help-seeking behavior defined in terms of help-seeking intentions and actual type of help sought or secured. The research hypothesis which stated male and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships are least likely to seek help from formal sources than male and female victims of dating violence in heterosexual relationships was supported by the statistical analyses conducted in this study.

A few other significant observations were made from the analysis of the data. Help-seeking intentions appear independent of actual type of help sought or secured. The findings from this study suggest, in general, both male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex collegiate relationships often do not actually secure the type of help they initially intended to seek from either formal or informal help sources. Further, the results in this study suggest while help-seeking intentions between the four relationship groups studied appeared largely influenced by sexual orientation, type of actual help sought or secured appeared largely determined by gender.

It is a known fact the majority of victims of dating violence do not report or disclose their experiences of abuse or violence by their dating partner to another. If it is not reported, potential helpers cannot render assistance. Promoting self-disclosure by gentle inquiry appears to be key in assisting all victims of dating violence regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Most importantly, the results of this study suggest if social change is to occur in the way victim of dating violence are perceived and assisted among

college or university campuses today will depend on a coordinated effort between informal and formal sources to create a therapeutic community or validating environment which will encourage self-disclosure among all victims of dating violence, regardless of gender and orient them toward help-seeking behavior from both informal and formal help sources as appropriate. The results of this study hold social change implications especially for administrators of gay and lesbian collegiate organizations who need to be informed of the realities of victimization by dating violence in same-sex relationships as revealed by the findings of this study, who can identify potential victims and encourage self-disclosure, and advocate for resources within and outside of the collegiate community to specifically attend to and meet the needs of this largely ignored population. This chapter closes with a question for all those who read this dissertation to ponder. In fact, if only one act of abuse or violence is traumatic or life threatening to an individual, should one's gender or sexual orientation *really* matter?

#### Personal Reflection

The topic of this dissertation study was inspired by my clinical practice as a Psychiatric Social Worker who encountered a number of men in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships who courageously disclosed their experience of victimization by their intimate partner. These men shared that they would never have disclosed this information if they were not asked about it and if it were not for my empathic ear and a non-judgmental attitude.

Often, when I was asked by friends, family, co-workers or other professionals, I was met with puzzled looks, disbelief, bewilderment and indifference when I said my study involved collegiate victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. In fact, at a social gathering among parents in my own suburban community outside of Cleveland, Ohio, when I told people about my dissertation topic, heads were turned and the topic of conversation was immediately changed. These reactions made me think about the stereotypic attitudes and prejudicial bias which still exists that only females in heterosexual relationships are victimized by dating partners and dating between same-sex partners is still considered “taboo.”

Among colleagues and others in my academic and professional life, several doubted that I would be able to recruit enough male participants, especially from same-sex relationships to conduct this study. Although this turned out to be the case, a number of young men did complete the survey and expressed how important this line of research really is, which only fueled my passion to complete this dissertation.

Had it not been for the encouragement of my former chair, Dr. Kelly Shannon formerly of Walden University, who helped erase my doubts about this dissertation topic, this project might not have gotten off the ground. This dissertation would not have been completed without the unswerving support and guidance of my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Matthew Geyer, and my committee members, Dr. Gerald Fuller and Dr. Scott Friedman of Walden University, an institution whose mission is focused on social change.

I sincerely hope all who read this dissertation will take it seriously. The results of this study will lead to future research and clinical intervention specifically designed to empower both male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships who might not otherwise seek help to do so, and for potential helpers to respond and assist all victims of dating violence, regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation who they encounter in their daily life or practice.

I wish to close this dissertation by sharing information from a few e-mails from individuals who took the time to comment on this dissertation project which I hope will encourage other students and researchers in the future to continue on with this line of research:

“I found your questionnaire for research on dating violence...It looked very interesting to me. It is a well-designed survey. It is a real interesting study and nobody here in Bosnia where I live has done any research on this. In fact, dating violence is kind of stigmatized here.” (Amela).

“Although I do not fit the criteria of your current study, but as a man who barely survived domestic abuse and who continues to be traumatized by my experiences, I wanted to say thank you for performing this research in this under-recognized but terrible phenomenon...the pain \*never\* ends. Perhaps, by raising awareness, it may be a less bleak for future abuse victims (of any group).” (Murray. Montreal, Canada)

“Kathleen, thank you for your interest in this topic. Having been married to a mentally and emotionally abusive woman, I understand firsthand the effects. It has been covered a great deal, most notably by Dr Maureen A. Pirog-Good, Professor and Co-Director, Indiana University Institute for Family and Social Responsibility. Your work may well round out this area of study as I found no works focused on men.” (Ted)

“Kathleen is doing a dissertation study on male victims of dating violence. I believe there is a lack of information...I have not seen any research solely on male victims of dating violence.”

“ Kathleen---wonderful that you are doing this! Men, by and large do not view psychological violence, or even minor physical violence as IPV. For example, female controlling behaviors, like making sex dependent on this or that, or doing some activity without asking for this and that or even the "junior high school punch on the arm". Men, further, are reluctant to self-report, because it is a reflection on their manhood somehow. My story, chased down the hall with a kitchen knife, large kitchen knife, by ex #1, or having the house set on fire, with damages 50% of value, while I was resting after a 12 hour workday in the Barcalounger® downstairs was not considered IPV by me, in my unenlightened youth.” (Mark)

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## APPENDIX A

### DISSERTATION FLYER



Are you interested in participating in a  
study on  
**Dating Violence???**

My name is Kathleen Kline, a doctoral candidate of the Clinical Psychology Program at Walden University. As part of my dissertation research, I am conducting a research study on the help-seeking behavior of those who are victimized by dating violence in their dating relationship. This study is being conducted under the supervision of my faculty chair, Dr. Matthew Geyer, of Walden University.

My review of the research found many victims of dating violence do not seek help for the abuse or violence experienced by their dating partner. Because victims of dating violence do not report or disclose their experience of abuse or violence by their dating partner to another, there is a myth that dating violence does not exist, especially among male victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships and female victims of dating violence in same-sex relationships. As a consequence, many victims of dating violence go unassisted. The purpose of this study is not only to create an awareness that dating violence does exist, regardless of one's sexual orientation or gender, but to further research which will lead to the development of innovative interventions and resources to assist those who might not otherwise seek help.

To be eligible to participate in my study, you will need to be between the ages of 18 and 25 years old, enrolled in a college or university, are in or have been in a dating relationship, and have experienced *at least one episode of abuse or violence* by your dating partner.

If you decide to participate in my study simply go to the secured survey website provided below which hosts the packet of questionnaires for you to complete. **Please note: You must complete the entire survey (all four questionnaires which constitute the survey) for your response to count in the results of the study. While the study is completely voluntary, and you may exit the survey at any time, once you exit the survey, you will not be able to re-enter it.** If you need to, highlight the hyperlink below, hit the “control key” and click on it to get to the survey or point your browser to the URL below.

The password is: Butterfly007.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=UcpSW4UYDgnVDXzbYG3Hkw3d3d>

By participating in this study, you may gain valuable insight into yourself and/or dating relationship and contribute to future research in the field of Psychology which will ultimately help others in a similar situation. Thank you for your time and assistance with my study!

Kathleen Kline, Doctoral Candidate, Walden University

## APPENDIX B

### **LETTER (E-MAIL) TO FACULTY CHAIRS AND ADMINISTRATORS OF NATIONAL GAY/LESBIAN COLLEGIATE ORGANIZATIONS**

(Date)

Dear (Name of Faculty/Administrator),

I am Kathleen Kline, a doctoral candidate in the Clinical Psychology program at Walden University, a regionally accredited institution of higher learning. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a study on dating violence under the supervision of my faculty chair, Dr. Matthew Geyer at Walden University and permission to conduct this study was granted through the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The title of my dissertation is *Collegiate Dating Violence: A Quantitative Analysis of Attachment Style and Help-Seeking Behavior by Gender and Sexual Orientation*.

Current research on dating violence has established that victimization by dating violence is a major social problem on college campuses. The majority of its victims fail to seek help for the abuse or violence suffered at the hands of their dating partner. A link between attachment style and help-seeking behavior among the medical and psychiatric population has led to an increased awareness of the need for resources to reach out to those who might not otherwise seek help. The purpose of my study is to examine differences in type of violence experienced, attachment style and help-seeking behavior among male and female victims of dating violence in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships among a college sample which will contribute to a change in the way victims of dating violence among a college population are served today.

In order to complete my study, I am in need a sample of at least 163 college or graduate students who are currently or have in a dating relationship. In order to collect my sample for this study, I will be asking you to assist me by informing students at your institution and direct them to a link to a secured website which will host the anonymous survey. In exchange for your cooperation, I will provide each participating institution the results of my study.

If you are interested in assisting me with my research, please e-mail me at [kklin001@waldenuedu](mailto:kklin001@waldenuedu) at your earliest convenience. Should you have any questions, you

may e-mail me at the address above or my Chairperson, Dr. Matthew Geyer at [matthew.geyer@waldenu.edu](mailto:matthew.geyer@waldenu.edu). Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely Yours,

Kathleen Kline  
Doctoral Candidate, School of Psychology  
Walden University

## APPENDIX C

### BRIEF DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The following is a brief demographic questionnaire related to the variables pertinent to the results of this study. Please respond to the following items as best you can. All of the responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Do not include your name or any other identifying information about yourself on this form.

1. What is your age?  
 18-19  
 20-21  
 22-24  
 older than 24
  
2. What is your gender?  
 Male  
 Female
  
3. What is your sexual orientation?  
 heterosexual female  
 heterosexual male  
 gay male  
 lesbian
  
4. What is your race/ethnicity?  
 Caucasian/White  
 African American  
 Asian  
 Hispanic  
 Native American  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What is your class rank?  
 Freshman  
 Sophomore  
 Junior  
 Senior  
 Graduate Student

6. Are you currently involved in a dating relationship?  
 Yes, I am currently involved in a dating relationship.  
 No, I am not currently involved in a dating relationship, but I have been involved in a dating relationship
7. How long have you been involved in your dating relationship?  
 less than one month  
 1-3 months  
 3-6 months  
 6-12 months  
 1-2 years  
 over 2 years
8. Have you experienced at least one incident of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse or violence over the course of your dating relationship?  
(Check all that apply)  
 at least one incident of physical abuse or violence by my dating partner  
 at least one incident of psychological abuse by my dating partner  
 at least one incident of sexual abuse or violence by my dating partner

## APPENDIX D

### COVER LETTER/CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study, entitled “Collegiate Dating Violence: A Quantitative Analysis of Attachment Style and Help-Seeking Behavior by Gender and Sexual Orientation.” You were chosen to participate in this study because you are single, between the ages of 18 and 25, attend a college or university, you are or have been in a dating relationship or have been in a dating relationship in the past, and have experienced at least one episode of dating violence or abuse. Kathleen Kline, a doctoral candidate in the Clinical Psychology program of Walden University, is conducting this study.

The purpose of this study is to determine which male and female victims of dating violence in both opposite sex and same-sex relationships are most likely to seek help based on attachment style and from what source of help. Your participation in this survey will contribute to a better understanding of the help-seeking behavior among victims of dating violence. It is estimated that it will take about 20-30 minutes of your time to complete the packet of questionnaires.

Before proceeding with this study, please read the following information:

#### **Risks and Benefits of Participating in this Study**

Risks to participants are considered minimal. There is a small possibility that answering some of the items on the questionnaires may evoke some emotional or psychological distress. Should you experience any emotional or psychological distress, there are several hotlines you may contact which will direct you to local resources in your area: The National Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 799-SAFE or The National Center for Victims of Crime (800) FYI- CALL. Participants are not obliged to complete any parts of the questionnaires with which they are not comfortable. There will be no costs for participating, except for a little bit of your time.

By participating in this study, you may gain an understanding about yourself and/or your relationship. Your participation in this study will promote social change efforts in the study of dating violence and discovering ways to help others in a similar situation.

**Participation in this study is voluntary.** Even though answering all the items on the packet of questionnaires is appreciated and critical to the results of this study, you may decline to answer any questions and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty or prejudice from this researcher. There is no right answer to

any question or item. If you wish to withdraw from the study or have any questions, please contact this researcher listed above.

**Any information you provide will be kept confidential and personal information (e.g., mailing address, e-mail address) will be numerically coded and kept separate from the research materials/data.** Your name or anything else that can identify you will not be included in the reports of this study. Responses will be anonymous, and your name will not appear anywhere on the survey material. Your information will not be used for any purposes outside this research project. Data will be stored in a secured computer file and/or locked in a filing cabinet in this researcher's office. This information will be stripped from the final data set.

To complete this survey, click on the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=UcpSW4UYDgnVDXzbYG3Hkw3d3d>

The password for this survey is: Butterfly007

This study has been reviewed and approved by Walden University Institutional Review Board. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of the study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board by phone at 1-866-492-5336 or e-mail at [irb@waldenu.edu](mailto:irb@waldenu.edu).

IRB Approval Number: 05-19-08-0283304

**Contact Information and Questions:**

This researcher's name is Kathleen Kline. I can be reached by e-mail at [kklin001@waldenu.edu](mailto:kklin001@waldenu.edu). This researcher's faculty advisor is Dr. Matthew Geyer who can be reached by e-mail at [mgeyer@waldenu.edu](mailto:mgeyer@waldenu.edu)

Please save or print a copy of this consent form for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participation in this study.

Participant's Written or  
Electronic\* Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Written or  
Electronic \* Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\* Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an “electronic signature” can be the person’s typed name, their e-mail address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Completing and returning the questionnaires constitutes your consent to participate.

Thank you for participating in this study.

APPENDIX E

**REVISED CONFLICT TACTICS SCALE (CTS2)**

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with one another, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired or upset for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Some questions are about you and others are about your partner. Please circle the response that describes how many times these things happened in the past year. If one of these things did not happen in the past year, but happened before, circle “7.”

<b>How often did this happen in the past year?</b>	Once	Twice	3-5	6-10	11-20	More than 20 times	Not in the past year, but it has happened before	Never
1. I showed my partner I cared even though we disagreed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2. <i>My partner</i> showed care for me even though we disagreed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3. I explained my side of a disagreement to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4. <i>My partner</i> explained his or her side of a disagreement to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5. I insulted or swore at my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
6. <i>My partner</i> insulted or swore at me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7. I threw something at my partner that could hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8. <i>My partner</i> threw something at me that could hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
9. I twisted my partner’s arm or hair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10. <i>My partner</i> twisted my arm or hair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11. I had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
12. <i>My partner</i> had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
13. I showed respect for my partner’s feelings about an issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
14. <i>My partner</i> showed respect for my feelings about an issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
15. I made my partner have sex without a condom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
16. <i>My partner</i> made me have sex without a condom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

17. I pushed or shoved my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
18. <i>My partner</i> pushed or shoved me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
19. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
20. <i>My partner</i> used force to make me have oral or anal sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
21. I used a knife or gun on my partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
22. <i>My partner</i> used a knife or gun on me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
23. I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner in a fight.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
24. <i>My partner</i> passed out from being hit on the head by me in a fight.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
25. I called my partner fat or ugly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
26. <i>My partner</i> called me fat or ugly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
27. I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
28. <i>My partner</i> punched or hit me with something that could hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
29. I destroyed something belonging to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
30. <i>My partner</i> destroyed something that belonged to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
31. I went to a doctor because of a fight with my partner,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
32. <i>My partner</i> went to a doctor because of a fight with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
33. I choked <i>my partner</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
34. <i>My partner</i> choked me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
35. I shouted or yelled at my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
36. <i>My partner</i> shouted or yelled at me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
37. I slammed my partner against a wall.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
38. <i>My partner</i> slammed me against a wall.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
39. I said I was sure we could work out a problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
40. <i>My partner</i> was sure we could work it out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
41. I needed to see a doctor because of a fight with my partner, but didn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
42. <i>My partner</i> needed to see a doctor because of a fight with me, but didn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
43. I beat up my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
44. <i>My partner</i> beat me up.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
45. I grabbed my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
46. <i>My partner</i> grabbed me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
47. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
48. <i>My partner</i> used force to make me have sex	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

49. I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
50. <i>My partner</i> stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
51. I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but I did not use physical force).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
52. <i>My partner</i> insisted that I have sex when I didn't want to (but did not use physical force).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
53. I slapped my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
54. <i>My partner</i> slapped me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
55. I had a broken bone from a fight with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
56. <i>My partner</i> had a broken bone from a fight with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
57. I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
58. <i>My partner</i> used threats to make me have oral or anal sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
59. I suggested a compromise to a disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
60. <i>My partner</i> suggested a compromise to a disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
61. I burned or scalded <i>my partner</i> on purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
62. <i>My partner</i> burned or scalded me on purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
63. I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
64. <i>My partner</i> insisted I have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
65. I accused my partner of being a lousy lover.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
66. <i>My partner</i> accused me of being a lousy lover.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
67. I did something to spite my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
68. <i>My partner</i> did something to spite me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
69. I threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
70. <i>My partner</i> threatened to hit or throw something at me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
71. I felt physical pain that still hurt the next day because of a fight with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
72. <i>My partner</i> still felt physical pain the next day because of a fight we had.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
73. I kicked my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
74. <i>My partner</i> kicked me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
75. I used threats to make my partner have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
76. <i>My partner</i> used threats to make me have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

77. I agreed to try a solution to a disagreement my partner suggested.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
78. <i>My partner</i> agreed to a solution I suggested.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

Straus, M.A. and Hamby, S.L. (2003). *The Conflict Tactics Scales Handbook*. CA: Western Reserve Psychological Services. Reprinted with permission by the author.

## APPENDIX F

### RELATIONSHIP SCALES QUESTIONNAIRE (RSQ)

**Directions:** Please circle the answer that best describes you for each question.

1 = not at all like me

2 = rarely like me

3 = somewhat like me

4 = often like me

5 = very like me

1. I find it difficult to depend on other people.
2. It is very important to me to feel independent.
3. I find it easy to get emotionally close to others.
4. I want to merge completely with another person.
5. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.
6. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.
7. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.
8. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others.
9. I worry about being alone.
10. I am comfortable depending on other people.
11. I often worry that romantic partners don't really love me.
12. I find it difficult to trust others completely.

13. I worry about others getting too close to me.
14. I want emotionally close relationships.
15. I am comfortable having other people depend on me.
16. I worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
17. People are never there when you need them.
18. My desire to merge completely sometimes scares people away.
19. It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient.
20. I am nervous when anyone gets too close to me.
21. I often worry that romantic partners won't want to stay with me.
22. I prefer not to have other people depend on me.
23. I worry about being abandoned.
24. I am uncomfortable being close to others.
25. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.
26. I prefer not to depend on others.
27. I know that others will be there when I need them.
28. I worry about having others not accept me.
29. Romantic partners often want me to be closer than I feel comfortable being.
30. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.

Griffin, D. and Bartholomew, K. (1994). Self-report measures of adult attachment.  
Retrieved from [http://wwwsfuca/psyc/faculty/bartholomew/  
selfreports.htm](http://wwwsfuca/psyc/faculty/bartholomew/selfreports.htm).

APPENDIX G

**GENERAL HELP-SEEKING QUESTIONNAIRE (GHSQ)/ACTUAL  
HELP-SEEKING QUESTIONNAIRE (AHSQ)**

*General Help-Seeking Questionnaire*

Below is a list of people who you might seek help or advice from if you were experiencing a personal or emotional problem (e.g., dating violence) Please circle the number that shows **how likely is it** that you would seek help from each of these people or for a personal or emotional problem (e.g. dating violence)

	<b>Extremely Unlikely</b>				<b>Extremely Likely</b>		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 a) Partner (e.g. boyfriend, girlfriend)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) Friend (not related to you)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c) Parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d) Other relative/family member	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e) Mental Health professional (e.g. school counselor, psychologist, social worker, psychiatrist, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f) Phone help (crisis) line	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g) Physician	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h) Teacher (professor, advisor)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i) Someone else not listed above (e.g., police, clergy, etc.) Please describe who this is/was _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j) I would not seek help from anyone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2 a) Have you ever seen a mental health professional (e.g., school counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist) to get help for personal problems (e.g., dating violence) (Circle one)

**Yes No**

If you circled “no” in question 2 a, you are finished this section. If you circled “yes”, please complete

2 b, 2 c, and 2 d below.

b) How many visits have you had with the mental health professional? \_\_\_\_\_ visits.

c) Do you know what type of mental health professional (s) you’ve seen? If so, please list their Titles (e.g., counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist).

d) How helpful was the visit to the mental health professional (Please circle)

**Extremely unhelpful**

**Extremely helpful**

1

2

3

4

5

*Actual Help-Seeking Questionnaire*

Below is a list of people you might seek help or advice from if you were experiencing a personal or emotional problem (e.g., dating violence). **Tick** any of these who you have gone to for advice or help for a personal or emotional problem (e.g. dating violence) and briefly describe the type of problem you went to them about.

3 a) Partner (e.g. boyfriend or girlfriend) \_\_\_\_\_

b) Friend (not related to you) \_\_\_\_\_

c) Parent \_\_\_\_\_

d) Other relative/family member \_\_\_\_\_

- e) Mental health professional (e.g., school counselor,  
psychologist, psychiatrist) \_\_\_\_\_
- f) phone (crisis) help line \_\_\_\_\_
- g) Physician \_\_\_\_\_
- h) Teacher (e.g. professor, advisor) \_\_\_\_\_
- i) Someone else not listed above  
(e.g. police, clergy) (please describe who this was) \_\_\_\_\_
- j) I have not sought help from anyone for my problem \_\_\_\_\_

Dean, F.P. and Wilson, C.J. (2007). Considerations for specific problem-types help Sources and scoring the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ). Retrieved from <http://uowedu.u/context/groups/public/@web/@health/documents/doc/uow/039041.pdf>.

## APPENDIX H

### **THANK YOU/REMINDER (E-MAIL)\***

About two weeks ago, a packet of questionnaires seeking your responses on dating violence was e-mailed to you. If you have already completed and submitted the packet of questionnaires, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, I encourage you to respond and will be especially grateful for your help.

I am providing the link to the packet of Internet questionnaires again in this e-mail in case you did not receive a previous e-mail or if it was misplaced. If you have already responded, thank you.

By clicking on the link provided and logging into the secure site, you are agreeing to participate in this research study.

Here is the link to the packet of questionnaires:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=UcpSW4UYDgnVDXzbYG3Hkw3d3d>

Your password is:

Butterfly 007

\*This e-mail was sent to faculty and/or administrators of gay/lesbian collegiate organizations to distribute to students via faculty e-mail

APPENDIX I

**PERMISSION TO USE THE RELATIONSHIP SCALES  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Date 7/3/07

From: Kathleen Kline at Kathleen.Klinekp.org.

To: Dr. Kim Bartholomew

Department of Psychology

8888 University Drive

Simon Fraser University

Burnaby, BC.

V5A 1S6 CANADA

Dear Dr. Bartholomew,

I am a Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate with Walden University and would like to use the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) for my dissertation project. I am aware that I am welcome to use the RSQ in my research examining adult attachment relationships, but would appreciate it if you could give me formal permission to use the RSQ to satisfy my dissertation requirements.

I understand by signing this letter you are giving me formal permission to use the RSQ in my dissertation project.

Thank you for your assistance,

Kathleen Kline

Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate, Walden University

Date 7/9/07, Monday 21:12 SFU PSYC. DEPT.

To: Kathleen Kline

From: Kim Bartholomew

I give you permission to use the RSQ for your dissertation research.

Kim Bartholomew Bartholomew@sfuca

July 9, 2007

APPENDIX J

**PERMISSION TO USE THE GENERAL HELP-SEEKING QUESTIONNAIRE  
(GHSQ)/ACTUAL HELP-SEEKING QUESTIONNAIRE (AHSQ)**

Date: July 4, 2007  
To: Dr. Rickwood  
From: Kathleen Kline

Dear Dr. Rickwood,

I am a Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate with Walden University. I am doing my dissertation research on victims of dating violence and help-seeking behavior and would like to request permission to use the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire and the Actual Help-Seeking Questionnaire to measure my dependent variable in my study, help-seeking behavior and type of help sought.

I would appreciate your permission to use these instruments for my study.

Thank you very much,

Kathleen Kline

Date: Monday, 09 Jul 2007 10:41  
From: "Rickwood Debra" Debra.Rickwood@canberraeduau  
Subject: Permission to use GHSQ/AHSQ for dissertation research  
To: Kathleen Kline at robertkline@sbcglobalnet.

Hi Kathleen,  
Confirming that we are happy for you to use the GHSQ/AHSQ measure in your research with appropriate acknowledgement.

Best regards,  
Debra

Professor Debra Rickwood PhD MAPS  
Head, Centre for Applied Psychology  
Chair, University of Canberra Committee for Ethics in Human Research  
Convener, Bachelor of Science in Psychology (Honors)

School of Health Sciences  
Division of Health, Design and Science

University of Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: +61 (0)2 6201 2701

Fax: +61 (0)2 6201 5753

E-mail: [Debra.Rickwood@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Debra.Rickwood@canberra.edu.au)

Location: 3B28

## APPENDIX K

### SAMPLING OF PARTICIPANT SELF-REPORT ON THE GHSQ/AHSQ ON ACTUAL TYPE OF HELP SOUGHT BY CATEGORY

**PARTNER** (e.g. boyfriend, girlfriend):

“I can go to him with every problem I have.”

“My partner used to be very mean to me and not notice how hurt I was. I confronted him about it and it stopped.”

“Talked with my boyfriend about touching me in ways I did not like”

“Asked her to stop hitting me and calling me names, this happened twice with 2 different girls, one didn’t and I ended the relationship and the next one did stop. I never hit back because I have martial arts training and I am afraid that I will put a partner in the hospital if I really fight back.”

“Bad choice. Psychological/emotional abuse...same circle just not physical.”

“My boyfriend because we were so close, but because it is a problem between us, it is difficult to communicate so we end up fighting.”

“Discussed current dating relationship...physical and psychological abuse.”

“Talking about him abusing me and wanting it to stop.”

“Told her it felt like she was taking me for granted.”

“I have talked to a few partners about my past. It usually comes out when they notice how dysfunctional I am. Then they leave!! :) I keep trying anyway; don’t really have any other option.”

“Its very difficult to turn to your abuser as the solution to the problem, because a large part of the situation is denial, or knowing that you’re a trigger and that you’ll make them angry and its easier not to make waves and just hope the current honeymoon period will last than it is to actually bring up the problem with an individual you won’t admit to yourself that you are afraid of.”

“Wanted to discuss the violence and how we could make it stop...it didn’t work.”

“I went to my partner to ask in so many ways, that he not treat me the way he did and that the way he treated me caused me a lot of distress. He told me I was having problems because I was emotionally unstable and dismissed my concerns.”

“I went to my boyfriend and explained to him that it hurts when he gave pressure points to me and that I would like him to stop. He said that the only reason he gives them to me is because I don’t listen unless I am physically held down because I have a tendency to leave the room and distract myself from the root problem.”

“I was scared that I was going to die after being strangled by my boyfriend the night before” This was due to the fact that my voice was raspy, I was having trouble breathing, I could not move my neck without crying in pain, and I looked up information on

strangulation and it said that people were known to have underlying injuries that kill them hours, days, weeks or even months after the incident. I really wanted to go to the emergency room but my partner would not let me for fear he would be arrested. So cuddled with me, calmed me down and assured me I was not going to die. It made me feel a lot better even though he never apologized.”

“This is the only person that I’ve gone to about any of our problems. We’re both committed to solving our problems in a way that satisfies us both.”

“Speaking to my partner about the abuse was always present in the relationship--- however---discussion and processing did not lead to change and ultimately speaking to a partner about fear, anxiety, repression, control, etc did not make sense in the reality of the situation.”

“Personal problems—health, work, studies, family pressure from various sources.”

“I might confront them about the issues that have to do with them; if they are hurting me I would let them know they hurt me.”

“Physical abuse.”

“My girlfriend threatened to hit me. I told her if she laid a finger on me, we’d be through. I also insisted we go to couple’s therapy, or we would need to break up.”

“When my boyfriend and I get into a fight, I usually get very emotional; he uses bad language and sometimes insults a friend or family member of mine. However, once I’ve calmed down and given him time to calm down as well, we usually talk rationally and come up with a compromise. We admit were both sorry about the fight, and say we love each other.

“Anything, everything.”

“I feel I try to talk to my partner about changing behavior and making things better.”

“After a violent incident, I talked to them about it and how I did not think it was acceptable. I did not decide (then) to break off the relationship, though.”

“Telling him I am uncomfortable and afraid of his behavior when he becomes angry and confronts people in public. Telling him how upsetting it is when he leaves and or does not respond to me. Telling him how upset I feel when he ignores me, especially when it was my birthday.”

“I will talk to my boyfriend about the times when he gets drunk and becomes violent. Thankfully, drinking related issues have stopped because of this.”

“Partner was abusing me. Went to her to discuss and she threatened to tell the military I was gay if I said anything to anyone.”

“Everything other than our relationship”

“I talked to him about the way he treated me and that I thought I didn’t deserve it and it wasn’t fair. I felt very upset and unloved. I told her him I didn’t think I did anything wrong to be treated that way.”

“Try to work things out and want to go to a therapist for assistance in improving our relationship and reducing the abuse.

“Nothing.”

“Discussed how to change our unhealthy pattern. For example, discussing not cursing at each other or putting one another down.”

“Talked to later partner about previous partner being sexually coercive and how it affected my current level of trust and sexual desire.”

“With my partner I have discussed problems revolving around an incident in which he yelled so loud to the point I did not feel safe and the police were called, about lies and manipulation I felt as a result of lying, about his temper and how I felt uncomfortable to discuss certain things for fear of his reaction, and about his dishonesty regarding alcohol abuse, specifically an incident where he did not disclose to me that he was drunk but drove me anyway.”

“Depending on the seriousness of the issue at hand, I would talk to him first to discuss the problem I am having with him. If I felt that talking to him would help I would.”

“I’ve spoken to my current boyfriend about my past relationship”

“Sexual abuse from previous experience, emotional abuse from him.”

“Discussed his violence and problems in our relationship”

“I tried to tell my next girlfriend about the girl before her told me she was pregnant (which she wasn’t) just to keep me around, but I could not find the words.”

“Talked about the abuse that was going on.”

“Just discussed the issues we were having specific to our relationship (fights, yelling, spite).”

“The bruises they left.”

“Spoke to previous boyfriend about seeking help for himself as there were several issues (alcohol and drug abuse, aggression toward me, and suicidal thoughts).”

“Asked them to stop.”

“I should go to the abuser himself when I experience a case of abuse? I mean, yes, after sometime I came up with the decision something needs to be done about this and we agreed to go to therapy as a consequence of this. But shortly after the incident (choleric fits, name-calling, insulting), he would be the last person to turn to...”

“Initially, I sat down with my boyfriend after he apologized (again), for victimizing me and told him it had to stop or we were through, it didn’t stop so I ended the relationship.”

“Emotional abuse. I don’t appreciate it when you say that I am not smart enough to become a doctor, I know you are just joking about it sometimes, but it hurts.”

#### **FRIEND/PEER** (not related to you):

“When he was hurting my feelings, making me do things I didn’t want to do, jeopardizing our relationship because I did not want to have sex.”

“I go to my friends just to vent about anything really.”

“Briefly discussed similar experiences but spent most of my time consoling them.”

“Anything about my partner and depression.”

“Just wanted to tell friends what happened, they said I should get out of the relationships and shortly thereafter I did for the first time.”

“If my boyfriend said something really upsetting and I needed some support.”

“I asked what I should do about constantly being followed by my boyfriend.”

“Issues concerning my partner being violent and unwilling to compromise also issues with partner cheating.”

“Safety when partner threatened to kill me and my dog.”

“Emotionally harmful relationship and asked for feelings on the situation.”

“I don’t talk to a lot of people about my problems, they don’t care anyway.”

“Asked for help about boys and other friends when there is a disagreement.”

“To discuss current dating relationship...physical and psychological abuse.”

“Understanding feelings of rape.”

“Friends came to me concerned about my relationship; I politely told them it wasn’t any of their business.”

“Physical and emotional abuse from partner.”

“Anything I didn’t know how to bring up to my boyfriend.”

“Talking about the best way to deal with or get out of the relationship.”

“Told her there was a power imbalance in the relationship and I was not happy.”

“My friends are my greatest resource. They are the only people I can talk to about my experiences with sexual violence...I was raped when I was intoxicated. Another man forced me to give him hand jobs...some of my friends react well, some of them react poorly.”

“I went to my friends with tiny, discreet issues, but would rarely get into the situation as a whole. Again, it would be admitting and acknowledging how bad things were to talk about it.”

“I spoke to my best female friend about it and she was very supportive of me and the manner in which I approached my boyfriend. She made sure to emphasize that if the issue ever came up a second time, there was definitely a problem. If that sort of pressure never happened again, it was probably an issue of poor communication between my partner and me.”

“Wanted to know if it was normal and also generally whine.”

“I mentioned it casually the way my partner treated me to friends. They had no reaction, so I assumed my relationship was normal, and didn’t pursue the issue.”

“My best friend hears everything I go through and have been through rape, sexual abuse and emotional abuse both past and present.”

“A situation when I was embarrassed to tell about those who were related to me.”

“I have spoken to friends about all problems/issues/challenges in my relationship including abusive cycles---abusive behavior and also was seeking support and advice on how to get out of the relationship.”

“When I suspected my girl was not being faithful.”

“Abusive relationship”

“I have gone to friends most often when I have problems, whenever my boyfriend and I fight I tell my friend but I most likely never tell them if he gets physical or loud with me because I don’t want my friends not to like him and not want to listen to anymore of my problems.”

“Relationship issues, feeling lonely or fear of losing my partner.”

“Physical and verbal abuse.”

“Problem with emotional abusive relationship when I had sex with this person under problematic circumstances. Asked for advice, such as emergency contraception, options, and how to still seem “cool” in the eyes of my partner.”

“Friends especially if they do not know my partner---are a great resource. They could have an outside perspective that could more effectively gage the extent of the issue and where to go from there. When I was in an emotionally abusive relationship, my friends were the first people I went to in fact, they pointed it out before I knew.”

### **PARENT:**

“I do not go to my parents”

Parents refused to acknowledge the problem when I brought it up.

“Nothing, really I don’t have a close relationship with my parents’.

“Frustrations with my overall relationship, but this just caused more frustration.”

“Safety when partner threatened to kill me or my dog.”

“My parent is in a dysfunctional relationship, so advice is not something I would like to hear.”

“Ha.Ha.Ha. Never. I can’t imagine how people can do this.”

“Wanted emotional support and a safe haven.”

“My mother had also been in an abusive relationship. I did not speak to her about mine until it was about to end and at the worst. She turned out to be a great support. She helped confirm the way I was feeling was normal, that I was not crazy, and that I did not deserve to be treated in that way. She also gave me some very practical advice how to emotionally untangle myself from my partner.”

“Violence”

“I am very close to my mother who has also experienced deep abuse throughout her relationship”.

“I mentioned to them my boyfriend is “mean”, but I probably won’t say he hits me, but I would say he says hurtful things.”

“I don’t really talk with my parents about much of anything especially my relationship. They are only now coming around to the idea that I don’t have heterosexual dating relationships after 12 years.”

“They encouraged me to leave, but I did not open up to them my partner falsely convinced me they were the sole reason behind all my stress.”

“Concerns about my girlfriend’s manipulation.”

“When I needed to leave a relationship, I would go to my mother.”

“Told my mother about my boyfriend being manipulative and she told me I was probably overreacting”.

“My mom, I tell her everything.”

“Fear of physical harm from my partner. When I decided to break off the relationship, I felt parents could help in providing protection from my ex-partner.”

“My parents were abusive. I would never go to them with an issue. “

“I was threatened with a knife in front of my father, father had been alerted to what was happening and chased my boyfriend down the street, rather than help me stop bleeding. And I would no more go to my mother than I would put myself back into the hands of a male abuser”.

“Implied something about my partner’s sexual coercion, but did not go into the details.”

“Talked about circumstances on TV but never really let them know it was actually happening to me.”

I talk to my mom occasionally about my relationship, but if its extreme, I will not say anything.

“When my girlfriend told me she was pregnant 2 days after we broke up, I went to my parents afraid she might charge me with rape. The relationship as well as the sex were always by her consent and were sometimes engaged by her, but that girl was crazy.”

“I always go to my dad for advice, got me out of my jams.”

“I asked for advice but left out some of the gory details because I did not want them to worry about what was going on especially as it started to get worse. Thankfully, I got out before there was any lasting damage.”

“Never approached my parents with my problems. My father intervened and sent me to a professional because of issues relating to my volatile relationship.”

“Not as much anymore since I am not home. I would talk with my mom.”

#### **OTHER RELATIVE/FAMILY MEMBER:**

“Just vented.”

“I talk to them about family issues that I can’t talk with my parents about my life and relationships.”

“I went to my cousin when I and my boyfriend argue which leads me to hitting him out of anger.”

“A family member threatened to beat up my partner if she laid a hand on me again (ended that relationship).”

“Safety when partner threatened to kill me and my dog.”

“There have been rifts in the relationships between family members, so it’s basically impossible to talk with them.”

“Discussed current dating relationship physical and psychological abuse”

“Wanted to hear I was not awful.”

“Not so much, I don’t have a lot of faith in secrecy when it comes to other family .”

“The majority of my family is abusive and I am not in contact with them. My partner isolated me from family members I was in casual contact with I would never have gone to them with my problems.”

“I started talking to a cousin and my sister, but did not get help from either of them.”

“Only in extreme cases when I was desperate. “

“My sister and I are very close, she would be the one I would tell everything to (like if my boyfriend got physical), but the reason why I rated her as unlikely to talk to is because we do not talk on a normal basis so something would really have to bother me to reach out to her.”

“I would go to my brother about emotional abuse in my relationship. Discussed means to get out of it, mentally manipulative, revenge (which at the time seemed consistent with the relationship and therefore, fair). “

“My sister has gone through a very difficult relationship as well and was incredibly helpful. As well, my grandmother gave me fantastic advice about being in an adult relationship and expectations that are ok to have in a relationship.”

“I went to my older brother for advice. He always to tell me how it is and that I should try to make the right decision and be happy.”

My aunt and uncle occasionally come to town and are always wonderful and clearly supportive. I trust them to give me advice on anything, but they are not around often and I censor the information I give to them.

“I have gone to my younger sister when I have had problems in my relationship. Any problem except abuse issues.”

“No. I don’t think I could have told anyone else, telling my parents were a horrible mistake to begin with.”

“I generally tend to call relatives and give them updates and when we are talking about my relationship if it comes up, we discuss ongoing hardships as well as the good things.”

**MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL:** (i.e., school counselor, social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist, nurse).

“I have spoken with a Rape & Abuse counselor & a social worker about physical & verbal abuse that I have gone through.”

“My ex boyfriend used to force me to have sex, and I talked about this and the panic episodes it was making me experience”

“Counselor discussed an abusive relationship and how to protect myself and remove myself safely from the relationship...”

“Tried to be honest but they suggested I leave instead of the abuser which made me more angry”

“his negative accusations upon me, him being overbearing at times, me not knowing whether he's right for me or not”

“Went to counselor to deal with emotional fall out.”

“I go to therapy once a week. In one session we discussed about a problem where my boyfriend treated me with psychological violence, ignoring me and telling me things to make me cry in front of his friends. I discussed this with my psychologist, and we found out a positive way to solve the problem “

“Talked about powerlessness feeling when I am insulted or get hit “

“Safety when partner threatened to kill me and my dog”

."This counselor I was seeing was asking me very inappropriate sexual questions. Another counselor didn't even help me; they just said it was normal."

"I have been to two different psychologists. One acted very uncomfortable with the topic and was extremely unhelpful. Another was very good. I haven't talked to her much about it as she was really more of my mother's counselor."

"I have previously seen mental health professionals to discuss the struggle of being with an abuser, trying to get out of the relationship- how to stay safe during the break-up, and also have seen a psychologist for minor issues with depression, general anxiety disorder and coping with grief. I have seen, social work students, licensed social workers, a school social worker and a community based abuse counselor in a glbt public health center."

"I spoke with a school counselor while in my emotionally abusive relationship. She guided me through by building up my self-esteem, self-awareness and reinforced my ability to make my own choices."

"My partner had convinced me that I was mentally unstable so I went to see a psychologist. Eventually I realized it was him that was unstable and that I was perfectly fine."

"Social Worker - helped me to deal with getting out of the relationship and find strength to maintain life without that person."

"I've sought treatment from a psychiatrist for treatment of my severe depression and anxiety which I believe has been made worse by my involvement with an abusive partner."

"Talked to (male) therapist about previous partner's being sexually coercive and how it affected my psychological state, but this was harder than talking to a friend."

"I have seen a counselor through my university on a regular basis. It took me a while to seek them out and I had to get pretty depressed before I did so."

"I spoke with a counselor regarding depression related to emotional and psychological abuse by my girlfriend at the time"

"Absolutely not. Never."

#### **PHONE:** (Crises help line)

"I called them initially to see how to get help. They were not at all helpful."

"Whining anonymously"

"I called a few phone lines when I was younger. They are very unhelpful. They asked one or two basic questions and then asked if there was anything else I needed."

"I would not use this service I feel it would be too impersonal."

"Safety when partner threatened to kill me and my dog."

"How can they really help me?"

"It crossed my mind several times to call a crisis line. But, in my mind, crisis lines were for women who \*really\* had it bad. You know, women being \*abused.\* I didn't believe I was being abused. I believed I was being treated the way I deserved for being such a monstrous person. I was too ashamed to call a crisis line to complain about my "trivial" problems, and perhaps take help from a woman who really needed it. "

“You start picking up phones when you're feeling suicidal. Plain and simple.”

“Afraid I would be told my problems were no big deal. That was a blow I don't think I could have stood.”

“I've called a couple of helpline (RAINN, for example), but didn't have much luck, and I couldn't talk much.”

“Phone lines are too impersonal I would not go to them about a problem”

**Sexual assault by partner**

“No, I rather see a person face to face.”

“Talk to them about any abuse at the time that was going on. I called several times.”

“Usually hypothetical questions”

“I've called crisis lines before just to vent about my problems and to receive support and encouragement to get out of the relationship.”

“Have never called one but am not opposed to the idea...”

**PHYSICIAN/DOCTOR:**

“I would not talk to a doctor unless there was physical damage.”

“My own physician whom I know and am comfortable with.”

“They are too busy to worry about people's problems.”

“My new gynecologist had a question about abuse/sexual violence on her questionnaire. She asked me about it when she saw that I had checked "yes." I told her that I'm coping pretty well and had discovered feminism. Judging from her response, she would have been ready with resources if the answer had been different.”

“Because I didn't believe I was being abused, I didn't go to my doctor. But I had an extremely kind, wonderful, personable gynecologist, and when describing some of the sexual contact I was having with my partner during routine check-ups, she started to give me information on crisis lines and whatnot. Again, I didn't think any of that applied to me, but if at any point I had realized I was being abused, I would have felt comfortable going to my gynecologist about it.”

“Violence.”

“They have no psychological degree on that matter; they know how to treat disease that's all.”

“Bruises.”

“When bruised and battered when to a doctor but I was in the military at the time (and I'm a lesbian) so I had to tell the doctor I was being abused by a male--so I couldn't report the abuse either or I'd have been kicked out of the military for being gay.”

“I needed STD testing because I found out later that I wasn't the first one she'd done that to.”

“Cuts, bruises and broken bones.”

“If a problem were bothering me when I was in for another issue I may discuss it.”

**TEACHER:** (e.g. professor, advisor).

“Just mentioned in response to them that I have had some experience in abusive relationships.”

“I sought advice from a professor. He was probably the most helpful person I spoke to. I would not talk to a teacher.”

“Emotionally harmful relationship, and asked for their feelings on the situation.”

“It was very important to me, while being abused, to appear to be completely competent and together to others. I didn't want them to know how worthless and terrible a person I was, that I could have a partner who hated me this much. I never would have spoken to a professor about my problems. The attention and encouragement I received due to my extremely hard work in academia was the only positive attention I got, and I wouldn't have jeopardized it for the entire world.”

“Often go to teachers to explain why I would be having trouble turning in assignments on time.”

“When I was in my emotionally abusive relationship I spoke briefly with one of my dearest English Professors. She was very kind and guided me to talk to the school counselor.”

“When I was overwhelmed from dealing with a partner.”

Being behind in my work

“I have had teachers that have asked about why I seemed upset and what they could do to help. I know that professors that I have now are incredibly helpful and would love to discuss issues regarding interpersonal relationships.”

“They are not professionals; they only know how to teach.”

“My attack from my ex-boyfriend happened over a weekend. We had broken up just two days prior to his stabbing of me. Although this happened over a weekend, on Monday I immediately contact my professor David Starnes for my Creative Writing class. I am a Writing and Linguistics major with an emphasis in Creative Writing so my Creative Writing professor was particularly important to me. From having read a lot of my creative work David Starnes knew personal information about my life. He also knew that that relationship was "not working well" and that we were in a process of separation. The problem I came to him with concerned the police's inability to locate my ex-boyfriend and whether or not he would show at my class time, which he was already familiar with. My professor said he could call security for me if the attacker did arrive or if I felt afraid if he would. He also sat with me in his office before the class started and walked me in through a back door. After class he drove me to my dorm.”

“Whether or not I should stay in the relationship.”

“Professional guidance, balancing school and personal life.”

“My professor is also a psychologist. I've gone to her for help in dealing with anxiety about running into my ex-partner and conflicting feelings surrounding our breakup.”

“If I trusted them I would talk to them.”

“Talked w/ professor once about unfair verbal fights, she said I knew what fair was and should handle it how I saw fit. My new zero tolerance policy has turned the tables but I'm still not comfortable.”

“There are several teachers with whom I am close to and when experiencing minor problems with my boyfriend I will talk to them about it.”

“One of my professors was the first person I told about incidents of psychological and emotional abuse by my girlfriend at the time.”

“None of their business. All they'd manage to do would be to call in someone else, either my parents or a therapist, neither of which I was willing to talk to.”

“Missing class due to threats from my partner.”

Just to vent

“Stalker.”

**SOMEONE ELSE NOT LISTED ABOVE** (police officer, lawyer, clergy, etc):

“Justice department/police for a restraining order.”

“Police officer. We had someone break into our house.”

“Spoke with bishop about sexual behaviors.”

“Possibly clergy.”

“If it was an emergency of some sort I would probably tell the police.”

“I have dealt with the government before and they did nothing for me, but make my problems worse. I would say unfair justice system.”

“A family member talked to a pastor about how I should be feeling now.”

“Police officer and lawyers to try to get him away from me.”

“I should have checked this off before, but I forgot about it. Oops! I have been to a few healers, mainly Reiki. They have both been very helpful. The one healer who is male I found particularly helpful because most of the men in my life are either neutral or harmful. Certainly I'm not used to kindness and healing being an element of the male personality.”

“Confession with a priest.”

“Police officer. To submit police report for domestic dispute.”

“I reluctantly received help from the police when the stated incident occurred. Someone else had called the cops, and I reluctantly worked with them on the situation.”

“Possible legal action against boyfriend.”

“My boyfriend's mother”

“I have spoken with a long term friend who is also a police officer about abuse, though I usually don't give her names because I fear that because she's a cop, she may report and the person would be arrested.”

“I went to a police officer who was always respectful to me and told him that someone was hurting me.”

“I have spoken to my Clergy; my boyfriend and I were working through some problems regarding boundaries in our relationship. I talked to my priest who I am close to about it and discussed aspects of our relationship. Pastor about violence in my dating relationship.”

“Pastor: Sexual abuse from previous experience, emotional abuse from current partner.”

“Police - the police were called by me once, the neighbors once and by my partner once.”

“I went to a mother who I babysat for, and talked to her. I was lucky enough to talk to someone that was date raped when she was younger.”

“I didn't mention this on the last page, but I do use a journal for a means of support. Keeping track of my thoughts helps me with conflict resolution helps immensely because I don't have to censor anything and I can revisit the issues later, with more clarity.”

“Police to get a restraining order against a stalking ex-boyfriend.”

“Lawyer.”

“Never have but would not be opposed to it.”

## APPENDIX L

### SAMPLING OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSE TO THE “NO HELP” CATEGORY ON THE GHSQ/AHSQ

“I don't think I could ever truly escape this relationship. Recently, I have tended not to go to anyone because of past experiences.”

“Talking to others tended to increase the problem because people seem to take sides on the issue.”

“I did but the counselor blamed me for the violence my partner did to me, saying I should not piss him off and he would stop.”

“I have not sought assistance because I really feel there is no help. I have before and nothing helped.”

“Embarrassment; shame; fear; disgrace; guilt; repression/denial.”

“I was afraid. My partner was not out, and I felt like I could not talk to anyone, because I didn't want to out my partner.”

“partner has been taking anti-depression pills, and behavior is markedly improved.”

“Didn't tell anyone anything for ages because I was ashamed. It's embarrassing.”

“Seeking help just seems overwhelming and seems it would be as humiliating as my boyfriend makes me feel.”

Have not sought out anybody because I am a strong person and I am now realizing how unhealthy my relationship is and I will get myself out”

“Ashamed, fearful.”

“I don't think the problem was serious enough for help to be needed. In my particular case it's pretty clear that I just need more self-control to avoid hurting people, and I don't see how talking would help with this.”

“I'm afraid to get help.”

“I did not seek help from anyone for a long period of time. I did not realize myself fully just exactly how emotionally unhappy I was and just how much he truly did put me down.”

“Lazy, anxiety.”

“Embarrassment. Fear. Attachment to my partner.”

“I told myself that it was not that bad and that I needed to grow up.”

“Prefer to deal on my own.”

“Too ashamed, don't want to be pitied either. I know I'm doing something wrong by staying in the relationship and I don't want someone telling me that I'm wrong because I already know that! I just can't get out of it because it gives me a (be it false) sense of love. I know that there are "better" people out there, but I am a weaker person, I believe, and I guess I am more drawn to those men who "prey" on innocent victims, whom they can control. Only I can help myself, but I'm not ready, and I probably won't ever be ready. “

“It is my problem.”

“It's not easy to discuss. I don't trust anyone to keep what I tell them confidential. “

“I have had sufficient guidance from the other members in my life.”

“I had a very hard time trying to talk to anyone about it. I felt so embarrassed and ashamed. I didn't know what to do, so I just let it continue.”

“the only person I went to is that one friend and then I didn't go to anyone else ever because I knew they would all say the same thing. “

“Don't feel I am close enough to anyone to really give all of myself because I do not want the person to look at me differently.”

“It is kind of weird to seek help.”

“I have not had a problem that I was suffering from enough to feel comfortable talking to anyone about. “

“My boyfriends and I live 10 hours away from each other and that naturally causes stress for us and tension in our relationship. I realize that the shouting at each other is not ok and shouldn't be tolerated, but in our case it is different. We aren't always hateful with one another... Arguments are healthy for couples. When we shout at each other we do not call each other bad hurtful names. I do talk to my aunt about it, but that's about it. When we are together my boyfriend and I rarely argue... the distance is definitely the cause for the arguing... & we have began taking precautions to prevent yelling at one another and allowing the other to tell their feelings completely . I have seen a decrease in arguing and yelling for us. “

“Out of embarrassment.”

“I don't think it's that serious of a problem that I need help”.

“I might go to my mother or my sister but usually I don't talk to anyone. I figure it is my problem and I should be able to deal with it myself. I don't want anyone to think I am a burden with my problems.”

“I have not ever sought help while in an abusive relationship, only as a means of healing after. “

“I only talked to a friend about it because I didn't feel like it was a big deal at the time. I never blatantly said help me I'm being abused. I sought help for problems that come from the abuse. I knew that I was in a bad situation, but I want other people to think that I was stupid because I was staying with a person who abused me. At the beginning of this survey it asked for sexual orientation. I actually identify as bisexual, but it wasn't listed. My experience of abuse was in a relationship with a female and I indicated lesbian.”

“Rather not involve other people who do not understand the situation “

“No one would understand why I have stayed.”

“I was in a very complicated relationship. She was emotionally manipulative, but massively insecure, and so we got into an emotionally unhealthy relationship that was also a BDSM-related relationship where I would be sexually dominant, often blackmailing or forcing her into sex while fought me off, or initiated the proceedings by either stepping over a line we had agreed on, or initiating physical violence, or letting me catch her cheating on me. As the relationship was sexually rewarding for both of us, and in retrospect I guess it was to some degree consensual, or at least understood to be consensual (though many of the actions in the relationship and in sex in particular were

not consensual), we had no desire for "help" until we reached the point of wishing to have not talked about all the problems that we had because I was honestly too embarrassed to admit out loud that I was dating someone that would do those things to me. I was in love, but humiliated. and didn't want to feel like my friends/family/etc was judging me for being with him. break up, which we achieved without help."

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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**Walden University**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 3.95 GPA.
- 1980 – 1982      Master of Science in Social Administration -  
**Case Western Reserve University**, Cleveland, Ohio,  
3.5 GPA.
- 1976 – 1980      Bachelor of Arts – Sociology and Psychology -**Alderson-  
Broadus College**, Philippi, W.Va., *cum laude*, 3.5 GPA.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1993 – *Present*      **Psychiatric Social Worker (full-time)**  
*Kaiser Permanente, Cleveland, Ohio*
- Responsible for psychosocial intake, individual, marital family, and group therapy with an adult outpatient mental health population; triage and crisis intervention services; and case management. Obtained *Rookie of the Year*, 1994.
- 2002 – 2004      **Employee Assistance Counselor (part-time)**  
*EAPCONCERN*, Marymount Hospital, Garfield Hts., Ohio  
Responsible for psychosocial assessment, chemical dependency assessment, individual, family and marital counseling with a child/adolescent and adult population. Also, provided case management and crisis management services.
- 1991 – 1993      **Inpatient Psychiatric Social Worker (full-time)**

*Southwest General Hospital, Middleburg Hts., Ohio*

Responsible for psychosocial assessment; individual group, marital/family counseling; discharge planning; outpatient counseling with an adult psychiatric population.

1989 – 1991

**Cottage Therapist***Parmadale, Parma, Ohio*

Responsible for psychosocial assessment, chemical dependency assessment; individual, group and family therapy for an adolescent males in a residential treatment program for chemical dependency; discharge planning; supervision of social workers for licensure.

1989 – 1989

**Team Leader***W.G. Nord Center, Lorain, Ohio*

Responsible for supervision of a clinical case management team; Individual, marital/family and group counseling for a severely mentally ill adult patient population; various administrative duties.

1982 – 1989

**Director of Intake***Northeast Community Mental Health Center, Cleveland, Ohio*

Responsible for supervision of intake staff; individual, marital/family and group counseling with an adult severely mentally ill inner city patient population; emergency and crisis intervention; case management; psychiatric intake.

ASSOCIATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2006- 2008

**Practicum/ Internship***Kaiser Permanente, Cleveland, Ohio*

Psychiatric intakes, diagnostic assessment, treatment planning, crisis intervention/triage, individual counseling with an adult and child/adolescent population; couples and family therapy, and psychological assessment/testing under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in the State of

Ohio. Conduct “Ways to a Healthier Heart” and “Stress Management Groups for medical patients of Kaiser Permanente.

#### LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATIONS

Licensed Independent Social Worker, State of Ohio

Received 1986

License # I - 0000239

Licensed Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor, State of Ohio

Received 1992

License #933502

Certification in Cognitive Therapy from the Cleveland Center for Cognitive Therapy, 1996 through *Barbara Flemming, PhD and James Pretzer, PhD.*

#### REFERENCES:

Dr. Kelly Shannon, former Professor of Psychology, Walden University.

Dr. Matthew Geyer, Dissertation Chair, Walden University.

Avtar Saran, Psychiatrist, Kaiser Permanente, Cleveland, Ohio.

Arthur La Place, PhD. supervisor, Kaiser Permanente, Cleveland, Ohio.

Sara Stein, M.D. Chief of Psychiatry, Kaiser Permanente, Cleveland, Ohio.