Family Violence

Victim, Perpetrator And Service Provider Perceptions Of The Nature Of, Factors Associated With, And Responses To Wife-Battering – An Australian Sample.

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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification. I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the varying perceptions of victims, perpetrators, and service providers of factors associated with wife battering, and responses to it. First, attention is given to pregnancy as a potentially vulnerable period for battered women. Second, the impact of wife battering for the battered women in this study has been that of “learned hopefulness”, as opposed to the “learned helplessness” commonly assumed. “Hope” is a significant factor influencing the women’s decision to leave a battering relationship. Third, the three-way focus (victims, perpetrators and service providers), which has been rare in previous research on wife-battering, is very important in its revelation of substantial differences in perceptions and attitudes. For example, the findings point to the identification of the power of service providers in dominating the nature of public discussion of wife-battering in ways which are to a significant extent at odds with the views and needs of service users. The recommendations flowing from this finding should make a significant contribution to public debate about the nature of, and factors associated with, wife battering and the desirable responses to it.

The conclusions of this study speak with and for those directly affected by wife battering. It is recommended that problems should drive and direct treatment for those in need of such; organisational philosophy, particularly service provision, should not direct treatment, intervention and/or response. Wife battering should remain entirely under the ownership of those who lived it instead of being managed and manipulated. This is required if we wish to narrow the gap between empirical evidence and organisational philosophy.
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