

## **The Impact of Different Forms of Psychological Abuse on Battered Women**

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Battered women receiving either shelter ( $n = 30$ ) or nonshelter services ( $n = 30$ ) from a domestic violence agency were interviewed regarding psychological abuse and its aftermath. Four types of abuse were derived from factor analysis: ridiculing of traits, criticizing behavior, ignoring, and jealous control. Sheltered women experienced ridicule and jealous/control more often than nonsheltered women. For the entire sample, ridiculing of traits was rated as the most severe form. Ignoring was the strongest predictor of low self-esteem. Both psychological abuse and physical abuse contributed independently to depression and low self-esteem. However, fear of being abused was uniquely predicted by psychological abuse. Implications for practice and research are discussed.

Practitioners and researchers are paying increasing attention to the psychological abuse of women (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Loring, 1994; Tolman, 1989). A major reason for this focus is the realization that psychological abuse may be just as detrimental, or more detrimental, than physical abuse. In one study, 72% of the battered women reported that emotional abuse had a more severe impact than physical abuse (Follingstad et al., 1990). In another study, psychological abuse was more strongly associated with psychosocial problems than threats or physical abuse (Tolman & Bhosley, 1991). The focus of most previous work is on women who are both physically and psychologically abused. Almost all women who are physically abused also report verbal abuse (83%, Walker, 1984) or psychological abuse (99%, Follingstad et al., 1990). Another reason to focus on psychological abuse is the evidence that verbal aggression early in the relationship is a frequent precursor of physical aggression later (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989). Thus, identifying particular forms of psychological abuse may help prevent physical abuse later in the relationship.

Psychological abuse can also help to maintain abusive relationships. If severe enough, it may lead to self-doubt, confusion, and depression. Battered women may subsequently have a difficult time seeing their options and marshaling the resources needed to leave the relationship. At first, a battered woman may respond to criticism and put-downs by trying to change herself, convince her partner they need couple's counseling, or attribute his abuse to his drinking. Over time, many women realize that nothing they do seems to make a difference. Women may be especially affected by emotional abuse coming from a sig-

nificant other because of the importance of mutuality to their psychological development (Miller, 1991). Qualitative research on battered women finds that battered women may experience a loss of identity directly related to coerced isolation, emotional abuse and "acts of diminishment" (Larkin & Popaleni, 1994; Mills, 1985; Smith, Tessaro, & Earp, 1995).

Along with the increased attention currently given to psychological abuse have come attempts to classify the various forms that it takes. Direct practice work with battered women and men who batter helped to create lists of a broad range of abusive behaviors (e.g., NiCarthy, 1982; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Sonkin, Martin, & Walker, 1985). Some practitioners drew parallels between battered women and prisoners of war, and thus the lists included techniques that are commonly used in brainwashing: degradation and threats with occasional indulgences, isolation, and invalidation of perceptions (Walker, 1992). Survey research that built on these observations and classifications has pointed to a number of different types. Tolman (1989) factor-analyzed 58 forms of psychological maltreatment and found two major dimensions: dominance-isolation and emotional-verbal. Aguilar and Nightingale (1994) divided abuse into "controlling/emotional" and "sexual/emotional," based on their cluster analysis. Using semistructured interviews, Follingstad and her colleagues (1990) created a list of five types: threats of abuse, ridicule; jealousy; threats to change marriage; restriction; and damage to property. Marshall (1996) uncovered six patterns of psychological abuse through a cluster analysis of a large sample. The patterns were as follows: (1) severe violence but without denigration or control of finances; (2) moderate violence and sexual abuse; (3) low on abuse but enforced isolation; (4) low levels of violence with overt criticism and several types of control; (5) several types of overtly dominating and controlling abuse and lower levels of sexual aggression; and (6) similar to cluster 5 but with different patterns of help-seeking.

Few attempts have been made to discover the forms of psychological abuse that have the most severe impacts. The women in the Follingstad et al. (1990) study reported that ridicule was the worst form. In the Aguilar and Nightingale study (1994), women who experienced "controlling/emotional" abuse had lower self-esteem scores. Dutton and Painter (1993) found that dominance/isolation was more strongly related to trauma and low self-esteem than emotional-verbal abuse 6 months after the abuse occurred.

The purpose of this study was to extend previous research on the different types of psychological abuse experienced by battered women and to examine whether some types of psychological abuse are rated as more severe than others. We predicted that, similar to the study by Follingstad and her associates (Follingstad et al., 1990), ridiculing of traits would be rated as more severe because it attacks a person's sense of self more directly than other types of abuse. For example, if a woman's behavior is criticized she may believe that she needs to change specific behaviors. Her hope for the relationship may continue and she is less likely to become depressed (Frieze, 1978). Ridiculing of her traits, however—an attack on her character—is more likely to shatter her sense of hope, security in the relationship, and even her sense of self. Depression, low self-esteem and further alienation and isolation from herself and others is likely to result. In our test of this hypothesis, we went beyond simple severity ratings to assess the impact of psychological abuse on distinct outcomes: depression, self-esteem, and fear.

We used more extensive measures of abuse and its impact than most other studies and therefore hoped to explore more fully questions about the impact of various forms of psychological abuse on battered women. Furthermore, we wanted to know if psychological abuse acts independently of physical abuse on depression, self-esteem, and fear, and if so, to what extent. Given the large overlap between physical and psychological abuse, it seems important to partial the effects of physical abuse from that of psychological abuse.

We also wanted to explore whether sheltered and nonsheltered women differ on levels of psychological abuse. Sheltered women generally suffer more severe physical abuse (e.g., Wilson, Vercella, Brems, Benning, & Renfro, 1992) and the pattern may be the same for psychological abuse. However, the two forms of abuse do not always correlate (e.g., Sabourin, 1991).

## METHOD

### Respondents

Respondents had sought help from a domestic violence agency in a midsized midwestern city. All of the women had been physically abused at least once. Thirty women were shelter residents and 30 were in nonresidential individual or group counseling for domestic violence. Average age was 34.7 years. ( $SD = 9.1$ ). The majority of the women were White (62%); 30% were African American and 5% were Native American. One woman was Hispanic and one was Asian. Most of the women (63%) had some college and 25% were college graduates. Forty percent were employed full-time and 25% part-time. Most of the women (62%) had children ( $M = 1.2$ ;  $SD = 1.2$ ). Seventy percent of the women were currently living with their partners. The majority of partners were spouses (56%).

### Procedure

Data collection took place over a 9 month period. Routine intake forms required by the state social service department provided some information for the study, such as demographics and abuse history. Other information was collected through an interview designed for the study. The women in the shelter were recruited by a staff member who gave the women information about the study a day or 2 after they entered the shelter. Following informed consent procedures, an interviewer was assigned to the woman. During the period that the 30 sheltered women were interviewed, 45 other women were sheltered. Many of these women were not interviewed because they left the shelter before an interview could be arranged.

The women who were not sheltered were recruited by their individual ( $n = 18$ ) or group counselor ( $n = 12$ ). When counselors wanted to refer a woman, information about the study was given to her and she completed informed consent procedures. The interviewers, trained by the first author, were staff members ( $n = 2$ ) or volunteers ( $n = 5$ ) of the domestic violence agency or undergraduates majoring in psychology ( $n = 3$ ). The first author interviewed 21 of the women. The interviews lasted approximately 1 1/2 hours, but ranged from 1.25 hours to 3.5 hours. Fifteen of these women had never left their partners, 3 had stayed at a shelter at some time, and the remaining 12 stayed temporarily or permanently with friends, relatives, or on their own. Many of the women were referred to a special group for partners of men who were in treatment. Other women were referred by agencies, friends or themselves.

### Measures

**Depression.** The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)(Beck, 1967) was used to measure depression. The BDI contains 21 items that cover mood, guilt, loss of interest, and physical signs. It has good concurrent and construct validity (Beck, 1967). The internal reliability coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) in this study was .90.

**Self-esteem.** This construct was measured with a version of the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967) designed for a general population. The scale contains 25 items with a response format of "like me" or "unlike me." The internal reliability coefficient (alpha) in this study was .90. It is demonstrated to have good convergent and discriminant validity (Johnson, Redfield, Miller, & Simpson, 1983).

**Fear.** A 6-item scale of battered women's fear was constructed for this study. Originally, 14 items were constructed and administered. The scale was reduced to 6-items through item analysis and by choosing items which clearly described emotional impact. The 6-item version had an internal reliability coefficient (alpha) of .86 which was higher than the 14-item version (see Appendix). The response format was: "never, less than once a month, once a month, 2-3 times a month, once a week, 2-3 times a week, and daily."

**Profile of Psychological Abuse.** This measure was developed for the study based on earlier work (Sackett, 1992). It initially contained 42 items drawn from clinical work, descriptions of the tactics of men who batter (Pence & Paymar, 1993), and the experiences of battered women as categorized by NiCarthy (1982). The items covered a wide variety of psychological abuse: humiliation, threats, invalidation of experiences, isolation, trivial demands, occasional indulgences, and emotional distance. The response format was the same as for the fear scale: "never, less than once a month, once a month, 2-3 times a month, once a week, 2-3 times a week, and daily." Seven items were removed because of ambiguous wording. The remaining 35 items were entered into a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation. A scree test revealed that a 5-factor solution was optimal. All 5-factors were interpretable. One factor of 6 items was not retained because it did not reflect behaviors that were clearly abusive. As evidence for this, it did not correlate significantly with the women's depression and low self-esteem.

Eight other items were deleted in order to improve the reliability of the subscales. The factor analysis was repeated with the 21-item version and the factor structure was consistent with the original analysis with 35 items with the exception of one item. The final 21 items are shown in the Appendix, along with the item-factor loadings and the internal alpha coefficients of the subscales. The factors were labeled as follows: Jealous Control (alpha = .85); Ignore (alpha = .80); Ridicule Traits (alpha = .79); and Criticize Behavior (alpha = .75).

**Severity of Psychological Abuse.** A single question asked about the severity level of abuse: "Overall, how would you rate the severity of the psychological abuse?" (not severe at all, mildly severe, very severe, extremely severe).

**Demographics.** Age, educational level (five levels), and income (nine levels) were taken from intake forms.

**Violence.** The intake form contained four questions on violence, with the first two requiring yes or no responses: Did the assailant use any of the following? (a gun? a knife, or other cutting instrument? hands/fist/feet? sexual assault? threats to kill?). Did the client ever receive any of the following injuries from the assailant? (cuts/burns/bruises; choking; internal injuries; strains/sprains/broken bones; head injuries). How often does any of the violence occur? (never, once a year or less, approximately 3-4 times a year, approximately once a month, approximately once a week, almost daily). Length of time the client has been exposed to abuse by the assailant? (no previous abuse, less than 1 year, 1 to 3 years, 3 to 5 years, more than 5 years).

Based on a factor analysis (principal component with varimax rotation) of the violence and injury items, the items "fist/feet/hands" and "cuts/burns/bruises" were labeled as "moderate violence" and all the rest as "severe violence." A variable called "Amount of Violence" was constructed by giving a double weight to the severe items, adding them to the less

severe items and multiplying the total by the frequency of violence. An advantage of multiplying severity by frequency is that a more normal distribution is approached than when either variable is used alone. The item on the duration of violence in the relationship was kept intact.

**Relationship Happiness.** This construct was measured with items from a measure of relationship satisfaction developed by Veroff (1988). A factor analysis revealed one factor out of five that could clearly be labeled "relationship satisfaction." The highest loading items were: (1) "Would you say your relationship is: not too happy, just about average, a little happier than average, very happy?"; (2) "When you think about your relationship—what each of you puts into it, and gets out of it—how happy do you feel?"; (3) "When you think about your relationship—what each of you puts into it, and gets out of it—"how angry do you feel?"; (4) "How stable do you feel your relationship is?"; and (5) "All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship." The response format was on a four point scale from "never" to "often." Factor scores were used in the analysis in order to use weighted items. The internal alpha coefficient of reliability was .78.

## Analysis

We used a t-test to compare the sheltered and nonsheltered women on abuse and demographic variables. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to test the relative impact of psychological and physical abuse on depression, self-esteem, and fear.

## RESULTS

Compared with the women who had not been in the shelter, the sheltered women had less education and income and experienced more severe physical abuse (see Table 1). They also had higher scores on two of the psychological abuse scales: Ridicule Traits and Jealous Control (Table 1). Despite more physical and psychological abuse among the sheltered women, they did not have higher scores on depression and fear or lower scores on self-esteem. The average score for both groups of women on the Beck Depression Inventory was 18.1 ( $SD = 12.5$ ), which is in the moderate range. There was considerable variation on this measure: 30% scored as nondepressed (0-9), 27% as mildly depressed (10-18), 27% as moderately depressed (19-29), and 17% as severely depressed (30 or over) (norms from Beck, Steer, & Garbin, 1988)

Table 2 shows the relationship among the independent and dependent variables for both groups of women combined. As predicted, psychological abuse severity was much more strongly related to ridiculing of traits than criticism of behavior. Psychological abuse severity also showed a significant but weak correlation with "jealous control." In addition, severity correlated positively with the amount of violence and fear and negatively with relationship satisfaction.

In the prediction of depression, the strongest bivariate correlation was with the amount of violence, followed by the global severity rating of psychological abuse. Ignoring and ridiculing of traits were also significantly related to depression. Unexpectedly, the duration of violence was negatively related to depression. The amount of violence also had the highest correlations with low self-esteem, followed by ignoring. Ridiculing of traits was also significantly related to lower self-esteem. Relationships with the fear of abuse were the strongest. Ridiculing of traits was the most strongly related to fear. Jealous/control, criticizing behavior, ignoring, and the amount of violence all had moderately high correlations with fearfulness.

**TABLE 1. Mean Comparisons of Sheltered and Nonsheltered Battered Women on Abuse and Demographic Variables (Standard Deviation in Parentheses)**

	Sheltered <i>n</i> = 30	Nonsheltered <i>n</i> = 30	<i>t</i>
<b>Psychological Abuse</b>			
Ridicule Her Traits	24.6 (7.1)	20.4 (8.1)	2.08*
Jealous Control	40.7 (11.1)	31.7 (12.4)	2.95*
Criticize Behavior	9.8 (6.1)	9.8 (5.7)	.00
Ignore	22.5 (9.2)	23.3 (8.5)	-.34
Overall Frequency	5.5 (0.8)	5.6 (0.8)	-.49
Overall Severity	3.1 (0.8)	3.1 (0.8)	.00
<b>Physical Abuse</b>			
Severe Violence	4.9	3.2	2.79**
Duration	4.1	4.1	.12
<b>Demographics</b>			
Age	34.4	34.9	-.21
Education	3.2	4.1	-3.19**
Household Income	5.0	7.3	-3.73***

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Although Jealous/Control had relatively low correlations with depression and self-esteem, it had the highest correlation with physical abuse, compared with the other forms of psychological abuse (ave.  $r = .32$ ).

The three dependent variables, depression, self-esteem, and fear, were correlated with each other in expected directions. Depression and low self-esteem were the most highly correlated.

The correlation matrices (six independent and three dependent variables) were compared between the two samples. Fifteen of the 18 correlations were similar. Sheltered women had much higher correlations between "ignore" and depression and self-esteem; and violence duration and depression.

Table 3 shows the results of the hierarchical multiple regression in the prediction of depression, self-esteem, and fear. Psychological abuse and violence variables were entered in separate blocks. Psychological abuse was entered first, followed by violence. The procedure was then reversed with violence entered first. In this way, the unique variance of psychological versus physical abuse could be determined.

Jealous/Control was not entered into the first two equations because it had the lowest correlation of the psychological abuse variables with depression and self-esteem and the sample was too small for using all of the variables. The psychological abuse variables accounted for 13% of the variance in depression. When the physical abuse variables were entered, the variance accounted for rose significantly by 10%. When the order was reversed,

TABLE 2. Correlations Among the Dependent and Independent Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Fear	—										
2. Self-Esteem		-.25*	.29**	.56***	.47***	.66***	.52*	.31**	.01	.42***	-.34**
3. Depression			-.65***	-.17	-.31**	-.22*	-.17	-.08	.05	-.34**	.05
4. Jealous/Control				.18	.22*	.23*	.20	.31**	-.23*	.34**	-.40***
5. Ignore					.33**	.53***	.43***	.23*	-.15	.49***	-.24*
6. Ridicule traits						.47***	.55***	.17	-.03	.26*	-.16
7. Criticize beh.							.54***	.55***	.13	.36**	-.42***
8. Global severity of psychological abuse								.16	.17	.35**	-.12
9. Duration of violence									-.04	.36**	-.61***
10. Amount of violence										.07	.16
11. Relationship satisfaction											-.22*

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

TABLE 3. Hierarchical Multiple Regression

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		
	Depression	Self-Esteem	Fear
Step 1: Psychological Abuse			
<i>R</i> =	.37	.32	.73
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> =	.13	.10	.53
Step 2: Violence			
<i>R</i> =	.48	.43	.73
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> =	.23	.19	.54
<i>R</i> square increase =	.10	.09	.01
<i>F</i> for increase =	7.40**	6.33**	1.24
Step 1: Violence			
<i>R</i> =	.43	.34	.42
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> =	.18	.12	.18
Step 2: Psychological Abuse			
<i>R</i> =	.48	.43	.73
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> =	.23	.19	.54
<i>R</i> square increase =	.05	.07	.36
<i>F</i> for increase =	3.70	4.93**	44.6***

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001.

the violence variables accounted for 18% of the variance, showing a (not quite significant) 5% increase with the addition of the psychological abuse variables. Thus, psychological abuse and physical abuse made unique contributions in explaining depression, with a somewhat stronger contribution by physical abuse.

In the prediction of self-esteem, the variance accounted for when the psychological abuse variables were entered was 10%; with the addition of the violence variables, it rose significantly by 9%. When the violence variables were entered first, they accounted for 12% of the variance in predicting self-esteem; the addition of psychological abuse significantly increased the variance explained by 7%. Once again, psychological and physical abuse made independent contributions to the outcome variable.

In the prediction of fear, the global severity rating of psychological abuse was dropped from the equation. Although it was significantly related to fear ( $r = .31$ ), the four types of psychological abuse were much more strongly related to it (ave.  $r = .55$ ). The psychological abuse variables accounted for 53% of the variance. The entry of the physical abuse variables added only 1% to the variance. When the physical abuse variables were entered first, they accounted for 18% of the variance. The addition of the psychological abuse variables raised the percent variance by 36%, a very significant increase. Thus, psychological abuse was a much stronger predictor of fear than physical abuse.

## DISCUSSION

The factor analysis of the Profile of Psychological Abuse revealed four major forms of abuse: Criticize Behavior, Ignore, Ridicule Traits, and Jealous/Control (Appendix). The Jealous/Control factor appears similar to the Dominance-Isolation factor of Tolman's (1989)



Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI), which also included items on jealousy and restriction of behavior. It also has items similar to the Controlling/Emotional Abuse items from the Aguilar and Nightingale study (1994). The Ignore factor has items similar to some of those on the Emotional-Verbal subscale of the PMWI (e.g., "sulked, refused to talk," "withheld affection"). The Criticize Behavior factor seemed closer to items on the Dominance-Isolation factor of the PMWI, whereas the Ridicule Traits factor seemed closer to items on the Emotional-Verbal factor of the PMWI. However, these similarities were not clear-cut.

An important feature of the Profile of Psychological Abuse is its ability to distinguish between criticism of behaviors and ridiculing of traits. It also has the advantage of using specific time referents (e.g., "once a month," "once a week," "2-3 times a week," etc.). The differing patterns of psychological abuse found in this and other studies probably reflect the behavior of different types of men who batter. Some men seem to restrict their partners' behavior out of jealousy, while others tend to blame their partners for the violence, treat them as inferiors, and use threats (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). Battered women's experiences can also be clustered into different groups depending on the types of violence they experienced and their causal attributions for the violence (Follingstad, Laughlin, Polek, Rutledge, & Hause, 1991; Snyder & Fruchtmann, 1981).

Battered women residing in a shelter reported more severe physical abuse. This finding is consistent with other studies (Saunders, 1994; Wilson et al., 1992), as are the findings that the sheltered women had less education and income. These women also experienced more ridicule of their personal characteristics and jealous control by their partners. Surprisingly, their depression, self-esteem, and fear did not differ from nonsheltered battered women. The shelter may have provided enough support in a short period of time for previous depression and fear to lift. Self-esteem is less likely to change in such a short period of time. However, one study found that the length of stay in a shelter was related to higher self-esteem and lower depression (Orava, McLeod, & Sharpe, 1996).

Another possibility is that the more severe abuse experienced by these women produced traumatic symptoms, such as "numbing" and dissociative responses, that kept other emotional responses from surfacing. The fight for survival and the recency of abuse might not have allowed them to feel depressed or fearful, at least for the time immediately after the abuse. Other research shows that sheltered women have more frequent symptoms of post-traumatic stress than other help-seeking battered women (Gleason, 1993; Saunders, 1994).

The average level of depression on the BDI for both samples was somewhat below that of another sample of battered women. In that sample 33% of the women were in the severe range (score over 30) (Orava, McLeod, & Sharpe, 1996).

As predicted, ridiculing of traits was related most strongly to the severity rating of psychological abuse. The other forms of psychological abuse, especially criticizing behavior and ignoring, are somewhat less likely to be taken personally. Jealous-controlling behavior, although most strongly related to the amount of physical abuse, might be viewed as a less severe form of psychological abuse for the same reason: it is not a direct attack on the self. Similarly, there was no relation between jealous/control and depression. Again, the women might be able to make external attributions, i.e., to readily see through the tactics and jealousy of their partners without blaming themselves. These findings are consistent with the distinction made between behavioral self-blame and characterological self-blame that Janoff-Bulman (1982) applied to rape survivors. Behavioral blame is a less severe form of blame and provides the victim with a sense of control that "there is something about myself that I can change to prevent an attack." These forms of attributions are less

likely to have an impact on depression and self-esteem (Frieze, 1978). Jealous/control may also have been interpreted positively by many of these women, just as it does for many college women (Henton, Cate, Koval, Lloyd, & Christopher, 1983). At least early in the relationship, jealousy may be viewed as a sign of romantic love.

This study revealed that psychological and physical abuse had fairly independent effects on depression and self-esteem. However, psychological abuse had a much stronger impact than physical abuse on fear. Ridiculing traits, criticizing behavior, and jealous/control had the strongest relationship to fear. The intimidating behavior of the most controlling type of batterer may be partly responsible for the greater fear. The amount of physical abuse, but not its duration, was also significantly related to fear.

Depression was related to criticism, ignoring, ridicule, and violence as expected. The negative relation between depression and the duration of violence is more difficult to explain. It is possible that women experiencing the most severe violence had shorter relationships; those experiencing less severe violence might have been able to find ways to keep their hope alive and keep their depression lower. Alternately, as with the speculation we made about the severe trauma to sheltered women, the survival needs of those enduring long-term abuse may cause numbing and a suppression of feelings.

The amount of violence and ignoring were most strongly related to low self-esteem. The act of violence itself gives the message that the victim is unworthy and unlovable. In one study of the men's accounts, many of the men admitted that they were trying to convince their wives that they were worthless through a combination of verbal and physical abuse (Hyden, 1995). The finding on the use of ignoring shows that it needs to be taken seriously as a form of abuse, with the potential for long-term consequences. Being ignored may give one of the most negative messages possible about self-worth.

For practitioners, these results confirm the negative impact that psychological abuse has on battered women's emotional life and sense of self. Practitioners can help women to see why "character assassinations" are more devastating than specific criticisms, but also why specific criticisms might build unrealistic hopes. Ignoring needs to be discussed as an extreme form of abuse because it conveys the message: "you don't exist." Group work is particularly well suited to help battered women overcome psychological abuse because they can learn that their experiences are similar to those of other women, their experiences and emotions can be validated by others, and mutual support can occur. There is some evidence that such group work not only increases self-esteem and a sense of inner control but also may help to reduce psychological abuse (Tutty, Bidgood, & Rothery, 1993).

The conclusions of this study need to be viewed cautiously due to a number of limitations. The sample was relatively small and all of the women were seeking help. Not all of the women who were asked to participate were willing or able to do so. Nonparticipants tended to be those who left the shelter more quickly and were probably less traumatized. The results may also differ with nonhelp-seeking samples. The measure of physical aggression was derived from an intake form and had unknown reliability and validity. If it was less reliable than the psychological abuse variables, the relationship between physical abuse and the outcome variables would be attenuated. The measures of psychological abuse and fear were developed for this study. Although showing adequate scale reliability, tests of validity outside of the hypotheses of this study were not available. All of these limitations point the way for future research.

Despite these limitations, this study shows the utility of a new measure of psychological abuse. The findings suggest that the psychic injuries to battered women are typically caused as much by psychological abuse as physical abuse. Some forms of psychological

Abuse appear more damaging than others. With the replication of these results, counseling methods can be refined and tested for countering what are probably the most lingering effects of woman abuse—those which affect the survivor's very sense of self.

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*Offprints:* Requests for offprints should be directed to Daniel G. Saunders, University of Michigan, School of Social Work, 1080 South University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. A revised version of the *Profile of Psychological Abuse* is available from Dr. Saunders.

**APPENDIX**

**Profile of Psychological Abuse**

As much as possible, I would like you to disregard the physical abuse that has occurred in your current relationship. The question I am asking should be answered according to the psychological or emotional abuse that has occurred in your relationship. I know some of these questions may be hard to answer, but please try to be as accurate as possible.

Response format under each item:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
never	less than once	once a month	2-3 times a month	once a week	2-3 times a week	daily

**Jealous Control**

Internal Alpha Reliability = .85

Factor Loading	How often does your partner:
.74	Become angry or upset if you want to be with someone else and not with him?
.70	Intercept your mail, telephone calls, or drill you about who called you, who wrote you a letter, or what you were talking about?
.70	Make you account for every minute you spend away from the house?
.65	Become jealous about your friends, family or pets?
.62	Ask for detailed reports of your hourly activities?
.61	Check up on you throughout the day? (calls you every 15 minutes, comes home early from work, has others tell him your whereabouts, etc.)
.57	Threaten to hurt a prized possession, pets, friends, or relatives if you don't comply with his wishes?
.48	Keep you up late yelling at you, either accusing you of having affairs or accusing you of other things?

**Ignore**

Internal Alpha Reliability = .80

.77	Make the TV, a magazine, the newspaper, or other people seem more important than you are?
.74	Ignore your need for assistance when you're sick, tired, or over-worked?
.71	Complain or ridicule you if you are upset or ask for emotional support?
.70	Ignore your suggestion to have sex or not do what excites or satisfies you?
.61	Ignore you when you begin a conversation?

**Ridicule Traits**

Internal Alpha Reliability = .79

.80	Ridicule the traits you admire or value most in yourself?
.66	Tell you that you are a horrible lover, worthless, or no good?
.54	Suggest you're crazy or stupid?
.50	Call you names with sexual connotations such as "slut" or "whore" or "cunt"?
.46	Make fun of your triumphs, discourage your plans, or minimize your successes?

**Criticize Behavior**

Internal Alpha Reliability = .75

.73	After you've cooked or cleaned, tell you it's not right and ask you to do it over again until he decides it's done right?
.61	Inspect your work and make overly critical comments?
.50	Request that everything be done in a precise way or it will be unacceptable to him?

**Fear of Abuse**

Internal Alpha Reliability = .84

- Make you feel guilty or ashamed for something he demanded that you do?
- Make you feel you as if you are "walking on egg shells" when you are around him?
- How often:
- Do you worry that what you do will make your partner angry?
- Do you do things your partner wants you to do because you feel afraid?
- Do you fear that your partner will hit you if you don't comply with his wishes?
- Do you try to second-guess how your partner will act?