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College: Nursing
Degree: Bachelors of Science in Nursing
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Full title of project as it should appear in Graduation Program and on transcript:

Intimate Partner Violence:

Assessing the Knowledge of Female College Students

Abstract (should be included at the beginning of your project as well):

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is defined as physical, sexual or mental (or a combination of the three) abuse by someone the victim knows or has an established relationship. The objective of this research was to determine female students' knowledge about IPV. Since young female adults are the primary victims of IPV, two hundred and twenty female college students were surveyed. The design for this study included a likert-scale questionnaire, developed by the researcher. In addition, this research examined the demographics of the university, current policies and trends regarding IPV and current resources available for college students.

Key Words: Intimate Partner Violence, Female College students

Approved by:

Project Advisor: Lynx McClellan (Signature) Date: 11/30/2011
Department Chair: [Signature] (Signature) Date: 11/30/2011
Honors Program Director: [Signature] (Signature) Date: 11-30-2011

Intimate Partner Violence on Campus:
Assessing the Knowledge of Female College Students

Lyn Barger

University of Alabama in Huntsville

Intimate Partner Violence on Campus:
Assessing the Knowledge of Female Students

Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is defined as physical, sexual or mental (or a combination of the three) abuse by someone the victim knows or has an established relationship. The objective of this research was to determine female students' knowledge about IPV. Since young female adults are the primary victims of IPV, two hundred and twenty female college students were surveyed. The design for this study included a likert-scale questionnaire, developed by the researcher. In addition, this research examined the demographics of the university, current policies and trends regarding IPV and current resources available for college students.

Key Words: Intimate Partner Violence, Female College students

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to find out what female college students know about Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). IPV, when one partner hurts or threatens to hurt the other, is a traumatic situation and many victims may be so traumatized they may be unable to complete their plan of study. By increasing the knowledge level of incoming freshman of what is and is not appropriate in a relationship and what to do when encountering someone who acts in an inappropriate manner, the likelihood of intimate partner violence incidents will inversely decrease. In addition, prior to implementing a teaching plan, the student's current level of knowledge must be examined.

According to the National Institute of Justice, a successful IVP program at the university level should be: 1. Able to measure the student's current knowledge. 2. Educate the students so understand what is and is not appropriate behavior. 3. IPV is clearly defined. 4. Students will know how to stay safe. 5. They will know where they can report IPV. 6. They will know what resources are available to them. 7. They will know that they will be treated in a fair and non judgmental manner. 8. They will be supported if an incident occurs. 9. Finally they will know how to advise other students who need help (McMahon, 2008). The purpose of this research was to review current peer reviewed literature and to survey the students find out what the knowledge base was here on the University campus regarding IPV.

Review of Literature

McMahon (2008) outlines a guideline for colleges to benchmark with the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) policies on sexual violence. In addition, through her research and experience at Pennsylvania State University (PSU) with implementing a program to reduce sexual violence,

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she has developed two additional criteria for the template. She outlined the template and NIJ's study results and has determined that providing financial and other support to help the victim such as counseling, legal assistance in prosecuting and comprehensive survival support. A representative from the university should be designated as the victim's advocate. McMahon (2008) is an excellent example regarding the implementation of the template. McMahon (2008) also suggests that there be an annual review to evaluate student knowledge of sexual assault on campus and upon telephone conversation (August 30, 2011) to inquire about the recommended instrument used to evaluate the level of knowledge, she responded that she used a combination of three surveys, but recommends a "PULSE" instrument. McMahon also stated in the phone conversation (August 30, 2011) that despite over ten years of programs to reduce the incidence of sexual violence on campus there has not been a reduction and that the best method to reduce sexual violence would be to reduce the use of alcohol among college students.

Griffin and Koss (2002), nurses, rather than medical doctors, in the clinical setting can significantly impact IPV by routine screening. They address the current shortcomings in screening by physicians and cite AMA's practice guidelines for IPV screening in healthcare and JCAHO's protocols regarding IPV screening. They discuss the barriers to reporting IPV such as fear, cultural differences and dependence on the abuser. Asking multiple specific questions rather than a single comprehensive question; maintaining non judgment and merely documenting and assessing the victim's current level of safety. They emphasize that documentation in the medical records any potential abuse, can alert future providers and monitor future care, help the victim make a safety plan and make appropriate referrals. This is a good resource article, they stress the importance of the nurse in the screening process, but they do not provide any new research or studies.

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Campbell and Walton-Moss (2002) note that one of the objectives in Healthy People 2010 is lowering the incidence of IPV from its current rate to 4/1000 (the current prevalence is 25% of the current population has been a victim of IPV). They recommend universal health screening for IPV and the mandatory reporting of IPV, currently reporting for adult IPV is only mandatory in six states. They review the epidemiology, screening, identification and interventions for IPV as it applies to the role of nursing. Violence against women is most likely from a current or former intimate partner and is responsible for 30% of the female homicides. While substance abuse is not the cause, it is significantly correlated with IPV. Mandatory reporting and found that it may make women less likely to report (Campbell and Walton-Moss, 2002). They also found that 59% of the physicians would likely be non compliant in reporting IPV if the client objects (Campbell and Walton-Moss, 2002).

Between November 1995 and May 1996, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) conducted a “National Violence against Women Survey” of over 8000 women and 8000 men. This survey was completely confidential and a first of its kind in its scope. A summary of the results are 22.1% of woman and 7.4% of men have been a victim of IPV; 64% of the violence against women is IPV; women are twice as likely to be victims of sexual violence if they were raped before the age of 18; only 1/3 of the victims received medical treatment. Fifty one point nine percent of women and 66.4% of men were physically assaulted as children. Seventeen point six percent of all women have been a victim of rape and 21.6% of those were under the age of 12 when they were first raped, 32.4% were between the ages of 18-24, 29.4% between the ages of 18-24 and 16.6% were older than 25 years of age when first raped. The results of this survey indicate that IPV intervention needs to be done through early screening and education of children and young adults.

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Holland, Smith and White (2003), conducted a longitudinal design study of dating violence among adolescent and college women. They looked two cohorts of women from high school to senior in college. The results follow the trend of the CDC study showing the percentage of women being victimized higher the younger they are, and decreasing as they got older, with the peak being prior to the age of 18. The study size shrunk as the study went on to almost one half of what it originally was, though the study stated that the results of those who fell out of the study staying on the same trend, that is only an assumption.

Community Resources Available to Students on Campus

The resources available for victims of intimate partner violence on the college campus are the campus police, the counseling center and the health clinic. The campus police may be the victim's first line of defense especially if the crime was committed on campus. The campus police were fully knowledgeable and trained in how to respond and where to correctly guide students who seek assistance or are victims of intimate partner violence. A problem which was found is that they may be biased and not afford all people the same resources based on their initial impression of the victim as evidenced by a case of a woman who reported she had been sexually assaulted and was not counseled to go to the crisis center because the officer did not believe her. This officer stated that his opinion was based on his many years of experience, however even if he is correct, all alleged victims should be given the same counsel to go to the crisis center for assistance as this is their specific area of expertise. In addition, many victims already may not want to report for fear of not being believed.

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The university counseling center is a confidential resource which is well trained in intimate partner violence, PTSD and a variety of issues which may result from abuse. The counseling is free to all students enrolled in at least three credit hours.

The health clinic is another resource that can offer a variety of assistance to students from a free consult to an examination and testing which are done at minimal charge for all full and part time students. They have literature on display and have actively sought to increase awareness of intimate partner violence on campus. They ran a two page article in the campus on line newsletter on Understanding Intimate Partner Violence which had links to many resources to include a relationship test; a self test which helps to identify healthy versus unhealthy relationships.

Outside the college campus the other resources include: crisis services, the city police, the domestic violence hotline and many online resources. Crisis services provides assistance from rape response intervention for the most serious cases to a crisis intervention Help-line, assistance with domestic violence and court advocacy, a HOPE place shelter for victims of domestic violence and information and referrals. The sexual assault/domestic violence nurse examiner can help by documenting forensic evidence in order to prosecute the offender. They also provide confidential emotional support and counseling for victims. The police will escort the victims to the facility or it can be reached by phone. The city police can help the victim by both helping guide them through the process of bringing criminal charges and assisting get the victims to crisis services. Crisis services will act as an advocate for the victim and should be the first line of referral for all IPV cases without bias or judgment.

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There are numerous internet resources; the Center for Disease Control (CDC) www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index/html , Break the cycle www.breakthecycle.org , Love is Respect www.loveisrespect.org , the American Bar Association http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/initiatives_awards/national_teen_dating_violence_prevention_initiative.html , the domestic violence hotline is www.thehotline.org and Crisis Services of North Alabama www.csna.org .

University Demographics

The university is an autonomous part a larger system. It is located in Research Park and lies adjacent to the Space and Rocket Center, Teledyne Brown and the National Ocean and Aviation Administration. It is located a city with a population of 334,811. The university had 7614 students in 2010, 700 were first time freshman, 2388 males, 2151 females and 60% of new freshman live on campus. 21% of all students live on campus. The average age of students is 24 years old. Out of 5828 undergraduates, 4185, or 71%, are Caucasian. 85% of the students are from in state. The majority, 28%, of the students are engineering majors. The ratio of the students to faculty is 16:1. (www.collegeportraits.org)

Crime on the University Campus

Criminal Offenses - General*	1/2008 12/2008	1/2009 12/2009	1/2010 12/2010
Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter	0	0	3
Negligent Manslaughter	0	0	0
Sex Offenses - Forcible	0	1	0
Sex Offenses - Nonforcible	1	0	0
Robbery	0	0	1
Aggravated Assault	1	1	3
Burglary	23	11	20
Motor Vehicle Theft	0	2	3
Arson	0	0	0

*Includes criminal offenses occurring in residence halls.

Criminal Offenses - In Residence Halls	1/2008 12/2008	1/2009 12/2009	1/2010 12/2010
Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter	0	0	0
Negligent Manslaughter	0	0	0
Sex Offenses - Forcible	0	1	0
Sex Offenses - Nonforcible	1	0	0
Robbery	0	0	0
Aggravated Assault	0	0	0
Burglary	9	5	11
Motor Vehicle Theft	0	2	2
Arson	0	0	0

Campus Safety Guide, Campus Crime Statistics

Since 1990, the Student's Right- to- Know and Campus Security Act has mandated crime reporting on the campuses of Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), McMahon (2008). This federal law was developed in response to a student who was brutally raped, tortured and sodomized in the dormitory of PSU. The law has been amended and titled Jeanne Cleary

Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics. In 1999, the NIJ mandated that the IHE assess compliance with the Cleary Act (McMahon 2008).

Methodology

The population for the research targeted female college students. A convenience sample of female students was obtained through invitation to participate prior to a college class. Eight college classroom instructors agreed to allow the survey to be disseminated prior to classroom instruction. The paper surveys were handed to the students and then picked up by the researcher to ensure privacy. Participation was nearly 100% with 222 out of 223 students completing it. The survey was a 20 question, 2 page written and confidential questionnaire (See Appendix A). The questionnaire contained mixed questions, 6 likert, 7 circling the correct choice, five yes/no questions and two fill in the blank questions. The results were then entered into a spreadsheet and analyzed to determine trends.

The permission to disseminate the survey on campus was approved by the Institutional Review Board after a contingency was made to provide information and assistance for the participants if needed and to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the surveys.

Results

The majority of the students, 68% or 151 students, reported that they were unlikely to use the counseling center. While the personal level of concern for IPV was low, mean of 2.32, on a scale of 1-5, the level of concern for IPV in the community was 3.68. Sixty nine percent, or 154 of respondents, reported that fear of others finding out would not keep them from reporting. The reported self-confidence level was 3.97 with 5 being the highest. Of particular significance was

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that all students report family support being 4.58 out of 5, on a scale of 1-5. Ninety four percent, or 209/222 of the students, could correctly identify signs of intimate partner violence.

Fifteen percent, or 34/222 students, have been victims of intimate partner violence. While drinking has not been shown to be a cause of intimate partner violence, this research, along with McMahon (2008) correlates increase usage of the victims who self reportedly consume alcohol 3.97 times per month where as the non victims self report to consume alcohol 1.54 times per month. Both victims and non victims acknowledge that a woman can still be the victim of rape even if she has consumed alcohol, with 98% or 206/222 respondents, answering that “a woman can still be raped even if she is drinking alcohol”.

The research showed the respondent’s ability to locate services was of significance: 85% knew which building the health clinic was located, 73% knew which building the campus police was located and 28% knew where the counseling center was located.

Additionally, a comparison of the victim’s and non-victim’s knowledge showed that victims of IPV were more likely to use the counseling center. The family support reported by non-victims was significantly lower (See Figure 1).

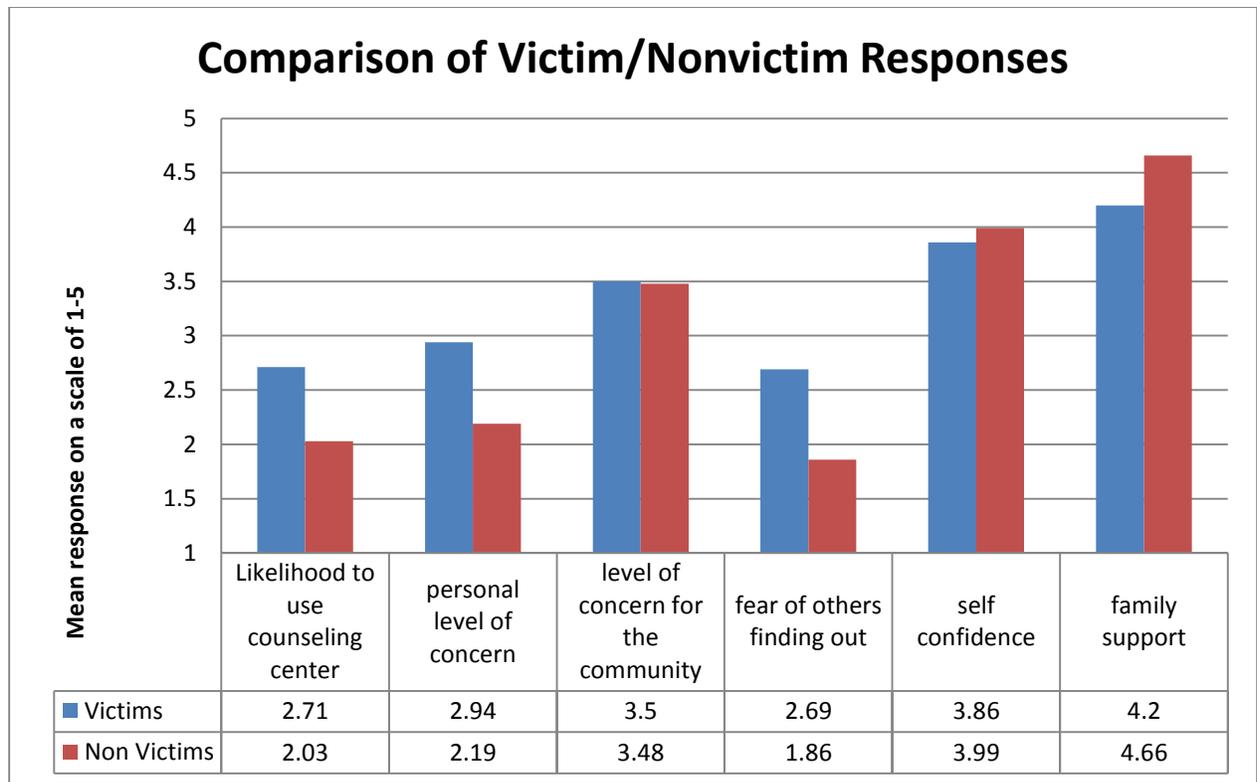


Figure 1

Discussion

The original intent of this research was to compare freshmen and senior student’s knowledge of IPV, however due to the fact that most freshmen are <19 years old, and are minors, therefore in Alabama, they must have parental permission to complete the surveys. The focus of the research changed to consider collecting all female students. The majority of the students, 87%, in this survey were nursing students this was due to finding the students in a convenience sampling, but it may be a factor that future research would like to control better.

The results of what the students thought about making the campus safer was especially interesting, 65% (144/222) of the students were concerned about safety. The most frequent need verbalized was 32% (71/222), responded that there should be better lighting especially around

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the parking lot. They were concerned about the distance they had to walk from the parking lot to the classrooms. Twenty two percent (48/222), wanted better security with it being more visible and more availability of escorts at night to the parking lots. They also mentioned that a shuttle, especially at nighttime, would help them feel safer with 12% (27/222) requesting this type of service. Eighteen percent (39/222) suggested assertiveness or self defense training. And three of them stated that they would feel better if they could carry a weapon on campus.

From the results of this research it suggests that the students on the campus know what IPV is, but they could use more information on the resources available to victims. Both where the counseling center is located, and how to report IPV, are the primary areas which need to be taught in orientation. It also needs to be noted and recommended to the campus police to send IPV victims to crisis services without judgment. In addition, a victim advocate should be immediately assigned to each person on campus who reports IPV to campus police. IPV and sexual assault are currently not in the student handbook/code of conduct, this situation needs to be rectified immediately.

Further research could use this research to implement an educational intervention and conduct a post test. Also the data collected from these surveys could be further analyzed for trends and knowledge deficits. Policy and safety recommendations will be forwarded to the Dean of students based on this research.

IPV is an issue that affects at least 15% of the student population and educational interventions and adequate response and safety procedures should continue to be reexamined and improved upon to provide the necessary support the student population.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Circle the correct response on a scale of 1-5, one being very unlikely to 5 being highly likely

1. What building houses the **campus police**?

The University Center Shelby Center The intermodal Parking facility Charger
Village

2. What building houses the **Counseling center**?

Shelby Center Madison Hall The University Center Johnson Research Center Roberts
Hall

3. Which building houses the **Health clinic**?

Madison Hall Charger Village The Parking facility The University Center Roberts
Hall

4. **Circle the following that are signs of intimate partner violence.**

Hitting verbal abuse joking controlling isolating

5. **Circle the following that are signs of intimate partner violence?**

Stalking intimidation rape dating praising

6. **Have you ever heard of Crisis Services of North Alabama?** Yes No

7. **How likely would you be to use the counseling center on campus?**

1 2 3 4 5

8. **Have you ever been a victim of intimate partner violence?** Yes No

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If yes list the age when it first happened:

Less than 12 between 12-15 between 16-18 older than 18

9. **Have you known anyone who has been a victim of intimate partner violence?** Yes

No

10. **Did you receive any information on intimate partner violence in high school?** Yes

No

11. **What is the level of concern you feel regarding intimate partner violence?**

1 2 3 4 5

12. **How much would fear of others finding out keep you from reporting an intimate partner violence crime?**

1 2 3 4 5

14. **Are you a member of a social or support organization such as a church group or a sorority?** Yes or No if yes list _____

15. **How often do you engage in sexual intercourse?**

Not at all _____ Every

Day

16. **How often do you engage in drinking alcoholic beverages?**

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Not at all _____ Every
Day

17. **Do you live:** In a campus resident hall Off
campus apartment in a home with family other _____

18. **How would you rate your self confidence?** 1 2 3 4 5

19. **How would you rate your family support?** 1 2 3 4 5

20. **If a woman is drinking alcohol can she still be raped?** Yes No

Open ended questions

What could UAH do to make you feel safer? (*Example would be better security, lights, shuttle? women's dorms, safety or self defense classes, assertiveness training*)

What is your major/educational back ground?

What are the obstacles that would keep you from reporting intimate partner violence? (*Fear of retaliation, don't know what it is, don't know how to report, fear of not being believed, involved in drinking, don't want him to get in trouble...*)

Appendix B

Questionnaire Results

Circle the correct response on a scale of 1-5

One being none or very unlikely to 5 being highly likely

1. How likely would you be to use the counseling center on campus?

1 2 3 4 5

The mean was 2.14 1) 79 2) 72 3) 43 4) 15 5) 12

2. What is the level of personal concern you feel regarding intimate partner violence?

1 2 3 4 5

The mean was 2.32 1) 107 2) 24 3) 29 4) 29 5) 30

3. What level of concern do you feel regarding intimate partner violence in the community?

1 2 3 4 5

The mean was 3.68 1) 20 2) 26 3) 66 4) 58 5) 46

4. How much would fear of others finding out keep you from reporting an intimate partner violence crime?

1 2 3 4 5

The mean was 2.0 1) 105 2) 52 3) 36 4) 16 5) 12

5. How would you rate your self confidence?

1 2 3 4 5

The mean was 3.97 1) 4 2) 6 3) 44 4) 106 5) 61

6. How would you rate your family support?

1 2 3 4 5

The mean was 4.58 1) 1 2) 5 3) 17 4) 39 5) 159

Circle the appropriate answer for the following questions:

7. What building houses the campus police?

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**The University Center Shelby Center The intermodal Parking facility
Charger Village**

161/222 or 73% Knew the correct location

8. What building houses the **Counseling center**?

**Shelby Center Madison Hall The University Center Johnson Research Center
Roberts Hall**

63/222 or 28% knew the correct location

9. Which building houses the **Health clinic**?

**Madison Hall Charger Village The Parking facility The University Center
Roberts Hall**

188/222 or 85% knew the correct location

10. **Circle the following that are signs of intimate partner violence:**

Hitting verbal abuse joking controlling isolating

Stalking intimidation rape dating praising

209/222 or 94% could identify signs of intimate partner violence

11. **Have you ever heard of Crisis Services of North Alabama?** Yes No

102/222 or 46% have heard of CSNA

12. **Have you ever been a victim of intimate partner violence?** Yes No

34/222 or 15% have been a victim of intimate partner violence

If yes list the age range it first happened:

Less than 12 between 12-15 between 16-18 older than 18

13. **Have you known anyone who has been a victim of intimate partner violence?** Yes
No

129/222 or 58% knew someone who had been a victim

14. **Did you receive any information on intimate partner violence in high school?** Yes
No

77/222 or 35% had received information on IVP in high school

15. **Are you a member of a social or support organization such as a church group or a sorority?** Yes or No if yes list _____

16. How often do you engage in sexual intercourse?

Not at all _____ Once a month _____ Every other week _____ Every week _____ Every Day

Mean- 4.51 times per month

17. How often do you engage in drinking alcoholic beverages?

Not at all _____ Once a month _____ Every other week _____ Every week _____ Every Day

Mean 1.92 times a month

18. Do you live: (Circle one) In a campus resident hall

Off campus --- **Apartment** **in a home with family** other _____

19. If a woman is drinking alcohol can she still be raped? Yes No

206/211 or 98% responded that a woman can still be raped even if she is drinking alcohol

Open ended questions

What could UAH do to make you feel safer? (*Example would be better security, lights, shuttle? women's dorms, safety or self defense classes, assertiveness training*) other:

Better lights-especially in parking lots 71

Better security (escorts, more visible)-48

Assertiveness/self defense training 39

Shuttle-27

Ability to carry weapons-3

What is your major/educational back ground?

What year of study are you in? Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

What are the obstacles that would keep you from reporting intimate partner violence? (*Fear of retaliation, don't know what it is, don't know how to report, fear of not being believed, involved in drinking, don't want him to get in trouble...*)

Fear of retaliation-35

Not being believed/taken seriously- 14

Don't want to get him in trouble-13

Not knowing how to report-12

Judging/shame-7

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Broken family/stability/children- 4
Intoxicated-3
Re-experiencing it over and over- 2
Only happened once-1
Own fault-1
Friends-1
Love of partner-1
Nothing will be done-1
What is reportable-1
Inconvenience-1
Report to family and let them handle it-1
Police involvement-1
Financial support-1