

A GROUNDED THEORY OF CHILD ABUSE

A Thesis

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
In the Department of Psychology
University of Saskatchewan

By Gail Andrew

Copyright Gail Andrew. All Rights Reserved

PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of the University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other use of material in this thesis in whole or in part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of Psychology
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N 5A5

ABSTRACT

My dissertation is an attempt to bring clarity and relevance to the way in which we define and understand child abuse in our communities and in our research. The variety of ways in which child abuse is currently defined hampers efforts to capture the prevalence of child abuse and seriously undermines research efforts. Professionals and researchers agree that the definition of child abuse is problematic and call for a concerted effort to address the problem.

Child abuse is a concept that has been shaped by our understanding of childhood which, in turn, has been fashioned by history and politics. As the role of children and their importance to families and communities have evolved over time, so has the notion of what constitutes abuse of children. Until the 19th century, the state intervened only when parents could not provide for their children or if parents were engaged in criminal or immoral behavior. At that time, children had no special status under the law but were protected against assault and cruelty under the same statutes as adults. Over time, children assumed special status under the law, and soon, middle-class values about childrearing practices became the guiding principles of good parenting and, conversely, defined what constituted child abuse (Giovannoni and Becerra, 1979).

The benchmark in the search for a definition of child maltreatment was set by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). Their vignettes have been used extensively in the search for a consensus on what constitutes child abuse. Drawing from the literature as well as organizations such as the American Humane Association and the Child Welfare League, Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) constructed a series of vignettes, each depicting a parental behavior considered potentially abusive or neglectful. The method has been used to investigate definitions of child maltreatment with various professionals such as social workers, health workers, police officers, lawyers and teachers. It has been used to solicit the views of community members generally, mothers specifically, as well as adolescents, young adults, children and victims of child maltreatment. Although some modifications have been made to the original vignettes or method used by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979), most studies have simply been replications of their original research

with different groups.

The goal of the present study is to contribute to our understanding of child abuse by giving voice to individuals who labeled their childhood experiences abusive. In-depth, unstructured interviews explored their childhood experiences, and the process by which they arrived at their decision to label these experiences as abusive. The categories and properties that emerged from the analysis of these narratives were tested against the narratives of individuals who shared similar childhood experiences but who did not label their experiences as abusive. I used the principles and methods of grounded theory to guide the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.

In my research, child abuse is best described as a dynamic process that occurs in the interaction between the child and his or her parents as well as a child and his or her community. It is a struggle for control that begins with a parent's need for control and that escalates over time into out-of-control behaviors as a child attempts to regain control through a variety of strategies that, over time, also become out of control. Stressors, both pre-existing and on-going, play a pivotal role in initiating and maintaining the child abuse process. Isolation, both social and psychological, is central to the experience of abuse and leads to the labeling of abuse. The experience of child abuse is one of being dehumanized or being robbed of a sense of self. A discussion of this theory in relation to present models of abuse, the intergenerational transmission of abuse, interventions and directions for future research follows the presentation of the theory.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members for their support and guidance throughout the process of this research: Linda McMullen, John Conway, Pamela Downe. A special thank you to Margaret McKim for undertaking the task of supervising this research project and spending many hours reading drafts.

My heartfelt thanks go to Lynda Ross who served as peer debriefer for this research. Her willingness to engage in long discussions via telephone and email were invaluable to the development of the theory contained in these pages. I also want to thank my eldest daughter Christine Andrew who transcribed the interviews in this study. Her assistance sped the process up immeasurably.

Finally I want to thank all the people who participated in this research but particularly those who shared their stories of childhood so willingly and candidly.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to Kara who served as the inspiration for this research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Permission to Use	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	v
Dedication	vi
Table of Contents	vii
CHAPTER 1	
THE PROBLEM	1
1.1 ACCURATE PREVALENCE UNAVAILABLE	2
1.2 EFFECTIVE RESEARCH UNDERMINED	5
1.3 OUR PRESENT UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD ABUSE	8
1.4 RESEARCH ON DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE	12
1.5 THE PRESENT STUDY	15
1.5.1 The Researcher	16
1.6 TRANSPARENCY IN RESEARCH	18
CHAPTER 2	
CHILD ABUSE -AN HISTORICAL SKETCH	21
2.1 CHILDHOOD IN CONTEXT	21
2.1.1 THE INFLUENCE OF ECONOMICS	24
2.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE POOR LAWS	26
2.3 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	29
2.4 THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE	31
2.5 SUMMARY	34

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS	36
3.1 PROFESSIONALS DEFINE CHILD MALTREATMENT	37
3.1.1 Limitations of Design and Analysis	39
3.1.2 British Professionals	40
3.1.3 Teachers' Definitions of Maltreatment	42
3.2 COMMUNITY MEMBERS	43
3.2.1 Ratings of Neglect	47
3.2.2 Structured Interviews	50
3.2.3 Research with Adolescents	52
3.3 VICTIMS' PERSPECTIVES ON ABUSE	53
3.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	56
3.5 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS	58
3.6 UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING CHILD ABUSE	61

CHAPTER 4

THE PRESENT STUDY	63
4.1 CLASSICAL WAYS OF DEFINING CONCEPTS	64
4.2 GROUNDED THEORY	65
4.3 THEORETICAL SAMPLING	67
4.4 RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANT POOL	68
4.4.1 Recruitment Method	68
4.5 MATERIALS	70
4.6 DATA COLLECTION	71
4.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA	74
4.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS	76
4.8.1 Credibility	77
4.8.2 Transferability	78
4.8.3 Dependability	78

4.8.4 Confirmability	79
CHAPTER 5	
RESULTS	80
5.1 ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS	80
5.1.1 My Clinical Experience	82
5.1.2 About the Narratives	83
5.2 THE THEORY	84
5.3 CORE CATEGORY: STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL	86
5.3.1 Out-of-Control Behaviors	90
5.3.2 Regaining Control	101
5.2.2 Stressors	104
5.2.3 Isolation	109
5.4 SUMMARY	122
CHAPTER 6	
DISCUSSION	124
6.1 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS	124
6.1.2 Abuse vs. Neglect	126
6.2.1 Definitions of Abuse	128
6.2.2 Models of Abuse	131
6.2.3 The Four Factor Model of Oppositional Behavior	133
6.2.4 Contextual Factors	134
6.2.5 A Developmental Perspective	136
6.2.6 Need for Control	138
6.2.6 Intergenerational Cycle of Abuse	139
6.3 Interventions	142
6.3.1 The Private Sphere	142
6.3.2 The Public Sphere	146
6.4 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF SAMPLING	149

6.5 FUTURE DIRECTIONS	150
6.5 CONCLUSION	153
REFERENCES	155
APPENDIX A	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	165
APPENDIX B	
CHILDHOOD & TRAUMA QUESTIONNAIRE	167
APPENDIX C	
INVENTORY TO DIAGNOSE DEPRESSION-LIFETIME VERSION	172
APPENDIX D	
LIFE EVENT SCALE	179
Appendix E	
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	181
APPENDIX F	
CATEGORIES & PROPERTIES	183
APPENDIX G	
SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS BY GROUP	184

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Legal theorists, medical personnel, social workers, and psychologists each have unique ways of understanding and defining child abuse. Aber and Zigler (1981) argued that multiple definitions of child abuse are acceptable, even desirable, because each definition of child abuse fulfills a different purpose (e.g., legal, scientific, clinical). More recently, Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) called for a consensual definition of child abuse to be used by researchers and professionals alike. There is a dawning awareness that multiple definitions hamper our efforts to respond appropriately to the problem of child abuse in our communities, and undermine research directed at prevention and intervention (English, 1998).

Definitions of child abuse have not kept pace with our understanding of the phenomenon. Models of child abuse have become more complex over time, incorporating transactional, ecological and epigenetic perspectives (Belsky, 1980; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Egeland, Carlson & Sroufe, 1993). However, child abuse is still defined as a discrete event or set of discrete events - acts of omission or commission that endanger the well-being of a child (Wolfe, 1985). Child abuse is a social issue that engages legislators, policymakers, clinicians, social workers, child welfare advocates, and parents. Although professionals and researchers have engaged in "...vigorous debate over the last two decades, little progress has been made in constructing clear, reliable, valid and useful definitions of child abuse and neglect" (National Research Council, 1993, p. 40). A definition based on a grounded understanding of child abuse is essential to building a body of knowledge that informs policy, intervention, and prevention. The interconnectedness of research and practice in an applied area such as child abuse necessitates a consensual definition. This dissertation is an endeavor to bring clarity and

relevance to the way in which we understand and ultimately define child abuse¹.

1.1 ACCURATE PREVALENCE UNAVAILABLE

The difficulty of grasping the prevalence of child abuse is reflected in the novel ways by which agencies attempt to capture the phenomenon. For example, Statistics Canada reports that in 1996, children under the age of eighteen (24% of the population in Canada) were the victims in 22% of all violent crimes reported to a sample of 154 police departments in Canada. Of these assaults, 20% were committed by family members (Statistics Canada, 1998). Police reports of child abuse provide a picture of only the most severe cases. According to Statistics Canada (1998), more accurate estimates of the prevalence of child abuse in Canada were not available at that time, in part, due to the problems surrounding the definition of child abuse. In a recent study, Trocmé and Wolfe (2003) estimated that 135,573 maltreatment investigations were conducted in Canada in 1998. These national estimates are based on 7,672 investigations undertaken by a selected group of child welfare agencies across Canada but do not include incidents reported to the police. The estimated incidence rate is 21.52 investigations per 1000 children in Canada and includes all investigations whether they were substantiated or not (Trocmé and Wolfe, 2003). The estimates include only those incidents that are reported to child welfare authorities but do not represent the number of children who are actually abused in Canada.

Official definitions of child abuse hamper our ability to capture the extent of the problem of child abuse in two ways. First, definitions differ substantially from one jurisdiction to another. For example, Saskatchewan's *Child and Family Services Act* delineates a wide range of behaviors that jeopardize the welfare of a child. It includes "physical harm," "impairment of mental or emotional functioning," or situations where a "child's development is likely to be seriously impaired by failure to remedy a mental,

1

The terms 'child abuse' and 'child maltreatment' are used interchangeably in the academic and professional literature. However, I prefer to use the term 'child abuse' since according to Roget's College Thesaurus, when abuse is used as a noun it is synonymous with injury, desecration, insult. I believe that when people speak of child abuse it contains the notion of injury. Furthermore, it is the term readily recognized in our culture and our community. Maltreatment or mistreatment does not necessarily have the same connotation. I use the term 'child maltreatment' in the literature review because that is the term the researchers used.

emotional, or developmental condition” or when children have been “exposed to domestic violence likely to result in physical or emotional harm”. (RSS, 1990, Ch-7.2, s.11). Contrast the relative precision of the Saskatchewan definition with the British Columbia *Child and Family Service Act* which defines a child in “need of protection” as a “child who is abused or neglected so that his safety or well being is endangered” (S.B.C., 1980, Ch. 11, s. 1). Given the variance in these definitions, it follows that what counts as child abuse in British Columbia may differ dramatically from what counts as child abuse in Saskatchewan.

Second, definitions of child abuse are broad to the point of ambiguity, inviting individual interpretations of what constitutes child abuse. For example, the child welfare legislation in Saskatchewan appears to be relatively precise in naming the class of behaviors considered to be abusive. However, no indication regarding the interpretation of such terms as “harm,” “impairment,” “mental,” “emotional” or “seriously” is provided. Arguably, the broad nature of the law encourages judges to reflect the “standards of the particular culture and community in which the child resides, holding the child’s experiences as primary to these deliberations” (Walters, 1995, p. 164). However, the broad definition also invites subjective decision-making rules, rules that vary according to one’s personal beliefs and values (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Valentine, Acuff, Freeman & Andreas, 1984). What counts as child abuse for one judge may not count as child abuse for another judge even within the same jurisdiction. Different interpretations of the law lead to different families being designated as abusive in different parts of the country, and seriously undermine efforts to grasp the extent of the problem of child abuse in Canada. The variety of definitions and interpretations of child abuse complicates both the aggregation and the comparison of figures between different provinces.

A parallel situation exists in the United States. Although American federal legislation sets the minimum standards for states receiving federal funding, each state defines child abuse and neglect on their own (English, 1998). Definitions vary substantially across states. Some states include educational neglect in their definition; others vary in the criteria and procedures used to screen and validate cases of reported

abuse (English, 1998). The use of different definitions of abuse leads to different incidence rates. For example, in 1985 the National Family Violence Survey interviewed a representative sample of families and asked parents about their behaviors toward their children during the previous 12 months (Gelles, 1992). Actions considered to have a high probability of injuring a child (e.g., kicking, biting, punching, or using an object to hit, burning or scalding) were deemed to be physical abuse. This poll estimated that 20 parents per 1000 engaged in physically abusive behaviors resulting in injuries to 7 children per 1000 (Gelles, 1992). In a 1995 Gallup Poll on discipline, physical abuse was defined as “being hit on part of the body other than the bottom with an object” (Emery & Laumann-Billings, 1998, p. 123). This poll estimated that 3 million out of 67 million children or 44 out of 1000 children were victims of physical abuse. This latter estimate is 16 times higher than the rates of physical abuse reported to state officials (English, 1998). Based on the states’ responses to the 1999 National Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting System, 826,000 children were maltreated nationwide, for a rate of 11.8 per 1,000 children (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). A comparison of American and Canadian statistics would lead one to conclude that Canada has almost twice the prevalence rate than the United-States. It is difficult to determine whether this difference in prevalence rates represents a true difference or whether it is an artifact of different definitions used by child welfare agencies north and south of the border.

In Saskatchewan, Social Services reported 2,746 children in need of protection for the year ending March 31, 1997 (Working Group on Child And Family Services Information, 1998). According to this report, these statistics represent about 1% of the child population under 16 in the province. These figures approximate Gelles’s (1992) estimate of the prevalence of child abuse in the United States. However, it is important to note that the Saskatchewan figures include all forms of abuse while Gelles’s (1992) data include only physical abuse. If Gelles’s (1992) estimates hold on this side of the border, the number of abused children identified in Saskatchewan falls well below the actual number of children and families in need of services in the province. As these examples aptly demonstrate, different definitions of child abuse seriously undermine our ability to grasp the extent of the problem of child abuse in our communities.

Current estimates of child abuse range from 1 to 5% for the entire population but estimates of child abuse may be as high as 25 to 30% percent when considering populations at risk for abuse (Widom, 1989). The resulting ambiguity surrounding the prevalence and incidence of child abuse prevents the appropriate allocation of resources to meet the needs of abused children and their families (English, 1998). Without adequate resources, social workers are forced to respond to a narrow definition of child abuse, and children and families do not receive the help they require. However, the definition problem frustrates more than our efforts to allocate resources; it hinders the quality of our response. The quality of our response to child abuse in our communities is directly related to our ability to engage in effective and meaningful research.

1.2 EFFECTIVE RESEARCH UNDERMINED

The effective prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse depends on effective research. Effective research necessarily begins with a clear definition of the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, if we are to produce a body of knowledge about a phenomenon, it follows that a common definition must be used across studies intended to contribute to that body of knowledge. This is not the case in child abuse research. At times, abuse is approached from a categorical perspective and researchers study families who appear on their local child abuse registry. At other times, abuse is conceptualized as the extreme end of a continuum of parental behaviors, and researchers investigate individuals who obtain extreme scores on physical abuse scales. Regardless of which approach is used - categorical or dimensional - researchers apply their findings to child abuse.

However, there is no empirical evidence to support the assumption that a sample drawn from the community on the basis of extreme scores on a measure of physical discipline, and a sample drawn from the child abuse registry actually represent the same population. Although the behaviors described on these questionnaires appear extreme, they may differ dramatically from the behaviors of parents who have been identified as abusive by child welfare agencies. If the goal of research in child abuse is to produce research relevant to child abuse, then researchers must provide evidence to support the assumption that these populations are equivalent. Giovannoni (1989) recommended that,

if the goal of this research is to better understand child abuse, researchers must begin by using families from the child abuse registry (Giovannoni, 1989). However, using families identified by a child abuse registry is no guarantee of homogeneity. It is a guarantee that abusive families will continue to be stereotyped and that child abuse will remain a problem connected to poverty and lower education status.

Inclusion on a child abuse registry in any one jurisdiction is largely dependent on the systemic and social definition of child abuse in that area (Giovannoni, 1989). Political, cultural, and historical forces influence definitions of child abuse, and ultimately, which families are labeled as abusive (Barnett, Manly, & Cicchetti, 1993; Korbin, 1991). Substantiating allegations of child abuse relies on social judgments that are influenced by culture, class, ethnicity, profession, and gender (e.g., Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Rose & Meezan, 1995). Some research indicated that there were **no** characteristic differences between families that appeared on child abuse registries and those receiving other services from social service agencies (Campbell, 1991). Other studies have found that abusive families differed substantially from neglectful families (Watters, White, Parry, Caplan, & Bates, 1986). Despite these contradictions, much of the body of knowledge that exists in the field of child abuse is based on findings from studies using individuals and families identified as abusive through the social service system. Results depend on the definition of abuse and neglect, the measures used to define characteristics, and the method used to investigate (e.g., archival vs. pen and paper measures).

Findings in child abuse research often conflict with one another (Emery & Laumann-Billings, 1998; Pianta, 1984; Wolfe, 1985) and “prevent us from reaching unambiguous conclusions” (Emery & Laumann-Billings, 1998, p.128). For example, studies commonly found that abused children suffer from more, and more severe, psychopathology when compared to a sample of nonabused children (e.g., Cicchetti, Rogosch, Lynch, & Holt, 1993). However, Toth and Cicchetti (1996) found that when maltreated children were compared to nonmaltreated children matched on gender, ethnicity, poverty and family structure, maltreated children did not differ from nonmaltreated children on depression. It would seem that factors such as poverty, family

structure, ethnicity, and perhaps gender, contribute significantly to levels of psychopathology, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and social or scholastic competence. Toth and Cicchetti (1996) suggested that their findings indicated a need for closer adherence to types of abuse.

Early research by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) discerned several categories of child abuse based on the type of abuse perpetrated on the child (e.g, sexual, physical, emotional, verbal, etc.). They advocated the use of this typology in research, suggesting that it would provide the specificity required to increase our understanding of child abuse. This has led to an exponential growth of research into the different etiologies, risks, and consequences associated with different types of abuse. However, these efforts have been complicated by at least four factors. First, the categories of abuse proposed by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) are not mutually exclusive and children who are subjected to one aspect of abuse are frequently exposed to others. Less than 5% of child maltreatments occur in isolation (Ney, Fung & Wickett, 1994). Second, given the private nature of some forms of abuse (e.g., sexual, psychological, verbal), it is often impossible to gain an accurate picture of the abusive experiences of children. Third, it is difficult to draw causal relationships between parenting behaviors and outcomes experienced by children particularly when some outcomes may not be evident until later or when outcomes are due to the accumulated effect of parenting practices and environment (English, 1998). Fourth, efforts to relate different types of abuse to specific etiologies are often encumbered by the availability of participants in any one type. Given these problems, it is difficult to understand how closer adherence to typology will overcome the problems in child abuse research.

Certain of the problems in the literature may be attributed to methodological ones. In his 1977 review of the literature on child abuse, Holmes declared that “the majority of studies are so poorly designed that no generalizations should be made from the findings” (as cited in Besharov, 1981). Since 1977, steps have been taken to correct some of the deficiencies (e.g., retrospective research, lack of control groups) that first plagued research into child abuse (see Wolfe, 1985). Although the National Research Council (1993) conceded that knowledge of child maltreatment has improved in the last three

decades of research, the report clearly stated that “we still lack a solid base of research information that can guide and enhance society’s efforts to intervene and prevent child abuse and neglect” (p. vi). Furthermore, there have been few, if any, modifications to the way in which researchers define child abuse in spite of repeated calls for clarity and relevance in defining child abuse (see Ammerman & Hersen, 1990; Besharov, 1981; Emery & Laumann-Billings, 1998; Giovannoni, 1989; Pianta, 1984).

Historically, the search for a definition of child abuse has been an attempt to understand more about the values that lead to different decisions about what is or is not child abuse. At the beginning of four decades of research, child abuse was conceptualized as a discrete event or series of events. Over time, models of child abuse have progressed from simple linear models to ones that acknowledge the complexity of the problem. Parallel progress is not evident in research on defining child abuse. The failure of research into the definition of child abuse is best understood when juxtaposed against the progress evident in the way we conceptualize child abuse.

1.3 OUR PRESENT UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD ABUSE

The advent of x-ray technology is, in part, responsible for highlighting child maltreatment by revealing children’s multiple bone fractures that had previously gone undetected (Aber & Zigler, 1981). Although there was much speculation about how these injuries might have occurred, it was not until 1962 that Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, and Silver published their landmark article, and coined the term “battered child syndrome.” The battered child syndrome was defined as a physical injury sufficient to warrant medical attention, and for which parents had either no explanations or provided a description inconsonant with the injury being treated (Kempe et al., 1962). The medical model hypothesized that parents who inflicted intentional injuries on their children suffered either from a mental illness or from a personality disorder. Although this model has not been supported by empirical evidence (Wolfe, 1985; 1987), it is responsible for setting much of the agenda for research into child abuse. For example, physical abuse is still researched more than any other forms of abuse (Wolfe, 1985), and much of the research effort is directed at discovering the characteristics of parents who abuse their children. The emphasis on pathology overshadowed the cultural and social

factors that may contribute to child abuse.

At the start of the second decade of research into child abuse, Gelles (1973), based on research by Gil (1970, as cited in Gelles, 1973), put forward a sociological model of child abuse. According to this model, the boundaries of acceptable individual behavior are established by social and cultural forces. Research during this time period focused on the socioeconomic circumstances or the social structure in which child abuse occurred. Strong associations between child abuse and lower-class families were found. For example, Garbarino (1976) found that socioeconomic factors accounted for 36% of the variance in rates of abuse. Various explanations for these associations exist: it may be that middle-class families use their resources to cover up the abuse (Gelles, 1973), or that they do not come to the attention of authorities because they lead more private lives (e.g., independent dwellings rather than apartments or row housing). However, socioeconomic forces are not sufficient to the task of explaining, predicting, or preventing child abuse (Garmezy, 1993), since the great majority of people who live in economically deprived circumstances do not abuse their children. During the third decade of research into child abuse, models have assumed a more complex structure.

The social-interactional model suggests that psychological processes within a specific social context account for abuse. In 1980, Belsky proposed an ecological model of child abuse that focused on the interactional processes within and between parent and child, and within both the family and the larger context. The model incorporates perspectives from both of the previous models of child abuse but invites researchers to consider individual characteristics of families within a social and cultural context. Certain characteristics of parents (e.g., learning history, interpersonal experiences and capabilities) are considered to be predisposing factors that contribute to an aggressive episode (Wolfe, 1985). Certain child characteristics (e.g., temperament, health) are also considered to be contributing factors (Friedrich & Boriskin, 1976). The model assumes that certain psychological processes (reciprocity of aversive behavior, global attributions for child misbehavior) are enacted during an abusive episode (Milner, 1993). The model also directs attention to the level of violence that is accepted in our communities, and the socialization practices of families (e.g., the use of physical discipline) as ways in which

we might better understand child abuse. In three decades, the concept of child abuse has evolved from a simple linear model of cause and effect to a model that acknowledges the complexity and transactional qualities of human behavior.

More recently, attention has been focused on understanding the strengths or coping strategies of individuals who have been exposed to abusive experiences but who do not seem to suffer the negative consequences commonly associated with abuse. Egeland, Carlson and Sroufe (1993) conceptualized resilience as a transactional process within an organizational framework. From this perspective, developmental outcomes are determined “by the interaction of genetic, biological, psychological, and sociological factors in the context of environmental support” (Egeland et al., 1993, p. 519). According to this view, any environmental or biological factors may serve as vulnerability, protective, or risk variables which influence behavior directly or indirectly. The developmental process, although hierarchical, is not seen as a linear progression; earlier structures are incorporated into later structures in increasingly complex forms. The individual actively participates in the process by bringing to each new experience, the attitudes, expectations, and feelings from a history of interactions which, in turn affect the environmental stimuli attended to, and colors the interpretations and attributions derived from the stimuli. Resilience is the process of successfully resolving stage-specific developmental tasks (Egeland et al., 1993). If resilience is best conceptualized as a process, it may be that abuse is best conceptualized as a process as well.

Finkelhor (1989) developed a process model of sexual abuse that accounts for the constellation of consequences that accompanies sexual abuse. The Traumagenic Dynamics Model (Finkelhor, 1989) posits that there are four types of experiences key to sexual abuse. They are (a) traumatic sexualization, (b) powerlessness, (c) stigma or negative connotations, and (d) betrayal. Each dynamic is related to specific sequelae of sexual abuse whether intra- or extra-familial. Differences in consequences may be accounted for by the age of the child at the time of the abuse as well as the context in which the abuse takes place. Although this model is specific to sexual abuse, it is possible that similar processes and dynamics mark non-sexual abuse.

Feminists have made major contributions to the broader understanding of child sexual abuse but have been largely silent on the issue of other forms of child abuse (Corby, 1989). From a radical feminist perspective, our society is patriarchal (i.e., dominated by men and male interests) and social organization is framed from the male perspective. This view is particularly pertinent to child sexual abuse where more girls are abused than boys (Finkelhor & Kendall-Tackett). However in the field of child physical abuse, where women are more likely to be the abusers, the feminist perspective has been less prominent. However, the field of child abuse could be enriched by feminist contributions. If the patriarchal construction of reality was overthrown, radical feminists maintain that the incidence of child abuse would be reduced in two ways. First, men would no longer have the need to express their machismo and would be involved in the care of their own children. Second, the construction of women as mothers would change, thus alleviating the stress associated with the primary responsibility of raising and caring for children (Corby, 1989).

Colley (2001) proposed a psychodynamic model of child abuse based on empirical research with college students. In her model, a history of abuse leads to a higher probability of abusing one's own children, but the relationship is mediated by the individual's object relations, namely an inability to trust others. According to her findings, a history of abuse plus an inability to trust others leads to a higher probability of abusing one own's children. This model suggests that internal factors are important to developing an understanding of the conditions that may lead to child abuse. However, it does not address the complexity of child abuse proposed in more recent models of child abuse. This research differed substantially from previous research in that Colley (2001) used a non-clinical college sample to investigate her hypotheses and develop a psychodynamic model of child abuse.

1.4 RESEARCH ON DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

The research on definitions of child abuse has focused almost exclusively on delimiting which parenting behaviors are considered abusive by various groups of professionals and lay people in our communities (e.g., Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Tite, 1993). The goal is to delineate which parenting behaviors are considered deviant within

the community. However, consensus among professionals and/or community groups about where the line should be drawn to distinguish between abusive and nonabusive behaviors is problematic (Giovannoni, 1989; Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). Agreement about extreme behaviors is relatively easy to obtain. These are the cases that make the headlines where children are chained to a bed, or locked up in a closet for years, or where an infant is deliberately burned with cigarettes. It is much more difficult to get agreement about those behaviors that fall in the middle of the continuum of parenting behaviors. For example, there is little agreement in our communities about the appropriateness of spanking. Those who would enforce a total proscription against corporal punishment argue that physically abusive behaviors are instances of extreme physical discipline and that physical punishment may escalate to abusive behavior. Baumrind (1997) opposed the total proscription against corporal punishment, and cited research that supports the appropriate use of spanking as an acceptable, and perhaps valuable, disciplinary technique to be used with younger children. Baumrind (1997) provided clear distinctions between abusive behavior and acceptable discipline practices. “*Abusive physical punishment* consists of beating, kicking, punching, scalding, and otherwise inflicting bodily injury on a child...*spanking* consists of striking the child on the buttocks or extremities without inflicting physical injury...” (Baumrind, 1997, p. 177). Baumrind (1977) emphasized that the context in which physical punishment is used is key to understanding the appropriateness of using physical punishment.

Another area in which it is difficult to achieve consensus is that of medical care. In Saskatchewan, as in most jurisdictions, parents are required to obtain medical treatment for their children. Generally, these provisions have been invoked when parents are neglectful of their children’s health or children require medical procedures which their parents refuse to endorse. Of late, the meaning of medical treatment has expanded to include many alternative forms once foreign to western medicine. Our own community experienced a very public and open debate concerning the ability of parents to choose alternative medical treatments for a child with a serious illness. Social Services invoked their authority under the Child and Family Services Act and threatened to take a fourteen-year-old into care in order that he receive traditional medical treatment

for cancer. The event sparked a debate that produced odd bedfellows. Individuals who believe in the sanctity of the family and protest state interference in family life sided with individuals who support alternative forms of medicine. It is when we encounter these more ambiguous events that personal beliefs, values, and experiences come into conflict with those of the larger community. Given the pluralistic nature of our communities, consensus about which parenting behaviors constitute abuse is likely to be more, not less, difficult to achieve in the future.

To date, research into definitions of child abuse consists of presenting a series of vignettes to a group of professionals or community members and asking them to rate the seriousness of the parental behaviors for a child of a particular age. Generally, vignettes provide very little information regarding the context in which the behaviors take place. In fact, most of the vignettes that are used in different studies are the same vignettes designed by researchers in 1979 (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). The information for these vignettes was drawn from files of child protection agencies and from organizations such as the American Humane Society (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). Although the research was designed to capture differences in perceptions of different groups, it contributed little to a better understanding or definition of child abuse. This approach has been inadequate to bringing the much-needed clarity and relevance to the study of child abuse.

In 1981, Besharov declared that “...existing definitions often fail to meet research needs because they lack : (1) comparability, (2) reliability, and (3) taxonomic delineation.” (p. 384). He further noted that “...research reviews often begin by complaining that inadequate definitions undermine all research findings, but then go on to describe and compare the findings of various studies as if there were no problems with existing definitions...” (p. 387). Besharov (1981) hypothesized that the likelihood of researchers expending a concerted effort to derive an optimal definition was minimal given “governmental and academic pressures for immediately **useful** research” (p. 387, emphasis in the original). It seems that Besharov’s hypothesis has held. By 1987, little progress had been made and Wolfe (1987) stated that “efforts to define child abuse and neglect have been fraught with controversy and shortcomings” (p.14). In 1991,

Sternberg and Lam commented that “...problems of definition are at the core of all professional work on this topic - be it empirical, legal, clinical, or political...” (p. 87).

In 1991, the Commissioner for Children, Youth and Families charged the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services to commission an expert panel to develop a research agenda for future studies in child abuse. Three of the recommendations of this report have significance for this research project. First, the report identified the development of a consensual definition of child abuse as the number one priority facing researchers in child abuse. The report specified that a panel of experts be convened to study the problem and reach a decision of how research will define each area of abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional, etc.) and neglect (e.g., basic needs, medical, educational, etc.). The continued debate among experts surrounding the multiple definitions of child abuse indicates that, short of privileging the opinion of one expert, reaching consensus about a definition in the near future is unlikely.

Second, they strongly recommended that research in child abuse be ‘child-oriented.’ They emphasized the importance of “knowing more about the backgrounds and experiences of developing children and their families, within a broader social context that includes their friends, neighborhood, and communities” (National Research Council, 1993, p. 49). In my view, the National Research Council (1993) recommendation for child-oriented research in the area of child abuse must be extended to include the process of defining child abuse. Third, they “considered, but did not endorse, a framework that would emphasize differences in the categories of child abuse or neglect” (p. 45). Consequently, a definition of child abuse should be built on a greater understanding of the shared experiences of people who have had abusive childhoods without differentiating those who were sexually abused from those who were verbally or physically abused.

1.5 THE PRESENT STUDY

In addition to incorporating these three recommendations, this project also deviated substantially from past research designs. A definition is a statement of the meaning of a word, phrase, or term. To define a concept such as child abuse, one must go beyond mere description and seek to uncover the very nature of the concept. In order

to bring clarity and relevance to the field, a definition of child abuse must include criteria to help researchers and professionals alike decide whether the phenomena they are observing meet the definition. It must pass from the realm of “I know when I see it” to a confirmable observation. As such it requires a theory or model about what child abuse is. The methodological processes of grounded theory are geared to theory building from the ground up and, as such, are particularly well-suited to the task I have set myself in this project. I approached the problem of defining child abuse through the use of unstructured interviews with individuals whose childhoods include abusive experiences and through the principles and methods of grounded theory as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and expanded by Glaser (1978, 1992). Deriving a theory of child abuse from a theory grounded within the lived experiences of those who have suffered childhood abuse will bring both clarity and relevance to how we define child abuse in our communities, and in our research.

The development of any research project is a dynamic process that the researcher undertakes in conjunction with the research history of the phenomenon, and the perspective of other writers, researchers and colleagues. Consistent with the qualitative paradigm that acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher, I reflect upon my interaction with the research and upon myself as a researcher. The present study grew out of an exploration of how I might study mothers who abused their children but my interest in this area and my approach to the problem is grounded in my personal experiences, beliefs and values.

1.5.1 The Researcher

My interest in child abuse was stimulated by my clinical work with a young mother struggling to break the cycle of abuse that had plagued her family for the last three generations. She did not necessarily label her childhood experiences as abusive. Her understanding of her experiences stemmed primarily from the way in which the community had repeatedly failed her throughout her childhood. When she was four years of age, a judge decided against apprehension and removal from her home. Her experiences since that time have confirmed that life is hard, and terrifying, and that one cannot count on the system for help when one needs it. Over the course of a year, as she

met with one crisis after another, I became convinced that she and I truly lived in two different worlds. The assumptions that I made about institutions and the legal system did not apply to her world. Working with this client and her child sensitized me to the middle-class values upon which the enterprise of psychology is built.

This experience confirmed the suspicions that were first raised at my clinical practicum in a First Nations child and family welfare agency. While working with First Nations foster children, I became more familiar with the struggle faced by First Nations' families. More importantly, perhaps, I gained a deeper understanding of how my own upbringing has been influenced by my aboriginal roots. I came face to face with my own difference - a difference that I had experienced deeply during my childhood and adolescence. In many ways, my childhood experiences were more akin to the aboriginal experience than to that of my peers. These insights supported the changes in my political thinking that had been gradually taking place. As a result of these experiences, I shifted away from a purely feminist view of the world to a feminist post-colonial perspective. A post-colonial perspective resonates best with my own personal experiences of race and culture growing up as French and Native in an English-dominated community at a time when being French or Native was not valued. My beliefs and values are a blend of the experience of membership in an upwardly mobile lower-class family, and in an oppressed culture. Through marriage to a white, educated person, I attained full-fledged membership in the middle-class but deliberately avoided the privileges that accompanied such a position. I have always felt somewhat of an imposter. My own studies seemed to complete my transformation from lower-class to middle-class but I find that I continually challenge class and the way in which it is manifested in Canadian culture, communities and institutions. The privileged position that my education conferred on me led me to make a commitment to produce scholarly work that is both meaningful and practical, and that takes class, race and culture into consideration.

My perspective was also influenced by my 20-year partnership with a man who actively practiced law, who both prosecuted and defended, and who was a member of the provincial judiciary. This experience taught me that the administration of justice is a negotiated tension between the personal, the political, and the law, and that laws are

designed to protect property and privilege, not people, unless they are propertied or privileged. I have become very aware of the increased influence of the courts in formulating law rather than simply interpreting it. My knowledge and experiences of these issues sensitized me to the role that the legal system played, and continues to play, in defining child abuse.

My early training in the traditional crafts of sewing, spinning, and knitting, along with my experience as a homemaker and mother have taught me that the quality of the end product is directly related to the materials used to construct it. My original intent was to explore the experience of child abuse through the eyes of those women who have abused, but my analysis of the literature in child abuse and characteristics of the perpetrators led me to question how child abuse was being defined, first, in the literature, and eventually in our communities. My understanding of the need for quality materials to produce a quality product necessitated that I go back to basics and address the question of definition.

As part of my preparation for this project, I read several autobiographies of individuals who were abused as children. They were: *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt, *A Child Called It* by Dave Pelzer, and *Becoming Anna* by Anna Michener. I also read a journalist's account of child abuse based on the inquest of Lester Desjarlais's suicide at the age of thirteen: *Flowers on My Grave: How an Ojibwa Boy's Death Helped Break the Silence on Child Abuse*. The readings include stories of neglect and abuse. Until I started the interviews for this study, I believed that their stories would contribute little to the development of a theory of abuse since they seemed to represent such extreme cases of child abuse. However, as I engaged in the interview process a dialogue began between their stories, the stories of the participants, and my own childhood experiences. Although the published stories are extreme examples of abuse, they contain the same elements as the stories of the participants. Alice Miller's (1983) critique of psychoanalytic work in particular and psychotherapy in general has also influenced my thinking on child abuse and expanded my awareness of the many forms child abuse presents in our culture.

1.6 TRANSPARENCY IN RESEARCH

Transparency in research is a trademark of qualitative research and feminist

research. In grounded theory research, the question emerges from the data that the researcher collects in the preliminary stages of the research. I would like to review the process of how I set the question in this study. During the time that I was investigating possible topics for my dissertation, I worked as a research assistant. My work as a research assistant gave me the opportunity to read the literature in child abuse quite extensively. I noted that although abusive mothers had been the subject of research in many studies, particularly with regard to risk of abuse and characteristics of the abuser, their stories had not been recorded and their perspective on abusive experiences was absent. At the same time that I was immersed in the literature, I was doing clinical work with a young mother who had been abused as a child and feared abusing her own child. As a result of her experiences and the stories she shared with me, I sensed that abusive experiences were somehow qualitatively different from harsh discipline. I struggled with the way that child abuse was defined in the literature and began an intensive review of this literature. I undertook this review primarily to see how I might recruit abusive mothers to participate in a study on child abuse. This review of the literature is in Chapter 3 of this document. Unable to resolve the difficulty of recruiting abusive mothers into a study of child abuse without resorting to a child welfare sample, I turned to the idea of interviewing the primary definers of child abuse in our communities, social workers.

Interviews with social workers might provide us with a better understanding of child abuse as it is currently used in practice. The project would entail a reverse of the process followed by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). In a trial interview with a former social worker, I was struck by her statement that complaints of child abuse were very rarely investigated when they involved families from middle-class neighborhoods. The role of class in the construction of child abuse and childhood is reviewed in Chapter 2. As a result of my readings, my clinical work and the interview, I undertook to examine the process of child abuse as experienced by people who label their childhood experiences as abusive. I adopted the methods of a grounded research project. An explanation of how I carried out this study is in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents the process theory of abuse as it unfolded from the stories I collected from the participants.

During the theory-building phase of this work, I actively sought feedback from my debriefer and shared my preliminary findings with colleagues as a way to clarify my thinking. As a result of one such dialogue, a colleague returned to me some time later and disclosed how helpful the emerging theory had been to both her and her mother's struggle to understand their own childhood experiences. Her disclosure came at a time of self-doubt and convinced me of the importance of the theory as it was unfolding. During the last two years, I have been focussed on my clinical work with special needs children and their families in a children's rehabilitation centre. My work has brought me into intimate contact with children who have been abused in their families of origin and the foster families that care for them when they are apprehended. These experiences are reflected in the interventions that I have outlined in Chapter 6.

Despite the limitations imposed by my own biases and sampling procedures, I believe that the work contained in these pages represents a grounded theory of child abuse. It is necessarily a work in progress but one that I hope the reader will find informative. If it broadens our understanding of child abuse as a process and influences the way we approach our work with abusive families, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

CHAPTER 2

CHILD ABUSE -AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

Child abuse is a concept that has been shaped by our understanding of childhood. It is not my intent in this chapter to present a comprehensive review of the history of childhood or child abuse, but to introduce the reader to the way in which I construe these concepts. In the following pages I argue that the concept of childhood is particular to class, culture, time and place and that it must be understood within the context provided by values, beliefs, economics and politics. Over time, children assumed special status under the law, and soon, middle-class values about childrearing practices became the guiding principles to good parenting (Rogers, 1989). The concept of child abuse cannot be conceptualized or understood independent of our concepts of childhood. As such, it is also context-driven. As the role of children and their importance to families and communities evolved over time, so has the notion of what constitutes abuse of children. Child abuse is a concept that emerged from middle-class values about childhood and appropriate childrearing practices. In this chapter, I first review some of the perspectives on childhood and then chronicle some of the history of the development of the concept of child abuse in North America, Canada, and Saskatchewan.

2.1 CHILDHOOD IN CONTEXT

The history of childhood has only recently gained the attention of historians (Hiner & Hawes, 1985). Much of the history of childhood is constructed from personal stories harvested from journals, private letters, legal documents, church writings and contracts. Since reading and writing were skills possessed only by the upper classes, the burgeoning middle-class and clerics, much of history being written today centers on events or lifestyles of the middle-class. Historians, by the very nature of their education and privilege, are also middle-class. The history of childhood, then, is necessarily a

middle-class account of childhood - one that reflects the beliefs and values of both source and historian. The earliest historical accounts of childhood were based on 20th-century assumptions that often portrayed past events in a negative light. The history of childhood is "...marked by condescension, sentimentality, and even blank incomprehension" (Beales, 1985, p. 9). The way in which the history of childhood has been written invites a number of myths, myths that support our view of the 20th-century as a panacea for children.

More recently, there is an attempt to broaden our view of childhood and to place various experiences in context. When practices from the past are presented within the beliefs and value systems that gave rise to them, they seem less bizarre, more understandable. For example, infanticide was fairly common in many different cultures throughout history (deMause, 1987). When we isolate the practice of infanticide from the various belief systems that support infanticide, we are more likely to condemn the perpetrators as barbaric and to see them as "other." However, if we consider the beliefs that support infanticide, we are forced to abandon this stance and acknowledge the limits of our own human knowledge. We are more likely to see similarities than differences. According to beliefs in Japan, for instance, infants did not become human until they had drawn their first breath, and infanticide at the birth of a baby was acceptable as long as the baby was not yet breathing when the deed was done (deMause, 1987). Once we acknowledge the belief, we are forced to consider our own uncertainties and controversies surrounding the beginning of life - at conception, at birth, in vitro? The practice may still not be acceptable to us but we are less ready to condemn the perpetrators as barbaric or inhumane for we share in their dilemma.

Historical accounts of childhood are replete with examples of the horrors that children have been subjected to across the ages. From these data, we conclude that childhood was characterized by brutality, abuse, and untimely deaths. In fact, many of the customs and costumes do seem particularly brutal to us when seen through our 20th-century eyes. For example, common corsets with steel stays were worn by both sexes and were often used to ensure studious behaviors. As Mary Somerville described it, "I was enclosed in stiff stays with a steel busk in front, while, above my frock, bands drew

my shoulders back till the shoulder-blades met. Then a rod, with a semi-circle which went under the chin, was clasped to the steel busk in my stays.” (Somerville, 1873 as cited in deMause, 1987, p. 427). These descriptions of the common-place reinforce historical views that childhood was a dangerous place in past times, and encourage us to feel somewhat superior in our own enlightened views of childhood. However, I wonder how graphic descriptions of orthodontic appliances worn by many children today will color future generations’ views of 20th- and 21st-century childhood. Will they too not seem barbaric and dangerous to more enlightened perspectives or to people who do not hold perfect teeth in high esteem?

Not all historians believe that the development of the concept of childhood has been a steady progress toward our present enlightened view of childhood. Social historian and French demographer Philippe Ariès (1960) challenged 20th-century assumptions of childhood during the middle ages. He contended that “in some respect (they) were better off than children in later periods when, under the influence of the modern idea of childhood, adults began to deprive children of their freedom, confine them to prison-like schools, and subject them to the severe discipline of schoolmaster” (Hiner & Hawes, 1985, p.xvi). The concept of childhood and what consists of enlightened childrearing practices depend not only on the times, but also on the viewpoint of the writer.

There is a widespread belief that childhood and adolescence are concepts developed in recent times , and that, prior to the 20th century, children were treated as mini-adults (Beales, 1985). This is a conclusion reached by many historians in part because of the clothing worn by children in the portraits painted of them during this time. Beales (1985) relied on evidence provided by American and common laws, Church customs and apprenticeship contracts to argue that childhood and adolescence existed as separate concepts from adulthood in 18th-century America. The evidence suggested that at least four stages were recognized by official institutions during this time - infancy, children, youth, and adulthood. Adulthood was not automatically conferred on an individual but could be reached when that individual demonstrated an ‘adult understanding’ (e.g., of church matters). In New England, age governed sentencing of

youths. For example, a youth of sixteen could be executed for swearing at his parents but only severely punished if he were younger (Beales, 1985). Although we may not treat children and youth in the same ways today as in the 18th century, there is little evidence to support the belief that children were treated like mini-adults. If similarity of dress is sufficient evidence for this statement, then future generations are likely to question the existence of adulthood in the 20th century since most adults dress similarly to children, i.e., in jeans and t-shirts. A further blurring of the lines between childhood and adulthood can be inferred from adults' preoccupation and pursuit of video and computer games.

2.1.1 THE INFLUENCE OF ECONOMICS

In the introductory chapter of his 1974 history of childhood, deMause stated that the "history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken" (p.1). deMause (1974) proceeded to enumerate all the ways in which children have been abused, leaving no doubt in one's mind that, up until modern times, parents lacked any affection for their children. Smith (1985) successfully challenged this 'fact' in his study of parent-child relations in Virginia and Maryland. Using personal journals and birth announcements, he built a cogent argument to support the position that, at least in 18th century Virginia and Maryland, parents "were deeply attached to their children and they structured family life around them" (p. 45). However Smith (1985) did not use this information to challenge prior interpretations about the lack of affection for children throughout the ages. He suggested that the affection and status granted children in Virginia and Maryland was reflected in the lower infant mortality rate experienced in that part of the world compared to Europe. However infant mortality rates in American cities during the 18th century were similar to European rates (Slater,1985) and much higher than infant mortality rates in rural America. In light of these statistics, it might be more reasonable to conclude that differences in infant mortality rates between Europe and Chesapeake were due to lifestyle rather than parental affection. Children of plantation owners did not work on dirty streets or in factories; nor were they exposed to the diseases rampant in crowded living conditions. The south enjoyed a more rural life and the infant mortality rate in the south was similar to that of rural families in New England (Slater, 1985). The meaning ascribed by Smith (1985) to lower infant mortality rates in

18th century Virginia and Maryland does not necessarily follow when one includes economic and political realities in the analysis.

The post-modern tradition of challenging previous interpretations of history relies on converging evidence from a variety of sources. Rodgers (1985) went beyond a simple challenge to question the very basic assumption that written records represent the actual experiences of childhood. He suggested instead that the written records better represent adults' "changing expectations of children" (p.121) as well as their efforts to socialize children to meet those expectations. His research into the socialization of northern middle-class children during the 19th century focused on the transmission of the American work ethic from one generation to another. His study of three socialization forces - the routine of schools, the child-rearing advice, and the stories written for children - suggested that history is not so much one of "steadily accumulating progress" as a series of shifts in "the definition of work and, by implication, adulthood" (Rodgers, 1985, p. 121). Rodgers's (1985) analysis emphasized the way in which concepts such as adulthood and childhood were tied together as well as tied to larger concepts such as work. Rodgers (1985) made no attempt to generalize his findings regarding the socialization of northern middle-class children to either northern lower-class children or to southern children of any class. His work recognized the specificity of the socialization of children and supported the differing experiences of childhood based on class and place.

If we extend Rodgers's (1985) analysis to present-day concepts of childhood, we can easily refute our times as a panacea for children. The boom and bust economic cycles that marked our times have heightened parents' anxiety about the future of their children. Driven by an unpredictable job market, parents frantically attempt to prepare their children for the uncertainty of the future. The precision of electronic schedulers is now required to manage their children's activities. Preschoolers' activities include half-days in the structured setting of playschool, an introduction to musical concepts in a structured music group, pre-arranged play dates with same-age peers, gymnastics for toddlers, lessons in skiing, skating, and/or swimming as well as instructive computer games. All this in an effort to get a jump on others, to maximize their children's

cognitive and social development. More than ever, some of our children have become mini-adults. It remains to be seen whether this frantic pace of living prepares them for anything but reproducing the frantic pace of their parents' lives.

Historians today are challenging some of our notions regarding the history of childhood. They are doing so by using multiple sources of information and locating that information within the economic and political structure of the time. What emerges from this type of analysis is a richer, more complex understanding of the experiences of childhood across time. What is evident from the illustrations presented here is that childhood is an experience that varies from one geographical location to another, from one culture to another, from one economic system to another, from one class to another. The experience of children from economically disadvantaged homes differs dramatically from those of middle-class homes. These differences may provide historians with a natural laboratory to examine more closely the effect of economics and class on the construction of childhood. As is evident from the information provided earlier, childhood is a concept that was established long before the 20th century. In Britain, laws providing for destitute and delinquent children have been on the books for over 300 years (Battel, 1979). We might not agree that these laws were necessarily humane according to our own standards. Nevertheless, they provide testimony to the belief that then, as now, childhood was recognized as a time of dependence and vulnerability warranting intervention by the state.

2.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE POOR LAWS

Several hundred years ago, the practice of state intervention was undertaken to protect the property rights of children whose fathers joined the Crusades, and the concept of the state's ultimate responsibility for its children emerged (Battel, 1979). During most of the 19th century, the state intervened only when parents could not provide for their children, or if parents were engaged in criminal or immoral behavior. Children did not enjoy special status before the courts; they were afforded protection against assault and cruelty under the same statutes as adults. Over time, children assumed special status under the law, and soon, middle-class values about childrearing became the guiding principles to good parenting and, conversely, defined what constituted child abuse.

The continuity between the New World and the Old was provided by the English colonialists settling in North America. When they emigrated to the New World, they brought with them the common-laws and poor-laws that were in effect in England at the time. Poor-laws gave local authorities the right to remove children from parents who could not provide for them. Authorities had the power to either indenture or place these children in apprenticeships until they were either 18 or 21 years old. The practice of indenturing or apprenticing out destitute children was done for two reasons. First, it ensured that the children would learn a trade and become productive adults, and second, it alleviated the financial burden of communities who otherwise would have to pay for their upkeep (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979).

Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) linked the concept of child abuse and the practice of removing children from their families directly to the poor-laws that were imported from Britain, and expanded upon in the United States. Removing children was not necessarily done out of consideration or concern for individual children but was done under the belief that children required strong moral leadership if they were to become productive members of the community. During colonial times, the goal of families was to produce children who would make a contribution to their communities as upstanding and moral citizens (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). Parents in the New Colonies were obliged to teach their children to read and write and instruct them regarding religious teachings. These practices were ensured through regular house-to-house inspections and, if parents were found negligent in their duties, the children could be apprenticed out (Giovanni & Becerra, 1979).

The practice of removing children from parents who were destitute continued until the 19th century when immigration and hard economic times swelled the ranks of children requiring care for whom there was little hope of finding placements. However, financial support to mothers was conditional and they were required to adhere to the parenting standards set by the community. Initially, officials intervened only when it became publicly apparent that there was a parental failure (e.g., a child was in conflict with the law). However, it soon became practice to inspect the homes of mothers receiving social assistance to ensure that they were conforming to parenting standards of

the day. During the 19th century, children could come to the attention of authorities through one of several ways: by delinquent behavior, by being vagrant without visible means of support, or by having parents without means of support or who engaged in criminal or immoral activities. There was no differentiation between delinquent and neglected children until child advocates began to press for change, first, in the segregation of delinquent children from adult criminals, and then, in the distinction between neglected and delinquent children. This differentiation led to the introduction of the juvenile court system which was set up at the beginning of the 20th century (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979).

The juvenile court system was originally conceptualized as an institution with a therapeutic function as its primary goal. It was also a way of circumventing the laws of due process which governed other court systems, and enabled the judge and other officers of the court to bring in all types of information not acceptable in another court of law. There was hope that the system would provide for the best interests of the child in ways that the regular system could not. It was mainly an avenue that brought workers, probation officers, police officers and judges together with parents and delinquent or neglected children. It also meant that juveniles and their parents were rarely, if ever, represented by legal counsel. Given the inequities between the professionals and the parents, the establishment of middle-class values as the benchmark for acceptable childrearing practices within case law was given free-rein. Youth courts are still very much in evidence today but the rules of evidence and courtroom procedures are more akin to regular court. However, because our system of justice relies on case law, the decisions that were taken during the early days can still be used as arguments in today's cases.

It is clear that, at least in the American tradition, financial assistance to families was tied to whatever were the criteria for proper parenting. As the 19th century unfolded and immigration from countries other than England became more common, the range of childrearing practices and family values increased. The courts recognized that child protection laws might impose individual standards (middle-class) on lower-class families, particularly immigrant families who did not share the same religious or cultural beliefs as

police or social workers. From time to time, there were reminders from the bench that the laws were not meant to be interpreted narrowly to impose religious or cultural values on those families whose values might differ from the mainstream (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979).

Close monitoring of families on social assistance is perhaps even more prevalent today than it was in the 19th century given that accountability has been the predominant political view since the 1980s. The likelihood of being reported for poor parenting practices (neglect or abuse) rises exponentially when a family is already being monitored by an official arm of the state. I am willing to speculate that this monitoring accounts for the strong association found between child abuse and poverty (Garbarino & Sherman, 1980 as cited in Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Wolfner & Gelles, 1993). At the very least, it may prepare lower-class families to answer telephone interviews about harsh discipline practices more honestly.

2.3 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

According to Giovannoni and Becerra (1979), by the end of the 19th century, many states had already passed legislation regarding the mistreatment of children. For the most part, the legislation simply collected what had previously existed in the statutes. Although not universal, three categories of parental failure appeared in the laws: a) endangering the morals of their children or permitting others to do so; b) being immoral themselves; and c) endangering the life and health of their children. Aspects of moral behavior were more clearly spelled out than “endangering” or “health.” For example, there were “prohibitions of the use of children in certain occupations - such as gymnast, acrobat, or rope walker - in public exhibitions, in begging , or in any occupation dangerous to life or injurious to health” (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979, p. 48). It is interesting to note that under these laws, gymnastics as an Olympic event would be unlawful since the age of participants range from 12 to 16 years. The physical care of children, or lack thereof, was not included in most jurisdictions at this time because adequate protection from physical assault and cruelty was thought to be provided under regular criminal laws.

The New World emphasized industriousness, and moral and social conformity in

all of its members. Obedience was viewed as a primary virtue of children. As insurance that parents would conform to these values, the State played an active role in ensuring that children were obedient. For example, in Massachusetts parents of unruly children could be punished and statutes "...empowered appropriate civic or religious bodies to chastise rebellious children, even to the point of putting them to death" (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979, p. 40). Although the statutes indicated the degree of importance attached to the subjugation of children to their parents and their elders, they also placed limits on corporal punishment since excessive physical punishment was considered to be a justification for a child to defy a cruel parent.

In the 19th century, childrearing attitudes seemed to shift from a belief in corporal punishment to a "commitment to an ideal of loving, moral rebuke" (Taylor, 1987, p.431). Taylor (1987), in her study of the recommended childrearing practices in Boston and Melbourne during the 19th century, found parents (mainly mothers) were encouraged to use moral suasion when dealing with their children, and advised to use the rod only as a last resort. Because traditional methods dominated in the early 1800s and moral suasion became prominent in the 1840s, it created the illusion of a shift in childrearing philosophies. However, both approaches remained present and strongly represented throughout the century. "The only significant difference was that the confusion became greater after 1860, and the definition of what constituted good childrearing became increasingly vague." (Taylor, 1987, p. 433). Although Taylor (1987) argued that the reevaluation of the role of violence in the family was due mainly to enlightenment and humanitarian concepts, Rodgers (1985) contended that industrialization demanded workers who were self-motivated and self-disciplined. This goal was better met by the internalization of community values and necessitated a shift in ways of socializing children.

The debate surrounding corporal punishment continues until this day with some advocating a complete prohibition against it (e.g., Straus, 1994), and others defending it as an appropriate discipline strategy under certain conditions (Baumrind, 1997). One might take a lesson from Rodgers (1985) and examine the goals that are met by each method. For that matter, it might be extremely interesting to examine the goals that

lower-class and middle-class parents attempt to reach through their differing discipline strategies since higher use of physical punishment is associated with lower socioeconomic status (Wolfner & Gelles, 1993). Although we might all aspire to our daughters being the next Prime Minister or Chief Executive Officer of a large corporation, the reality is that many lower-class families hold much more mundane goals for their children - ones that may not call for childrearing practices that foster the free-wheeling thinkers and risk-takers of the middle- and upper-class families. However, the needs and values of lower- vs. middle-class families are rarely addressed in the literature about childhood and appropriate childrearing practices. It is assumed that the middle-class template is the only template for raising responsible, successful adults.

2.4 THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

“The Canadian child welfare system grew out of a concern to protect neglected, or orphaned, poor city street children and save them from becoming criminal or dependent adults” (Mcintyre, 1993, p.15). Our history of child welfare or its antithesis, child abuse, parallels that of our American neighbours due in large measure to our common roots in British law. What is most often ignored in recording the history of child welfare is the direct role played by economic factors, and the assumptions that gave rise to our notions of family and children. The development of the modern concept of family and childhood assumed a *traditional* family (Mcintyre, 1993). In the traditional family, the father was responsible for the economic security of his wife and children, and the mother was responsible for the physical, emotional, and overall well-being of family members (Mcintyre, 1993). The male head-of-household was the family patriarch responsible for ensuring the law-abiding behavior of the family members, servants, apprentices, and employees within his household (Mcintyre, 1993). This arrangement recapitulated the larger hierarchical social structure. Social reformers of the late 19th and early 20th century wanted to protect this traditional family, and as a new vision of childhood emerged, “this family type was viewed as best for children” (Mcintyre, 1993, p. 15).

The traditional family was an ideal adhered to by middle-class families. However, it was largely absent among lower-class families. The industrialization and

urbanization that took place during the 19th century in Canada was a significant factor in creating and extending a class of behaviors we have come to view as child abuse. Because wages paid during this period were insufficient to meet the needs of families, mothers were forced from their homes and into the labor force. Young children were left in the care of older children until the latter could join their parents in the workforce. Often, mothers returned to their homes when their older children contributed to the family finances. These informal arrangements were curtailed when legislators, lobbied by child advocates, increased the age at which children could legally work in factories. These children, now banned from legal work, gathered in the streets to earn what income they could. It was the growing numbers of street urchins, some of whom were newsboys, some of whom were pickpockets, that offended middle-class sensibilities. As an effort to stem the increasing tide of street children, legislation was introduced that made school attendance mandatory until the age of 14 for girls and 16 for boys. In Toronto, where problems were at their worst, there were not enough schools to accommodate the number of children eligible for schooling. By the middle of the 19th century, industrial schools - reform schools - had been established to take in delinquent and destitute children. Poorer families began the practice of signing their children over to the state as a way to see them learn a trade and ensure a future for them.

As another alternative to seeing their children fend for themselves on the streets, some families voluntarily turned their children over to orphanages. Records from two catholic orphanages in Quebec revealed that families used the shelter as a crisis nursery, leaving their children in the care of the Church during hard times and collecting them during the good times (Bradbury, 1982). In some cases, children were left with the orphanage until they were old enough to work and contribute to the family coffers. In other cases, younger children were left until there was someone old enough to care for them at home. Because the church assumed the cost for these children, the state or municipal authorities were not involved. As the state assumed responsibility for social welfare, the churches closed these refuges and eliminated a viable alternative for poor families during times of stress (Bradbury, 1982).

By the end of the 19th century, Ontario had passed legislation for the Prevention

of Cruelty to and Better Protection of Children (Battel, 1979) and established the Children's Aid Societies. This Act also provided for the transfer of guardianship from the family to the state, and for maintenance of a child in care to the municipality. Care of children passed from institutions to private foster homes, and provision was made to protect the religion and language of the children taken into care. The primary objective of the Act was to provide protection for any child "who is likely to become a neglected child within the meaning of the Act" (Battel, 1979, p. 49). This legislation was considered to be progressive for the times, and it was adopted by the other provinces when they entered Confederation.

Saskatchewan adopted this Act as its own in 1908 (Battel, 1979). Children's Aid Societies were established throughout the province. Initially, they were organized by volunteer boards and their work funded by the municipalities. Eventually, the work done by Children's Aid Societies (i.e., protection, adoption, fostering, etc.) was taken over by social workers and the administration of the system fell to the government. When the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation party came into power in 1944, Saskatchewan became the vanguard in child welfare reform (Battel, 1979). New legislation expanded the circumstances under which a child was considered in need of protection. It retained protection from neglect but added the notion of endangerment. It read: "who is in peril of life, health or sense of morality by reason of ill treatment, continual personal injury, habitual intemperance, continued neglect or other grave misconduct of the parents or either of them" (Battel, 1979, p. 50). The addition of this clause to previous conditions greatly expanded the mandate of child welfare and has set off the present debate concerning what constitutes ill treatment or child abuse. Since 1945, several versions of a child welfare act have been written. There have been attempts to be more specific, but the concepts captured in the 1944 legislation remain. The establishment of residential schools for native children and the subsequent revelation of the widespread abuse of the children within those walls and the walls of church-run orphanages should serve as a stark reminder that the laws governing child welfare are not necessarily applied equally across race and class.

2.5 SUMMARY

Child abuse is a concept that has been shaped by our understanding of childhood. Although it can be shown that the concept of childhood is context-driven, it has largely been shaped by middle-class values and beliefs. Ideal childrearing practices are also synonymous with middle-class values and beliefs, and these have been imposed on lower-class families through the development of the laws governing acceptable child socialization. The strong correlation between child abuse and poverty may be the result, in part, of the scrutiny under which many poor families find themselves when they are receiving social assistance. The association between poverty and child abuse has led to the development of a 'stereotypic abusive family' - a stereotype which ignores the possibility that child abuse occurs in middle-class families. This stereotype also helps to protect middle-class families from coming under closer scrutiny when it comes to their own childrearing practices and nurtures an attitude of 'othering' lower-class families. It also permitted the wide-scale abuse of children of an 'other' race, specifically Aboriginal children. The research into child abuse both reflects and advances that standpoint. If we are to develop a better understanding of child abuse, then we need to distance ourselves from that standpoint, adopt a more open and broad-minded approach to its study and include context as a critical element in our research.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The benchmark in the search for a definition of child maltreatment was set by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). Their vignettes have been used extensively in the search for a consensus on what constitutes child maltreatment. Drawing from the literature as well as organizations such as the American Humane Association and the Child Welfare League, Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) constructed a series of vignettes, each depicting a parental behavior considered abusive or neglectful. They asked respondents to rate the seriousness of vignettes representing 13 different categories of child maltreatment. In all, 156 vignettes were created: half of which consisted of only parental behaviors, and half of which included both parental behaviors and the consequences of these behaviors on a six-year-old child.

Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) have provided researchers with a model for studying the definition of child abuse. It has been used to investigate definitions of child maltreatment with various professionals such as social workers, health workers, police officers, lawyers and teachers. It has been used to solicit the views of community members generally, mothers specifically, as well as adolescents, young adults, children and victims of child maltreatment. Although some modifications have been made to the original vignettes or method used by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979), most studies have simply been replications of their original research with different groups. Since Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) seem to have established a benchmark, I begin the chapter with a detailed exploration of their work. From this point, the review is organized around studies of professionals and community members including adolescents, children, and self-identified victims of child abuse.

3.1 PROFESSIONALS DEFINE CHILD MALTREATMENT

Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) randomly presented 60 of 156 available vignettes to four professional groups deemed to play key roles in the child protective service system in Los Angeles County. They asked social workers (n = 113), police officers (n = 50), lawyers (n = 71), and pediatricians (n = 79) to rate the seriousness of the parental behaviors featured in the vignettes for the welfare of a six-year-old child. Statistical differences were found between the groups on all but 9 incidents. Further inspection revealed that police officers and social workers agreed 73% of the time. Lawyers disagreed with the police officers, social workers, and pediatricians 45% of the time, and generally rated the behaviors as “less serious” than other groups. When consequences were added to the vignette, there was a significant increase in the seriousness of the overall ratings for 43 of the 78 pairs of vignettes. In general, the addition of a consequence increased the ratings of lawyers and social workers but not police officers or pediatricians. In particular, pediatricians rated those vignettes that entailed some medical consequence as less serious, possibly because they are more familiar with these conditions and can assess their seriousness more accurately. When the seriousness ratings of all 78 vignettes were examined, there was no consensus about the seriousness of the incidents of mistreatment.

The distribution of female and male raters was severely skewed within professions, making group comparisons by sex difficult. However, significant effects of sex on ratings were found for 28 of the 78 vignettes. These 28 vignettes related to basic physical care and were rated as “more serious” by women. The experience of raising a family was not evenly distributed across professions but no differences in ratings were detected between those who had parenting experience and those who did not. However, considering that mothers are involved in the day-to-day care of children more than fathers, it might have been more helpful to examine sex differences and parenting experiences together rather than separately. The groups with the most parenting experience (i.e., social workers and police) also saw mistreatment as more serious.

The incidents depicted in the vignettes aggregated around three general areas. The first category concerned the physical care of the child. This category included

nutritional neglect, medical neglect, poor supervision, inattention to cleanliness, clothing and housing. The incidents describing situations in which the child was left alone and unsupervised provoked more disagreement between lawyers and the other three professional groups than other vignettes. Perhaps this finding reflects the controversy surrounding *actual* harm versus *potential* harm. When defining child abuse, many professionals working with children take a broad view of child abuse and include the potential harm that could occur. However, our legal system insists that evidence of actual harm be presented in order to make a decision about child abuse. A second category of caregiving responsibilities included parental responsibilities toward children in the educational, emotional, and moral realms. In general, there was more agreement regarding educational matters than emotional ones. This is perhaps due to the difficulty of drawing causal links between parental behaviors and emotional consequences to children. Social workers rated emotional mistreatment much more seriously than other professionals. Vignettes about stealing, drug and alcohol usage elicited comparatively more agreement than did other types of mistreatment.

The third area included physical injury and sexual molestation of the child. Although one might have expected the strongest agreement in this category, respondents disagreed about the seriousness of individual actions. Among all 78 vignettes, 4 of the 7 physical injury incidents were among the 10 actions judged to be the most serious by the combined ratings of all the professions. The burning of a child with a cigarette was rated as the most serious of all vignettes. Two acts of spanking, one with a leather strap and the other with a hand, generated complete disagreement between the groups. The relative rankings of the vignettes concerning sexual activity between parent and child were similar across professions with actual penetration being rated more seriously than verbal suggestions of sexual activity or showing pornographic materials. There was one exception: doctors and social workers rated fondling of the child as less serious than showing pornographic pictures. Although Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) do not offer any explanations for this finding, one might speculate that although social workers and doctors appear to agree, the underlying reasons for this may differ dramatically. For example, social workers were mainly women and it may be that women, in general,

dislike pornographic pictures under any circumstances. In the course of their duties, doctors will often probe or handle a child's genitals, and this practice may attenuate their ratings of seriousness in this vignette. Although these explanations represent speculations on my part, it is easy to argue that similarities in ratings may be due to personal characteristics (e.g., sex) or to professional occupations. Similar ratings do not necessarily mean that the underlying reasons for the ratings are similar as well.

Besides analyzing the ratings of the vignettes, Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) did a factor analysis of the vignettes to identify the underlying commonalities conceptualized by the respondents. This analysis resulted in the development of 9 categories of mistreatment. The categories, in order of their relative ranking and their mean ratings, are: physical abuse ($M = 6.89$), sexual abuse ($M = 6.67$), fostering delinquency ($M = 6.55$), supervision ($M = 5.19$), emotional mistreatment ($M = 5.05$), drug/alcohol ($M = 4.62$), failure to provide ($M = 4.23$), educational neglect ($M = 4.06$), parental sexual mores ($M = 3.21$). Thirteen of the 78 vignettes either failed to correlate with, or were conceptually unrelated to, any of the 9 categories. The behaviors that did not fit with any of the categories dealt with bizarre or very unusual behavior (e.g., locking a child in a room for the first six years of life). Some of the situations were marginal in their impact on children's welfare and seemed more reflective of circumstances of poverty than neglect.

3.1.1 Limitations of Design and Analysis

This study demonstrates agreement on some of the more extreme forms of maltreatment, and recommends that future research into child maltreatment adopt a categorical approach (e.g., physical abuse, sexual abuse, etc.). It also establishes a method with which to study definitions of child maltreatment. However, it does not clearly demarcate what parental behaviors are actually considered abusive. The age of the child is not varied in the vignettes and may have influenced the ratings. It is unclear whether the consequences in the vignettes were short-term or long-term or what domains were included. For example, whether the child suffered psychological harm or physical harm may have influenced responses of different professionals. Furthermore, the study emphasizes differences *between* professionals without examining what kinds of

differences might exist *within* professions, something that might challenge the researchers' conclusions about the role of professional versus personal characteristics.

The study has a few methodological problems. For example, the number of statistical tests used in the study raises the possibility of Type I error and there is no evidence that Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) took this into account when setting the level of probability required to reach statistical significance. In addition, standard deviations and range of scores are not provided for any of the data. More importantly, the 9-point Likert scale lacks clear descriptors, and we are left wondering if items rated as 1 or 3 are even considered to be abusive by the participants in the study. Although the factor analysis shows some agreement regarding classification of the vignettes, none of the analyses indicate which actions may not have been considered abusive at all. In examining the means for each of the categories, I noted that only five of the nine categories were rated above the median on the scale. Furthermore, each of the nine categories has items that were not rated above the median either by one of the professional groups or by all four groups. The lower ratings may indicate that the actions in these vignettes are not considered serious enough to be abusive. Therefore, we have no way of gauging the practical significance of the obtained differences between professional groups or between categories, and the contribution to our knowledge of what constitutes child maltreatment is severely limited.

3.1. 2 British Professionals

The vignettes developed by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) have been used extensively to study other groups of professionals. Fox and Dingwall (1985) investigated differences in definitions of child maltreatment between British social workers and health visitors and found that these two groups did not differ statistically in their ratings of seriousness of the Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) vignettes. However, they did find within-group differences on some of the vignettes. These differences were most notable among social workers on the vignettes relating to sexual abuse, nutritional neglect, cleanliness, and housing. Fox and Dingwall (1985) suggested that these findings raise the possibility of inequitable treatment of parents and children within the same jurisdiction and emphasized the need for discussion and consensus within departments.

These results also suggest that professionals may have an internal script of what constitutes child maltreatment that is governed by their own experiences and not strictly by official policy. It emphasizes the need to understand the ratings of parental behaviors from the standpoint of individual characteristics of respondents in addition to professional groupings.

Although Fox and Dingwall (1985) used only 20 of the original 78 vignettes, the vignettes were chosen to represent both the nine different categories that emerged in the Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) study and those expected to yield the greatest differences between these two professional groups. As in Giovannoni and Becerra (1979), there is some doubt whether some of the behaviors rated less seriously on the Likert scale actually constitute mistreatment. Fox and Dingwall's (1985) failure to replicate the differences between professional groups found by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) may be due to several factors: a) the sample may have been too small for differences to reach statistical significance; b) as a group, health visitors may differ substantially from pediatricians; c) health visitors and social workers may be more similar in terms of education, values and perspectives than social workers and pediatricians; d) fewer vignettes were chosen for this study than the original study, and finally e) cultural differences between the United States and Britain may play an important role in the failure to find group differences. However, Fox and Dingwall (1985) did find within-group differences suggesting that Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) overlooked important information when they failed to explore within-group differences in their study. This study supports the idea that the way in which child maltreatment is defined is likely influenced by cultural beliefs (e.g. British vs. American beliefs about child rearing), education (e.g., health visitors vs. pediatricians), and individual experience (e.g., within-group differences), as well as professional goals and training.

3.1.3 Teachers' Definitions of Maltreatment

Teachers are professionals who have the potential to play a key role in reporting suspected cases of abuse since they come into almost daily contact with the majority of the children in our communities. Children spend the greater part of their day with them, and teachers come to know their parents through parent-teacher interviews, contacts in

home and school associations, and by talking with, and listening to, children. They are probably more aware of home circumstances than either police officers or physicians. Since teachers are potentially the best-situated of all professionals to advocate for children, their definitions of child abuse are critical to the welfare of children.

Through a survey of more than 200 teachers in Ontario, Tite (1993) investigated teachers' definitions of child abuse, and how teachers dealt with identified cases of abuse. Besides items on definitions and interventions, the questionnaire included 10 vignettes from Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). Tite (1993) selected the vignettes that generated the most discussion at focus groups during a preliminary phase of the study and modified them to encompass classroom situations. Only three of the vignettes met the strict requirements for reporting child abuse in Ontario. Teachers were asked to rate the behaviors in the vignette as "abusive" or "not abusive," and to indicate what actions they were most likely to take if they encountered the same situation in their classroom.

Results of the survey suggest that teachers hold a broader theoretical view of abuse than is covered by the legal definition in Ontario. Teachers rated the behaviors in the three vignettes that met the requirements for reporting as "abusive" more often than other behaviors. However, all behaviors included in the study were rated as "abusive" by at least some of the respondents. Furthermore, teachers seemed to have a working definition of abuse that they used to decide whether or not to report. Tite (1993) found that teachers report only about 25% of suspected child abuse cases to child protection services but find a variety of ways to intervene in the situation (e.g., reporting to school nurse, to principal, talking with parents, etc.). Informal intervention is often aimed at discovering whether a formal report would be supported because teachers are concerned about establishing reasonable grounds for their allegations (e.g., bruising would be followed up by observations, referral to school nurse, etc.). The majority of teachers found parents who refused medical tests or psychological testing of their children to be abusive but felt that child protection services did not share their concerns for the emotional and psychological well-being of the child. A small majority of teachers (52%) felt that a child's exposure to violence was in itself abusive but would not report these incidents to protection services because of a lack of services available to ensure the

child's safety. There was a belief that reporting meant only a "worse ordeal [for children] to cope with" (Tite, 1993, p. 599) and an underlying perception that some cases could be handled more effectively by the school.

3.2 COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) did not limit their study to professional groups but extended their research to community members as well. The basic vignettes (stems and consequences) used in the first study were restructured to include the age of the child (randomly varied to be 3, 7, 13 years or no mention), and the occupation of the parents (randomly varied to represent four socioeconomic levels or welfare recipient or no mention). Vignettes were presented to respondents in the same manner as in the previous study and were available in either English or Spanish. The sample was selected from the Los Angeles Metropolitan area. Fifty-seven percent of the 1065 respondents were female and less than half of the sample had minor children living at home (most had only 2 children). The sample was distributed across all age groups and religions; 37% were unemployed; the remainder occupied professional or managerial jobs (21%), sales or clerical (18%) or blue collar workers (15%) or other (9%). The sample represented three cultural groups: White (n = 687), Black (n = 129), Hispanic (n = 177).²

Like the professionals, community members rated the actions as "more serious" when consequences were included in the vignettes. The number of possible permutations, (i.e., 4 [occupation of parents] x 4 [child's age] conditions), along with the random selection of vignettes resulted in ambiguous findings. Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) admitted this problem but insisted that their data did not support the common speculation that perceptions of mistreatment are influenced by information unrelated to the mistreatment itself. Age of the child did have some effect but in only 25% of the vignettes. However no information is given regarding whether age mitigated or exacerbated the seriousness of the behaviors. Whites rated 94% of the vignettes as less serious than either Hispanic or Black community members. Blacks rated 58% of the vignettes more seriously than the other groups and Hispanics rated 40% of the vignettes

²These terms represent those used in the original study and do not represent the author's viewpoint.

more seriously than the other two groups. Community members rated all of the vignettes as more serious than the professionals. In fact, all ratings were skewed toward the serious end, with none of the vignettes rated below 5 on the 9-point scale according to the group means provided.

The belief that child maltreatment occurs more often in lower socioeconomic classes implies a greater acceptability of mistreatment among lower classes. Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) argued that their findings do not support this view. “Without exception” the community members with more education rated vignettes less seriously than those with less education. Among those people without college education, there was agreement regarding the relative seriousness of all categories but among those with a college degree, physical abuse was perceived to be relatively more serious than parents’ sexual mores and drug usage. In fact, the relative ranking of college-educated members matched the ratings of the professionals, suggesting that level of education rather than professional goals may be more important in defining child maltreatment. Although the relative ratings of all community members were similar, the category of drugs and parents’ sexual behavior was rated as more important by those with lower education, suggesting a greater tolerance for moral deviance in the better educated.

Although education seemed to affect the absolute ratings of seriousness, cultural beliefs affected the relative rankings of different behaviors. Blacks showed the greatest concern for behaviors where parents either failed to provide necessities to, or supervision for, their children. This concern was shared by all Blacks regardless of income, sex, or education. All Hispanics rated sexual abuse, physical abuse, and drugs/sex as more serious than either Blacks or Whites. Spanish-speaking Hispanics rated these categories significantly higher than did English-speaking Hispanics. English-speaking Hispanics rated these categories more like Blacks. These results suggest that specific cultural values may play a large role in the evaluation of behaviors that constitute child abuse, and that the degree of assimilation into mainstream culture may be an important variable to consider when doing research in this area.

Five categories of maltreatment emerged in the factor analysis of community ratings as opposed to the nine categories in the analysis of professional ratings. These

categories³ were: a) failure to provide (medical care, feeding, cleanliness, emotional treatment, housing and education), b) lack of supervision, c) physical abuse, d) sexual abuse, and e) drug and alcohol abuse and sexual orientation of the parents⁴. According to Giovannoni and Becerra (1979), the main differences between community members and professional groups in the categorization of behaviors lay in the “less-fine discriminations made among situations relating to the physical and nonphysical domains of general child care responsibilities” (p. 186). Community members seemed to view child care responsibilities more globally and did not distinguish between emotional and physical care. There seemed to be a willingness on the part of community members to consider the emotional realm on the same footing as the physical realm which deviates significantly from the professional perspective.

Community members distinguished fewer categories of child maltreatment and rated all behaviors more seriously than did professionals. Although there was agreement about the most extreme situations (i.e., burning a child with a cigarette, immersion in hot water, keeping a child locked in a room, and sexual abuse of the child), professionals rated physical harm among the most serious incidents, but community members rated matters pertaining to moral issues (drugs and engaging the child in stealing) as more serious than physical matters. Community members ranked fostering delinquency after sexual abuse and ahead of physical abuse, but professionals ranked physical abuse and sexual abuse ahead of fostering delinquency. This finding would seem to indicate that community members recognize and value socialization practices of parents who ensure that their children learn adaptive values, and may reflect the belief that long-term consequences accrue to children who are not socialized into the community’s mores and practices.

Although some of the same criticisms mentioned before also apply to this part of the study, new criticisms emerge regarding some of the conclusions reached by

³The authors do not provide the means for each of the categories found in the community ratings.

⁴The authors do not elaborate on this category but it seems likely that it is a question of morals as perceived by community members.

Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). The two samples were asked to rate very different vignettes; community members received more information than did the professionals (varying age of the child and occupation of parents). These differences lead one to question whether a comparison of the ratings of these two groups was even possible. Although Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) claimed that age of child and occupation of parent did not influence ratings significantly, the random selection of the variables and vignettes severely skewed the numbers in each of the categories. This large discrepancy between categories complicated the analysis and increased the difficulty of interpreting the results. It may well be that the ratings attached to vignettes with varying levels of information were just not comparable. The differences that emerged in the community sample suggest that education plays a large role in the way that people rate the seriousness of the vignettes. However, Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) failed to note that basic level of education could also account for part of the differences in the professional sample. Social workers and police officers generally have less education than physicians and lawyers. Given the differences found between Whites, Hispanics, and Blacks, it may be important to explore the role of culture among professionals as well. From Fox and Dingwall (1985) and the communities sampled by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979), individual experiences (e.g., culture and education) seem important when trying to understand how people define child maltreatment, and differences in these experiences undermine Giovannoni and Becerra's (1979) argument that professionals make decisions based on their training and not on idiosyncratic beliefs or values.

3.2.1 Ratings of Neglect

Although most of the research has concentrated on general views of child abuse, Rose and Meezan (1995) studied the level of agreement regarding the seriousness of components of neglect among community members and professionals. From a review of state statutes and the relevant literature in child abuse and neglect, the authors identified nine components of neglect. They subsequently developed 66 vignettes to represent these components. Some of the vignettes were drawn from the work of Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). Respondents rated the vignettes on a 5-point Likert scale regarding the seriousness of the behaviors for the welfare of a six-year-old child. The scale was

anchored in the following way: 1 - not serious, unlikely to endanger, 3 - somewhat serious, potential to endanger and 5 - serious, will endanger. The sample consisted of 131 mothers representing Whites, Hispanics and Blacks, 74 child protection workers, and 49 service providers from the social welfare agency.

Rose and Meezan (1995) did a factor analysis of the vignettes used in the study and decided on a 4-factor solution: a) physical care (e.g., does not have shoes that fit or wood floors of home are cracked and splintered), b) judgement (e.g., does not take precautions in storing medications, left to care for younger siblings), c) emotional care (e.g., does not show any physical affection, does not comfort child when upset), and d) sexual orientation of parents (e.g., a divorced mother who has custody is a lesbian). Only 36 of the 66 vignettes loaded on these factors and were used in the remainder of the analysis. According to Rose and Meezan (1995), the vignettes that were excluded seemed to involve incidents that carried less severe consequences for the child. The analysis of the ratings was carried out on the categories delineated by the factor analysis rather than on the individual vignettes.

Hispanic mothers and African-American mothers rated categories of physical care and sexual orientation significantly more seriously than White mothers who ranked these categories below 3 on the Likert scale, indicating that they did not consider these behaviors abusive. Mothers and professionals agreed on the relative ranking of the categories of neglect but mothers saw each of the categories as significantly more serious than did the workers. Mothers perceived all categories as representing neglectful behaviors that endangered the welfare of the child. Mothers also seemed to perceive the neglect of children in a more global fashion, viewing neglectful behaviors in the emotional and moral realm as serious threats to the child's welfare. Overall, Rose and Meezan (1995) found that professionals rated vignettes less seriously than community members, and suggested that their findings indicate that the role one plays in the system influences one's definition of child maltreatment. Rose and Meezan (1995) concluded that social agencies may have moved too far away from community standards and that there is a need to inform the community about the standards used by social workers to substantiate child maltreatment. Providing such information might reduce the intrusion

into family life created by unfounded or not serious enough allegations of maltreatment.

This study indicates that the categories developed by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) are robust to changes in populations under study and to using somewhat different vignettes. The first two categories, physical care and judgment (supervision), are the same categories that emerged in the Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) study of community members, as is the fourth category, sexual orientation of parents. The relative ranking of the categories seems to be similar as well. What is different is that the 1995 sample now identifies emotional maltreatment as a distinct category, suggesting that community members are now making the same distinctions that professionals were making in 1979. However, if one compares the 1979 sample to the 1995 one, the mothers in Rose and Meezan (1995) study are better educated, with approximately 67% having some college education or more. In 1979, only the White sample had reached a comparable level of education. It is possible that the more educated one is, the less one is preoccupied with basic survival issues, and the more importance one attaches to emotional and psychological issues. In this study, only Hispanic and African-American mothers considered sexual orientation of the parents an endangerment to the child's welfare, suggesting that cultural values play a strong role in people's beliefs about child maltreatment.

In spite of these contributions, there are some problems with this research. Rose and Meezan (1995) constructed 66 vignettes to represent 9 categories of neglect. In their factor analysis, they chose a four-factor solution. Although six factors explained a larger portion of variance, the items were "conceptually unclear" according to Rose and Meezan (1995). As a result, they dropped 30 items from their analysis. This number represents almost half of the vignettes in their study. Rose and Meezan's (1995) decision to use categories rather than individual vignettes in their statistical analyses decreases the likelihood of Type I error due to an abundance of statistical tests. However, it may have been more appropriate to use individual vignettes given the admitted ambiguity of their factor analysis.

Korbin, Coulton, Lindstrom-Ufute, and Spilsbury (2000) looked at neighborhood views of the definition and etiology of child maltreatment. Using a stratified sample of

neighborhoods highly correlated with child maltreatment rates, they asked respondents to name three things that they considered “child abuse and neglect.” They were not provided with a list of behaviors or vignettes from which to draw. They were presented with 13 factors and asked to rate each factor on a scale of 1 to 10 regarding how much they believed that the factor contributed to the occurrence of child abuse and neglect. A total of 1,413 behaviors were identified by the sample (n = 400). These behaviors were collapsed into six summary variables created by using conceptual categories from the literature and an analysis of the specific behaviors offered by the respondents. Physical abuse was the most frequently mentioned summary category of maltreatment, followed by neglect. Inadequate supervision of children and emotional or verbal maltreatment were mentioned in nearly equal frequencies. When Korbin and her colleagues (2000) constructed a summary variable that included both neglect and inadequate supervision, it slightly exceeded physical abuse in frequencies. Definitions of child maltreatment did not vary by neighborhoods but there were significant differences in individual variables. European-Americans were more likely than African-American parents to report physical acts of maltreatment and African-Americans were more likely to name behaviors in the neglect category.

Four causal factors were identified in this study: Poverty and Family Structure items were identified most often, followed by Substance Abuse and Stress, Moral Values, and Individual Pathology. Only the first causal factor, Poverty and Family Structure, was related to any of the variables studied. Those individuals who perceived lower neighborhood quality and greater neighborhood disorder were more likely to view poverty and family structure as contributing to child maltreatment. The relationships between the causal factors and gender, race-ethnicity, marital status and high school graduation were analyzed. Males identified poverty and family structure as causal more often than females. Those individuals who had completed high school identified a lack of moral values more often than those individuals who had not completed high school. Married people also identified this factor more often than those who were not married. African-Americans identified individual pathology more often than European-Americans as did those who had completed high school.

Korbin and colleagues (2000) suggested that there is congruence between the literature on child abuse and the lay person on what constitutes child maltreatment and its etiology. Furthermore, there is good congruence amongst the community members regarding what constitutes child maltreatment, and individual differences played a minor role in identifying causal factors of maltreatment. Despite the emphasis on individual pathology and the role of childhood abuse in the intergenerational transmission of abuse found in the literature, respondents placed less importance on these factors than on poverty and family structure. The beliefs held by lay persons regarding the etiology of child maltreatment is a reflection of studies on the prevalence rates of child maltreatment in the United States. As such, it might be appropriate to conclude that the congruence between the literature and lay person reflects the successful dissemination of academic results into the public realm.

3.2.2 Structured Interviews

Rating the seriousness of vignettes depicting abusive behaviors often raises the question as to whether the actions in the vignettes are actually considered abusive or not. Rose and Meezan (1995) found that certain behaviors were not considered abusive when the Likert scale was anchored by descriptors. Elliott, Tong and Tan (1997) also circumvented this problem by asking respondents in Singapore to categorize behaviors regarding their acceptability (never, sometimes, always) and to indicate whether they considered it to be abusive or not (is, can be, not). Elliott and his colleagues (1997) presented 18 different behaviors representing four categories of abuse (i.e., sexual abuse, physical abuse, physical neglect, and emotional maltreatment) to respondents (n = 401) in a face-to-face structured interview. The first three categories of behaviors are officially recognized in child protection laws in Singapore, while emotional maltreatment is not considered grounds for intervention. The researchers selected eight of the 18 different actions (two from each type) and asked respondents if various circumstances (i.e., age of child, whether child is disobedient or handicapped, sex of child, adult's intentions, whether parents are busy working, frequency, whether child is treated differently from siblings, area of body affected, marks or injuries, and poverty level of the family) would qualify their judgement of the acceptability of the behavior.

All behaviors presented in the interview were rated as abusive by at least some of the respondents but there were varying levels of tolerance towards each type of action. Behaviors concerning sexual abuse were considered to be “almost never acceptable” but those involving emotional maltreatment were often rated as “always acceptable” and “sometimes” acceptable. There was more consensus in the rating of behaviors denoting potential physical abuse and neglect which is specified in law than of emotionally abusive behaviors which are not. It may be that laws appropriately reflect community values but it may also be that community members are informed by laws. Respondents in the study often rated behaviors “unacceptable” but not “abuse”. Although all behaviors were rated as abusive by at least some of the respondents, the behaviors were rated more often as “never acceptable” rather than as “abuse”. Does “never acceptable” mean that the behavior represents a violation of good parenting behavior with little or no consequence for the child, or does it represent the need for contextual information to decide whether actions are abusive? Do “never acceptable” behaviors warrant intervention or not?

For the behaviors judged to be more serious, circumstances made no difference to acceptability. However, judgements of actions viewed as less serious were influenced by the circumstances in which they occurred. For instance, caning is an acceptable method of disciplining while slapping the face is not. Caning is acceptable if the child is older, disobedient, not handicapped, and if the caning did not result in permanent marks or injuries. Sex of the child did not influence judgements. Elliott and his colleagues (1997) suggested that the lack of sex differences might indicate that a preference for sons results in better treatment of boys but not in selective ill-treatment of girls.

The research by Elliott and his colleagues (1997) suggests that American researchers may have neglected an important aspect of defining abuse by ignoring the context in which behaviors occur. Although one cannot generalize results from an Asian culture to an American one, one can speculate that the addition of context may help to clarify the grey areas that emerge in the American research. Furthermore, this research suggests that “abuse” and “unacceptable” have different connotations for people. Behaviors rated as “abuse” seem to be more serious, to imply harm, while behaviors

rated “unacceptable” cross the boundaries of good parenting practice without necessarily inflicting harm on children. To date, American research has not taken this possibility into account. It may explain how professionals and community members differ in their judgments of seriousness regarding child maltreatment. It is possible that professionals consider behaviors that they rate as “less serious” to be “unacceptable” behaviors that, in their opinion, do not carry harmful consequences for the child. Community members may rate these behaviors as “more serious” because either they are not using harm as a criterion in their decision process or, in their opinion, the child may suffer long-term, rather than short-term, consequences of these parental behaviors (e.g., sexual orientation of parents). Given the role of culture (e.g., Rose & Meezan, 1995) in defining child maltreatment, one cannot assume that either the method or the findings of Elliott et al. (1997) would apply to a North American population.

3.2.3 RESEARCH WITH ADOLESCENTS

The vignettes developed by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) have also been used to investigate how adolescents and young adults compare to other community members and professionals in their ratings of parental behaviors. Roscoe (1990) found that introductory college students ($n = 204$) judged parental mistreatment more harshly than the community sample in Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). Older respondents (ages 20 and 21) were less critical in their assessment of vignettes than younger respondents in the sample (ages 18 and 19). According to Roscoe (1990), this finding supported the hypothesis that young people who had relatively limited experience with child rearing would be the most critical of inappropriate practices. The findings challenge Giovannoni and Becerra’s (1979) conclusions regarding the lack of effect of marital status, age or parental status on the ratings by professionals. Additionally, 20 years have elapsed since Giovannoni and Becerra’s (1979) study, and it is also possible that the harsher ratings by adolescents and young adults simply reflect a lower tolerance for child abuse. The relative ratings of the vignettes by the adolescents resembled the samples from Giovannoni and Becerra (1979). Unfortunately, factor analysis was not done with this sample, and we do not know whether adolescents and young adults perceive the same categories of child maltreatment as other community members or professionals.

3.3 VICTIMS' PERSPECTIVES ON ABUSE

Although community samples are an important way to investigate definitions of abuse, victims represent an equally important voice that must be included. Although researchers have sampled community members and professionals fairly extensively in their bid to understand definitions of child abuse, very few studies have included victims' views on child abuse. Vignettes similar to those developed by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) have been used to explore definitions of abuse by children exposed to domestic violence. Cruise, Jacobs, and Lyons (1994) developed five vignettes featuring physical abuse. Each vignette included a different behavior directed at a child, information about the event which preceded the action, and consequences to the child. A picture illustrating the scene accompanied each vignette. The gender of the adult was always male but the gender of the child was varied, first to match the sex of the child responding to the vignette, then repeated with a child of the opposite sex. Each subject was read two sets of randomly-ordered vignettes for a total of 10 vignettes. After hearing each vignette, participants were asked to rate the seriousness of the adult's behavior on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "not serious at all" to "very serious". The scale was presented in the form of a bar graph with ascending bars representing the seriousness level.

Thirty-five children (17 females and 18 males) who were in residence at a shelter for battered women and children took part in the study. Their ages ranged from 6 years to 11 years ($M = 8.4$). All had witnessed abuse and most ($n = 24$) had experienced physical abuse. The children were asked to participate in the research only after their second week in residence. Generally, children rated the vignettes on the high end of the seriousness scale (average ratings between 3.1 and 4.4) but ratings varied between 1 and 5. There were no differences in seriousness by sex of participant or subject of vignette. The most serious ratings were given to the vignette in which the adult used an object to strike the child, and the least serious in which the adult struck the child in the face. However, age played a significant role in the way vignettes were rated. Younger children (6 to 8 years) rated all vignettes more uniformly and less seriously than did the older children (9 to 11 years). The two groups differed significantly on vignettes that featured "hitting with an object" and "kicking," suggesting that as children get older they begin to

make finer distinctions in their perceptions of seriousness of different behaviors.

Cruise and colleagues (1990) concluded that children are capable of making distinctions between different forms of physical abuse and that this ability increases with development. This finding has important implications for children reporting abusive behaviors. Cruise and colleagues (1994) suggested that their findings imply that younger children tend to minimize abusive behaviors due to developmental differences in cognitive ability. Additionally, I would like to suggest that the seriousness of ratings may also be dependent on children's exposure to the normative values in our culture. Understanding that violent behavior is not an acceptable way to discipline may come through exposure to alternative ways of discipline in addition to cognitive development. As children spend more time in their friends' homes, they are exposed to non-abusive families. Therefore, it is possible that children's rating of seriousness of some parental behaviors is increased as they begin to understand that other children do not share their violent experiences. This study is one of the first that includes victims of abuse, but the significance of the results is somewhat lost without a comparison group. Children exposed to violence are an important source of information - one that needs to be pursued if we are to gain a better understanding of how to define child abuse.

Before the study is extended to a larger sample, it is important to address some of its limitations. First, the vignettes written for children contain a new element that has not been included in vignettes prior to this research, namely, an antecedent to the parent's behavior. For example, in one vignette, the child had just spilled milk all over the table. Because a new element has been introduced in the vignette, it seems premature to compare the children's ratings to those of adolescents or adults since the latter have not rated the same vignettes. Second, using a male adult in all of the vignettes does not necessarily represent everyone's experience. Mothers are responsible for much of the caregiving and disciplining of children, and engage in child maltreatment as well (Gelles, 1992). It is possible that a female figure would have a different effect on the ratings. Rather than try to manipulate the sex of the child in half the vignettes, it might be more advantageous to vary the adult figure as well as the antecedent or consequences of the vignettes.

Carlin, Kemper, Ward, Sowell, Gustafson and Stevens (1994) attempted to distinguish between abusive and non-abusive behaviors by examining responses of subjectively-defined victims, objectively-defined victims and those who never experienced abuse. Subjectively-defined victims were individuals who responded affirmatively to the statement “I consider myself to have been emotionally or physically abused as a child.” Objectively-defined victims were those who responded to the above statement in a negative way but endorsed “the occurrence of any of nine major assault items” (e.g., bones broken, teeth knocked out, being purposefully burned), or “five other items occurring with a frequency of 3 or greater” (Carlin et al., 1994, p.394). The sample consisted of 280 women between the ages of 18 and 90 years who were attending a university-based family medicine clinic.

On the basis of the responses to a physical and emotional abuse questionnaire, Carlin and colleagues (1994) identified three groups of women: a subjectively-defined group which acknowledged their abuse openly (11%), an objectively-defined group which met criteria for abuse but did not consider themselves abused (28%), and a non-abused group. Statistical analysis of depression scores revealed that all three groups differed significantly from each other with the non-abused group scoring the lowest and the subjective and objective groups scoring the highest. Carlin and colleagues (1994) cautiously interpret these findings as an indication that physical abuse may result in future pathology regardless of the severity or frequency. The authors acknowledge that it is difficult to interpret the higher scores on the depression scale in the subjectively-defined group since they may have become depressed as a result of considering themselves abused.

No clear-cut point of abuse emerged in this study. When Carlin and colleagues (1994) calculated abuse scores from the frequency and severity of physical abuse items, they found considerable overlap between the subjectively- and objectively-defined groups. As a group, the women who identified themselves as abused scored higher on the abuse scale than the group of women who were objectively identified. However, an abuse score of 3 included 98% of the women who did not consider themselves abused and 36% of the women who did consider themselves as abused. Findings from this

study imply that severity or frequency of abusive behaviors may not be the factors that lead a person to consider herself a victim of child abuse.

3.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There seems to be no consensus regarding what parental behaviors constitute child maltreatment. In general, professionals tend to rate child maltreatment as *less serious* than community members (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Roscoe, 1990; Rose & Meezan, 1995), and some behaviors, considered abusive by community members, are not considered abusive by professionals (e.g., Rose & Meezan, 1995). Professionals and community members also differ in their rank-ordering of different types of maltreatment. For example, community members rate behaviors fostering delinquency as “more serious” than physical abuse, and professionals rate physical abuse as “more serious” than fostering delinquency (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979).

Furthermore, professionals do not necessarily agree with one another. In general, lawyers rate most forms of maltreatment as *less serious* than do social workers and police officers (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). Teachers define child maltreatment more broadly than the law; they report only about 10% of what they judge to be maltreatment, and personally intervene in other situations (Tite, 1993). Initial research stressed the homogeneity among professional groups in their definitions of child maltreatment. However, later research indicated wider variance between definitions used by a single profession, for example, among British social workers (Fox & Dingwall, 1985). American investigative workers and service providers also differed in how seriously they rated vignettes even though they worked for the same social agency (Rose & Meezan, 1995). Results of these studies suggest that professionals directly involved with children and their families in the child protective system rate vignettes more seriously than those who do not (Rose and Meezan, 1995). Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) chose to sample from professions that may play a key role in the child protective system but who do not necessarily deal with child abuse first-hand; within-group differences observed in Rose and Meezan (1995) may not have emerged in Giovannoni and Becerra’s (1979) their study even if they had tested for them. Social workers who work in child protection seem to rate vignettes more seriously than those who do not (Rose & Meezan, 1995), but less

seriously than community members (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Rose & Meezan, 1995), suggesting that the closer an individual is to the problem, the more seriously it is viewed. However, this interpretation does not explain observed differences within professions that share the same level of contact (Fox & Dingwall, 1985).

Community samples show within-group variance by culture, age, and sex (Cruise et al., 1994; Roscoe, 1990; Rose & Meezan, 1995). In general, ethnic minorities (e.g., African-Americans and Hispanics) rate vignettes as “more serious” than people from the mainstream culture (Rose & Meezan, 1995). Adolescents and young adults rate child maltreatment vignettes as *more serious* than other community members (Roscoe, 1990), and older children rate them *more serious* than younger children (Cruise et al., 1994). These age differences are attributed both to cognitive development and to unfamiliarity with the demands of child rearing. However, other studies have not found significant differences in ratings due to parenting status (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). One might speculate that the vignettes are rated *more serious* by adolescents and young adults because the vignettes represent scenes from their own experiences, either directly or indirectly through siblings and peers. These experiences may loom larger for them because they are closer to these experiences and may still feel their impact in direct ways.

Results using community samples suggested that personal characteristics such as age, education, and cultural beliefs and values play a significant role in the way individuals perceive child maltreatment. For example, women tended to rate items that refer to sexual abuse or to neglect of mothering functions as *more serious* than men did (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Rose & Meezan, 1995). Given these findings, it is surprising that these differences have not proved to be significant among professionals. Further exploration of the role of individual characteristics in definitions of child maltreatment among professionals is warranted. However, neither these factors (age, education, etc.) nor severity or frequency are sufficient to explain why some individuals label themselves as victims of childhood maltreatment while others do not (e.g., Carlin et al., 1994). This question remains an important area for investigation.

3.5 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Most writers accept differences among professionals as inevitable given the different functions that professionals perform (Azar, 1991; Giovannoni, 1988). In their analysis, the broader view of child maltreatment held by social workers enables them to provide therapeutic services to a wider group of families while lawyers are more concerned with protecting the legal rights of individual parents. However, one must seriously question the motives of a system that invites social workers to provide services to a wider base of families than it legally recognizes as necessary. One would have to believe that this situation puts a considerable amount of stress on social workers due to the dissonance of working in a system that does not legally sanction their actions with many families. If many investigations are not supported by the court system, social workers and police officers likely suffer a demoralizing process that leads to burn out and, possibly, apathy regarding the very clients that they are expected to serve.

The disagreement within professions about what behaviors constitute child maltreatment raises a different kind of concern. If social workers or investigative officers differ in their definition of child maltreatment, the inequitable treatment of families in a community is a real possibility. It means that some families experience intrusive investigations regarding their functioning while other families exhibiting similar behaviors are spared. In particular, these disagreements seriously complicate the education process regarding which parenting behaviors will be labeled maltreatment and which ones will not. How can families at risk of maltreating their children learn to differentiate which behaviors are acceptable and which ones are not, if the social workers cannot agree among themselves?

There are three further consequences that flow from observed differences between professionals and community members. First, there is a strong likelihood of significant over-reporting of instances of child maltreatment by community members, an issue expressly raised by Rose and Meezan (1995). Since professionals view many behaviors less seriously than community members, over-reporting is inevitable. Such over-reporting results in substantial resources being expended on investigations when resources might be better employed in delivering needed services (Rose and Meezan, 1995). When maltreatment of children is over-reported, social workers necessarily

experience a high level of frustration at the needless (in their view) call on limited resources.

However, a second consequence of the gap between professionals and community members is the possible lack of response by social agencies to children who are being maltreated according to community standards but whose case is considered not serious enough for intervention. Research suggests that harmful consequences accrue to children whose cases are considered *not serious enough* (Carlin et al., 1994; Gracia, 1995), lending support for the community view of child maltreatment. Furthermore, research reviewed here (Rose & Meezan, 1995) suggests that the closer one is to the problem, the more seriously you view the problem. It may be that the effect of abusive experiences on children is more evident when you are closer to the problem. Consequently, definitions from community members should perhaps carry more, not less, weight in definitions of child maltreatment. The call for the professionalization of child protection workers (Rose & Meezan, 1993) may not necessarily serve the best interests of the children since professionalization and increased education results in a distancing from community values.

A third consequence of the observed gap between professionals and community is the resulting loss of faith in the child protective system that community members experience when their concerns are not addressed (Tite, 1993). This loss of faith may result in under-reporting of child maltreatment on the part of community members since they may feel that their concerns are generally unheeded, or they may attempt to personally intervene in the situation (Tite, 1993; Elliott et al., 1997). It may also result in apathy regarding the welfare of children, and the acceptance of maltreatment as an inevitable consequence of parenting, or of modern pressures. As a result, children in need of interventions may be endangered unnecessarily. There are documented cases of child maltreatment where entire communities have turned a blind eye to the plight of children in their midst (Teichroeb, 1998).

The difference in ratings of seriousness according to age in studies by both Roscoe (1990) and Cruise et al. (1994) implies that our understanding and definition of child abuse is a developmental process. This process likely involves a growing

cognitive and social awareness of the impact of abusive events over time. It may also help to explain how some people label their experiences as abusive while those who experience similar events do not label them as abusive (eg. Carlin et al., 1994).

One of the conclusions reached by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) is that professionals are not imposing their view of child maltreatment on the community, that they are not manufacturing victims since the community embraces a broader view of child maltreatment and identifies more, rather than fewer, victims. I argue that professionals are imposing their values in a very direct fashion by attending to a more narrow view of child maltreatment than some communities believe is warranted. What are the implications of selectively attending to some forms of maltreatment over others? As we saw earlier, professionals rated physical maltreatment *more serious* than moral transgressions while community members rated physical maltreatment as *less serious*. There is evidence to suggest that the use of physical punishment as a disciplinary strategy is more common within lower socio-economic families (Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1996; Gelles, 1973). Since physical maltreatment is thought to occur most frequently during disciplinary actions, it is possible that poor families are more at risk of crossing the line between non-abusive and abusive behaviors. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that child maltreatment does occur most in poor families (Gelles, 1992). However, this may, in part, be due to the populations studied and to the fact that families on social assistance have historically been under more scrutiny than families who do not receive social assistance. It may also be a result of placing more emphasis on physical maltreatment than on emotional or moral maltreatment. If we were to attend more to emotional maltreatment, might the attention shift more to a middle-class milieu? By attending first and foremost to physical maltreatment, do professionals ensure that child maltreatment is viewed as a lower-class problem?

3.6 UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING CHILD ABUSE

Previous research has failed to provide us with either a clear-cut definition of child maltreatment or to demonstrate that consensus about what behaviors constitute child maltreatment is even possible. However, the research reviewed here can be very helpful in two ways. First, it is possible that the traditional research methods being used

to study definitions of child abuse are insufficient to the task of understanding child abuse and ways in which to better define it. This possibility implies that a change in methodology is required if we are to collect qualitatively different information helpful to defining child abuse. Second, despite arguments to the contrary (Azar, 1991), the acceptance of multiple definitions is problematic, not only to the allocation of resources, but to researchers and professionals who must provide services to children. It has serious consequences to child protection services, and ultimately to child welfare. There is a need to consolidate our discordant views into a definition of child maltreatment that is relevant to the needs of children and their families (Barnett, Manly & Cicchetti, 1993; English, 1998).

The present ways of defining child abuse have not provided us with the clarity and relevance that is required to meet the needs of professionals, researchers, or children who are abused. What is required is a better understanding of child abuse from which to derive a definition of child abuse. Work by Egeland and colleagues (1993) and Finkelhor (1989) implies that child abuse might be better understood as a process rather than a series of discrete events. Further, there is a growing understanding among professionals that child abuse is a phenomenon that occurs within the context of relationships (George, 1996). As such, it is shaped by the dynamics of specific parent-child relationships and the development of the self within that relationship. The goal of deriving a better understanding of child abuse can best be met by exploring abusive childhood experiences within the context that they occur, and the developmental process by which an individual comes to label those experiences as abusive.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study endeavored to broaden our understanding of child abuse and to develop a theory of child abuse that would bring some clarity and relevance to our definition of abuse. It assumed the child-centered approach advocated by the National Research Council (1993) and gave prominence to the voice of individuals who considered themselves victims of childhood abuse. My reading and analysis of the literature suggested that there were three domains to be explored if I was to develop a theory of child abuse. First, I required an in-depth description of the experiences of abuse in order to understand the abusive processes underlying these experiences. Second, I needed to explore the child's experiences within the context of their lives, i.e. their family, friends and schools, as advocated by more complex models of abuse. Third, I needed a knowledge of the process that led individuals to consider themselves abused to further my understanding of the interaction between abusive experiences, the context of abuse, and individual development.

To meet the objectives of this study, I engaged in unstructured, in-depth interviews to explore the childhood experiences of individuals who considered themselves abused as well as the process by which they arrived at their decision to label these experiences as abusive. I tested the categories and the properties that emerged from the analysis against the narratives of individuals who shared similar childhood experiences but who did not label their experiences abusive. By examining the narratives of these individuals, unique characteristics of abusive experiences, the context of abuse, and the process of labeling experiences as abusive surfaced. In this chapter, I outline the procedures and process that I followed in this study. I begin with an overview of ways in which we traditionally think of defining concepts and then I present the principles of

grounded theory - my method of choice for this project.

4.1 CLASSICAL WAYS OF DEFINING CONCEPTS

To date the research into defining child abuse assumes that a classical categorical approach to definitions is possible. According to the classical categorical approach, a concept is defined by a set of features common to all members in the class, and these features are seen as necessary for class-inclusion. Within this view, child abuse is seen as a range of behaviors. However, there has been little dialogue on which characteristics of these behaviors are necessary for class-inclusion. For example, legal definitions include such characteristics as intent of perpetrator, and harmful consequences as necessary characteristics of abuse. Some investigators have attempted to discover which properties of the event would direct people to make decisions about child abuse. Consequences, occupation of parents, age of child, attributions, antecedents are some of the characteristics that have been investigated peripherally but without conclusive results (see Cruise et al., 1994; Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979).

Alternatively, it is possible that people use a prototypical approach to defining child abuse. Within the prototypical approach to categorization, concepts are “organized around their clearest examples” (Fehr & Russell, 1984, p. 486) and other instances of the concept vary in the degree to which they resemble the best example or prototype. Prototypes shade into non-prototypes and non-prototypes gradually shade into nonmembers. The more prototypical, the more features it shares with other members in the class. This perspective implies an internal structure because examples of a concept can be ordered from better to poorer ones, and from a basic level to a superordinate one (Fehr & Russell, 1984). This approach assumes that child abuse can be placed on a continuum that ranges from discipline to harsh discipline with child abuse at the extreme end of harsh discipline. Despite numerous studies, researcher have been unable to agree on what constitutes child abuse, suggesting that a prototypical approach is insufficient to capture the essential nature of child abuse.

More recently, a script approach based on script theory (Tomkins, 1978) has been used to define concepts (e.g., Andrew, 1997; Russell & Fehr, 1994). In script theory, the basic unit of analysis is the scene which represents an event in life as lived and which

may also contain a variety of other information regarding the situation including subscripts such as motives, feelings, and beliefs. The analogy to life on stage is an apt one that best captures the essence of a scene. Scripts are blends of cultural beliefs and personal experiences. One might hypothesize that the concept of child abuse is mentally represented as a script that allows for different judgments in different contexts.

Accordingly, to know the concept of child abuse is to know a script for child abuse that lays out the antecedents, feelings, expressions, behaviors and consequences of child abuse. Through an examination of scenes across individuals, it may be possible to identify essential components of a script for child abuse

4.2 GROUNDED THEORY

I had given serious consideration to using a script approach to developing a theory of child abuse. However, using a script approach implied that I was looking for particular categories of events such as antecedents, behaviors, and consequences. I believed that presupposing these categories was the greatest drawback in the approach, since it assumed that particular categories were salient to a theory of child abuse.

Although legal definitions include the notion of harm, there is evidence to suggest that even people who have suffered serious physical injuries do not necessarily label their experiences as abusive (e.g., Carlin et al., 1994). Unfortunately, a script approach locks a researcher into a linear format that precludes finding anything but what one is looking for. In addition, the focus on the scene as the primary unit of analysis simply replicates previous research that defined child abuse as a discrete event. This ignores the need for context in the exploration of child abuse. Because of these difficulties, I believed that the first step in defining child abuse was to approach the task within a methodology that sought neither to impose categories nor assume linear relationships. The task of uncovering what is child abuse must go beyond description to the formulation of a theory that one might apply to decide what is abusive or not. My search for a method of investigation that met these criteria led me to grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory was particularly well-suited to the task at hand since it is geared to the production of a theory that is at once parsimonious and comprehensive. According to Webster's Dictionary, a theory is a formulation of apparent relationships or underlying

principles of certain observed phenomena used to explain or predict the phenomena. Grounded theory provided a framework for the collection and analysis of data with the goal of generating theory at either a substantive or formal level. A theory that is generated by the data is necessarily relevant and easily understood by lay and professionals alike (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). My goal for this project was to develop theory in the substantive area of child abuse.

My investigation into grounded theory research methods led me to the controversy that emerged between Glaser and Strauss, the originators of this method, with the publication of Strauss and Corbin (1990). Strauss and Corbin (1990) advocate using a conditional matrix as a framework to integrate the categories that emerge during the coding process. Researchers are also encouraged to use their own personal experiences when applying the conditional matrix. However, after reading Glaser and Rennie (1998), I decided to use the method as originally outlined in Glaser and Strauss (1967). It seemed to me that the method presented by Strauss and Corbin (1992) strayed from the original intent of grounded theory by imposing a framework on the data rather than letting the data speak for itself. Furthermore, the introduction of personal experiences into the analysis of the data also threatens the ability of the data to speak for itself.

One of the goals of my project was to produce a theory of child abuse that was relevant to child welfare. My view of the development of the concept of child abuse suggested that professionals and politicians have had more than their fair share of input into the area. It was time to hear from those who are the real experts in child abuse - those who labeled their childhood experiences as abusive. Encouraging these individuals to share their stories of abuse, and to place the stories within the context of their childhood experiences may enlighten us regarding the ecological niche that supports childhood experiences of abuse. Using these accounts as the foundation to build a theory of what constitutes child abuse ensured a relevance of the theory to the experience of child abuse. The remainder of this chapter outlines how the principles and method of grounded theory helped me to meet my objectives of bringing clarity and relevance to the question of what is child abuse.

4.3 THEORETICAL SAMPLING

In a grounded theory approach, a researcher simultaneously collects, codes and analyzes data. The decision of where to collect the next set of data is guided by the emerging theory. Although the initial decision is based on a general problem area, subsequent groups of participants are chosen for their theoretical purpose and relevance to the development of emerging categories. Because the goal is to discover the properties of these categories, the non-comparability of groups is irrelevant. For example, if an emerging category seemed to be about sudden, physical threats to well-being one might develop that category by looking at other situations such as car accidents, for example. People who suffer car accidents and those who suffer childhood abuse would seem to belong to non-comparable groups. However, in grounded theory, it is the conceptual category and the process that is being investigated, not the individual per se. This principle directs the researcher to the group of participants that can best elaborate properties of the category under study. Minimizing differences among comparison groups brings out basic properties of the categories, and helps to establish conditions under which a category exists (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Maximizing differences among comparison groups helps to conceptualize categories at a higher level, and to find strategic similarities and diversities. Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocated beginning a study by minimizing differences between comparison groups and then maximizing differences as the study progresses. Glaser (1978) further elaborated on this guideline by suggesting that a good rule of thumb is to stay within a substantive area for comparison groups until a focus has stabilized, or when a “basic social psychological problem and the process by which it is resolved *both* have been discovered” (p. 50). Glaser and Strauss (1967) stressed the need to stay within a substantive area and to minimize differences in comparison groups until the core categories have emerged from the data.

Theoretical sampling is a way of checking on the emerging conceptual framework as it provides both verification and challenges to the categories and/or their properties. Theoretical sampling ends when the categories under study have been saturated, that is, when additional data do not yield further properties of the categories. An adequate theoretical sample is judged on the basis of how widely and diversely the researcher has

chosen the groups for saturating categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theoretical sampling determines which groups will be used in the study but the initial group is determined by the problem or the substantive area the researcher is interested in. Since I was interested in developing a theory of child abuse, my initial group of participants consisted of individuals who labeled their childhood experiences as abusive. In order to identify participants who met the criteria for inclusion in this study, I canvassed a number of post-secondary institutions.

4.4 RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANT POOL

It was important to the task at hand that the participants in this research represent a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Post-secondary students attending the University of Saskatchewan and SIAST Kelsey Institute in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan who labeled their childhood experiences as abusive formed the core group (Subjective-Abuse) from which I sampled. I later invited students from the University of Regina to take part in my study. Students attending these institutions or programs came from both rural and urban families, represented a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and held a wide range of values and beliefs. They also represented a wide range of ages and life experiences. Their ability to function in a post-secondary educational institution suggested that their childhood experiences had not been so traumatic as to incapacitate them entirely. They were demonstrating an ability to get on with their lives. Please see Appendix A for the demographic questionnaire.

4.4.1 Recruitment Method

Students were approached in individual classrooms and invited to take part in research about childhood experiences. They were given information about the study, and presented with a card upon which they either (a) wrote their name and telephone number, or (b) indicated that they were not interested in taking part in the study. I then telephoned those individuals who agreed to be contacted, answered any questions they had, and sent them a questionnaire package to complete and return (see Appendices A-D for questionnaires in package). The package included a consent form (Appendix E) for the first phase of the study and individuals were asked to indicate whether or not they wanted to participate in a further step of the research project. Students who agreed to

further participation and who had labeled their experiences abusive (Subjective-Abuse Group) formed the pool from which I selected the initial group of participants. Participants who met these criteria were contacted by telephone and an interview date was set. Please see Appendix F for the interview schedule used as a guide for this interview. With their permission, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. I met with the participants a second time, and they read the transcripts and made minor changes and offered elaborations on their narratives.

Subsequent participants were chosen to represent those whose experiences were similar to the abused group but who did not label their experiences abusive (Objective-Abuse Group). In order to qualify for the Objective-Abuse group, participants reported that they did not consider themselves abused in their childhood on the demographics questionnaire but reported scores similar to the Subjective-Abuse group on the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire. The Subjective-Abuse group obtained scores ranging between 30 and 91 on the Physical and Emotional Scale and Total scores ranging between 74 and 254. The Objective-Abuse group obtained scores between 40 and 71 on the Physical and Emotional Abuse Scale and Total scores between 97 and 156. In comparison, the No-Abuse group scores ranged between 25 and 47 on the Physical and Emotional Abuse Scale and Total scores between 58 and 106. In order to meet criteria for this study, participants in the Objective-Abuse group had to obtain a score greater than 34 on the Physical and Emotional Abuse scale **and** Total scores greater than 92 on the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire. The cut-off scores for the Objective-Abuse group represented the lowest scores on the two scales of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire at that time in the study. The reader will note that the scores reported above are lower than the cut-off scores used. This is because more participants were recruited after the cut-off scores were chosen. Those respondents who did not meet both of the above criteria remained in the No-Abuse group. Unfortunately, sampling from the Objective-Abuse group proved difficult, not because they did not appear in the sample but because they proved difficult to contact and recruit. This was mainly because my recruitment of this group coincided with the end of the school term.

4.5 MATERIALS

Several questionnaires were used to gather information about childhood experiences from prospective participants to assist in the identification and description of groups. Students were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), the Lifetime Version of the Inventory to Diagnose Depression (IDD-L), and the Life Events Scale for Students (LESS). They were also asked about previous treatment for psychological difficulties, suicide attempts, and other acts of self-harm. They also indicated whether they considered their childhood experiences as abusive or not on the demographics questionnaire. The latter question served to identify the Subjective-Abuse group, while the CTQ served to identify those individuals who may have had similar experiences but who had not labeled themselves as abused. The IDD-L and the LESS were used to validate and limit the selection of participants in the study. The LESS was used to exclude participants who had experienced a high degree of stressful events in the recent past and who were, as a result, at risk of being stressed by the sensitive nature of the interview for this study. The IDD-L was used to demonstrate the similarity of the Subjective- and Objective-Abuse Groups and to exclude participants who were currently experiencing a depressive episode.

The CTQ (Appendix B) consists of 70 items that begin with the phrase “When I was growing up,…” and explores experiences of physical and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical, and emotional neglect. Participants rated each of the statements on a 5-point Likert scale according to the frequency with which experiences occurred. Responses ranged from “Never True” to “Very Often True”. An additional item in the demographic questionnaire asked respondents if they considered their childhood experiences as abusive. The CTQ has very good reliability (Cronbach Alpha: physical and emotional abuse = .95, emotional neglect = .94, physical neglect = .84, sexual abuse = .94, total scale = .96) (Bernstein, Fink, Handelman & Foote, 1994).

The IDD-L (Appendix C) was selected as a measure of depression because of its demonstrated diagnostic and psychometric strengths. The measure also takes into account major life events that contribute to situational depression. Its reliability and validity compared to diagnostic interviews are very good (Zimmerman & Coryell, 1987a, 1987b). Administration of the IDD-L to university and community samples yields a

Spearman-Brown split-half reliability coefficient of .90 and Cronbach alpha of .92 (Zimmerman & Coryell, 1987). The IDD-L consists of 22 items with 5 descriptors each. Each of the five statements increase in severity: 0 = no disturbance, 1 = subclinical severity and 2-4 = symptoms. Instructions for completing the form direct the respondent to rate each item according to “the week in your life that you felt the most depressed”. As an example, the IDD test item for insomnia is as follows:

- 0 I was not sleeping less than normal
- 1 I occasionally had slight difficulty sleeping
- 2 I clearly didn't sleep as well as usual
- 3 I slept about half my normal amount of time
- 4 I slept less than two hours per night

The LESS (Linden, 1984) (Appendix D) is a convenient measure of experienced stress suitable for use with a student population. It consists of 36 clearly defined items weighted specifically for a Canadian sample (Linden, 1984). Items include: moving away from home; pregnancy; minor car accident. It demonstrates adequate reliability using both Life Change Unit (LCU) scores ($r = .661$, $p = 0.001$, one-tailed) and consistency of event reports (61%) at a one-month interval (Clements & Turpin, 1996). The estimates of reliability for the scale are consistent with estimates reported for other life event scales (Clements & Turpin, 1996).

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

Grounded theory is a method of inquiry and analysis developed by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. It is based on a naturalistic model of inquiry. The type of data most often collected in this model is a combination of observations and interviews of individuals or groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1978). Observations in the field are chronicled in the researcher's field notes. Interviews may be transcribed verbatim or they may be captured only in field notes, depending on the suitability of recording interviews. Data collection is similar in grounded theory and may take the form of field notes or transcripts. However, the shape of data collection is particular to the method.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) advised that the researcher must remain open to all possibilities at the onset of the study. This includes the possibility that the initial idea or

hunch that drew the researcher to an area may not actually emerge as a valuable concept in the area. They cautioned that the researcher should take care not to introduce elements into the area to fulfill his or her own agenda. Data collection in grounded theory and goes from broadly-based and non-directive to selective and more focused. It may begin as observations of the phenomena as in a naturalistic study, but it continues to be broadly based in the initial interviews. An interview in the early phases of data collection may look very different than one in the later phases of the study. The purpose of initial interviews is to open up the area for inquiry and to allow the data to direct the process. These interviews are broad in themselves. As the researcher begins to analyze these interviews, a more detailed and specific purpose for the study emerges from the study itself. Subsequent interviews may be focused and a researcher may develop an interview guide based on the categories and properties that are emerging in the study. The later interviews may target the development of only one conceptual category and may be rather pointed and short. The interview process in grounded theory shifts continually as the researcher responds to the emerging categories.

Not all areas under investigation in the field of psychology are necessarily open to direct observation as a means to begin the investigative process. This is particularly true when it comes to opportunities to observe events or incidents that are potentially abusive. However, from the time that I made the decision that my doctoral research would focus on child abuse, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances offered me different stories about their personal experiences of childhood abuse. These stories actually formed part of the preliminary gathering of data that influenced the direction of my project. For example, when I was still contemplating the actual nature of my study, I interviewed a social worker who had formerly worked for Child Welfare. In her account of her work, she related an episode at the beginning of her employment. She and her supervisor received a complaint about a possible protection issue. Her supervisor directed her to drive by the address which was located in a middle-class neighborhood of the city. After the drive-by, her supervisor closed the file commenting that abuse was unlikely in that part of town. This story helped to shift my inquiry.

I believe that these stories correspond to an observation phase in a naturalistic

inquiry. Therefore the first part of the data for my study were the field notes outlining the narratives that I collected prior to the interviews. Each note was anonymous and described the context in which the story was shared. My reflections formed part of the field notes and were detailed in the memos that formed the basis of theoretical coding. I also used field notes to record some of the events and stories that appeared in the public domain and which I saw as pertinent to or having influenced my research. Prior to beginning formal data collection, I began work at a mental health agency in the city and worked with suicidal adolescents and their families. I soon came to realize that abusive experiences played a large role in the lives of these adolescents and many of their parents. Their stories and my reflections about their experiences also form part of the fieldnotes in this study and have made an important contribution to the emerging theory. Last, but certainly not least, I read several autobiographies of people who had been abused as children and their stories served as a comparison group to the participants in my study. The questions that I asked of these narratives were more pointed and served to validate the emergent theory.

The principal type of data that I collected was an unstructured interview with post-secondary students who labeled their childhood experiences as abusive. I conducted the interviews on campus in a private room in the Psychological Center. I tried to set them at ease by asking them about their studies and thanking them for agreeing to take part in the interview process. I reviewed the process that we were engaged in, e.g., recording, consent, reviewing transcripts, and reminded them that they could withdraw from the study at any time. I set the stage for the interview by reminding them of the questionnaires they had filled out for me in the first phase of the study and invited them to talk about their childhood experiences and how their experiences had influenced them. I used probes only to keep the conversation going, not to direct or investigate any one phenomenon at a deeper level. In this way, I hoped to avoid directing the categories that emerged early in the study. Stewart and Cash (1997) guided the design of my interview which is in Appendix E. Although I had planned a second interview, I felt that the initial interview was exhaustive, and follow-up was limited to a check-in telephone call to reassure myself that there were no serious consequences from the interview and remind

participants that counseling was available. With the permission of the participants, I audiotaped all interviews. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and participants were given an opportunity to meet with me and review the transcript. This meeting yielded very little new information but centered around revisiting some of the events they had talked about previously.

4.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA

There were four steps in the analysis of the data. The first step was to extract potentially meaningful phrases from the narratives, e.g., “we got beaten by wooden shingles”. I wrote the phrase on a 4 x 6 card. Each phrase was identified by a participant number as well as the line number from the transcript to facilitate returning to the full passage. The second step was to compare each new phrase extracted from the data to previous ones. If it seemed to describe the same thing, it was added to the same card. For example, “we got beaten by wooden shingles” was written on the same card as “slammed my head into the wall.” If a phrase seemed to be about something else, e.g., “still huddled in bed”, it was given its own card. Once a card had several phrases, a generic name using the participants’ own words was given to the card e.g., “what my mother said”. Once a card had a generic name, I returned to the transcripts to search for other phrases that seemed to fit the description on the card to ensure that I had recorded all the data that pertained to that category of phrases. These first steps represent the open and selective phases of coding in grounded theory and promote complete immersion into the data.

While I was engaged in the open and selective coding process, I began to produce memos. Each memo represented an idea that I had about a category, e.g., “what mother said” or a descriptor of a category, e.g., “assaults are sudden, unexpected”. The goal of memoing was to develop theoretical ideas and to make connections with complete freedom in order to produce a fund of memos that are highly sortable (Glaser, 1978). It is from this fund that I engaged in the third or theoretical coding stage of the research. Memos were a way to capture the insight that accompanied the process of being submerged in open and selective coding. The concepts and ideas in the memos did not necessarily survive the entire coding process but memos preserved each and every idea

and concept that was generated by the data. After I completed the open coding process on three transcripts, I proceeded to the next phase of the analysis - the development of categories. The phrases on each card were reviewed to see if they really pertained to the same phenomenon (category). I used Glaser's (1978) question: "What categories, concepts, or labels do I need in order to account for what is important in this passage?" This meant going back to the data often to refresh my memory about the event the phrase represented. This stage of coding is referred to as axial coding. Reconstituting the phrases by examining the full context of the narrative helped me to decide whether the phrases I had gathered together really did represent the same kind of experience. At this stage of the analysis, I reverted to the cut and paste method to realign categories. When I had completed the refining of categories, I then began to look at each of the phrases in each category to label the properties that each phrase represented. At the end of this process, I had developed 6 categories and a list of properties for each of these categories. I then approached the remaining transcripts and began a more selective coding process. I recorded only those events or phrases that seemed novel and added them to the established categories. No new categories were developed as a result of this further coding but several new properties emerged. Appendix F contains the categories and properties that emerged at this stage of the coding. These categories and their properties guided the next step of the analysis: development of the theory.

When saturation had been achieved, I began the next step of theoretical coding with the memos produced throughout the life of the project. The task at this point was to work at a purely conceptual level, leaving the individuals and transcripts behind to understand the data at a purely theoretical level. Theoretical sorting is the sorting of ideas, not the sorting of data. It forced connections between categories and properties and produced a generalized, integrated theory from which to write up the theory rather than a description of the data (Glaser, 1978). The process of sorting memos generated more memos on more ideas and new connections, integrating categories at a higher conceptual level. The first step in theoretical sorting was to begin looking for connections, similarities, and conceptual orderings of the categories and of their properties. As these materialized, an outline began to emerge. It is the tension between

the emerging outline and the memos that directed the theorizing (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The detailed set of analytic rules provided by Glaser (1978) to guide the sorting and writing process was used at this stage of the research project. These rules outlined the process of sorting memos and the goals that I kept in mind during this process in order to arrive at a theory that was at once parsimonious and comprehensive. At this stage, I reduced the number of categories and realigned others in order to produce the most parsimonious yet comprehensive theory.

4.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

A naturalistic approach to the construction of knowledge rests on a set of axioms that differs radically from the positivist axioms that guide an experimental or quasi-experimental research design. Because a naturalistic inquiry is based on a different set of precepts, a different set of characteristics is implied. These characteristics transform the language and concepts of reliability and validity found in a positivistic paradigm into establishing the trustworthiness of the study. This section outlines the different ways that I have chosen to establish the trustworthiness of my project. There are four different concepts that contribute to the establishing of trustworthiness and which correspond to the concepts of reliability and validity. They are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.8.1 Credibility

For a project to be credible, it must demonstrate truth value. The researcher must exhibit that his or her reconstructions of the reality as described by the participants are credible to the original constructors of the multiple realities under study. This task is two-fold: first, to design and carry out the study in a way that will enhance the probability of this occurring, and second, to ask the participants to review the findings. The method and process of doing grounded theory is in itself a guard against straying from the data, provided that the steps outlined in the theory are followed closely. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that prolonged engagement with participants or the area under study is helpful in establishing credibility because the researcher has time to become oriented to the problem, and to deal with personal and external distortions.

Although prolonged engagement may apply more to a field study than a psychological study, I feel that my project conformed to this standard in two ways. First, I familiarized myself with the literature on child abuse as it pertained to the characteristics of perpetrators and indicators of abuse. I read accounts from a sociological perspective as well as a psychological one. I read accounts of child abuse that appeared in popular literature. I spoke with people who had been abused, and worked with clients who were abused as children. I believe that these experiences can be included in the category of prolonged engagement even though it may not necessarily be prolonged engagement in the usual sense of the word. Second, I built in several opportunities to meet with participants in the study. Such contact increased their trust in me and, hopefully, encouraged their sense of ownership of the project so that they became participants in the full sense of the word.

Because establishing credibility is a fundamental step in qualitative research, I incorporated a third way suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) - peer debriefing. The purpose of peer debriefing is to explore aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain implicit within the researcher's mind. The role of the debriefer was to challenge all facets of the project, and to raise questions of all kinds - substantive, legal, methodological, and ethical. It also provided me with an opportunity to test emerging hypotheses and core categories.

4.8.2 Transferability

Transferability or applicability of findings is an empirical matter dependent on the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability does not really apply to grounded theory. The reason is that grounded theory, if it has been conducted according to the methods and principles first outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), does not consist of a set of findings to be corroborated in subsequent studies but rather a theory to be expanded by the collection of additional data and tested for goodness of fit. The judgment of the applicability of the theory to a new set of situations depends on the contextual information provided by the researcher, and it is incumbent on the researcher to provide a rich description of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), so that readers will understand under which circumstances the theory applies.

This is an easy requirement for grounded theory projects to meet since the method provides a thick description of the data (Glaser, 1978, 1992).

4.8.3 Dependability

The concept of dependability includes the consistency with which the data have been analyzed and the theory developed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One of the main ways in which dependability is demonstrated in qualitative research is through triangulation. Although triangulation has come to mean different data collection modes, in its fullest sense, it includes the use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators and theories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Grounded theory as it was used in this project included triangulation as part of its method. First, I used observation data from field notes, which included accounts of abuse offered to me by acquaintances when I related the subject of my study and accounts told to me from my clients in a clinical setting. Second, I read several autobiographical accounts of child abuse published in popular literature. Finally, I interviewed participants who considered themselves abused as children. These three sources of data were used to develop categories from which the present theory of child abuse emerged. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also suggested that an inquiry audit should be possible to examine the process of inquiry and determine its acceptability. The audit trail was used as the fourth component of establishing trustworthiness, namely confirmability.

4.8.4 Confirmability

The qualitative researcher must provide and maintain a careful record not only of the data used in the analysis but of the decisions and rationale for decisions throughout the research process. To this end, I recorded the name, place and date of all field notes and identified each field note by a unique number. Transcripts included a participant number as well as a date and place. Each decision point (e.g., next group to be sampled) was captured in a reflective journal that itemized whatever transcripts or field notes were used in the process of making decisions. Transcript pages and lines were numbered. Each memo was referenced to either a particular field note, reflective entry, or transcript, and each memo was numbered, dated, and identifiable. These methods should provide enough information for an audit to be done to confirm the sources of the data and the way in which the data were analyzed.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Six women and two men agreed to be interviewed for this study. Five of the women and one of the men declared their childhood experiences abusive. One of the young women in this group said that she had reported herself as abused because she believed that she met the criteria but that she, herself, found the label uninformative and did not want to think of her father as a “monster”. The remaining participants, 1 woman and 1 man, did not consider their experiences abusive. However, the young woman changed her mind at the end of our interview saying that in reviewing her experiences, she believed that she had been abused. She was visibly shaken by the insight and I gave her some time to compose herself. When I asked her what had changed her mind, she replied that it was talking about the whole thing at once, that she had never put it all together before. She and her sister had talked about various incidents but never the entire experience. I then asked her if she thought her sister would agree with the abuse label and she said that she thought she would. I followed up our interview with a telephone call to assure myself that she was okay and reminded her that help was available through Student Counseling should she need to speak about her experiences further. The young women and men who participated in this research attest to the difficulty of labeling a wide range of experiences with one word and the struggle they faced when confronted by the word ‘abuse’. They acknowledged that their childhood experiences included good times along with the bad.

Five of the women talked about their mothers being the main perpetrators of assaults or neglect; one woman declared both parents’ behaviors as abusive. One male denied any abuse by his parents but believed that his school experiences were abusive.

Much of this person's experiences fit the categories that emerged from the other transcripts and his narrative was used to validate the theory. The remaining male did not believe he was abused as a child but said his dad was the disciplinarian in his family.

Participants were subjected to a wide range of abusive experiences: all of them either witnessed violence or were, themselves, victims of verbal and physical assaults. Four of the six women were sexually assaulted by family members when they were young, and one was assaulted by a peer. Assaults ranged from voyeurism to full penetration. Two of the perpetrators were eventually prosecuted for their assaults, although not on the testimony of any of the participants. Although the sexual assaults were considered to be pivotal events in the lives of these young women, they were not the main focus of their narratives. The narratives surrounding the sexual assaults were but one set in a series of abusive events that they talked about. As discrete events within their lives, the sexual assaults represent a microcosm of the abuse process that emerged from the narratives of the participants. All of the transcripts contain examples of psychological and emotional abuse.

One of the participants was under the age of 20, six of them were between 21 and 30 and one was over the age of 31. Seven of the participants were single, never married and one was divorced. Six of them said they were Canadian, one person said he was from mixed race (Métis), and one did not respond. Four of them declared themselves to be practicing Christians and the remaining participants did not answer the question. Three participants declared incomes of \$13,000 or less, one declared income between \$13,000 and \$24,000, one between \$24,000 and \$39,000 and two were over \$70,000. It is not clear whether participants were declaring their parents' level of income or their own. Please see Appendix G for a summary of the demographics of the respondents in this study.

Seven of the 16 parents had an average of 2.85 years of post-secondary education, five of them had a secondary school graduation diploma and the remaining four parents either had less than grade 12 or no information was provided on their education status. Half of the participants were raised in the city, one in a small town under 6000, and three of them grew up on farms. None of the participants were recipients of social welfare

when they were growing up. All but one came from two-parent working families. Occupations of the fathers in these households ranged from farmers and blue collar workers to professionals. Mothers in these families were involved in clerical work, nursing or education. On the whole, mothers were better educated than their partners (13 years of post-secondary education as compared to 7). None of the participants belonged to families who were under investigation for child abuse, nor had they received any formal interventions during their childhood. The participants in this study represent a unique segment of abused children that have not been well represented in the literature on child abuse in the past. Most of the literature on child abuse (e.g., consequences, etiology) is based on samples drawn from investigated cases of child abuse from child welfare files. Furthermore, child abuse has been highly correlated with low-income families, or single-parent families living in inner-city neighborhoods. None of the participants fit these categories.

Six of the eight participants have sought counseling services since their experiences and half of them have had family members in counseling as well. Two have taken medication to help with the effects of depression/anxiety and half of the participants said they had family members who had taken psychotropic medication. One of the participants reported that he or she had experienced psychological difficulties but had not gone for help. Five participants identified other family members who, in their estimation, had experienced psychological difficulties but had not gone for professional help. One of the participants had attempted suicide in the past and represented the most extreme scores on the Child Trauma Questionnaire.

5.1.1 My Clinical Experience

My clinical work both contributed to, and was improved by, the interviews that I undertook for this study. As the interviews progressed and I began coding, I began to reflect on the experiences of the clients I was seeing at the time. It helped to raise my awareness of the abuse that many of my clients were experiencing at the time or had experienced when they were younger. During the coding phase of the study, I realized that their experiences were contributing indirectly to the emerging theory by providing me with a comparison group - one that was younger than the participants. h I worked

with a number of suicidal adolescents in my clinical practice during the data collection phase of my study but did not fully understand the significance of this experience until I was in the theorizing stage of my coding. Their stories are recorded in my fieldnotes but information from these fieldnotes are referred to as CF 1, CF2, and CF3 etc. All had experienced abusive behaviors on the part of their parents or family, ranging from neglect to sexual assault, verbal and/or physical assaults. Because these clients were younger than the participants that I interviewed, their stories expanded on the developmental aspect of the abuse process. I will not provide details about them or their families in order to protect their identity. Suffice to say that they are perhaps more representative of stereotypic families that are currently studied in the literature on child abuse. However, child abuse had never been formally identified in these families, and no interventions to that effect had taken place. None of the adolescents I worked with in the clinic considered themselves abused.

5.1.2 About the Narratives

All of the participants chose pseudonyms for this study. Throughout the remainder of the manuscript, their words are identified by their chosen names. Two of the participants chose the same name but with different spellings. I have honored their choices and trust that this will not be a source of confusion to the reader. Very few of the participants, if any, provided cohesive accounts of their childhood, and the quotes that I have drawn from the transcripts reflect this aspect of the narratives. In particular, John who claimed abuse from the school system provided very incomplete information in his interview. He was able to furnish me with only a few examples of his childhood experiences, and often changed the subject. My attempts to reach him for a second interview were unproductive. The stories from my clinical experience were used to amplify the categories developed by the interview participants. I have not provided quotes from this group of three, but have used their experiences to add depth to the categories and inform theory building. The points made by casual contacts throughout the research process are identified by the number of the fieldnote, e.g. F23.2.2, that refers to them.

I have avoided using the same excerpts to illustrate the various categories or

properties that emerged from the data. At first reading, the phrases extracted from the narratives assumed one meaning. However, as the categories and properties emerged, the implications of these phrases became more complex and supported the development of new properties. I have tried, wherever possible, to provide other evidence or to refer the reader to another section of the transcript. In a grounded theory project such as this one, categories derived from a single interview may become the sole basis for a property. Although additional data may not confirm the property, it does not negate the property. It simply adds to the categories and properties developed in the coding process (Glaser, 1978).

5.2 THE THEORY

As I read through the transcribed interviews and coded meaningful phrases and sentences, I became convinced that the overarching concept that each participant was talking about was a process of Dehumanization. Participants used words like “robots” or “not the way you treat human beings” to describe their experiences. For example,

Jayne: Oh, we were well-disciplined little girls. People would say: “Oh your girls are so well-behaved,” and we were like, “Yeah, if you only knew.” (Chuckle)
Like...we did the dishes, we cooked the supper, like Donna started cooking at the age of nine and I did all the cleaning and...us girls were robots to her and we made sure we did what had to be done and we tried not to get in trouble.

Jane, in summarizing her experiences, also refers to the dehumanizing aspect of her experiences.

Jane: They had no respect for how I felt. You know, like. It was all about, well for my mother, it was all about her. And you know, she was so selfish. She was just so, you know, it was her drinking and her, like she always had the new clothes and the nice things. You know, it was just like, you know like, and, you know lying, and lying about me and, like, just no respect and no...no consideration, and ...like that’s not the way you treat human beings. So...they took my dignity away almost. They robbed me of like, an awesome childhood. Kids aren’t supposed to grow up like that.

However, Dehumanizing as a core category does not fully capture the process of

abuse as experienced by the participants and revealed during their interviews. It does provide us with the devastation that is experienced when children and adolescents are raised in abusive families, but it ignores the interactive process that emerged in their narratives. Nor could Dehumanizing fully account for the categories developed during the coding of the interviews (both open and selective). The data were telling me that there was a larger picture that needed to be painted if I was to present a theory of child abuse rather than simply a summary of child abuse. Dehumanizing is the end result of the process of child abuse that emerged in this study.

Child abuse cannot be defined by any one event or incident as previous research efforts have focused on. Nor can it be characterized simply as extreme disciplinary measures. Rather child abuse is a process that occurs within the interpersonal and the intrapersonal realms. Key to the experience of abuse is the total sense of social and psychological isolation that the child or adolescent acquires over time as a result of events throughout their development. The sense of isolation mediates, and is aggravated by, parental assaults against the body, the mind and the self of the developing child. Without this sense of social and psychological isolation, verbal, physical and emotional assaults remain in the category of extreme disciplinary practices for which the child often takes responsibility. The abuse process is dynamic and escalates over time. It has its roots in pivotal events or stressors that set off a chain of events that lead to extreme parenting practices and a sense of isolation in the child. Part of the escalation process is the response of the child to parenting extremes. These responses are attempts by the child to protect himself or herself against parental assaults and a growing sense of isolation. The strategies used by the child are developmentally determined and culminate in the child leaving his or her family of origin as an effort to save the self. The mechanism underlying this process is a struggle for control that occurs first, within the parent, and eventually, within the child as he or she attempts to individuate and become independent. It is, in the case of child abuse, a process that becomes 'out of control' over time. See Figure 5.1 for diagram outlining the process theory of abuse. The discussion regarding the implications of this finding for the cycle of abuse, the development of the self, therapy with people who have experienced abuse and investigations of allegations of

abuse will follow in the next chapter.

5.3 CORE CATEGORY: STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

Child abuse, then, is a struggle for control between parent and child. The struggle for control stems from a need for control within the parent that becomes out-of-control. The struggle escalates as the child attempts to establish control and seeks to counteract the out-of-control parenting to which they are subjected. During adolescence, many of the children's responses also become out of control, and we begin to see pathological

PROCESS THEORY OF ABUSE

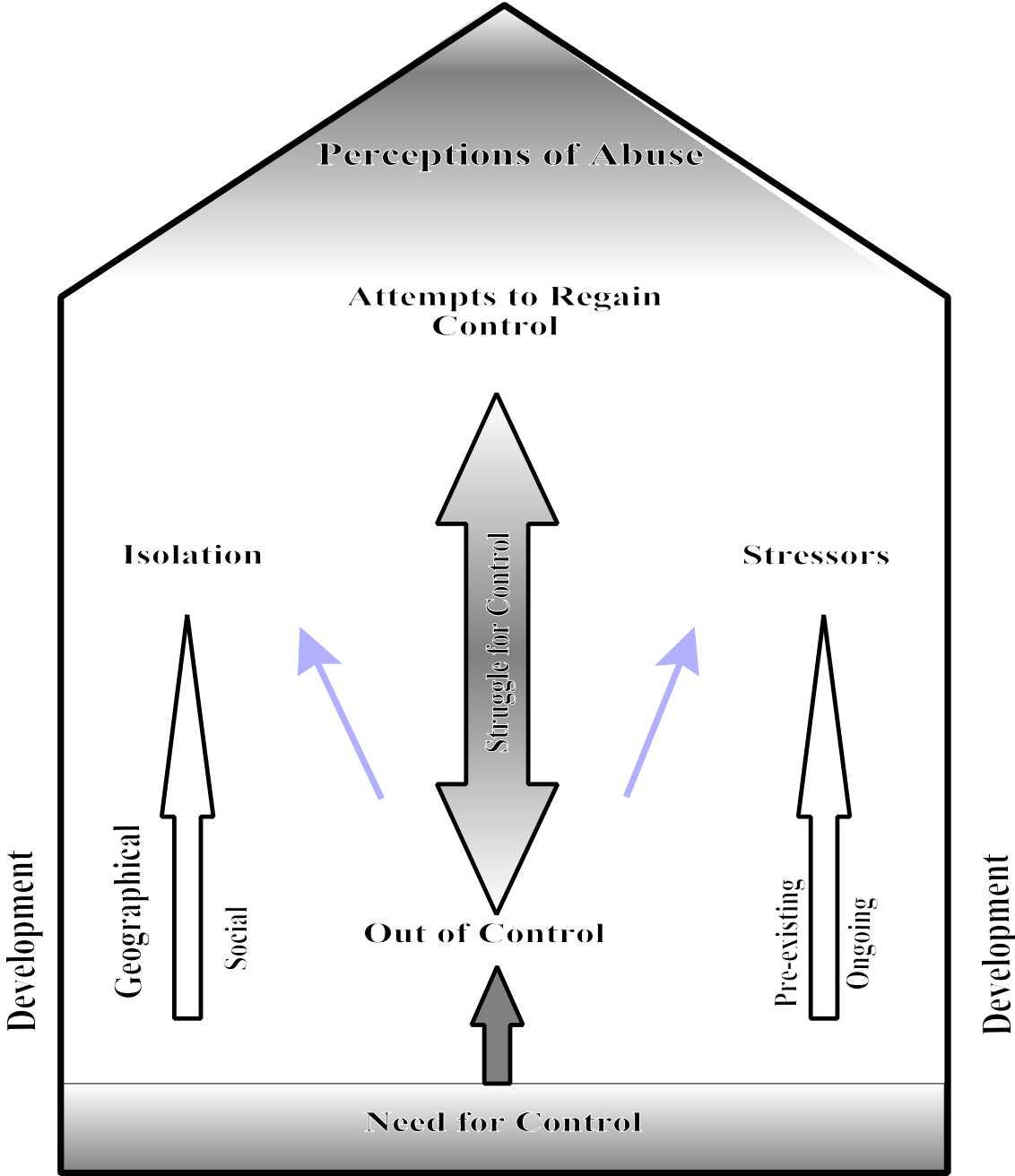


Figure 5.1 Process Theory of Abuse

behaviors. The adolescents regain control by leaving the family home and becoming young adults.

Participants described the process of control as they understood it to have affected their experiences. They attributed their parents' behaviors to a need for control that lay within the parent. Patcee describes her experiences.

Patcee: or not having supper ready on the table when mom got home, or you know, not vacuuming, like mom has this thing, you have to...no footprints can be on the carpet after you vacuum because then you haven't vacuumed. And it's like, she does that to this day, like, she's labeled herself as obsessive compulsive. You know, like, she doesn't have the diagnosis but she...everything has to be her way or else she's upset or she does it herself. And it took a lot to please her, you know, you had to do things right, like the cushions had to be a certain way like they had to be on an angle, and you know if it wasn't like that, well why not? Fix it!

Jayne provides another example, as she also believed that her mother's behaviors were rooted in a need for control.

Jayne: She'll get angry and then, we're kids...okay. Typical scenario: we're traveling in a car and it's a long trip. We came home from C. a lot. So Donna and I would be sitting in the back seat and we would be laughing. And it was: "Stop that incessant giggling!" So we'd stop. Then we'd start a fight. "Stop that incessant fighting!" Okay, so we'd stop fighting. Then dad, so we'd look at books, then dad would say: "Well look at this scenery," and we were trying to keep quiet so mom doesn't get mad and then about half way through the trip, the car would stop and we would get spanked because she couldn't handle it anymore. She couldn't handle life, she had to control things and if she couldn't control things exactly how she wanted to, it built until she hit a rage and she spent her rage on us and then, I'm not kidding, ten minutes later, it was, like, "Oh what a nice trip" and she would just snap out of it.

The incident Jayne refers to in the above example also illustrates another facet of the control process, i.e., the loss of control that this mother exhibits as a result of her

children's behaviors. The use of the word "spanked" by Jayne in this excerpt implies that her mother's behaviors still fall within the parameters of discipline from her perspective. This narrative is drawn from the early part of the interview and represents her early experiences of her mother. However, she is also expressing the understanding that she now has gained as an adult looking back on her experiences. When she looks at the whole of her experience, she concludes that it was about her mother needing to be in control.

In the following passage, Victoria describes life with her mother.

Victoria: Yeah, I do know that my mother would go off on screaming fits. She'll still do that. She'll get into a glitch and there'll be a few hours that she'll be, her cognitive ability goes way down, and you know, how you get really reactive to something? She was very reactive, very punitive, very difficult and then she'll realize, calm down, and then apologize and, now the good-mother (times) are much longer than...it's easier as an adult to say Mom's having a fit. I mean she doesn't really have any power over my life, so she can have a fit and that's that."

From Victoria's account, we can also see that an 'out-of-control' parent has very different implications for a young child or adolescent and an adult. As an adult, one can step back from irrational behavior because its effects on one are minimal. As a child, one's parent is the most powerful figure in one's life and one feels completely helpless.

Patcee provided another facet of the control/out-of-control aspect. At home her mother seemed out of control, but in the presence of a force or power greater than herself she managed to stay in control.

Patcee: I don't think she wanted anybody to know. Because I don't think my grandparents knew because it never happened, because we...Mondays and Thursdays we'd always go over there after school and for lunches and mom would come there for supper and you know, if we did some bad thing she would yell at us in front of grandma and grandpa, but it was kind of weird because we were expecting more and it never came. Like my brother and I talked about it once, "Hey like how come she doesn't hit us at grandma and grandpa's," and we had these jokes you know, whenever we'd get into trouble we should run across

the park over to grandma and grandpa's because then we wouldn't get hit, you know. So I think she didn't want anybody to know that she kind of lost control type of thing.

As we see from these passages, a need for control within the parent sets the stage for loss of control and out-of-control behaviors. Out-of-control parenting behaviors can be curtailed by the presence of others more powerful or who may disapprove of their actions. This theme re-emerged when participants spoke of fathers and how their presence often ameliorated their situations at home. I have included these examples under Isolation since this is the context in which they were related but they could have lent support to this category as well. In the next two sections I review, in detail, the sub-categories of Out of Control Behaviors and Regaining Control which describes the dynamics of the control process in abusive families. Then I present the two sub-categories of Stressors and Isolation which provide a fuller picture of the control process as it is experienced in abusive families.

5.3.1 Out-of-Control Behaviors

One of the definitions of 'discipline' supplied by Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary (1986) is "punishment or disciplinary action for the sake of training or correction; chastisement." The premise in this sub-category is that the behaviors of the parents in this study do not simply represent extreme disciplinary measures. Adrien (not abused according to him) explains what discipline was like in his family:

Adrien: . . . when you misbehave, you know, you occasionally expect, you know, corporal punishment. . . . No because, you know, he didn't just fly off the handle and start beating up with a stick or anything like that, you know, like, he's not like the uh, what you see in the literature, not the grim father who's going to grab you and beat you.

From this excerpt we see that Adrien believes that his father's punishments were deserved and that his father was in control throughout the process of punishing him. This presentation is in sharp contrast to how the participants who said they were abused spoke about their experiences. Mackenzie witnessed violence perpetrated by her father on her mother. Her recollections leave little doubt regarding the effects these episodes had on

her. As evident throughout this and other passages, recalling certain childhood memories was painful, and participants often referred to not having clear memories of events in their childhood experiences. The exception to this was Jayne who had been in therapy several times in her adult years and had spent time talking about her experiences prior to the interview.

Mackenzie: Um, hmm, I just remember um, one, there was one particular time where my mom and dad were getting in a fight and I don't really know why, or what were the circumstances of, around it. But I just remember he had a Tupperware bowl and he smashed it against her ear and it broke, and Tupperware is plastic and she was deaf for two weeks. And like, like I remember that. . . . I imagine that I was, like I think me and my brother would, I think my brother that time phoned my grandparents who lived a mile down. And that was his parents, and said what was going on and started getting upset and, but that was one story I remember. And another story I remember, uhm, was that we were gardening out in the, we were gardening in the garden and I had a little wheelbarrow and I remember carrying like, running it around, and we had a hired man who lived with us all the time, and my dad started accusing my mom of having an affair with him, and so I remember one day he took a shotgun out to the garden, and I remember that and I don't really remember what happened after that. I just remember this wheelbarrow, like just little things, like, like even when we went to City when we did go to (the transition house), I remember the interior of the car, and I remember what I wore, and I remember what I, little, like little pinpoint details there but I don't remember the whole... . . . Uhm, even after, well even after my parents split up, I like, even when my dad would raise his voice, I'd get scared. I remember getting strapped when I was little from my dad. . . . I don't think it happened very often, but I remember getting it done. And I remember when, after my parents split up that I'd go and stay with my dad, and if I was, if he was mad or something and he started undoing his belt, I'd get, I'd get freaked out. And he never did strap me after that, after my parents separated but I'd still be afraid.

There is little doubt in this passage that Mackenzie witnessed behaviors that were out of control. When directed at children, parents' out-of-control behaviors are often seen as extreme disciplinary measures. However, because the incidents described by Mackenzie occurred between adults, we can perhaps perceive their out-of-control nature more clearly. The excerpts that follow in this section also fall into the class of behaviors better termed 'out-of-control' than extreme disciplinary measures.

Jayne's experience in the next two excerpts is much more aligned with that of Mackenzie than with that of Adrien. Jane implies that her mother was somewhat in control because she believes that her mother hit her where marks could not easily be detected by others. What is missing is the expectation of being disciplined that Adrien talks about in his passage.

Jayne: My mom used to be very abusive when I was little. If Donna and I were fighting, like I remember one time, we got beaten with wooden shingles, uhm, we always got the strap. . . . dad's belt and...on the bum. She was very careful, my mom's a teacher, she was a very careful individual. She was a very good teacher, an excellent teacher, yeah she was a very intelligent woman. . . . I don't know she was just angry and it looked like we were bad because obviously we had been fighting, so we deserved to get this. But in my eyes, even as a child, it was extreme.

Although Jayne acknowledges in this passage that she may have been at fault and deserved to be disciplined, the language she uses, e.g. "beaten" and "extreme" is in sharp contrast to the previous episode presented, in which she used the word "spanked". There may still be some ambiguity in this last episode because she and her sister had been fighting but there is little room for speculation in the following episode.

Jayne: . . . and we got into it over some curtains...'cause when my mom left my dad she took everything, and the curtain rods. And then this apartment, curtains didn't fit so I said, "give Dad back the curtains," like our farm house was immense and had these huge picture windows that I'm like, "he's going to fry, give him back his curtains, this is so stupid." And so... "You love your father more than me." I didn't stop that night...I thought, "No way, I'm not backing

down.” So she had me in the bedroom and she caught me by the head, and there goes the hair, slammed my head into the wall a couple of times then threw me around a bit in the room. But as soon as the violence started, I became meek. You never hit mom back, you never swore at her. You could fight intellectually, but you couldn’t go past that with her. So I finally got away and hid in the bathroom. Three things stand out in this passage. First, there is the escalation of violence from the time when Jayne was three and four years old to this episode which occurred when she was 14. A second aspect is that by the time she is 14, she decides that she is not going to back down, that she is going to stand her ground. The third part of the picture is that the mother’s behaviors are not carried out in the guise of discipline. They represent the actions of someone who is out of control, not someone who is trying to discipline a child. There is no evidence in this passage that Jayne’s mother is trying to teach her something or even to punish her for something other than loving her father.

John, who spoke of his school experiences as abusive, relates some of his experiences with his grade one teacher. John was five years old when he started school in a small rural community. His use of the word “cracked” conveys the force used to ‘discipline’ him and teach him to write right-handed. “Kept trying” convinces us that this was not an isolated incident but one that occurred regularly throughout that year in grade one.

John: . . . I got picked on a lot when I was in school. . . . Um, other students, uh, my Grade one teacher, I never did, right from day one, I didn’t want to go to school. . . . Well I don’t know, in Grade one I kept trying to write left-handed and my teacher cracked me across the knuckles with the yard stick and made me write right-handed and that’s why my writing is terrible today. But I can write with both hands, so it did help me to be ambidextrous.

Kate recalls the final episode that she says led to her leaving home.

Kate: Well, actually...the one really bad thing...the last really bad thing that I, that’s ever happened between us, was, we were planning a trip to Disneyland. We were supposed to go when I was a kid. I was going to go with my, me, my little sister and my mom and my dad, my older sister and her husband and her kids.

And um, I can't even remember really how it happened. Oh yeah, I do. Pam and I were sitting on the couch watching TV and she got home and Pam had, she'd got a phone call about Pam failing math. And she started talking to Pam about it and she said, "What's your problem? Why are you failing math?" And I wasn't going to get involved because I could tell she was mad. And then she's like "You're so lazy and you" and then she starts talking to me, "you're so lazy and you don't do anything around here and you guys are just lazy. You're not going to make anything of yourselves. You're going to be failing classes." And blah, blah, blah...I'm like "Well, mom, why are you bringing me into this, I'm not the one failing. And if Pam has a problem with math, then I'll help her. But I'm not lazy." And then she just freaked out and then she started hitting me. And I'm like bigger than her by this time, you know, 'cause she's just a short woman. And I'm, like, "Mom, don't hit me. I could hit you back." And, but I just know if I ever hit her back that I would be such a bad daughter and I hit her and stuff. And then, I just remember her telling Pam to leave but she wouldn't leave. And then she was hitting me over the head in a corner of the room. And I was really depressed actually at that time of my life and I told her, I'm like "Why don't you just kill me?" And then she went to the kitchen and she got one of our stay-sharp knives and she came back out and then that was it, then she just dropped it. . . . I was scared. I thought she was going to kill me. . . .And that day I just totally like died (laughs) inside. For a long time I couldn't even look at my mom for a long time. . . .I moved out.

In this passage, as in previous ones, we also see how the adolescent reacts to attacks. They protest. Their protests add to the intensity of the situation and the out-of-control behaviors escalate.

Not all out-of-control behaviors were physical assaults; many spoke of the verbal assaults that took place. Jane shares her experience in the following episode. This passage seemed especially difficult for Jane, and the pauses represent the probing that was necessary to get the story out.

Jane: I think it was just her freaking out on me for various reasons, I don't know.

I didn't make my bed, or God, who knows? She would just get really, um, really mean, really vindictive. You know, and call me down. That was the majority of them. . . . "You're a little whore" and, you know. . . .she wasn't ever physical, but she did throw things. So I guess, yeah, she got physical (laughs). . . . You know, like just having to, like I remember this one incident in particular, it was just like, I was talking to my sister on the phone, and I was telling her, you know, 'cause she didn't live with us at the time, she had moved out...so, uhm, and uh, I was talking to her on the phone and mom was freaking out, and telling me to get off the phone. And my sister's like, you know, "we'll just wait it out." She's like "Go in your room." I remember going in my room and here's the door and here's my dresser and having my leg stretched out and my mom trying to get in, you know and I'm trying to hold the door shut so she can't get in. And she's getting more frustrated and I had the phone line in the door. And the next thing you know my mom cut the phone line, like it was just, it was scary you know. Like you're only 12 or 13 and...she's freaking out and she's throwing stuff. And yeah, I don't know, like I don't know what she would have done if she would have gotten in that door. . . . like she went on a rampage and she had some expensive pottery. She threw it and broke , she broke, like, most of it.

Sometimes the verbal insults and assaults are part of the escalation process itself as is evident in the next passage..

Victoria: I don't remember any yelling until I was about fourteen. My older sister says that she would have to take us and hide us because she was afraid that we would get hit. Now I don't think, I think I was usually not hit. It's hard to piece it together (laughs) 'cause you get little pieces from each person. I don't think that I was hit much but there is a little bit that I remember. I remember being slapped across the face once by my mother and I remember my father throwing a dish at me once. But I think, I remember feeling largely physically secure. Like I wasn't afraid of being beaten. I was afraid of being yelled at. But my sister says she used to hide us because she was worried about that.

Victoria, by her own admission, has very few specific memories of her childhood. The

fact that her elder sister had those fears suggests that perhaps there was more going on in her family than what Victoria remembers clearly.

Victoria shared two episodes which show the boundary issues that existed in her family.

Victoria: A story that is commonly told at family functions that's considered amusing is when my dad used to draw butterflies on our tummies, and my mom was taking one of my sisters to have a check-up when they were two and three and uh, she was undressing one child and the doctor was undressing the other, and he said, "What's this?" she thought he was referring to the butterflies on the kids' tummies and then she had finished undressing the one she was undressing, my father had drawn breasts and pubic hair on her which while, not a traditional form of abuse, is certainly strange. And there's a whole bunch of things like that - odd pushing-ins of sexuality. . . . I remember uhm, I still feel like these are my fault and something to be ashamed of. Um, when I was, well I was going to C. school so I think I was in grade five or six, uhm, I wanted to know what masturbation was, how men did it. And I couldn't figure out how. And he tried to explain it to me. I couldn't figure it out and he eventually got frustrated trying to explain it to me so he pulled out his penis and showed me. Now it wasn't erect and he didn't actually masturbate. He just showed how it would happen in that situation which is odd. I could see drawing a diagram but it's not something I considered appropriate. Like if I was thinking of the children that I nanny, "Would that be appropriate?" And I would say, "No!" . . . Everybody walked around naked. I wasn't allowed to lock the bathroom door and there was six people and one bathroom. So I kind of understand that. At the same time, I wasn't allowed to pull the curtain and the logic was that I might drown. But I was twelve, so I don't (laughs) think that I could have.

Victoria's experiences cross the boundary that we normally erect between children and their parents in our culture. What might have been appropriate for a two- or three-year-old becomes questionable for a twelve-year-old. Victoria has been left wondering whether this was sexual abuse or not. There is a lot of ambiguity for her particularly in

light of the few memories that she has of her childhood.

Victoria: I think that's a lot of why I eventually ran away from home was that, at least that was a large issue, I was still trying to decide from grade five up until recently, I was trying to decide whether it was abuse or it wasn't abuse. Whether it was something because I knew that I had a lot of symptoms of sexual abuse.

Was there something else that I wasn't remembering?

So we are left wondering along with Victoria whether this was a grooming process that was happening, i.e., from drawing butterflies on tummies, to breasts and pubic hair, from leaving the bathroom door open to not being allowed to draw a curtain for privacy, or whether her lack of memory can be attributed to sexual abuse. There is more ambiguity here in terms of out-of-control behaviors. But if boundaries are erected by cultural taboos for the purpose of controlling adults' sexual behaviors towards children, then crossing those boundaries can also be considered out-of-control behaviors.

The notion of crossing boundaries is also described by Patcee, and this example more clearly demonstrates the threat to the sense of self experienced in abusive relationships.

Patcee: My appearance! Because I think, well I didn't care, you know, like I had low self-esteem, you know, I wasn't pretty, I wasn't, you know, so I didn't I don't know what it was, like I wasn't like a slob, I wasn't like a tomboy sort of thing, but I wasn't the way my mom wanted me to be I think. . . . Yeah, and I wasn't like...put bows in my hair and stuff like that, I was just like yeah, comb it and leave it straight, you know? So she ended up, actually I had, like, really long hair and she ended up cutting it off because she didn't like what I did with it type thing. . . . I think it's just kind of piled on, you know, a little bit at...in the same meaning in a different light but the same result type thing, you know? Uh, I think it's made me very cautious around, like kind of I watch what I do around my mom even to this day, you know, like because it wasn't just in childhood, it was right up until I lived at home, and 'til about 2-3 years ago. I have been on my own for about 2 years now, so about 2 years and it wasn't like... when I was younger it was appearances and like chores and stuff, when I got older it was

personality stuff. You know, like, I would get down kind of moods and I'd get depressed and when I get depressed I find I get irritable, like crabby. And she and I would have the hugest fights when I was depressed because, I don't know what would ever spark it off, but I think it was like stupid stuff. Like I had a glass in my room or something like that and it would just start like a 2-hour shouting match and, you know, there was just no end.

In this excerpt, we see how something minor or "stupid" escalates into something significant, huge. A two-hour shouting match is out of keeping with a minor infraction like "having a glass" in her room. It isn't until almost the very end of the interview that Patcee discloses that her mother used more than verbal insults and assaults which she characterizes as punishment.

Patcee: There was a lot of physical punishment too, mom used to hit a lot, the belt, the hands, like my face, you know, slapping you across the face but the belt was the big one. And I find that ironic now that she used one of my dad's belts. So the only memory I had growing up of my dad was that he was dead and here's his belt. So that was...I wish that hadn't been the way, but I've got it now. And it's kind of like (giggle) a mixed emotion, like this is the belt my mom used to hit us with but it's a possession of my father's. That I have a picture and a belt, you know, it's really odd.

I asked Patcee and the other participants what they had done to deserve the punishments or assaults. Their answers suggest that there was a lack of balance between what they did and what happened as a consequence of their actions.

Patcee: You know, anytime, it was, I think I was the only kid to get grounded for not putting my shoes in the closet, you know, when you came home from school you kicked it off and you ran to the tv. That, you know, uh, uh, you got grounded for a week and a spanking. Now when I mean grounded it was like no tv, no phone, in your bed at 8:00 and sleeping.

Not all the behaviors fit into the realms of physical or verbal assaults. Some were just bizarre and unpredictable. For example,

Kate: Like if, one time, I didn't eat my lunch, it was hamburger helper, and I was

having a queasy stomach when I was a kid, and I...sometimes that wasn't, sometimes it wouldn't be a big deal if you didn't eat, like if dad was home you'd just have to, he'd tell you to eat. Sometimes it wasn't a big deal, but obviously this day it was and she came out and noticed that I'd thrown it in the garbage. And she picked it out and she made me eat it. And...I was...crying and gagging, and...and, like weird things, like sometimes it wouldn't make her do things like that but other times it would.

In this passage, as in others, we see that out-of-control behaviors were unpredictable, sudden and disconnected from any immediate or identifiable context. When there was an identifiable cause, it seemed to be most often about housekeeping duties. Assaults seemed to occur at a parent's whim and the children were left without any clear understanding of why they were attacked. For example, Jayne explained "mom was in a mood and you'd better tiptoe". The attacks were often unpredictable, e.g., "You could tell certain risk factors. You didn't have a lot of warning." All of the young women believed that their transgressions, e.g., leaving a glass on the cupboard, not hanging up their coat, were simply excuses for the perpetrator to take out her or his anger and frustration on them. Victoria spoke of the difficulty she had making links between causes and consequences since there seemed to be so few links available between her behavior and her parents' behavior when she was growing up.

Victoria: I think that to invest in everything around me was asking for disappointment at that time. So to try to pay attention at school and to try to work, or to set any sort of goal because everything was controlled externally was just an experience in frustration so I wouldn't try to do that. I didn't try to do that until actually fairly into university where I finally connected cause and effect in my brain. That was a big problem. When I was young, I would do things, like, I would, and this is up until seventeen or eighteen, and I would believe that all my clothes would always get wrecked. I would climb trees, most people would wreck their clothes when they climbed trees but I didn't wreck my clothes when I was climbing trees. My clothes just always got wrecked. There was no, I couldn't connect there even though everybody would say this. There's this

connection and I just wouldn't pick up on it, and my theory would be that especially early in life, cause and effect wasn't connected. If you cry and no one comes, how do you connect that in your brain? So it took a long time to get that.

In this sub-category I reviewed the out-of-control behaviors of parents in abusive families. Within the excerpts, participants provided us with their experiences and what led to these outbursts. From all accounts, it is difficult to define abusive parents' behaviors as acts of discipline. Rather they represent behaviors that are out of control, and they ultimately lead to the negation of the self in the child or adolescent, a sense of dehumanization that we saw earlier in this chapter. I leave the last word to Kate who sums up this section and the process admirably right at the beginning of her interview.

Kate: I found a, like what I remember was warm memories, but it's kind of like it was two sides to it. Like there was, I remember it really warm but I also remember that when it wasn't like that it was pretty unpredictable. Like, my mom could fly off the handle. Like some things wouldn't bother her, little things, or no, big things wouldn't bother her and then all of a sudden like the littlest thing, and she'd be set off. And when my dad was working, um, dad was working until 11:00 for awhile or quarter to eleven or something, so we didn't see him very much. And I remember my mom getting mad all of a sudden 'cause her house was messy and waking us up at like, 10:30 to come and clean the house and vacuum and stuff like that. And like, sometimes irrational things happened, not often in front of my dad.

5.3.2 Regaining Control

The bid for control is not one-sided. Children and adolescents also seek to establish control. Some of the quotes provided above illustrate early attempts by children to control outcomes, e.g., when Patcee says "you had to do things right" or when Jayne says "we made sure we did what had to be done and we tried not to get into trouble." As young children, they used the only means at their disposal, that of pleasing their parents and doing what was expected of them. Later when their stage of development affords them some mobility, they seek to escape the situation. Jayne describes her efforts:

Jayne: It was awful...very stressful. I spent a lot of time out of the house. I spent

a lot of time in the graveyard. We had a little graveyard and I love it to this day. I still go out there every once in a while if I'm feeling really awful, I go sit in my little graveyard, but it was a far enough walk that mom wouldn't come after me. So if she got mad, I'd scoot out of the house and walk to the graveyard, about a mile away and I would just stay there a couple of hours away. So I spent a lot of time there to get away from her. . . . We were outside a lot, we weren't allowed in the house a lot, my mom was very neurotic so we (chuckle) spent a lot of time outside which in the end was very good for us. As I got older I would bike ride to a neighbor and then at fourteen my parents divorced.

Not all of their escapes are physical. For Victoria, there was a rich fantasy world to compensate for what was lacking in her world.

Victoria: I spent a lot of time out walking and I had a very elaborate world where there were little men in my lunch box and there was this evil character called Black Magic and I was saving the world from him. A very elaborate world, and when I decided I was ready to leave and go fight the forces of evil, I had to change my name to Reuben James which I heard from a Kenny Rogers's country song (laughs). So elaborate, things like that.

With the onset of adolescence, their world expands considerably and they began to spend more time outside the home. CF2 began her experiments with drugs and alcohol at age twelve, following a particularly violent attack by her father which ended her parents' marriage. She eventually found a group of peers who were also having difficulties at home and developed a deep connection to them. The behaviors of this group escalated until she was doing car break-ins and stealing to support her drug and alcohol habit. Although this example may seem to be extreme because it is drawn from my clinical work, participants in the study talked candidly about their own out-of-control behaviors. For example,

Victoria: And I, it is my feeling that that's what was, because I was declining and declining and getting more and more psychologically messed up...I call it dissociative. Because, well the overt symptoms, I was cutting myself. I was bulimic. I stole. I didn't drink or do drugs because I...I was promiscuous but I

wouldn't have sex. 'Cause promiscuous...I had a sense I was biding my time. I couldn't do anything about my problems right now but there was going to be a time when I could and I knew if I drank or did drugs or had sex, those were all things that could lead to a point where you couldn't bring yourself back. So I picked things that I did not see as destructive. I would cut myself but I would research to make sure that I wouldn't hit any major veins or arteries (laughs). I needed to express it, how difficult it was but I didn't want to hurt myself seriously. So I had a lot of those kinds of symptoms. A lot of weird psychological stuff.

Kate explains that her bulimia was a way for her to exert some control over her life.

Kate: Yeah, it just kind of started out like that. I took a home-ec class actually, and I was like, maybe I should start eating healthier and cut out chips and that. So it kinda started as a body thing and then it just kind of went the way...being able to control things. Like you might make me eat but it's not going to stay down. And like...a way to deal with my emotions when I was upset.

When the situation at home is out of control, some adolescents seem to be left with no choice but to pack up and leave. As Jane puts it, "So then I think that's why I felt like, you know, either I gotta get out of here or else I'm going to lose it kind of thing." It is only by leaving that they begin to establish some control over their day to day lives. For some, it is an easier journey than others, as Jane's story informs us.

Jane: I stayed for grade 9 and 10. And then, the summer of grade 10, um, I went and lived with my sister for the summer. It was just going to be for the summer. And, um, I got to talking with my sister at the end of the summer, and Mom and Dad had come up to R. Lake to come and get me, and I was just like, you know what, I don't want to go home. You know, cause when you're there for two months and you're experiencing things, like, of you know, this is a good life kind of thing. You know, I was just, I don't want to go back there. And I asked my sister, "Susan, can I stay with you?" And she's like, "Yeah, of course you can, you know you're always welcome here." And I remember my dad freaked out and, you know, "We're not leaving until you get in that truck!" And I remember I

was standing behind my sister and her husband, and they're like, you know,
"You're not taking her."

Jane, like others in the study, was following in her older sister's footsteps. Her sister had left home for good when she was only sixteen and gone to live with an aunt. For others, there was a much more dramatic parting. Jayne relates how she came to leave home after a particularly vicious attack by her mother.

Jayne: I went back to the bathroom quick and sat in the dark and took out a razor blade and said: "This is it, I've had it, I can't do it". And thank God, I hate pain and so I'm sitting there saying, "Oh that's going to hurt." So I just stayed in the bathroom and finally my sister came home and she came and got me. So I told her what happened and she phoned dad and said, "You'd better come now or Jayne will be dead." So he came the next morning and said, "Okay let's go," and mom just stood there and she said, "Well you leave with what you came in with." And I left with nothing. I took my clothes, that was it.

Leaving home once does not mean that one does not try to go back. Several of the participants did return home after they had been gone for years, in some cases. They returned because they thought things would be better and that the abuse would stop. As Jayne said, "But you still had to give it a chance...she was still mom." The only way that Jayne could free herself from the control her mother exerted over her was to completely disown her.

Jayne:...and that's when I said, "You're a child abuser, you are not my mother, when I have children, I will tell them that their grandmother is dead, you will not be invited to anything, you will not be involved in the rest of my life. You are dead.

For others, connections to the family are stressful and evoke painful experiences for them.

Kate: But, and then, I think the only reason I don't, I won't worry about it but it upsets me, you know, that it might happen again. Because, it always takes me back to that, like five-year-old, scared, you know, helpless, and worthless, and...she can just make me feel like that all over. And I'm really scared about

living there this summer.

The three sub-categories that I have presented here outline the process of control as it moves from a need for control, to out of control, and regaining control. This is the process of abuse as it is played out in families. However, the picture is not complete until we examine the sub-categories that expand on the control process, Stressors and Isolation. The subcategory Stressors is an examination of the stressors that exist prior to the formation of the family and occur along the development of the family and that contribute to the abuse process. The stressors also provide the foundation for the sense of isolation that is experienced by children who are abused.

5.2.2 Stressors

Some of the stressors that the participants spoke of pre-existed the formation of the family or their birth. They pre-dated the beginning of the abuse process. Interviewing older individuals who have developed some perspective on their experiences is clearly helpful for identifying the stressors that played a role in their families. The adolescents I worked with in the clinic had not yet developed the knowledge of their parents as people or did not have the cognitive skills to make connections between once- or twice-removed causes and consequences. Kate tells us what it took for her to overcome some of the consequences of her own abusive experiences.

Kate: Mmmm. I think it's when I finally, I don't know how it happened, but I think it's when I saw my mom and dad as people instead of my parents. I always thought like I, they were such bad parents, but then I think of their life and I think like they're really good people. Like all the things that they've overcome. Like my dad is strong, and he's made it from nothing. Like, he's been so poor and like he used to beat my mom and he used to, like, drink. And now he's like, he'd never lay a hand on anyone. He doesn't drink. And he, like is driven and he, the only reason we have money is because he's smart with it. And my mom, like, is actually, she has a really beautiful spirit where she's not, you know...and she's come from a pretty hard life too. She had to deal with my dad.

Within this passage Kate provides us with an insight into her own resolution of her abuse

but she also hints at some pre-existing stressors that contributed to the abuse she experienced.

Patcee elaborates on how stress affected her mother and the empathy she now has for her mother.

Patcee: I don't think she did. I don't think she learned it, like there would be no way my grandparents would ever have done that. I think it was just, you know she was raising two kids. Like my father passed away when she was 22 which I could not imagine because I just turned...like I remember July 19th when I was 22, I was sitting in my room going, I'm supposed to have two kids and be a widow. Uh! Uh! There is just no way I could do that, so I have like so much admiration for my mother, she is the strongest person I know. To have...you know she's retiring today at 45. You know like, good for her, in a way, you're awesome type thing eh! So I think she had a lot to deal with and I think that's kind of, you know, it's not something she really wanted to do. I think it happened before she knew it type thing. And she was so frustrated and alone, you know?

Victoria provides us with another type of pre-existing stressors - specifically chronic illness.

Victoria: My mother was sick, chronically ill. She has training as a social worker. Uhm, before I was born actually, she, over several years, she down-slided, getting more and more sick. We don't know what the diagnosis was. She thinks it was structural problem, other people think she had vasculitis, immunity disorder, all kinds of things (laughs). So you can pick anything to be the illness and she started getting better probably shortly before my youngest sister was born. In terms of being functionally able to act as a housewife, that probably happened about the time I was in grade five or grade six. But there was still thorough problems of dysfunction in the family as a result of the illness that is still there to some extent.

At the very beginning of her interview Jane talks about her childhood in more general terms, what her father did and her mother and then she says, "My dad was always working and . . . well my mom is an alcoholic." A third of the way into the interview

she reveals more about her mother.

Jane: Uh, I know that, like talking to her, I know that she's gone through a lot in her life, like I know that was like, she's experienced like, her mom, like her dad died at a young age, and her stepfather used to abuse her and...And I know that she probably has a lot of issues to deal with as well, and I know it's wrong to be an alcoholic. But at the same time, she needs help, like she obviously needs help, but at the same time I think I kind of justify it with a story that she's told, she's told me. 'Cause I know how she made me feel, so I can imagine how somebody else made her feel. . . . I know it was sexual abuse.

This passage is important not only because Jane reveals her mother's abusive past but because she identifies so strongly with her experience. She is tacitly accepting abuse as part of her childhood experiences. Yet, Jane did not acknowledge abuse in her childhood until the end of the interview.

Victoria, in talking about her experiences, provides us with another pre-existing stressor, that of upbringing. She believes it led to the boundary problems that existed in her family.

Victoria: . . . My father had a lot of boundaries problem. Like he was raised in an incredibly frigid Christian home. Where there was no hugging and no one ever discussed sexuality and he was determined to make his children not frigid and I think he overstepped a lot of boundaries that he shouldn't have overstepped. Which is the one thing in our family that we don't discuss much because I am the only one in the family that takes a clear stance on it having been wrong. Everyone else says dad shouldn't do that but it certainly couldn't damage anybody. It's just annoying.

Some of the stressors represent pivotal events for the participants as well as their parents. For example;

Jayne: My parents split up when I was just three. It's one of my earliest memories because I was so scared of dad not coming home. I didn't like my mom too much. Oh, yeah, I loved my mom but dad and I were very close so I can remember that and I can remember not understanding and being very

uncomfortable with that. And then when dad came home things were great and I have very good memories through kindergarten. Up until age of five, we lived in C. My mom was a school teacher and my dad worked for the oil, he did oil mapping and some kind of engineering kind of work. And, yeah, I have really good memories. At the age of five, we moved to S. and my dad went farming. And my mom went teaching in a very small town, in a very small community. So that was a big change.

For Jayne, it set the stage for the abuse that she maintains started later when she was ten years old. Recall that Jayne has already talked about her mother's out-of-control behaviors happening prior to age 10 but in this passage is very clear about when 'abuse' started.

Jayne: I've had to do this so many times. 'Til the age of ten, it was great but when my baby sister was born, everything changed. My mom changed.Uhm, she had a lot of hormonal problems after Helen. She had to go on a lot of medications, she got very sick. I think more mentally sick, you know. She had anxiety attacks continually, uhm, she...didn't deal with anger very well. She never did before that. I mean if she was mad, you ran like, you got the hell out of her way because she was very abusive and after that it became...it really compounded after the age of ten. I was her scapegoat after the age of ten so it all kind of came down on me and not my sister. Yeah, I mean it was a really hard time.

Some of the stressors experienced by the participants are the assaults that they experience at the hands of their parents. The assaults escalate to the point that they can no longer remain in their homes and they take action to leave the abusive situation. This was evident in the example provided by Jane earlier when she talked about her leave-taking or escape from her mother. The same thing was reiterated by Kate when she described the episode between her and her mother that led her to leave home.

Not all the stressors were negative. Some of them had very positive effects for the participants or their parents. Mackenzie talks about her parents' divorce.

MacKenzie: Uhm, I, I liked when I moved away from my dad, I was actually

relieved, for me. Uhm. . . . Most, most kids are ususally really sad and upset about it but it was more of a relief. Uhm, I don't know. It was kind of hard 'cause my mom was a single mom and um, there was me and my brother, and she tried really hard to get her life back together and what not. And so, uhm, so in that sense I didn't get to do everything that I wanted to so like some people were in figure skating and some people were in, I don't know, like Uhm, well my dad, well my dad used to beat up my mom.

Although MacKenzie sees the down side to the separation and divorce, she also credits her mother with getting the family out of a bad situation, one where she was scared of her father and the violence that surrounded her.

The stressors that I have outlined in this section in no way represent the possible array of stressors that exist. However, the examples of the stressors provided by the participants in the study provide us with a picture of the different classes of stressors that have an impact on members in an abusive family and show how the participants use the stressors as a way of constructing the context for the abuse and of excusing (and, in some cases, blaming) the abuser. Some stressors pre-exist the formation of the family, such as parental experiences in childhood, or belief systems in the family of origin. Others exist within the person, such as chronic physical or mental illness. Still others involve changes in the economic and financial situation of the family as well as more basic structural changes such as the birth of a new child or separation and divorce. Others revolve around the assaults that are, themselves, extremely stressful but may sometimes lead to a change in circumstances that benefit the person who is experiencing abuse.

5.2.3 Isolation

Central to the experience of abuse was a feeling of isolation or being disconnected from others, of not belonging to their families. The isolation that the participants experienced was both social and psychological. The total sense of isolation that participants experienced evolved as an interaction between two factors: a) a physical and psychological distancing from siblings and family members and, b) feeling different from siblings and friends. The out-of-control behaviors of parents reinforced the sense of isolation as the children or adolescents sought refuge from the chaos in their lives by

turning to other family members. Isolation seemed both to magnify the effects out-of-control behaviors and was magnified by out-of-control behaviors. It also seems to be central to the process of labeling their experiences as abusive.

Distancing from extended family occurred on two levels. First, there was a geographical distancing which was a factor for some participants. Jane explains:

Jane: I was born in S. and lived there for about 10 years. And then we moved to O. for 2 years. And then we moved to another town in S. for a year and then I, at right around, I think I was 13, I moved in with my older sister back in O. I lived with her for about a year, and then they moved back, my parents had moved so I moved with them and lived with them for, I think, 2 years. And then right around grade 11, 10 or 11, end of grade 10 I moved back to live with my sister in O. I wouldn't say it was very stable. We were always moving, and um, I don't know how else to describe it, it always seemed like nobody was around, that kind of thing. My dad was always working...

Geographical distancing is insufficient to account for their sense of disconnection from family, particularly with the ease of communicating over distances that exist today. Perhaps even more important was the prohibition against contact with family members. Jane continues with her story.

Jane: Like she's lost a lot of friends. We've lost contact with a lot of family members. Like...Yeah, I think it's a little bit more than, it is definitely way more than that...but at the same time, yeah, you know, like especially on, like partially on my dad's side. You know. Like they seen the way she treated my dad, you know. I don't blame them for not liking my mom...and especially, I guess, especially when you see like your...like if I was a grandmother and I seen my, my son marry this woman, and this woman is terrible to him, and terrible to her kids, like of course I'm not going to like her. My mom just says, "Oh, you know, your dad's family is a bunch of stuck ups." And it's just, like, "No they're not!" you know, and God forbid if I go over to grandma's for dinner one night, you know, because we're not supposed to talk to them because they treat my mom so terribly. Like...

With Victoria, the distancing from extended family had its source in her parents' rejection of family values and beliefs.

Victoria: On my mother's side (laughs) they're full of crazy people. They're very concerned about appearances, making money and drinking alcohol. So I didn't bond with any of them at all. . . .My dad's side, they're all highly religious There is...my mother and them don't get along at all. Because she feels that they were mean to her, gloss, gloss, gloss everything. She has a point. They were somewhat dysfunctional but I would not say they were horrible demons and at the same time she relates to her family who were fair worse (laughs) because she needs this approval from them. She didn't need this approval from my dad's side.

When there was contact with extended family, it came as a result of a shared view, particularly when it came to children. Jayne explains how things worked in her extended family.

Jayne: My mom's sister, tuh, kids were not put on this earth to be kids. Kids are laborers...we'd go to her house and she'd have a list of work for us to do. We cleaned her toilets too. We did her babysitting. We did, you know, Donna and I were just the laborers for the family. We were the oldest...so we did all the babysitting, the cooking and the cleaning for all of them. We just went house to house...and it's like you have no one you could rely on. . . . And her whole family is like that, very violent family, very...yeah we didn't have very much support over there. And my dad's family is far away. His sister lived in E. and his other sister lived in O. and my grandma and grandpa were so much older.

When participants experienced support from family members, it was from siblings. For participants, siblings were a source of support in early childhood. Jane provides us with her view on her sibling's role when she was between 10 and 14 years old. This excerpt follows a discussion about her father and how things were better for her when he was at home.

Jayne: As I got older, Donna also became a protector. If Donna was around, it was better. I don't know so much if she stopped mom or if she would just get to me to tell me to shut up, to conform, keep yourself out of trouble.

The closeness is captured further in this passage from Jayne.

Jayne: . . . Then mom and dad would fight and mom and grandma would fight and then grandma and grandpa would fight and then...so a lot of our nights were fighting so you didn't sleep well. You know, Donna and I slept together a long time, fourteen and sixteen and you're still huddled together in the bed thinking "We'll get through this, we'll get through this." I mean that's insane. At that age, we shouldn't have to huddle.

However, the relationship deteriorated over time, as did the relationship between other participants and their siblings. Underlying this distancing was the different ways in which they viewed the abusive experiences or their parents.

Jayne: . . . We're a lot more distant now. A lot of things came between us with mom and dad. Donna's was mom's and I was dad's, and I couldn't see her point and she couldn't see mine. You know dad's had a lot of issues with Donna that I totally hated her for, like how dare you be mad at him for being a good dad. 'Cause she had so many issues, she had to work out. Yeah, we distanced a lot actually.

Although this distancing often occurred during later adolescence and young adulthood, it reinforced participants' perspective of having no one around to rely on, of being isolated in their perspective of their experiences. In addition, for many in this study, older siblings had already left home and were unavailable to them as a source of daily support. The only way that siblings stayed connected throughout the process was if they, too, had been subjected to the same behaviors and experiences as the interviewee. In this case, they became a source of support and a rescuer. Kate's story is one of these.

Kate: I think that I would've never made it without my sisters. At this point, like we were really close, like I can't imagine losing any one of them. I could imagine losing my parents before I lost them. . . . I know that Rhonda had much more bitterness towards my dad because my dad used to be a lot meaner when they were kids. . . . Rhonda, she's really removed from dad. Angry. She doesn't, for a while she wasn't, um, like be around the house very much if he was there. If he was going to be home for supper, she wouldn't come over. And she, she knows

mom's like a little off too, but she's still like, I think she mostly feels bad for mom. But mom was hard to put up with her whole life. And she really hates dad, I think.

Participants in the study talked about the way their siblings were their supporters, their caregivers, and often their protectors. However, my clients talked about the relationship with siblings as one of rivalry and antagonism(F9.22.5). Since most of the interviewees were high functioning young adults, one can only speculate at the role supportive siblings play in resilience and how different things might have turned out for the group in the study had they not had this source of support and comfort.

The importance of social isolation in the abuse process is underscored in Adrien's interview as he describes connections in his family. Adrien did not believe that he was abused in his family.

Adrien: Yeah, my dad was, let's see, my mom too, were big on everything was done in the family kind of thing. . . .We have the...well my dad was actually was from the typical big French extended family that keeps together. On my mom's side, well, very much the same thing. Like uh, Christmas, New Year's, Easter, Thanksgiving, we'd have to get all 50 to 60 of us together.

Statements like these are all but absent in the transcripts of the participants and the stories from my clients. John provides a very different view of growing up in his family.

Although he insisted that life at home was good, he could not provide one single example of something that he did with his parents. He classified himself as a loner. For example,

John: No, no, I pretty much done everything on my own all my life so, I had one or two friends when I went to school but I chose to be alone most of the time. . . . I did things with my mum and dad, like, we used to...and I used to...when my grandpa was alive, I used to go fishing with him all the time and I'd spend time up at the lake with him. . . . Like I just did pretty much everything on my own, so.

In addition to the physical distancing from family is the psychological and emotional distancing that occurred. The experiences of the children were not acknowledged by family and friends even when they witnessed the abuse. In this study,

only one parent was responsible for the direct assaults against the child. However, the other parent colluded in the abuse in countless ways and, at the very least, was guilty of failing to protect the child from the abuse⁵. As Jane recounts it:

Jane: Yeah. And but yeah, sometimes I get mad at him because I think, you know, why didn't he ever stand up for us? Like why didn't he say enough is enough? And why did he keep promising that she was gonna get help? And why, like, why didn't he do things differently? You know, and sometimes I blame him. . . . So, I don't...and it was, it seemed like, every time, it was always him buying the alcohol. You know, like he'd come home with groceries and there's a forty of rye in the bottom of the cupboard. Like who bought it? Obviously he did. . . . Like, why hasn't he left her? You know, like, when she gets mean, like, when she gets on one of her moods or whatever, like my sister and I always used to say, like no wonder why dad works so much. You know, like, who wants to be like...Yeah, I wouldn't be in that house either if I had the choice.

Although one parent may feel powerless in the face of a controlling partner, his or her very presence does make a difference. As Jayne recalls:

Jayne: And the physical abuse, never in front of dad...the mental and the verbal, yeah, and then they'd fight and then it would be our fault. So yeah, he tried but he couldn't fight her on a personal basis. My father was scared of her too. He could fight her on our behalf but on his own behalf, he still can't. He's still...he's scared of her and he'll say it all the time, "I just can't fight her."

Partners also seemed to accept, without challenge, the explanations that were offered regarding the disciplining of the child (read physical assaults) or the havoc that the parents themselves had wreaked on the house. As Jane explained earlier when I asked how her mother would account for all the broken dishes,

Jane: And the story that my dad got was that I was being a spoiled brat and my mom wouldn't let me have a coke or something, and I threw a fit and broke all the

⁵ Because 'failure to protect' is considered abusive, I will refer to abusive parents in the study except when I refer to the specific parent involved.

pottery. . . .Um he just told me to smarten up and stop being so stupid. That was his favorite line. And uh, and just, yeah, just tell me to smarten up and grow up a bit and stop provoking my mother (laughs).

The abusive parent, it seems, exerted control over the entire family, including his or her partner, and seemed to paralyze everyone from intervening.

Extended family members who witnessed abuse or who became aware of assaults against the child minimized the perpetrator's behavior, further isolating the child. Jayne describes her grandmother's reaction after a violent episode with her mother which led Jayne to suicidal thoughts in the bathroom.

Jayne: And I had hit my end and I came out, I don't know where she (mother) was...but I came out and I said to Grandma, I said, "Please grandma, just let me go home with you tonight, just 'til mom calms down." And it was the same thing, "Oh, Jayne, just set the table, it's all over now." Oh, I hate you people. They just couldn't see the violence; they couldn't see anger.

Ignoring assaults when they happened was only one way in which family members colluded. They also minimized the experiences and expected children to handle their situations themselves. Jane recalled one incident when she was looking for help:

Jane: And, I remember one incident or whatever, Mom was freaking out, so I ran to a friend's house. And I phoned my Aunt Jackie to come and get me and she came and got me, and she took me to her house. But, when she was talking, er talking to me or whatever, she's like, "Jane, she's like, I know what's going on, she's like, and I know it's not that bad, she's like, Just go home and work it out." So when somebody's telling you to go home and stop, stop provoking it and stop being a little witch and stop running away from it. Just stay home and put up with it kind of thing. Just like, I, right then and there, it's like, "Oh you're not the right person."

When children attempted to disclose the abuse or to name behaviors as abusive, it was denied by other family members which also added to their sense of isolation. As they named their experiences "abusive" and pointed to their parents as perpetrators of abuse, other siblings, who had since either made peace with their parents or who needed

to deny their own complicity in the abuse, denied the allegations and minimized the experiences. When the participants labeled their experiences abusive, they found themselves in a unique position. Their beliefs eventually led to a distancing from siblings. This distancing was a keen loss for the participants because, at one time, siblings were their sole source of support.

Victoria: I am the only one in the family that takes a clear stance on it having been wrong. Everyone else says dad shouldn't have done this but it certainly couldn't damage anybody. It's just annoying.

Isolation also comes about as a result of being singled out and of being made to feel different from others in the family or peer group. The sense of being different first emerged in the family where they felt they were scapegoats or the black sheep of the family. Victoria expresses it quite clearly:

Victoria: From what I have read of family systems theory, I think I was probably the one that was dysfunctional to draw the attention away from the problems. Like, I was very much the black sheep and the person who couldn't get it together.

John talks about being blamed for everything or anything that went wrong in his family and at school:

John: There were times when, uh, things went wrong around the farm and I got blamed for some the things I didn't do and it was my younger brother that did 'em or somebody (*else*) totally that did 'em. I got blamed for them because I was the eldest I guess, I don't know. Always getting into mischief but that's part of growing up, so. . . . (Explaining why he beat up his brother) Uh, he'd blame me for doing something and I'd get mad at him because I knew I didn't do it, and he'd blame me anyway, so. . . . I got picked on a lot when I was at school. . . . Oh call me names, and try and get me into trouble and that was another reason I got sent to R., was because the principal there classified me as a ring leader, which wasn't true but it was, every time something started, I usually wound up in the middle of it. And so I'd get blamed for it, so.

Jayne provides us with some of her experience to illustrate what it meant to be a

scapegoat in her family.

Jayne: My baby sister is an intellect, she's a genius child and she is so bad. So she would throw her temper tantrums and, of course, I would get hit because Helen was upset. It was never Helen's fault. Helen was never disciplined. Helen would throw something at me and I would be bleeding and I would get a smack across the head for bleeding basically. "Like how dare you make a mess" and humph "she hit me" and it's like, "Poor Helen." And God forbid if I ever did something to Helen, then I was being the mother and that wasn't allowed. Yet Donna could to a point. So you really had to watch. There were so many things you had to watch.

Another form of scapegoating was included in previous excerpts when Jane was blamed for the broken dishes, and Jayne was blamed for fights between her mother and father. The importance of this form of scapegoating is apparent in Jane's statement:

Jane: Yeah, I know that she can't control how I feel. She just has to control herself. Like, I just, I don't want her to take necessarily responsibility for me, I want her to take responsibility for what she is, and what she's become, and for what she's done. You know, like doesn't she feel sorry?

In addition to the scapegoating, the expectations that the perpetrator had for the target child differed from their expectations for others in the family.

Jayne: I would be cleaning out the sewer and my sister would be baking pies in the kitchen with my mother. Dad came down to help me and this would cause hard feelings with Donna because, in her opinion, he would be overcompensating for mom's behavior.

Some children and adolescents who are abused are often held to a different standard of behavior than their siblings. In a therapy session, the mother of a young man (CS2) who at the age of fifteen was struggling with alcohol and drugs admitted that her daughter had displayed many of the same behaviors as her son at the same age. Her daughter had since straightened out and finished high school. However, her son's behaviors had taken on a different meaning for her. She was able to stand by her daughter but had barred her son from the house. Her behavior left him (CS2) puzzled

and angry and feeling very much alone; only his friends could understand him.

It seemed that no matter what, the target child could not do anything right. As older siblings assumed more of the household duties, their efficiency and expertise seemed to emphasize the younger sibling's ineptitude and provided more opportunity for the perpetrator to single out the target child for more abuse. Jayne relates her experience:

Jayne: Donna was now more the mother. Like mom spent four years on the couch basically. She'd go to work, she'd come home and hit that couch and we did everything. . . . So Donna's a kind of mom now and I think mom just kind of needed her to be in that position and didn't want to damage that one. And Donna was so much like mom. Donna has a lot of mom's qualities. She works at them continually and I give her more credit than the world can give, but she has a lot of mom in her. And they bonded a lot better because of that and she could work mom better than I could. I just didn't have...

One might speculate that the older siblings came to provide a valuable service to the household and the perpetrator needed to placate them in order to retain their services. In Jayne's passage we can also see the examination of the self and the finding of the self lacking in the qualities that a sibling has and which seem to protect this sibling from her mother's anger.

So far, I have talked about a number of ways in which the participants felt isolated from others. There was the geographical distancing from family, the social and emotional distancing from both extended family members and siblings, the sense of being alone that occurred as a result of a non-abusing parent's lack of support or presence. There is also the sense of being different from others which further emphasized their sense of being alone in their experiences. As children develop and spread their wings beyond their own family, they became aware of how different their own experiences of family were from others. Jayne, who spent as much time as possible with a friend's family, was amazed at the difference between this family and her own.

Jayne: I grew up through other friends' families. Like one girl friend, her mom was so sweet; she would bake cookies and she would never make us work and I was just amazed. I'd say, "You know, we'd better do the dishes" and she's like,

“Kids don’t do dishes, go have fun” and I’d be, like “Huh? This is too cool!” So I spent so much time at her house. I really lived through their families. And they all sort of adopted me. I was kind of that personality and I sort of slid in and I’m part of the family now. So I was really close to a lot of families at that time and I think that they knew because I was always scared.

School was another environment where differences between self and other became more apparent. Jane recalls her experience at school:

Jane: I think I figured it out an early age. Like just, I remember even school things, like you know, they weren’t really involved, you know, so I think you pick up on that as a young kid. Like I know that, like grade 3, you know, we have this big graduation ‘cause you’re moving from elementary to secondary or whatever school. They weren’t there, or, you know, like, you know, having no lunch or, you know, no milk money or you know...and you see other kids having it or, you know, parents not going to parent-teacher interviews, you know. And it always seems like I had to, uh, I just, you know...they always sent home those stupid permission forms and it just seemed like nobody was around to ever sign it.

School was also the time that Victoria felt the isolation of her experiences. Because her experiences at home were so different from other students, she felt she lacked the skills that other children had and lacked the support at home to overcome the problems she had with peers.

Victoria: Well after toddlerhood, uhm, I went, I attended school. I wasn’t particularly liked by my peers. It was obvious that I was socially behind them. That was actually, I would say more, in terms of what I noticed at the time, that was more painful than anything and my whole life, I knew it kind of sucked but if school was good, I could’ve dealt with it (laughs). I remember trying to ignore as much as I could ‘cause I, I don’t think I had much in the way of friends until grade four. In grade four, I had some friends but they were, sometimes they liked you sometimes they didn’t. It’s probably typical for...(laughs). A lot of it, I think, was that it had a stronger effects on me when the kids didn’t like me too. Like after I had a social group, we got along really well for grades five and six,

and then in grade seven, they decided they didn't like me anymore and were quite cruel. But that is very typical of children in grade seven...for children in grade seven, but it had a much stronger effect on me, I think, because I didn't have anything to fall back on.

The sense of being different was consolidated at adolescence when belonging and acceptance by others become more critical. Within their community of peers, they believed that they lacked the material things that would have helped them to feel a part of the group. A lack of material things in adolescence left them feeling out of step with peers at a time when connection to peers is considered to be an important step in the development of a separate sense of identity.

Jane: By the time you're 11 or 12, material things matter, you're getting into that age where, where material things matter. You know, and you're getting into that age where friends get really cliquy and sort of form cliques and, you know, you gotta be popular, and, like, all, that's the things that matter. And I remember, you know, like, not having as nice things as anybody else.

This experience might seem to be more true of families where money was not an issue, as in the present study, and when the targeted child was denied material things because money was spent on things that brought satisfaction to the parent without regard for the child's needs or desires. The lack of material things singled them out from their peers at a time when a sense of belonging, sharing, and sameness is critical to fitting into their peer groups or cohort.

It is not only in the physical realm that children were made to feel different. Children's emotions and experiences were not acknowledged or validated while those of the perpetrator seemed to be on the forefront of everyone's mind. When others minimized the child's experience, the implicit message was that they were different from others. This message accentuated the feelings of isolation and of being different that they were already struggling with. It is a very small step from being different to being unworthy of protection or empathy. Jayne put up with many such comments from her family.

Jayne: Because family kept saying...constantly, "you've got to be nicer to your

mother, she's having a hard time." Well what do you think we're going through? They never once considered that we would have a hard time. They felt that we should just go and life is good...we're, like, "No this sucks. I am fourteen now and don't tell me to be happy when I'm not."

Her family ignored the emotional consequences of her abusive experiences even when they witnessed them. She experienced the same reactions when she disclosed her uncle's sexual assault of her when she was fourteen.

Jayne: They won't accept that I hurt. They won't accept that this could have done something to me. They worried about what it's done to them. They worried about what it's done to him.

Finally, in many cases, the reaction of the community, friends and peers to the experiences of abuse reinforced that sense of difference. For example, Jayne often heard "I don't know how you survived" or "How did you live like that?" The words, although meant perhaps to underline Jayne's strength and resourcefulness, implied that she was somehow different from the speaker. Such statements further emphasized the differences that participants had experienced or that had been constructed throughout their lives. They do not empower them. Rather, they forced individuals to review how these differences could be responsible for their abusive childhoods.

This sense of being different was even more pronounced when children entertained different interests or talents than others in the family. For example, one young woman who is a poet today attributed her abuse to the fact that she was always different from her siblings, an observer rather than a doer. In her estimation, it was her poetic nature, her being different from the rest of the brood that invited the abuse from her parents. Their treatment of her gave her siblings implicit permission to do the same. She becomes angry when people credit her early childhood experiences for her poetry. Today she writes under a nom de plume and her family has no idea that she has been published (F2.4.2). John's narrative provides another example of being a square peg in a round hole. One gets the sense from his narrative that his interests and his personality were very different from his brother and from others at school. Because he was different, he was scapegoated throughout much of his early life at home and at school.

Whether these differences actually existed or were constructed by the interviewees as a way of understanding their experiences is impossible to know. Nevertheless, it is clear that they felt singled out from others in their families. Being different, being treated differently, being socially isolated, combined with the assaults that they endured throughout their childhood and adolescence, led them to label their experiences 'abusive'. The adolescents I worked with did not directly share the experience of isolation with me, although their experiences of abuse did not differ from those of the interviewees. There may be two reasons for this difference. The first is that this aspect of their experience may have been masked for them because they were in the throes of adolescence and very connected to peer groups at the time they were in treatment. A common experience would be to run away for a few days at a time and stay with various friends to escape a chaotic home life. A second reason for them not addressing the issue is that they may not have reached the level of maturity that permitted them to take a step back and digest the whole of their experiences. For whatever reasons, the recognition of isolation as a factor in childhood remains a significant part of the process of labeling experiences 'abusive'. Getting connected to peers in adolescence is a normal part of development, but for children who are abused, it becomes a critical step in feeling connected and in stemming the flow of isolation they experience.

5.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have presented a theory of child abuse as it emerged from the narratives of eight interviewees supplemented by stories from three clients from my clinical practice. A struggle for control between parents and children emerged as the core category. I described the process as it proceeded from a need for control to parental out-of-control behaviors which were remarkable for their unpredictability. Adolescents also engage in out-of-control behaviors and contribute to an escalation in abuse. Regaining control is part of the process, and I described how children attempt to establish some semblance of control in their chaotic lives. Stressors, both pre-existing and ongoing, play a pivotal role in initiating and maintaining the child abuse process. Isolation, both social and psychological, increases the effects of child abuse and leads to the labeling of childhood experiences as abusive. In the next chapter, I discuss the

implications of this theory as well as the support for the theory from the existing literature as well as the published autobiographies of those who were abused as children.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The theory of child abuse that emerged from the data in this study has wide-ranging implications for how we understand and define child abuse, for research into child abuse, for interventions, as well as for the intergenerational transmission of abuse. In this chapter, I will discuss the process theory of abuse in relation to the definition of child abuse and existing models of child abuse as well as the way in which the present theory both supports and is supported in the child abuse literature. This discussion leads into an overview of possible interventions based on the findings from this study and the process theory of abuse. I profile the strengths and limitations of the present study and offer some possible directions for future research in child abuse based on the findings in this study. I begin this discussion by outlining how some of the autobiographical accounts of child abuse support the process theory of child abuse developed in this study.

6.1 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS

The process theory of child abuse is supported in the autobiographical accounts of child abuse that I read prior to beginning this study. Two of the biographies, *A Child Called It* and *Becoming Anna*, are particularly poignant and violent. Anna's mother institutionalized Anna in a mental home for a year on the advice of her own mother who had a Ph.D in child psychology and who had worked at a center for children with behavior problems. Because of Anna's mother's illness, her grandmother often cared for Anna. From a very young age, Anna's grandmother berated her, finding fault with everything she did. According to her grandmother, Anna was responsible for her mother's illness because her behavior was so stressful. Anna had a younger brother with whom she initially had a good relationship. She describes this relationship in the following passage.

Anna: We used to talk, to tell jokes and make tents and act out stories. He adored my imagination, and I was glad to have someone to play with. We fought like normal siblings do, in the beginning. But our mother and our grandmother poisoned him against me. They told him not to play with me, not to look at me because I was a bad influence, because he didn't want to be like me. He learned from the way everyone else in the family treated me that I was a disgusting specimen, that I had caused all the family problems. He caught on pretty quickly that he could do anything he wanted and say I had told him to do it. Then I would be punished instead of him (p.5).

Anna's story is one of isolation, hitting, berating. Her story supports and elaborates the experiences of abuse as they unfolded in the narratives I collected for this study. The word that struck me the most from Anna's account was "dehumanized". At the time that I read her book, I asked whether this was the overarching concept in abuse.

Dave Pelzer's account of his experiences confirmed 'dehumanized' as a central experience in child abuse. Dave Pelzer was abused by his mother between the ages of four and eleven, and he sees himself as having attracted the bad attention because he was more mischievous than his brothers. Dave was an outcast in his family, sleeping separately and eating only when his mother allowed him to do so, but never at the table with his family. His brothers soon learned to ignore him and treated him poorly, knowing that this was one way to ensure that they did not get the same treatment as Dave did. He was isolated from his family and scorned by classmates because he wore the same clothes all the time and was not allowed to bathe. The very title of the book, *A Child Called It*, as well as the experiences Dave Pelzer describes within the covers of the book parallel the experiences of the participants in this study. They, too, reported that they felt dehumanized by their childhood experiences, albeit not in terms of those exact words.

As I read through the transcripts of the interviews in this study I was struck by the similarity between their childhood experiences and those of prisoners of war or hostages. For a time, the language in my theoretical memos and my research diary (war, battle, prisoners, jails) reflected my reaction to the narratives. Goddard and Stanley

(1994) also drew comparisons between the abusing parent/the abused child and as captor/hostage. When I originally read their article in the preliminary stages of my research, I believed that the comparison applied only to the most severe cases of abuse such as were described in *Becoming Anna* or *A Child Called It*. After the interviews were completed and I began the task of coding the data, I reread the article by Goddard and Stanley (1994) and I was struck by the following quotation: “The child is not seen as a person with rights, feelings, drives and interests of his own. . . . He is truly a need-satisfying object for the parent” (Martin & Rodcheffer, 1980 as cited in Goddard & Stanley, 1994). The process theory of abuse developed in this study describes the dehumanizing experience that children suffer in abusive families. As Goddard and Stanley (1994) argued, there are many similarities between their experience and that of being held hostage by terrorists.

6.1.2 Abuse vs. Neglect

There is less support for the process theory of abuse in *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt. This book describes the neglect experienced by children living in abject poverty rather than abuse, as described in these pages. There are two important differences that emerged when I compared this book to the process theory of abuse. First, Frank McCourt did not experience a sense of isolation akin to the participants in this study. The conditions of poverty and neglect were widespread in the community and his mother tried to provide Frank and his brother with the opportunity to take part in as many of the rites of passage as she could afford, and even some she couldn’t. Second, Frank and his siblings did not experience the unpredictable violent episodes that the participants in this study were subjected to. Frank’s father was an alcoholic who eventually abandoned his family but his drinking bouts were predictable: any and every payday. His drinking was always at the expense of the necessities required by his family. Frank’s life was a series of highs and lows, his hopes forever dashed by his father’s broken promises that things would be different next time. In this sense, his life was similar to the participants in this study. However, the sense of isolation and the unpredictable violence are the two important differences that led me to believe that the experiences of neglect are qualitatively different from experiences of abuse. Young

(1964) in her groundbreaking study of child abuse and neglect also found significant differences in abusive and neglectful families.

Young (1964) studied 300 case records from Social Services in New York city. After reviewing the extensive notes of social workers, she found that, in neglectful families, parents were engrossed in their own needs and seemed not to be aware of their children's needs; everything was judged as it affected them personally. They spoke of their own experiences with grief and anger and of their own children with indifference and apathy (Young, 1964). Her study concluded that neglectful parents were immature, did not plan for the future and had no sense of responsibility for their children. Young's (1964) findings are aligned with Frank McCourt's experiences relayed in *Angela's Ashes*. In contrast to neglectful parents, Young (1964) described abusive parents as having a "perverse fascination with punishment as an entity in itself, divorced from discipline and even from the fury of revenge" (Young, 1964, p. 44). She found that abusive parents were immersed in the action of punishing without regard for its cause or purpose and she observed that "punishment is divorced from discipline" (Young, 1964, p. 45). In talking about abusive parents, Young (1964) concluded that "It is very probable that for most of these parents their children do not exist as people..." (p. 54). Young's (1964) description of abusive parents seems to be corroborated by the narratives of the participants in this study. The differences between abusive and neglectful parents presented by Young (1964) are upheld in the autobiographical accounts that I read prior to this study. The differences between abusive and neglectful families imply that the process theory of abuse developed in this study likely applies only to abusive, not neglectful, experiences in families. However, the theory may apply to those cases that involve both abuse and neglect.

6.2 THE PROCESS THEORY AS A FRAMEWORK

The process theory of abuse introduced in this study is not so much a novel formulation of child abuse, but a framework within which the findings from previous research may be inserted, much like the pieces of a puzzle or the letters provided in a crossword. In this section, I will use some of the findings in child abuse research to demonstrate how the theory is both supported by previous findings and provides more

context for some findings in the child abuse literature. I begin by discussing some of the implications of the present theory for the definition of child abuse. I then compare the process theory of abuse developed in this study to other models in the child abuse literature including the challenge that the process theory poses to the four-factor model of oppositional behavior developed by Barkley (1997). Following this discussion, I examine the contextual factors implicated in the problem of child abuse in our communities. I then join other researchers in calling for a developmental approach in the study of child abuse, arguing that it would provide us with the specificity needed for successful interventions and prevention of child abuse in our communities. I conclude with a discussion of the need for control that emerged in this study and its possible role in the intergenerational transmission of abuse.

6.2.1 Definitions of Abuse

To date, two definitions of abuse have been used interchangeably in the literature. In the first instance, it is used as a distinct category of behaviors, and researchers study the correlates of abuse by sampling within families where child abuse has been substantiated by child welfare agencies. In the second instance, child abuse is defined as the extreme end of a continuum of discipline practices, and researchers sample broadly from communities using instruments designed to investigate mild and extreme uses of physical punishment. The most extreme of these behaviors are considered to be abusive. Gelles (1991) challenged the prevailing view that violence toward children was on a continuum from the mildest form to its most deadly form. He suggested that there may be two distinct categories of violence: physical punishment and abusive violence (Gelles, 1991). This study supports the view that physical punishment and abusive violence are distinct categories. Although the participants who labeled themselves abused were able to identify some of their own behaviors that led to being hit or disciplined, for the most part, they described situations in which the violence they were subjected to seemed disconnected from their own behaviors. The violence they described was sudden and seemed out of control. These descriptions were in sharp contrast to Adrien's (not abused) description of his experience of being physically disciplined by his father. Young (1964) also described abusive violence against children as unrelated to physical

punishment. The descriptions provided by participants in this study as well as the conclusions reached by Young (1964) support Gelles's (1991) hypothesis that physical punishment is distinct from abusive violence. Baumrind (1997) has long argued that physical punishment is distinct from abusive violence. According to Baumrind (1997), the use of physical punishment is acceptable when it is intended to modify behavior, when it is non-injurious, and when other disciplinary measures (e.g., time-out, loss of privileges) have failed. Furthermore, she argues that the use of physical punishment should only be used on children between the ages of 18 months and 6 years (Baumrind, 2002). This study supports Baumrind's distinction between physical discipline and abusive behaviors. However, in the Intervention section to follow, I challenge her position that physical punishment continues to be a viable discipline strategy.

The distinction between physical punishment and physical abuse aligns itself with Giovannoni (1989) who suggested that research into child abuse needed to begin with families from the abuse registry if the goal was to better understand child abuse. This research and that by others (e.g., Colley, 2001) demonstrate that child abuse is a serious problem that goes unreported in many instances. It is not yet clear whether this unreporting is specific to class or what other factors may be at play. What is clear is that using families from the abuse registry is only a first step to the development of a broader understanding of child abuse. My results suggest that using a continuum approach to the study of child abuse can be considered as advancing our understanding of child abuse only when we clearly ask whether participants believe they were abused as children. Otherwise, we are not providing the field with the clarity required to deepen and/or broaden our understanding of child abuse.

Gelles (1991) further hypothesized that 'intent' was a distinguishing factor between physical punishment and abusive violence, that abusive violence contained the intent to injure the child. The process theory of abuse presented here is based on the narratives of children who experienced abuse, not on the parents who perpetrated abuse. Therefore, I cannot speak directly to the intent of abusive parents. However, the narratives gathered for this study suggest that it is control or, rather the lack of control, that distinguishes abusive violence from physical disciplines. By the accounts of the

participants, physical punishment is an in-control behavior used by a parent to correct a child. In contrast, abusive behaviors were described as out-of-control behaviors. In fact, it is hard to imagine in the context provided by participants and reviewed in the previous chapter, that there could be any opportunity for abusive parents to form the intent to hurt the child. Abusive behaviors seemed to come out of the blue and were not necessarily connected to events happening at the time. Abusive parents seemed to have a complete disregard for the safety of the child. But can we equate a disregard for a child's safety with an intent to injure the child? On the other hand, one could argue that intent develops over time and is a consequence of accumulated negative experiences with the child. As a result any abusive act may appear to "come out of the blue", but intent to harm could be brewing for some time. Only a study of parents who commit abusive acts against their children will shed light on the question of intent. Participants believed that their parents' out-of-control behaviors were about their parents' state of mind and/or their parents' inability to cope with life. This perspective is also supported by Young's (1964) study of abusive families in New York. The findings in this study support Gelles's (1991) conclusions that the continuum of physical punishment exists independently of a continuum of abusive violence, but it challenges Gelles's (1991) hypothesis that intent is a distinguishing factor between discipline and violence. This study suggests that abusive behaviors arise from a need to control that moves swiftly from a loss of control to being out of control.

The widespread agreement on the most extreme scenarios presented by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) is more likely due to the fact that most respondents in this research are unable to reconcile behaviors such as burning children with cigarettes or chaining them to objects, as the acts of rational, in-control parents. The agreement is not necessarily due to the extremeness of the behaviors but to their out-of-control nature. It is much more difficult to distinguish many other potentially abusive behaviors without knowledge of the context in which the behaviors take place. As reviewed earlier, some attempts to add context to the vignettes were undertaken. However, these have taken the form of changing the gender of the perpetrator or the age of the child or providing some disciplinary justification for the parents' behaviors. These scenarios fail to capture the

suddenness of the attack or its irrelevance to what was happening at the time of the assault. The context of the behaviors is critical to the determination of abuse. It is perhaps why people know it when they see it but have difficulty deciding whether an act is abusive or not with the information they have at hand.

It is also perhaps why we end up with an objectively-abused category of participants. When non-abused participants respond similarly to abused participants, we create a group called objectively-abused. We assume that they are denying their abuse or are unaware of the abuse they have suffered, or prefer to justify their parents' actions. Some research supports that this is the case (e.g., Femina, Yeager & Lewis, 1990). However, we must also consider that the context in which some of these extreme forms of punishment have taken place differs from abuse because they represent acts that are in control. For example, while it may be hard to imagine, some parents will actually deliberately and calmly bite a toddler to teach them that biting hurts and they should not bite others. The context is necessary to the determination of abuse.

6.2.2 Models of Abuse

Wolfner and Gelles (1993) proposed that their analysis of the data from the Second National Family Violence Survey supported a psychosocial diathesis-stress model of abusive violence toward children. A psychosocial diathesis-stress model explains abusive violence toward children as a socially learned and/or constitutional predisposition for violence in combination with stressful conditions that lead to the violent behavior found in abusive families. The process theory of abuse developed in this study acknowledges that predispositions and stressors play a significant role in child abuse and supports a psychosocial diathesis-stress model of abusive violence. In this study, the need for control emerged as an important precursor or predisposition to violence. However, the need for control may only escalate into abusive violence against children when parenting becomes a struggle for control against a backdrop of stressors experienced by the family.

The abuse process as a struggle for control has support from the research into the control strategies of abusive mothers. For example, Oldershaw, Walters and Hall (1986) investigated control strategies and noncompliance in mother-child dyads. They found

that abusive mothers were more intrusive, more inconsistent in their use of parenting techniques, displayed more flattened affect throughout their control interactions and were less flexible in their attempt to gain compliance from the child. In turn, children of abusive mothers demonstrated far more non-compliant behaviors than their control counterparts. Their findings were based on an observational study of abusive and non-abusive mothers in a simulated home-setting carrying out both structured and unstructured activities. Oldershaw and colleagues (1986) hypothesized that the ineffective parenting style of abusive mothers and the noncompliant behaviors of their children escalate disciplinary measures into physical abuse. They further suggested that the ineffective parenting style was learned by the children in abusive families and contributed to the cycle of violence repeating itself across generations (Oldershaw et al., 1986). The findings and conclusions from Oldershaw and colleagues (1986) support the basic premise that a struggle for control is being played out in abusive families. Their research with very young children provides us with a glimpse into the early interactions between parent and child in abusive families. The process theory of child abuse developed in this study supports the idea that control strategies are part of the problem in abusive families and that a struggle for control perpetuates and escalates the process of abuse. However, there is no indication from the narratives in this study that the participants were necessarily more non-compliant than other children or adolescents. In some instances, just the opposite occurred - strategies to avoid violence included extra effort to comply with parents' requests and expectations, particularly when the children were younger. The struggle for control that marked the experiences of the participants in this study arose from the adolescent developmental tasks of separation and individuation. The tasks of separation and individuation that characterize adolescence are threatened by a parent's extreme need for control. Participants left home rather than risk being derailed in these tasks.

6.2.3 The Four Factor Model of Oppositional Behavior

The relationship between ineffective parenting styles and their children's non-compliant behaviors has proven robust and led to the development of models of parent training. Barkley's (1997) four factor model of oppositional behavior in children is one such model. The four factors in the model are a) the parent-child relationship, b) child characteristics, c) parent characteristics and d) contextual factors such as stress, and stressors, i.e., marital discord, financial hardship, lack of social support, etc. The model presumes that parents engage in coercive behaviors as a response to non-compliant behaviors on the part of their children. Child characteristics assumed to contribute to non-compliant behavior are temperament and cognitive characteristics, i.e., high emotionality, poor habit regulation, high levels of activity, and/or impulsivity and inattention (Barkley, 1997). Parent characteristics that contribute to the escalation of coercive parenting are said to be similar to those of the children (Barkley, 1997). Parent training based on this model has enjoyed a certain degree of success but has been plagued with a high dropout or refusal rate, 30 - 65% or more of families (Barkley, Shelton & Crosswaite, 2000). This is particularly true of families identified by third parties such as schools. This high dropout or refusal rate is assumed to reflect the difficult circumstances in which these families may find themselves. However there may be an alternative explanation for the high attrition or refusal rate in this population. In the present study, I found that parent's coercive behaviors may arise solely from parent characteristics and contextual factors. As we saw throughout the narratives, children who are subjected to abusive violence by their parents are very likely, in adolescence, to escalate this violence by defying their parents, i.e., talking back to them, defending themselves against an attack, running away to escape the violence, or experiencing suicidal ideation. It is also possible that these same defensive reactions occur in pre-adolescents in some families. These behaviors would eventuate in their image as non-compliant and oppositional and single them out for treatment by third parties such as schools. It is easy to see how parents would refuse or drop out of treatment for fear of being uncovered as abusive parents. On the other hand, it may be that the parents of interviewees in this study perceive their children to be non-compliant and/or justify their

own behaviors by reporting their children as non-compliant. It is an empirical question open to investigation.

6.2.4 Contextual Factors

The struggle for control and the resulting abusive violence that takes place in abusive families does not occur in isolation from the rest of the community. Two models of child abuse have proposed that more context is needed to explain the violence in abusive families (Belsky, 1980, Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993). In their ecological/transactional model of abuse, Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) suggested that community and cultural values are influential factors in abusive families. According to this position, the macrosystem (cultural and community values) has an impact on the exosystem. The exosystem is defined as the formal and informal social structures that make up a child's immediate environment. The level of violence generally found in our communities as well as the acceptance of that violence as depicted by films and television programs⁶ provide elements of the macrosystem that influence the exosystem (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993). Other elements of the macrosystem may also influence the exosystem. In one of the first English reviews of Korean research into child abuse, Hahm and Guterman (2001) reported work by Lee and Lee (1987) who found that Korean mothers used physical punishment more frequently than fathers or siblings. The researchers hypothesized that mothers' higher incidence of abusive violence against children was directly related to Korean mothers' level of responsibility for educating their children and to their belief that "physical punishment is *pillyoak* (a "necessary evil") for assuring appropriate development (Hahm & Guterman, 2001). These findings suggest that the primary responsibility of raising and caring for children places an additional burden on mothers. This additional burden may be one of the stressors that increases the likelihood that a need for control will escalate from a loss of control to out of control.

Cultural beliefs about the role of mothers and fathers also have an impact on the familial environment of the child in our own culture. Evidence emerged in this study that

⁶The movie *Bowling for Columbine* presents the most cogent argument for this perspective.

the present-day construction of mothers as the nurturing caregiver affects the perception and experience of abuse. At one point, Jane protested the treatment she received at the hands of her mother, “Mothers are not supposed to be that way!” For Jane, the experience of abuse seems to be heightened in a culture that places the primary responsibility for nurturing children on mothers. In addition, Jane and the other participants in this study had difficulty attributing any responsibility for their abusive experiences to their father. The emphasis on mothers as the nurturers in our culture seems to exonerate fathers who are, at the very least, guilty of abuse through their tacit acceptance of the abuse in their homes. The feminist reconstruction of our patriarchal society would see the responsibility of parenting children shift from mothers to both mothers and fathers (see Corby, 1989). If the primary responsibility for raising children constitutes a stressor for abusive violence as hypothesized, the move towards shared parenting has the potential of ultimately reducing the incidence of abuse by reducing the level of stress experienced by mothers. Support for this perspective exists in the literature. For example, some studies, (e.g., Egeland, Jacobvitz & Sroufe, 1988) have found that a supportive partner may help mothers who have been abused as children break the cycle of abuse. This finding intimates that supportive partners and fathers have a much larger role to play in the well-being and safety of children. The emphasis on mothers as the primary nurturers of children needs to shift from mothers to both mothers and fathers.

The Korean research reveals an additional aspect of the macrosystem that may also contribute to the abusive violence of children in their families, namely the acceptance of physical punishment of children as a viable disciplinary measure. Although this study suggests that physical punishment differs from abusive violence, it may be that the community’s acceptance of physical punishment provides the atmosphere in which abusive violence against children masquerades as physical discipline, not only in the minds of family, friends, and neighbors, but also in the minds of parents. The line demarcating control and loss of control from out-of-control behaviors may be too fine for some people to recognize. The resulting masquerade enables abusive violence to go undetected or, even more likely, unreported as was the case with the participants in this

study. The acceptance of physical punishment in our communities may also serve to reinforce children's idea that they deserved the treatment they received at the hands of their parents (Kaplan, Pelcovitz & Weiner, 1994). According to Femina, Yeager and Lewis (1990), the idea that they are themselves responsible for the abuse is one reason young adults deny previously substantiated cases of abuse and why adolescents do not report abusive violence in the first place (Kaplan et al., 1994).

6.2.5 A Developmental Perspective

The process theory of abuse that emerged in this study combines elements of the diathesis-stress model (Wolfner & Gelles, 1991) and the ecological/transactional model (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993). However, the process theory of abuse differs in a very significant way from either of these models by introducing the concept of development as an important variable in the process of abuse. Finkelhor (1989) developed a Traumagenic Dynamics Model of sexual abuse that posits the age at which abuse occurs as an important factor to be considered when determining the consequences of sexual abuse. The present study emphasizes the importance of taking a developmental perspective in the study of child abuse generally. For example, children used very different coping strategies than adolescents as responses to the violence they encountered in their homes. Young children coped with the violence or the possibility of violence by trying harder to please the offending parent. Older children tried to escape the situation by spending time at the home of friends or escaping into their own world. Adolescents, on the other hand, were more likely to stand up to the abusive parent which tended to escalate the violence. The coping strategies used by children and adolescents across the age-span are, in part, a reflection of the options available to them at their particular stage of development. However, coping strategies may also be considered the result of the cognitive appraisals that they are engaged in at the time. When they were younger, participants seemed to accept the responsibility for the abuse and they tried harder to do what was expected of them. However, by the time they had reached late adolescence, they no longer accepted the responsibility for their parents' behaviors and they were more likely to be defiant or to leave the family home.

Finkelhor and Kendall-Tackett (1997) proposed that researchers adopt a General

Model of Victimization when investigating the consequences of victimization. The General Model of Victimization includes child abuse but encompasses a broader range of victimizations, e.g., witnessing homicides, experiencing abductions, being assaulted by peers and siblings. They advocated using a developmental model for the study of consequences that would include looking at cognitive appraisals, developmental task application, coping strategies and environmental buffers (Finkelhor & Kendall-Tackett, 1997). The process theory of child abuse presented in this study implies that taking a developmental approach to the study of child abuse in general, not just consequences, might yield a greater understanding of the process of child abuse. For example, past research into the correlates of child abuse has used samples of households with children under 18 years of age (e.g., Wolfner and Gelles, 1993) but has not looked at the correlates by age group. It is possible that the correlates (e.g., predispositions, stress, stressors) of child abuse differ according to the age of children. Adopting a developmental framework in child abuse research would provide more specific information - practical information that could assist agencies involved in preventing and addressing child abuse in our communities.

Adopting the model proposed by Finkelhor and Kendall-Tackett (1997) and considering a broader range of victimizations would circumvent the problems of finding pure samples of any one form of abuse. The present study confirms Ney and colleagues' (1994) findings that few children experience only one form of abuse and challenges the recommendation made by Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) that researchers concentrate on studying abuse types. The broader range of victimizations may provide us with a clearer picture of the consequences of experiencing violence. By looking at what developmental tasks have been interrupted by abusive experiences, interventions would be better designed to meet the challenges posed in working with children who have experienced traumatic victimizations.

6.2.6 Need for Control

In this study, the need for control emerged as an initiator of the abusive process. The need for control as a factor in violent acts has been studied in other populations. Beesley and Stoltenberg (2002) found that adult children of alcoholics (ACOA) differed

significantly from adult children of non-alcoholics on their need for control of self or others and their surrounding environment as measured by the Desirability of Control Scale. Ackerman (1989), as cited in Beesley and Stoltenberg (2002), found that the need for control was an obstacle to establishing close relationships and that 33% of adult daughters of alcoholics versus 9% of adult daughters of non-alcoholics reported the greatest parenting issue was their need for control. In the present study, as in others, (e.g., Cermack and Rosenfeld, 1987), the experiences of children in alcoholic families did not differ markedly from abusive families; the inconsistency and chaos noted in alcoholic families is parallel to the inconsistency and chaos in abusive families. It is not the presence of alcohol that renders a family abusive; it is the presence of out-of-control behaviors. Alcohol increases the probability that out-of-control behaviors will be part of a child's environment. The need for control seen as a result of growing up in a family where alcohol is abused also emerged as an initiator of abusive experiences in the process theory of child abuse.

Follingstad, Bradley, Helff and Laughlin (2002) examined the need for control, attachment style, and angry temperament as a factor in abuse and aggression in courting couples. Using structural equation modeling, they found that anxious attachment significantly related to an angry temperament but that anxious attachment was not directly related to attempts to control. Attempts to control were, however, mediated by the person's angry temperament. However, controlling behaviors were a significant mediator between angry temperament and greater frequency and severity of dating violence. Follingstad and colleagues' (2002) findings suggest that the need for control is an important variable to be considered in violence between couples. The present study suggests that the need for control is an important variable in violence against children as well. This shared factor present in couple violence and child abuse may be one of the factors that is responsible for such a high incidence of abusive violence against children in families who are experiencing spousal abuse. It also underscores the need for researchers in the field of child abuse to broaden their perspective to include all forms of violence in our communities and for the research in child abuse to be informed by findings in parallel fields.

The need for control is parallel to the concepts developed by Reder and Duncan in their research into fatal child abuse and extensive review of the violence literature. Reder and Duncan (2001) developed the concepts of ‘unresolved care and control conflicts’ to explain the underlying mechanisms that led to fatal child abuse. Unresolved ‘care’ conflicts are “tensions about being cared for and caring for others” and they arise “out of actual experiences of abandonment, neglect or rejection as a child, or feeling unloved by parents (Reder & Duncan, 2001, p. 412). ‘Control’ conflicts are “tensions about self-control, wishing to control others and fearing control by them” and are enacted in adult life “through excessive proneness to violence, a determination to dominate partners, poor self-control and misperceptions of others’ behaviors as controlling” (Reder & Duncan, 2001, p. 413). The need for control that emerged in this study as an important initiator for out-of-control behaviors seems similar to ‘control conflicts’ as developed by Reder and Duncan (2001). If, as Reder and Duncan (2001) suggest, “care and control conflicts” are the outcome of actual experiences of abandonment, neglect or rejection as a child, the concept may also be implicated in the intergenerational cycle of abuse.

6.2.6 Intergenerational Cycle of Abuse

The prevalence of child abuse in the general population is estimated between 1-5% but the estimated prevalence rates in at-risk populations rises dramatically to 25-30% (Widom, 1989). Parents who have a history of childhood abuse figure prominently among the at-risk populations. Several theories have been proposed to explain the higher prevalence within this at-risk group. Support has been found for a social learning model versus a temperament model of transmission (e.g., Muller, Hunter and Stollak, 1995). This model postulates that we learn at the feet of our parents; if they were violent, then we become violent. However, this theory fails to account for those parents who were abused in childhood and managed to break the cycle of abuse in their own families. A search for conditions that might ameliorate the propensity for violence yielded a number of protective factors, e.g., the awareness of a personal abusive past and a determination not to repeat the same pattern in their own parenting (Egeland et al., 1988). Although there is value in the study of protective factors and resiliency in developing an understanding of the important factors in child abuse, social learning theory lacks the

specificity required for successful interventions in child abuse cases. The current research into child abuse suggests that child abuse is a complex phenomenon and social learning theory, on its own, is insufficient to the task of understanding or intervening in cases of child abuse.

Simons and Johnson (1998) designed a study to test 3 models of intergenerational transmission, a) role modeling, b) family relationships, and c) antisocial orientation. The study was both prospective and retrospective in nature; participants were 3 generations of families. Using structural equation modelling, they found most support for an antisocial orientation as responsible for the intergenerational transmission of abuse with some support for role modeling (Simons & Johnson, 1998). The findings from this study align well with Follingstad and colleagues' (2002) findings that angry temperament and the need for control led directly to violence in dating couples.

The quality of attachment has also been investigated as a source of the intergenerational transmission of abuse and support for the model has been found (e.g., Main & Goldwin, 1983). Attachment theory as originally formulated by John Bowlby (1973) and operationalized in the Strange Situation by Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, Wall, 1978) described an innate mechanism whereby an infant under stress will seek proximity to a caregiver in order to achieve a secure base. This felt security provided the infant a base from which to explore the physical and social world. Bowlby (1973) further hypothesized an 'internal working model' of relationships developed as a result of an infant or child's interactions with his or her caregivers. Attachment theory has evolved and is used to examine relationships in children and adults across the life span. Attachment style in individuals has been found to be robust across time. It is the 'internal working model' measured as an attachment style that has been investigated as the mechanism for the intergenerational transmission of abuse (e.g., Crittenden, 1988). Attachment theorists suggest that the parents who break the cycle of abuse resolve their experiences of abuse through the awareness of their abuse. Although both attachment and social learning theorists may be correct in their theories, neither theory excludes the possibility that an intervening variable is responsible for the intergenerational transmission of abuse. The need for control may be that intervening

variable. As we saw earlier, research by Follingstad and colleagues (2002) found that attachment style alone was insufficient to explain violence in dating couples. Attachment style led to anger but it was a need for control mediated by attachment style that was related to the violence seen in dating couples. It may be that a greater understanding of the relationship between abusive experiences, attachment style and need for control would provide us with the specificity required to intervene successfully and stop the cycle of violence from being repeated. It is also possible that the need for control may emerge as an important variable in the transmission of the cycle of violence independent of attachment style. Both social learning and attachment theory fail to explain how child abuse occurs in families with parents who have not themselves experienced abuse. One might speculate about a number of situations that could lead to the development of a strong need to control the self or others. If the need for control emerges as the mechanism of abusive violence, it may help to clarify how child abuse unfolds in both previously-abused families and non-abused families. The need for control may also provide clinicians with the specificity required to develop more effective interventions.

6.3 INTERVENTIONS

In this section, I will present two pathways for interventions in child abuse. The first pathway involves the personal or private sphere. This is where interventions traditionally take place with abusive families. The other pathway involves a public education process that entails dispelling some of the myths surrounding child abuse. By structuring the discussion in this way, I do not mean to imply that they are separate endeavors. In fact, I would argue that both approaches are necessary if we are to address the issue of child abuse in our communities. In line with the ecological/transactional model of child abuse, the present theory acknowledges that the macrosystem exerts much power over the exosystem. Therefore, anything less than a two-prong approach is only half a remedy.

6.3.1 The Private Sphere

From the stories of participants, the need for control was attributed to a variety of stressors experienced by their parents prior to the formation of the family and afterwards (e.g., sexual abuse, chronic illness, spousal violence). If, as Reder and Duncan (2001)

suggest, 'control conflicts' are the result of abusive experiences, then more attention has to be paid to children who experience abuse in their homes. Children who have suffered abuse are at risk of developing a strong need to control the self or others and their environment. Parents who are fostering or adopting children who have been abused in their families of origin have often remarked to me that their children have a strong need to be in control of every situation in their home. In my personal work with children who have been abused, I have noted their strong need to control me and all facets of play in the therapy room. Interventions for abusive families usually center on providing parents with treatment, and children's emotional and psychological needs are too often ignored (Azar & Wolfe, 1989; Goddard & Stanley 1994). However, if the need for control is an outcome of abusive experiences, it is important to provide interventions to children who have been abused in order to reduce the risk of repeating the cycle of abuse. Treatment for parents who abuse often focusses on anger management techniques or parenting skills as a way a treatment for their violent behaviors toward their children (Kaufman & Rudy, 1991). However this study implies that the need for control is an underlying issue that needs to be addressed in the treatment of parents who abuse their children.

The dehumanizing aspect of the child abuse process needs to be addressed with children who have experienced abuse. According to self psychology (see Goldmeier & Fandetti, 1991 for an overview), the self begins its development in relationship with primary caregivers. The needs of the self are expressed as mirroring (love, acceptance, admiration from others), idealizing (safety and security through closeness with others) and twinship (essential likeness with another). The child who has been abused by a primary caregiver has not had the benefit of these experiences. While the language of self psychology is specific to this theory, the identified needs represent basic needs for the developing self regardless of how they are framed. I believe that these basic needs can be met within an empathic therapeutic relationship regardless of the treatment modality. In cases where children are apprehended and placed in foster care, some coaching of the foster parents regarding these basic needs and how to meet them may help to repair the damage to the self sustained in abusive families. In fact, children who are apprehended due to child abuse should be fostered in therapeutic homes where foster

parents are given the tools and knowledge to meet their foster children's special needs. Too often, foster parents are kept in the dark regarding the children's experiences, leaving them perplexed and angry at the children's complex behavior patterns. When they have insufficient tools to do the job, foster parents feel inadequate, give up and request that the children be moved to another home. This leads to multiple foster placements for children who are already feeling socially and psychologically isolated.

The social and psychological isolation experienced by children who have been abused is often reinforced within the present child welfare system. Either child abuse is not addressed, as with the participants in this study, or children are apprehended and placed in foster care. Foster care is usually a temporary measure providing time for interventions to take place with parents, not the children. In some cases, an intensive intervention takes place in the home, i.e., a family worker is assigned to the family to teach and model parenting skills, and children are not removed. These interventions or lack of them may reinforce the sense of isolation experienced by children who have been abused in their families. Regardless of the intervention chosen for families, it is important that children are given an opportunity to make or maintain relationships with supportive family members and friends to alleviate their sense of isolation. The tendency for child welfare agencies to keep siblings together must also be scrutinized. Preliminary findings in this study indicate that, in some cases, siblings may not have formed supportive, empathic relationships. As in the case of Dave Pelzer, siblings may join parents in abusive violence in order to escape the abusive treatment themselves. Because of this, it is important that a thorough assessment of sibling relationships is carried out to ensure that the relationships are supportive rather than malevolent. This may be particularly true in cases where only one of the siblings is responsible for disclosing the abuse. If relationships are deemed to be malevolent then it is important that steps be taken to provide siblings with an opportunity to develop healthier relationships while protecting the most vulnerable against further abusive violence.

Likewise the practice of placing children with significant others in the child's life requires a better understanding of the relationship history. If extended family members have been supportive of the children who have experienced abusive violence, they may

be an excellent resource and very suitable as candidates for foster parents. However, if they have witnessed the abusive violence and not intervened, or if they have supported the abuser in the eyes of the child, then placing the child or children with them will only serve to reinforce the social and psychological isolation that the child is experiencing.

In my experience of working with children who disclose physical abuse, interviews of the children were often done at schools or on some other neutral ground, i.e., the police station or child welfare agency. The interviews often consisted of questions about the alleged incident that led to the reporting. There seemed to be no attempt to gain the child's trust or to provide him or her with a sense of safety or even a sense that things could possibly change for the better in his or her life. The one thing that seemed clear from my interviews in this study and my clinical work with children who have been abused is that they want the abuse to stop and they want to live in their families without fear of being hit or yelled at. They want their parents' love and respect. The practice of clandestine interviews, the quick removal of children from abusive homes may deter professionals (see Tite, 1993) from reporting suspected cases of child abuse and attempting to remedy the situation in some other way. Therapists who work with these families are often caught in a conundrum. Do they report and lose the confidence of the family and, as a result, any opportunity of creating positive change in the family? We must ask ourselves: Have we truly explored the alternatives to the way in which we deliver child welfare in our communities? What would a family approach to intervention look like if we were to adopt the principles of family therapy to the investigation and treatment of child abuse? In my own practice, as in others, I have received disclosures of abuse from children in the families with whom I work. I have used these disclosures of abuse as opportunities to enlist the parents' cooperation in reporting the abuse to a child welfare agency and worked with the agency to continue to provide services to the family. The agency has provided the impetus for the family to continue working on the issues that have led them down the path of abusive violence while monitoring the situation at home and offering the resources the family needs to alleviate some of the stress and stressors that the family is experiencing. In these cases, the family has remained intact and change has been possible because of a coordinated approach that did not involve

tearing the family apart. It is possible that, if we change the way in which we respond to disclosures of abusive violence, we can provide an atmosphere in our communities that will assist those children who do not report abusive violence to disclose and receive needed services. A careful assessment of the family and more research into which families are suitable for family intervention is needed if therapists are to use this approach.

In my review of Barkley (1997), I challenged the four factor model and suggested that children who are brought to mental health clinics by their parents because they are non-compliant may, in actuality, be experiencing abusive violence that is rooted not in the child's non-compliance but in the parents' actions towards their children. All the participants in this study who declared themselves abused engaged in pathological behaviors at some time in their early adolescence. These behaviors could have brought them to the attention of mental health clinics as the behaviors did for the clinical population I describe in this study. It is incumbent on therapists working in mental health clinics to create an environment that will support disclosures of child abuse from the targeted child. Pelcovitz and colleagues (1994) suggested that this process begins with a careful history taking that includes examining methods for discipline and conflict resolution strategies in the family. Although I agree with Barkley (1997) that, in some cases, child characteristics (e.g., ADHD) may escalate abusive violence in families, my experience with the clinical cases described in this study suggests that it is otherwise for many children attending mental health clinics. It may be safer to assume that a child's pathological behaviors are a call for help rather than the result of temperament and cognitive characteristics.

Historically, the apprehension of children from lower-class families has served multiple purposes: the first, was to fuel the economic engine of our communities, the second, was to punish the abusive parents. Yet another was to provide the children with a better standard of living than that available to their parents. The closure of orphanages removed a resource that poor families used to help them through the tough economic and emotional times they faced. More recently, in-home visiting programs have been set up with families labeled 'at risk' due to mental health issues, poverty, or drug habits. These

programs provide the social support that these families require to parent more successfully. But what of middle-class families? They are not considered at risk and, yet, this study and Colley (2001) suggest that the abuse rate amongst this population may be between 16 and 20%. Obviously, continuing down the path of offering services only to lower socio-economic families at risk will not address the full extent of the problem of child abuse in our communities. We need to go beyond the private sphere to the public one.

6.3.2 The Public Sphere

The costs of child abuse to individuals have been well documented throughout the literature, (e.g., Wekerle & Wolfe, 1996). The costs of child abuse to our communities are hidden in social welfare and health care budgets. Wolfner and Gelles (1993) concluded from their study that violence was a socially learned response to resolve social conflicts and that “abusive violence may be a distinct behavior” (p. 211). This study revealed that abusive behaviors are not part of a continuum of discipline and do not simply represent harsh discipline practices. Rather, abusive behaviors are out-of-control behaviors. Wolfner and Gelles (1993) advocated that education and prevention programs for “diminishing the use of physical punishment should be aimed at the overall population as the higher base rate of physical punishment suggests that these programs should be targeted toward a broad audience” (p. 211). I agree with Wolfner and Gelles (1993) that there is a need for a broadly-based education program. Given the influence of cultural values and beliefs on the process of child abuse reviewed in this study, I believe that it is time that we accord children who are the most vulnerable in our society the same rights that we accord adults; the right not to be assaulted in the context or in the name of discipline. The ambiguity concerning where to draw the line between physical abuse and physical punishment has plagued researchers in the field since they first turned their attention to the problem of child abuse. The current state of research has not progressed beyond this in the last forty years or so (see Baumrind, 2002; Gershoff, 2002). Given the difficulty researchers have in making these distinctions, how do we expect parents to make the distinction in the heat of the moment? Baumrind (2002) herself states that: “Their anger is explosive, and they hit impulsively in response to their own frustration

rather than to correct the child.” She supports Gershoff’s (2002) call for research in determining for “whom, in what contexts, and when purposeful corporal punishment is transformed into abuse” (Baumrind, 2002, p. 13). However effective such a research program might be in understanding child abuse, I suggest that it will be insufficient to remedy the situation. We need to send a strong message to families that hitting children is simply not an acceptable discipline strategy and provide families with effective discipline strategies that do not rely on physical punishment. If this can only be done through a total ban on corporal punishment, then so be it.

I believe that we need to distinguish between abusive or out-of-control behaviors and discipline or punishment. This distinction has been successfully drawn in the case of Shaken Baby Syndrome. Prevention and education programs emphasize the out-of-control nature of shaking a baby as well as the stressors that lead a parent to shake a baby and a help line is provided. Something similar to this model could be developed to address the issue of child abuse in our communities. In addition, the distinction between out-of-control behaviors and discipline as well as the emphasis on the role of stressors would provide a framework for family members and friends to intervene and support the family. Korbin (1998) suggested that the “collective denial and minimization of the seriousness of abuse by others” (p. 261) reinforced mothers’ ideas of their behaviors as not serious. As we saw earlier in this study, it also reinforces the isolation experienced by the child. Reframing the problem may also furnish formal agencies (schools, child welfare, health) with the opportunity to create new solutions that would better meet the needs of children and parents alike. At the very least, it would alleviate the sense of responsibility felt by children when abuse is framed as extreme disciplinary measures. A broad-based education program will also include children as the audience. If children are educated regarding the difference between physical discipline and abuse, they will be more willing to report these events when they witness them or when they are subjected to them. This type of programming has been offered to children in the past to help protect them from sexual abuse and should be extended to include all types of abusive violence, e.g., parent, peer, sibling, etc.

Second, the association between lower socio-economic status and abusive

families needs to be challenged in a broad-based education program. Abuse in families is present in all communities, both large and small, and cuts across all socio-economic classes. The heightened awareness would increase the possibility that children from middle or higher socio-economic classes who disclosed their experiences to friends or family members would be believed and supported. Changing our understanding of child abuse, how it happens, when it happens, will inevitably change the way we intervene in cases of child abuse. It is in this way that the private and public spheres influence one another.

6.4 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF SAMPLING

I did not adhere to the guidelines of theoretical sampling as specified in grounded theory. I sampled only from those who responded to questionnaires and who agreed to be interviewed. I expected to sample more broadly and to include more participants from the lower socio-economic strata and from the group of people that met criteria for abuse but who did not consider themselves abused. However, I believe that the strengths of the sample that I gathered for this study outweigh the limitations created by my narrow sampling. First, the participants represented a wide range of abusive experiences, i.e., sexual, physical, emotional and psychological, and their ability to verbalize these experiences provided me with rich narratives from which to develop theory. The theory that emerged from the data highlights the common experiences of people who were abused as children regardless of the form of abuse.

Second, the participants embodied a group of people who have not been well studied regarding the nature of their abusive experiences. The participants in the interviews were not drawn from an abuse registry and did not have any involvement with child protection during their childhood. In this respect, they are a unique population since most research in the field of child abuse uses families and children who have been involved with child welfare agencies and represent cases where child abuse was substantiated. University populations are popular subjects for many academic projects. However, they have only rarely been the subject of this type of inquiry into childhood abuse (e.g., Carlin et al., 1994; Colley, 2001). Colley (2001) found that 20% of the participants in her study drawn from a college in the United States were abused as

children. In my study, 16% of the initial respondents to my call for participants reported that they considered themselves abused as children. Colley (2001) suggested that the higher incidence of child abuse found in her study when compared to national prevalence rates may be a more accurate assessment of the prevalence of abuse than are statistics from documented cases. These findings seem to challenge the prevalence rates that were quoted earlier in this dissertation and underscore the inadequacy of the methods we currently use to determine the extent of the problem of child abuse. Furthermore, the high prevalence rate among college students found in Colley (2001) and this study confirms that child abuse does not occur only in lower socio-economic families and may be more common than originally hypothesized.

A second problem is the way in which I asked respondents about their level of income. In order to substantiate the claim that this was truly a middle-class sample I required the income levels of their families of origin. Some people provided their family's income level and others provided their own income level as students. Because I lack family income data, I can only infer that they are a middle-class sample from their parents' level of education and the narratives about their lifestyle. More clarity in the question would have provided more evidence for my claim. However, I believe that the concept of class cannot be distinguished on the basis of income alone. It must also include the values, beliefs, and expectations held by individuals and their families. The people that I interviewed represented middle-class values, expectations, and beliefs: they valued post-secondary education and believed that they would hold influential positions in their communities.

It is possible that the process theory of abuse that I am proposing may not extend to those families from child abuse registries. It may be a process unique to more middle-class families or specific to families whose children attend post-secondary institutions. As such, the process theory of abuse as developed in this study, may not be comparable to the results of previous studies in child abuse discussed earlier in this chapter. However, the stories gathered in this study indicate that this population is an important source of knowledge when it comes to childhood abuse. Their stories deserve to be heard and included in the ever-growing investigations of childhood abuse if we are to better

understand, predict and prevent child abuse.

6.5 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Throughout the discussion I have suggested several avenues that research into child abuse might adopt. In this section, I would like to provide a few specific directions that I feel arise directly from this research. The theory of child abuse that I presented here requires further validation and expansion. There are two ways that this could be undertaken. The first is to continue in the grounded theory tradition and interview more individuals who label their childhood experiences abusive or who have experienced other forms of victimization. This would validate and perhaps expand the theory of child abuse developed in this project. A second way in which grounded theory could be used is to interview parents who have been abusive to investigate the struggle for control that they experienced in their families and how they view the experience. A more quantitative approach could be undertaken, now that a theory exists as a starting point. The relationship between need for control and the propensity for committing violent acts has been studied in different populations, but to date, has not been undertaken in the area of child abuse. Through structural equation modeling, one could clarify the relation between the role of stressors, attachment styles, temperament and the need for control in an abusive population as it pertains to child abuse. Given the importance of the need for control in the abusive process, more research into the construct is required. What other conditions lead to a need for control? What factors increase the likelihood that a need for control will result in a struggle for control when parenting? Is a strong need to control unique to abuse at different ages or stages of development?

The role of siblings also requires more investigation. It would seem from the stories collected from this project that siblings play an important role in resilience and recovery, but also in curtailing the isolation that occurs in the abusive process. Furthermore the importance of birth order emerged as another factor requiring investigation since experiences of abuse seemed to differ from the eldest to youngest child. It seemed that, in abusive families, the eldest child assumed a caretaking role that eventually protected them from further abuse and distanced them from the other children in the family. Does this change in roles mitigate some of the effects of child abuse for

the eldest child or does it make it more devastating with the added guilt that they escaped the abuse? Does it make them more or less vulnerable to committing abusive acts when they become parents?

The high prevalence of abuse found in the original response to the call for participants (16%) suggests that a college or university population could be important when investigating resilience in the face of adverse experiences in childhood. Participants in this study appeared to meet the definition of resilience provided by Egeland and colleagues (1993), i.e., the successful resolution of stage-specific developmental tasks. What were the protective factors that allowed them to continue with their education? Adopting a developmental approach to the study of consequences and resolution of abusive experiences would provide us with more information regarding interventions to be applied at different developmental stages.

Besides the experience of out-of-control behaviors, psychological and social isolation emerged as central to the process of child abuse. This implies that instruments used to determine whether a person has endured abusive experiences, e.g., the Child Trauma Questionnaire, are insufficient to the task of identifying those who have been abused. Researchers who wish to access a population that has been abused require the additional information that would be provided by an instrument designed to assess the sense of social and psychological isolation experienced by children. The instrument should also take a developmental approach to the experience of isolation and could be used across a broad range of victimizations, e.g., peer and sibling assaults.

As stated earlier, researchers need to adopt a developmental perspective when investigating child abuse, its correlates, risk factors and consequences. Clinicians and other front-line workers need clearer evidence regarding the process of child abuse at different developmental stages to assist them in the assessment and treatment of children who experience abuse. Instruments developed to assess psychological and social isolation as well as the need for control will only be practical if they, too, are developmental in nature. This study underscores the importance of taking a developmental approach to the study of child abuse when it comes to the experience of children. But what of parents? They too have a developmental trajectory as individuals

and as parents. How does that developmental trajectory put them at risk of abuse or of escalating abuse?

This study further raises questions about the reporting of child abuse by witnesses and disclosure of abuse by those experiencing abusive violence. What prevents family members and friends from intervening directly when they witness abuse? Is our knowledge of the process of investigating abuse a hindrance or is it a lack of knowledge that is responsible? This research has shown that when community and family members remain silent, they contribute to the social and psychological isolation experienced by the child being abused. How do family and community members see their role in child abuse cases? What helps children disclose ongoing abuse in their families? Who do they talk to? How can the child welfare system be reformed to better meet the needs of these children and families?

6.5 CONCLUSION

For me, this research has raised many more questions than it has answered. At the outset of this project, I naively believed that I might uncover a definition of child abuse--one that would serve all purposes. Today, I marvel at my own naivety. However, I feel that this study has made a contribution to the greater understanding of child abuse. First and foremost, it has confirmed what others have found: child abuse unfolds within relationship. However, that relationship is not only between parent and child but includes the child's relationship to the extended family and to the community. Second, child abuse is not marked by discrete events but represents a process that unfolds over time. As such, the development of the child, of the parent and the couple all play a significant role in the maintenance and escalation of the abuse process. An intricate part of the abuse process is the social and psychological isolation experienced by those who label themselves 'abused'. Third, this research supports Giovannoni (1989) and Gelles (1991) in their hypothesis that child abuse represents a different class of behaviors than physical punishment. Furthermore, it names that class of behaviors as out-of-control. Fourth, the study has shown that abuse exists throughout our communities and is not limited to the lower socio-economic classes.

Finally, I believe that this research supports the utility of adopting a grounded

theory approach when trying to broaden or deepen our understanding of a phenomenon or concept. Using grounded theory highlighted the voices of those amongst us who have labeled themselves 'abused'. It assisted them to tell their stories and to tell them in such a way as to further our understanding of their experiences, to advance our knowledge of child abuse, and build pathways to expand our response as professionals and community members.

REFERENCES

- Aber, J. L. & Zigler, E. (1981). Developmental considerations in the definition of child maltreatment. New Directions for Child Maltreatment, 11, 1-29.
- Ainsworth, M.D.S., Blehar, M., Waters, W., Wall, S. (1978). Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the Strange Situation. Erlbaum: Hillsdale, NJ.
- Ammerman, R. T. & Hersen, M. (1990). Research in child abuse and neglect: Current status and an agenda for the future. In R. T. Ammerman and M. Hersen (eds.) Children at Risk: An Evaluation of Factors Contributing to Child Abuse and Neglect. (pp. 3-19). New York: Plenum Press.
- Andrew, G. (1997). Anger Narratives in Psychotherapy: The Search for Cultural Scripts. Unpublished Masters' Thesis. University of Saskatchewan. Saskatoon, Canada.
- Ariès, P. (1962). Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life. NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Azar, S. T. (1991). Models of child abuse: A metatheoretical analysis. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 18, 30-46.
- Azar, S. T. & Wolfe, D. A. (1989). Child abuse & neglect. In E. J. Mash & R. A. Barkley (Eds.), Treatment of Childhood Disorders. (pp. 451-493). NY: Guilford Press.
- Barkley, R.A. (1997). Defiant Children (2nd Edition). (pp. 27-43). New York: Guilford.
- Barkley, R. A. (2000). Issues in training parents to manage children with behavior problems. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 39, 1004-1007.
- Barnett, D., Manly, J. T., Cicchetti, D. (1993). Defining child maltreatment: The interface between policy and research. In D. Cicchetti & S. L. Toth (Eds.), Child Abuse, Child Development and Social Policy. (pp. 7-73). N. J.: Abex Publishing Corporation.
- Battel, M. E., (1979). Children Shall be First: Child Welfare Saskatchewan 1944-64.
- Baumrind, D. (2002). Ordinary physical punishment: Is it harmful? Comment on Gershoff (2002). Psychological Bulletin, 128, 580-589
- Baumrind, D. (1997). Necessary Distinctions. Psychological Inquiry, 8, 176-229.
- Beales, R. W. (1985). In search of the historical child: Miniature adulthood and

youth in colonial New England. In N. R. Hiner & J. M. Hawes (Eds.) Growing up in America: Children in Historical Perspectives. (pp. 7-24). Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Beesley, D. & Stoltenberg, C.D. (2002). Control, attachment style, and relationship satisfaction among adult children of alcoholics. Journal of Mental Health Counselling, 24, 281-298.

Belsky, J. (1980). Child maltreatment: An ecological integration. American Psychologist, 35, 320-335.

Bernstein, D. P., & Fink, L., Handelsman, L. Foote, J. (1994). Initial reliability and validity of a new retrospective measure of child abuse and neglect. American Journal of Psychiatry, 151, 1132-1136.

Besharov, D. J. (1981). Toward better research on child abuse and neglect: Making definitional issues an explicit methodological concern. Child Abuse and Neglect, 5, 383-390.

Bowlby, J. (1973). Attachment and Loss, Volume II, Separation: Anxiety and Anger. Markham, ON: Penguin Books Canada Ltd.

Bradbury, B. (1982). The fragmented family: Family strategies in the face of death, illness, and poverty, Montreal 1860-1885. In J. Parr (Ed.). Childhood and Family in Canadian History. (pp. 109-128).

Campbell, M. (1991). Children at risk: How different are children on child abuse registers? British Journal of Social Work, 21, 259-275.

Carlin, A. S., Kemper, K., Ward, N. G., Sowell, H., Gustafson, B., Stevens, N. (1994). The effect of differences in objective and subjective definitions of childhood physical abuse on estimates of its incidence and relationship to psychopathology. Child Abuse & Neglect, 18, 393-399.

Cermack, t.L. & Rosenfeld, A. (1987). Therapeutic considerations with adult children of alcoholics. Advances in alcohol and Substance Abuse, 6, 17-32.

Cicchetti, D. & Lynch, M. (1993). Toward an ecological-transactional model of community violence and child maltreatment: Consequences for child development. Psychiatry, 56, 96-118.

Cicchetti, D., Rogosch, F. A., Lynch, M., Holt, K. D. (1993). Resilience in maltreated children: Processes leading to adaptive outcomes. Development and Psychopathology, 5, 629-47.

Clements, K. & Turpin, G. (1996). The life events scale for students: Validation for use with British samples. Personality and Individual Differences, 20, 747-751.

Colley, Amy J. (2001). Adult survivors of childhood physical abuse: A study of object relations. Unpublished Dissertation. Richard L. Connolly College of Long Island University. New York.

Corby, B. (1989). Alternative theory bases in child abuse. In W. S. Rogers, D. Hevey & E. Ash (Eds.). Child Abuse and Neglect.

Crittenden, P.M. (1988). Distorted patterns of relationship in maltreating families: The role of internal representation models. Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology, 6, 183-199.

Cruise, K. R., Jacobs, J. E., Lyons, P. M. (1994). Definitions of physical abuse: A preliminary inquiry into children's perceptions. Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 12, 35-48.

Deater-Deckard, K. D., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., & Pettit, G. S. (1995). Physical discipline among African American and European American mothers: Links to children's externalizing behaviors. Developmental Psychology, 32, 1065-1072.

deMause, L. (1987). The history of childhood in Japan. The Journal of Psychohistory, 15, 147-151.

deMause, L. (1974). The evolution of childhood. In L. deMause (Ed.) The History of Childhood. NY: The Psychohistory Press.

de Shazer, S. (1988). Clues: Investigating Solutions in Brief Therapy. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Ducharme, J.M. (2000). Success-Based, noncoercive treatment of oppositional behavior in children from violent homes. Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 39, 995-1004.

Egeland, B. (1988). Intergenerational continuity of parental maltreatment of children. In D. Browne, C. Davies & P. Stratton (Eds.). Early prediction and prevention of child abuse. (pp. 197-208). Beverley Hills, CA: Sage Publication.

Egeland, B. R., Carlson, E., Sroufe, L. A. (1993). Resilience as process. Development and Psychopathology, 5, 517-528.

Egeland, B.R., Jacobvitz, D., Sroufe, A.L. (1988). Breaking the cycle of abuse. Child Development, 59, 1080-1088.

- Elliott, J. M., Tong, C. K., Tan, P. (1997). Attitudes of the Singapore public to actions suggesting child abuse. Child Abuse & Neglect, 21, 445-464.
- Emery, R. E., & Laumann-Billings, L. (1998). An overview of the nature, causes, and consequences of abusive family relationships. American Psychologist, 53, 121-135.
- English, D. J. (1998). The extent and consequences of child maltreatment. The Future of Children, 8, 39-53.
- Fehr, B. & Russell, J.A. (1984). Concept of emotion viewed from a prototype perspective. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 113, 464-486.
- Femina, D.D., Yeager, C.A., Lewis, D.O. (1990). Child Abuse: Adolescent records vs. adult recall. Child Abuse & Neglect, 14, 227-231.
- Finkelhor, D. (1989). The trauma of child sexual abuse. In G. E. Wyatt & G. J. Powell (Eds.) Lasting Effects of Child Sexual Abuse. CA: Sage Publications, Inc. p. 61-82.
- Finkelhor, D. & Kendall-Tackett (1997). A developmental perspective on the childhood impact of crime, abuse and violent victimization. In D. Cicchetti & S. L. Toth (Eds.) Developmental Perspectives on Trauma: Theory, Research and Intervention. (pp.) Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.
- Fox, S. & Dingwall, R. (1985). An exploratory study of variations in social workers' and health visitors' definitions of child mistreatment. British Journal of Social Work, 15, 467-477.
- Friedrich, W. & Boriskin, J. (1976). The role of the child in abuse: A review of the literature. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 46, 580-590.
- Follingstad, D.R., Bradley, R.G., Helff, C.M., Laughlin, J.E. (2002). A model for predicting dating violence: Anxious attachment, angry temperament, and need for relationship control. Violence and Victims, 17, 35-47.
- Funk & Wagnalls (1986). Canadian college dictionary. Toronto, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited.
- Garbarino, J. (1976). A preliminary study of some ecological correlates of child abuse: The impact of socioeconomic stress on mothers. Child Development, 47, 178-185.
- Garnezy, N. (1993). Children in poverty: Resilience despite risk. Psychiatry Interpersonal and Biological Processes, 56, 127-136.

Gelles, R.J. (1992). Poverty and violence toward children. American Behavioral Scientist, 35, 258-274.

Gelles, R.J. (1991). Physical violence, child abuse, and child homicide: A continuum of violence or distinct behaviors? Human Nature, 2, 59-72.

Gelles, R. J. (1973). Child abuse as psychopathology: A sociological critique and reformulation. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 43, 611-621.

George, C. (1996). A representational perspective of child abuse and prevention: Internal working models of attachment and caregiving. Child Abuse & Neglect, 20, 411-424.

Gershoff, E.T. (2002). Corporal Punishment by Parents and Associated Child Behaviors and Experiences: A Meta-Analytic and Theoretical Review. Psychological Bulletin, 128, 539-579.

George, C. (1996). A representational perspective of child abuse and prevention: Internal working models of attachment and caregiving. Child Abuse & Neglect, 20, 411-424.

Giovannoni, J. (1989). Definitional issues in child maltreatment. In D. Cicchetti and V. Carlson (Eds.). Child Maltreatment: Theory and research on the causes and consequences of child abuse and neglect. (pp. 3-37). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Giovannoni, J. & Becerra, R. M. (1979). Defining Child Abuse. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). Emergence vs Forcing: Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis. CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1978). Theoretical Sensitivity. CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G., Strauss, A. L. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Goddard, C.R., & Stanley, J.R. (1994). Viewing the abusive parent and the abused child as captor and hostage. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 9, 258-269.

Goldmeier, J. & Fandetti, D.V. (1991). Self psychology in child welfare practice. Child Welfare, LXX, 559-570.

Gracia, E. (1995). Visible but unreported: A case for the “not serious enough” cases of child maltreatment. Child Abuse & Neglect, 19, 1083-1093.

- Hahm, H.C., Guterman, N.B. (2001). The emerging problem of physical child abuse in South Korea. Child Maltreatment,6, 169-179.
- Hiner, N. R., & Hawes, J. M. (1985). Introduction. In N. R. Hiner & J. M. Hawes (Eds.) Growing up in America: Children in Historical Perspectives. (pp. i - xxv). Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Kaplan, S.J., Pelcovitz, D., Weiner, M. (1994). Adolescent physical abuse. Child Abuse, 4, 695-711.
- Kaufman, K. L., & Rudy, L. (1991). Future directions in the treatment of physical child abuse. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 18, 82-97.
- Kempe, C. H., Silverman, F. N., Steele, B. F., Droegemueller, W., Silver, H. K., (1962). The battered-child syndrome. Journal of the American Medical Association, 181, 105-112.
- King, P. R. (1984). Reporting child abuse in the province of Ontario: Interpretational problems in the legislation and associated government guidelines. Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, 3, 77-90.
- Korbin, J.E. (1998). Good mothers, babykillers and fatal child maltreatment. In Nancy Scheper-Hughes & Carolyn Sargent (Eds.). Small wars. (pp. 253-276). Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Korbin, J. E. (1991). Cross-cultural perspectives and research directions for the 21st century. Child Abuse & Neglect,15, 67-77.
- Korbin, J.E., Coulton, C.J., Lindstrom-Ufuti, H., Spilsbury, J. (2000). Neighborhood views on the definition and etiology of child maltreatment. Child Abuse & Neglect, 24, 1509-1527.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985) Naturalistic Inquiry. CA: Sage Publications.
- Linden, W. (1984). Development and initial validation of a life events scale for students. Canadian Counsellor, 18, 106-110.
- Main, M., & Goldwyn, R. (1984). Predicting rejection of her infant from mother's representation of her own experience: Implications for the abused-abusing intergenerational cycle. Child Abuse & Neglect, 8, 203-217.
- McCourt, F. (1999). Angela's Ashes. Simon & Schuster Trade.
- McIntyre, E. (1993). The historical context of child welfare in Canada. In B.

Whorf (Ed.) Rethinking Child Welfare in Canada. (pp. 13-35). Toronto: ON: McClelland & Stewart Inc.

Michener, A.J. (1998). Becoming Anna. Chicago, ILL: The University of Chicago Press.

Miller, A. (1998). Thou shall not be aware. NY: The Noonday Press.

Milner, J. S. (1993). Social information processing and physical child abuse. Clinical Psychology Review, 13, 275-294.

Muller, R.T., Hunter, J.E., & Stollak, G., (1995). The intergenerational transmission of corporal punishment: A comparison of social learning and temperament models. Child Abuse & Neglect, 19, 1323-1335.

Ney, P.G., Fung, T., Wickett, A.R. (1994). The worst combinations of child abuse and neglect. Child Abuse & Neglect, 18, 705-714.

National Research Council (1993). Understanding child abuse and neglect. Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press.

Oldershaw, L., Walters, G.C., Hall, D.K. (1986). Control strategies and noncompliance in abusive mother-child dyads: An observational study. Child Development, 57, 722-732.

Pelzer, D. (1995). A child called it. Deerfield Beach, FLO: Health Communications, Inc.

Pianta, R. (1984). Antecedents of child abuse: Single and multiple factor models. School Psychology International, 5, 151-160.

Reder, P. & Duncan, S. (2001). Abusive relationships, care and control conflicts and insecure attachments. Child Abuse Review, 411-427

Rennie, D.L. (1998). Grounded theory methodology: The pressing need for a coherent logic of justification. Theory & Psychology, 8, 101-119.

Rodgers, D. T. (1985). Socializing middle-class children: Institutions, fables, and work values in nineteenth century America. In N. R. Hiner & J. M. Hawes (Eds.) Growing up in America: Children in Historical Perspectives. (pp.120-132). Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Rogers, R. S. (1989). The social construction of childhood. In W. S. Rogers, D. Hevey, E. Ash (Eds.). (pp. 23-29). Child Abuse & Neglect. London: B. T. Batsford Ltd.

Roscoe, B. (1990). Defining child maltreatment: Ratings of parental behaviors. Adolescence, 25, 517-528.

Rose, S. J. & Meezan, W. (1993). Defining child neglect: evolution, influences, and issues. Social Service Review, 279-293.

Rose, S. J. & Meezan, W. (1995). Child neglect: A study of the perception of mothers and child welfare workers. Children and Youth Services Review, 17, 471-486.

Russell, J. A. & Fehr, B. (1994). Fuzzy concepts in a fuzzy hierarchy: Varieties of anger. Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 67, 186-205.

Simons, R.L. & Johnson, C. (1998). An examination of competing explanations for the intergenerational transmission of domestic violence. In Danieli Yael (Ed.) Intergenerational Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma. Plenum Press, New York: NY. p. 553-570.

Slater, P. G. (1985). From the cradle to the coffin: Parental bereavement and the shadow of infant damnation in Puritan Society. In N. R. Hiner & J. M. Hawes (Eds.) Growing up in America: Children in Historical Perspectives. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press. p. 27-43

Smith, D. B. (1985). Autonomy and affection: Parents and children in eighteenth century Chesapeake families. In N. R. Hiner & J. M. Hawes (Eds.) Growing up in America: Children in Historical Perspectives. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press. p.45-58.

Statistics Canada (1998). Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile. Catalogue no. 85-224. Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada.

Statutes of British Columbia (1980). Child and Family Services Act. Ch.11, s.1

Statutes of Saskatchewan (1990). Child and Family Services Act. Ch-7.2, s.11

Sternberg, K. J. & Lamb, M. E. (1991). Can we ignore context in the definition of child maltreatment? Development and Psychopathology, 3, 87-92.

Stewart, C.J. & Cash, W. B. (1997). Interviewing Principles and Practices (Eighth Edition). Toronto, ON: Brown & Benchmark Publishers.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Taylor, K. (1987). Blessing the house: Moral motherhood and the suppression of

physical punishment. The Journal of Psychohistory, 15, 431-453.

Teichroeb, R. (1998). Flowers on my Grave. Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd.

Tite, R. (1993). How teachers define and respond to child abuse: The distinction between theoretical and reportable cases. Child Abuse & Neglect, 17, 591-603.

Tomkins, S. (1978). Script theory. In V. Demos (Ed.) Exploring affect: The selected writings of Sylan S. Tomkins. (pp. 303-397). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Toth, S. L. & Cicchetti, D. (1996). The impact of relatedness with mother on school functioning in maltreated children. Journal of School Psychology, 34, 247-266.

Trocme, N., & Wolfe, D. (2001). Child maltreatment in Canada: Selected results from the Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources, National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (2001). Child maltreatment 1999: Reports from the states to the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. (<http://www.axf.dhhs.gov/programs/ch/publications/cm99/high.htm>)

Valentine, D. P., Scuff, D. S., Freeman, M. L. & Andreas, T. (1984). Defining child maltreatment: A multidisciplinary overview. Child Welfare, 63, 497-509.

Walters, D. (1995). Mandatory reporting of child abuse: Legal, ethical and clinical implications within a Canadian context. Canadian Psychology, 36, 163-182.

Watters, J., White, G., Parry, R., Caplan, P., Bates, R. (1986). A comparison of child abuse and child neglect. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 18, 449-459.

Wekerle, C. & Wolfe, D. A. (1996). Child Maltreatment. In E. J. Mash & R. A. Barkley (Eds.) Child Psychopathology. (pp. 492-537). NY: Guilford Press.

Widom, C.S. (1989). Does violence beget violence? A critical examination of the literature. Psychological Bulletin, 106, 3-28.

Wolfe, D. A. (1987). Child Abuse: Implications for Child Development and Psychopathology. Beverly Hills: CA: Sage Publications.

Wolfe, D. A. (1985). Child-abusive parents: An empirical review and analysis. Psychological Bulletin, 97, 462-482.

Wolfner, G. D. & Gelles, R. J. (1993). A profile of violence toward children: A national study. Child Abuse & Neglect, 17, 197-212.

Working Group on Child and Family Services Information (1998). Child and Family Services Statistics Report. Hull, Quebec.

Young, L. (1964). Wednesday's children: A study of child neglect and abuse. NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Zimmerman, M. & Coryell, W. (1987a). The Inventory to Diagnose Depression (IDD): A self-report scale to diagnose major depressive disorder. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 55, 55-59.

Zimmerman, M. & Coryell, W. (1987b). The inventory to diagnose depression, lifetime version. Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 75, 495-499.

APPENDIX A

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Sex: male female
 2. Age: _____years
 3. Please circle the highest level of education you have completed to date:
 high school: 9 10 11 12 post secondary 1 2 3 4
 4. What do you consider your cultural background to be? _____
 - a) Do you identify with any particular religious group?
 Yes No
 If yes, which one? _____
 5. Current Gross Family Income (before taxes). If you are receiving financial support from your parents or are living at home, please indicate your parent's income. However, if you are self-supporting please indicate your personal income, including your partner's if you are married or living common-law):
 - under \$13,000
 - \$13,000 - \$24,999
 - \$25,000 - \$39,999
 - \$40,000 - \$54,999
 - \$55,000 - \$69,999
 - \$70,000 +
 6. Marital Status:
 - single common-law married common law
 - divorced/separated
 7. How many different homes did you live in when you were growing up? _____
 8. Please indicate what kind of dwellings you lived in when you were growing up. (Check as many as apply):
 - house trailer apartment other _____
 - b) When you were growing up, what room did you sleep in? (Check as many as apply)
 bedroom living room dining room other _____
 - c) At any time, did you share this space with someone else in your family
 yes no
 If yes, please indicate their relationship to you (e.g., parents, brother, cousins, etc.) _____
 8. Please indicate where you grew up:
 - farm small town city reserve
 10. How many schools did you attend: grade school _____ high school _____
 11. When you were growing up did you participate in:
 _____sports _____dance _____music
 12. Do you consider yourself abused as a child _____yes _____no
- Information about your family:**
13. Please indicate the number of siblings:
 _____brothers _____sisters _____step-brothers
 _____step-sisters _____half-brothers _____half-sisters

14. Please circle the highest level of education completed by:
 Your mother: high school 9 10 11 12 post secondary 1 2 3 4
 Occupation: _____
 Your father: high school 9 10 11 12 post secondary 1 2 3 4
 Occupation: _____
15. Have you or anyone in your immediate family had any of the following experiences:
 (Please indicate their relationship to you but not their names, e.g., father sister, etc.)
- a) taken medication to treat a mental illness (e.g., depression, anxiety, etc.)
 yes no if yes, please indicate self other _____
 - b) been hospitalized for mental illness
 yes no if yes, please indicate self other _____
 - c) served time in jail
 yes no if yes, please indicate self other _____
 - d) gone for therapy or counseling
 yes no if yes, please indicate self other _____
 - e) attempted suicide
 yes no if yes, please indicate self other _____
 - f) completed suicide
 yes no if yes, please indicate self other _____
 - f) experienced psychological difficulties, but not gone for help
 yes no if yes, please indicate self other _____

If you are willing to take part in the second phase of this research and have not yet signed the Consent Form for Phase 2, please do so and include it in the return envelope along with the questionnaires. Thank you.

APPENDIX B

CHILDHOOD & TRAUMA QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read each statement carefully then indicate how the statement applies to your own experience by placing a check mark in the appropriate column.

When I was growing up...	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Often True	Very Often True
1. There was someone in my family whom I could talk to about my problems					
2. People in my family criticized me					
3. I didn't have enough to eat					
4. People in my family showed confidence in me, and encouraged me to achieve					
5. Someone in my family hit me or beat me					
6. I felt that I better take care of myself, because no one else would					
7. People in my family argued or fought with each other					
8. I lived in a group home or in a foster home					
9. I knew that there was someone to take care of me and protect me					
10. There was someone outside of my family (like a teacher or a neighbor) who was like a parent to me					
10a. Someone in my family yelled and screamed at me					
11. I saw my mother or one of my brothers or sisters get hit or beaten					
12. Someone in my family made sure that I went to school unless I was sick					
13. People in my family called me things like 'stupid' or 'lazy' or 'ugly'					

When I was growing up...	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Often True	Very Often True
14. I was living on the streets by the time I was a teenager or even younger					
15. There was someone in my family whom I admired and wanted to be like					
16. My parents were too drunk or high to take care of the family					
17. I rarely got the love or attention that I needed					
18. People in my family got into trouble with the police					
19. There was someone in my family who helped me feel that i was important or special					
20. I had to protect myself from someone in my family by fighting, hiding, or running away					
21. I felt like there was someone in my family who wanted me to be a success					
22. I had to wear dirty clothes					
23. I lived with different people at different times (like different relatives or foster families)					
24. I believed that one of my brothers or sisters might have been molested					
25. I felt that I was loved					
26. The other kids that I hung out with seemed like my 'real' family					
27. I rarely had a father or step-father around the house					
28. My parents tried to treat all of us children the same					
28a. I thought that my parents wished that I had never been born					
29. I got hit so hard by someone in my family that I had to see a doctor or go to the hospital					

When I was growing up...	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Often True	Very Often True
30. There was someone in my family who made sure that I stayed out of trouble					
31. People in my family hit me so hard that it left me with bruises or marks					
32. I belonged to a gang					
33. The punishments I received seemed fair					
33a. I had sex with an adult or with someone who was at least 5 years older than me					
34. There was someone older than myself (like a teacher or parent) who was a positive role model for me					
35. I was punished with a belt, a board, or a cord (or some other hard object)					
35a. There was nothing I wanted to changed about my family					
36. People in my family got high or drunk					
37. People in my family looked out for each other					
38. My parents were divorced or separated					
39. People in my family said hurtful or insulting things to me					
40. I believe that I was physically abused					
41. People in my family tried to keep me away from bad influences					
42. There was an adult or another responsible person around the house when I was home					
43. I got hit or beaten so badly that it was noticed by someone like a teacher, neighbor or doctor					
44. People in my family seemed out of control					
45. People in my family encouraged me to stay in school and get an education					

When I was growing up...	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Often True	Very Often True
46. I spent time out of the house and no one knew where I was					
47. The punishments I received seemed cruel					
47a. I felt that someone in my family hated me					
48. People in my family felt close to each other					
49. Someone tried to touch me in a sexual way, or tried to make me touch them					
50. People in my family pushed me or shoved me					
51. There was enough food in the house for everyone.					
52. Everyone in my family had certain chores that they were supposed to do.					
53. Someone threatened to hurt me or tell lies about me unless I did something sexual with me					
53a. I had the perfect childhood					
54. I was frightened of being hurt by someone in my family					
55. Someone tried to make me do sexual things or watch sexual things					
56. Someone in my family believed in me					
57. I believed that I was emotionally abused					
58. People in my family didn't seem to know or care what I was doing					
59. There was someone to take me to the doctor if I needed it					
59a. I had the best family in the world					
59b. People in my family had secrets that I wasn't supposed to share with anyone					
60. I believe that I was sexually abused					

When I was growing up...	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Often True	Very Often True
61. My family was a source of strength and support					
62. I was spanked or hit					
63. I received black eyes from being hit by someone in my family					
64. I was purposefully burned with a cigarette, lighter, iron, etc.					
65. I have had broken bones following a beating					

APPENDIX C

INVENTORY TO DIAGNOSE DEPRESSION-LIFETIME VERSION

1. On this questionnaire are groups of 5 statements.
2. Read each group of statements carefully. Then pick out the one statement in each group that best describes the way you felt during the **WEEK IN YOUR LIFE YOU FELT THE MOST DEPRESSED**. Circle the number next to the statement you picked.
3. For every group in which you circled #1, 2, 3 or 4 answer the follow-up question as to whether you felt that way for more or less than 2 weeks.

-
1. 0 I did not feel sad or depressed.
1 I occasionally felt sad or down.
2 I felt sad most of the time, but I was able to snap out of it.
3 I felt sad all the time, and I couldn't snap out of it.
4 I was so sad or unhappy that I couldn't stand it.

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you feel sad or down for more or less than 2 weeks more less

-
2. 0 My energy level was normal
1 My energy level was occasionally a little lower than normal
2 I got tired more easily or had less energy than usual
3 I got tired from doing almost anything
4 I felt tired or exhausted almost all the time

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Was your energy level lower than usual for more or less than 2 weeks more less

-
3. 0 I was not feeling more restless and fidgety than usual
1 I felt a little more restless or fidgety than usual
2 I was very fidgety and I had some difficulty sitting still in a chair
3 I was extremely fidgety and I paced a little bit almost every day
4 I paced more than an hour per day, and I couldn't sit still

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you feel restless and fidgety for more or less than 2 weeks more less

-
4. 0 I did not talk or move more slowly than usual
1 I talked a little slower than usual
2 I spoke slower than usual and it took me longer to respond
3 Normal conversations were difficult because it was hard to start talking
4 I felt extremely slowed down physically, like I was stuck in mud

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you feel slowed down for more or less than 2 weeks more less

5. 0 I did not lose interest in my usual activities
 1 I was a little less interested in 1 or 2 of my usual activities
 2 I was less interested in several of my usual activities
 3 I lost most of my interest in almost all of my usual activities
 4 I lost all interest in all of my usual activities

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Was your interest in your usual activities low for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

6. 0 I got as much pleasure out of my usual activities as usual
 1 I got a little less pleasure from 1 or 2 of my usual activities
 2 I got less pleasure from several of my usual activities
 3 I got almost no pleasure from most of the activities I usually enjoyed
 4 I got no pleasure from any of the activities which I usually enjoyed

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Was your enjoyment in your usual activities low for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

7. 0 My interest in sex was normal
 1 I was only slightly less interested in sex than usual
 2 There was a noticeable decrease in my interest in sex
 3 I was much less interested in sex
 4 I lost all interest in sex

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Was your interest in sex low for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

8. 0 I did not feel guilty
 1 I occasionally felt a little guilty
 2 I often felt guilty
 3 I felt quite guilty most of the time
 4 I felt extremely guilty most of the time

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you have guilt feelings for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

9. 0 I did not feel like a failure
 1 My opinion of myself was occasionally a little low
 2 I felt I was inferior to most people
 3 I felt like a failure
 4 I felt like I was a totally worthless person

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Were you down on yourself for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

10. 0 I didn't have any thoughts of death or suicide
 1 I occasionally thought life was not worth living
 2 I frequently thought of dying in passive ways (such as going to sleep and not waking up), or that I'd
 be better off dead
 3 I had frequent thoughts of killing myself

4 I tried to kill myself

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you think about dying or killing yourself for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

-
11. 0 I could concentrate as well as usual
1 My ability to concentrate was slightly worse than usual
2 My attention span as not as good as usual and I had difficulty collecting my thoughts, but this didn't cause any problems
3 My ability to read or hold a conversation was not as good as usual
4 I could not read, watch TV, or have a conversation without great difficulty

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you trouble concentrating for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

-
12. 0 I made decisions as well as usual
1 Decision making was slightly worse than usual
2 It was harder and took longer to make decisions, but I did make them
3 I was unable to make some decisions
4 I couldn't make any decisions at all

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you have any problems making decisions for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

-
13. 0 My appetite was not less than normal
1 My appetite was slightly worse than usual
2 My appetite was clearly not as good as usual but I still ate
3 My appetite was much worse
4 I had no appetite at all, and I had to force myself to eat even a little

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Was your appetite decreased for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

-
14. 0 I didn't lose any weight
1 I lost less than 5 pounds
2 I lost between 5 and 10 pounds
3 I lost between 11 and 25 pounds
4 I lost more than 25 pounds

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Were you losing weight for more or less than 2 weeks

more less

-
15. 0 My appetite was not greater than normal
1 My appetite was slightly greater than normal
2 My appetite was clearly greater than normal
3 My appetite was much greater than usual
4 I felt hungry all the time

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Was your appetite increased for more or less than 2 weeks more

less

16. 0 I didn't gain any weight
 1 I gained less than 5 pounds
 2 I gained between 5 to 10 pounds
 3 I gained between 11 and 25 pounds
 4 I gained more than 25 pounds

***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Were you gaining weight for more or less than 2 weeks more less

17. 0 I was not sleeping less than normal
 1 I occasionally had slight difficulty sleeping
 2 I clearly didn't sleep as well as usual
 3 I slept about half my normal amount of time
 4 I slept less than 2 hours per night
- ***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you have sleep problems for more or less than 2 weeks more less
-
18. 0 I was not sleeping more than normal
 1 I occasionally slept more than usual
 2 I frequently slept at least 1 hour more than usual
 3 I frequently slept at least 2 hours more than usual
 4 I frequently slept at least 3 hours more than usual
- ***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you sleep extra for more or less than 2 weeks more less
-
19. 0 I did not feel anxious, nervous or tense
 1 I occasionally felt a little anxious
 2 I often felt anxious
 3. I felt very anxious most of the time
 4. I felt terrified and near panic
- ***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you feel anxious, nervous or tense for more or less than 2 weeks more less
-
20. 0 I did not feel discouraged about the future
 1 I occasionally felt a little discouraged about the future
 2 I often felt discouraged about the future
 3 I felt very discouraged about the future most of the time
 4 I felt that the future was hopeless and that things would never improve
- ***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you feel discouraged for more or less than 2 weeks more less
-
21. 0 I did not feel irritated or annoyed
 1 I occasionally got a little more irritated than usual
 2 I got irritated or annoyed by things than usually didn't bother me
 3 I felt irritated or annoyed almost all the time
 4 I felt so depressed that I didn't get irritated at all by things that would normally bother me
- ***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you feel more irritated than usual for more or less than 2 weeks more less
-
22. 0 I was not worried about my physical health
 1 I was occasionally concerned about bodily aches and pains
 2 I was worried about my physical health
 3 I was very worried about my physical health
 4 I was so worried about my physical health that I could not think about anything else
- ***If you circled #1, 2, 3, or 4: Did you worry about your physical health for more or less than 2 weeks

The following questions are about the period of depression you just described.

1. Did anything cause the depression? Yes No

IF YOU CHECKED YES, DESCRIBE BRIEFLY

2. How long did the depression last (CIRCLE ONE)

1. less than 1 week
2. at least 1 week, but less than 2 weeks
3. at least 3 weeks, but less than 1 month
4. at least 1 month, but less than 6 months
5. at least 6 months, but less than 1 year
6. at least 1 year, but less than 2 years
7. 2 years or more

3. Did the depression affect your schoolwork, job, social life, performance of household chores or anything else?

Yes No

IF YOU CHECKED YES, DESCRIBE BRIEFLY:

4. Did you see a counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist about how you were feeling?

Yes No

5. Did you receive any medication for how you were feeling?

Yes No

- 6) Were you hospitalized for the depression?

Yes No

APPENDIX D
LIFE EVENT SCALE

Please indicate with a check mark which of the following events has occurred to you within the previous six months.

	1. Death of a parent.
	2. Death of your best or very good friend.
	3. Jail term (self)
	4. Breakup of parents marriage/divorce
	5. Getting kicked out of school
	6. Major car accident (car wrecked, people injured)
	7. Pregnancy (either yourself or being the father)
	8. Failing a number of courses
	9. Parent losing a job
	10. Major personal injury or illness
	11. Losing a good friend
	12. Major change of health in close family member
	13. Breakup with boy/girl friend
	14. Major and/or chronic financial problems
	15. Moving out of town with parents
	16. Seriously thinking about dropping school
	17. Getting an unjustified low mark on a test
	18. Moving out from home
	19. Failing a course
	20. Beginning an undergraduate or graduate program in university
	21. Seeking psychological or psychiatric consultation
	22. Major argument with parents
	23. Major argument with boy/girlfriend
	24. Sex difficulties with boy/girlfriend
	25. Establishing a new steady relationship with partner
	26. Minor car accident

	27. Minor financial problems
	28. Losing a part-time job
	29. Getting your own car
	30. Finding a part-time job
	31. Change of job
	32. Minor violation of the law (i.e. speeding ticket)
	33. Switch in program within same college or university
	34. Family get-togethers
	35. Vacation with parents
	36. Vacation alone/with friends

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This interview schedule represents the three areas that I want to cover in an initial interview. The order of the questions has been set arbitrarily in the schedule but interviews will not necessarily follow this format. For some participants, the focusing statement may be sufficient to set the stage and invite them to share their childhood experiences. For others, a more structured approach may be warranted initially.

Focusing Statement:

You recently filled out some forms - one of which asked you about your childhood experiences. During this interview, I would like us to explore these experiences and, generally, to talk about what it was like for you growing up in your family.

Part I: The Context of Childhood Experiences:

1. To begin with, who was part of your family while you were growing up? (Parents, occupation, siblings, birth order, where, how large was the house, extended family, family moves, school moves, etc. Did you ever spend time living with another relative or in a foster home? This question is partly an elaboration of the demographic questionnaire-a means to put them at ease)
2. What was growing up like for you? (Feelings about childhood - good, bad, indifferent, a mixture of both, lots of change, etc. - looking for both negative and positive feelings about childhood experiences)
3. What are some of your most vivid memories of growing up in your family? (How old were you, what made this event memorable, have you talked about this with anyone else lately, are there other events that stand out in your mind? - looking for specific experiences that support the feelings alluded to in the previous question)
4. Did you get to see your grandparents or cousins very often? What were family occasions like when you all got together? (Develop an understanding of the extended family and what traditions have been developed)
5. Tell me about what going to school was like for you. (Friends, teachers, sense of accomplishment, sports, etc. Did you have a special friend, or hang out in a group? Did your friends share your interests?)

Part II: Abusive Experiences

If childhood experiences of abuse have not come up by the time these areas have been explored, then I will ask directly.

6. In your questionnaire, you mentioned that _____ was part of your early experiences. Could you tell me more about that? (How old, who, when, how often? Were you injured? Did you receive medical attention? What was that like for you? How do you think these experiences have affected you? Did these things happen to anyone

else in your family? Did you share these experiences with anyone else? Who or why not? How did they react when you told them? How did you feel at the time? How do you feel now about these past events? Do you remember what you thought about these experiences at the time?

Part III: The process of labeling the self as abused

7. You labeled your childhood experiences as abusive, what led you to that conclusion? Did something specific happen for you to consider these experiences as abusive? Do you recall when you arrived at this decision? How old were you at the time? Did you always think of these experiences as abusive or have you changed your mind? What changed your mind? Have you shared this with others? If so, who, when, how? Do you think that your brothers and sisters would agree with you? Do you think that others in your family were abused?

OR

7. Others who have had similar experiences as you have described, label these experiences 'abusive'. I noticed that you didn't on the questionnaire you filled out. What do you think might be the difference between your experiences and theirs? How did you come to this conclusion? Have you ever considered the possibility before? Do you believe that anyone else in your family was abused? What about your experiences would have to be different in order for you to label them as abusive? Do you feel differently now that we have talked about it? How?

APPENDIX F
CATEGORIES & PROPERTIES

1. Nobody around, no one to rely on: Social Isolation
 1. Insulating/Isolating the family
 2. Conspiracy of Silence
 3. Temporary Exception to Isolation
 4. Minimizing
 5. Looking the other way
 6. Denial of Abuse
2. Construction of Difference
 1. Scapegoating
 2. Self as Deficient
 3. Children as 'other'
 4. Social differences
 5. Denial of normative experiences
 6. Denial of Abuse
 7. Public Reaction to Abuse
 8. Difference as a source of abuse
3. Assaults against the body, the mind, the self
 1. Unpredictable
 2. As if nothing happened
 3. Rejected
 4. Held responsible
 5. Indifference
 6. Violation of Boundaries
 7. Robbed of a normal childhood
4. Resistance: Fighting back
 1. As developmental
 2. Protecting the self
 3. Establishing an identity
 4. Getting noticed
 5. Attributions for Abuse
5. Regaining control
 1. Escapes
 2. Abuse follows
 3. Hopeful returns
6. Naming the experience
 1. Implications of the label
 2. Monsters in the family

APPENDIX G
SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS BY GROUP

Categories ¹	No Abuse (n=48) 66%	Subjective-Abuse (n=12) 16%	Objective-Abuse (n=13) 18%
Males	8	2	4
Females	40	10	9
Below 20 years old	23%	17%	23%
Between 21-30	71%	58%	62%
Over 31	6%	25%	15%
Education:			
Grade 12	2%	25%	8%
1 Year Post	2%		
2 Years Post	13%	33%	23%
3 Years Post	63%	42%	23%
4 Years Post	21%		46%
Cultural Background			
Metis	2%	8%	8%
Native	2%	8%	
Caucasian	54%	42%	54%
Other	31%	33%	23%
Practice Religion			
Christian	52%	42%	54%
Fundamentalist	50%	58%	62%
Income			
Under \$13,000	38%	67%	38%
\$13,000-\$24,000	10%	8%	8%
\$25,000-\$39,000	8%		8%

Category	No Abuse	Subjective Abuse	Objective Abuse
Income			
\$40,000-\$54,000	17%		15%
\$55,000-\$69,000	25%	12%	8%
Over \$70,0000			23%
Missing	2%	8%	8%
Marital Status: Single			
Married	15%	8%	8%
Common-law	13%		15%
Divorced		25%	
No. of Homes (<i>M</i>)			
Farm	65%	42%	46%
City	23%	42%	23%
Small Town <6000	8%	17%	8%
Reserve	2%		8%
No. of Schools (<i>M</i>)			
Involved in Sports	85%	50%	77%
Dance	46%	17%	31%
Music	73%	67%	54%
No. of Brothers			
No. of Sisters	20-1, 9-2	5-1,1-2	7-1, 1-2
Stepbrothers	23-1, 6-2, 3-3	1-1, 3-2, 1-3,1-4	9-3,2-1
Stepsisters	2-2,	1-1, 1-2,	2-1, 1-4
Half Brothers	1-1, 1-2	1-1,1-2, 2-3	1-2
Half Sisters	1-1	4-1,1-4	2-1
	1-7	4-1,3-4,1-6	1-1

Categories	No Abuse	Subjective Abuse	Objective Abuse
Mother's Education			
Less than Grade 12	17%	8%	23%
Grade 12	27%	25%	23%
Some Post Secondary	31%	25%	15%
Graduate	25%	33%	31%
Father's Education			
Less than Grade 12	17%	33%	15%
Grade 12	27%	17%	15%
Some Post Secondary	25%	25%	15%
Graduate	31%	8%	38%
Mental Health (Self)			
Medication: Depression	13%	25%	23%
Hospitalization	4%	8%	15%
Jailed	2%	17%	15%
Therapy	21%	58%	31%
Suicide Attempts	6%	8%	15%
Psych. Difficulties	10%	8%	31%

Note: Where the % do not add up to 100, participants in this study, data was missing.

1. 'No Abuse': Participants answered 'no' to question #12 in Appendix A.
'Subjective-Abuse': Participants answered 'yes' to question 12 in Appendix A.
'Objective-Abuse': Participants answered 'no' to question 12 in Appendix A but obtained scores higher than 34 on the Physical and Emotional scale and Total scores greater than 92 on the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire in Appendix B.