The Subjective Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence among Female Sex Workers

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Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious problem affecting many women around the world. Extensive research exists that focuses on the cultural context of abuse and, more specifically, marginalised women's experiences of IPV. This study focused on the ways in which female sex workers talk about their experiences of IPV. It focused on the stories that sex workers construct to make meaning of their abusive experiences, as well as the connections they draw between these experiences and the work they do. Unstructured, narrative interviews were conducted with 11 female sex workers. The data was analysed by means of a thematic narrative approach. The findings indicated that the participants had been subjugated to large-scale violence and abuse in their intimate relationships, where the male partners of these women frequently used the latter's work as a way of justifying the abuse directed towards them. Within the context of romantic relationships these women constructed their role in terms of their sexual availability that allows them to gain financial rewards from their partners. In this way their identity as sex workers transcends the context of their work and influences the way in which they relate to men in general. Through the participants' narratives, popular ideas about sex workers have been challenged. These women have shown an enormous amount of resistance and strength, even within the context of male domination. In a certain sense they actively resisted the negative labels attached to both their identities as battered women and sex workers. Female sex workers' experiences of IPV cannot be understood in isolation from the stigma embedded in sex work. Findings suggest a need to address the stigma attached to sex work and further empower the women who are working within this profession.

1. Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) against women is a subcategory of domestic violence and includes physical, sexual, emotional, financial and psychological abuse committed by previous or current male partners (DuBois & Miley, 2010; Outlaw, 2009). A study conducted by the World Health Organization found that IPV is an issue affecting many women around the world (WHO, 2005). Although men are also subjected to IPV, it has been found that 95% of IPV victims are female (Berry, 2000). In 1999 8.8 per 100,000 women in South Africa, aged 14 and older, were killed by their male partners (Mathews & Abrahams, 2001). The high prevalence of IPV is a major cause for concern in our country. Not only do battered women suffer grave emotional and physical burdens, but IPV also contributes to mental illness, substance abuse and the spread of HIV (Wong, Huang, DiGangi, Thompson & Smith, 2008).

Extensive research has been conducted within the field of IPV. Space constraints did not allow me to do a thorough review of the literature. For the purpose of this study, research pertaining to marginalized women's experiences of abuse was explored. I was introduced to SWEAT through the University of Cape Town at the beginning of 2014. Sex Workers, Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) is a non-profit organisation in Cape Town that renders health, empowerment and therapeutic services to street-based sex workers. In being introduced to the women who make use of SWEAT's services I became aware how their gender, cultural group and low socio-economic class interact to shape the challenges in their daily lives. This realisation influenced my decision to focus on IPV in the lives of poor and marginalized women.

Women's Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence

It is evident that a vast amount of literature exists that focuses on IPV among women. Due to the serious nature of this problem, there is a need to gain a clearer understanding of battered women's struggles, fears and resilience. This knowledge will deepen our understanding of the subjective reality of battered women and may challenge any misconceptions about women's position in violent relationships.

Research on a broad range of contexts has found that violence against women in heterosexual relationships is often perceived as normal (Lopez et al., 2014; Ludermir, Schraiber, D'Oliveira, Franca-Junior & Jansen, 2008; Rada, 2014, Virkki, 2007). Accepting attitudes toward violence develop in battered women as a method to cope within violent

relationships (Bryant-Davis, 2010). However, not all battered women are accepting of violence and the idea that battered women are 'accepting' of violence is sometimes used as a way to blame the victim. There is a large body of research that shows that women frequently use active strategies to resist and cope with the abuse in their relationships (Bauman, Haaga & Dutton, 2008; Stubbs & Tolmie, 2008; Yoshihama, 2002).

Research has shown that women who are subjected to IPV are more susceptible to negative physical and mental health outcomes. Abused women report higher rates of health problems compared to non-abused women, which includes high blood pressure, insomnia, gastrointestinal symptoms and chronic pain syndromes (Dutton et al., 2006). They are at an increased risk for HIV/Aids transmission, other sexually transmitted diseases and gynaecological and reproductive health problems (Campbell, Woods, Laughon Chouaf & Parker, 2000; Dutton et al., 2006). Many women who have been abused during pregnancy experience poor pregnancy outcomes and birth complications (Campbell et al., 2000). Psychological problems following exposure to abuse includes greater likelihood for PTSD, other anxiety disorders, depression, substance abuse and suicidality (Dutton et al., 2006). Many abused women report loss of appetite and diminished satisfaction in life (Loke et al., 2012). In their phenomenological study on the influence of culture on the lived experiences of battered women, Magnussen, Amundson and Smith (2008) found that most of the women in their study believed the lies they were told by their abusive partners and internalized feelings of inferiority.

Cognitive reconstructions can often be identified with battered women. Magnussen et al. (2008) also showed in their study that "magical thinking" often emerges in battered women as an attempt to escape the incomprehensible reality of their situations. "Magical thinking" is a clinical concept used to define a range of non-scientific and irrational beliefs among people. In a phenomenological case study exploring the coping strategies employed by battered women, Haesler (2013) found that many of the participants in her study actively tried to cope with their ambivalent feelings of love towards their partners by altering their perceptions of the abuse.

Current literature on violence against women often refers to women's reluctance to seek help and to inform other people of their abusive experiences (Magnussen et al., 2008; Ogunsiji, Wilkes, Jackson & Peters, 2010). A study focusing on the lived experiences of female victims of IPV showed that battered women "are often ashamed to disclose their situation" and "afraid of being ridiculed or ignored" (Loke et al., 2012, p. 2336) when doing

so. The women in the study also reported that helping-professionals often "underrate their experience" (Loke et al., 2012, p. 2342).

From the above discussion, it is clear that female victims of IPV experience a broad range of physical and psychological problems that can be attributed to their abuse. Due to the humiliation connected to abuse, battered women are unwilling to talk about their abuse with others and frequently change their perceptions of the abuse (Haesler, 2013; Magnussen et al., 2008). The cultural context of marginalised women further influences their experiences of abuse. Certain groups of women find themselves in cultural contexts that normalise violent behaviours towards women, which makes it difficult for these women to escape and seek help (Hong, Zhang, Li, Liu & Zhou, 2013).

The Cultural Context of Abuse

A growing body of research exists that explores the sociocultural context of IPV among diverse groups of women (Bograd, 2005; Bryant-Davis, Belcourt-Dittloff, Chung & Tillman, 2009; Taft, Bryant-Davis, Woodward, Tillman & Torres, 2009; Yick, 2007). Moreno (2007) argues that women's experiences of abuse are shaped by their cultural context. Research focussing on groups of women who are especially susceptible to becoming victims of IPV, highlights the following categories: women who have traditionally been marginalised, impoverished, pregnant, homeless and HIV-positive (Bryant-Davis, 2010), migrant women (Ogunsiji et al., 2010), ethnic minority women (White, Yuan, Cook & Abbey, 2012) and women who experience educational and economic disadvantages (Wechsberg, Luseno & Lam, 2005). A study focusing on West African immigrant women's experiences of IPV, found that the participants often "suffered the abuse in silence" and that they were "reluctant to seek assistance for the abuse" (Ogunsiji et al., 2010, p. 1659). The women in the study thought about IPV as a topic to be kept private. Another study focusing on the impact of culture on Latino survivors' experiences of IPV, identified the following help-seeking barriers among the participants: traditional beliefs about gender roles, marriage and authority, limited social resources and embarrassment when talking about sex (Bryant-Davis, 2010). It is thus clear that certain groups of women are more exposed to IPV, possibly have additional burdens in terms of help-seeking, and call for more attention (Hong, Zhang, Li, Liu & Zhou, 2013).

Sex workers can also be described as a marginalised group who are more vulnerable to IPV. Research shows that women's entry into sex work can be ascribed to their precarious financial situations (Halland, 2010). Violence in the lives of female sex workers is extremely

common. Research shows that sex workers endure extremely high levels of abuse from clients and policemen (Raphael & Shapiro, 2004; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). In a study focusing on violence in the lives of black female sex workers in Johannesburg, Wojcicki and Malala (2001) found that all the participants in their study had been verbally and sexually assaulted by policemen. Violence towards female sex workers is linked to their low status, lack of power and limited social capital (Ratinthorn, Meleis & Sindhu, 2009). To further complicate the matter, sex work is frequently stigmatized and rated as morally inferior (Pack, L'Engle, Mwarogo & Kingola, 2014). Therefore sex workers are subjected to much discrimination and exclusion.

Although current literature acknowledges female sex workers to be at risk for physical violence, few studies focus on sex workers' personal lives and intimate relationships. One study that does focus on IPV among female sex workers, found that the participants had negative views of men in general, used substances in dealing with their violent intimate relationships and lacked the power to negotiate safe sex (Karandikar & Gezinski, 2013). In this study semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten female sex workers, living in Mumbai, India. Although the study addressed the participants' subjective experiences of IPV, it centred mainly on the HIV risk associated with IPV among female sex workers. More research is needed on IPV amongst sex workers that goes beyond a focus on HIV risk into exploring how they construct their experiences of IPV.

Although the topic of IPV among females has received a great deal of scientific attention, little research on IPV within the context of the sex industry has been conducted. Current literature does acknowledge the vulnerability of female sex workers, but the majority of studies on this population are focused on their HIV and STI risk and their use of illegal substances. Studies on their subjective experiences of IPV are lacking, especially within the context of sex workers working in Cape Town and South Africa more broadly. This study attempted to contribute toward addressing this gap in the current literature.

2. Aims and Objectives

Aim

The overall aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the ways in which sex workers interpret and construct their experiences of IPV. The study also aimed to explore the meanings that sex workers attach to their experiences of IPV, as well as the links they

draw between these experiences and the work they do. The study further aimed to explore sex workers' constructions of their personal identities as women victims of violence by means of the stories they tell.

Main Research Question

      How do female sex workers talk about their experiences of IPV? What types of narratives do they employ to make meaning of their experiences of IPV?

Sub-questions

- What connections do female sex workers make between their experiences of IPV and the work they do?
- How do experiences of partner violence influence female sex workers' constructions of self?

3. Theoretical Framework

      The research project was guided by social identity theory. Social identity theory was originally developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner who argued that identification with a certain group has a major impact on the member's self-concept and self-esteem (Forsyth, 2010). People who belong to stigmatized and low-status groups tend to exhibit lower self-esteem than people who belong to more honourable groups (Forsyth, 2010). The participants in this study are among others, members of the group called "sex workers". People are more prone to act violently towards sex workers, because of the social and moral meanings embedded in understandings around sex work (Arnold & Barling, 2010).

      This research study aimed to explore the connections between the participants' identification as sex workers and their interpretations of the violence they experienced. It is possible that their experiences were shaped by their association with a particular group. The messages that sex workers receive from society and the ways in which other people treat them may have had an influence on their view of their own situations (Mayer & Richardson, 2010). It was thus of concern to investigate how the participants' stories were shaped by their identities as sex workers.

      However, the extent to which people identify with the social groups to which they belong, may differ (Forsyth, 2010). Individuals may even resist being perceived as a member of a certain group to which they are assigned (Mayer & Richardson, 2010). Individual mobility is a term used to describe the phenomenon where a person diminishes his/her

connection to a group in order to reduce risks to his/her self-esteem (Forsyth, 2010). The extent to which the participants identified with the group "sex workers" was explored throughout the study, as well as the impact that this identification had on their experiences and self-concept.

4. Methods

Research Design: Narrative Research

This study was conducted within a qualitative paradigm, using a narrative approach. The narrative approach was developed from a social constructionist viewpoint that challenges the "realist" approaches to the study of self and identity. Traditional psychological studies often relied on realism that treats "the self" as an entity that can be discovered and grasped in a systematic way, much in the same way as an object studied by natural scientists. Social constructionism gives an alternative view of the conceptualisation of the self and believes that it is a concept that is inextricably dependent on the social context in which it is being created (Crossley, 2007). Social identity theory can, however, be criticised as it assumes a real identity that is relatively static (Howard, 2000). Although the above theory was used to guide the analysis of the data, within this study identity was regarded as something that is constructed which is constantly evolving.

The narrative approach centres on the structure, content and function of the stories that research participants convey. It is believed that people shape their world and their personal identities through the development of personal narratives (Murray, 2003). According to Byat (2000), stories are embedded in all aspects of human existence. People are born in a storied world and live and describe their lives in terms of narrative (Murray, 2008). Stories are a series of events, plots, actions and emotions that are organised into a unified episode, in which the lived experiences of humans can be expressed (Polkinghorne, 1996). The ways in which events are interpreted and the meanings that are attached to key experiences are reflected in individual narratives.

The narrative approach was suitable for this study, because the stories people tell are often a reflection of their lived experiences. Stories help us gain a better understanding of the ways in which people make sense of their world and construct their personal identities (Squire, 2008). The narrative approach integrates with social identity theory, as both are concerned with the influence of wider social contexts on identity and the construction of self (Kiguwa, 2006; Wood, 2001). Broader social and institutional forces are often reflected in

individual narratives. For instance, people draw on larger structures of power relations, inequality and societal values in telling their stories. These structures influence how people come to construct their own identities and make meaning of their subjective experiences (Riessman, 2008).

Sampling Strategy

Participants were recruited in collaboration with SWEAT. Purposive sampling approaches were used. In other words the research participants were selected on the grounds of certain defining criteria (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of a select group of women and not to generalise the findings to a broader population. The use of probability or random sampling approaches was thus not necessary. Sampling decisions were made for the purpose of acquiring the richest source of information on the topic of IPV among sex workers. Participants were female, at the time of the study involved in sex work (and had been for at least five years), at the time of the study in a heterosexual relationship or had been in the past five years and had experienced some type of IPV in a past or current relationship. Participants were over the age of 18 and in affiliation with the organisation called SWEAT. On the basis of the above criteria, 11 participants were voluntarily recruited to participate in the study. Recruiting was done by means of advertising (see Appendix A). SWEAT advertised the study to its members and the voluntary nature of this study was emphasized.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Participant[1]	Age	Length of time as a sex worker	Current relationship status	Level of education	Number of children	Race[2]
Jowidene	36	6 years	Single	Grade 12	4	Coloured
Meryl	35	4 years	Single	Grade 12	3	Coloured
Shandry	33	8 years	Dating	Grade 11	1	Coloured
Lu-Juan	35	16 years	Dating	Grade 11	5	Coloured
Mbulee	35	16 years	Dating	Grade 11	2	Coloured

[1] These names are pseudonyms provided to ensure the women's anonymity.

[2] Race is included in the demographic details of the participants as it frames the participants' lifeworld. The participants find themselves on the margins of society, specifically due to the racial categories they are part of.

Thato	31	2 years	Single	Grade 11	4	Black
Nicole	49	18 years	Single	Grade 12	1	White
Kimberly	51	20 years	Single	Grade 11	1	Coloured
Clarissa	46	23 years	Dating	Grade 9	1	Coloured
Boitumelo	48	25 years	Dating	Grade 9	3 (1 dead)	Black
Joslin	45	15 years	Dating	Grade 9	3	Coloured

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

Data was obtained through unstructured face-to-face interviews. One interview, ranging between 60 to 90 minutes, was conducted individually with each of the research participants. The interviews were open-ended and unstructured. In the narrative interview the interviewer has less control over the interview process than in more structured data collection methods. The participants have full control over the direction that the interview will take and are viewed as experts on their own life experiences (Corbin & Morse, 2003). The narrative interview enables participants to provide detailed stories of their lives in general or of specific experiences.

The following question was asked during the interviews: "I would like you to tell me the story of your intimate relationship – how you met, how the relationship progressed, the challenges you experienced in the relationship, that sort of thing. I would like you to tell me as much detail as you can remember about your relationship." Clarification was obtained at the end of the narrative account by asking additional questions, such as: "What role do you play within this story?" and "What connections can you draw between your experiences within the relationship and the work you do?" The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder.

Data Analysis

A thematic narrative approach to data analysis was used. The guidelines proposed by Crossley (2007) and those proposed by Murray (2008) were integrated. The researcher first familiarised herself with the narrative accounts and obtained a general idea of the main themes (Crossley, 2007). Data was then analysed in two phases, one descriptive, the other interpretive.

During the descriptive phase a short summary was constructed that identified the key features, structures, themes, symbols and images within each of the narratives. The main issues and plots were explored, as well as the connections between the various parts (Murray, 2008). Predominant attention was given to the content of the narratives. The way in which the

narratives were communicated and the structures embedded in the narratives were given less attention (Riessman, 2008).

During the interpretive phase the narratives were connected to the broader theory that was utilized. Social identity theory was used in order to gain a clearer understanding of the meanings underlying the narratives. The metaphors, images and themes that were used in the narratives were interpreted and understood within the broader social context in which it was created. The underlying beliefs and values of the participants were explored and interpreted. In analysing narrative data, the broader social narrative in which a personal story unfolds should be taken into consideration (Murray, 2008).

There are a variety of approaches by which narrative analysis can be done. The researcher broadly followed the following steps proposed by Crossley (2007):

- Reading and familiarizing
- Identifying important concepts to look for
- Identifying 'narrative tone'
- Identifying narrative themes and images
- Weaving all the elements together into a coherent story
- Writing the research report.

5. Ethical Considerations

A key ethical issue applicable to this study was the avoidance of emotional harm caused to participants (Strydom, 2005). The type of information that was collected during the study was personal and emotional in nature. There was the possibility of opening up old wounds and thereby upsetting the participants. This aspect was dealt with by fully informing the participants prior to the interview about the purpose of the inquiry, procedures to be followed and the personal advantages and disadvantages of participating in the study (Strydom, 2005). This information was given as accurately as possible by means of a consent form (see Appendix B). After being informed about this information, participants received the opportunity to freely decide whether or not to participate in the study. The researcher informed them that they had the right to withdraw from the study during any phase, if they wished to do so. Debriefing sessions were provided by the researcher after each individual interview. The researcher is a qualified social worker, who has experience in doing clinical interviews. During the debriefing sessions, the participants received the opportunity to work

through their emotional experiences (Strydom, 2005) and participants who required referrals were provided with such.

The privacy of the participants was respected by allowing them to decide for themselves what type of information to reveal (Strydom, 2005). In no instance did the researcher force participants to share information with which they were not comfortable. Narrative interviews are flexible and allow participants to control the amount of disclosure in the interviews. Data was anonymously displayed in the research report, by means of a code system. Confidentiality was maintained by not sharing any information gathered during the interviews with other people, except with the researcher's supervisor. Data was stored in a secure place (password controlled access on private computers). The participants were informed of the researcher's legal responsibility to adhere to the above principles.

6. Limitations of Study

A key limitation of this study was the short time period during which it was conducted. Interviews were held with only a small number of participants (11) and each participant was only interviewed once. A larger sample size, repeated interviews and an extended period over which data could be collected would possibly have induced potentially richer data. However, due to the limited scope of this Honours project, it was not possible to include more participants or to lengthen the duration of the study.

Another limitation was the homogenous characteristics of the participants. The sample consisted of street-based sex workers working in Cape Town and did not explore the experiences of sex workers on a broad range of contexts. The participants were in affiliation with the organisation SWEAT, through which they had received empowerment and guidance. SWEAT had actively enabled these women to leave their abusive relationships. The participants most likely had different experiences as to sex workers who did not receive such positive influences. It could thus be argued that the participants of this study are not representative of sex workers in general. However, the purpose of this study was to explore the unique experiences of IPV among a select group and not to generalize the findings to broader populations.

7. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a valuable aspect of qualitative research. It is necessary for the researcher to reflect on his/her own role in the co-creation of meaning (Banister, 2011).

14

Stories never exist in isolation, but are created within a wider social context. A wide range of people and social ideas influence the types of stories that individuals tell about their lives (Murray, 2008). For instance, my own presence greatly influenced the type of story that was told during the individual interviews. The participants might have been motivated to display a specific identity and to downplay more negative parts. The nature of the relationship between myself and the participants and the broader cultural context in which the interaction took place impacted the essence of the story told (Murray, 2008).

I did not engage the research process from a neutral position. Although I did not deliberately work from a feminist framework, my own understanding of the power inequalities embedded in gender relationships, informed and influenced the analysis of the data. The fact that SWEAT worked from an empowerment paradigm might have motivated the women to construct their personal identities within an empowering framework. There was also a lack of shared knowledge between myself and the research participants. As a white middle class woman I found it difficult to fully understand the types of experiences the participants, who were mostly poor coloured women, were exposed to. However, the fact that I shared the same home language (Afrikaans) as the majority of the participants was beneficial in building trust and report with them.

I do believe that the narrative approach was suitable for this study. In asking the participants about their relational experiences, they spontaneously constructed these experiences in a storied form. This approach also challenged traditional power dynamics between myself as the researcher and the participants as it allowed the participants to control the amount of self-disclosure and viewed the participants as experts on their own life experiences.

8. Results and Discussion: Narratives of IPV

Narratives of Abuse in Intimate Relationships

In the narratives told by participants, themes of violence and abuse in intimate heterosexual relationships came out strongly. The participants frequently drew on the narrative of violence as an ongoing presence in the lives of female sex workers. Various studies conducted on female sex workers refer to the pervasive and ongoing nature of the violence experienced by this group (Mellor & Lovell, 2011; SWEAT, 2005) and found stable partners to be "major perpetrators of violence" (Hong et al., 2013, p. 6). The participants had

been exposed to varying levels of physical violence in their intimate relationships, which includes slapping, punching, kicking, stabbing, being shoved down stairs and even being pushed off bridges. The high levels of violence sex workers encounter within the context of intimate relationships, can be seen as a result of the lack of power many marginalised women experience within this context (Argento et al., 2014). The narrative below represents the types of violent experiences all the participants had been exposed to at the hands of their intimate partners. These violent acts had a significant impact on the women's health and physical wellbeing. In many cases the acts of violence increased during pregnancy and some participants had experienced miscarriages due to the physical violence inflicted upon them during pregnancy.

> *He threw me from the stairs on a Friday night when I was pregnant. He threw me from the stairs and I haemorrhaged. And at the same time my womb twisted. I was eleven days in hospital. And the police woman comes again the next day, "You have to make a case because your womb twist and you will never <u>ever</u> have children. They have to take out everything away. Damage was done."* (Kimberly)

Kimberly experienced the psychological damage that followed her injury, the fact that she was required to have a hysterectomy, which she described as a 'loss of her womanhood', as even more harmful than the physical violence itself. The participants talked about the meaning that these physical acts posed to them, which went much deeper than the physical scars and bruises. They experienced the abuse as humiliating and as a 'loss of identity'.

Apart from physical violence, the participants also experienced persistent verbal abuse in their intimate relationships. As illustrated in the narrative below, the women received violent verbal messages from their partners that reflected the negative labels attached to the sex worker identity category. They were repeatedly called 'whores', 'bitches', 'dirty' and 'useless women' by their partners.

> *(He said) "You <u>whore</u>. You are so dirty, <u>bitch</u>. But you think you are better than other women. How can a <u>whore</u> like you think you are better, 'cause you sleep with other men?"* (Clarissa)

The male partners of the women regularly told them that they would not be able to survive without them and that they were 'useless' on their own. It is evident that these messages were

given as both an attempt to break the women's individual power and to keep them dependent on their partners within the context of a dominant-submissive relationship (Argento et al., 2014; Ratinthorn et al., 2009). The men also received derogatory messages about their partners from their families and friends which impacted the way in which they behaved towards their partners. This is clearly reflected in the following narrative.

> *(My boyfriend's family asked him) "Why do you want this coloured woman? (You) tell us that you picked her up on the street, this prostitute who put her family in shame." So he became aggressive (towards me).* (Lu-Juan)

In Lu-Juan's narrative it is clear that she is ascribed two identity categories that are loaded with negative connotations, both being a sex worker and a 'coloured' woman. These categories interact with each other and influence the way she is perceived by her partner and society as a whole. This example illustrates how a person's race and gender can function as interlocking systems of oppression (Collins, 1990; Cornish, 2006). In the participants' narratives it is striking how their partners used the negative connotations embedded in their various identity categories as a way of breaking their power and legitimising the abuse afflicted upon them (Mellor & Lovell, 2011; Ratinthorn et al., 2009).

The participants understood the violence in their intimate relationships within the larger context of stigma directed towards female sex workers as a group (Burnes, Long & Schept, 2012; Cornish, 2006; Mayer & Richardson, 2010; Mellor & Lovell, 2011). Their partners deliberately used their work as sex workers as means of justifying the abuse directed towards them. Many women stated that their partners did not respect them as women due to the nature of their work. They repeatedly referred to the negative labels other people attach to their identity as sex workers. This stigma was used to explain the phenomenon where abuse towards sex workers from various sources, including intimate partners, clients, police and even strangers, has become normalised (Ratinthorn, Meleis & Sindhu, 2009; Mellor & Lovell, 2011). To complicate the matter, and as depicted in the narrative below, some participants internalised the messages they received from both their partners and society as a whole and experienced themselves as 'deserving of punishment'.

> *The only reason I stuck in the relationship was because I was ... because he was my main thing. I would think I was good for nothing. I was just a prostitute, a whore, stuff like that.* (Shandry)

17

Both the physical and verbal abuse the participants were exposed to was experienced as an on-going, unexpected and unpredictable quality within their relationships which caused them to live in a constant state of fear. Living in such a home environment was described as 'walking on eggshells' where the women had to pay attention to their every move and waited hyper vigilantly on the 'eruption of the storm'. The majority of the participants had experienced heightened levels of anxiety, blunted emotional reactions, loss of meaning in life and emotional break-down while they found themselves within these relationships. The participants also told stories illustrating how the abuse in their intimate relationships caused them to withdraw from their families and friends. They experienced the marks and wounds on their bodies as humiliating and degrading and made constant efforts to cover themselves up and to hide the evidence from other people. The above-mentioned consequences of IPV resemble those identified by battered women on a broad spectrum (Loke et al., 2012; Magnussen et al., 2008; Ogunsiji et al., 2011).

The participants' inability to build relationships of trust with men on a broad spectrum can also be understood as one of the long-term consequences of the abuse they endured at the hands of men. As depicted in the narrative below, many women expected all men to be violent, untrustworthy and sexually controlling.

> *I don't the fuck like men! If you touch me ... I smacked somebody two days ago. I had this dress on. He pulled down my dress. I don't want a man to fucking look at me in this outfit. I'm sick and tired of cocks. I don't fucking like them, anymore. If a man approach me and he compliment me, I chase him away like a dog, 'cause he's just got one thing on his mind. That's all I see.* (Mbulee)

It is interesting to note how Mbulee reduces men to their sexual organs by referring to them as 'cocks'. The emotional tone of her story is predominantly angry. Due to Mbulee's experiences of sexual violence, both in her intimate relationships and work context, she expected all men to sexually objectify her. Throughout her narrative she referred to straight men as 'perverted', 'sex addicts' and 'untrustworthy'. Her narrative revealed how she generalised these perceptions to all men and expected men on a broad range of contexts to treat her in a disrespectful way. Although the majority of the participants did not experience such extreme feelings towards men, all the participants stated that they struggled to trust men

in general. The participants who weren't currently in relationships, frequently stated that they had no desire to enter a committed sexual relationship with a man.

Construction of Masculinity and Femininity in Heterosexual Relationships

The violence that the participants experienced in their romantic relationships brings into question how men and women are positioned within this context. Telling stories about violence in heterosexual relationships also invokes the construction of masculinity and femininity.

Money and sex. Through the participants' narratives they constructed masculinity in relation to breadwinning and femininity in relation to sexuality. In this sense men are inextricably linked to money and women are inextricably linked to sex. Bhana and Pattman (2011) refer to these ideas as the love-money-masculinity, as notions of love in heterosexual relationships are often tied to money and the glorification of men who provide. As depicted in the quotation below, the participants repeatedly stressed their expectation of men in heterosexual relationships to provide for them financially.

> *When you're in a relationship ... back in the old days, a man must buy you a house. The man must provide for you.* (Meryl)

On the one hand the participants seek freedom and financial independence from men, but on the other hand they also expressed a desire for a man to 'look after' them. This is complicated by the participants' low socio-economic status and the broader context of unequal pay between men and women (Watson, 2011). Some participants considered their engagement in heterosexual relationships as a channel through which survival could be attained. In a sense their survival depended on their ability to stay in heterosexual relationships through which they received financial rewards in exchange for sex. Thus, the participants conformed to "gendered discourses of intimate relationships being utilized for survival" (Watson, 2011:652). This is reflected in the two narratives below.

> *(I) just had to stick with him, to get the money every month. Do whatever he asks me to do. I have to do it.* (Lu-Juan)

But the long-term (relationships) would not pay you as much and they'll wake up anytime and just open your legs. And you can't really stop them and say, "Stop it." Because I needed the shelter and I couldn't really fight or speak with him. (Thato)

Thato's narrative above reflects how the transactional element of sex work was recreated within her romantic relationships. In this sense, money and sexual intercourse with men had become inseparable from one another. Due to men's status as breadwinners, they were automatically placed in positions of financial power over their financially dependent partners (Jewkes, Morrell, Sikweyiya, Dunkle & Penn-Kekana, 2012). Participants' narratives illustrated how their male partners abused this financial power by demanding control over most decisions made within the relationship. Most participants stated that they had very little bargaining power within these relationships. Their partners frequently became violent when they asserted themselves and continuously demanded absolute obedience from them. Due to the construction of the powerful male figure who possesses financial resources, many participants declared that they struggle to view men outside the limiting discourse that links money to masculinity. They struggle to view men in their entirety but instead view them in terms of financial rewards. Many participants did not only ascribe this phenomenon to the nature of their work, but also to the lack of support from and worthwhile connections with men in their romantic relationships.

Not only did the participants construct masculinity in conjunction with finances, but they also constructed femininity in terms of a woman's sexual availability to her partner. The participants repeatedly stated that they had to sexually please their partners even when they were not in the mood. Within their heterosexual relationships their sexuality was exalted, but at the same time they were constructed as the sexual possessions of their romantic partners. The male partners perceived their girlfriends' bodies as their 'sex right' with which they could do as they please.

I always know because I'm dressed like this, but in the middle of the night when I wake up, I'm stark naked. I think to myself, "Who did undress me now?" When I see him who's naked too, then I always said to him, "You mustn't do that." He don't care. He says, "You're my girlfriend, I do what I want." (Boitumelo)

The role of the male provider has often been linked to ideas surrounding sexual entitlement, where men expect their partners to be sexually available in return for the financial security

they provide (Jewkes et al., 2012; Watson, 2011). A woman's sexuality is frequently categorised under the male domain. Her body is not constructed as her own asset with which she can do as she pleases, but instead something to use in order to cater to the sexual needs of men. As depicted in the narrative below, many participants told stories of how they came to view their sexuality as a source of income after the first time they engaged in romantic relationships with men.

> *Then I met this Englishman which used to come and fetch me every Saturday and then give me pocket money. So afterwards I decided, but I can make money by meeting men.* (Clarissa)

The same dynamics that are found in the client-sex worker relationship were frequently transferred to the participants' intimate relationships, where men are seen to give money in exchange for sex. The participants' narratives mirrored their need to recreate the transactional element of sex work within their intimate relationships. Again their low socio-economic status influenced their construction of intimate relationships, as their daily lives become a struggle for basic survival. The idea that the female body is a commodity that can be bought and sold ran through all the narratives told by the participants.

The good wife. Apart from a woman's sexual responsibility towards her partner, a 'respectable woman' was constructed as someone who is faithful to her partner and who has only one sexual partner throughout her lifetime. The expectation of women to abstain from having multiple sexual partners (Shefer & Potgieter, 2006) sheds light on the stigma attached to female sex workers. Many participants stated that the same expectation did not apply to men and that sexual experimentation and even promiscuity were often accepted in men.

> *No, for men it's okay to have many partners. It's <u>okay</u> for men to hit on you. Obviously they're married to other women or dating other girls, but they're open to always getting more. (Whisper) I find that disgusting. (Laughing)* (Thato)

Thato's statement above gives one explanation for the phenomenon where female sex workers are stigmatised while the men who make use of their services are approved and even praised (Cornish, 2006). The majority of the participants told stories of their partners' unfaithfulness to them. They made use of expressions such as: "He liked other women in the

same way" throughout their narratives. The cultural construction of male sexuality as intense, demanding and uncontrollable, typically referred to as the 'male sexual drive discourse' stands in stark contrast to ideas about female sexuality, where women are expected to be sexually reserved, passive and submissive (Shefer & Potgieter, 2006). Throughout the narratives of the participants, female virginity was frequently held in high esteem. The loss of virginity was described as an immense loss and in certain instances as shameful. Most participants felt embarrassed about the fact that they did not live up to the expectation of a woman to have only one sexual partner throughout her lifetime. This made it almost impossible for their partners and society as a whole to construct them as 'good women' that other people could idealise and look up to (Cornish, 2006).

The male rescuer. Despite the negative experiences of violence and abuse in heterosexual relationships, some participants revealed a wish to meet a 'heroic man' that would rescue them from sex work. The participants' talk mirrored the narrative of the 'heroic prince' that rescues the 'defenceless princess' from her life of imprisonment. As depicted in the quotations below and as found by Halland (2010), the participants had dreams and hopes that a 'good man' would come along, fall in love with them and rescue them from sex work.

> *You know you expect a partner to take you out of that type of work basically.* (Meryl)

> *There's a certain kind of man who take the sex worker and use them. Then there's that type who want to <u>change</u> the sex worker into a lady again. You get that type who want(s) to change you and try their best and tell you to stop … I must stick a little bit longer (in sex work) until I find somebody who's going to care for me. Who's gonna help me, care for me, get a 'lekker' relationship.* (Boitumelo)

In relation to the active masculine identity as the 'rescuer', the participants constructed themselves as the 'lonely, passive princess' who has to wait upon her prince to come and rescue her from her pain and misery. The notion of the 'passive female' places women in subordinate positions in relation to men. Men are thus depicted as all-powerful figures who should assert their influence and control over women (Wood, 2001).

Despite the wish of some participants to meet a man that will save them from their misery, a large portion of women actively resisted the passive role ascribed to them in their current relationships with men. The participants had commanded their partners to treat them

with respect, had refused being treated like objects and had acted violently towards their partners in reaction to the abuse they had received.

And so I started showing him that I had <u>enough</u>, I'm gonna abuse you too, because you don't know what it is for me to feel hurt every time. (Lu-Juan)

And I told this guy (current boyfriend), "You're <u>not</u> going to get it right, because that other one (previous boyfriend) didn't get it right. <u>Not</u> going to push me in any direction. You're not going to get me down. I will stand up by myself 'cause all my life I stand up by <u>myself</u>." (Joslin)

On the one hand the participants expressed an expectation of a man to 'look after' them, but on the other hand they had resisted this passive role within their relationships by setting boundaries within these settings and by communicating certain ground rules to their partners. Various studies have found, contrary to popular belief, that women are active within the context of violent intimate relationships and make use of a variety of coping mechanisms in order to assert themselves (Haeseler, 2013; Kirkwood, 1993).

Narratives of Identity and Transformation

In analysing the participants' talk specific patterns in the way in which they came to construct their own identities, came to the fore. These constructions of 'self' reflected the meaning that the participants made of the abuse they had experienced in their past relationships. Many participants also experienced a period of identity transformation in which they came to view themselves and their experiences in a different light.

The lonely sex worker. Most participants told stories of the forlorn sex worker, who is better off on her own and who will always experience rejection from other people. Many participants came to devalue their own worth as relationship partners. This is illustrated in the statement below.

You should <u>always</u> be single when you're a prostitute. (Shandry)

Shandry believed that men were incapable of respecting sex workers and would always behave violently towards them. This is based on her actual experiences of abuse and disregard in her intimate relationship. Throughout her narrative she stated that sex workers

should never get close to any man and should always function outside of intimate relationships. The belief that men are incapable of respecting sex workers is based on the stigmatised nature of sex work. Shandry expanded on this idea by stating that the stigma attached to sex work has a negative impact on the way in which sex workers come to view themselves.

> *You don't have a self-esteem when you are a prostitute. You think low of yourself. If uhm ... if normal people ... if ... say I go to Shoprite and that, people stare at you. It's people who maybe saw me standing on the road and stuff like that. It's maybe because ... maybe they know where I come from, things like that. So prostitution comes with a low self-esteem, no confidence. It makes it really hard. There's this stigma that comes with it.* (Shandry)

It is noteworthy how Shandry made use of the word 'normal people', insinuating that sex workers are abnormal and deviant. Most participants referred to the glares they received from other people when they visited public places. Mellor and Lovell (2011) found female sex workers to be hyper sensitive to the derogatory comments and looks they receive in public spaces. The participants internalised the stigma attached to sex work to varying degrees.

The outcast. Many participants told stories of how they had been ostracised in their communities due to the nature of their work. A great amount of literature emphasises the extreme levels of social exclusion and rejection that all female sex workers are exposed to, which is associated with the illegality and stigma of sex work (Hong et al., 2013; SWEAT, 2005). The violence and abuse the participants experienced in their intimate relationships were understood within the broader context of violence against female sex workers that had become normalised (Nixon, Tutty, Downe, Gorkoff & Ursel, 2002; Ratinthorn et al., 2009). Many participants stated that their experiences of social exclusion had a negative impact on their self-image and that they had come to view themselves as 'losers' and 'outcasts'. The narrative below reflects Mbulee's experience of ostracism in which she came to view herself as an 'outcast'.

> *And now you stand there, it's pouring with rain, now somebody comes and throw a fucking rotten egg in your face. You know how you feel? You feel like fucking murdering that person.* (Mbulee)

In addition to feeling like 'outcasts' and 'losers' the participants' stories reflected issues of acceptance and belonging. Most participants felt that they did not belong anywhere. They were repeatedly rejected by other people, which caused them to develop an 'outsider' identity. This is clearly reflected in the narrative below.

> *I belong nowhere. He (ex-husband) is their (her parents) child and I am an outsider…* *I've even (felt) like a <u>freak</u>, an egg. How can I put it? I don't fit in anywhere. My* *whole life has been like that.* (Jowidene)

It is interesting to note how both Mbulee and Jowidene make use of the word 'egg' in order to frame their identities as 'outcasts'. In addition to constructing themselves as 'outcasts', many participants struggled to integrate their identity as sex workers into their personalities. Some participants looked down and stammered as they talked about their work. They frequently referred to their sex worker identity as humiliating and shameful. These findings are congruent with discursive ideas surrounding the sinful and shameful nature of sex work that had been discussed in various studies (Moane, 2003; SWEAT, 2005). One participant stated that she had become the person she used to look down on. Her identity had changed from the ridiculer to the ridiculed.

In congruence with the findings of other studies on sex workers, many participants were hesitant to integrate their identities as sex workers into their public identities (Cornisch, 2006; Halland, 2010; Sanders, 2004). They viewed their work as something they had to hide from their partners, friends and family. Some participants told stories of the great lengths they had to go to in order to hide their work from their intimate partners. They ascribed this to a persistent fear that their new partners would treat them in the same disrespectful manner as their previous intimate partners used to.

The pleasing wife. Participants' narratives reflected how they constructed themselves as 'pleasing wives' while they found themselves within abusive heterosexual relationships. Many participants said that the fact that they were abused had a detrimental impact on their self-esteem. They came to view themselves as 'powerless victims' who had to please their partners in every possible way in order to avoid danger. Similarly, Wood (2001) found in her study on the normalisation of abuse in heterosexual relationships that battered women frequently draw on romance narratives that normalise controlling behaviours in males and

submissive and consoling behaviours in females. As illustrated in the narrative below, many participants experienced the idea of the 'pleasing wife' as a loss of identity.

> *You just leave life, you're just there. You don't think much. You don't see a future and you become so attached to this person. You want to make them happy, you're clingy and you'll do anything for them. When they say "Jump," you say "how high?"... That is the hardest thing about being married, because you're trying to become like whoever, you want to please people a lot. So you lose your own identity and trying to get people's identities.* (Thato)

Thato expanded on this idea by stating that she experienced a lack of freedom in her relationship. She felt lost within herself and gave up parts of herself in order to attain basic survival within her intimate relationship. She always felt that she had to conform to her husband's expectations of her, in order to avoid negative consequences. Many participants stated that they were too scared of what their husband might do to them if they did not obey his orders. As illustrated in the narrative below, the participants frequently apologised for their actions. In doing so, they began to play the part of the submissive wife.

> *I'd always just say, "Sorry." I would always apologize for my actions and always apologize for the little bit of dust that he saw or apologize if I put a bit too much salt in the food. You know, there was <u>always</u> something.* (Nicole)

The participants' apologetic behaviour can be seen as one of the many coping mechanisms that battered women employ in order to cope with abusive intimate relationships (Haeseler, 2013).

The good mother. The participants made use of creative means in order to reclaim their sex worker identities and in order to construct these identities in a positive light. They reconstructed this identity by stating that they do sex work for their children. This allowed them to construct themselves as 'the good mother' who provides for her children in a selfless manner. This is clearly reflected in the narrative below.

> *As much as people think you like to party and that, you're children are like the core of everything that you do. I'm doing it for my children regardless of what society might think. I'm not here for hand-outs; I'm here to make the money myself.* (Thato)

All the participants described their work as a means of generating income in order to provide for their children. Their identity as mothers was powerfully reflected in the narratives they told. It is clear that the participants constructed their children as their primary motivation and meaning in their lives. Various sources refer to the negative constructions of sex workers within the popular culture and within the everyday conversations of people (Hallgrimsdottir, Benoit & Benoit, 2005). Female sex workers are frequently believed to be 'selfish' and 'irresponsible mothers'. In a sense the participants actively challenged these negative connotations by honouring their role as mothers. Similarly Mayer and Richardson (2010) found that sex workers resist the stigmatised nature of their identities by redefining the elements of their identity categories. This approach has often been referred to as 'social creativity' within social identity theory.

The strong, empowered woman. Although many participants viewed themselves as 'passive victims' within their abusive relationships in the past, they told stories of the many changes that had taken place within themselves ever since. Their narratives reflected the empowering role that SWEAT had come to play within their lives. In many cases the employees at SWEAT strengthened the participants and enabled them to leave their abusive partners.

Through the narratives told, it is evident that some participants valued and respected their own identities. They frequently referred to their inner strengths, talents and potential. Many participants expressed a need for other people to realise their true potential and repeatedly stated that they also wanted to 'be somebody' in life. Their individual dreams and hopes were frequently reflected in the stories they told. As reflected in the narrative below, most participants did not want to see themselves as victims. They expressed a wish to embody a strong survivor identity.

> *But I'm not going to give up hope. As a woman I'm going to be <u>strong</u> in life. I'm going to find a way how to… I'm going to lift up my head and walk in the street as a human being, as a <u>woman</u>. I'm not ashamed of who I am and who I was and still can be as a mother and as a parent. I'm not going to give them a chance, not ever,*

> *because I also want to <u>be</u> somebody in life, although I was abused, although I went*
> *through a lot in life.* (Lu-Juan)

Many participants stated that they did not blame themselves for the abuse they had endured in their intimate relationships. They frequently argued that the abuse had nothing to do with them, but that it was rather a reflection of their partners' characters. Many participants said that they liked themselves, that they had made peace with their violent pasts and that they would like to make something worthwhile of their lives. As reflected in the narrative below, many participants ascribed this change within themselves to the positive role that SWEAT had come to play within their lives. This enabled the women to construct themselves as powerful activists who would like to to reach out to women who experience similar difficulties. Similarly, Profitt (2000) found that female survivors of partner violence often undergo a process of transformation in which they come to view themselves differently and come to position themselves in relation to political activism.

> *I'll keep on mentioning SWEAT, because they had a big role to play in my life. I*
> *would not have been the person that I am not knowing my rights and being able to*
> *have a voice and to speak about it as much as I can now. I find that the empowerment*
> *and having knowledge and strength really goes a long way for yourself as a person*
> *and building your confidence, being sure about what you want to do ... and especially*
> *being sure for other women and even gays and lesbians. You become more of an*
> *activist knowing that I am not wrong, I am <u>strong</u>.* (Thato)

Even though some participants said that the abuse had made them stronger, many participants gave acknowledgement to the individual costs of the abuse they had endured. They frequently referred to their physical wounds, bodily deterioration, emotional pain, humiliation and the anger they experience towards men. All the participants stated that they struggled to trust men and that their pasts had made them aware of their own vulnerability. Many participants told stories of their current traumatic memories of the past and the financial problems that they currently experience. Regardless of the very real costs of the abuse that the participants endured, they expressed a need to move on with their lives and for other people to respect them, rather than to feel sorry for them. As reflected in the narrative below, the participants highlighted the wisdom and strength that they had gained. In doing so, they celebrated their newfound identities.

Now I'm a better person. I'm more experienced and as I get older, I have more confidence in myself. I don't have the best clothes or the best make-up and I can't go to the hairdresser once a month, but I'm definitely coming to my own a lot than what I was before. And as I get older, I find definitely more confidence and more ... speak out more. You know, I can talk to anybody from the queen to the man on the street. I don't judge. I've become wiser. (Nicole)

Many participants underwent a process of growth and self-acceptance. Today they are able to reclaim their stories of abuse and violence by repositioning themselves as survivors instead of victims. Themes of survival and endurance ran through many of the narratives. In a similar fashion Mayer and Richardson link narrative to identity by arguing that "sex workers can redefine themselves and their professions by re-writing their subjugated sexual narratives in empowering ways to those hegemonic forces that marginalize them" (2010, p. 62).

9. Summary and Conclusion

It is thus clear that the participants in this study talked about their experiences of IPV by drawing on specific examples of violent incidences in their intimate relationships and by situating these experiences within the larger context of stigma directed towards female sex workers. The participants drew connections between their experiences of IPV and their work by referring to the normalisation of violence towards female sex workers on a broad range of contexts. Female sex workers are exposed to significant violence from various sources, including police, clients, intimate partners and society at large. Violence towards female sex workers is often legitimised based on the moral and social meanings embedded in understandings around sex work (Mellor & Lovell, 2011; SWEAT, 2005).

Despite the participants' experiences of abuse within their intimate relationships, they drew on empowering narratives in telling their stories of violence. In this way their narratives deviate from the typical narratives one would expect from female sex workers who had been subjugated to IPV (Halland, 2010; Sanders, 2004). Many participants actively resisted the negative labels attached to their work by constructing sex work within a positive light. This reclaiming of their sex worker identities had often been understood as a result of the empowering role that SWEAT had come to play within their lives. Many participants did not

blame themselves for the violence they were exposed to in the past. They repositioned themselves from 'powerless victims' to 'active survivors' who aspire to educate and empower other women who are also subjected to IPV. This is consistent with research on battered women that has shown the transitions of these women from constructing themselves as victims to viewing themselves as survivors of the abuse they had endured (Boonzaier, 2006; Mayer & Richardson, 2010)

As a result of this study, questions arise as to how the stigma embedded in sex work may be addressed in South Africa. In reaction to the empowering influence that SWEAT had on the participants' constructions of 'self', a need emerges to link more sex workers to women's empowerment community organisations. As it is clear that negative ideas about sex workers, and femininity and masculinity in general are constructed within a larger cultural context (Wood, 2001), more awareness campaigns need to be launched in local communities where community members are made aware of the realities and struggles facing sex workers, as well as the negative consequences of rigid gender expectations.

The study was one of the first to examine the relationship between IPV and sex work among female sex workers in Cape Town. The findings brought awareness to the extent to which IPV is an issue affecting the lives of female sex workers. The findings of this study will inform professionals working with sex workers on their struggles, needs and subjective reality. For instance, the findings will assist SWEAT in gaining a clearer picture of the experiences and self-constructions of the women to which they render services. Feedback on the study will be provided to SWEAT in the form of a power-point presentation. In order to enrich the findings of the current study, it will be essential to explore the experiences of street-based sex workers who have not received empowerment from a community organisation. This will help gain a clearer understanding of the impact that women's empowerment organisations have on sex workers' lived experiences of violence.

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Appendix A: Study Advertisement

Violence in your intimate relationships?

Are you a female sex worker who experiences violence from your partner?

Would you like to share your story of intimate partner violence?

I am doing a study focusing on female sex workers' personal stories

of partner violence. If you would like to participate in this study,

I will interview you once on your experiences. During the interview

you are free to discuss whatever you are comfortable with. The information

you share will be treated respectfully. The interview is private and your

story will not be shared with anyone.

If you are interested, please call:

Elretha 079 826 0706

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

The Subjective Experience of IPV among Female Sex Workers

1. **Invitation and Purpose**

    You are invited to take part in this study which explores women's personal experiences of intimate partner violence. I am a research student from the Psychology department at the University of Cape Town.

2. **Procedures**

    *   If you decide to take part in this study I will interview you about your experiences of violence in your intimate relationships, asking you to share the story of your relationship. By interviewing you I hope to find out what it is like to be in a violent relationship and talk about the impact that these experiences have had on your identity.

    *   The interview should take about 60 minutes; however, you are free to speak to me for a shorter or longer period.

    *   The interview will be recorded with a digital recorder.

    *   Participating in this study is voluntary. You are free to end the interview at any time with no negative consequences. If you decide not to participate in the study, it will not affect your relationship with SWEAT.

3. **Risks, Discomforts & Inconveniences**

    *   This study poses a low risk of harm to you.

    *   Speaking about your experiences of violence could bring up sensitive issues and could potentially be emotionally distressing. However, you will decide what you would like to discuss in the interview and you will not be obligated to speak about anything you do not feel comfortable speaking about.

    *   You might be inconvenienced by having to give up an hour of your time.

    *   If you would like to contact a counsellor to further discuss your experiences, you can contact one of the organizations: Rape Crisis (021 447 9762) Life Line (021 461 1113) Famsa (021 447 0174).

4. **Benefits**

    This project gives you an opportunity to share your personal story of your experiences of violence, thus raising people's awareness to the issue of intimate partner violence among sex workers.

5. **<u>Privacy and Confidentiality</u>**

- Interviews will take place in a private room.

- Any information you share is strictly confidential. You will remain anonymous throughout the research process. You have the right to request that any information you have shared be removed from the study.

6. **<u>Money Matters</u>**

You will receive R40 to compensate for your travelling expenses.

7. **<u>Contact details</u>**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study please contact:
- Elretha Bartlett (student researcher) on 079 826 0706.
- Dr Floretta Boonzaier (my supervisor) at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town (UCT) 021 650 3429.
- Rosalind Adams (admin assistant for the UCT Department of Psychology) 021 650 3417 and for access to the Ethics Committee Chair in Psychology.

8. **<u>Signatures</u>**

{Subject's name}_____ has been informed of the nature and purpose of the procedures described above including any risks involved in its performance. She has been given time to ask any questions and these questions have been answered to the best of the researcher's ability. A signed copy of this consent form will be made available to the participant.

_____
Investigator's Signature   Date

I have been informed about this research study and understand its purpose, possible benefits, risks, and discomforts. I agree to take part in this research. I know that I am free to withdraw this consent and quit this project at any time, and that doing so will not cause me any penalty or loss of benefits that I would otherwise be entitled to enjoy.

_____
Participant's Signature   Date

Hereby, I give permission for the interview to be recorded.

_____
Participant's Signature   Date

Appendix C: Referral List

If you feel that you need counselling or support, below is a list of organizations for you to contact:

LIFE LINE
Services:
24-hour crisis intervention service – telephonic counselling for rape, trauma or relationship issues
Payment
This is a toll-free helpline
Contact:
National counselling line: 0861 322 322

STOP GENDER ABUSE
Services:
Crisis counselling for women who have been raped, or abused and advice and support for people wanting to help others.
Payment
This is a toll-free helpline
Contact:
Helpline: 0800 150 150

THE TRAUMA CENTRE
Services:
Trauma counselling is available for domestic violence (mental, physical emotional and sexual abuse), sexual offences (rape, forcible fondling, pornography) and secondary traumatic stress
Payment:
To be confirmed
Contact:
Office line: 021 465 7373
Emergency line: 082 444 4191
Email: info@trauma.org.za
Address: Cowley House 126 Chapel Street
            Woodstock Cape Town 7925

FAMSA
Services:
FAMSA works to build good family relationships through offering counselling to people in relationships which are in crises. Domestic violence is a common issue that they deal with.
Payment:
FAMSA charges for professional counselling using a sliding scale according to level of income, but will never turn anybody away from counselling. There is also lay counselling and community workshops, which are free services
Contact:
Telephone: 021 447 7951
Email: national@famsa.org.za
Address: 9 Bowden Road Observatory Cape Town
            7925 Western Cape
            South Africa

Appendix D: Transcription/Quotation Information

_   Underlining indicates vocal emphasis made by the participant.

( )   Brackets indicate additional words for extra clarification.

,   Comma indicates a short pause in the participant's speech.

…   Ellipsis points indicate a longer pause in the participant's speech or that parts of the participant's original speech have been omitted from the quotation.

" "   Quotation marks are used to indicate the participant's reference to the direct words of other people.

gonna: The modified spelling of the word 'going to' indicates the variation in pronunciation spoken by participants.

lekker: An Afrikaans word meaning nice or good

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

DECLARATION

1. I know that Plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.

2. I have used the American Psychological Association formatting for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this essay/report/project from the work or works, of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

3. This essay/report/project is my own work.

4. I have not allowed, and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

5. I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment or essay, or part of it, is wrong, and declare that this is my own work.

NAME: Elretha Bartlett

SIGNATURE:

STUDENT NUMBER: BRTELR001

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: Floretta Boonzaier

DATE: 2011/10/30