

Sample Oral Defense Announcement D-9

Name: Louise Cenatiempo

Education

M.A. in Psychology, May, 1987, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

B.A. in Psychology, January, 1985, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Samuel Marwit, Ph.D. (Advisor)

Dennis Lisenby, Ph.D.

Suzanna Rose, Ph.D.

Nancy Shields, Ph.D.

Dissertation Title

Attachment Pattern and the Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Among Men Who Batter

Date: July 14, 1992

Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Place: 233 Stadler Hall

Abstract

This investigation is an exploratory study of attachment patterns among men who batter their wives or paramours. It proposes that early relationships with attachment figures play an important role in the etiology of battering. Thirty-one men who batter were drawn from three batterer counseling programs in St. Louis and Columbia, Missouri. Twenty-nine nonviolent comparison subjects were recruited from the St. Louis community. Variables suggested by attachment and social learning theories were examined by logistic regression in order to identify those variables that best discriminate batterers from nonbatterers. Historical data on early relationships with parents and exposure to violent parental models were obtained along with each subject's current attachment pattern (secure, anxious, or detached), which was assessed with the Separation Anxiety Test (Hansburg, 1972). Highly significant differences in the occurrence of attachment disturbance were found. Fifty-two percent of batterers showed attachment disturbance compared to only 11% of comparison subjects.

A three-variable model was established by logistic regression and found to be highly efficient in making correct classification decisions. Variables discriminating the two groups included abuse by father in childhood, exposure to father violence against mother, and current relationship discord. These indicators possessed good sensitivity and specificity; that is, 83% of batterers and 86% of nonbatterers were correctly classified.

Exposure to violence in childhood was examined for both groups. Batterers scored significantly higher than nonbatterers on all dimensions of violence: abuse by father, abuse by mother, father violence toward mother, and mother violence toward father. However father violence was a recurrent factor in both logistic analysis and analysis of group differences. The benefits of considering both intrapsychic and environmental origins of battering are discussed.