



### **D46 Intimate Partner Violence — What Causes Victims to Finally Leave: A Case Study**

*M. Sue Gabriel, EdD\*, BryanLGH College of Health Sciences, School of Nursing, 5035 Everett Street, Lincoln, NE 68506-1299*

After attending this presentation, attendees will have learned how to: identify the phases in this case study from the initiation of a violent relationship to the final decision to leave; describe the steps taken to move from victim to survivor; and, analyze how health care professionals can help victims of intimate partner violence.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by raising awareness of global communities and healthcare professionals in identifying IPV and responding to the needs of victims of IPV. It is the intent of this case study to identify one survivor's story, by investigating what factors brought an end to her abusive relationship, how she executed this task, what and who were of help to her in making this process successful. This survivor's experiences can convey to the worldwide forensic community, ways to be more pro-active in understanding and assisting individuals living in abusive relationships, recapture their lives, and have productive and meaningful futures.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is intertwined in the lives of untold numbers of men, women, and children around the world. This human abuse dates back as far as the Roman times, when women were considered property of their husbands. In many ways, this viewpoint continues to hold true for many families today. Between one and two million women are victims of IPV yearly. This occurs at the hands of spouses, boyfriends, ex-spouses, and ex-boyfriends. There are numerous assessment tools available to identify victims and potential victims of IPV. Education in this area is insufficient for health care professionals, which makes it difficult to make the transition from assessment to intervention. Healthy People 2010 has identified violence in relationships as having escalated to a world wide pandemic. Millions of dollars are spent annually on studying the short and long term effects of violent relationships and there are thousands of missed work days lost every year. In order to identify and intervene, regular and consistent risk assessments need to be performed. There needs to be more education for medical and nursing professionals so they are better equipped to identify risk factors and red flags in patients and provide help and resources for victims of violent relationships. Many victims feel there are not adequate resources available in their communities or enough professionals who are willing to get involved. Information is abundant about risk factors, types of abuse, why victims continue to remain in these relationships, and who the abusers often are. However, there is very little literature that identifies what decisive factor occurs in the lives of victims that gives them the courage and strength to sever their ties with their abuser and become survivors.

The purpose of this study is to explore all facets of a single violent relationship and identify the causative elements that evolve which finally bolster the victim's need to leave. This qualitative case study of one will describe one participant's encounter with a violent relationship, identify themes and phases of a violent intimate partner relationship, describe what facilitated leaving, analyze how severing ties from the abuser was accomplished, and discuss how the survivor recaptured her life.

Research questions asked in this case study are: how are women drawn into relationships that are abusive; what impact do violent relationships have on victims emotionally, physically, and socially; how and when do victims realize when enough is enough; and how do they go about severing ties from their abuser? Lastly, realizing this case study of one may have limitations because this is one person's encounter with interpersonal violence and it may not be applicable to all violent relationships, cultures, or age groups.

The intent of this case study of one is to document in rich text, the passage of one victim, who unsuspectingly journeys into the dark world of intimate partner violence. She will identify her reason for severing ties with her abuser, and will reflect on her journey through several phases in her life, to emerge on the other side, into hope, healing, and recapturing her life.

**Case Study, Intimate Partner Violence, Severing Relationship Ties**