

# THEORETICAL REVIEW ON CHARACTERISTICS OF A BATTERER AND BATTERED PERSONS

**Eman AYOUB,**  
*PhD student, ULIM, Chisinau, RM,*  
*coordinator of students health service in special education,*  
*State of Israel*

**Adelina ȘTEFĂRȚA,**  
*dr., associated professor, ULIM, RM.*

*Adnotare:* În articol este prezentată perspectiva teoretică a fenomenului de violență în familie și sunt prezentate câteva caracteristici a persoanelor-abuzatori și a persoanelor abuzate în cazurile de violență în familie.

*Abstract:* The article gives a view a theoretical view of phenomenon of family violence and gives and explanation of some charectaristics of a batterer and of a battered person in cases of family violence.

*Key words:* violence, relationship, family, conflicts, wife, husband, kids.

*Cuvintele-cheie:* violență, relații, familie, conflicte, soție, soț, copii.

**Alcohol and drugs abuse** are considered to be in a direct relation with battering life partner. The researches show that there is a high correlation between these two actions. American researcher Maria Roy, found that about 85% of battering partners abused alcohol or other drugs. [1] But, it does not mean the complete correlation because of individual difference s of how alcohol abuse affects battering. The practical researches show that most abusive men who successfully completed alcohol treatment continue their battering behavior afterwards. Some batterers admit that they consciously use alcohol before an

abusive incident. In his studies, the American researcher Lenore Walker showed that the alcohol lowers the inhibitions to battering while provide an excuse for” losing control”. The abuse comes more dangerous with the addition of alcohol and drugs into the equation; the most serious injuries were sustained by women whose partners were consistently heavy drinkers. [2, 3]

Sometimes substance abuse occurs with both of partners. The couple may drink or use grugs together and both may be addicted. Some batterers make pressure on their partners in order to push them to use alcohol or drugs. They want to normalize their own substance use with this pressure. In this case, the substance abuse is woven into their shared lifestyle and while they each may have their individual ways of using substances to cope with stress, they may also share a powerful bonding around substance abuse.

A woman can use drugs or alcohol to cope with the stress of being battered as well. It may serve to assuage or blunt some of her pain and fear. In this case the substance abuse will impair her ability to make sound judgments about breaking out of the relationship and protecting herself and her children. It also may add to her feelings of guilt and responsibility, and lower her self-esteem about her ability to be a good partner or mother. Alcohol is also a depressant, and will exacerbate any existing depression in both partners.

**Childhood history of spouse abuse** – In her studies, the American researcher Maria Roy, found that in 4000 couples in New York, over 80 % of batterer men grew up witnessing their fathers beat their mothers. [4, p. 74] These men learned through role modeling that violence between spouses is acceptable and that consequences for it will be few, if any. There also seems to be some evidences that certain attitudes that often accompany battering seem to be passed from generation to generation. Some beliefs devaluing women are transmitted in the family. Similarly, is transmitted the idea that the perpetrators are not responsible for their violent actions. The damages made on children of battered women may be lifelong. The researches show that men who lived

in homes where their mothers were abused tend to be angrier and to have a lower self-esteem than men who did not. [1] In the same time, Roy's study showed that there is no direct provement of traditional belief that women unconsciously seek out abusive partners because they are trying to duplicate what they witnessed in their childhood. [1, 4]

**Traditional view on gender role** means that men who are violent believe in men's superiority over women. Those men think that male's role in to "in charge" in making all decisions and that they have the right to enforce subservience in their partners.

**Financial control** happens in a battering relationship, when women have much less access to the couple's money than the men. The American researcher Mildred Page low, in one of her studies, showed that from 350 victims of domestic violence, about 25 % who returned to their abusers admitted they did so because they could not support themselves and their children independently. [5] When one partner in the couple has no one idea how to manage the money it means a possible inequality in their relationship in the future. The financial control can be considered a way or a tactic of a man that needs to maintain control on those around them.

**Charm** is pretty common tactic. In many cases the batterers are described by the victims as being very charming persons. In time, these people show extremely rapid change of their mood, from charming and carrying attentiveness to furious name-calling and abuse.

**Dependency and jealousy** (possessiveness) are proper for batterers in many cases. These men have a strong emotional dependency on their partners, which makes them feel vulnerable of the possibility of loss. They overcompensate for this vulnerability by attempting to control every aspect of their partner's lives so as to reduce the chance that she will leave. "If his partner makes any autonomous moves, the batterer may become violent, homicidal, or even suicidal in an attempt to prevent what he sees an abandonment." [6, p. 29] The batterer

does it because he thinks that it is a provement of devotion to his partner, but, in fact, it is paranoid, manipulative, and bullying quality of his behavior toward her.

**Depression** is shown sometimes in as a quality of abusive person. This seems to correlate strongly with remorse over his behavior or with threatened ending of the relationship. In some cases, when the women begin the process of separation, the abuser become suicidal. He makes promises to change. On this level, the batterer may seek out treatment with their problem with violence. Here is possible to help this person, but it is possible with appropriate intervention that puts responsibility for the violence onto the perpetrator, with a support of him personally and with affirming his ability to change. But here is important to understand for helping professionals that batterer will try to make pressure to focus on getting his partner to return as being “successful” outcome to a treatment program he might undertake. If the victim returns the cycle of control (that she tries to escape) will easily repeat. That is why is important to help and to encourage the batterer to understand that he must make changes for his own improved functioning. He must be helped to built a healthy relationship as a goal for the future.

In the following rows there will be described the characteristics of battered women.

**Low self-esteem and depression** are characteristics of a battered woman. The American researcher Lenore Walker tells in her studies that a battered woman has a lack of self-esteem and tends to underestimate her abilities in many different areas. [2, p. 32] When describing a battered woman is also possible to use the term passive. Depression and passivity are often used to describe women who are abused in their partnership. It is very difficult to distinguish whether these personality traits might not, in fact, be a result of battering over time. Emotional and physical abuse will have a negative effect on victim’s self-concept. The permanent need to adapt to controls and manipulations for minimizing the danger will reduce their ability to participate actively in many areas of their lives. These behaviors can be explained as being

ways to adapt to the situation not as being causes or encouraging acts for violence. In some cases, the violence can produce in the victim an idea that she is responsible for lack of success in the relationship. This tendency to underestimate her personal values and qualities can cause the battered woman to stay longer in the violent relationship. In same time, she can think that she is not able to separate from him and to begin a "new life". But, do not be forget, that the threats of the partner are still real and a woman's perception of the possible danger of leaving her partner should always be taken seriously.

**Traditional view on family roles** means that battered woman should have similar to the abuser view on family life and gender roles. The man is responsible for supporting the family as breadwinner and for decision makings. The woman must take care of the children and the home. In this situation, the battering behavior may be seen as an expression of the unequal control that is viewed as legitimate for both partners. It is important to mark here that, although the battered woman cannot agree of the physical or emotional abuse, she may view it as necessity in order to maintain the natural order. If so, for the battered woman will be difficult to understand the battering as an unacceptable action and, as a result, she will not be able to take steps to protect herself effectively. If both partners have an explanation for the abuse, it will allow the batterer to escape the responsibility.

**Taking the responsibility for violence** happens when there is a traditional view of the male being in charge in the relationship. In this case the violence is a way to maintain control in the hand of men, that usually, is the batterer. The violence can be seen as a way of maintaining the balance of power. The women that have these kinds of view may not see that control resting in their partners is problematic. They can come to the conclusion that she is not doing well in her role of wife and mother, that is why the husband becomes violent. If so, she tries to strive more diligently to meet his expectations.

**Passivity**, as already was mentioned, comes to woman when leaving the relationship and protecting children. Today's

researches are not unanimous when it comes to this subject because there is widespread misunderstanding of why battered woman may appear passive and what that passivity consist of.

In 1973, Amnesty International published a “chart of coercion” where were shown some techniques to brain-wash political prisoners, soldiers, hostages. Those are: isolation, threats, occasional indulgences, demonstrating omnipotence, degradation and enforcing trivial demands. All these can be used to break the will of prisoners. [7, p. 173]. These are common techniques used by batterers to establish the control in their relationship. It is important to mention, that these techniques are very effective even without physical actions. But, when there are added beating, choking, hitting, hair-pulling, sexual assault, we get a sense of the emotional power such interaction might have on battered woman. Confusion, anxiety, fear, all combined in the mind of a battered woman, reduce her will to act, to do something in order to make changes. Instead of looking on her relationship as being a stressful for her entire life, she might begin to focus on how to keep functioning on every-day life, how to keep the violence far from children, how to please her partner, how to avoid of getting hit again and again. In this context, the passivity of a battered woman can be seen as a way to hope safety. There is important to show the battered woman that there are possibilities for her to live apart from her abuser, and it is possible to ask independently to make that possibility to be real.

#### **REFERENCES:**

ROY, M. Battered women: a current survey of 100 cases. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1977. 248 p.

WALKER, L.E. The Battered Woman. New York, 1980. 288 p.

WALKER, L.E. The Battered Woman Syndrome. New York: Springer Publishing Company. 2016. 580 p.

ROY, M. Children in the crossfire. Deerfield, 1988. 139 p.

PAGELOW, M. Woman battering, victims and their experiences. California.1981. 288 p.

STORDEUR, R.; STILLE, R. Ending men`s violence against their partners: one road to peace. Newbury Park. 1989. 329 p.