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Victim Advocates' Experiences in the Provision of Domestic Violence Services for Jewish Women

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Victim Advocates' Experiences in the Provision of Domestic Violence Services for Jewish Women

by
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Approval Page

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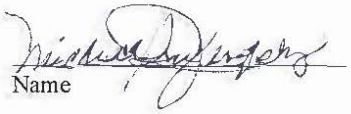

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Dedication

Dedicated to my friend, Banji who lost her life, to those who have lost their lives, to those who have been helped, and to those who will be helped.

To Dr. Lenore Walker, you gave me the opportunity to begin this stage of my journey when I was allowed as one of three undergraduates to work on the Nova Southeastern University Battered Woman's research, as well as a participant, and again as a co-researcher on the Nova Southeastern University Battered Woman's Jail research. I am most grateful that you encouraged me to continue my education in the Criminal Justice doctoral program. You were my chairperson for my thesis, Denial: Domestic Violence In The South Florida Tri-County Jewish Community and continued as my dissertation chairperson until your retirement.

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Abstract

Victim Advocates' Experiences in the Provision of Domestic Violence Services for Jewish Women. Michael Sue Jenefsky, 2024: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: Jewish women, domestic violence, needs, cultural, secular, shelters, resources, tri-county area

Domestic violence is a serious, dangerous global epidemic and does not discriminate. Domestic violence has no limitations happening in all communities, religions, and cultures. There are many types of abuse, and it is not always physical; however, the underlying threat of violence is perceived by victims. Abusers use manipulative and coercive tactics to gain and maintain power and control of victims. It is deliberate and a choice. Feelings of shame, guilt, blame, failure, helplessness, and being trapped with no means to escape are prevalent among victims. Jewish women have specific feelings and fears that are associated with *halakha*, Jewish law, and Judaic culture. It is against *halakha* to discuss domestic violence and to inform outside authorities. It is extremely important, especially for Orthodox women, to be in close contact with their family and the community are extremely. For this reason, they often choose to remain in an unsafe and abusive relationship. If they do decide to leave, secular shelters and resources are not an option due to a lack of understanding of Jewish culture and laws. There are no Jewish shelters for the women who reside in the South Florida tri-counties of Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade. This study will explore the lived experiences of four domestic violence advocates from Jewish Family Services in Palm Beach and Broward counties. The research aims to identify the requirements of the abused Jewish women as perceived by the advocates who work with them. Specifically, the research will examine the necessity for Jewish domestic violence shelters in the South Florida tri-county area.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Domestic violence has no boundaries or socioeconomic distinction (Houseman, 2021; Huecker et al., 2023) and has occurred in 15-25% of all relationships (Lang, 2017; Myers, 2009). No one is prone to be in an abusive relationship (Kraus, n.d.). The 17th Annual Domestic Violence Counts 24-hour survey was conducted on September 7, 2022, by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). Florida was one of the 41 programs. The Florida summary showed that 2,083 (18) victims were served. All requests from 1,332 (12) adults and children for emergency and transitional housing were met. In contrast, the remaining adults and children received over 75% (7) of the requested legal and other support services. An average of 13 (7) hotline calls were answered every 24 hours. Programs could not provide services for 23 victims, with almost 90% for emergency refuge (NNEDV, 2023). The numbers in parenthesis are an estimated total of Jewish females who reside in the South Florida tri-county area of Palm Beach County, Broward County, and Miami-Dade County. In 2019, 77 Jewish women were killed and 32 killed by firearms by their abusers in the tri-county area (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV, 2020).

There is no prejudice, whether below the poverty level or a millionaire, employed or not, degree of education, neighborhood, or status in the community and synagogue (Berry, 2000; Myers, 2009). According to Jewish law, physical and other types of abuse are forbidden and *shalom bayit* (peace in the home) is imperative. However, the *Torah* (five books of Moses) contains *Mishnah* (oral laws), *Gemara*, (Rabbinic commentary), *Talmud* (*Mishnah* and *Gemara*), and *Midrash* (Scripture interpretation) (Pines, 2022). *Halakha* (Jewish law) is based on what is written in these texts (Graetz, 1998) and the collection of laws and regulations that have emerged

from biblical times to control Jewish religious observances and daily life and conduct (Pines, 2022). They have contradictory views on how a husband should treat his wife. In traditional Jewish literature, some justify and even condone domestic violence (Dorff, 1998). Furthermore, Lev (2003), "Marcia Cohn Spiegel points out that ancient Jewish texts share with the text of some other religions and cultures a valuing of men over women and an acceptance of the use and abuse of women and children" (p. 47).

Problem Statement

Despite the severity of domestic violence and abuse, little has been written regarding this issue in the Jewish community (Ben-Lulu, 2021). Ben-Lulu (2021) notes that 20% of Jewish homes in the United States experience domestic violence. Jewish women, particularly those who are Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox, feel significant pressure to preserve the community image and maintain the family unit instead of seeking help for domestic violence (Ben-Lulu, 2021; Twerski, 1996). This is consistent with underreported domestic violence across all races, cultures, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses (Rosenbloom, 2021). Fear, lack of resources, shelter, and finances, the uncertainty of more harm or death to her, the children, and their pets, and the loss of family and community force a woman to remain (Barrett, Fitzgerald, Peirone, Stevenson, & Cheung, 2018; Rosenbloom, 2021). If a survivor chooses to reveal her abuse, others in the community may think she is being dramatic and, therefore, not trust her or tone down her story (Rosenbloom, 2021).

An additional concern is the dearth of literature about domestic violence in the Jewish community and the need for domestic violence shelters within the Jewish community (Chernikoff, 2021; Macy, Martin, Ogbonnaya, & Rizo, 2018). Furthermore, (Band-Winterstein & Tuito, 2018) indicated insufficient research regarding domestic violence among extreme

Orthodoxy. Given that denial (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018), myths, and isolation in the Jewish community are contributing factors to continuing domestic violence, those who work with Jewish victims of domestic violence worry that without culturally specific shelters that understand and cater to their culture and faith (Leibowitz, 1988; Senser, 2018).

The final concern is the limited literature regarding the role of domestic violence advocates who work with Jewish women as a stand-alone group. Although Ragavan, Thomas, Medzhitova, Brewer, Goodman, Bari-Merritt (2019), conducted a systematic literature review to determine the amount of community-based participatory research related to domestic violence in racial and ethnic communities, there is still limited research that provides transparent, equitable, and meaningful research or research on how culture can serve as a protective factor for survivors. Advocates and survivors provide much-needed insight and information about the programs and interventions, which is critical (Ragavan et al., 2019).

Purpose Statement and Research Question

This qualitative case study aimed to learn, describe, and understand the experiences and perceptions of domestic violence advocates who work with Jewish victims of domestic violence. Specifically, the research question addressed how domestic violence advocates uniquely perceive their role in working with Jewish victims of domestic violence?

Research Design

This research study used a qualitative case study design. Creswell & Creswell (2018) defined qualitative research as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 41). The goal of the qualitative researcher is to gain participants' perceptions about their lived experiences in the natural setting where they occur (Austin & Sutton, 2014). "Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that

seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, attempting to make sense of it and interpreting in terms of meaning people bring to them" (Cypress, 2015). Creswell & Creswell (2018) indicate that "Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (p.51). Moreover, Baškarada (2013) defines case studies as "A method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance, obtained by extensive description and analysis of the instance, taken as a whole and in its context" (p. 2). Alam (2021) in describing Merriam's (2009) approach to case study research as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon or social unit" (p. 6). Furthermore, Yin (2003), describes a case study as a "contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear, and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context" (p. 13). From Yin's perspective, a case study considers a phenomenon's 'how' and 'why' (Yazin, 2015). Case study design presents "the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions."

Qualitative research is a practical research design because the study's purpose is to understand the difficult and complex experiences of domestic violence advocates who work with abused Jewish women from varying Judaic denominations. This study provides a beneficial and holistic understanding of the importance of domestic violence advocates and the perspective of the women and Jewish community's concerns and requirements. A collective case study allowed this researcher to convey the details advocates provided from semi-structured interviews.

Significance of the Study

Judaism is not just a religion but a culture, people, and nation. Each is true, but the most accurate description is that Jewish people are a family (Rich, 2023). Jewish is both a religion and a culture; however, one can identify as Jewish despite lacking religion or culture (Friedlander, Friedman, Miller, Ellis, Friedlander, & Mikhaylov, 2010). Beyer asserts, "Religion and culture are an inseparable tapestry" (Zed, 2021). Judaism, the religion of the Jewish people, is a multifaceted phenomenon encompassing the Jewish people's theology, law, and countless cultural traditions (Pines, 2022). All Jews have a shared heritage, which forms the foundation of their culture and is frequently regarded as the most integral component of Jewish identity (Pew Research Center, 2013).

The research literature has contributed significant research and study that have shaped our understanding of abused Jewish women and their beliefs, religion, culture, traditions, and laws. The literature considered and contributed to our understanding of domestic violence within the Jewish community. These topics include, among other topics, domestic violence (Starr, 2017; Walker, 2009, 2017), Jewish women (Ain, 2018; Jacobs, 2018), and shelters (Hughes, 2020; Macy et al., 2018; Simic, 2020). Long-standing research indicates that abused Jewish women have needs (Brown, 2018; Prince, 2021; Rosenbloom, 2021), motivations (Murugan, 2022), challenges (Belzer, 2005; Ellison, 2021; Widawski, & Frydman, 2007) that differ from abused non-Jewish women and necessitate cultural shelters (Letourneau et al., 2019; Spiegel, 2016; Streyffeler, 2017), resources, and advocates that understand and embrace their beliefs (Ben-Porat & Sror-Bondarevsky, 2021; Jacobs, 2018). Jewish women in violent relationships and homes provide a lens for how abused Jewish women view themselves (Widawski, 2007; Streyffeler, 2017), the abuse (Aiken, & Rosenberg, 2020; Guthartz, 2004; Kaye, 2018), Jewish culture (Murugan, 2022; Newfeld, 2020; Schick, 2017), and interactions or lack of interactions with

non-Jewish shelters (George & Wesley, 2021), resources (Chapman, 2022), and culturally unknowledgeable advocates, staff, and lawyers (Chernikoff, 2021; Scarf, 1988). Jacobs, 2018). Nevertheless, the literature has remained relatively secular except for research in niche areas such as Jewish reactions and inaction to domestic violence or cultural beliefs.

Domestic violence is a widespread and disturbing issue that affects individuals from all levels of society, regardless of their religion or ethnicity (NCADV, 2016). Sabri, Thamarajah, Nije-Carr, Messing, Loerzel, Arscott, & Campbell, (2022) asserted, "Intimate partner violence (IPV) disproportionately affects marginalized women in the United States" (p. 1728) and "research shows marginalized women are disproportionately affected by homicides" (p. 1728). Marginalized women of racial/ethnic identity may not have access to appropriate domestic violence resources or culturally competent services that provide adequate assistance for their mental health and physical safety, and they may feel ashamed or embarrassed to pursue support (Sabri et al., 2022). These reasons keep the survivors of their abusive relationships from being further abused, which often increases in severity and even homicide. Much of this literature has focused on marginalized populations based on race and ethnicity (Sabri et al., 2022). Sabri et al., (2022) indicate that domestic violence victims from marginalized populations are unique and conceptualized culturally, with privilege and oppression impacting their lived experiences. Across racial and ethnic demographics, there are some commonalities, including but not limited to family violence, use of informal support (i.e., family members), and financial, sexual, and mental/emotional abuse (Sabri et al., 2022). The literature has shown that cultural norms and stigma keep victims from seeking help (Weintraub, 2013).

Despite this awareness along racial and ethnic lines, there was little research that regarded the effect of domestic violence on Jewish women. Thus, this research aimed to address

three points of significance. First, while Jewish law forbids any physical and other types of abuse, various religious texts, laws, and regulations provide contradictory language on Jewish religious and cultural observance (Pines, 2022). Moreover, the beliefs about domestic violence held by the woman's family and friends, who attended the synagogue, including rabbis, and other community members, were incorrect (Weintraub, 2013). Even the victim did not comprehend what was happening in her home (Senser, 2018). Misconceptions supported ongoing denial (Graetz, 1998). Many authors, rabbis, shelters, and resources defined many myths about Jewish domestic violence (Gelber, 2005; Kaufman, 2003; Rabin, Hirsh, Hornsten, Kirshbaum, & Rudnick, 2020). For example, phrases such as "Jewish men do not batter," "Jewish men make the best husbands," and "Jewish families are safe havens" are myths, just like the notion that there are no Jewish alcoholics (Pogrebin, 2005). Denial, myths, and isolation in the Jewish community contributed to continuing domestic violence (Leibowitz, 1988; Senser, 2018). The juxtaposition of religion and culture in the lived experiences of Jewish victims of domestic violence presented a dimension of understanding that did not exist for other marginalized groups and is ripe for exploration.

Second, the dearth of literature that explored the role of the domestic violence advocate who encountered Jewish women needing assistance and protection was of even greater significance. According to Sabri et al. (2022), "that use culturally informed approaches in design and evaluation of interventions for marginalized women" (p. 1748) were in crucial need. Inadequate literature and limited research about domestic violence in the Jewish community and the need for shelters existed (Chernikoff, 2021; Macy et al., 2018). Our understanding of abused Jewish women who were religious and lived in the South Florida tri-county area without Jewish shelters to ensure a safe place in order for them to leave their abusive homes highlighted specific

research gaps. These abused women must have a place to observe important religious practices of Sabbath (Myers, 2009), daily prayers and rituals, and follow *kashrut* (dietary laws) (Fontes, 2020; Kadish, 2020; Murugan, 2022; Prince, 2021), and connectedness for her and her children with the familiar Jewish community (Musleah, 2003). Furthermore, Orthodox Judaism remained masculine, with only male rabbis (Ringel & Bina, 2007) before Sara Hurwitz became the first Orthodox woman ordained a *rabba* (Orthodox clergywoman) not a rabbi, in 2009 (Berkenwald, 2010), women sat behind a *mechitzah* (curtain) which divided them from the men in the synagogue (Arowoloju, 2016; Walker, 1997), and their *kolot* (voices) were forbidden to be heard (Borts, 2021). The awareness and education of domestic violence were slowly beginning to reach abused Orthodox Jewish women, their families and friends, as well as members of the community (Fontes, 2020; Freedman, 2005).

Finally, Jewish advocates, facilities, and organizations are still focused on and committed to promoting domestic violence awareness (Frydman, 2021; Murugan, 2022; Schick, 2017). Reaching highly religious women and communities is critical to protecting abused women. Domestic violence survivors and synagogue members became aware and even related when posters were placed in synagogue restrooms (Chernikoff, 2021; Pesner, 2006), and rabbis delivered sermons, as well as writing synagogue newsletters and articles in Jewish periodicals that included references to domestic violence (Greenbaum, 2002; Jacobs, 2018; Pesner, 2006), may introduce new initiatives and research. Jewish women living in the tri-county area in South Florida (Palm et al.), escaping domestic violence posed unique challenges (Band-Winterstein & Tuito, 2018; Brofsky, 2017; Koblenz, 2009). These women often hesitate to seek help from traditional shelters because of concerns about cultural insensitivity and a lack of understanding of their particular needs (Glenn & Goodman, 2015; Schick, 2017; Spiegel, 2016). This

phenomenon underscores the critical need for culturally sensitive domestic violence shelters that cater to the unique needs of Jewish women in that region. By providing a haven for these women, such shelters can help break the cycle of abuse and promote healing. Advocacy for all abused Jewish women is of grave importance (Rosenbloom, Valente, Karp, & Rosenberg, 2021) especially, those in the tri-county area without Jewish domestic violence shelters or culturally knowledgeable resources, i.e., lawyers and doctors, who were often needed but cost-prohibitive (Wright & Bertrand, 2017).

Additionally, the limited collaboration research between community-based and academic research due to the rejection from published journals or academic researchers is uncertain. There appeared to be no research on the assessments of domestic violence survivors about the process of community-based research or the combination of community-based and academic research. However, the researchers concluded that the information on the part of the survivors would be invaluable. Ragavan et al. (2019) stated, “Exploring DV advocates’ opinions about dissemination practices and challenges is critical to ensure that community-based work is published and available in peer-reviewed literature” (p. 153). Ragavan et al. (2019) concluded, “Community-based research is a promising and needed approach to create programs that support DV survivors in ways that celebrate the strengths, wisdom, and lived experiences of survivors, advocates, and other community members” (p. 153). This research is significant for the domestic violence advocate because it can serve as a foundation for a greater understanding of how to better serve Jewish victims of domestic violence by being mindful of how Jewish culture and religion impact a victim’s decision to seek shelter. For municipalities, it can serve as a blueprint for expanding services. For Jewish women living in the tri-county area in South Florida (Palm et al.), escaping domestic violence poses unique challenges. These women often hesitate to seek help from

traditional shelters because of concerns about cultural insensitivity and a lack of understanding of their particular needs. This phenomenon underscores the critical need for culturally sensitive domestic violence shelters that cater to the unique needs of Jewish women in that region. By providing a haven for these women, such shelters can help break the cycle of abuse and promote healing.

This research's overarching significance is necessary for ensuring the safety of more abused Jewish women in the South Florida tri-county area. The voices of too many abused Jewish women have been silenced, and culturally safe emergency housing is unavailable. This research provides the Jewish community with qualitative evidence that allowed their voices to be heard through the experiences of the domestic violence advocates who work the closest with them. This research's significance lies in taking our existing knowledge and assumptions about abused Jewish women in the South Florida tri-county area and comparing them against the advocate details.

Definitions

This research used specific definitions to describe domestic violence advocates and the women they serve within the Jewish community.

- **Domestic Violence, also called Domestic Abuse or Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):** "Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that one partner uses to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological, or technological actions or threats of actions or other patterns of coercive behavior that influence another person within an intimate partner relationship. This includes any behaviors that

intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone" (Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), 2023).

- **Battered Woman**: "…is one who has been physically, sexually, or psychologically abused by a man…with whom she is in an intimate relationship. An intimate relationship is one in which there is a close, loving, romantic, emotional bond, usually including sex" (Walker, 2006, p. 56).
- **Women and men can be abused or the abuser. For this study, she is abused, and he is the abuser.**
- **Abused, also referred to as survivor or victim**: a wife who is the target of her husband's aggressive, controlling behavior through a cycle of violence in various forms of physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, sexual, and financial abuse (Sangeetha, Mohan, Hariharasudan, & Nawaz, 2022).
- **Abuser, also called batterer or perpetrator**: a husband whose ultimate goal is to use coercion to gain power and control over his wife to dominate, disempower, and isolate her (Western Australia Government, 2023).
- **Domestic Violence Advocate**: "A person who acts in a supportive role on behalf of, or in collaboration with, survivors and their children to work to stop, prevent, and address violence in an intimate relationship, as well as to endorse and support larger system change" (Wood, 2014).
- **Domestic Violence Shelter**: provides a "haven" for abused women and children when their homes are unsafe and emergency protection from the abuser. Crisis intervention, support services from advocates and therapists to promote empowerment, future

independence, food and clothing, shelter for their pets, and various other services and resources (Women in Distress (WID), 2022).

- **Jewish community**: the population of all Jewish people (Sheskin & Dashefsky, 2019).

Chapter Summary and Organization of Study

This chapter presented the roadmap for this research study by describing the prevalence of domestic violence in the United States regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. It showed how, although violence against women was forbidden within Judaism, core tenets of faith and culture presented contradictory views on domestic violence and how the wife was viewed within the marriage. The problem statement indicated that the literature remained silent regarding domestic violence within the Jewish community, as many women chose to preserve the family unit rather than leave the abusive environment. An additional concern was the lack of Jewish faith-based domestic violence centers within the tri-county area of Florida, consisting of many Jewish women with specific faith and cultural needs that were not supported in traditional domestic violence shelters. The literature provided little guidance for advocates who primarily worked with Jewish women and provided best practices for addressing religious and cultural needs. The chapter proposed a qualitative case study that sought to understand and learn about the lived experiences of domestic violence advocates who worked with Jewish women, with the research question seeking to understand how domestic violence advocates uniquely perceived their role in working with Jewish women. The chapter discussed the significance of the research on three levels. First, while the research contributed to our understanding of how religion and culture played a significant role in a Jewish woman's experience, the research provided little to our understanding of culture and faith juxtaposed against the phenomenon of domestic violence.

Second, the lack of literature on specific religious and culturally based best practices provided little guidance for domestic violence advocates to effectively support and provide shelter for Jewish victims of domestic violence. Finally, this research addressed the disconnect between awareness of domestic violence within the Jewish community and the lack of faith-based shelters within the tri-county area of Florida due to a lack of community-based and academic-based research.

Dissertation Outline

Chapter 2 of this dissertation presents a review of domestic violence literature. The review covers the definition and types of domestic violence, the history of domestic violence and cycles of abuse, a historical view of Jewish belief and community reaction to domestic violence, Jewish law, including marriage and divorce, and criminal law. The chapter continues with an analysis of the effects of domestic violence on Jewish women, the numerous reasons they stay or leave abusive relationships, and the necessity of culturally specific shelters and resources in the literature. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, research design, participants, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, and the limitations of this study. Chapter 4 presents the data of the interviews with domestic violence advocates, and analysis of the various themes. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings based on the analysis in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a discussion including recommendations, limitations, and overall significance of future studies about Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence and advocates charged with providing a safe space for them to heal.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This qualitative case study aims to learn about, describe, and understand the experiences and perceptions of domestic violence advocates working with Jewish victims of domestic violence. Specifically, the research question addresses how domestic violence advocates uniquely perceive their role in working with Jewish victims of domestic violence.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the various definitions of domestic violence. Next, there is a discussion about various types of abuse and the generational effect that occurs due to domestic violence. The chapter continues by explaining the domestic abuse cycle and how the decision to stay or leave is intertwined with the cycle. Next, the chapter explores what behaviors and actions perpetuate domestic violence. The chapter shifts to explore Judaism and the various laws that play a significant role in the Jewish community and reflect how men and women view Jewish culture and faith. The chapter then explores the various challenges that Jewish women who are victims of domestic face within their communities and the context of their faith. The chapter follows with how Jewish synagogues have historically responded to domestic violence. This leads to a discussion about the history of domestic violence shelters and a comparison and contrast of secular versus Jewish shelters. The chapter continues with a discussion of the various resources that shelters need to serve victims of domestic violence effectively. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the gaps and deficiencies in the literature.

Domestic Violence Definitions

According to the NCADV, the term "domestic violence" refers to a wide range of abuses and tactics for exerting power and control over the victim of the abuser (NCADV, 2016). In the United States, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds. Domestic violence is women’s most common cause of injury (Pogrebin, 2005b). Domestic violence is a significant and

underappreciated problem that affects Jewish homes and families, although there are no accurate estimates of its incidence or prevalence in the Jewish community (Rosenbloom et al., 2021). The community and the rabbis frequently fail to recognize its significance (Letourneau et al., 2019).

There are many definitions of domestic violence (DV) termed intimate partner abuse (IPV). The NCADV defines violence as:

> The willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. Frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically, but the constant of domestic violence is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other (NCADV, 2016).

In addition, the Florida Department of Children and Families provides the following definition.

> As pattern of behaviors that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners or former partners to establish power and control. It may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and economic abuse. It may also include threats, isolation, pet abuse, using children, and a variety of other behaviors used to maintain fear, intimidation, and power over one's partner (Houseman, 2021).

Furthermore, Jewish Women's International Clergy Task Force define domestic abuse as:

> Intimate partner violence, relationship abuse, domestic violence, and partner violence - is a pattern of coercive behaviors used to establish power and control over an intimate partner. The first signs of abuse may be so subtle that the perpetrator is able to pass them off as expressions of "love." These behaviors can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse (Rabin et al., 2020, p. 3).

The Power and Control Wheel is another way that domestic violence is defined. There are two Power and Control Wheels; the Duluth and Jewish models will be discussed later in the chapter. The "Power and Control Wheel" (see Appendix) message may appear simple, but it is deceptively powerful in significantly broadening the definition of domestic abuse (Starr, 2017). “People who abuse do so intentionally…The bottom line is that people who abuse want to control, intend to get their way and believe it is their right to do so. They are wrong” (Landesman, 2004, p.15). The definition states:

> Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that one partner uses to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological, or technological actions or threats of actions or other patterns of coercive behavior that influence another person within an intimate partner relationship. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone (Harris & Desantis, 2023).

The definition used in Chapter 1 defines domestic violence similarly to the above-mentioned definitions. This definition is appropriate because it details what domestic violence is and describes the types and behaviors of abuse, all within a concise, easy-to-understand definition. This definition is often cited in the literature, which helps frame our understanding of domestic violence. Therefore, this definition will be used to frame this study.

Types of Abuse

“Domestic violence is an epidemic affecting individual in every community, regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality” (NCADV, 2016). Domestic violence withholds needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is typically displayed as a

pyramid of categories ranging from basic physiological and safety needs to higher psychological needs such as love, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Domestic violence can affect needs such as safety, basic survival, and growth needs, such as self-actualization achieved through intellectual and creative behaviors. Unmet lower-level needs often hinder progress toward self-actualization, and individuals can fluctuate between levels of the hierarchy, moving back and forth between different needs (McLeod, 2020). It is important to remember that domestic violence includes emotional, financial, sexual, and verbal abuse (Propp, 2005). Emotional abuse, such as name-calling, putting down, or restricting activities, as well as sexual abuse, such as forcing or withholding sex, are all forms of abuse that do not involve physical violence (Jenefsky, 2012; Weinberger, 2005). Researchers who examine the effects of domestic violence on victims typically examine the physical, psychological, financial, and sexual forms of abuse (Arowoloju, 2016).

The spectrum of coercive actions includes verbal, psychological, and emotional assaults, physical and sexual abuse, and economic manipulation. Isolation from family and friends is an abusive relationship's most effective control mechanism. Although only some of these acts may be unlawful, they are always psychologically and emotionally destructive and induce fear or dread in the victim. It is crucial to understand that the person abusing is not out of control; these behaviors are selected intentionally to exert control over their partner (Rabin et al., 2021). The abuser threatens the victim and the victim’s friends, family, and pets with physical harm or even death. He threatens and intimidates a victim with a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or other deadly object (NCADV, 2016).

Physical

Physical abuse is any abuse in whatever manner to control her into submission. He might slap, choke, or use guns and knives (Walker, 2006). Physical abuse includes the forms mentioned earlier; however, when he has access to a weapon, he may commit an assault or even death (Rivas, Ramsay, Sadowski, Davidson, Dunnes, Eldridge, Hegarty, Taft, & Feder, 2016). Pregnancy does not deter domestic violence (Rivas et al., 2016). Abuse of a pregnant woman, specifically in the form of beatings (Meyers, 2015), has been linked to miscarriages (Meyers, 2015) and early labor with underweight babies (Rivas et al., 2016). In order to prevent violent behavior, economic freedom is an essential element (Evans, Lindauer, & Farrell, 2020).

Sexual

Examples of sexual and domestic violence include putting the victim under undue sexual pressure to engage in sexual activity or to perform sexual acts, requiring the victim to have sex with others against their will, as well as refusing to use protection or sabotage birth control (NCADV, 2016). Rape by a stranger is power and control, and it is the same for the abuser (DellaCroce, 2018).

Financial/ Socioeconomic

Financial abuse often involves an abuser controlling and withholding resources from their partner, making the victim financially dependent and limiting their options. Examples Jewish Women International (JWI) has encountered include restricted access to money and resources, forced sexual acts for money, and sabotaging their partner's ability to get to work. This abuse takes away financial independence, making it harder for victims to leave and easier for more abuse to occur (Ellison, 2021).

Although JWI does not have statistical data to support it, they have observed that financial abuse is a significant problem for survivors of domestic violence. While physical and

sexual violence is widespread, JWI team has noted that financial abuse is common (Ellison, 2021). By withholding money and restricting her movements, he fosters her financial dependence. Attempts at making her lose her job include tampering with her car so she is late or unable to get to work and harassing her while there, both of which make her dependent on him and ultimately force her to stay with him (Ellison, 2021). If she does not comply with his demands, he will withhold money from her and control every household expenditure (Feliciano, 2021). The victims often stay in abusive relationships because of economic abuse. Sometimes, victims of domestic violence may be financially unable to leave or coerced back to live with their abuser. Debt incurred under duress can devastate a person's credit, making it difficult to get a job or rent an apartment after escaping an abusive relationship (NCADV, 2016).

Due to financial privilege, many Jewish men who commit relationship crimes face fewer consequences and are less likely to be accused or convicted of domestic violence. They are often sentenced to mandatory re-education groups or private therapy instead of serving jail time (Pogrebin, 2005).

Psychological/Emotional

Women who are abused with words experience the same psychological symptoms as those who are physically abused (Letourneau et al., 2019). One in four women represses their emotions because of being shamed and rejected by their family and community (Senser, 2018).

“Most people prefer the certainty of misery to the misery of uncertainty” (Murray, 2007, p. 14). The first chapter heading of the book Atlas of the Heart is titled “Places We Go When Things Are Uncertain or Too Much: Stress, Overwhelm, Anxiety, Worry, Avoidance, Excitement, Dread, Fear, Vulnerability” (Brown, 2021, p.2). Psychological abuse is intentional, secretive, and devious, consequently deemed hidden abuse (Hackett, McWhirter, & Lesher, 2016).

Other examples include frightening the victim with their glare or behavior; keeping tabs on the victim's interactions with others and restricting their movements; stalking the victim or keeping tabs on their whereabouts; limiting the victim's ability to choose for themselves; putting the victim under duress to use drugs or drink; refusing to let the victim go to work or school, harassing the victim there, or keeping them awake all night to make them work ineffectively (NCADV, 2016).

Digital Abuse

Technology has created a way for the abuser to use digital methods to manipulate and control the victim. This abuse is over the Internet and social media. He can keep track of everything she does and verbally abuse her technologically. He can force her to give him access to her electronic devices, such as her cell phone, tablet, and computer (Frey, 2018).

Isolation

A prolonged period of social isolation is described by the phrase "social battering." (Walker, 1979). The ideal environment for abuse is isolation (Walker, 2017). Sealing the doors and windows with bolts, latches, nails, and glue to keep her with him, isolated from anyone outside of the home (Walker, 2006).

Shame

“The opposite of respect and honor is shame” (Dorff, 1998, p.3). “Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience believed” (Brown, 2007, p.5). The bond between shame and fear may be the strongest human emotion. The vicious cycle of shame leading to fear and fear leading to shame is all too common in human experience. It is frequently difficult to distinguish between one and the other, resulting in fear of many issues due to shame and fear of detachment (Brown, 2007).

Many of us hold unrealistic expectations of perfectionism, which a single person cannot achieve. Instead, we strive for an ideal constructed from various "perfect" aspects. This editing 2017 mentality stems from the shame web (see Appendix E), where we feel pressured to meet the expectations of family, friends, colleagues, and society in appearance, motherhood, parenting, work, and family (Brown, 2007).‘“*PERFECTIONISM IS THE VOICE OF THE OPPRESSOR*”’[emphasis added] (Brown, 2017, p. 173, quoting Lamott, 1994).

Experiencing joy and pain can be difficult, especially with strangers. The foundation of courage is vulnerability, which involves uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. Feeling joy requires great courage since it is a vulnerable emotion. People often fear feeling joy because they worry that something bad will happen. This fear can lead to "foreboding joy," where people prepare for the worst or try to feel nothing. Pain is also a vulnerable emotion that requires courage to face. It is easier for some people to cause pain than to feel it themselves when they are suffering (Brown, 2017).

Verbal

“Death and life is in the power of the tongue” Proverbs 18:21 (*The Torah: The Five Books of Moses,* 1962). Proverbs warn of the power of words to kill, injure, and shame. Nevertheless, Jews often forget the wounding power of speech, especially in family lives. Even trained rabbis may not recognize the painful effects of their abusive words, which can be just as damaging as physical abuse. Verbal abuse can be a routine mode of communication in some households where yelling and insults are the norm. Although verbal abuse often escalates to physical violence, it does not always do so (Propp, 2005).

Religious/Spiritual

"*Spiritual abuse* is defined as an attempt to damage the woman's spiritual self, life, or experience in three ways: (a) reducing her spiritual esteem, beliefs, and spiritual practice; (b) limiting her spiritual practice; and (c) forcing her to engage in spiritual transgression" (Band-Winterstein, 2018, p. 3016). The abuser uses *halakha* as an instrument to rationalize the abuse (Aghtaie, Mulvihill, Abrahams, & Hester, 2020) in addition to the *Mishnah Torah*'s list of 613 commandments (Aghtaie et al., 2020; Fontes, 2020).

A form of religious or spiritual abuse is denial (Aghtaie et al., 2020; Starr, 2017; Letourneau et al., 2019). The man uses religion to justify his behavior and to create fear in her and the children (Crisp, Afrouz, & Taket, 2018; Simonič, Mandelj, & Novsak, R.2013). Abusers may use various facets of *halakha* and tradition; however, the laws of modesty, sexual conduct, and the highly valued *shalom bayit* (peace in the home) are used most frequently to engage in abusive behavior (Kadish, 2020).

It is not uncommon for an abusive husband to wield his knowledge, perception, and interpretation of *halakha* to cause his wife to act incorrectly on Jewish law and her religious belief (Band-Winterstein, 2018). Misuse of *halakha* is a problem in both the perpetration of violence and the escape of abused women (Kadish, 2020). Refusing to grant her a *get* (divorce decree) is considered spiritual abuse for survivors (Arowoloju, 2016).

Pet Abuse

In violent households, there is a high rate of violence towards women and pet(s), and there are few shelters and resources with pet accommodations, which becomes an obstacle to her leaving (Barrett et al., 2018). The tragic effects of violence against survivors and their pet(s) emphasize the necessity for shared actions between animal welfare groups and domestic violence services to provide options for abused women (Jegatheesan, Enders-Slegers, Ormerod, &

Boyden, 2020). The abuser often abuses the animal(s) or threatens to harm them if she leaves (Cleary, Thapa, West, Westman, & Kornhaber, 2021). If she leaves them with the abuser, she considers returning for fear he will hurt them (Barrett, Fitzgerald, Peirone, Stevenson, & Cheung, 2020).

Non-Physical Signs

Domestic violence can show itself in non-physical ways. Signs of abuse can include a pattern of being repeatedly late or quitting work, social isolation or not being on time to family and other similar gatherings; may suddenly have a decrease in their self-esteem after periods of happiness and confidence; they may exhibit fear during disagreements or disputes; and often assume blame for their own or someone else's failures (Eriksen, 2016). Additional non-physical signs of domestic violence may include persistent tension, struggles with sleeping and eating, as well as difficulty connecting socially with others; experience recurrent physical distress, such as headaches and upset stomach; and constant depression (Eriksen, 2016; Macy et al., 2018); and suicidal ideations and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Macy et al., 2018).

The Generational Effect

Domestic violence is frequently a pattern that repeats itself within a family, passed from generation to generation (Bolton-Fasman, 2011; Greenbaum, 2002). The abuser may have seen, heard, or been abused (Barnard, n.d.), and it becomes important to help the children break the abusive cycle of *l'dor v'dor (*generation to generation) (Chernikoff, 2021). Children are often abused physically and emotionally. There is molestation, and they may feel responsible instead of feeling they are the victim (Lev, 2003; Snyder, 2019). Children are affected adversely, whether abused or living in an abusive home, hearing and watching the abuse (Simonic, Mandelj, & Novsak, 2013). Domestic violence during childhood is directly linked to difficulties in learning,

lower IQ scores, deficiencies in visual-motor skills, and problems with attention and memory. Living with domestic violence can also significantly alter a child's DNA, resulting in premature aging of 7-10 years (Martin, 2014). Often the abuse inhibits emotional development and regulation, not learning how to love and comfort themselves (Simonic, et al., 2013; George & Wesley, 2021).

Children are a gift and should be treated as such (Dorff, 2014). “As long as we deny the existence of the behavior, we deny the Jewishness of that person. If we say that Jews do not commit incest, then the child victim does not exist as a person or a Jew” (Spiegel, 1988). Children can respect the role of a parent but not the abusive behavior (Rodman, n.d.). By remaining, the wife inadvertently causes harm to her children with the belief that she is the one being abused. The children are not affected or know about the abuse (Streyffeler, 2017).

Generational Effect Statistics

In the United States, 15.5 million children witness domestic violence annually, and 40 million adult Americans have grown up living with it. Children from violent homes are more likely to experience significant short and long-term psychological problems. They exhibit trauma symptoms as early as age one and may have experienced chronic trauma since infancy, with many experiencing it before age six (Graham-Bermann, Castor, Miller, Howell, 2012). According to the findings of a study by Winegan et al., children who come from homes where there is violence and soldiers who have been exposed to combat have very similar patterns of brain activity (McCrory, De Brito, Sebastian, Mechelli, Bird, Kelly, & Viding, 2011), both presenting symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Graham-Bermann et al., 2012).

Children in homes with violence are physically abused or seriously neglected at a rate 1500% higher than the national average. Those who grow up with domestic violence are six times more likely to commit suicide and 50% more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol. They are also 74% more likely to commit a violent crime against someone else if they grew up with domestic violence (Martin, 2014). Moreover, children of domestic violence are three times more likely to repeat the cycle in adulthood. Growing up with domestic violence is the most significant predictor of whether or not someone will engage in domestic violence later in life (Martin, 2014).

Cycles of Abuse

Abuse follows a cyclical pattern where the abuser makes threats of violence, acts upon the threats, expresses regret, claims they will change and do better, and gives gifts; the cycle repeats itself. Survivors experience depression, anxiety, self-doubt, inadequacy, helplessness, and paralysis. It is more challenging for them to request help because they are confused and wonder if the abuse is their fault (Mayo et al., 2022).

The cycles of abuse are three phases: Tension Building, Acute Battering and Loving-Contrition (Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Sangeetha et al., 2022; Walker, 2017). Rakovec-Felser (2014) discovered a fourth phase described as Calm. It is the quiet period before the tension begins the cycle again (Rakovec-Felser, 2014).

The *Tension-building phase* occurs when the tension mounts gradually; he becomes irrational and argumentative, verbally abusing her, and there may be minor battering. She tries to appease him thinking she has done something to inflict his behavior (Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Sangeetha et al., 2022; Walker, 2017). Following is the *Acute battering phase,* in which he becomes increasingly aggressive and violent. During this phase, the abuse may not be physical

but severely emotional, psychological, sexual, or financial. He may isolate her by forbidding her to see her family and friends and stopping her from attending synagogue and interacting with the community. The violence is severe and dangerous; however, it is shorter than the other two phases. (Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Sangeetha et al., 2022; Walker, 1989). A woman may develop what Seligman termed *learned helplessness* through repeated abuse cycles. She believes she has no choice except to remain with the abuser, even though her home is unsafe (Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Walker, 2017). The misconception that Jewish husbands are not abusive could influence denial; however, it is learned helplessness or confinement with no alternative (Pesner, 2006).

In the *Loving-Contrition or Honeymoon phase*, the abuser becomes apologetic, showering her with love, kindness, and gifts. This phase is often called the honeymoon phase because it is similar to the behavior a husband would portray on a honeymoon (Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Sangeetha et al., 2022; Streyffeler, 2017). He swears he will never hurt her again. She loves and believes in him and hopes he is being truthful, and this time will be different (Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Sangeetha et al., 2022; Walker, 2017). The victim often denies that the abuse is not that serious or affects her health and well-being, believing she knows how to improve the situation. However, as the abuse progresses, the severity increases, and her life becomes unmanageable and. dangerous (Nicholson & Lutz, 2017). In the cycle of domestic violence, the abuser engages in various tactics to keep the partner from leaving (Streyffeler, 2017).

Finally, in the *Calm* phase, the abuse has stopped, the abuser acts as though he did nothing to hurt her, and she wants to believe him when he vows it will never happen again. His behavior proves why she waives whether to leave or stay (Rakovec-Felser, 2014). Craig & Kippert conveyed, “Sometimes abusers will use love-bombing to “make up for” the abuse,

though this further manipulation is actually designed to keep the victim off-guard and remaining with the abuser'" (2022, para. 9). This phase is short-lived as the tension starts, and the cycle is in full swing again (Craig & Kippert, 2022). In conclusion, the cycle of abuse is repetitive and very predictable (Dutton & Painter, 1993).

The Decision to Stay or Leave

Questions often asked are 'Why does she stay' (Adelman, Rosenberg, & Hobart, 2016; Widawski, 2007) or 'Why doesn't she leave '(Adelman et al., 2016; Frydman, 2021). The question should be, 'Why does he do that?'(Bancroft, 2015). Alternatively, 'Why don't you let her go?' (Walker, 2015). The answer to the question is that he has chosen to abuse (Greenbaum, 2002; Landesman T., 2004), it is a learned behavior (Walker, 2006, 2017), his need for power and control (Houseman, 2021; Rabin et al., 2020) and the victim develops learned helplessness (Pesner, 2006; Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Walker, 2006, 2017). Her family, friends, people who do not know her, and even advocates believe that her leaving is the cure, but this is not a "one-size-fits-all solution" (Adelman et al., 2016).

Women who have been abused may be led to believe and even be informed by their abusers that they are helpless, but this is not the case (DellaCroce, 2018). Stockholm Syndrome or Trauma Bonding is an attempt to survive relentless abuse and emotional traumatization, believing all the abuser says, developing an illogical identity with the abuser (DellaCroce, 2018; Logan, 2018; Murray, 2007). In the past, society viewed the problem as it affects its functional relationship rather than holding the abusive man responsible for his behavior. Marital therapy was seen as a solution to restore peace in the home by changing the woman's behavior rather than addressing the abuser's actions (Walker, 1997).

Violence against women increases during emergencies such as epidemics, stress, disruption of social networks, economic hardship, and decreased access to services. Economic instability and lack of safe childcare during the Covid-19 lockdown exacerbated already difficult situations (Savitsky et al., 2021). To safeguard the general population and reduce the virus's spread, many victims were forced to stay at home with their abusers, increasing their trauma (Evans et al., 2020). Her bodily and psychological health may suffer as a consequence when both partners are restricted at home and kept physically segregated from others (George & Wesley, 2021).

The Decision to Leave

Leaving an abusive partner does not end domestic violence; the risk of harm only increases (Douglas, 2018). This is the most dangerous time for a woman to leave. The severity of physical abuse often increases, causing serious injury and, many times, death (Douglas, 2018; Rakovec-Felser, 2014). Crime statistics show that leaving can be even more dangerous than staying, as victims are at the highest risk of being killed during the period immediately after they leave (Pogrebin, 2005).

The victim may decide to leave, taking away his immediate power and control over her. However, the abuse usually continues. He is prone to follow her, so he knows her every move, where she is and who she is with. The emotional and psychological abuse continues with his threats against her and her family and friends. He may cause financial abuse through harassment of her and co-workers, resulting in the loss of employment. (Shechory-Bitton, 2014; Walker, 2017).

Abuse does not end when she leaves (Walker, 2009). Leaving the abuser can be the most difficult time. The husband is losing his power and control over her. Three out of four women are

murdered when they leave (Greenbaum, 2002; Snyder, 2019). According to Rivas et al. (2016), the Campbell study "estimated that between 65% and 75% of women killed by abusive partners are leaving or have already ended the relationship" (p. 14). After leaving, the abuser continues to stalk, make monetary demands, and harass her family, friends, co-workers, and employers. The system, courts, advocates, and judges are aware of the abuse against her and the children; however, they continue the abuse by forcing them to contact him. She cannot take her children and get away. She has to live in close proximity so he may have access to unsupervised visitation with his children (Walker, 2017). "Divorce, the most often recommended solution, does not stop the violence; batterers continue to harass, stalk, and abuse the women and their children, often assisted by a legal system that colludes with the men and invalidates the reports of women" (Walker, 1997, p. 266).

Shechory-Bitton (2014) reported that despite a shelter stay, it is not uncommon for the women to continue to have adverse psychological difficulties, emotionally feeling sadness and grief, which are predictors that "violence leaves scars that do not always heal" (Shechory-Bitton, 2014, p. 416). Thoughts of suicide, self-harm, depression, fearfulness, PTSD, poor self-esteem are caused by the effects of domestic violence (Rakovec-Felser, 2014).

Jewish women typically stay in marriages longer, anywhere from seven to thirteen years, whereas non-Jewish women typically stay for only three to six years (Blum-Cogan, 1992; Guthartz, 2004; Koblenz, 2009; Pesner, 2006; Schick, 2017). Some do not leave until their children marry (Shechory-Bitton, 2014). Women may return to their abusive partners because of societal and economic pressures (Leibowitz, 1988). Acts of violence and sexual abuse occur behind closed doors in some Jewish communities, even behind *mezzuzot* (doorposts), that are

meant to symbolize divine protection. Women who experience abuse often feel alone and unsafe in their homes (Pogrebin, 2005).

Death

Some women often die because of remaining in violent relationships (Barnard, n.d.). The victim of an abusive relationship may stay in the marriage for years, enduring psychological or violent behavior that can result in significant harm or the loss of her life. Since circumstances do not appear dire, the situation can be deceptive to others. However, domestic violence is potentially deadly. When someone intends to control, verbal assaults can become physical. Each of us has the right to be safe" (Pogrebin, 2005). The NCADV (2020) reported that abused women are at higher risks of suicidal behavior, victims of murder-suicides, homicide when a gun is present and femicide (an unequal woman).

Factors That Perpetuates Domestic Violence

Whoever justifies the perpetrator's abusive behavior is not in denial (Dorff, 2014). Domestic violence is stigmatized, perpetuating the abuse (Ellison, 2021). When an abused woman tried to seek refuge with her parents, the mother insisted she returns to her husband (Myers, 2009).

Rabbis unfamiliar with domestic violence endanger victims by telling abused female congregants to go home and make *shalom bayit* (Jenefsky, 2012; Twerski, 1996). Hirsh recalls a 1988 domestic violence training where a seasoned rabbi stated that if he learns about domestic violence in his congregation, he asks the husband and wife to come to see him as a couple, explains *shalom bayit,* instructs them to act like *menschen* (decent people), and demands that the husband swear he will not do it again. This might put the woman in danger of suffering additional harm (Hirsh, 2022).

Clergy make statements that perpetuates the abuse (Guthartz, 2004). When Spiegel approached her rabbi about her husband's alcoholism, she was told, "Jewish men do not do that. When you figure out what you are doing to cause him to behave like that, he will stop" (Spiegel, 2016).

Despite greater awareness of the problem, many women are still encouraged by their rabbis to go home and attempt to work things out in therapy, even though this may lead to worse abuse and, in some cases, even death. This perpetuates the cycle of abuse and continues to be a major challenge in Jewish communities (Spiegel, 2016).

The abused woman is warned not to discuss or voice her complaints about her abusive home life by her family and friends (Fontes, 2020). She conforms by remaining silent and endures suffering (Simonic et al., 2013). Organized religion can carry on this cycle of abuse as women are often told to go back and be a "good wife." This is especially prevalent among Ultra-Orthodox and Hasidic Jews, and many women accept this advice without question (Debeer, 1988).

Judaism

Judaism is more than a religion, a culture, a nation. It is each of these, and all of them, it is a family. It is a religion where Jewish people attend synagogue, study Judaism, and children go to Hebrew school. Judaism is a culture with traditions; however, Jews follow different traditions depending on the part of the world they descended from. The *Torah* states Jews are a nation, and today means, they are bound together by history and destiny. All of this equates to Jews are a family, an extension of each other, and behave as families do. They love, play, agree, disagree, and feel joy and pain with Jews worldwide (Rich, n.d.).

Denominations

Judaism has three major denominations: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and five smaller Judaic denominations. Reform Judaism is the largest and most liberal denomination, mainly following Judaic traditions and culture instead of strict adherence to the teachings in the Torah. Conservative Judaism is considered the middle denomination and is more conservative than liberal or pious. The most religious of the three is Orthodox; however, it is not a single denomination like the Reform and Conservative denominations. Orthodoxy is divided into Modern (liberal) and Open-Orthodox (more liberal), and Ultra-Orthodox Jews are Haredi and Hasidic, which are the most religious observing all of the teachings of Jewish law (My Jewish Learning, n.d.). (see Appendix G) Following the Torah is a priority for the Ultra-Orthodox, who are fully devoted to family, community, and Ultra-Orthodox faith (Band-Winterstein & Tuito, 2018).

While Orthodox and Ultra or Haredi Jews have distinct beliefs and practices, they both share a strict adherence to Jewish law and a steadfast refusal to join the society at large (Winston, 2006). Hasidic Jews are a small group of Ultra-Orthodox Jews. They are a pious community. They are recognizable with men who wear dark hats and coats and whose wives demonstrate modesty by wearing wigs and dresses with high necklines (Fontes, 2020).

After a review of the 2013 comprehensive survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, Pinker projected that over the next 50 years, there will be significant changes in the U. S. Jewish population. According to Pinker, children from intermarried families will leave the Reform and Conservative denominations, causing an increase in the Orthodox population, the most religious and conservative Jews (2019).

The tri-counties have 234 synagogues that include the three main Jewish denominations, Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform, as well as five newer denominations (Greater Miami

Jewish Federation, 2023; Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County, 2022; Madar & Bloom, 2023; Shapiro, 2023).

Historical Overview of Jewish Belief

The *Torah* is the written law and foundation of Judaism. Every person is a child of G-d, created in G-d's image, each unique and valuable. Community is the focus of Judaism. As a community, the Jews fled Egypt. They were presented the 613 commandments listing the community's duties, responsibilities, and obligations, that all people are to be respected, protected, and cared for by the Jewish community (Dorff, 2014).

In many portions of the *Torah* and *Talmud*, it is stated or implied that men are superior to women with the use of masculine language and their obligation to observe the negative commandments (Meacham, 2021).

An eight-day-old boy's *bris* (circumcision ceremony) is the first tangible sign that Judaism is a patriarchal society with a male-centric. At 13, he is considered an adult synagogue member and is therefore called to the *Torah* (Arowoloju, 2016; Koblenz, 2009). Fathers are obligated under *halakha* to educate only their sons (Arowoloju, 2016).

Bible: Patriarchal

Men held authority, and women were subservient (Arowoloju, 2016; Pesner, 2006), as evidenced that this is stated in Genesis, obviously patriarchal (Murugan, 2022; Pesner, 2006) and an imbalance of gender. When Eve eats the apple in the Garden of Eden, G-d punishes her severely with agony during childbirth, while Adam receives no punishment and is given control over her. This conduct continues and catalyzes manipulative, violent behavior (Pesner, 2006). "Jewish and secular sources from the Bible to modern times give proof of the existence of abuse

within Jewish families and relationships." (Landesman T., 2004, p. 1). Women are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse because of their gender (Arowoloju, 2016).

In biblical times, women had subordinate roles in society and were under the guardianship of their fathers and, later, their husbands. The Hebrew language in Jewish law reflected this patriarchal system, with the *ba'al* (husband) implying both ownership and lordship, similar to the responsibilities of an owner outlined in Exodus 21:28. The term *be'ulat ba'al* (married woman) literally means she belongs to the owner (Graetz, 1999).

The cultural assumption of male dominance still exists. The greater the level of patriarchy within a family, the greater the likelihood of abuse toward women. Power is present where there is a privilege, and a lack of power exists where there is dependency. An example would be where a wife has no control over family finances or a husband's mistreatment of his wife leads to the children disrespecting or bullying their mother. This dysfunction promotes male supremacy and female subordination, perpetuating the idea that masculinity equates to dominance and femininity equates to submission (Pogrebin, 2005).

Judaism has a history of marginalizing women or restricting their public visibility to nonreligious spheres such as the home and the workplace. The legislation that made this possible specified that women would be treated differently than men. *Kol Isha* (a woman's voice), thought of as *erva* (nakedness), is forbidden when men are praying, the *Shema* (ritual prayer) is sung, and to sing and, at times, speak in front of men (Borts, 2021). Women are silenced (Borts, 2021) and separated from men as they are required to sit behind the *mechitzah* (curtain) (Arowoloju, 2016; Walker, 1997). This continues in Orthodox, Ultra-Orthodox and liberal Judaism (Borts, 2021).

Orthodox Jewish beliefs, such as *mesira (*turn over) a Jew to secular authorities, the possibility of harm if imprisoned, and the *shonda* (shame) upon his family, predisposed the *beit*

din (Rabbinic court) to decide an Orthodox rabbi in Brooklyn was innocent of sexual child abuse fleeing to Israel evading a grand jury review (Neustein, 2008).

Informing authorities

It is forbidden under *halakha* to *mesira*, provide information about a Jew to non-Jewish authorities (Arowoloju, 2016; Brofsky, 2017). *Mesira* and the fear of *shonda* often dissuades women from calling the police and using the justice system to gain safety (Freedman, 2005).

The *halakhic* laws of *lashon hara* (derogatory speech) and *rekhilut* (gossip mongering) (Brofsky, 2017) support the reluctance to remain silent and not report abuse. *Lashon hara* and speaking negative truths are forbidden under *halakha* (Dorff, n.d.). It could shame her, her husband, her children, and the community (Arowoloju, 2016; Schick, 2017). It is a sin for Jews to stand by and do nothing to help (Senser, 2018). Rabbis uphold *lashon hara* as prohibited even when the information is true (Schick, 2017). Conversely, if someone is injured or put in danger, doing so is not prohibited (Dorff, n.d.).

Shalom Bayit

Pressure to have "*shalom bayit*" or peace in the home can make women feel responsible for the situation (Propp, 2005) and dissuade her from seeking assistance (Band-Winterstein & Tuito, 2018). Orthodox women are instilled with the importance of *shalom bayit* (peace in the home) at a young age (Belzer, 2005; Widawski, 2007). The wife believes it is her fault for the failing marriage (Belzer, 2005) and a "personal failure" If there are any challenges, even abuse, in the home, she will often devote all of her ability to keep the peace (Widawski, 2007). She believes that she is to blame for the abuse and that she is the one who caused her marriage to fail. As a result, she is burdened by feelings of guilt (Widawski, 2007; Streyffeler, 2017).

There is a common misunderstanding that *shalom bayit* is solely the wife's responsibility. In reality, it is a joint obligation of both the husband and the wife (Kadish, 2020; Kaye, 2018). Observant Jewish women tend to stay in abusive relationships longer than women of other groups partly because their tradition emphasizes the importance of a woman's responsibility to keep the family together and maintain domestic tranquility. Additionally, they may not seek help or take legal action because the Jewish feminine ideal is to stay married and raise children (Pogrebin, 2005).

Not all Jewish homes embrace the concept of *shalom bayit*, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony within the home. This may paradoxically lead women to stay in violent relationships out of a desire to protect their families (Belzer, 2005). Due to the pressure and *shonda*, abused religious women often remain in or return to their abusive homes (Guthartz, 2004; Kaye, 2018).

Pikuah Nefesh

Pikuah Nefesh is the Hebrew word to save a life. Jews are commanded to save a person whose life is in danger, even on *Shabbat* (Jewish Sabbath). It supersedes the *Shabbat* laws. The person who is saving a life can violate all of the *Shabbat* laws regardless of what has to be done to do so, i.e., drive a vehicle or use equipment, whatever is necessary to save the person's life. To violate *pikuah nefesh i*s a sin; whoever does so, and the person dies, as a result, is a murderer, according to (Braun, n.d.). Judaism teaches that only three commandments are more important than saving a life. G-d has commanded that observing the Sabbath is not as crucial as saving a life (Friedman, 2020). Jews assume the moral obligation and duty to save a life (Brown, 2018).

Tikkun Olam

The Hebrew definition for *Tikkun* is repairing, and *Olam* is world. Repair the world. In the *Mishnah*, *tikkun* translates to fix, improve, prepare, set it up, or do something, and in Biblical Hebrew, *olam* is all of the time. This means anyone, no matter who they are or young or old, can always do something to repair the world. The ways are countless and can be done alone or in a group. Everyone is here to make the world a better place (Freeman, n.d.). It has been used for thousands of years and is about how people speak to and treat one another, regardless of their religion or if they are family members. *Tikkun olam* is an important way for members of synagogues to help victims of domestic violence and their children in many areas (Dorff, 2007; Jenefsky, 2012). Jewish law mandates that ignoring a person in imminent danger is a crime of omission, particularly the target of brutal physical violence (Macner, 2019).

Tzedakah

Tzedakah is Hebrew for charity which means 'justice.' It is written in the Torah that only a part of the money one makes belongs to them. The money is used to do G-d's will to provide a meal or shelter to anyone in need. It is a moral obligation to ensure that our children are never without food and shelter (Moss, n.d.).

Chesed

Chesed means loving-kindness. It was G-d's intent for the world to be loving and kind. For everyone to act with generosity, kindness, and love. Moreover, meant for each person 'who is good to do good' (Miller, n.d.). All the following explain what Jewish people live by as a Jewish way of life morally right, to improve the world (Freedman, 2005), and follow G-d's wishes and commandments (Miller, n.d.; Moss, n.d.).

Rueben (2016) asserted, "…what we say matters, what we do matters, and who we are matters. This is the true fulfillment of the rabbinic phrase, *"Letakken olam bemalkhut*

Shaddai," – To be partners with the Divine in healing the broken pieces of the world. What could be more "cutting edge" than that?" (para.15).

Challenges Facing Jewish Women Domestic Violence Victims

There are numerous challenges that Jewish women face concerning domestic violence. She is afraid to leave, yet afraid to stay. She wants to save her marriage, home, family, and community.

Graetz (1998) recognized several types of denial, and it hurts too much to admit domestic violence when domestic violence is directly confronted, denial emerges and is seen as a brand-new issue, the belief that only Gentile men abuse their wives, not Jewish men, as well as the denial of the Jewish rabbinical community. It is a common misconception that domestic violence affects only a few people; women with lower income levels, education and job skills are more severely abused than those from middle- and upper-class families, and abuse does not happen to Jewish women (Jenefsky, 2012; Walker, 1979).

Denial of domestic abuse in the Jewish community is dangerous, making it harder for women to admit that abuse is happening and easier to deny (Propp, 2005). The community is unaware because the abuse occurs within the home, and the woman pretends to be fine. Abused women conceal their situation to make things seem better (Senser, 2018).

Myths

There are many myths Walker claims are associated with domestic violence. Mentioned are just a few of those myths. Domestic violence only affects a small percentage of the population. Abused women are often not well educated, have little or no job skills, and do not come from middle- and upper-class status; middle-class women are not abused as often or

severely as lower-income women and Jewish women are not abused (Jenefsky, 2012; Walker, 1979)

However, (Jenefsky, 2012; Walker 1979) stated that domestic violence does not discriminate between rich and poor, educated or uneducated, skilled or unskilled, or religious beliefs. Domestic violence is revealed in all walks of life and classes of people, and statistics are soaring. “The myth that Jewish families are immune from abuse is a cause for missing red flags” (Rabin et al., 2020, p. 3). The Jewish community is rooted in denial regarding domestic violence because of the perpetuation of four myths: the fiction of the happy Jewish family, the belief that Jewish males are not physically violent, the myth of the "sacramental" nature of marriage, and the myth of the woman's role as solely a helpmate (Graetz, 1998; Jenefsky, 2012).

These myths are reinforced by stereotypes of the "Nice Jewish Boy" and the "Jewish American Princess,” which portray men as good-natured and women as concerned with appearances. These myths also blame women for causing domestic violence through nagging, not listening, or performing their duties while excusing men's abusive behavior because of work-related stress or alcohol (Schick, 2017).

The Jewish community holds certain expectations for their children, including becoming a professional, getting married, having children, and achieving independence. This culture of success and perfection can lead to shame and denial when families experience violence. A stigma attached to domestic violence in Jewish communities goes against the idealized version of ourselves that we strive to maintain (Weintraub, 2013). This perpetuates the lack of recognition and acceptance of domestic violence in many Jewish communities (Light, 2006; Senser, 2018).

Victims of domestic violence in Jewish families are slower to seek help, as there is a belief that such violence does not exist in the community. It may take several years longer than

victims in other communities to seek assistance. Once that occurs, they may find themselves uncomfortable in shelters where they could be one of the few, if not the only, Jews (Spiegel, 2016).

Unsafe

Those living with their abusers face significant vulnerability as their homes are unsafe, and it may be unsafe to seek help. They often feel trapped between bad choices with no easy way out (Aiken et al., 2020). Horrendous acts of violence and sexual abuse occur behind closed doors in some Jewish communities, even behind *mezzuzot* meant to symbolize divine protection. Women who experience abuse often feel alone and unsafe in their own homes (Pogrebin, 2005). Abused women who do not have a safe space to live most times feel there is no choice but to remain in unsafe relationships and homes (Klein, Chesworth, & Macy, 2021).

Not Believed

Abusive men who present themselves well make it difficult for their wives to expose their behavior and seek help. In the Orthodox community of Boro Park, New York, abused women are often not believed or supported (Pogrebin, 2005). If the wife discloses the abuse, she fears not being believed and being labeled a *moser* (one who commits) *mesira* (Brofsky, 2017).

Repeatedly, she is the target of discrimination and pressured to remain in an abusive home instead of leaving her husband. Because the Orthodox faith is everything in life, including one's family and friends, she is shamed and forced not to reveal the abuse (Aghtaie et al., 2020). It is a close-knit community whose members keep their opinions to themselves regarding life (Murugan, 2022).

JWI believes that the stigma surrounding domestic violence is a significant factor that allows it to persist. Jewish communities often prioritize the more authoritative family member,

the "*macher*," over the survivor. This is true when the abuser is a significant donor or important member of the community. In such cases, the survivor is often shunned (along with the children), and they do not feel welcome or supported. It is essential to change this culture and prioritize the safety and well-being of survivors (Ellison, 2021).

If the husband is a prominent figure with a high status and a good reputation, his statements will be more plausible (Brown, 2018; Walker, 1979). To continue engaging in abusive behavior, the abuser does everything in his power to ensure that what she says is not remembered or that the victim is not believed. Therefore, he requires her silence (Brown, 2018).

Lack of attention by the community

The reasons behind this disparity are complex, but the outcome is consistent. In the American Jewish community, domestic violence victims receive significantly less attention and resources than victims of anti-Semitic violence, even though domestic abuse incidents are much more prevalent. A victim of anti-Semitic violence or rape by a stranger is more likely to receive community support and protection than a victim of spousal abuse whom her husband may physically assault in her own home (Jenefsky, 2012; Pogrebin, 2005).

Marriage

In ultra-Orthodox communities, a female *shadchanit* or male *shadchan (*matchmaker) arranges the marriage to the extent where the future husband is essentially a stranger, unfamiliar with either his personality or his mannerisms, and unknowing of the warning signs until she is exposed to his aggressive conduct (Band-Winterstein & Tuito, 2018). Some relationships are not *bashert* or "meant to be." This idea applies to arranged marriages (Widawski, 2007).

The work performed by (Widawski, 2007) in several Brooklyn Orthodox communities observed the *shidduch* (arranged marriage) leading to adolescent females who may have limited

educational background and poor occupational abilities to marry. The tendency to have many children is another trait many Orthodox families share; some have as many as thirteen children (Murugan, 2022; Widawski, 2007). Providing for such a large household in terms of its basic needs is a costly endeavor. Meeting their fundamental requirements is expensive for a family of this size (Newfield, 2020; Widawski, 2007). It is not uncommon for women to continue living with their abusers so that the husband/father may be at home on *Shabbat* to perform *kiddush* (prayer for wine), among other Jewish rituals (Widawski, 2007).

A traditional wedding begins before the marriage ceremony with the decision to marry. The groom paid the bride's father a *mohar* (bride price). Now it is based on spirituality, even though she continues to be an acquisition by *halakha*. The couple is married by a rabbi under a *chuppah* (marriage canopy) with prayers (Thaler, n.d.). A woman is still married without a *get* (Jewish divorce decree) by *halakha*. Therefore, she cannot remarry under a *chuppah* performed by a rabbi in a traditional wedding service (S. L. & J. H. H. W., 2020).

Jewish law requires a traditional wedding and the signing of the *ketubah* (marriage contract) (Kaye, 2018), thereby declaring that her responsibility is to him as his wife (Belzer, 2005). To end a Jewish marriage, which is distinct from a civil marriage and is not dissolved by a civil divorce, Jewish law mandates that a man gives a *get* voluntarily, and a woman receives a *get* from her husband in order for the marriage to be legally dissolved (Broyde, 2020).

According to *halakha*, the husband must initiate divorce proceedings, and the wife is not permitted to do so (Belzer, 2005; Letourneau et al., 2019). A *get* can only be given by a husband (Cares & Cusick, 2012), and he is obliged to deliver it to her (Belzer, 2005), and he cannot be coerced into doing so. Contracts under Jewish law are simply unilateral, unlike bilateral contracts in civil law. Marriage and divorce are not sacred but contractual, designating the husband's

signature as the guarantor and the wife as an acquisition, comparable to other contracts with acquisitions (Goldstein, 2013).

Divorce/Get/Agunah

In custody battles involving abusive spouses, victims of domestic violence in the Haredi community are at risk of prolonged abuse. Even though victims may face grave danger, the courts consider the religious practices of both parents and how they contribute to religious domestic violence. The courts often link child custody and/or visitation to specific religious practices, community norms, or school rules. This gives the abuser a way to continue religious and domestic violence even after the court's intervention (Kadish, 2020).

Although a divorce may be granted or ordered by a *beit din,* it cannot be finalized until the husband agrees to the divorce and the wife is free to remarry (Joffe, 2017; S. L. & J. H. H. W., 2020). Historically, a *get* had to be declined if a man went missing at sea or during a battle; however, refusal is now deliberate (Arowoloju, 2016). According to Jewish law, a man is not required to grant his wife a *get*; however, refusal is considered spousal abuse, and Dratch believes it immoral (Dratch, 2015; Rivlin, 2020).

It is within a husband's marital rights, but not *halakha*, to threaten to refuse a *get*. *Get*-threats are a way to exploit the husband's power over her, keep her chained to him for his personal gain or satisfaction, causing her harm, and against his Jewish legal and moral responsibilities (Laufer-Ukeles, 2020). It is not only coercive in manner but comparable to blackmail and extortion in a judicial context (Laufer-Ukeles, 2020; Rivlin, 2020). The results compiled by The Rackman Center survey indicate that one out of every third woman is threatened with a *get*-refusal (Laufer-Ukeles, 2020). Without a *get*, a divorced woman has no

legal standing in Jewish society. Jewish law prohibits her from remarrying or having legitimate children (Cares & Cusick, 2012).

Neither husband nor wife may remarry. According to Jewish law, she is not permitted to have a relationship with another partner if a *get* has not been granted (Starr, 2017, 2020). Nevertheless, he is free to start a new family with another woman and completely disregard the divorce (Laufer-Ukeles,2020). If a woman was legally divorced in a civil court and did not receive a *get* from her husband by *halakha*, they remain married. She is an *agunah* (chained woman) (Belzer, 2005; Starr, 2017) and unable to move on with her life freely (Starr, 2017).

The woman is considered an adulteress without a *get*. She is not entitled to a divorce or the freedom to live with, wed, or have children with a new spouse under Jewish law. Moreover, demeaning the children is "*mamzerim*" (illegitimate) (Joffe, 2017; Kaye, 2018). She is typically cut off from her children and shunned by the community due to her actions (Kaye, 2018).

Due to the stigma that persists into adulthood for the children of all Jewish denominations, Orthodox Jews have the lowest divorce rate. Rarely do the families of the abused resort to outside assistance. For the sake of their children's future marriage prospects, women frequently delay leaving abusive relationships (Starr, 2017).

Haredi victims of domestic violence are vulnerable to continued domestic violence during custody disputes with an abusive spouse. Despite the grave risks facing such victims, courts consider co-parents' religious practices in a way that is vulnerable to exacerbating the dynamics of domestic religious violence. Courts routinely tie child custody or visitation to specific types of religious practice and community norms or children's school rules. In doing so, the court creates a tool for abusers to use to continue domestic religious violence—with court enforcement (Kadish, 2020).

In the Jewish community, one of the most common and unique forms of family violence is the refusal to grant a divorce decree (Joffe, 2017; Rosenbloom et al. 2021; Starr, 2020). Jewish divorce decree refusal is categorized as spiritual abuse rather than emotional or psychological abuse (Starr, 2017).

Abusive aspects of co-parenting or custody procedures are maintaining the child's religious status quo by mandating certain religious practices, such as observing *Shabbat* and *kashrut* (Jewish dietary law); isolating survivors from outside resources; the child's continued attendance in a Jewish private school are court-imposed arrangements to continue domestic violence (Kadish, 2020).

Halakha Jewish law

"It is significant that since *Talmudic* times Jewish law has created a fundamentally unalterable corpus of law, at whose core is an unequal gender and power differential in which men control the privileged hegemonic center, while women are marginalized, relegated to a different area, namely, the domestic sphere, and denied the rights and privileges that men enjoy," (Goldstein, 2013, p. 6). *Halakha*, observed by religious Jews, places the *Shabbat* at the top of the hierarchy of legal authority (Kaye, 2018).

Weinberger specified that The *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law) contains laws that address different forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Husbands are commanded to love, honor, and respect their wives and should not abuse them in any way (Dorff, n.d.; Weinberger, 2005). Domestic violence is not acceptable and contradicts the nature of marriage and Jewish life, which should be focused on living without pain and suffering. When a woman reports abuse to her rabbi, it should be considered a fact (Weinberger, 2005). "Battered women rarely exaggerate" (Walker, 1979, p. xiv). Emotional abuse, such as name-calling, putting

down, or restricting activities, as well as sexual abuse, such as forcing or withholding sex, are all forms of abuse that do not involve physical violence (Weinberger, 2005).

While patriarchal and sexist attitudes have contributed to the mistreatment of women, there are laws in place to protect them and their children. Judaism promotes the value of life, and its laws serve as moral guidelines (Walker, 1997). Jewish law has maintained an unchangeable set of laws since Talmudic times, and at its core lies a power imbalance where men hold control over the privileged center. At the same time, women are marginalized and confined to the domestic sphere, lacking the same rights and privileges as men (Goldstein, 2013). In some extreme cases, husbands demand hundreds of thousands of dollars from their wives before granting them a *get* (Koblenz, 2009).

Criminal and Family Law

Abuse can be perpetuated further by the legal system, the abuser, judges, and lawyers by providing her with inappropriate treatment and responses. An individual receiving legal aid appeared in court sixty times in one year (Douglas, 2018). The United States criminal justice system did not provide much thought to the issue of violence against women and domestic abuse until around fifty years ago (Starheim, 2019). The consensus was that it was a private subject that should be discussed only among immediate family members (Starheim, 2019).

Domestic violence is a criminal offense. The justice system and other systems designed to protect the vulnerable are not set up with safety measures or to assist abused women and children (Jewish Women International, 2021). However, the definition of domestic violence is controversial and differs depending on the agency, researcher, legislative, legal, and criminal. Criminal penalties apply to acts of domestic violence. However, this only applies to evidence of physical abuse, not abuse that is not clearly demonstrated, i.e., verbal, emotional, or spiritual

abuse. Law enforcement is powerless to intervene since they cannot see it (Snyder, 2019). Domestic violence under Florida law is defined as "any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member" (Houseman, 2021).

Perpetrators typically have more resources and a more straightforward path to hiring experienced legal counsel. They may be able to test the parameters of the law because they are aware of those restrictions. They may have a strong understanding of the law and are conscious of the inherent prejudices in the judicial system (Prince, 2021). The system, courts, advocates, and judges are aware of the abuse against the wife and the children, yet they continue the abuse by forcing them to contact the husband and father. She cannot take her children and get away. She must live in proximity so he may have access to unsupervised visitation with his children (Walker, 2017). "Divorce, the most often recommended solution, does not stop the violence; batterers continue to harass, stalk, and abuse the women and their children, often assisted by a legal system that colludes with the men and invalidates the reports of women" (Walker, 1997, p. 266).

Synagogues' Response to DV

"When rabbis speak about domestic violence, it gives people permission to have open conversations about it. When rabbis do not speak about domestic abuse, it just reinforces its *shonda* nature" (Jacobs, 2018). Quote by Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben. Rabbis who deliver sermons about domestic violence create awareness in the congregation and lets those who are abused know there is help for them (Frisch-Klein, 2019; Greenbaum, 2002; Pesner, 2006; Rueben, 2016).

Some Jewish communities have acknowledged their role in addressing domestic violence and providing services that the state cannot provide while emphasizing traditional values (Ben-Lulu, 2021). Synagogues, community centers, and even grocery stores can provide abused women who do not have the capacity or cannot seek outside assistance with referrals to domestic violence resources (Murugan, 2022). To support victims of domestic violence, some synagogues have started to display information in their restrooms about local shelters and other resources for help. The posters confirm that abuse exists and provide an awareness that women are not alone, as well as information that safe places and resources are available (Chernikoff, 2021; Pesner, 2006). However, there have been instances where congregants removed this information due to being offended by the suggestion that Jewish families may need such referrals (Spiegel, 2016).

A Jewish community can help solve the problem of domestic violence by acknowledging it and supporting survivors. This means believing the abused, prioritizing safety, and being inclusive of all families. By supporting community-based programs and advocating for expanded services, an environment can be created where survivors feel safe to come forward and receive help. Spreading awareness, standing up for what is right, and promoting healthy relationships provide survivors with a supportive network. Collective power makes a positive difference (Frydman, 2021).

Support Available for Victims

Abused women initially turn to their families for support (Kirshbaum, 2020). Outside the family, the rabbi is the next person a woman might turn to (Dorff, n.d.; Walker, 2017), followed by her friends and trusted community. The wife does not contact hotlines/helplines, secular domestic violence programs, or medical or law professionals (Kirshbaum, 2020).

Although the majority of clergy from all backgrounds are eager to support victims of domestic violence, many lack the knowledge necessary to put safety plans in place for survivors, deal with emergencies or crises involving domestic violence, or respect the needs of survivors for safety during major life events (Prince, 2021).

Reasons for leaving

For Orthodox and conservative Jewish women, family and home are very important. Secular shelters that do not understand their religious or cultural beliefs can worsen the situation. Glenn and Goodman found in their work that emotional needs are not always met in these shelters, leaving women feeling isolated from their families, friends, and communities. Lack of support can be more damaging than the abuse they experience (Glenn & Goodman, 2015).

For many reasons, abused women stay longer in abusive marriages (Belzer, 2005). In Orthodox Jewish life, family is extremely important (Belzer, 2005; Murugan, 2022). However, leaving an abusive relationship can be difficult due to several barriers. These may include fear of tearing apart the family, concerns about the children's future, and the shame and stigma of leaving. Financial limitations and the expense of observing *kashrut* may also make it difficult to leave an abusive situation (Murugan, 2022). The wife may be under the impression that she must remain if she is to continue observing the Jewish religion (Levitt & Ware, 2006).

There are perceived barriers that can prevent someone from seeking help or resources for domestic violence. Some people may delay seeking help or not seek it at all because they fear disclosing the abuse to community members due to the fear of being stigmatized or not receiving support (Letourneau et al., 2019). Lacking funds, afraid of losing her children, being isolated from the outside world, and finding it difficult to communicate, the wife may want to remain

within her community to be able to maintain dietary and Sabbath (Fontes, 2020) and preserve her strong relationship with the synagogue and community (Murugan, 2022).

Why abused women do not leave is complicated and often perilous (Frydman, 2021). Victims' responses to abuse, including whether or not they seek help, are influenced by their cultural and religious backgrounds (Widawski, 2007). Women who are viewed by the majority of cultures as the person who holds the family together regularly remain with the abuser (George & Wesley, 2021).

Previous research shows a great deal of fear associated with leaving their husbands. Often, the wife cannot leave (Ain, 2018). There is also a fear of losing their children or being denied services due to their children's presence (DeVoe, & Smith, 2003; Streyffeler, 2017; Widawski, 2007). The wife is afraid of losing custody of her children in civil and *beit din* (Rabbinical court) (Streyffeler, 2017) and not receiving a *get* (Letourneau et al., 2019; Aghtaie et al., 2020).

Leaving a domestic violence situation may also harm children; it can disrupt their lives, school, and friendships (Dorff, 2014). Children moving in and out of a home or shelter can sometimes lead to instability and confusion (Selvik, Raaheim, A, & Øverlien, 2017). The wife stays to protect her children, for whom the upheaval of her departure would be difficult. The act of fleeing an abusive home is a source of shame and is viewed negatively by others. Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox communities adhere to traditional Jewish law, and leaving is a disgrace that jeopardizes her children's opportunity to attend private schools and their future marriage prospects (Schick, 2017).

Conversations between Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox people frequently center on money and finance. They choose to live in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods, are active members of

a synagogue, send their children to private religious schools, and adhere to strict *kashrut* guidelines. These come at a steep price for families. Due to their low income, they must rely on *gemachs* (free loans) to cover their daily living costs. (Newfeld, 2020).

Reasons to stay

The reasons a woman stays in an abusive marriage within the Jewish community are complex (Belzer, 2005). Ideals, traditions, and a lack of knowledge about domestic violence can contribute to a woman's self-imposed imprisonment in an abusive relationship (Kadish, 2020). For example, choosing a new location close to a synagogue can be difficult due to the potential danger of being close to the abuser and the fear of judgment and discrimination from synagogue members (Light, 2006). This can create a difficult choice between leaving an unsafe relationship and staying in a community (Frydman, 2021; Schick, 2017). In addition, a mother's decision to leave is linked to the safety of her children (Dorff, 2014). Many battered women remain in abusive relationships because they love their husbands and want to keep their marriages intact (Debeer, 1988).

The Jewish community's ideals and traditions, as well as lack of knowledge, disbelief, and stigmatization, serve as a silent conspiracy to imprison a woman in an abusive marriage for many years (Light, 2006). *Shalom bayit* can also keep women from leaving (Guthartz, 2004). Additionally, Jewish women tend to stay in abusive relationships longer for various reasons. However, barriers to leaving an abusive relationship can be made even more difficult by societal beliefs, misconceptions, religious teachings, and laws unique to Jews (Schick, 2017).

Victims of domestic violence often stay in abusive relationships not because they are weak or enjoy pain but because they want to protect their families. The abuser has threatened to harm or take away their children if they leave. Some women may also choose to stay to make the

relationship work rather than end it altogether (Pogrebin, 2005). Jewish women may also stay longer in abusive relationships due to difficulty finding appropriate shelters that cater to their religious needs (Propp, 2005). Ultimately, she would not have a place to live (Letourneau et al., 2019).

Survivors of domestic violence often feel ashamed and pressured by their Jewish families, making them hesitant to seek help. This reluctance is especially prevalent when they have young children living at home because custody battles can be lengthy and antagonistic. It is common for abusers to be granted custody, which can intensify the survivor's fear and reluctance to leave the abusive situation (Ellison, 2021). The JWI needs assessment survey aims to determine the prevalence of domestic violence in the Jewish community. However, this can be challenging to measure because discussing this issue is often forbidden (Chernikoff, 2021).

Reasons for not reporting

Freedman (2005) recounted, “Orthodox Jewish women reported the following reasons for not reporting their abuse according to the sample: shame 50%, denied abuse 28%, felt it was own fault 11%, love abuse 6%, and no one to tell 6%” (p. 107). The data provided for this study underestimates the real risk of abuse, as women often do not report it to hospital staff due to fear of authorities. Healthcare professionals only detect 5% of battered women, and the emergency department is often the only contact for abused women (Freedman, 2005).

History of Domestic Violence Intervention

Interventions/Shelters

The first feminist-initiated domestic violence shelter was established in England in 1971 by Erin Pizzy called Chiswick Women's Aid. When her first client was brutally beaten, she realized there was no legal protection for women against domestic violence. This led to research on the frequency and causes of domestic violence, highlighting the need for community shelters

to protect abused women and their children. The Battered Women's Movement eventually spread nationally and internationally (Simic, 2020). Domestic violence interventions have changed since the origination of shelters in the 1970s. Funding was of great importance in order to provide safe refuge, services addressing safety and mental health, and to increase knowledge of domestic violence (Hackett et al., 2016). Because of this shift in intervention ideology, the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, more commonly referred to as the Duluth model, came into existence. This model places the focus of intervention on the offender rather than the survivor (Hackett et al., 2016). The Duluth model implemented a multifaceted program and the power and control wheel, supporting the hypothesis that patriarchal ideation is the source of violent behavior in intimate relationships.

There are two versions of the power and control wheels. (see Appendix C, Appendix D) The first is the above-mentioned, created by the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project. The other was created by a group of Jewish women for Jewish women. The Jewish power and control wheel was a team effort with the staff and Frydman under her direction as the program director at Met Council in 2012. The decision to create the wheel was to document the actual words of abused women who sought counseling and resources at Met Council. Jewish women wrote the wheel for Jewish women. Once the wheel was constructed during counseling sessions, the clients were shown the completed wheel and asked to fill in the spaces of a blank copy with their own words. It proved to be validating and beneficial for the clients. Frydman is currently the executive director of the Shalom Task Force.

This researcher retrieved a copy of the Duluth and Jewish models of the power and control wheel on the Shalom Task Force website's educational guides and resources page. It is a useful educational tool for domestic violence survivors to see they are not alone and as an

example for attorneys to better understand and help the women when they are clients (S. Frydman, personal communication, July 2023). The two versions contain eight categories that explain the abuser's coercive ways he manipulates the victim. The Jewish version has two different categories, and the ten categories are pertinent to her life according to Jewish law and how he controls her (Shalom Task Force, 2020).

Walker's cycle of violence theory began with the commonalities of her (Barnes, 1999; Copenhaver, 2019) clients at the domestic violence center (Copenhaver, 2019; Sangeetha et al., 2022). After further investigation, she found similar characteristics, which led to the development of the term Battered Woman and Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS) (Barnes, 1999; Copenhaver, 2019). Walker's cycle of abuse theory is scientifically valid and widely used; she is renowned among DV survivors, experts, and literature (Copenhaver, 2019). The term 'Battered Woman' has been cited most in domestic violence literature, with 530 references since 1996 (Sangeetha et al., 2022). Walker (2017) defines Battered Woman Syndrome as having seven identified psychological signs and symptoms. Walker's (2017) identification of the seven is as follows

1. reexperiencing the trauma events intrusively,
2. high levels of arousal and anxiety,
3. high levels of avoidance and numbing of emotions,
4. cognitive difficulties,
5. disruption in interpersonal relationships,
6. physical health and body image problems, and
7. sexual and intimacy issues (p.3).

BWS is due to the victim's heightened sensitivity to the perpetrator's repeated acts of domestic violence and as a valid legal defense for their violent actions (Barnes, 1999).

Walker noted that almost four decades later, the “feminist battered women’s movement” continues to focus on battered women’s shelters and services. The attempt to prevent husbands from abusing their wives or helping free them from their abuse and their communities' abuse has been less than adequate (Walker, 2017). Even with the #MeToo movement, Jewish women continue to be stigmatized for attempting to discuss their abuse (Ain, 2018). Frisch-Klein was abused in her first marriage, which established the reason for writing the book to help survivors heal throughout the Jewish year (M. Frisch-Klein, personal communication, November, 2015).

Frisch-Klein wrote, “To my daughters, Anna, Gabrielle and Sarah, you have lived this book with me. You learned too much from this story too young. Sadly, you have your own #MeToo moments. I dream of a day where our grandchildren and great-grandchildren do not” (2019, p. 167).

Secular vs. Jewish Shelters

Jewish women have special needs and require shelters that are considerate of their culture (Prince, 2021). Secular shelters do not follow religious customs (Letourneau et al., 2019), and there are gaps in therapists' knowledge regarding their clients' religious and ethnocultural practices (Murugan, 2022). Jewish women generally make insufficient use of available support services (Murugan, 2022). There is a demand for housing of all types, including subsidized apartments and houses (Letourneau et al., 2019). It is less common for Jewish women to seek refuge in emergency shelters in the immediate aftermath of fleeing an abusive relationship (Koblenz, 2009).

Jewish Women's Aid (JWA) aided more than 400 women and 110 children at the end of 2015. The need is greater than ever, and the service is in demand (Dickson, 2019). While the Jewish community is meeting immediate needs, it is not doing enough to promote long-term recovery and self-sufficiency (Frydman, 2021). The shame of being a victim of domestic violence or a failed marriage is a major obstacle for survivors pursuing support (Frydman, 2021).

Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews often live in close-knit communities near places of worship, *kosher* (Jewish dietary) stores, *mikvah* (ritual purity bath) and other religious institutions. Importance is placed on adhering to religious principles such as daily prayer, observing the Sabbath, following laws of family purity, and maintaining a *kosher* lifestyle. These practices are fundamental to women's culture and existence (Murugan, 2022).

When a woman arrives at a shelter, she needs a safe and temporary refuge where violence is absent, and she can start to heal and feel empowered. The shelter should provide support, transitional housing, and necessary goods and services for her safety and well-being (Brown, 2018). Empowerment is a two-fold intervention that may decrease or increase domestic abuse. It is individually specific and dependent on her community and beliefs (Kiani, Simbar, Fakari, Kazemi, Ghasemi, Azimi, Mokhtariyan, & Bazzazian, 2021). *"Don't be part of the problem-help us to become part of the solution"* (Dickson, 2019, np.). [Emphasis added]

Secular shelters and resources, i.e., counselors, advocates, and attorneys, do not have the cultural knowledge specific to Jewish women and therefore risk retraumatizing them (Chernikoff, 2021; Scarf, 1988). Many counselors do not know that Jewish women who have experienced abuse often feel alienated because of their culture and minority status in the United States (Fairchild, 2010).

Not many shelters help observant Jewish women, and most do not have religious services or kosher food (Debeer, 1988). Most emergency shelters lack the capacity or motivation to assist kosher-observant Jews (Schick, 2017). Unfortunately, many secular shelters choose to serve pork because it is inexpensive (Jenefsky, 2012; Myers, 2009). A haredi Orthodox woman cannot stay in traditional shelters due to their inability to adhere to strict kosher and Sabbath rules, which are crucial to their religious practices (Myers, 2009). For instance, lighting candles on *Shabbat* (Jewish sabbath), essential for Jewish women, is not permissible in most secular shelters (Chapman, 2022). Direct quote by Korman, who began Bat Melech Jewish shelter in Israel to Sommer, It is very hard to be a religious woman in a secular battered women's shelter, which is why it is so difficult for us to turn women away. Often there is a big-screen television in a central place that cannot be avoided; *Shabbat* [observance] is violated everywhere, and they cannot eat the food. It is very difficult, and to make things worse, the children's fathers can point to these conditions in a religious court and argue that the mother is taking the children away from a religious lifestyle, and they will risk losing custody. So, many religious women would rather stay in an abusive situation than bring their children to a regular shelter (2012).

Women who seek refuge in a secular shelter may find it difficult to maintain their Jewish traditions. This can also separate her children from their Jewish school, friends, and community (Streyffeler, 2017). Secular shelters may not provide employment and education services, making it challenging for women to transition to independent living (Brown, Serpe, & Brammer, 2020). Employment and education are requisite (Kiani et al., 2021).

Shelters should be a healing and empowering refuge for traumatized women who are closely housed and may not be attainable due to inadequate budgets and supplies (Brown et al., 2020). It is imperative for women in a shelter to feel a sense of peace, secure, comfortable, and

supported. They deserve the opportunity to feel empowered to make decisions for themselves, not feel as if they continue to have no choices (Hughes, 2020). Shelters may increase her safekeeping and her ability to communicate and make decisions effectively (Kiani et al., 2021). “Jewish agencies can respond to the duty to save the lives of abused Jews by establishing shelters of their own or by providing resources for people to live on their own” (Dorff, n.d., p.5).

Jewish women, especially those with strict religious boundaries, do not need to explain their ethnic and religious beliefs, may abide by *kashrut*, and use a *mikvah* (Jacobs, 2018). Women from this community need Jewish shelters to have a safe space that is culturally specific to their needs (Ben-Porat & Sror-Bondarevsky, 2021). According to Dratch “For many who live their lives within a Jewish context, the way toward healing and wholeness is within a Jewish context” (2004, p. xvi).

Living in a vulnerable space should not be mandatory for anyone, and it is crucial to seek community support and shelter when needed. Safe environments are needed, especially for Jewish women (Rosenbloom & Valente, 2020). Bat Melech provides a *kosher* kitchen in accordance with *kashrut*, accommodations to observe *Shabbat* (Sommer, 2012). Beyond what is provided at Bat Melech, Jewish women need other items such as *mezzuzot*, (Pogrebin, 2005) and a *mikvah* in accordance with *halakha* (Jacobs, 2018).

Jacobs (2018) noted, “Jewish victims, particularly the more observant, often turn to Jewish agencies that understand Judaism because abusers often use religion as a means of control, e.g., forcing or not allowing victims to use a mikvah or adhere to *kashrut*” (np). Furthermore, "We speak from the Jewish community to the Jewish community," Youdovin said. "There's a whole cultural community that wants to get services from people who understand the pressure" (Schick, 2017). (Quoted in the interview)

Women's shelters are vital services for victims of domestic partner violence against women, as longer stays are associated with greater success in leaving violent cycles. Emotional abuse, rather than physical violence, was a significant factor in the length of shelter stays. Women who make their first attempt at leaving violent partners stay in shelters longer than those who have previously attempted to leave. The decision to seek help has emotional implications that potentially lengthen shelter stays. Violence perpetrated against children did not necessarily result in longer shelter stays (Ben-Porat & Sror-Bondarevsky, 2021). Shelter stays are dependent on the needs of the survivors. Short-term stays of a few days or weeks ensure immediate security and lodging. On the other hand, long-term stays ranging from months to years set the conditions for repairing the damage caused by the abuser and the opportunity to begin an entirely new way of living (Jewkes, 2022). Whether a survivor decides to stay or leave an emergency shelter depends largely on her assessment of the degree to which her quality of life has improved, regardless of other factors (Fisher & Stylianou, 2019). When workers at domestic violence facilities are not properly trained, it can lead to survivors reliving the traumatic abuse (Prince, 2021). It can be traumatic for survivors to describe the abuse (Chernikoff, 2021; Schick, 2017).

Getting help for domestic violence can be retraumatizing and difficult. Women who call for help are asked for their address during intake, which can be challenging, especially if they are still with the abuser or homeless. Seeking help can also be stigmatizing and lacking in empathy. In addition, many services may be under-resourced or ill-equipped to meet the housing needs of victims. These factors, along with the "interactional burden" that women face in institutional interactions can prevent them from leaving abusive situations (Weatherall & Tennent, 2021).

Women are not obliged to live in a *sukkah* (hut with a leaf and branch roof), and no one should be expected to live in an unsafe space. When space is not secure, the community should

provide shelter. We need to support all who live within our 'virtual walls'/community and create a safe place for everyone (Rosenbloom & Valente, 2020). In this way, we can use the power of community for good (Weatherall & Tennent, 2021). (Frisch-Klein, 2019) described,

> This holiday is filled with imagery that works for healing. "*Ufros Aleinu Sukkat Shlomecha,"* the *Haskivenu* prayer demands in the evening service, "Spread over us the shelter*, sukkah* of Your peace." By using the word *Sukkah,* it acknowledges that peace is as fragile as a *sukkah*. Safety can be fleeting. Housing can be impermanent. A strong wind could blow it down (p. 49).

Additionally, Ben-Lulu, (2021) identified, "Jewish communities have indeed come to understand that they have a role in coping with the issue and providing services that the state is unable to provide, while emphasizing Jewish values" (p. 632). The Jerusalem Shelter for Battered Women believes in treating each woman as an individual and breaking down stereotypes of battered women. This is especially important in Israeli society, where domestic violence is often denied (Leibowitz, 1988).

Legal services in women's domestic violence shelters are often unaffordable or not easily accessible, the attorneys and women are incompatible, and judicial procedures frequently frighten them. Their needs vary depending on their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sociocultural background, and religion. Additionally, women are generally terrified of legal procedures (Wright & Bertrand, 2017). The JWI needs assessment survey determined: the necessity to be permanent legal aid available from trauma-informed attorneys, the significance of culturally appropriate methods, an increase in the availability of low-cost housing in Jewish neighborhoods, options for recovery from financial abuse, and to establishing stable financial futures (Rosenbloom, 2021).

Bat Melech established its first shelter in a Jerusalem apartment in 1995, and since then, it has expanded to include two additional locations: one in Jerusalem and another in central Israel. From that time forward, the organization has assisted 1000 women and 4500 children (Meyers, 2015). When a woman leaves an abusive relationship, she typically has to make significant life changes and sacrifices as a result. Even after leaving a domestic violence shelter, survivors still have various requirements (Stylianou & Hoge, 2021).

With the MeToo movement and in places like New York City, where there are Jewish shelters and services, a better sense of security may be created for more women to report their domestic violence and seek help (Ain, 2018). Talking to a service provider increases a woman's likelihood of leaving an abusive relationship by 2.6 times (Jacobs, 2018).

Shelter Resources

The programs and services available to women in domestic violence shelters are substantial. These frequently include individual and group counseling, support and educational groups, and assistance and sources outside of the shelter (Hughes, 2020). Domestic violence shelters and resources may provide ongoing assistance to survivors from the woman's arrival through the various stages of transition until she is independent (Stylianou & Hoge, 2021).

The women have a secure dwelling away from the abuser and violence and are offered the opportunity to feel empowered, encouraged, and free to choose for themselves (Hughes, 2020). Shelters for battered women also offered clients access to medical and legal services and provided a safe space for residents. A shelter offers more than just a haven. One of the women at Bet Melech is leaving with more strength and vigor than before, ready to live independently (Meyers, 2015).

Assessments Needed upon Arrival

Domestic violence service providers need to complete a thorough assessment of the survivor's goals, violence and trauma, health, the survivor's knowledge of the effects of violence, a safety plan, her medical and legal access upon her arrival to determine beneficial treatments and emergency shelter, one-on-one or group counseling, and services for legal and medical representation (Macy et al., 2018).

New JWI report

JWI released *Domestic Violence in the Jewish Community*, a groundbreaking report that found Jewish communities in the United States lack safe shelter, legal services, acknowledgment and support. Six recommendations (Chapter 5) for acting were endorsed (Ellison, 2021).

JWI's report recognized that in addition to what is required for survivors, most Jewish organizations and their employees are unfamiliar with the procedures necessary to carry out protective court orders that prohibit communication between an abuser and a child. A deeper lack of knowledge in security pointed to a broader ignorance of security policy best practices and the institutions' legal responsibilities (Chernikoff, 2021).

Frydman, (2021) acknowledged that JWI's report revealed several major conclusions: (1) the importance of community, (2) being coerced to leave her home and Jewish community is painful, (3) the deficiency of instruction and preparation, rabbis are unable to address matters relating to domestic violence effectively, (4) the intense shame connected to being a domestic abuse survivor or even exiting a violent marriage, as well as how to live in the community while ending an unsafe relationship, is one of the biggest obstacles for survivors who seek help (Frydman, 2021).

National statistics are available to provide numbers of cases of abuse, but they do not specify any data specifically for Jewish women. This information is difficult to find because of

the severe underreporting in the Jewish community (Rosenbloom et al., 2021). Even with poorly reported statistics, there is no question that domestic violence occurs (Barnard, n.d.). Domestic violence affects one out of every four women in the United States (Jacobs, 2018; Evans, et al., 2020). Of the over five million Jews in the United States, 10% are Orthodox, and 70% of the Orthodox population is comprised of young adults (18-25) (Murugan, 2022).

While there is no exact data on how prevalent domestic violence is within Jewish families, domestic violence programs designed for Jewish survivors are very busy and struggling to keep up with the demand for services. These programs are not even aware of the full extent of what is happening because many survivors seek help from private therapists, attorneys, and their personal connections (Ellison, 2021).

When Pew Research asked 68,398 United States Jews if being Jewish is a matter of religion, ancestry, or culture, most do not see being Jewish as primarily about religion but do derive a great deal of meaning from spending time with family, continuing family traditions, being part of a Jewish community, eating traditional Jewish foods, observing Jewish law, leading an ethical and moral life, working for justice and equality in society, and being intellectually curious. These are essential aspects of being Jewish. For Orthodox Jews, 40% is solely about religion. At the same time, another three-tenths believe it is about some combination of religion, genealogy, and culture, or all three, with over 80% believing that *halakha* is the most important aspect (Pew Research Center, 2021). In 2020 (Rosenbloom et al., 2021), the lead researchers for the JWI study "A National Needs Assessment" national survey was conducted to assess the needs of the Jewish community regarding different types of abuse, including those specific to Jewish families. The statistics obtained from the survey were similar to those of the general population. The stats are "emotional/psychological abuse (98%), physical abuse (93%), financial

abuse (93%), conflict around custody (88%), isolation or ostracization (84%), and sexual violence (84%), and get abuse (81%)" (Rosenbloom et al., 2021, p. 18).

Approximately 15 to 19 percent of Jewish households in this country experience domestic violence. Jews as a collective are often concerned with maintaining a positive appearance and may not like to acknowledge when members of their community engage in negative behaviors (Debeer, 1988).

Silence

The phrase "*shtika k'hoda-ah*" means that silence implies agreement. Sometimes staying silent allows for injustice and suffering to continue. When someone is too afraid to speak, others must speak and break the silence. Living in a home where people are afraid to speak their minds is not a good place to live. This goes against Rava's teaching that communication is essential to having a peaceful home (Rosenbloom, 2018).

According to the JWI DV resources directory there are 40 Jewish domestic violence resources and three Jewish shelters in the United States. The South Florida tri-county area has four Jewish resources and one Jewish shelter and apartment. Domestic violence resources are available through two Jewish Family Service facilities in Palm Beach County; resources are available through one Jewish Family Service facility in Broward County, and domestic violence resources, as well as an emergency shelter and a safe house for interim housing through Jewish Community Services in Miami-Dade county (JWI, 2021).

The tri-county Jewish female population and the number of abused Jewish females are 96,738 and 36,663 (World Population Review, 2023c, 2023b). The Jewish female population and the number of abused Jewish females are Palm Beach County: 23,666 and 8,969 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022c; World Population Review, 2023e), Broward County: 30,710 and 11,639 (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2022a; World Population Review, 2023a), and Miami-Dade County 42,362 and 16,055 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022b; World Population Review, 2023d). These are estimated populations for 2023 and abused for 2022. In 2019, Jewish females killed by the abuser and those killed by firearms were Palm Beach County: 19 and 8, Broward County: 24 and 10, and Miami-Dade County: 34 and 14. These are estimated numbers (NCADV, 2020).

Jewish Population Estimates

	Total Population 2023	3% Est. Jewish Population 2023	Female Percentage	Est. Jewish Female Population	Est. Jewish Female Abused Population 37.9%	Est. Jewish Female Killed Population 0.21%	Est. Jewish Female Killed by Firearms 42%
Florida (actual)	22,661,577	657,095	51.1%	335,776	127,259	267	112
Palm Beach Cty	1,543,809	46,314	51.1%	23,666	8,969	19	8
Broward Cty	2,003,268	60,098	51.1%	30,710	11,639	24	10
Miami Dade Cty	2,763,366	82,901	51.1%	42,362	16,055	34	14
	6,310,443	189,313		96,738	36,663	77	32

Col B-Total Population 2023-Actual Numbers
Col C-3% Est Jewish Population-3% of Col B
Col D-Female Percentage-51.1%
Col E-Est Jewish Female Population-51.1% of Col C
Col F-Est. Jewish Female Abused Population-37.9% of Col E
Col G-Est. Jewish Female Killed Population-.21% of Col F
Col H-Est. Jewish Female Killed by Firearms-42% of Col G

Table 1: Tri-county Jewish female population and the number of abused Jewish females (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022b; World Population Review, 2023b, 2023c,2023d, 2023e).

Deficiencies in Literature and Research

Despite the widespread nature of abuse and violence in the home, the Jewish community has not produced a significant amount of literature on the subject (Freedman, 2005). There is insufficient research on women of extreme Orthodoxy (Band-Winterstein & Tuito, 2018). There is a lack of studies and peer-reviewed journal articles about Jewish domestic violence, specifically the need for Jewish shelters. Much of the evidence was found in seminal works such as the *Torah,* Rabbinic sermons and commentaries, thesis/dissertations, Jewish online

publications and reports, educational websites, newspapers, and magazines. Despite the widespread nature of abuse and violence in the home, the Jewish community has not produced a significant amount of literature on the subject (Ben-Lulu, 2021; Freedman, 2005).

Summary of Chapter 2

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the various definitions of domestic violence, including an explanation of which definition is an appropriate basis for this study. Next, there is a discussion about various types of abuse, the abuse cycle, and the challenges domestic violence victims must endure to survive in the relationship. Next, the chapter explores what behaviors and actions perpetuate domestic violence to frame the dynamic further. The chapter explored Judaism and the various laws that often contradict each other, leading to many challenges for Jewish women who must navigate the culture and faith with violence imposed upon them and how synagogues have responded to domestic violence within their community. A discussion followed, which presented a comparison and contrast of secular and Jewish shelters and the various needs and resources specific to Jewish domestic violence shelters considering the culture and faith of Jewish women. The chapter then summarizes that while much is known about domestic violence, there is a lack of understanding of the lived experiences of Jewish women who face domestic violence and must seek shelter. Our understanding of Jewish women does not consider how one's faith and culture impact her decision to leave an abusive relationship. Moreover, many shelters are ill-equipped to provide the faith-based, cultural support necessary for a Jewish woman. This study aims to fill that gap in the literature and serve as a source of best practices to serve better Jewish women who seek assistance in a situation that is already traumatizing.

RQ1: How do domestic violence advocates describe their experiences with Jewish female victims?

Chapter 3: Methodology

A qualitative case study was used to conduct this research. The research attempted to get to the center, the essence, of advocate experiences within a certain setting and environment. Qualitative research is “the means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables which in turn can be measured so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures” (Austin & Sutton, 2014, p. 436). There is no generalization in qualitative research; it is an interpretation of the lived experiences of those in the study (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

Qualitative research focuses on participants' perceptions of a life event to interpret what participants say to illuminate their motivations. Therefore, strategies should be selected that encourage free and unrestrained communication between participants (Austin & Sutton, 2014). Feminist Theory is an approach that will be used to frame the research. Landman (2006) indicates, “Feminist methodology is specifically concerned with how, or whether, knowledge produced about social life can be connected with the social realities of women in the context of any methodology that is dominated by men and that neglects consideration of the gendered nature of social life” (p. 430). Moreover, the goal of feminist research is for women who are disregarded and silenced to end the marginalization of all women (Landman, 2006), improve the lives of women despite their “inferiority” in a patriarchal gender-based world, and empower their emergence from oppression (Baird & Mitchell, 2014). Feminist Theory approach will aid this female researcher in understanding the experiences of the advocates of Jewish women who are survivors of domestic violence through the participants’ responses and how they continue to deal with victimized Jewish women and their daily struggles.

According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), “Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (p. 51). When doing a case study, a “flexible” approach is used, and the objectives are amenable to alteration if the circumstances so dictate (Aaltio & Heilmann, 2009). Case study researchers, through the use of interviews, seek to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the participants’ views (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Yin’s (2003) definition of a case is where the researcher seeks to view a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context where the boundaries are unclear, and the researcher has no control over the phenomenon or the context in which it occurs. Thus, the case study in an empirical inquiry into the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions of a phenomenon of interest (Yazin, 2015). In describing Yin’s approach to case study design, Baxter & Jack (2008) state that

> a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context (p. 545).

Yin subscribes to four types of case study, explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, and multiple case study. A descriptive case study describes an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003). In designing a descriptive study, or any case study, from Yin’s perspective, a researcher must become fully versed in the research literature and related frameworks to distinguish it from other qualitative methods (Yazin, 2015). Then, a researcher must plan and develop a sequential set of

components, the study's research questions; its propositions, if any; its unit(s) of analysis; the logic linking the data to the propositions; and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yazin, 2015). Data collection rests upon the researcher's training and investigation skills, developing protocols, screening participants, and deciding who is selected for the case (Yazin, 2015).

For this study, a descriptive case study was used because the researcher described the lived experiences of domestic violence advocates who work with Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence. This study considered how the advocates engage with Jewish women considering their cultural and religious background in light of the domestic violence trauma. In describing this real-life phenomenon, the research hoped to better understand the connections between advocating and adherence to culture and faith.

The tri-county area was an appropriate site for this research because the advocates worked closely with Jewish female domestic violence survivors and understood the needs of the women. The South Florida counties of Palm Beach et al. Jewish female population was slightly over 96,000, with an estimated almost one-third of the women victims of domestic violence (World Population Review, 2023c, 2023b). These numbers are underreported for various reasons. *Halakha* and denial are two serious causes for women not to report (Graetz, 1998; Jenefsky, 2012). These barriers prevented women from reporting and leaving, which created more danger for them and their children. Judaism, especially among the highly religious Jews, i.e., Hasidic and Haredi, continues to follow life as a patriarchal society, which generates gender inequality and marginalization of women. The contradictions of abuse in the *Torah* claim there are times when men are recommended to act. Within the three are extremely limited resources and services, as recorded by JWI's most current listings of Jewish domestic violence shelters and resources. It was reported that four facilities with one shelter and safe

house (JWI, 2021). Upon further investigation, this researcher found that the domestic violence resources were a single department within the Jewish Community Services that provided services for many different areas of Jewish life.

Participants

This research study used qualitative interviewing data collection using purposeful sampling. Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood (2013) defined, "Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest" (p. 533). Qualitative research benefits from small sample size to get a deep look and better understand the "how and why" of the phenomenon in question (Dworkin, 2012). This study had a maximum of four participants. The participants in this study were limited to advocates with domestic violence service providers in the South Florida area. This study discovered a more in-depth understanding of Jewish female domestic violence survivors through the perspectives of the advocates who worked with them; therefore, these participants provided a rich, in-depth perception through their experiences.

Qualitative Interview Protocol

The qualitative interview protocol used semi-structured questions using a case study approach. The case study approach sought to understand the experiences of domestic violence advocates who worked with Jewish women who were victims of domestic violence. The experiences of the advocates were instrumental to the overall understanding of the cultural and religious needs of Jewish women who seek assistance at a domestic violence shelter. Semi-structured interview questions elicited a flexible, balanced conversation where the interviewer gently guided the interview by asking the participant questions, listening intently to what was

said to draw further details and information to understand their feelings, hopes and dreams for a deep view into their world. Interviews are “conversations with a purpose” and are relatively informal in person or by telephone (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022).

Subject Recruitment/Participant Selection

The specific criteria for these participants was that they worked closely with the survivors and had personal knowledge focused on domestic violence, especially within the Jewish community. The participants knew the intricacies of the effects of Judaic teachings, misconceptions, and the cultural needs of the survivors. Their direct day-to-day involvement in the procedures and the complications of working with survivors provided a deeper understanding of their perspectives.

The researcher placed telephone calls to South Florida domestic violence facilities to obtain the advocates’ names and spoke with them directly. Each potential participant was explained the purpose of the call, the details of the research study, and asked for their participation in the study through one Zoom interview lasting one-hour to one-and-one-half-hours. With their consent to participate each participant was informed that the interviews were confidential and completely voluntary, allowing them to end the interview or refuse to answer any questions at any time. During the call they were asked to select (1) whether they preferred video and audio or audio only for the interviews, and (2) a pseudonym of their choice to protect their identity. The participants were given a fictitious email address and facility name in order to further safeguard their anonymity. They were informed that they would receive a detailed email immediately following the call, and a reminder email with their distinctive Zoom link.

The email contained a copy of the interview questions, an informed consent form, and in the essence of time during the interview, a document with brief demographic questions. The

participants were reminded that the interviews were voluntary and confidential, that they could stop the interview or refuse to answer any questions at any time. They were informed that the information provided during the interview would be published with their chosen pseudonyms and fictitious facility name, and their names would not be associated with the publication. They received a copy of the interview and an informed consent form. They were required to return the electronically signed and dated informed consent form along with the completed document of demographic questions. The researcher sent a reminder email the day prior to the interviews with the interview time and private Zoom link.

Data Collection/Instrument

The researcher conducted each interview with the participants on Zoom with their choice of video and audio or audio only. Each participant was reminded that the interview was voluntary and may decide to stop at any time or refuse to answer any questions. The researcher began each interview with a review of the study and the informed consent form, and the interview process was confidential. The participant was reminded that the information they provided during the interview would be published with their chosen pseudonym and the fictitious facility name and their names would not be associated with the publication.

Data gathered during interviews was stored in a retrievable format. The most accurate way to do this was by audio-recording (with the participant's permission). Moreover, video recording was useful for gathering data as it recorded the researcher's observations during the interview, which was captured using audio alone. The study used video recording from the researcher's home computer through Zoom. The researcher ensured a secure connection for conducting the Zoom interview. Participants received a unique Zoom link via email before the scheduled interview time. Participants were given a pseudonym to protect their privacy. The

researcher kept a list of participants and their pseudonyms. The researcher also used an audio recording device as a backup in case of malfunction. Participants were provided with a consent form before the start of the interview, and verbal consent was obtained once the recording has begun. Recordings were transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy against the audio or video recording, and all personally identifiable information was removed from the transcript. The data was acquired through the interview process of this study. They interacted with each participant conversationally to help develop more questions and answers about their experience working with abused Jewish women and their perceptions of the needs of the women.

Each interview was recorded on Zoom and meticulously watched and listened to by the researcher during the analysis process. To ensure the absolute safekeeping of the original recorded interviews, the researcher downloaded the information onto the computer and an external hard drive that was password protected and accessible only by the researcher. The data, like the recorded interviews, was transcribed directly to the researcher's computer for accuracy and protection. This protected the confidentiality of the participants.

Data Analysis

The researcher used open coding as part of the analysis process. "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldafia, 2009, p.3). In open coding, the researcher is identifying distinct concepts and themes for categorization to express "data and phenomena in the form of concepts. Units of meaning classify expressions (single words, short sequences of words) in order to attach annotations and "concepts" (Flick, 2009, p. 307). The recorded videos were watched to identify body language and facial expressions to determine non-verbal messages. The audio was played to hear changes

in tone depicting emotions that are heard and not seen. The transcriptions were reviewed, searching for words or phrases that form a theme. The reviews were completed several times to evaluate the repeated words and phrases that the participants revealed during the interviews, which are symptomatic of abused Jewish women. As a theme is recognized, the words and phrases are coded and placed into the appropriate categories.

In the next phase of the analysis, the researcher classified the data by tagging and grouping the data into various categories and looking for what captured their attention and supported the purpose of the study (Baptiste, 2002). Next, the researcher made connections among those categories and then connected them to existing theories or frameworks, which broaden our understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Baptiste, 2002). The result of this analysis was presented in the form of findings that addressed the problem statement and research question.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the small sample size. While quantitative research can provide numerous results with a large sample, qualitative research allows the researcher to present a rich and holistic view of lived experiences, which cannot be done using quantitative survey instruments.

A second limitation was the inability to interview Jewish women who are the victims of domestic violence and may or may not have sought assistance at either a secular or Jewish-focused domestic violence shelter. The ideal and most accurate option would have been to interview the abused Jewish women directly, which, in itself, had several limitations. First, the facilities must follow strict confidentiality to find women to participate in the study. This prevents the facilities from releasing any confidential information. Secondly, the researcher

could request the facilities to check their records and contact former clients to participate. The time and effort to accomplish this request was prohibitive, and the facilities' probability of agreeing is nil. Next, feelings of fear, shame, insecurity, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and others could prevent women from agreeing to participate. Last, the rabbis in the counties could have increased the sample size, but denial and lack of knowledge were obstacles.

A third limitation was the possibility of bias and judgment by the participants based on their own lived experiences beyond working with their clients. While the participants had first-hand experience working with these women, they discussed their experiences about what they know, think, and feel, mostly their perception of what the women have reported. The researcher ensured that the participants presented the lived experiences of the women they served and not their personal experiences by clarifying responses to the researcher's questions.

Summary

This chapter explained the various steps that were conducted in the collection and analysis of data. Although there were a couple of limitations to this study, the research derived from this study helped our understanding of the experiences of domestic violence advocates who assisted Jewish women who were victims of domestic violence.

Chapter 4: Results

This qualitative research study included interviews with four advocates who worked with Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence. The case study addressed the following research question. How do domestic violence advocates uniquely perceive their role in working with Jewish victims of domestic violence?

Participant Profiles

The participants were selected from four domestic violence service providers in the Tri-County area. Each participant has 5-10 years of experience and has personal knowledge focused on domestic violence, especially within the Jewish community. Each participant was asked a series of semi-structured interview questions included in Appendix H. Each participant was asked to reflect on their perception and experiences as an advocate. Participants were also asked to describe their ideal Jewish shelter and resources. The researcher used probing to allow the participants to provide a deep, rich description of their experiences with Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence (Ruslin et al., 2022). The data was analyzed through open coding to discover themes that provide greater insight into Jewish women who are the victims of domestic violence. The codes that emerged also reflected the participants' views (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Three of the four facilities were in Broward and Palm Beach counties. The researcher was unable to contact the Miami-Dade County facility; however, the researcher learned that there was no longer a domestic violence shelter or safe house in connection with the facility that was originally found on the JWI website. The participants' demographic information is described in the following chart.

Table 2: Participant demographic information

Name	Age	Education	Denomination	Years of Experience	Affected by Abuse
Lisa	51	Psy.D	Non-Jewish	10-15 years	Yes
Pinky	33	Ph.D./MSW	Modern Orthodox	10 years	No
Skylar	34	LMCH	Reform	6 years	Yes
Kara	32	MSW/LCSW	Conservative	9 years	Yes

Lisa

Lisa is a 51-year-old African American woman who is not Jewish. She has a Psy.D. in Psychology. Lisa moved to Florida and began work at the facility one year ago. She was born and raised in New York. For the past ten to fifteen years or more, she worked at a non-profit agency for domestic violence. She sat on panels with judges, lawyers, and police officers. She spoke in a quiet voice when she told me that she was personally affected by domestic violence within her immediate and extended families, as well as friends and her community.

> So, understanding that abuse is something that takes place in the family and that it is often not talked and the impact it have I think mostly on children kind of made me want to really interested in it. Lending a hand. Helping individuals out. Understanding a little bit more of domestic abuse, just not what you see, the violence just right in front of you, but what's behind the scenes of violence. And so that was one of the things. So, yes, that's how it impacted me.

The fact that she is not Jewish and not as fluent in Hebrew, i.e., Hasidic or "the thing on the door" or as familiar with the culture, was not a deterrent. It was obvious during the interview that she had a true desire to do whatever she could to understand the Jewish culture to keep the victims and their children safe. Lisa viewed her experience working with the Jewish population, she saw the Jewish population as being no different than the other victims she has seen:

So, my experience is that just like any other population, there's a need for education, awareness and advocacy around domestic abuse.

Pinky

Pinky is a 33-year-old white woman who is Jewish. She had previously worked at the facility from 2014-16 and had been back for a year. She has a master's degree in social work and a Ph.D. in Family Therapy. Pinky has been trained in the field of domestic violence in financial assistance, counseling, case management, and education. She was raised Conservative and practiced Modern Orthodox. Her husband was Sephardic (Eastern European sect) Orthodox from Israel. Her two young boys attend a Chabad school, and she keeps a Kosher home. At the same time, she feels some apprehension about her faith.

> We're more orthodox, we keep kosher, we keep Shabbat. I don't dress, snoot or anything. But my kids go to Chabad. But I myself, because I was raised conservative. I'm intimidated to go speak to the more orthodox Shuls. My husband is Israeli. He's Sephardic. I understand the culture very well, but I'm still intimidated to go to those rabbis. And I shouldn't be because I'm exposed to them quite often, but I don't know what it is.

Skylar

Skylar is a 34-year-old white Jewish woman of the Reform denomination. She has an LMHC. She was a former advocate at the Broward County facility. Skylar saw a job listing at the facility: "I don't really experience with abuse." She doubted being hired, but she knew that it would be "a really powerful position." Skylar explained how she became versed in becoming a domestic violence advocate.

> I just immersed myself in any type of training that I could possibly get my hands on. I just went to Google. I found any type of training, any type of coalition that I could learn from. And through that process, what I realize was that there was a lot of red flags in previous relationship. But, I think the biggest one for me was a relationship that in high school, my senior year of high school that at the time I thought, very toxic. But looking back at the red flags and the warning signs.

After she left the facility, Skylar continues to work in the prevention side of domestic violence prevention and created a teen dating abuse workshop. Skylar chose only audio for the Zoom interview. Even with her camera turned off, her passion for her work and the emotion in her voice was unmistakable. For example, her answer to what a typical day was like:

> And so powerful to be able to provide a space for them where they feel safe, that it became empowering for me. Even when there weren't wins right? There doesn't need to be a win for it to feel empowering. I just need the survivor to show up for the session. I just need the survivor to show up for my workshop. And guess what, you empowered me because you're showing up for yourself. And I think I come from a lens within my clinical practice of really celebrating anything, any win. I'm talking you just walk in the door to come to my session. It's a win. So that to me, that fuels my fire to keep going, because they're showing up and obviously it's really hard to go to therapy. Therapy is not easy. You're not coming to therapy to laugh and giggle. You're coming to therapy to do hard work. And I had this one survivor that would be like every time I come to you, I cry. I'm not a crier, but I come in. And the second I sit down with you I start crying. And I think that that's really therapeutic. I think that's really helpful to be able provide a safe

space for a survivor. To talk about the things they need to talk about and work on what they want to work on, or just sit there with me.

Kara

Kara is a 32-year-old white Jewish woman of the Conservative faith. Kara stated on her demographic questionnaire that she experienced domestic violence in her family and grew up in foster care due to her mother's mental illness, domestic violence, and substance abuse. She has an MSW and LCSW. Kara worked in the field for 10 years and at her facility, first as the advocate and had been recently promoted to the executive director of the department. Her position entails education and crisis counseling with a lot of deescalating and calming the women. She described it as:

> To provide domestic violence education, because a lot of times these women know that something doesn't feel right. But they don't understand exactly the dynamics of domestic violence.

Kara was working from home the day of the interview and she appeared to be comfortable and relaxed in her own surroundings. However, when she answered the question how does she feel when working with the survivors, stated:

> I think I've desensitized myself. But there are cases where I get extra passionate about just like I had a woman that basically she's a Canadian citizen. They moved here. He's an Israeli and a Canadian citizen and he just stopped supporting them. Just like things like that.

As she continued with the story, Kara became animated with her body language, facial expression, and tone of her voice:

I was trying to advocate, to help her pay for legal fees, because that's something that we do, We don't pay for legal fees. But I was trying to see if we could make an exception.

And I was just very passionate about that to the point where it was like, you got to stop. She shook her head and laughed.

Findings

The case study addressed the following research question: How do domestic violence advocacies uniquely perceive their role in working with Jewish domestic violence victims? The data analysis revealed two themes: The first theme described how each domestic violence advocate perceived Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence. The participants provided insight into this theme with two subcategories: *Identity,* which describes a woman not as a victim of domestic violence who is Jewish but a Jewish woman who is a victim of domestic violence, and *Tension*, where faith is a source of comfort but also a source of stress, which creates a complex decision-making process.

Table 3: Theme #1: How do domestic violence advocates perceive Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence.

Theme	Definition
Identity	Describes a woman not as a victim of domestic violence who is Jewish but a Jewish woman who is a victim of domestic violence.
Tension	Faith is a source of comfort but also a source of stress, which creates a complex decision-making process.

The second thread described how the advocate perceives their role as an advocate. The participants provide insight into this theme with two subcategories. *Intricate* describes addressing the complexity of healing for the victim, the violence itself and the questioning or violating the tenets of the Jewish faith and culture, and *Suppression* describes the obstacles to

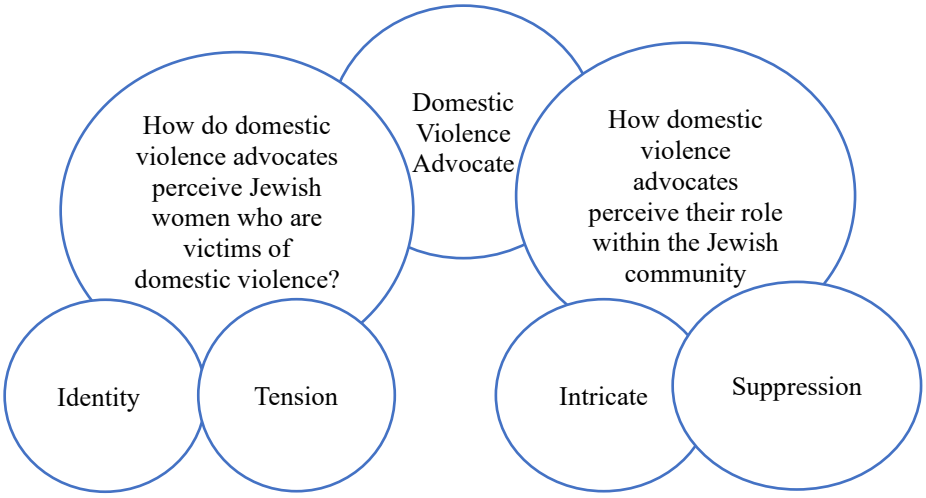
having resources that understand Jewish culture and religion and minimal to no support for outreach within the Jewish community.

Table 4: Theme #2: How domestic violence advocates perceive their role within the Jewish community.

Theme	Definition
Intricate	Describes addressing the complexity of healing for the victim, the violence itself and the questioning or violating of the tenets of the Jewish faith and culture.
Suppression	Describes the obstacles to having resources that understand Jewish culture and religion and minimal support for outreach within the Jewish community.

A domestic violence advocate working with Jewish women perceives a duality in their role: Identity and Tension are interlocked with the advocates' perception of a Jewish woman who is a victim of domestic violence. Intricate and Suppression are interlocked with the advocates' perception of how the advocates perceive their role within the Jewish community. Figure 1 displays this duality as a Venn diagram. The interlocking circles illustrate a domestic violence advocate's relationship to both worlds.

Figure 1: Duality Relationship of a Domestic Violence Advocate



Finding #1: Jewish women navigate a complex internal struggle between being Jewish and a domestic violence victim that impacts how they respond to support.

A Jewish woman's identity as being a Jewish woman takes precedence over being the victim of domestic violence. For Jewish women, their whole identity is wrapped up in their faith and culture, and that is why being Jewish is much more important than being a domestic violence victim. Her identity is being Jewish.

Jewish First, Victim Second

One of the things that is important to a Jewish woman's identity as a Jewish victim is something that stood out with the participants. She is not just a victim of domestic violence who is Jewish, but a Jewish woman who is a victim of domestic violence. Lisa mentioned that she frequently heard:

> I don't want anybody else. I want Jewish family services. I want someone that is Jewish to help me stay connected to what I believe in.

Furthermore, Skylar expressed:

> It does not matter if you're religious or not. There's a sense of community with just being Jewish. And even if you're not practicing, you're not "*shomer*" [guard or keeper]. I have heard over and over and over and over again from survivors how important it is to have a space that's, like, this is a Jewish organization. This is a Jewish dv program. It feels safer to come to. There's an understanding. And in fact, many survivors…said that they would prefer to go to a Jewish organization over a secular one. Regardless of your religious background, right. Regardless of how religious you are, what you practice, what you don't. There's this cultural understanding that I think is really integral and important to eliminate another barrier to come in for support and help.

A Jewish woman's identity is tied to how she perceives her role and responsibilities within her marriage. She often wrestles with specific tenets of her faith that conflict with her decision to leave an abusive relationship. Pinky confirmed that a prevalent theme in the research is that there is a misconception surrounding the understanding of *shalom bayit*:

> I think the biggest thing that is of challenge to them is the pressure put on, I don't want to say, because there's a reality of what it is *shalom bayit*. And then there's what people perceive it to be. So really to have *shalom bayit* your home is not just on the woman. A lot of women perceive it to be their responsibility. And the men actually do hold a very big responsibility in this. It's just not perceived this way for them. So, to answer your question directly, I believe that it has to really in the more Orthodox in all of them. It has to really escalate to a point where they're going to ask for assistance, but I think the moment it impacts their kids, that's it. I really see that's the breaking point for them or if they have a breaking point it depends. But it escalates. Which none of them no matter denomination. No one gets out right away.

Mesira, *lashon hara*, and *shalom bayit* were influential factors preventing Jewish women from seeking help or leaving abusive relationships, Kara responded:

> Yeah, I think the issue with, just like the religion, and what people are going to think if I get divorced happens a lot. And then a lot of times, they do reunify. And then they leave again. And it's like an on and off thing. I mean the cases that I have now of more religious women, they're all they've filed for divorce, and they're separated from their husbands.

The study revealed that, on average, survivors of domestic violence leave and return approximately seven times. However, this figure was higher for Jewish women. When inquired

about the duration it typically takes for a Jewish woman to depart and then return, Skylar responded:

> So, I had done research. When I first started out, I wanted to absorb every possible thing I could learn about domestic violence and then. Specifically Jewish domestic violence. I found an article where there was a study done that it takes a survivor about seven times to leave. It takes a Jewish woman three to five times longer to leave. I would say that is accurate. Cultural understanding about family within the Jewish religion is huge. Family is a huge component of being Jewish.

Followed by Kara's statement:

> As far as leaving and going back, as far as the number of times I know that for domestic violence in general, they leave and go back an average of seven times. But from research I know that that's not the way it is for Jewish women. I mean it varies. I mean like I just had a really, I was very sad about this case where I was talking to her every single day. We were working so hard. She was doing everything that I had asked her to do. And then randomly, her therapist called me and said she called me and left a message saying she no longer wants to come to therapy. So, I was like, okay, she hadn't called me, so I called her, and I said, Is everything okay? And she said, yeah, thank you for everything. But I don't need any more services. I decided to go move back in with my child's father. And that abuse was physical. And emotional and financial. And she had been to a domestic violence shelter already. She lost relationships with family and friends. She was 26 years old with a four-year-old child. Yeah, so that was a very disappointing end. But obviously, we're here. If she needs us, she knows how to reach us. But, yeah, it happens.

Kara recounted a different circumstance involving a woman who appeared to have no plans of leaving:

> Yes. Well, sometimes actually no. I'll do an intake, and they'll say, well, they just slam the door really loud, or they just threw some stuff on the floor, or whatever. And they destroyed my property. That's physical violence. That's violence. So sometimes they're not aware. Or like I spoke to a woman the other day who said he's an alcoholic. So that's why he does it. And that's not why, though. It's not an excuse. …It's a choice. So, he's been an alcoholic for 20 years. This is what I've been dealing with. But now he's getting violent towards our son, who's 17. And he's been to rehab 20 times. At this point now it's like, are we going to keep banging our head against the wall or are you ready to make a change and leave…. She's never left. But she'll leave and go stay with her sister for a weekend for him to cool off or whatever.

A *get* becomes a significant worry when a woman chooses to end her marriage. According to Jewish law, she remains legally married until her husband grants her a *get*, irrespective of the reasons for the divorce. Sklyar's statement affirmed this concern:

> But having a *get* was extremely important to her. So that's something I think that's a really, I mean, I think that's one of the biggest pieces in working with Jewish survivors and having that cultural lens. Of the difference between a Jewish survivor and someone outside of the Jewish community.

Pinky noted that the denial of a *get* was also a source of concern:

> Refusing to give her a *get*. But it's a challenge. It's usually like the thing they dangle at the end. …The 'damn carrot.' That's what it is…. Yeah, they use it. And that's really when you know you have that coined abuser that is about power and control, because someone

who doesn't care about controlling you, will not do that in my opinion. But the ones that are really suffering through this narcissistic abuse that is disgusting and horrible. Usually, their legal battle is hell and usually they will fight to for tooth and nail for the *get*. Okay.

Furthermore, significant abuse related to the issue of obtaining a *get* was mentioned by Kara:

> That was a part of her abuse too, is that he refused to provide for her again. It took a long time for her to get a *get*, for him to agree to the get. There was lots of abuse…

Survivors face additional abuse when they are dependent on their abusers to give them a get as it gives the abuser power and control over their ability to progress forward.

Internal Tension

The victim has this internal struggle of being a victim and knowing this can't go on; she needs help; she needs to get out of this bad situation. At a level, she knows this, but at the same time, it is taboo to talk about it in her faith; it's going against her faith because of the power that the husband has in the relationship. Lisa stated:

> Some people want to hear about it. Some people don't. Not everybody wants to hear about it. Maybe one or two. But a lot of times. It's just kind of like that taboo. Like, if we don't, it's kind of like, see no evil, speak, no evil. Evil won't show up if we don't say anything about it. But that's not true.

The subsequent statement validated the misconceptions identified in the literature regarding the roles of Jewish husbands and expectations for Jewish women. Lisa observed:

> They think that it's still taboo. They don't think that I hear that. And this is just not mine, just on my research as well, that a Jewish husband makes a good husband, he's a good provider. You have basically a good life. And in other words, all you have to do is this simple whatever it is. But the research that I saw said that usually because of not that

physical violence is out the picture. But usually, they are more likely to be verbal and emotionally abusive because of the emphasis on the education and the power. And that whole emphasis on being a good provider and having all of the skills and the knowledge and trade and all of that information, to put them in a place to be that provider. But it has been, I've seen physical violence as well.

Certain aspects such as *mesira* and *lashon hara*, especially *shalom bayit*, impact a Jewish woman's decision to seek assistance, Skylar responded:

> Absolutely 100%. Because. It's true. And that's why I think that the prevention work is really important, too, in educating rabbis and empowering them to understand that yes. While *shalom bayit* is so important and integral to our community. You can't just tell a survivor don't fight with your husband. Just keep the peace in the house. And I also think that as a Jewish survivor, especially someone that follows Jewish law. You're supposed to lie with your husband. But even if you're married, you're allowed to say no. And a lot of survivors, I don't know if they were comfortable with that. And so when we would talk about. This is sexual assault. This is rape. If you're saying no, I think is really hard and I think that's another barrier to talk about and seek out assistance and help. And yeah, and exactly. We're not supposed to air our dirty laundry. And also, domestic abuse doesn't happen in the Jewish community. That only happens in other communities. So, I think there's that stigma also that really plays into it. Another thing that I did notice for survivors in general, if there's no physical abuse, they don't know it's abuse, and so if I had a dollar for every survivor that came to me and said, Well, he doesn't hit me. I don't know if this is abuse, I would have quite a few dollars in my pocket.

Skylar presented an example from her professional experience:

> I did have a client where there was physical violence, and her family didn't understand. He's such a great guy. What are you talking about? He provides for you. He takes care of you and the kids. What are you talking about. Yeah, I saw that. I also have seen a couple of survivors be shunned from the community because they were religious. And they were like, I can't be in this marriage anymore. It's not safe. And I've seen a lot of survivors lose family support and friends support because of isolation too.

Lisa described an instance involves the experience of a woman who had to depart.

> She did leave her husband, and she had to literally. I don't believe she was able to do any of things that she might have done. I'm not sure if she probably wanted to do it at that point, just because that whole system did not support her. It was kind of like she was shunned…. There was a lot of alienation, shunning, blaming, a lot of that within the community. When she wanted to seek help and get out, and so, I think, I don't believe that those services were provided.

Additionally, Lisa made an observation:

> I found there was issues with individuals who was more conservative just because that whole belief of that there's something wrong with the husband, that there's a problem. I've definitely seen that create barriers to individuals getting help and support and even being able sometimes to get the message out. It's kind of that barrier that there's nothing wrong here, that we're okay. We're fine. Everything is okay. And that definitely presents barriers.

Women struggle with internal conflict when they must decide whether to remain or seek refuge in a shelter. When questioned about the reasons why women may be reluctant to go to a shelter, Kara elaborated:

> Yeah, they're just adamant. No. A lot of times. The first thing is I don't want to share a room with somebody. So, there's that. Or sometimes they have health issues. I've heard that they don't want to be in a shelter because of their health issues. Or it's not kosher. It's not near synagogue. Those kinds of things.

There is a domestic violence shelter called Women In Distress (WID) in Broward County. When questioned about whether she had ever referred a woman to WID, Skylar responded:

> I placed a Jewish woman there before. But again. It's like. These survivors are experiencing trauma on a daily basis and to uproot them and put them into a shelter. While that is the safe space, that's also a traumatic experience for them too. It's not their home.

It is a terrible situation to be in, where the decision to prioritize safety can lead to such likely consequences. Family, friends, and community members often question why someone would want to leave, and their reactions can be devastating if the person does decide to leave. Lisa expressed:

> You would think that something as domestic abuse would be out in the open more and readily available resources available. But I find that in the Jewish community because of the expectation of keeping your family together and having a good family. And people think that you have this wonderful life or situation, just living up to that expectation. And when things are not the way it's supposed to be, where do you go? And how do you not place the blame all on yourself? And how do you not take the burden of being the bad guy or the failure, so to speak, in this whole scenario, in this whole situation.

The advocates painted a picture of how Jewish women view themselves when faced with domestic violence. A victim's identity as a woman is highly influenced by adherence to her faith

and Jewish law, which clashes with one's basic need for safety and security. Her sense of self is diminished because of this internal struggle

Finding #2: Domestic violence advocates often engage in a power struggle that impedes their ability to engage with the Jewish community effectively.

Domestic violence advocates face the complexity of trying to navigate as an advocate helping Jewish survivors to leave an abusive relationship, which may contradict cultural and religious values.

Advocate vs. Faith Community

Domestic violence advocates, particularly those who are Jewish, navigate a delicate balance in their roles when engaging with the communities they serve.. There is an internal struggle that stresses the difficult nature of advocacy work, emphasizing the importance of empathy and understanding of intersecting identities and beliefs.

Pinky is an advocate who is a Jewish woman. She received a call from a Jewish woman who needed to leave her abusive relationship with no Jewish shelter available. She stated:

> I'll be very honest with all no disrespect to WID. I've never placed someone there. Not because of any number on the but I don't have contacts there. I tried. It's hard to really connect with them. And yeah, I've had a client call me on Friday at 03:00 p.m. She keeps *shabbat*. She has one baby, and she needs somewhere to go immediately. And, I would have to really scavenger at a place or somewhere. Because what am I going to tell her to break *shabbat*. No, I'm not going to do that.

Lisa is an advocate who is not Jewish but the only one who felt *kolot* is an important factor in a Jewish woman's recovery. She stated:

> I started over a year ago in this position. It talked about being able to sing, right? Because I think that was a big thing about not being able to sing and not having a voice.

Often, advocates work incessantly to provide solutions for survivors to manage their abusive relationships and they have to allow them to move at their own pace. Kara stated:

> We have clients that we'll talk to until we're blue in the face and recommend the same things over and over again, and they're just not ready to accept that help. And that's fine.

The advocates agreed to empower survivors to tell their stories in as little or more detail as they wish, to question which services are available, allowing them the freedom to choose and decide what they would like to do. Lisa described how she works with survivors:

> So, we talk about it. And then once they start telling me, and usually right off the back, there's this reluctance to talk about a whole lot of things, right? They don't want to share a whole lot. Some might just come out and minimize it. I've had some yelling and some screaming and some name calling, but it's not physical. And I always say that everybody has the right to feel safe in their relationship. You shouldn't have to walk on eggshells. You shouldn't have to be fearful in your own relationship. So, everyone has that. And usually by the time we talk about that, then they're willing to tell me a little bit more about what's going on in a non-judgmental setting, non-judgmental pace. And I'm not trying to tell them what to do. That's what so many other people told them most of the time. They just want to hear, to hear exactly what's going on. And then we talk about what do you feel is necessary for you? What's your next step? What do you feel you want? Because in these situations when power and control is removed from them, being able to think about what they want and what's best for them. They have getting their power back, they're deciding, well, this is what I need to do, this is what I would like to do, there's a couple of things that I want to do. And then we talk out each of those scenarios to kind of figure out what works best for them but letting them come up with

> what works best for them, because ultimately, whatever decision they make, it is something that they will have to navigate through. And so maybe they might not be ready to leave. Maybe they just want to talk about safety planning. Maybe they just want to talk about having resources available. Somebody they can talk to while this happens. Maybe, when things escalate, how do I remove myself so that I can de-escalate the situation. What are some of the things that I can do without controlling his behavior, but making myself safe in this whole environment, or when things escalate.

An example of the process to let the woman take the lead and control the conversation was with one of her clients, who allowed her to tell her whole story. Lisa observed this powerful outcome:

> And I think for her, it was really good, because at the end of her telling me everything that was going on in her situation, her entire chest deflated. She was able to get everything out. She was able to cry when she needed to. She was able to release every emotion that she felt. She was able to walk through that journey, so to speak in that space that we provided.

Skylar described how she works with survivors:

> We're going to try and figure out which ones work for you. And if you don't like it, you don't have to do it again. But let's at least try it. Are you willing to try it? For me, it's really important. One of the things that I noticed, especially with survivors, is there's this person in their life that's telling them what they can and cannot do, and they're not allowed to do anything else, and you don't want to be that person for them, even if it's a safe or healthier relationship. You don't want to be that new person where they're coming to you and saying, like you're my security blanket, I can't do anything without your

approval. My goal has always been to empower survivors to have a healthy, independent lifestyle. I would have clients and be like, what am I supposed to do here? What do I do? No, I'm not telling you, I'm not asking you to tell me what to do. I'm just saying, like, what should I do. And I think it's really important to empower them to figure out the choice. And I will help you get there. Let's weigh out our options. I love a pro and Con list. I love a trial and error. So, I think it's really about figuring out what style works best for that survivor.

Pinky explained that her experience with survivors is:

> They're not telling you the bottom line. And most of the time, they don't know what the truth is. They don't know what the problem is, right? And they're so in survival mode. People have to remind me of this a lot because I'm like, can you believe I got scammed? And they're like, well, they've been trained to survive, and they're going to do whatever it takes to survive.

Skylar went on to state:

> Actually, and I think that's part of the challenge for what I would tell any young clinician or anybody starting out in this field of working with survivors. A survivor is going to come and tell you, some of them are going to come and say, I'm ready to leave, but it's not going to happen for years. And then I had a handful of clients that came to me and said, I'm not leaving my marriage. I do not want a divorce. Help me cope with this. Help me figure out how to be in this marriage, how to be in this relationship. And I think that's really important to meet your client where they're at, meet the Survivor where they're at. Because I think there are a lot of advocates, well, I don't want to say there's a lot of advocates. I would say that there are some people that will be like, you have to leave.

> Right? That is not a helpful response to a survivor, even if there's physical abuse. Right? You have to support them. Exactly if someone's not ready to make a decision, someone's not ready to make a change. It's not going to stick and it's going to be harder. So, I think I would say that there was a good variety of clients that were like, I'm ready to leave. Clients that are saying I'm not sure what I want. And then I got a lot of I had a lot of clients that were already out of the relationship. But here's the thing, once you're out of the relationship, the abuse doesn't stop, especially if you have children. Especially if there's a lot of assets. And in fact, sometimes the abuse can get worse.

Unless there is an immediate threat to their safety, the participants emphasized empowering survivors to make choices and decisions that support both their safety and their faith and cultural beliefs. This approach ensures that survivors do not feel coerced into leaving before they are ready or are uncomfortable with the decisions being made.

Barriers to Advocacy

Several barriers contribute to the suppression of Jewish resources. These include a scarcity stemming from insufficient awareness and education, ongoing resistance within the Jewish community to acknowledge the issue, and a deficiency of religious and cultural comprehension among secular service providers. The subsequent instances illustrate the challenges encountered when engaging with secular resources.

The lack of understanding of the Jewish faith was explained by Skylar, who described an incident where a caseworker failed to understand the difficulty for a survivor to obtain a *get* from her abuser.

> Yeah. I had many. For a few of them, we were able to get through it. Connecting them with rabbis that could assist with that. And then there were some, that, there was one

> survivor that I always like to share from an educational standpoint of why it's really important to have a Jewish domestic violence program. So, I had to call DCF. and the case worker called me and was like, this is an abuse. She just wants to be in another relationship, and. I was like, let me explain. Please let me help you understand what's happening here. She's a religious woman. If she does get in a relationship with someone before having a *get* she could be shunned from her community, which means she will lose her social supports, her religious support, her community, which is so important and so vital for survivors. So again, there's this lack of understanding of what it means to be a Jewish survivor and how important certain integral things are within our religion and our culture.

This example indicated the seriousness of not having outside sources who understand the religion and culture for a Jewish woman to be denied a *get* by her abuser. Pinky was faced with this lack of understanding:

> I think your denomination plays a big part. Because I've heard comments, like if they don't have food, why do they have to keep kosher. You cannot be judgmental about that. But you hear that a lot. I would never do that. So not that I'm better, I don't see that as an option.

A similar example was when Skylar stated:

> I think that's another level and barrier for survivors to leave if they don't have access to kosher food or the community.

Overall, while the importance of kosher food for Jewish women who are domestic violence victims may vary depending on individual beliefs and practices, it often provides a source of spiritual and emotional support, and a sense of empowerment, control, and stability.

The lack of understanding within the Jewish community prevents Jewish women from asking for assistance.

Skylar asserted:

> I always said with each client. I'm never shocked, but I'm always so shocked by the story. Like every story is different, but every story is very similar. But each story, it was like, I felt like, oh, my gosh, I've never heard this before. Or this is one of the most extreme cases that I've ever seen before. So, really, it's just. From starting that position… it really opened up, what I realized my passion and my calling was, which is to work with survivors of domestic abuse, primarily Jewish. Just because there is that cultural aspect. I think that the secular community doesn't really understand.

Throughout the interview, her dedication was unmistakable as she not only described her work in supporting Jewish women who have survived domestic violence but also elaborated on the preventive programs she has established in her current position.

When asked has there been a challenging situation that she has to deal with at the facility, Lisa described:

> I think one of the challenges that we have, number one, is to shame and really being able to find the support that somebody understands. I guess with any background. But I think more particularly because if you are someone who's looking for, and I think I've had this conversation with others. Like if you're practicing Judaism, and you need to observe the Sabbath there are certain restrictions in your food and certain things. And being able to worship when you have to flee a situation like that, it is oftentimes, very challenging because not only are you leaving a place where you were able to practice what you believed and be comfortable in that with a community, in a setting, but now you have to

pick up and leave. The situation where you're at your comfort, even though this behavior is not okay, maybe somewhere in the community you had a little bit of support. Now if you have to leave and flee the situation, it becomes this, also almost like this isolation where you're separated. And then you feel like you're further penalized for doing the right thing. That you can't worship, you can't observe, you can't do all of the things that you wanted to do, because now you have to take this extra step, which can be very challenging. And people don't think about that.

One of the biggest issues where the advocates see suppression in the ability for the women to open up about the abuse to people within the Jewish community, particularly rabbis. When I asked if the women had contacted someone else whom they believed, they were told to go home and stay with him, but it did not happen. Lisa had one woman who was more conservative and went to her rabbi. It did not turn out well, as is evidenced in her statement:

Tell them what was going on and trying to get support and at least so She was trying to keep her son. And we talked about having to relocate and all the traumas. That number one that comes with this situation to be further traumatized and victimized. She went to the rabbi to say, this is what's going on. I want some support and help. And what they did, as opposed to, and she spoke to them in confidentiality, is went directly to the husband, the abuser making it worse. Which made the husband retaliate against her even more because she spoke to someone else. So, the Rabbi didn't believe her. He went to the husband. The husband then retaliated against her with something because of her speaking out, trying to get help, trying to confidentially say I'm willing to do this, but can we work on, can we kind of make some adjustments to this just because I need some support with my situation. And so it was some backlash to reaching out to the rabbi.

Pinky provided details about a client and shared her knowledge regarding the abusers and rabbis involved:

> They're very well off, like she's not because he's abusing her financially, but they were very well off. And he's very well known in the community. And she reached out to every single Rabbi that you can think of. And she said, I'm so disgusted with them. Like they just disgusted me. And a lot of times realistically the rabbis are the only answer. I hate to say it, but a lot of them, I know from my own husband. Just from his upbringing, he's going to listen to a rabbi ten times more than he's going to listen to a therapist or anything because. My husband grew up more orthodox, and he's Sephardic, he's Moroccan, so, he gets it. He will listen to a rabbi a thousand times more than he's ever going to listen to anyone else. And they're the answer to the problem. Yes, and I don't know, I don't know a why they don't see their role in responsibility. Yeah.

When asked whether there are women who seek help from the rabbi, her family, and the community but do not receive support, Skylar stated: “Yeah, the majority of them.” And when questioned if she was told to go home and be a good girl, her response was:

> No, I would say there was a mix, right? There were quite a few experiences from survivors, where the Rabbi was saying, like, just keep the peace, don't fight. But there are a lot of rabbis that do understand domestic abuse and are supportive. But I think that they still need that level of education to continue to support their community members of, like if you're in an abusive relationship. Couples therapy is not the answer. It's not the answer. It's not going to work. It's not going to do anything. And in fact, many times it could actually put the survivor in an unsafe position. Even if there isn't physical violence present, it can create more harm.

A common challenge for advocates assisting survivors is the scarcity of available legal and medical providers. Pinky claimed:

> We used to. What happens is the complexity of the case. And I hate to say this, and I mean in the most respectful way, but a lot of our clients can be highly emotional. And for someone who doesn't understand what that means they don't want to deal with it. They're like, I can't deal with this. I'm just trying to do a good deed.

An additional challenge is finances. Skylar's response to the question regarding the abuser's financial status and influence within the synagogue and community, expressing they do not want to lose his monetary contributions or his presence, was:

> Interestingly enough, that's one of the reasons why we have that project that I was telling you about at my current position. Because of that. *macher* (authoritative). Right. He donates to the Jewish Community Center; he's donating to the Temple. We can't choose sides. So that's why we're coming in and educating. Yes, you can choose sides because not choosing sides is dangerous, creates an unsafe environment for your community. I actually have a colleague who experienced domestic abuse and that was one of the things she experienced that her Rabbi told her. I cannot choose a side, sorry. Not sorry. So, yes, I've seen it.

Continued repression perpetuates the cycle of keeping Jewish women trapped in unsafe and unhealthy relationships.

In this study, participants discussed their experiences and perceptions as advocates working with Jewish women who are survivors of domestic violence. This chapter illustrates the findings from these interviews, which are categorized into two predominant themes, each with two sub-headings. The first section explored the complex internal struggles experienced by

Jewish women who are domestic violence survivors, which significantly influence their responses to support. This section examined the perspectives of domestic violence advocates regarding these women, with sub-headings focusing on identity and tension. The second theme analyzed the perceptions of domestic violence advocates concerning their role within the Jewish community, with sub-headings intricate and suppression. It emphasized the challenges they face in effectively engaging with the community and secular service providers, often marked by a power struggle. The following chapter will contextualize these findings within the existing research and literature on domestic violence advocacy.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Interpretation

Despite the severity of domestic violence and abuse among women of various ages, races, national origins, and religions within the United States, little is known about the prevalence and severity within the Jewish community, and the literature remains relatively silent on the issue (Ben-Lulu, 2021). Initially, the researcher intended to consider the lived experiences of Jewish women who were survivors of domestic violence. It was determined that locating the women for the study was nearly impossible. An alternative method was to consider the perspective of rabbis from the three countries; however, due to the lack of knowledge and awareness, the overarching problem would not be addressed. Ultimately, the researcher chose to address the following research question: How do domestic violence advocates uniquely perceive their role in working with Jewish victims of domestic violence?

The research used case study methodology to understand the experiences and perceptions of domestic violence advocates who worked with Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence. Interviews were conducted with four domestic violence advocates who work with Jewish women from three of the four Jewish facilities in the South Florida tri-counties, Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade. Interview data from the four participants revealed two themes and two sub-themes within each theme. Some of these findings are extensions of findings from previous literature, while others are new to the perception of domestic violence advocate research. This chapter will situate this study's findings into the literature on domestic violence advocates.

Finding #1: Jewish women navigate a complex internal struggle between being Jewish and a domestic violence victim that impacts how they respond to support.

Jewish First, Victim Second

The study showed that a domestic violence advocate perceives a Jewish woman's views of her identity as a Jewish woman before a victim of domestic violence. Advocates perceive her faith will override her basic needs as a woman, causing her identity to stifle her as a woman. This is because *Shalom bayit* is often misunderstood and seen to be the sole responsibility of the woman; however, the husband has an equal role in keeping peace in the home (Kadish, 2020; Kaye, 2018; Propp, 2005; Twerski, 1996). Moreover, the Jewish laws of *mesira* (Arowoloju, 2016; Brofsky, 2017; Freedman, 2005) and *lashon hara* (Brofsky, 2017; Dorff, n.d.; Schick, 2017) along with receiving a *get,* are not only a central part of her faith but impact her decision to leave the abusive relationship (Band-Winterstein & Tuito, 2018). Hence, Jewish women leave and return or remain in abusive relationships longer than women who are not Jewish (Streyffeler, Pogrebin). Often, a *get* is the 'damn carrot' that is used as a bargaining tool to extort money, take ownership of the family pet, or attempt to gain custody of the children. It is purely another way for the husband to continue the abuse and keep her legally bound to him, as indicated in Jewish law. In essence, her adherence to her faith is weaponized much more than the physical violence she endures (Laufer-Ukeles, 2020; Rivlin, 2020).

Internal Tension

Domestic violence advocates perceive that there is much internal tension that a Jewish woman experiences related to her roles and responsibilities within her marriage. Advocates describe how a Jewish woman often wrestles with specific tenets of her faith that conflict with their decision to leave an abusive relationship. A Jewish woman's faith creates an internal struggle and overpowers her need for security and safety. Unfortunately, secular shelters do not

provide her with the necessities required by her faith because there is a lack of cultural understanding among the secular facility employees and other abused women who are there. Within a secular shelter, Jewish women do not have a place to celebrate the Sabbath through significant religious practices (Myers, 2009), participate in daily prayers and rituals and adhere to *kashrut* (dietary laws) (Fontes, 2020; Kadish, 2020; Murugan, 2022; Prince, 2021), nurturing a sense of belonging for her and her children within the close-knit Jewish community (Musleah, 2003). One of the participants remarked that the ability to practice her faith, including having access to kosher foods, displaying *mezuzahs* on their doorposts, and fully embracing their Jewish identity, is of utmost importance.

The lack of cultural sensitivity and ability to practice their faith in an environment that provides a safe space for Jewish women often keeps Jewish women from seeking help from the very shelters that provide support and protection. The Jewish population within the tri-county area is significant. During one day in 2022, 44 Jewish women needed domestic violence assistance (NNEDV, 2023) and in 2019, 32 of the 77 Jewish women who died from domestic violence, were shot by their abusers (NCADV, 2020). In order to address this issue of culturally appropriate shelters for Jewish women, advocates who work with Jewish women must be a part of that conversation that uses a community-based approach (Raghavan et al., 2019). The advocates interviewed for this study noted that they empowered women to share as much or as little about their circumstances as they felt comfortable. They prioritized listening to the survivors' expressed needs and what they wanted to do or not do. Recognizing that trauma cannot be resolved quickly, and regardless of the facilities' allotted number of counseling sessions, they were committed to supporting the women for as long as necessary. They identified the absence of Jewish shelters, housing, financial support, education, and job skills as significant

barriers preventing women from addressing the abuse or leaving the abusive relationships. Having access to these resources would alleviate their challenges and reduce the need to constantly scramble to obtain adequate resources. Legal and medical support and housing emerged as the most demanding requirements. Several advocates had personal experiences with domestic violence, allowing them a deeper and unique perception of the obstacles encountered by survivors of abuse and the crucial support they require.

Additionally, advocates describe how a Jewish woman's identity is tied to how she perceives her role and responsibilities within her community. Unfortunately, myths are still prevalent in the Jewish community regarding domestic violence and the woman's responsibility for that violence. The myth that domestic violence does not happen to Jewish people; Jewish men are the best husbands and could not possibly be abusive (Graetz, 1996) still makes her feel that she is to blame, a failure, full of shame, and not believed. Her identity as a Jewish woman within the community is questioned. She is expected to be a "good wife" and remain silent. The participants confirmed this when discussing the myth that *shalom bayit* is solely the wife's responsibility. Participants describe that although *shalom bayit* is jointly the responsibility of husband and wife (Kadish, 2020; Kaye, 2018), many Jewish women emphasize that tradition dictates it is the woman's responsibility to keep the family intact and maintain peace in the household. A Jewish woman will perceive herself as a failure (Belzer, 2005), which, in turn, dissuades her from seeking assistance (Band-Winterstein & Tuito, 2018). The outward perception of peace in the household outweighs the obligation to seek peace, justice, and harmony within her home. She believes that her only choice is to remain with the abuser in an unsafe relationship (Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Sangeetha et al., 2022; Walker, 1989). Survivors reported incidents of rabbis, community members, family, and friends did not believe them; they

were told to go home, play nice, and do couples therapy. An advocate claimed couples therapy is dangerous, does not work, and does not hold the abuser accountable (Spiegel, 2016; Walker, 1997).

Finding #2: Domestic violence advocates often engage in a power struggle that impedes their ability to engage with the Jewish community effectively.

Advocate vs. Faith Community and Barriers

Domestic violence advocates face the complexity of trying to navigate as an advocate helping Jewish survivors to leave an abusive relationship, which may contradict cultural and religious values. The participants shared their own struggles with telling a woman to place her security over her faith. It was shown to be especially true for the Jewish advocates. They knew the importance of faith and found it difficult to tell a woman to go against their beliefs to be safe.

The advocates were protective of their own emotions with their faith. They desensitize and redirect themselves from the situation. They protect themselves by not taking their work home with them and do their best to not get too involved with their clients and passionate about their situations when they are faced with roadblocks to help them. The participants agreed that acknowledging the reality that cannot do it all. They are the only people in small facilities and with not enough hours. Shortly before the Sabbath, an advocate encountered a complicated position when a woman and her child urgently required shelter; however, there was no Jewish shelter available for them. Despite the urgency of the situation, the advocate could not ask the woman to ignore the Sabbath.

The women were allowed to lead the conversations with the advocates. This empowered the women to make choices and decisions that feel right for them. Advocates do not tell them what to do unless it is to ensure their safety. Advocates were confronted by the persistent denial that there is no domestic violence in Jewish communities (Graetz, 1998; Jenefsky, 2012; &

Propp, 2005). Participants were often not welcomed by the rabbis and the community. Advocates communicate the need for education and awareness in the Jewish community including the rabbis was frequently refused. An advocate connected by stating that she was there to give them information about domestic violence and did not mention there might or is a problem in their synagogue or community center. Another advocate did not receive responses to emails attempting to provide information to a Jewish academy. These experiences contradicted Ben-Lulu's perception that Jewish communities were attuned to the necessity to provide Jewish women who are abused culturally appropriate resources (2021).

Advocacy provides women with empowerment (Brown et al., 2020 & Hughes, 2020) and the right to choose and decide (Hughes, 2020, & Kiani et al., 2021) how they want to navigate their situation. They have been told what to do within their relationships and deserve the ability to take control of their lives. A basic reason to not leave an abusive relationship was the importance of kosher food (Jacobs, 2018) and the proximity of a synagogue. The participants agreed that the lack of finances, housing, legal and medical services were major hurdles in assisting the women. One of the participants stated that there must be physical abuse to be seen at Legal Aid, and many of the victims did not qualify.

The participants' perspective was a little different, particularly with Lisa, who was not as familiar with the verbiage and customs. However, she understood the importance of *kolot*, for their voices to be heard and to sing, because they had been forbidden to do so (Borts, 2021). Even though she was not Jewish, she was at a Jewish facility, which was a comfort and safe space for the women. These reoccurring comments were presented throughout the participant responses:

1. Jewish women feel safer and more comfortable with Jewish resources,

2. Her faith takes precedence over her safety,
3. Allow her to make her own choices and decisions, to find their strength and regain their power and control,
4. Need for more awareness and education in the secular and Jewish communities,
5. The Jewish facilities are too small and too much to be done for only one person,
6. Treatment has no limits, and
7. The lack of finances and housing are a major issue.

The advocates expressed excitement when asked what they would do if given unlimited funds to create a Jewish shelter, facilities, and resources. They unanimously agreed that Jewish women experiencing abuse, along with their children, should have access to short-term emergency shelters. Additionally, they emphasized the necessity for long-term transitional housing with rent free accommodation and all expenses covered for a minimum of one year, preferably two, where women can save money earned from employment. These housing facilities should mirror their own homes and communities, maintaining strict kosher standards and offering cultural foods. They envisioned educational programs within the transitional housing to empower women through schooling, financial management skills, and employment assistance. Classes on self-esteem, healthy relationships, and self-sufficiency would be provided, along with a daycare and learning center for children to ensure they are well cared for and socially engaged. Counseling services for both mothers and children would be available throughout their stay, and legal and medical providers would be on staff with services fully funded, regardless of duration. The goal is to ensure that women leaving the housing are self-supporting, confident, and equipped for independent living, free from financial dependence on anyone, especially their abuser. This represents the beginning of a new chapter in their lives.

The advocate, who is not Jewish, wanted to seek guidance from someone knowledgeable to ensure that she understood how to create an environment where the women would feel entirely at ease and comforted considering their beliefs and observances. She wanted to establish a safe atmosphere where she could freely use her voice, and her singing would be heard. A space that nurtures their self-discovery and empowerment to redefine themselves and embrace her new beginning to life. Another participant declared that providing them with enough diapers would last a year. An advocate stated that all legal expenses would be covered, regardless of the amount since abusers often prolong court proceedings, leading to exorbitant legal fees.

The participants unanimously acknowledged the significance and urgency of this research. One advocate communicated optimism, wishing for someone to undertake the project of constructing the facility. They all expressed enthusiasm, describing it as a remarkable endeavor and their aspiration to witness the realization of the design. Another advocate mentioned the availability of funding and resources, emphasizing the need for extensive collaboration and organization. One advocate voiced interest in presenting the research to her funders.

The considerable decrease in domestic violence resources listed in the JWI 2012 and 2021 directories from 83 resources nationwide and 5 in South Florida and 15 shelters nationwide and 0 in South Florida (JWI, 2012) to 40 resources nationwide and 4 in South Florida and 6 shelters and 1 in South Florida (JWI, 2021), particularly the decline in shelters, including the apartment and shelter in Miami-Dade County for Jewish women, was unexpected and concerning. Moving backward rather than forward in terms of available resources was surprising and underscores the urgent need for renewed efforts to address domestic violence within the

Jewish community. This regression highlights the importance of advocating for increased support and resources to better serve survivors in South Florida and beyond.

Limitations

The study had several limitations, one of which was the small sample size. Although quantitative research provides many responses using various survey instruments, qualitative research provides the most rich and holistic description of domestic violence advocates' experiences working with Jewish women. Qualitative research was better suited to address the research question and provide sufficient and rigorous analysis.

A second limitation is that the participants may show bias by self-reporting and from past lived experiences. The possibility that a second interview may have been helpful and provided more information. Third, there were two world events, Covid and the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel. There was still limited access to clients with only Zoom or phone conversations, and advocates continued to work from home on a partial basis. One of the facilities was locked to the general public, and survivors had to call to make an appointment. The inability to contact the Miami-Dade facility to ask them to participate in the study and could not verify why there was no longer a Jewish domestic violence shelter and safe apartment.

Finally, my background and experiences with an abusive marriage, my work in the field, and the effects of long-term COVID could be viewed as limitations in the form of bias. I was married to a violent alcoholic. I left and returned the average number seven times. My stepchildren were more important to me than my safety, and I always thought things would be different this time when I returned. I left the relationship, and my journey into the field of domestic violence began.

During my undergraduate studies, I was one of three undergraduate students chosen to be a part of the NSU domestic violence research by Drs. Lenore Walker and David Shapiro. During my master's program, I completed an internship working with domestic violence survivors at Women In Distress in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. At this time, I was the jail coordinator for the NSU jail domestic violence research for the 4th edition of Walker's The Battered Woman Syndrome. Dr. Walker was my thesis chair and original dissertation chair until her retirement. My own experience with Kate Ranta, who was not Jewish, was shot by her ex-husband not long after the police were summoned to her apartment. There was a restraining order, which an advocate described as just a piece of paper, and he had access to multiple firearms and ammunition. Needless to say, I understand and identify with the women who are victims and the advocates who seek to help women seek shelter from their abusers. The research and especially the interviews with the participants triggered my PTSD from my abusive marriage. I had to take time to take care of myself before continuing work on the dissertation. Therefore, it was very critical that I balance my experiences and knowledge with the protocols and design I implemented. I was mindful of my positionality at every stage of the research process. Additionally, I used member-checking to ensure that the participants' voices were reflected in the study. Participants reviewed the transcripts to ensure that they were accurately portrayed, followed by thick, rich descriptions of their experiences during the analysis and findings.

Finally, the long COVID symptoms, doctor's appointments, and testing delayed my work on the dissertation. Two of the symptoms were brain fog and memory loss, which made writing academically extremely difficult. This was too important an endeavor to give up on. I sought support from my advisor and committee and worked with a dissertation coach to help me set goals and make a solid research plan that would allow me to finish this dissertation.

Future Research

Further research is imperative across secular and Jewish communities to comprehensively address domestic violence. The existing literature lacks significant Jewish domestic violence studies and peer-reviewed journal articles on Jewish domestic violence (Ben-Lulu, 2021; Chernikoff, 2021; Freedman, 2005; Macy Martin, Ogbonnaya, & Rizo, 2018). Additionally, the absence of Jewish national statistics and critical underreporting of domestic violence among Jewish women exacerbate the scarcity of data (Rosenbloom et al, 2021). My own thesis, "Denial: Domestic Violence In the South Florida Tri-County Jewish Community," underscored the dearth of research in this area, particularly within the tri-county region.

A longitudinal study would be instrumental in furthering this research, allowing for the validation of existing conclusions and discovery of new insights. By following developments over time, could build upon the current findings and provide a deeper understanding of domestic violence within secular and Jewish communities.

Now that a rapport has been established, it could be viable to connect with women who have utilized domestic violence services at the facilities at this study. It may be feasible to be in touch with women who have been or are presently receiving domestic violence services at the facilities involved in this study. Conducting a comparison study through surveys and/or interviews, with Jewish women would elucidate similarities or differences in their experiences and perceptions compared to those of the advocates. This comparative analysis could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and challenges of domestic violence services within the Jewish community.

To enrich the understanding gleaned from this study, it would be beneficial to compare its findings with studies conducted in other regions of the country. By examining the experience,

perceptions, and suggestions of advocates in established Jewish domestic violence facilities elsewhere, we can discern commonalities and differences. This comparative analysis would offer valuable insights into best practices, challenges, and areas for improvement in addressing domestic violence within the Jewish community on a broader scale.

Exploring research conducted in cities lacking Jewish shelters and resources would offer a broader perspective on domestic violence within the Jewish community. By examining how advocates in these areas navigate challenges and support survivors without dedicated Jewish facilities, we can gain valuable insights into alternative approaches and resource allocation strategies. This comparative analysis could inform the development of more inclusive and effective support systems for Jewish survivors of domestic violence, regardless of geographical location.

Conducting studies to assess building designs, costs, and fundraising strategies for domestic violence shelters in South Florida would be crucial for addressing the region's needs. These studies could investigate optimal shelter layouts and construction and operational expenses and identify potential funding sources, such as government grants, philanthropic donations, and community partnerships. Additionally, researching successful fundraising approaches and resource acquisition strategies employed by other shelters nationwide could provide valuable insights for implementation in the South Florida region.

Ellison (2021) reported that in summary, JWI reports indicate that although there are some short-term support options available, such as emergency housing, counseling, and restraining orders; more long-term solutions are needed to help survivors in Jewish communities. Ellison (2021) has identified six critical solutions that need to be implemented:

1. Expand support offerings to increase accessibility and provide more virtual options,

2. Provide training for community leaders, including clergy and staff at Jewish Community Centers (JCCs), on how to identify and react to domestic abuse,
3. Increase access to reasonable and well-informed legal services to help survivors navigate legal issues related to domestic violence,
4. Help survivors regain financial freedom and self-reliance through income and other economic resources to reduce the impact of financial abuse,
5. establish more interim and affordable housing to provide safe housing options for survivors, and
6. Provide training for youth groups, including camps, schools, and athletic teams, on how to identify and help children who witness domestic violence.

This would enable them to provide appropriate support and referrals to children who may be impacted by domestic violence in their homes

Recommendations

It is crucial to emphasize to potential donors the urgent need for short-term emergency shelters and long-term transitional housing for Jewish women and their children who are experiencing abuse. These facilities provide essential safety and support, offering a sanctuary for survivors to rebuild their lives free from violence and break the cycle of abuse. Ideally, transitional housing should be accessible for a minimum of one year, preferably extending to two years, to provide survivors with ample time and resources to achieve sustainable healing and independence. An ideal transitional house would be a fully furnished and totally kosher apartment building equipped with comprehensive on-site resources and services. All expenses, including rent, medical care, legal assistance, kosher food, and even necessities like diapers, allow survivors to save their earnings for future self-sufficiency and financial freedom upon

leaving. The transitional housing should accommodate both the survivor, her children, and any pets, with the primary goal of ensuring their safety and protection from domestic violence and the abuser.

Promoting healing and prevention involves domestic violence education into rabbinical training programs, ensuring all rabbis graduate with a comprehensive understanding of the issue. These programs should equip rabbis with the knowledge and skills to address domestic violence, deliver sermons, and publish articles and newsletters to raise awareness within their congregations. It is crucial to emphasize that Judaism condemns domestic violence, and they are not alone in their struggles, as well as to combat denial, shame, and isolation, among survivors and their children. Motivating sisterhoods and brotherhoods to fundraise for shelters and resources can provide crucial support and to encourage congregants with relevant expertise to provide pro bono or low-cost services for survivors. Mentorship programs can further empower young people to cultivate healthy relationships and prevent future instances of domestic violence.

We can help decrease the number of Jewish women and their children enduring abusive relationships by empowering them to speak out about the abuse and leave their abusers. It is essential to highlight the voices of women who have experienced domestic violence firsthand and have successfully left their abusive relationships to support other survivors. These individuals serve as powerful examples of life after domestic violence and can provide invaluable insights and encouragement to those still struggling in abusive situations. Through education, support, and advocacy, we can empower survivors to break free from abuse and build safe and fulfilling lives for themselves and their children.

Let's restart Kolot. It is an opportunity for volunteers to continue our mission of raising awareness, providing education, and fundraising to support survivors of domestic violence within the South Florida Jewish community. With renewed dedication and energy, we can make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by domestic violence.

Conclusion

My deep involvement and the quest for further research and understanding within the Jewish community have illuminated a new path for me. While I have always been drawn to working with survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse, I am surprised by the newfound focus specifically on working with Jewish domestic violence survivors and the broader field. This experience has intensified my passion and commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those affected by domestic violence within the Jewish community.

In January 2015, just before my move to Tallahassee, I had a telephone conversation with the president of the conservative synagogue in the area. When I proposed the idea of presenting domestic violence workshops for the women and girls of the congregation, her response was disheartening: "Oh, we don't do that here." That moment crystallized for me the significance of why I was undertaking this dissertation. It underscored the urgent need for education and awareness about domestic violence within the Jewish community. There are an estimated 189,313 Jewish people who reside in the South Florida tri-counties (U. S. Census Bureau, 2022) and an estimated 96,738 Jewish women with an estimated 36,663 Jewish women who are abused (World Population Review, 2023) who need Jewish shelters, facilities, and resources in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties.

Jews live by four tenets of Judaism. *Pikuah Nefesh*-to save a life (Braun, n.d. Brown, 2018, & Friedman, 2020), *Tikkun Olam*-repair the world (Freeman, n.d.), *Tzedakah*-charity and

justice (Moss, n.d.), and *Chesed*-loving kindness (Miller, n.d.). They have a moral duty to fulfill each of these obligations. It goes against Jewish principles; it is prohibited to ignore anyone who are suffering abuse. facing abuse. to Jewish law, it is prohibited to ignore those who are suffering abuse. According to *halakha,* these responsibilities take precedence over observing *Shabbat*.

Dickson (2019, np) made a statement that was included in Chapter 2, and it bears repeating, "Don't be part of the problem; help us to become part of the solution."

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative research was to address the question: "How do domestic violence advocates describe their experiences with Jewish female victims?" It uncovered two main themes: 1) "How do domestic violence advocates perceive Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence," with sub-themes "Identity" and "Tension," and finding, "Jewish women navigate a complex internal struggle between being Jewish and a domestic violence victim that impacts how they respond to support;" and 2) "How domestic violence advocates perceive their role within the Jewish community," with sub-themes "Intricate" and "Suppression," the finding, "Domestic violence advocates often engage in a power struggle that impeded their ability to engage with the Jewish community effectively." The data constructed a clearer understanding of complexities and challenges of domestic violence advocates who work with Jewish women. It provides validation that Jewish women are more comfortable and will more readily seek domestic violence assistance from Jewish facilities and resources with culturally knowledgeable providers. Integrating these findings into interventions and policies can enhance support services' effectiveness, inclusivity, and responsiveness to better address the unique needs of Jewish female victims and the advocates who support them in the South Florida Tri-Counties of Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade.

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Appendix A

Domestic Violence Advocate Interview Protocol

Demographic Questions

Please tell me about yourself.

Age:

Education:

In the area of domestic violence?

Are you Jewish?

If so, what is your Judaic denomination?

If not, how did you acquire the knowledge to work with Jewish battered women?

How long have you been working at the facility?

How did you choose this job, how long have you been doing this, other places or here; what different positions have you had?

Did you know about domestic violence while growing up?

Have you been personally affected by abuse?

If so, can you talk about the experience, effect, what happened, how did you handle it, and how are you now?

Think about a specific woman with whom you worked with recently.

Without revealing her identity, can you briefly describe her situation?

Her age:

Length of time in the relationship:

Did she need help for herself and her children?

If so, how many children did she have in total?

How many of the children were with her?

What were the circumstances if she did not have all of her children with her?

What was the level of severity of the violence?

Was she the only one being abused or were the children being abused, too?

What were your thoughts and feelings as you listened to her?

Interview Questions

Category 1: The Women

Explain your experience working with Jewish battered women.

Describe a challenging situation you have faced working with the women and the resolution.

Tell me what that was like for you.

If you are not their first point of contact, who is?

Describe the women you work with.

How many women and children call or visit the facility seeking help?

When they ask for help, what type of services do they need?

What denominations are they?

How different are the needs of Ultra-Orthodox vs Modern Orthodox vs Conservative vs Reform women?

Do you think that her observance of Jewish law, for example*, mesira*, *lashon hara*, and *shalom bayit*, affect her decision to seek assistance?

Is it a determining factor whether she leaves or remains in the abusive relationship?

Have there been women who have lost their families, communities, or been refused a get?

Category2: Advocacy and Treatment

Describe what a typical day working with battered women is like for you?

What assessments and strategies are used when women turn to you for help?

Tell me about the types of therapies and education available for the women and children?

Does your approach change with their Judaic faith?

If so, please explain.

How do you incorporate Jewish values into your work and what you are offering?

Is there a specific way that the success or effectiveness of the work that you do with women are evaluated ?

Are there records that detail the women's denomination and religious practices ?

Category 3: Safety

Describe the safety plans for the women.

What services do they need beside an emergency safe space?

What about resources beyond an emergency?

Who provides medical and legal services?

Given the number of women who are murdered after they have asked for your help or left the marriage, do you know of any women who were killed by their husbands?

Can you tell me what your thoughts and feelings were?

How many women return, leave and return (avg times), leave permanently?

Even when support is available, there are times when it's too dangerous to for women and their children to stay within the area. Explain what happens or would happen in this type of situation in order to keep the women and children safe.

How do you collaborate with other agencies within the tri-counties?

What about within the state and nationwide?

Tell me about the rabbis and their religious denominations that you work with who deliver sermons about domestic violence and provide services for the women and children to ensure their safety.

Category 4: What is needed for shelters

With no Jewish shelter, where do you send the women who need to leave the abuser, but cannot or will not because of their strict religious practices?

Are there safe houses or apartments available?

If there is more help needed, what exactly do they need and what is provided?

Where do you place women with large families?

Do they take all of their children, infants, younger, older, girls not boys and the reasoning?

How are their pets kept safe and can they stay together?

How does the lack of Jewish shelters impact the women who are affected by domestic violence?

Why are Jewish shelters and resources important for Jewish women?

Can you explain why Jewish women will more readily turn to Jewish shelters and resources for help?

Describe what would make it easier and safer for women to ask for assistance?

Tell me if you were one of them what would they need in a shelter…kashrut, kosher kitchen, daily prayers, Sabbath, holidays, Jewish schooling and resources for children?

Would it be helpful and more comfortable for them and their children to be in familiar settings and among other Jewish women that could feel like community?

Explain what changes you want for you to help the women more effectively and to feel safe in the community?

What about changes within the community?

How would you design a Jewish shelter?

What would you suggest for a Jewish shelter?

How would you set it up?

Hypothetically, you have been delegated to address domestic violence in the Jewish community with access to an unlimited sum of money, describe what you would do and why.

Appendix B

Estimates of Jewish Females in the South Florida Tri-county Area

Estimates of Jewish females in the South Florida tri-county area (NCADV), 2020).

NNEDV Jewish Estimates

	Est. Jewish Population 2023	County Percentage of State Pop	NNEDV Calls per day-actual	Request for Housing	Request for Legal	Calls rec'd per day	Rec'd no Svcs
Florida	657,095		2,083	1,332	751	13	23
FL Jewish (est 3%)			62	40	23	-	1
Palm Beach Cty	46,314	7.05%	4	3	2		
Broward Cty	60,098	9.15%	6	4	2		
Miami Dade Cty	82,901	12.62%	8	5	3		
			18	12	7	-	-

NOTE: NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP BECAUSE OF ROUNDING

1-2 did not get requested services

NNEDV Florida numbers are actual, an est 3% are from Jewish population (example: 2083 x 3% = 62)

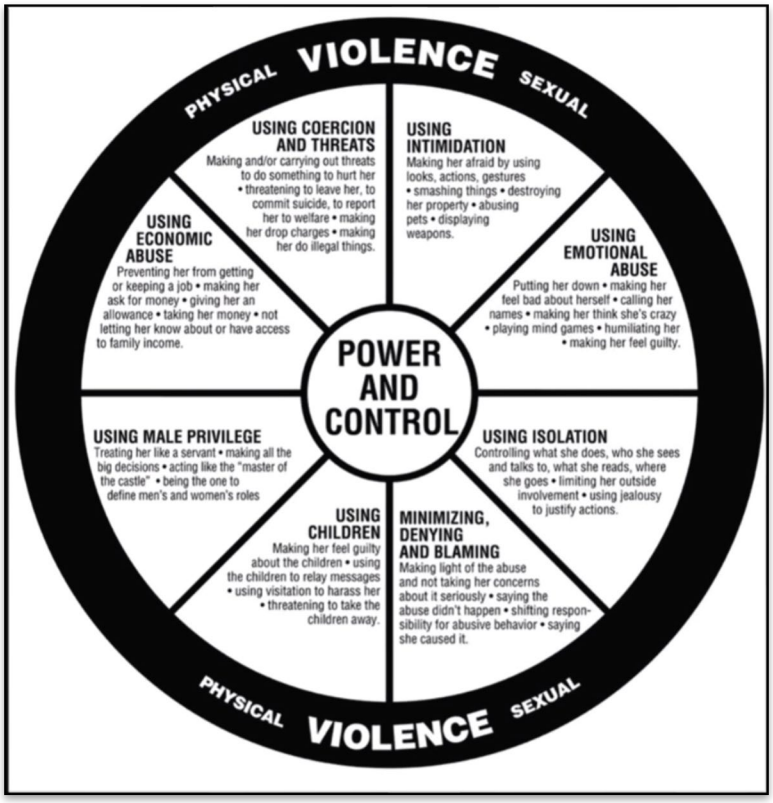
Col B-Numbers are copied from Col C of Population page
Col C-County Population divided by State Population (example: 46,314 divided by 657,095 = 7.05%)
Col D-County Percentage applied to FL Jewish Est (example: 62 x 7.05%(PBC) = 4)
Col E-County Percentage applied to FL Jewish Est (example: 40 x 7.05%(PBC) = 3)
Col F-County Percentage applied to FL Jewish Est (example: 23 x 7.05%(PBC) = 2)

Col G and Col H are statitically insignificant

Appendix C

Duluth Power and Control Wheel

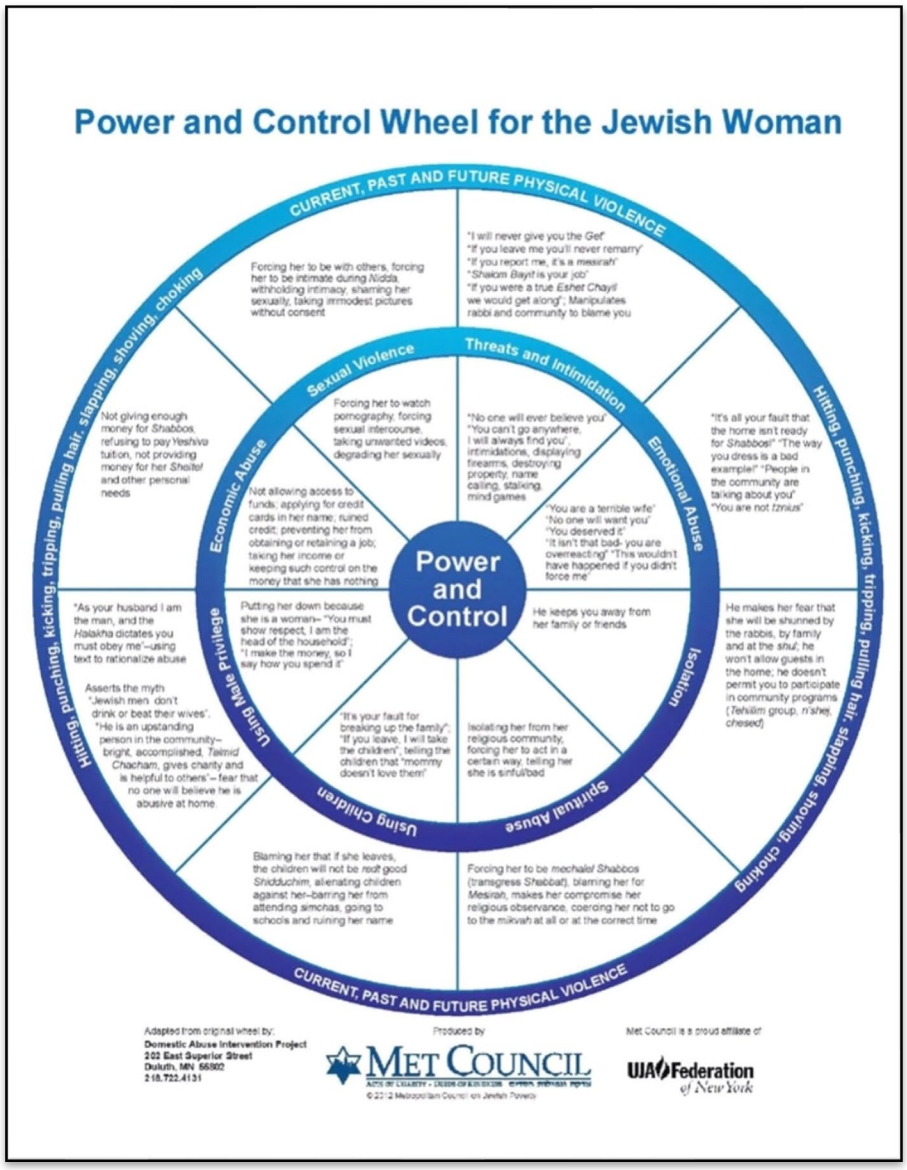
The Duluth power and control wheel was created in Duluth, Minnesota. The outer circle is the type of domestic violence. The inner circle are the eight tactics that he uses to abuse her, as told to advocates by victims of abuse. The violence and the tactics lead to the center of the wheel where he has gained power and control over her (Shalom Task Force, 2020).



Appendix D

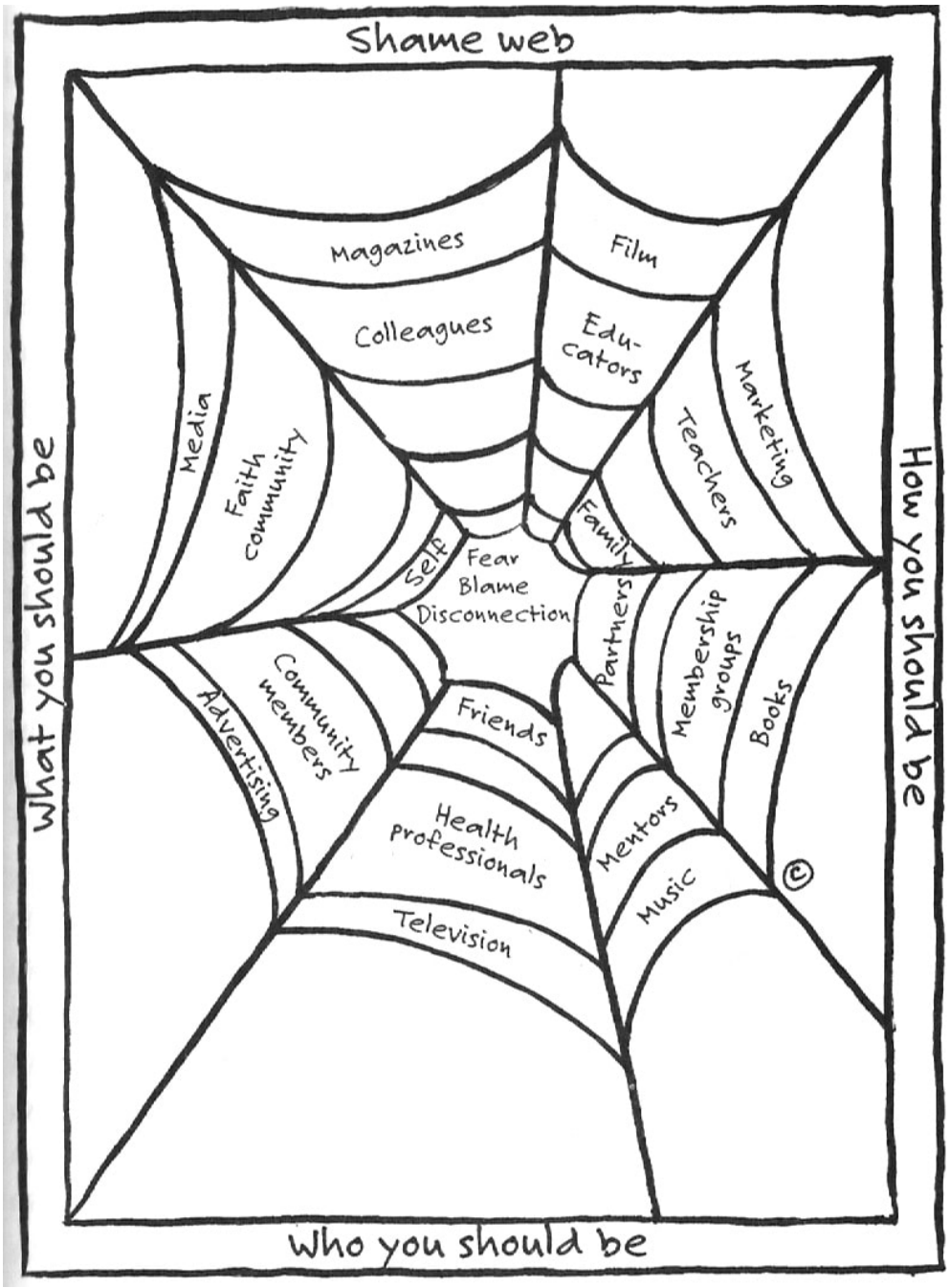
Power and Control Wheel for Jewish Women

The Jewish power and control wheel was created by the team at Met Council in New York. The Duluth power and control wheel was used as the framework. The outer circle is the type of domestic violence. On the outside of the inner circle are the eight tactics that he uses to abuse her, as told to advocates by victims of abuse. The inside of the inner circle are the tactics as they relate specifically to Jewish women. These lead to the center of the wheel where he has gained power and control over her (Shalom Task Force, 2020).



Appendix E

The Shame Web



Brown, B. (2007). *I thought it was just me: Making the journey from "What will people think?" to "I am enough."* Gotham Books. (p. 19).

Appendix F

Domestic Violence Resources for Jewish Families

The programs listed below offer services to support Jewish survivors and families impacted by domestic violence. The directory was compiled in April 2021, (JWI, 2021).

State	Resources	Shelters	Shelter Names or Specific Resources
Arizona	2	No	
California	3	1	SHALOM BAYIT
District of Columbia	1	No	
Florida	4	1	SHALOM BAYIT
Georgia	1	No	
Illinois	1	No	ORTHODOX RABBINIC TASK FORCE
Maryland	2	1	CHANA
Massachusetts	1	No	
Michigan	1	No	SHELTER EMERGENCY HOUSING RESOURCES
New Jersey	3	No	EMERGENCY HOUSING RESOURCES
New York	12	2	

THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE RESOLUTION OF AGUNOT (ORA), PROJECT TIKVAH-TRAINED ORTHODOX ADVOCATE, NY LEGAL ASSISTANCE GROUP (NYLAG)-LEGAL SERVICES SENSITIVE TO JEWISH WOMEN CIVIL AND BET DEIN

State	Resources	Shelters
Ohio	2	No
Pennsylvania	1	No
Texas	2	No
Virginia	1	No
Washington	1	No
Wisconsin	1	No

NATIONWIDE
TOTAL RESOURCES: 40, which includes 4 in the South Florida tri-county area.
TOTAL SHELTERS: 6, which includes 1 in the South Florida tri-county area.

Appendix G

The Jewish Denominations

The 3 Largest Jewish Movements

Reform Judaism

The largest affiliation of American Jews, some 35 percent of Jews identify as Reform. The movement emphasizes the primacy of the Jewish ethical tradition over the obligations of Jewish law. The movement has traditionally sought to adapt Jewish tradition to modern sensibilities and sees itself as politically progressive and social-justice oriented while emphasizing personal choice in matters of ritual observance. **Major institutions:** Union for Reform Judaism, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institution of Religion, Religious Action Center, Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Conservative Judaism

Known as Masorti (traditional) Judaism outside of North America, Conservative Judaism sees Jewish law as obligatory, though in practice there is an enormous range of observance among Conservative Jews. The movement has historically represented a midpoint on the spectrum of observance between Orthodox and Reform, adopting certain innovations like driving to synagogue (but nowhere else) on Shabbat and gender-egalitarian prayer (in most Conservative synagogues), but maintaining the traditional line on other matters, like keeping kosher and intermarriage. (While it continues to bar its rabbis from officiating at interfaith weddings, the movement has liberalized its approach to intermarriage somewhat in recent years.) About 18 percent of American Jews identify as Conservative. **Major institutions:** Jewish Theological Seminary, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Rabbinical Assembly, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies.

Smaller Denominations

Reconstructionist Judaism

Following the thinking of its founder, Mordecai Kaplan, Reconstructionism holds that Judaism is the evolving civilization of the Jewish people. Its adherents hold varying opinions about the extent to which Jewish law, particularly the mitzvot, are obligatory. The movement is quite religiously progressive: Kaplan was the first American rabbi to preside over a public bat mitzvah celebration — for his daughter, Judith, in 1922 — and the movement's rabbinical seminary was the first to accept openly gay students. The movement's major institution is Reconstructing Judaism. The movement also has a rabbinical school, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and a clergy association, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

Jewish Renewal

Jewish Renewal combines the ecstatic prayer of Hasidic Judaism with a contemporary ethos of gender egalitarianism, environmental consciousness, progressive politics and appreciation of religious diversity. Its spiritual father was the late Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, who was born into a Hasidic family in Europe but dabbled freely in the 1960s counterculture. Its principal organization is Aleph: The Alliance for Jewish Renewal, which also runs an ordination program.

Humanistic Judaism

Founded in 1963 by Rabbi Sherwin Wine, this movement offers a "nontheistic" Judaism that is not based on divine revelation. Humanistic Jews celebrate Jewish culture, history and holidays without reference to God and emphasize a rationalist, human-centered ethics.

Orthodox Judaism

Orthodox Jews are defined by their adherence to a traditional understanding of Jewish law as interpreted by rabbinic authorities over the centuries. Hallmarks of Orthodox religious life include strict observance of Shabbat (no driving, working, turning electricity on or off, or handling money) and of kosher laws. Though numerically the smallest of the big three — some 10 percent of American Jews identify as Orthodox— Orthodox Jews have larger than average families and their offspring are statistically more likely to remain observant Jews.
Unlike the Reform and Conservative movements, which have a recognized leadership that sets policy for movement-affiliated institutions, Orthodox Judaism is a looser category that can be further subdivided as follows:

Modern Orthodox
Also known as centrist Orthodoxy, this movement was an effort to harmonize traditional observance of Jewish law with secular modernity. It's ideal is summed up in the motto of its flagship institution, New York's Yeshiva University: Torah Umadda (literally, Torah and secular knowledge). Major institutions: Yeshiva University, Rabbinical Council of America, Orthodox Union.

Haredi (or Ultra) Orthodox
Chabad-Lubavitch Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz, right, Mussie Alperowitz, left, and their two daughters walk in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, 2016. (Eliyahu Parypa/Chabad.org)
Typically marked by their distinctive black hats (for men) and modest attire (for women), haredi Orthodox Jews are the most stringent in their commitment to Jewish law and tend to have the lowest levels of interaction with the wider non-Jewish society. One major exception is Hasidic Judaism's Chabad-Lubavitch sect, which is known for its outreach to the wider Jewish community. Haredi Orthodox Jews, who are represented in the United States by Agudath Israel of America, can be further subdivided into two principal groups:

Hasidic
Hasidic Jews are heirs of the spiritual revivalist movement that began in Eastern Europe in the 18th century and, drawing on the Jewish mystical tradition, emphasized direct communion with the divine through ecstatic prayer and joy in worship. There are a number of distinct sects, most headed by a charismatic rabbi, or rebbe, including Chabad, Satmar, Ger and Skver.

Yeshivish
Sometimes also known as Litvish, these haredi Jews are heirs of the mitnagdim (literally "opponents") who rejected the rise of Hasidic Judaism in Europe. These Jews

traditionally emphasized the intellectual aspects of Jewish life, particularly rigorous Talmud study for men. Yeshivish derives from the word yeshiva, or religious seminary.

Open Orthodox

The newest subset of Orthodoxy, Open Orthodox was founded in the 1990s by the New York Rabbi Avi Weiss. Its adherents, who consider the movement a reaction to a perceived shift to the right among the Modern Orthodox, generally support expanded roles for women in spiritual leadership and more openness to non-Orthodox Jews. Major Institutions: Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, Yeshivat Maharat

My Jewish Learning. (n.d.). The Jewish denominations. My Jewish Learning.Com. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-jewish-denominations

Appendix H

Participant Demographic Information

Participants

Name	Age	Education	Denomination	Years of Experience	Affected by Abuse
Lisa	51	Psy.D	Non-Jewish	10-15 years	Yes
Pinky	33	Ph.D./MSW	Modern Orthodox	10 years	No
Skylar	34	LMCH	Reform	6 years	Yes
Kara	32	MSW/LCSW	Conservative	9 years	Yes

Appendix I

Themes

Theme #1: Domestic violence advocates' perceptions of Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence.

Theme	Definition
Identity	Describes a woman not as a victim of domestic violence who is Jewish but a Jewish woman who is a victim of domestic violence.
Tension	Faith is a source of comfort but also a source of stress, which creates a complex decision-making process.

Theme #2: Domestic violence advocates perceptions of their role within the Jewish community.

Theme	Definition
Intricate	Describes addressing the complexity of healing for the victim, the violence itself and the questioning or violating of the tenets of the Jewish faith and culture.
Suppression	Describes the obstacles to having resources that understand Jewish culture and religion and minimal support for outreach within the Jewish community.

Appendix J

Duality Relationship of a Domestic Violence Advocate

Duality Relationship of a Domestic Violence Advocate