Self-Empowerment

Women resolving vulnerability to physical violence

by

Antony Last

Independent Edition

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Dedication

To every woman who has lived through physical violence.

Your courage shaped this work.

Preface

This study grew beyond the limits of the doctoral framework in which it began.

It required accuracy, integrity, and freedom from imposed structures.

When supervisory feedback became repeatedly contradictory and required changes that conflicted with research protocols, I decided to withdraw this thesis and exit the university's PhD programme.

This independent edition preserves the study as it was finally written up.

— Antony Last

Abstract

Physical violence against women remains a pervasive issue globally and especially in South Africa's Gauteng and Western Cape provinces. This study investigates the main concern of women who have experienced physical violence and their method of resolving it, regardless of perpetrator type. Existing literature previously lacked a theory that adequately captured these specifics. Adopting a classic grounded theory approach within a critical interpretivist paradigm, this research centred on authentically conveying participants' experiences and perspectives. The study involved 106 women aged 18 and older from Gauteng and the Western Cape, all of whom had encountered physical violence. Data collection began with responses from one participant via an anonymous online qualitative survey, followed by the recruitment of eleven additional participants through self-selection via Facebook advertisements. This initial phase employed constant comparative analysis and coding, which led to the second phase of data collection, based on theoretical sampling, until category saturation was reached. The findings show that vulnerability is the main concern for these women, who strive to resolve it through self-empowerment strategies of preparation, defence, and rebuilding, ultimately seeking peace. The emergent theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how women resolve their vulnerability to physical violence through self-empowerment. The study's implications are substantial, laying the groundwork for the development of training programs, seminars, and interventions to assist women in managing physical violence and its effects.

Key terms: aggression, vulnerability, women, physical violence, balancing power, self-empowerment, security, self-defence, support, rebuilding, peace, grounded theory, constant comparison

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Chapter 1:

Overview of the Study

before a woman can rise

she must survive being unheard

— Dr. Silencia Veil

Institute for Muted Histories

Introduction

This thesis begins with a commitment to critically examine the oppressive structures and violent actions embedded in society, aiming to reveal their impact on the lives of women and challenge the forces that silence their voices.

Chapter epigraphs are creative inventions, intended as literary devices.

This opening chapter sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of violence in Gauteng and the Western Cape. It offers a structured overview of the study, outlining the research problems, philosophical foundations, and key objectives. The chapter serves to orient the reader within the study's context, clearly defining its scope and establishing the groundwork for the detailed analysis that follows in subsequent chapters.

The estimated daily number of rapes in South Africa is alarmingly high, with approximately 3,323 women affected, according to an extrapolation from various sources

(Adefuye et al., 2024; AfricaCheck, 2020; BusinessTech, 2017; Everett, 2014; Itano, 2003; Kahonde & Johns, 2022; Watney, 2025). This equates to an annual total of approximately 1,213,726 incidents. Beyond sexual assault, women in South Africa experience additional forms of physical violence, including beatings, other assaults, and murder. This study seeks to identify the main concern of these women in facing such violence and how they resolve it.

Definitions

Ethical clearance for this study was granted for the research titled: "A classic grounded theory of the main concern of women experiencing physical violence and how they resolve it."

Consequently, it is essential to define the key terms employed in this preliminary study title:

- **Classic grounded theory**: A research methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, which focuses on generating conceptual models to explain how participants resolve their main concern within a specific context.
- **Main concern**: As defined by Glaser (2008), a main concern refers to the most significant issue or problem that individuals encounter and seek to resolve within the context of a specific phenomenon.
- **Women**: As defined by Byrne (2020), women refers to adult human females.
- **Physical violence**: Intentional damage or injury inflicted through contact, as discussed by Luhpratiwi et al. (2024) and Tyau et al. (2024). For the purposes of the present study, the term also encompasses non-consensual sexual contact and farm attacks against women.

- **Resolve**: As defined by Freeman et al. (2005), "resolve" refers to the act of finding a solution.
- **Physical violence against women**: Any intentional damage or injury inflicted on adult human females through acts of physical violence.

This study employs several other terms that warrant clear definitions:

- **Victims / Survivors**: These terms refers to women who have encountered physical violence and are managing their recovery process. The term "victim" acknowledges the impact of their experiences, while "survivor" emphasises their agency in confronting and overcoming the repercussions of such violence (cf. Herman, 2015).
- **Perpetrator**: An individual who initiates and carries out acts of physical violence against women (cf. Aström, 2006).

Abbreviations

This section serves to clarify my approach to abbreviations. For academic parlance and citations, I use the standard abbreviations where necessary. However, I refrain from using abbreviations in other contexts.

I find it disrespectful to both participants and readers to abbreviate terms such as "VS" when referring to "victim-survivors" (cf. Piippo, 2024). Why shorten "victim-survivors" when it is more respectful and fluid to use the full term? Similarly, I do not use abbreviations like "DV" for "domestic violence" or "PVAW" for "physical violence against women."

In this thesis, I have written "physical violence against women" nearly a hundred times, and I believe that spelling it out enhances the flow, presentation, and respect for the topic at hand.

Research Problem

As already indicated, physical violence against women is a significant and widespread issue in South Africa.

The provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape report alarmingly high levels of general violence, as evidenced in multiple studies (Gerber, 2020; Phagane, 2020; Puoeng & Sepadi & Chadyiwa, 2025; Tsawe, 2024). These regions also experience severe violence against women (Gender Links, 2012; Mbandlwa, 2024; Moruri-Silo et al., 2025; Njezula, 2006; Stats SA, 2020a). Despite this grave situation, the true extent of such violence remains considerably under-reported, with notable gaps in data and reporting mechanisms (UNHRC, 2016).

While numerous studies have addressed physical violence against women perpetrated by intimate partners, there is a notable lack of research on violence committed by any type of perpetrator, including both known and unknown assailants. This study aims to address this critical gap by focusing on incidents of physical violence against women from various perpetrators.

The following subsections break down and analyse the research problem into seven sub-problems to develop and illustrate the multifaceted intricacies of the issue of physical violence against women.

Research Sub-problem 1: History

The ongoing delays and overall ineffectiveness that have historically characterised responses to violence against women represent a critical dimension of the research problem.

Physical violence against women is widely understood, its meaning forged through the lived experiences of both victims and perpetrators. Less clear, however, are the historical nature of this violence and the efforts made to address it. This section seeks to examine these aspects.

There is no prominent item, whether in popular media or scholarly literature, that uses the phrase or title "history of physical violence against women", except a few instances where it refers to the personal background, predisposition, or reputation of certain men (e.g., Wilson, 2015). The reality is that there is no distinct history of physical violence against women. Although several literary works include the phrase "history of violence against women" in their titles, none focus specifically on the South African context. Consequently, this historical investigation has had to draw on these works and related materials to provide a broad yet concise background to the research problem.

In the Genesis 2:18 narrative, dated roughly to 1430 BCE, the woman is described as a "helper" for man in the creation account. This portrayal can be interpreted as situating women in a subservient role, potentially framing them as subordinate within societal hierarchies. Such early characterisations may have subtly legitimised differential treatment of women by men (Iloka, 2022). Texts of this nature are pivotal when exploring historical attitudes towards gender and violence.

The narrative complexity deepens in the depiction of women as both transgressors and victims within these texts. For instance, scriptural accounts suggest that women were seen as more susceptible to deception (1 Timothy 2:14; circa 64 CE) and often bore the brunt of collective sin, as seen in the directives given to Moses' officers in Numbers 31:17-18 (circa 1430 BCE). Additionally, figures such as Nehemiah (circa 450 BCE) attribute the moral

failures of male leaders, like King Solomon, to the influence of foreign women (Nehemiah 13:26), reinforcing a narrative that both victimises and vilifies women.

This pattern spans the Old and New Testaments, portraying women negatively and reinforcing gender biases that increase their vulnerability to violence, showing the need to reconsider traditional texts for a fairer view of gender roles.

By 70 CE, women in Judea suffered violence from both insurgent zealots, such as the Sicarii, who coerced and assaulted families, and from the Roman siege, which brought slaughter, enslavement, and widespread abuse, leaving women exposed to brutality from all sides (Last, 2020b).

During the Roman era (circa 500 BCE–500 CE), the law allowed a man to kill his wife to ensure fidelity; a thousand years later in Wales, he could only beat her (Engels, 1884). In the Middle Ages (5th–15th centuries CE), rape was often dismissed, briefly a capital crime in the sixth century, and later absolved if victims married their assailants. Women endured repeated abuses from aristocrats and clergy, sometimes resisted creatively, and occasionally succeeded in having perpetrators sentenced to death, though many women were imprisoned for pursuing claims (Berkowitz, 2013).

Still, in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and America, men were allowed to beat wives and children with a whip or stick (PBS, 1998), and women were physically attacked and harmed in large numbers (Cobbe, 1878; Naqvi et al., 2016). However, certain changes in the law did make it easier for women to deal with violence (Cyr, 2015).

In 1827, Shaka's decree to kill all pregnant women and their husbands following his mother’s death resulted in an estimated death toll of five to ten thousand women, based on birth

rates and population estimates (BlackPast.org, 2023; History.com, 2025; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). This brutal act of physical violence against women was met with Shaka's assassination by his half-brothers (A&E Networks, 2023).

The legal excuse for wife killing in adultery persisted until 1925 in Texas and 1975 in France (Weinstein, 1986). For over a century, discussion of violence against women largely disappeared from public view. Early feminist activism had addressed family violence and male abuse, but male-dominated institutions suppressed women's voices until the 1970s, when second-wave feminists challenged rape, exposed justice system failings, and founded shelters. Scholarly attention also grew, demonstrating the ongoing need for vigilance in protecting women from violence (Rutherford & MacKay, 2013).

It took two decades, from the resurgence of activism in 1970 to 1990, for the United States to pass the federal Violence Against Women Act (Siskin, 2002). In South Africa, femicide had been a persistent issue for decades (Amisi et al., 2022), but due to women's activism and government initiatives, there was a significant decrease of 38% from 1999 to 2009. Since then, despite claims to the contrary by the South African Medical Research Council, femicide rates have seen a slight increase of 2% (Abrahams et al., 2022).

In 2017, the #MeToo movement erupted following the exposure of the Weinstein scandal, prompting millions of women globally to publicly share their experiences of sexual harassment and assault for the first time. This disclosure forced many perpetrators to face accountability for their actions (Kantor & Twohey, 2019). The movement has significantly contributed to empowering women to resolve and combat physical violence (Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020).

Over the past five decades, slow but crucial incremental legal reforms advocated by anti-violence activists have provided significant support to women, enabling them to better manage violence in their lives. However, it is important to recognise that legislation alone does not solve the problem; rather, it establishes a foundation from which further development and continual updates can be launched. Such a foothold can facilitate the active, day-to-day protection of women in society through careful and adaptive implementation (Jordan, 2014).

This brief history shows some progress in addressing physical violence against women, although the rate and effectiveness of these efforts remain limited. The slow pace of change is, in itself, a significant part of the problem.

This study examines how, in light of the historical reality of women's exposure to physical violence, they have resolved this vulnerability through a process of self-empowerment — preparing for violence, defending themselves during attack, and rebuilding their lives afterward.

Research Sub-problem 2: Frameworks

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2021b), physical violence against women constitutes a severe violation of human rights and remains a critical global issue. In response, numerous legal, protective, and collaborative frameworks and projects have been developed and implemented at international, regional, and country levels to combat this difficult problem (UNWSDD, 2020).

However, the effectiveness of these frameworks is often restricted, with many proving inadequate or failing to achieve their intended outcomes. This lack of efficacy stresses the urgency of considering these frameworks as central components of the research problem.

International frameworks. Global frameworks are significant as they articulate agreed-upon standards, obligations, and procedures for governments to address the problem of violence against women by cooperation, protection, and restoration of rights with accountability.

Five international frameworks, CEDAW, the Vienna Declaration, DEVAW, the Beijing Declaration, and the 2030 Agenda, are regarded as crucial because they articulate global standards for human rights, gender equality, and sustainable development, and were adopted by United Nations member states.

These international frameworks will now be briefly discussed.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) – 1979. CEDAW is a global legal agreement for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls (UN Women, 2016). Many countries signed the convention in 1980, with a total of 189 ratifying it. South Africa only signed it in 1993 and ratified it three years later. The complaints inquiry and procedure were accepted by South Africa in 2005, which was later than many other countries. The Holy See, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, and the United States have not ratified the Convention, and the United States has also not accepted the complaints procedures (UN, 2015). Notably, the Convention does not explicitly mention violence against women. However, this issue was addressed through subsequent formal recommendations, starting a decade later. For instance, General Recommendation No. 12, adopted in 1989, directs participating governments to report on existing violence against women preventative legislation, eradication measures, victim support services, and statistics on incidents of violence (UN, 1989). Additionally, General Recommendation No. 19, adopted in 1992, clarifies that gender-based violence may contravene specific provisions of the

Convention, even if these provisions do not explicitly mention violence (UN, 1992). This situation indicates a significant oversight in the original drafting of the Convention, which may have impacted the effectiveness of international efforts to combat violence against women, as reflected in global statistics.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action – 1993. The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed its international commitment to human rights and freedoms, expressing profound concern over the exposure of women to violence. The Vienna Declaration, through Article 19, then took a strong stance against gender-based violence, advocating its eradication through legal frameworks, national initiatives, and international cooperation across various sectors including economic and social development, education, safe maternity, healthcare, and social support. Additionally, Article 38 emphasised the need to address the elimination of violence against women in both public and private spheres (UN, 1993b). Despite these robust declarations, the practical implementation and real-world outcomes of this programme appear lacklustre. Two decades post-declaration, there had been no significant global progress in mitigating physical violence against women (Priddy, 2014). This stagnation is mirrored in South Africa's escalating incidents of physical violence against women, highlighted by a staggering 46% year-on-year increase in attempted rape cases (Fraser, 2023), showcasing the apparent ineffectiveness of the stated commitments.

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) – 1993. DEVAW serves as a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly to strengthen the provisions of CEDAW. DEVAW categorises violence against women as physical, sexual, and psychological harm occurring in familial, community, or state contexts, while affirming women's rights to equality. DEVAW mandates that governments should eradicate violence

against women through diverse strategies and emphasises the United Nations' role in promoting awareness through seminars and similar activities (UN, 1993a). However, the Declaration is not legally enforceable (King, 2019; The Advocates for Human Rights, 2007). Furthermore, it is critiqued for being conceptually flawed and perpetuating violence by infantilising women, casting doubt on its effectiveness in achieving its objectives (Shepherd, 2006).

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – 1995. The Beijing Declaration reaffirms the commitment to, and encourages the implementation of CEDAW and DEVAW, alongside a variety of preventative and supportive measures by governments, including research into violence against women and self-protection training (UN Women, 1995). However, two decades later, reports indicated that this Declaration and its platform had failed; governments had not adequately addressed the issue of violence against women (OCHA, 2015).

Currently, governments around the world seem to lack both the determination and the means to effectively address violence against women. What solutions are available? The answer may rest with women themselves. In this study, 106 women were consulted. They shared their strategies for resolving their main concern, vulnerability to physical violence, through self-empowerment.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – 2015. The United Nations Organisation, through its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), ambitiously committed to transforming the world by 2030, with Goal 5 targeting the elimination of violence against women and girls. However, scholarly predictions pointed to the potential failure of these Sustainable Development Goals (e.g., El-Zein et al., 2016; Vieira, 2020), citing

significant shortcomings such as an alleged $2.5 trillion funding shortfall (UN, 2019) and a failure rate of 88% in meeting goal targets (Malleck, 2023). Such forecasts raise critical questions about the United Nations Organisation's ability to adequately plan and budget for the global future, particularly with regard to the safety and empowerment of women. This observation reveals a troubling discrepancy between the United Nations Organisation's aspirational goals and its operational realities. It suggests that reliance on the United Nations Organisation and associated political elite to safeguard the future may dangerously mislead people with unattainable promises.

Consequently, it becomes increasingly apparent that empowerment and advocacy for women's safety may need to come from grassroots movements and individual initiatives, as evidenced by the self-empowerment theory emerging from this study. This shift towards self-reliance is poignantly captured in the ethos of the anthem "Sisters Are Doin' It for Themselves" (Eurythmics & Franklin, 1985; Franklin, 1985), symbolising a move away from dependency on overarching structures to personal and collective agency in addressing and rectifying social and systemic challenges.

Regional frameworks. Structured agreements or guidelines established at a regional level to address specific issues, are viewed as beneficial as they can involve internationally non-participating governments and others more directly in anti-violence initiatives. The following three regional frameworks are legally obligatory for participants (UNWSDD, 2020).

The Belém do Pará Convention – 1994. The Organisation of American States ratified the Belém do Pará Convention in 1994, which aimed exclusively at eradicating violence against women (UNWSDD, 2020). Despite its widespread acceptance, the convention does not address domestic violence explicitly in its articles on women's rights. It lacks mandates for

member countries to criminalise specific behaviours associated with domestic violence, omits any reference to protection orders, and does not cover the reporting mechanisms for domestic violence. Furthermore, it is hindered by vague and ineffective definitions and standards, leading to legislation that does not adequately protect women from violence (Kimelblatt, 2016).

The Maputo Protocol – 2003. The African Union implemented the Maputo Protocol, which includes a treaty on women's rights and a specific article addressing violence against women (UNWSDD, 2020). While there is a formal commitment to this Protocol, compliance by states tends to be minimal (Somé et al., 2016). Many states have neither signed nor ratified the Protocol (UNWSDD, 2020), and the majority fail to submit the mandatory reports (Johnson, 2021).

The Istanbul Convention – 2011. The Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, adopted in 2011 and widely ratified by European Union member states, specifically addresses violence against women (UNWSDD, 2020). Besides the host country Turkey not fully enforcing the convention because of insufficient national policies (Güllü, 2019), and Ukraine's refusal to ratify it (Ketelaars, 2019), the convention also encounters significant opposition. Critics argue that its promotion of eliminating gender roles, particularly in education, encourages children to question their gender identity, leading to resistance in countries like France, Germany, Croatia, and Poland (Balogh, 2020). The United Kingdom ratified the convention in 2022, a decade after signing, due to so-called compliance challenges (Balogh, 2020; Venis, 2022). Several nations including Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Czechia, and Bulgaria have yet to ratify it (ETUC, 2023). The debate over the impact of gender roles on violence against women suggests a need for revising the convention's terms through grassroots initiatives rather than top-down mandates (ETUC, 2023).

South African frameworks. The imperative in South Africa to confront the endemic issues of gender-based violence and femicide is profound, rendering South African frameworks indispensable. Key instruments like the SADC Strategy and Framework, the National Strategic Plan, and the SAPS Annual Performance Plans are deemed essential for their potential impact on the nation's social, economic, and moral landscape. However, it is regrettable that these frameworks are not currently operating effectively. This section provides a brief review of each.

The SADC Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing Gender Based Violence (2018-2030). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a Regional Economic Community comprising 16 member states, including Angola, Comoros, Eswatini, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. In 2018, the relevant ministers approved the SADC Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing Gender-Based Violence (SADC, 2022). Overall, this strategy and framework are proving ineffective, characterised by inadequate responses to violence against women, legal misinterpretations and misapplications, limited knowledge of anti-violence legislation, constraints in financial and human resources, and compromised program ownership, coordination, consistency, and sustainability. Additionally, there is an excessive dependence on non-governmental organisations for addressing these issues (ReliefWeb, 2021).

The National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide (NSP on GBVF). The National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide represents a collaborative framework between civil society and government aimed at eliminating femicide and gender-based violence (DWYPD, 2020).

Bilankulu (2021) futuristically notes:

> The plan envisages bold leadership, with strengthened accountability across government and society that responds to GBVF strategically, and with clear messaging and adequate technical and financial resources. Multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration would be developed across different tiers of government and sections of society, based on relationships of trust that give effect to the pillars of the NSP.

One year after its introduction, few government departments had implemented this framework, clearly indicating a lack of urgency (DWYPD, 2021). Another year passed, and there continued to be a systemic failure by the South African Government to enforce the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide, with departments and the police failing to implement it (Painter, 2022). By 2023, the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide was still ineffective, prompting suggestions to establish a Council to enforce it. However, others proposed disbanding the Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) and dismissed the idea of a Council as potentially wasteful expenditure (Ndaba, 2023).

The SAPS Annual Performance Plans. The SAPS Annual Performance Plans appear to be well-intentioned yet fundamentally flawed, suffering from a lack of authoritative leadership. This deficiency has led to ineffective responses to gender-based violence and femicide, and for this reason, the Plans were expected to continue failing (cf. SAPS, 2023).

All the international, regional, and South African frameworks discussed above are significantly not meeting their objectives. This shortfall points to a critical issue: There seems to be an elusive factor, not yet fully definable or understood, that requires identification to ensure the success of efforts to combat widespread violence against women. Evidently, the authorities have not yet pinpointed this crucial element. This study may begin to reveal it.

Research Sub-problem 3: Gauteng Violence

In Gauteng, over 51% of women have experienced one or more forms of violence in their lifetime, including sexual or physical violence. Specifically, more than 25% of women in the region have faced sexual violence, and over 33% have encountered physical violence at least once. Physical violence against women in Gauteng encompasses a range of aggressive actions, including beating, burning, choking, dragging, hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, slapping, and having objects thrown at them, often on multiple occasions and in various forms. Additionally, more than 13% of women in Gauteng experienced intimate partner violence within a single year. Alarmingly, over 50% of men in Gauteng admitted to committing physical violence against women, and more than 37% admitted to sexual violence. Nearly 19% of women in Gauteng have experienced rape by an intimate partner, while over 12% have been raped by someone other than their partner. In addition, almost 2% of women in the region have narrowly escaped rape, and a similar percentage have been victims of gang rape (Gender Links, 2012; Modise et al., 2024).

There are approximately 2,291 farms in Gauteng (Stats SA, 2020b). On these farms, women experience brutal injuries (Engelbrecht, 2024), including being beaten viciously with sticks (SouthAfricaToday, 2021) and metal objects, burnt (Opera News, 2021), impaled, cut (Citizen, 2017), hacked to death (Roodepoort Record, 2015), and shot (FarmAttacks, 2020a). Elderly women are assaulted and strangled to death (Molosankwe, 2020), and both mothers and young daughters face rape (Meyer, 2020). Some women manage to fight back, escape, and survive (SouthAfricaToday, 2021).

These statistics highlight the pressing need for women to find ways to resolve their main concern in relation to the violence they face. The present study contributes to this process.

Research Sub-problem 4: Western Cape Violence

In 2023, in the Western Cape, 89 gender-based violence cases were removed from the court roll within six months due to police inadequacies (Martin, 2024). According to Artz and Smythe's analysis (2005), nearly 80% of protection orders against abuse filed by women in the Western Cape were for emotional or physical violence.

Another report revealed that nearly 70% of the surveyed farms in the Western Cape reported women farm workers experiencing domestic violence (Parliament, 2002). Additionally, more than one in five women in the Western Cape have encountered physical violence at some point in their lives (Stats SA, 2020a), and 45% have been subjected to some form of gender-based violence (Gender Links, 2011).

There are approximately 6,937 farms in the Western Cape (Stats SA, 2020a). On these farms, instances of violence against women include being tied up (Mashamaite, 2024), repeatedly punched in the face (CapeTownEtc, 2020), beaten on the head with firearms (FarmAttacks, 2020b), raped (AfriForum, 2019), pushed around, and shot dead (eNCA, 2020; Hyman, 2018; McCain, 2021).

These alarming indicators and prevalence statistics point to persistent and severe physical violence against women in the Western Cape. This suggests that, in the absence of anyone else achieving any real success in curbing it, women probably need to find ways to resolve the problem themselves (Harvison, 2016; Higgins, 2006). The present study offers an opportunity for exploring these self-driven solutions.

By 2018, over 210,000 women in the Western Cape had been victims of rape (cf. Alber et al., 2018).

Within any given group of women, some may successfully have avoided violence, while others fought back. Some may have managed to escape after being attacked, and others found methods to cope with the trauma that followed. Compiling this critical information into emergent conceptual understanding (Pearson et al., 2021), as done in the present study, could benefit everyone in such a group. This knowledge could then be considered by other women for application to their own unique circumstances.

Research Sub-problem 5: Effects of Violence

Young women in South Africa face the world's highest risk of experiencing physical or sexual violence (George, 2020; Nyemgah et al., 2024), a situation that reflects not only their vulnerability but also the troubling state of the nation.

Physical violence against women can result in both physical and psychological health issues for the victims, their spouses, wider family, and the communities in which they live. This violence can also lead to job loss and homelessness (OASH, 2021).

Effectively resolving physical violence against women crucially involves the role of public healthcare workers. They require comprehensive training in all aspects of the phenomenon, including preparation for incidents, actions to take when attacked, and how to manage the aftermath. Such training could benefit healthcare workers themselves as well as help guide and support victims. Regrettably, this practical knowledge and training are largely absent from even the most well-informed public healthcare protocols (WHO, 2021a).

The present study details organic strategies for women to prepare for an attack, respond during it, and manage its effects afterwards.

Research Sub-problem 6: Time for Violence

Physical violence against women predominantly occurs on weekends between 21h00 and midnight. During these times, social interactions are more casual than during the week, alcohol consumption increases, inebriation levels rise, and patriarchal behaviours are more pronounced (Egenasi et al., 2024; Jha, 2021; McCain, 2022; Movendi, 2019; Shaw, 2019).

The present study explores some of these issues.

Research Sub-problem 7: Filling the Literature Gap

To date, there has been no discovery of a grounded theory, whether classic or otherwise, that addresses how women resolve their main concern in physical violence against them by any type of perpetrator, whether in Gauteng, the Western Cape, or elsewhere. All existing grounded theory studies on violence against women specifically categorise types or aspects of violence. These include reporting violence (Damaceno et al., 2024), violence enablement (Gram et al., 2023), violence influence (Sammut-Scerri & Vetere, 2024), obstetric violence (Mena-Tudela et al., 2023; Okumu et al., 2024), violence gambling influence (Hing et al., 2022), perception of violence against women (Siller et al., 2020), gender violence (Bading & Bosch, 2024), marital violence (Campos et al., 2024; Sarma, 2023), domestic violence (Ghelichkhan & Abdoli, 2023; Jafari et al., 2022; Wilson & Goodman, 2021), intimate partner violence (Baeza et al., 2024; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Snyder, 2017), dating violence (Williams & Adams Rueda, 2020), sexual harassment (Worke et al., 2021), abuse (Wuest et al., 2021), workplace violence (Han et al., 2021), sexual violence (Sinko et al., 2021), and family violence (Stairmand et al., 2021).

Thus, the present study fills this gap in the literature.

Research Problem Summary

The research problem central to this study arises from two critical factors: The pervasive reality of all types of physical violence against women and the significant gap in the literature, specifically, the absence of a grounded theory, classic or otherwise, that examines how women navigate and resolve their main concern in the context of such violence. Consequently, the present study aims to address this gap by uncovering the main concern of women who have experienced physical violence and exploring the processes through which they resolve it. This will be achieved by analysing the lived experiences and narratives of women who have endured such violence.

To encapsulate, the research problem for the present study is the intense, widespread prevalence and impact of physical violence against women in general, and in Gauteng and the Western Cape in particular; the failure of international, regional, and local frameworks to adequately reduce such violence; and the absence of a grounded theory on how women resolve their main concern in physical violence.

Main Research Question and Sub-Questions

"What" and "how" questions are inherently aligned with the interpretivist paradigm underpinning this study (Carcary, 2009) and are employed here to facilitate a deeper interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation. Consequently, flowing logically from the research problems outlined above, the main research question guiding this study is: "What is the main concern of women who experience physical violence, and how do they resolve it?"

In classic grounded theory, themes for subsequent questions typically emerge from the initial data collected (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Nevertheless, potential sub-questions for the present study could be oriented around the following areas:

1. "What are the intensity and meaning of the experience of physical violence for women?"
2. "How do women cope with the experience of physical violence against them?"
3. "What are women's concerns and opinions regarding the causes, mitigation strategies, impacts, support systems, and prevention of physical violence?"
4. "How can a classic grounded theory be developed to understand how women resolve their main concern in physical violence against them?"

It is expected that these questions will find their answers in the data elicited from the study's anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire (Appendix A), particularly through its open-ended questions and requests, such as: "Please tell me about your physical violence experience."

In addition, the following questions are examples of subsequent theoretical sampling questions posed to participants, emerging from the initial data analysis:

1. "Please tell me how you felt when you were faced with the perpetrator/attacker."
2. "Please tell me how you stopped the perpetrator/attacker or how you escaped."
3. "How did/do you prepare for physical violence?"
4. "How did you negotiate with the perpetrator/attacker during your physical violence experience?"

5. "How did you bide your time / pace yourself during your physical violence experience?"
6. "How did/do you care for yourself after your physical violence experience?"

These questions evolved from my efforts to address gaps identified in the processes described by the participants.

Aim and Objectives

Extrapolating from the main research question presented above, the aim of the present study can be stated as follows:

To *discover* the main concern of women who experience physical violence
and how they resolve it.

This means that the purpose of the study is to receive, understand, and analyse the stories of women's experiences of physical violence, to observe and identify their main concern and how they resolve it, and to construct and explain a theoretical framework of how they resolve that main concern during and after those experiences.

Based on the research sub-questions outlined above, the objectives of the study can be stated as follows:

1. To *understand* the intensity and meaning of physical violence as experienced by women.
2. To *explain* how women respond to and cope with physical violence against them.
3. To *understand* women's concerns and opinions regarding the causes, mitigation strategies, impacts, support systems, and prevention of physical violence.

4. To *develop* a classic grounded theory that elucidates how women resolve their main concern in dealing with physical violence against them.

Significance of the Study

Out of the 106 participants in the present study, all shared their experiences of physical violence at the hands of men. One participant also shared her experience of physical violence at the hands of a woman.

The classic grounded theory emerging from the present study offers insights into how women effectively resolve their main concern regarding physical violence perpetrated against them. The empirical findings of the study, firstly, benefit the women participants; secondly, they benefit other women in Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces; and thirdly, they benefit women who may see the findings as relevant to their own experiences.

The present study also addresses the gap in understanding how women resolve their vulnerability to physical violence through self-empowerment — preparing, defending, and rebuilding. This knowledge could confirm or directly inform women's strategies, or it could serve as the foundation for seminars, training courses, and therapies designed to reach and support many women survivors of physical violence.

The study results may also benefit:

- Practitioners, by helping them understand and support women through the intricate aspects of the phases of physical violence;
- The research community, by providing guidelines for developing further research to deepen understanding of how women can more effectively resolve their vulnerability to physical violence; and

- Policy and law makers, by highlighting areas of practical application, such as self-defence, medical, psychological, reporting, and protective support services.

Furthermore, this study is the first to include sexual violence and farm attacks against women within the concept of physical violence. It is also the first study on physical violence against women, involving any type of perpetrator, conducted in Gauteng and the Western Cape. It uniquely reveals ways for women to resolve their vulnerability to physical violence before, during, and after an attack. The study illustrates vital abilities, such as knowing how to resist, challenge, fight back, and escape from dangerous assailants, as well as how to effectively manage the impact of physical violence on women. It shows women learning how to contribute to the process of practically helping reorient men toward empathy and understanding. The study also portrays realistic, practicable ways of empowerment by women who have experienced physical violence, as well as women constructing and utilising methods to process their trauma and live day-to-day, with or without formal therapy.

In addition, this study reflects an understanding of the intensity and meaning of the experience of physical violence for women. It also captures women's opinions and concerns regarding the causes, mitigation strategies, impacts, support systems, and prevention of physical violence.

Finally, the present study has developed a well-rounded, balanced classic grounded theory on how women self-empower to resolve their vulnerability to physical violence. Thus, the study has achieved its aim and objectives and stands as significant in its own right.

Philosophical Orientation

Classic grounded theory is not confined to any specific ontology (Holton, 2008). It is open to the use of any ontology held by the researcher and any epistemology suited to the data (Holton, 2007).

Ontology

Ontologically, realism asserts the existence of an objective reality in the physical world, independent of human perception or understanding (Derksen, 2010). Critical realism accounts for reality across three levels: empirical, actual, and real. Its purpose is to clarify the cause and effect of social phenomena across these levels. Compared to detailed contextual description, critical realism excels at analysing phenomena and identifying solutions (Fletcher, 2017), with the aim of improving society (Ritzer et al., 2001). This makes critical realism an ideal ontology for the type of conceptual explication used in classic grounded theory methodology. An interpretivist paradigm (Holton, 2008) can also examine reality through the lens of critical inquiry (McAnulla, 2006). Such complementary approaches allowed me to adopt a critical realist ontology (Irfan & Wilkinson, 2020) alongside an interpretivist approach in the present study.

Epistemology

In critical realism, only a small portion of the real can be known. This distinguishes critical realism from both positivism and constructivism. Within critical realism, knowledge of the real is understood as relative approximations (Fletcher, 2017). Such an epistemology integrates well with classic grounded theory and aligns with its constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) for getting as close as possible to "what is going on" (Glaser,

2002) in the data. Epistemologically, critical realism posits that contextual reality can be understood by combining empirical information and interpretation. This approach is equivalent to observing objective reality from a subjectively interpretive perspective (Grant & Giddings, 2002; McAnulla, 2006). I have employed this approach in the present study on physical violence against women. Thus, the epistemology of interpretive critical realism guided my thinking throughout this study.

As with Ansaldo (2024), a critical realist ontology allowed the present study to give greater influence and weight to contextual cultural elements and agent power. At the same time, an interpretive critical realist epistemology balanced predictive elements with co-constructed explanations (Husy, 2021).

Literature Review

In grounded theory, the literature review is conducted after the findings, as the theorist does not know in advance which literature is applicable (Erasmus, 2019). This approach also prevents contamination of evolving theoretical categories (Nathaniel, 2022; cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

A grounded theory literature review is conducted through conceptual, rather than contextual, comparison. The emergent concepts in the theory are compared with existing literature and discussed. As a result, the literature review can only be carried out after the theory's concepts have emerged (Christiansen, 2011).

These proscriptive constraints are logical and appear to ensure that a study and its theory do not "overstep their bounds" or waste time on irrelevancies.

Therefore, I have determined that a later chapter in this thesis on discussion and literature integration would be the most suitable place to review the literature relevant to the emergent content of the present study.

Conclusion

This first chapter has provided an orientation, definitions, and an outline of the research problems, questions, aim, and objectives. It has also presented the philosophical orientation and highlighted the significance of the study. The literature review has been postponed until after the findings.

The following chapter addresses beliefs, judgments, ethics, and method.

Chapter 2:

Ethics and Method

we followed the method as ethically as possible

which is to say we did not let it interfere with the truth

— Professor I. M. Plausible

Department of Retroactive Justification

Collegium Ambiguum

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three main sections, which outline my personal beliefs and judgments regarding physical violence against women, the ethical considerations applied in this study, and the detailed methodology employed.

Guba (1981) outlines four essential elements for assessing the trustworthiness of a qualitative study — credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability — while classic grounded theory identifies four theoretical measures of quality — fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability (Holton, 2006). These criteria are discussed in relation to the present study in the final chapter.

The research questions and philosophical orientation presented in the first chapter, along with the trustworthiness and quality criteria addressed in the last, establish the methodological framework and requirements of this study.

This chapter demonstrates how these demands have been effectively met.

Personal Beliefs and Judgements

In this section, I outline my personal beliefs and judgments to foreground the reflexive methodology employed in this study. By acknowledging and managing inherent subjectivities, this approach enhances the credibility and depth of the analysis.

Reflexivity in research is crucial for enhancing the trustworthiness and rigour of findings, as it improves transparency and illuminates potential biases (Ide & Beddoe, 2024; Jamie & Rathbone, 2022).

As the foundation of a reflexive approach to this study, I hereby document my personal stance and understanding of physical violence against women. Being conscious of this personal orientation allowed me to bracket it where necessary, as much as possible, to prevent undue or inappropriate influence on my professional conduct throughout the research process. This awareness also created room for any shifts in judgment or belief that I experienced during the course of the study.

The following are some of my more salient reflections on physical violence against women prior to this study, as well as how the study influenced, changed, or fulfilled them:

1. My primary stance is that underlying or fundamental beliefs about life are central to the issue of physical violence against women. In other words, I cannot simply begin

making judgments about physical violence against women without first articulating the broader principles that guide my perspective.

2. I believe that all human beings are equal, in the sense that, while they may face unequal opportunities in life, their intrinsic worth remains the same. The research for this study, along with concurrent personal life experiences, led me to deepen this understanding further: That all human beings are fundamentally one, sharing the same underlying universal essence (cf. Kastrup, 2023). This means that, beyond our individual egos and body-minds, the consciousness we each experience is part of the same subjective field of universal consciousness. Accordingly, when I look at you, I see my own intrinsic self in you, not the personal "me", but the essential universal Self (cf. Boyer & Hensley, 2015). This awareness emerged in 2023, a year after the initial *braving fear theory* of the present study surfaced in 2022, and it has profoundly deepened my perception and understanding, not only of life itself but also of women's experiences with violence. It has contributed to the recognition of a more nuanced and deeper understanding, which has informed the emergence of the final *self-empowerment theory* in this study.

3. The principle that people's intrinsic value is equal means that every individual is entitled to the same fundamental respect, honour, and dignity. This belief remained unchanged throughout the course of the study.

4. Each person is responsible for their own thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions, and for managing them appropriately. While I now more fully understand the implications of individuals not being initially responsible for their basic psychosocial conditioning (shaped during upbringing), this fundamental belief remained unchanged over the course of the study.

5. Harmful attitudes, words, and actions, such as expressing abuse or violence against women, should be universally condemned and met with reasonable and proportionate consequences. These may include corrective training or constructive restrictions aimed at encouraging change and rehabilitation. I continue to hold this belief.

6. I believe that governments worldwide generally lack the knowledge or will to effectively promulgate and enforce anti-violence-against-women legislation. There are structurally ingrained reasons, such as patriarchy, that may explain why they do not genuinely wish to do so, without admitting it, or worse, without being fully conscious of it. While I still hold this view, this study has reinforced my conviction that this issue must be properly and urgently addressed.

7. Although lobbying for necessary changes in laws, judicial systems, and associated services is essential and should be pursued as urgently as possible, I am convinced that there may also exist an organic way for women to resolve their encounters with violence as optimally as possible, thereby minimising unnecessary harm to themselves. The results of this study have compellingly demonstrated that this is achievable.

8. Thus, I believe that a theoretically aggregated and synthesised understanding of how women address the actual events and experiences of violence against them could create a broader awareness among both men and women of what women do, and consequently, what they can constructively do, to manage their main concern in the face of attempted or perpetrated physical violence. The results of this study have also fulfilled this expectation.

Although this study has been positioned as unique, I did not present myself as a "hero" or someone claiming to dictate what women "need to do" to address their main concern regarding violence against them. On the contrary, my habitual open-mindedness, along with a gentle and fair approach to people and their opinions and ideas, allowed me, I believe, to handle the entire process of data sourcing, analysis, and synthesis in this study with exceptional care and effectiveness.

Ethical Considerations

This section examines the ethical considerations of the research, showing my commitment to personal accountability and ethical diligence. While ethics committees may grant clearance, the ultimate responsibility rests with the researcher to conduct each step of a study with integrity and unbiased caution (Berry, 2009; Bizoi & Bizoi, 2024). Throughout this study, I have endeavoured to uphold these standards rigorously.

Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance was sought and was granted by the ethics committee at the University of [name removed] to conduct the present study.

Ethical Principles

Ethical principles are broad guidelines that inspire ethical thinking and behaviour; they are regarded as aspirational ideals toward which one should continually strive and measure oneself in psychological, scientific, and professional work (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017; Kazdin, 2024).

The following are some of the principles adhered to throughout this study:

Principle 1: Integrity. The conduct of research should exemplify honesty, fairness, and transparency (Unisa, 2016). Both the research process and the researcher should consistently demonstrate a high standard of integrity (Chatfield & Law, 2024).

Principle 2: Dignity and respect. Research should uphold the rights, autonomy, and dignity of participants (Unisa, 2016). This includes acknowledging and respecting their cultural backgrounds (Lomansoc, 2024).

Principle 3: Responsibility and faithfulness. Research should actively contribute to enhancing the welfare of individuals (Unisa, 2016). It should be beneficent, allowing participants to gain from the insights generated through their involvement (Hodges et al., 2024), reflecting researcher responsibility and faithfulness.

Principle 4: Do no harm. Research should avoid causing harm to participants specifically, and to people generally (Unisa, 2016). It should adhere to the principle of non-maleficence (Byrne et al., 2024).

Principle 5: Fairness. It is crucial for research to be morally fair and just, aiming to ensure that the benefits and risks are equitably shared among all parties involved (Unisa, 2016; cf. Cagle & Burnes, 2023).

The following section will demonstrate how these principles were implemented in this study.

Ethical Implementation

A researcher should not only "do no harm" but should also actively strive to do good (McCutcheon, 2021; Moorkens et al., 2024). The present study adopted affirmative ethics, addressing issues such as dehumanisation, toxic social conditions, and trauma (Strom & Mills,

2021), while ensuring non-exploitation of all participants (cf. Jackson, 2021). Careful attention was given to the influences and potential harmful effects of group identity and power abuse (Chelouche & Wynia, 2021). This orientation is one I consistently adopt in my day-to-day life. Consequently, it also guided the preparation, structuring, and wording of the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire (Appendix A) and was upheld throughout the entirety of the present study.

The following ethical factors (Söderlund, 2024) represent the standards implemented in the present study. These measures worked collectively to counteract coercion (cf. Gilbert, 1993), promote fairness (cf. Schweitzer & Gibson, 2008), potentially facilitate healing through sharing (Kuruvilla, 2024), and encourage maximum openness, engagement, honesty, authenticity, and satisfaction among participants (cf. Becker-Blease & Freyd, 2006). The intersecting nature of these factors illustrates the nuanced aspects of thorough reflexive thought applied to significant considerations, showing the depth and care taken in addressing relevant ethical complexities.

Ethical factor 1: A man conducting research with women. In 2022 during data collection for this study, I was a 65-year-old white male doctoral psychology student conducting research with female participants from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. These participants had experienced physical violence, predominantly perpetrated by men. The question of whether it is better for a man or a woman to conduct research with women is an equivocally moot issue (Flurey, 2024) and must rely heavily on the personal attributes of the researcher (Duch Crosta, 2024). My name, Antony Last, appeared in the informed and process consent section of the anonymous online questionnaire. A Google search of that name, for example, might arrive at my LinkedIn profile: https://www.linkedin.com/in/antonylast/.

Participants would have been able to access information about who I am, what I look like, and details about my background. I would not have been able to control the impression participants might have formed of me under such circumstances. It is possible, as with any individual, that I might have reminded participants of someone, whether positively or negatively, from their past. If this were the case, I would have had no way of knowing it. Viewers might have chosen to participate or not for reasons such as I appeared approachable and kind, or white and racist, although unbeknownst to them, I am part Cape coloured. However, the tone of the informed and process consent, as well as the questionnaire (cf. Dang et al., 2024), along with the openness and consideration demonstrated, such as ensuring a way for the thesis to be accessible after the study's completion, hopefully helped to mitigate any such apprehensions (cf. Pandya & Padma, 2024) that participants might have had.

Several participants contacted me via WhatsApp or email using the contact details provided in the informed and process consent. I responded to their messages, addressing any questions or concerns with the same respect and kindness I extend to anyone with whom I interact. It appears that I satisfactorily resolved all matters raised. My congenial approach helped to resolve any issues or, when necessary, directed individuals to further assistance when that seemed the most appropriate course of action.

Reading further below will also provide a clearer sense of the kind of person I am and how I would have ensured that any interaction with a participant was a pleasant, respectful, and dignified experience (cf. Bass Jr, 2024).

Ethical factor 2: Informed and process consent. An anonymous informed and process consent (Header, 2021) was integrated into the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire (Belcher, 2019). The consent was written in plain English, which is considered

"reasonably understandable" (APA, 2017, para. 3.10a) to the socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse demographic of women aged 18 years and older living in Gauteng and the Western Cape. This approach was both responsible and fair, aligning with Principles 3 (Responsibility and faithfulness) and 5 (Fairness) outlined above. The anonymous informed and process consent was appropriately documented in writing (APA, 2017, para. 3.10d) when submitted online by a participant and received in written form in the applicable Google Form, configured within my secure profile at antonylast@gmail.com. Process consent refers to the agreement participants provide to follow the outlined procedures and conditions of the study. This includes acknowledging that they understand what will be asked of them, how their data will be used, and their rights throughout the participation process.

The document outlining informed and process consent, as detailed by Header (2021) and Lamprinos et al. (2024), included all essential components. It clearly communicated to participants about the research's purpose, duration, and procedures; their freedom to opt out at any time without penalties; potential risks, discomforts, and adverse effects, with assurances of available support should such instances arise; the expected benefits of the research; confidentiality parameters; incentives (none) offered for participation; and contact information for inquiries about the research and participants' rights. It also ensured that prospective participants had opportunities to ask questions and receive answers, promoting a dignified and ethical approach to participant engagement (cf. Koali et al., 2024).

The anonymous informed and process consent (Header, 2021) was electronically agreed to by all anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire (Belcher, 2019) participants prior to completion of the survey (Andrews & Waterman, 2005).

Ethical factor 3: Autonomy, non-coercion, and non-inducement. The anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire appeared linked in an advertisement in Facebook feeds of people who were likely to be interested in such a survey as determined by the Facebook algorithm (Bucher, 2017). As such, the advertisement was presented in a non-coercive, non-inducing manner, and the viewer could simply decide that she was interested or not. This approach maximised her independence and autonomy (Siriwardhana et al., 2013), which is both respectful and fair (cf. Ceralde, 2024), aligning with Principles 2 (Dignity and respect) and 5 (Fairness) outlined above.

Ethical factor 4: Anonymity, confidentiality, and access / retention of data. The questionnaire for the present study was, as noted earlier, an anonymous (cf. Cassidy, 1998) online qualitative survey questionnaire (Ballou-Broadnax, 2018). This approach ensured maximum privacy for participants and confidentiality of their data (APA, 2017, para. 4.01). The anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire requested three required pieces of information from participants — gender, age, and province — along with eight optional items — home language, second language, relationship status, education level, and employment status. The optional items were clearly marked as "(optional)", allowing participants to control the extent of personal information they chose to share. Societal affiliation (e.g., Black, Coloured, etc.), occupation, and city or town were not included, as these details might have made participants potentially too identifiable (cf. Camilleri, 2024). For example, if a participant provided their occupation and town, there might only be one woman in that town with that specific occupation, effectively making the participant identifiable. Thus, the questionnaire was designed to avoid asking for general information that, when combined, could potentially identify an individual. This approach reflects harm prevention and faithfulness (cf.

Abua et al., 2024), effectively embodying Principles 4 (Do no harm) and 3 (Responsibility and faithfulness) outlined above.

In addition, the questionnaire included the cautionary instruction to participants: "In your answer, do not provide personally identifiable information like names of people and places, etc."

All of these anonymising features contributed to ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and the secure preservation, access, processing, and retention of data for the present study. When women encountered the questionnaire and perceived that their identity was highly respected and unlikely to be revealed, it would have significantly encouraged them to engage authentically with the survey and participate.

Additionally, because the questionnaire was anonymous, there was no way for me to contact participants to address any questions or concerns after they had completed and submitted the questionnaire. To address this, I included access to the study and my first supervisor's contact details again in the thank-you message that participants received upon submission of the questionnaire. This was applicable up to the end of data collection on 28 November 2022:

> Your answers have been received. Thank you for participating. I truly appreciate it. Remember, you will be able to find the final thesis by searching […] here: [https://stratadtheory.com/publications/] as and when it is published online; this is expected to be in early 2023. Also, if you have any questions or concerns, please Whatsapp (082 074-5319) or email me (antonylast@gmail.com) or contact my supervisor, Dr. [name removed], at [telephone number removed] or [email address

removed]. Kind regards, Antony Last. (Suggestion: Make a note of these details, copy and paste them, or screenshot this page and store securely.)

Now when a person accesses the survey link (https://forms.gle/8ViKK6zconN4d3cy7), they are informed with an updated message, such as: "Thank you for your interest. This questionnaire is no longer accepting responses. You will be able to find the final thesis by searching here: https://stratadtheory.com/publications/ as and when it is published online; this is expected to be in late 2025 or early 2026."

The Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013 defines personal information as data pertaining to an identifiable, natural individual (POPI Act, 2013). The Act permits the retention of personal information beyond the period required to achieve the purpose for which it was gathered or further processed, provided the individual involved has agreed to such retention (POPI Act, 2013). This Act also outlines various other requirements regarding personal information. However, the data collected through the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire included minimal personal details. Even in cases where descriptive answers provided by participants mentioned specific places or names, I ensured that such information was de-identified as soon as reasonably possible after I was no longer permitted to retain it (POPI Act, 2013). This process has now been completed as the thesis for the present study has been finalised. However, insofar as the received data contained no personal information (personally identifiable information), the Protection of Personal Information Act, in effect, did not and does not apply to the present study.

Nevertheless, my standard was to strictly observe anonymity and confidentiality regarding participants and any potential personal information throughout the present study. Personally identifiable information that may have appeared in any of the received data is stored

on secure servers with password-protected authentication and has never been used publicly. Data for the present study are securely stored in Google's "… world class data centers… encrypted in-transit and at rest" (Google, 2025, Store your content securely, para. 1). However, this data is not accessible offline unless it has been fully anonymised, as further explained. Only fully anonymised data is accessible offline, such as on one of my computers. If a computer were stolen, for example, there would be no breach of personal information, as the data is fully anonymised. In other words, Backup and Sync for Windows is not installed or used on my laptops or desktops within the applicable Google account (antonylast@gmail.com). This ensures that no personally identifiable data could potentially be downloaded to devices that, regardless of precautions, might be lost or stolen. Only I have access to participant information, secured through Bitwarden-protected passwords on the aforementioned secure Google servers. Bitwarden is a master-PIN-coded password management system that enables the storage and easy use of long, complex passwords — such as random alphanumeric combinations exceeding 50 characters — for secure access to relevant online profiles.

The supervisor and co-supervisor of the present study have access to fully anonymised participant data, including demographic details such as gender, age, and province, as included in the various thesis drafts shared with them periodically for review. Only relatively short or medium-length appropriate samples of data have been used in this thesis for conceptual illustration and data analysis exemplification. This approach reflects a strong commitment to minimising data exposure (cf. Guo et al., 2014) and upholding participant privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality expectations (cf. Roberts & Allen, 2015). It aligns with the above ethical principles of "do no harm" (Principle 4), respect (Principle 2), and responsibility (Principle 3).

Fully anonymised data may also be retained indefinitely for repeatability and future research purposes, as authorised by participants (APA, 2017, para. 8.14) through the informed and process consent included in the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire, as follows: "By continuing, you are agreeing to these terms and conditions and are giving informed and process consent to participate in this study, and for your anonymous responses to be used for research purposes now and in the future. (If you do not agree, you may stop now by closing this page.)"

Ethical factor 5: Accuracy and fair / empathic treatment. I have meticulously analysed each piece of data received through the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire on two separate occasions. This was done to ensure accurate conceptual coding and comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as well as to confirm that the data were handled appropriately and not misinterpreted in any way (cf. Padyk, 2023). Although this process resulted in two renderings of theory — the first being *braving fear* and the second, *self-empowerment* — the former is integrated into and subsumed by the latter. Despite applying a critical interpretivist approach (Kincheloe, 2006) in the present study, research rigour was treated as being of the highest importance (Mansfield, 2009; Scott et al., 2021). The supervisors have monitored and verified that this process was correctly carried out. Also, participants were treated fairly and empathetically through clear disclosure of the research purpose, the researcher's details and role, voluntary participation, what was expected of them, and their right to withdraw at any time. These elements were outlined in the informed and process consent, as well as in any interactions initiated by participants. Additional fair treatment explanations in the consent included the researcher's right to withdraw participants

for professional reasons, as well as the participants' right to refuse to answer any question/s (cf. Blackwell et al., 2024).

Ethical factor 6: Potential risks, prevention, and management. In the present study, all women experiencing physical violence are regarded as vulnerable. However, particularly vulnerable groups include black women (Miller & Becker, 2019) and white farmer women (Kerkvliet, 2017). In the informed and process consent, participants were cautioned that disclosing their experiences of violence could have an adverse emotional impact (cf. Gumani et al., 2013) and were advised to contact the researcher if they experienced any negative reactions to the research process. Some participants did make contact, and I addressed their concerns sensitively, in consultation with my supervisors. Appropriate responses were provided, which included referrals to an online psychotherapy clinic (Tallon et al., 2011). The clinic can be contacted through this link: [link removed for confidentiality reasons].

Although every effort was made to minimise any potential negative effects, participants were also informed that neither the researcher nor [the university concerned] provides medical or any other form of insurance for the study. As a result, neither can be held responsible for any unexpected responses that may arise.

All participants were treated with the utmost care and attention, particularly the vulnerable groups mentioned earlier. The four participants who contacted me regarding any effects (all of which were mild reactions or requests for further guidance) from the research process were followed up in February 2023 after their initial referral in October/November 2022. This was done to confirm that they no longer experienced any adverse reactions to their participation or to determine if they required additional professional assistance (cf. Tallon et al., 2011). Two participants did not reply to the follow-up emails. Two responded to the

WhatsApp messages, with one stating that she had not contacted the psychotherapy clinic, to which I had referred her. The other participant mentioned that she had contacted the clinic but found it unsuitable for her needs. I conducted an online search to locate a more suitable therapist for this participant and sent her the relevant link via text.

Due to the thoughtful and careful approach taken in this study, and despite acknowledging the possibility of isolated but well-managed adverse outcomes, the present study had been classified by me as "medium risk" in my 2021 research ethics application. However, it is also possible that answering questions about experiences of physical violence could affect a participant either positively or negatively. Positive responses were received from several participants. The ethical clearance certificate issued by the university concerned classified the present study application as "low risk".

Additionally, to address any unexpected adverse reactions, the questionnaire included a final question asking if the participant wished to share anything else with the researcher. This helped in gauging the participant's state of mind after completing the survey questions (cf. Eriksson-Liebon et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the informed and process consent was carefully constructed, and the research process was conducted with honesty, free from misinformation, instilling trust and demonstrating the highest respect for participant rights and autonomy. Participant welfare and research trustworthiness were never compromised for academic gain. In cases where a participant's decision-making or mental capacity appeared questionable, potentially identifiable through the manner or content of their responses, the data were excluded from the study. If the participant made contact, an appropriate response was provided via email,

including possible referrals for professional assistance. The present study also involved supervisors who are trained in the rights of people with psychological illnesses.

Ethical factor 7: Psychiatric research aspects. It was not always known whether a participant was currently suffering or had previously suffered from a specific psychiatric disorder, unless the participant explicitly mentioned this in her survey responses. Given that the present study involved vulnerable individuals who had experienced physical violence, careful consideration was given to the possibility that some participants might be dealing with a psychiatric disorder, trauma, depression, or stress (cf. Wathen et al., 2021), as the research process could potentially have an adverse effect on them. The two participants who mentioned suffering from PTSD stated that they were not adversely affected by their participation in this study and did not require additional support.

Ethical factor 8: Possible benefits. By participating, women may have gained greater insight into certain aspects of their experiences of violence. Some participants expressed that sharing their experiences helped them "lighten the load". They may also have discovered ideas that could contribute to improving their quality of life (cf. Tallon et al., 2011). In recognition of their valuable contribution to the research (Rid et al., 2021), participants were provided with a search link, as mentioned earlier, to access an electronic copy of the final report (this thesis).

Other individuals and researchers, as previously mentioned, such as mental health practitioners, psychologists, sociologists, self-defence practitioners, and law enforcement officers (cf. Diego, 2020), may also benefit from the contents of the final report or from specific aspects of this study. The positive effects of research can extend to individuals, groups, and communities, whether on a local, regional, national, or global scale (Tribe & Paddison, 2024).

Ethical factor 9: Debriefing. Participants were provided with the opportunity to access relevant information about the purpose and outcomes of the research (APA, 2017), as outlined in the informed and process consent of the survey questionnaire. The nature of the research is described in the questionnaire as "a study on physical violence against women in Gauteng and the Western Cape". Given that the outcomes involve a delay in sharing results and conclusions, reasonable steps have been implemented to reduce potential risks (APA, 2017). These measures include, as previously mentioned, providing participants with my contact details and those of my first supervisor, should they wish to ask questions or raise any concerns. Should I be contacted further, I will make appropriate efforts to address any misconceptions participants may have, provided I am made aware of them (APA, 2017). If it comes to my attention that the research procedures have negatively affected a participant, I will take suitable action to mitigate the harm (APA, 2017) [by discussing the matter with my supervisors] and, where appropriate, refer the participant to professional support (cf. Qu et al., 2024; Tallon et al., 2011). This approach has already been applied in several cases, as detailed earlier.

Ethical factor 10: Researcher ability. The successful implementation of any research process relies mainly on the researcher's competence. I received a distinction for my master's project and dissertation (Last, 2020a). I not only met the standards expected for a master's thesis but also contributed new insights to the field (Abridged Examiner 1's report in personal correspondence, 2021). Furthermore, I demonstrated the ability to work independently and uphold a high standard of academic and scientific research (Abridged Examiner 2's report in personal correspondence, 2021). Prof. [name removed] has also expressed her confidence in my ability to undertake a study of this nature.

Ethical factor 11: Delimitation. The scope of the present study focused on identifying the main concern of women experiencing physical violence and exploring how they resolved this concern.

The use of grounded theory, with its evolving theoretical sampling questions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), led the study to progressively focus on researching the following aspects related to physical violence against women: Types of physical violence; feelings during an attack; escaping an attack; stopping the attacker; preparing for an attack; negotiating with the attacker; biding time; post-attack care; the role of vulnerability and fear in preparation; timing moves; breaking a freeze; shouting; physically fighting back; group dynamics among women during an attack; doing things differently during an attack; the best personal quality for dealing with physical violence; the role of happiness; the potential helpful role of fear and bravery; the importance of closing or locking doors and gates; the possible benefits of explaining, making peace, standing your ground, diverting the perpetrator's attention, and using physical force; the effects of vulnerability, fear, bravery, and self-empowerment; the causes of physical violence against women; strategies to reduce or stop physical violence against women; the impacts of physical violence against women; support systems; treatment of perpetrators; recommended preparation training; the main worry in experiencing physical violence and its resolution; the effects of being vulnerable or scared versus being brave or self-empowered; stopping or controlling the cycle of violence; the main concern; handling the main concern; the feeling of a physical attack; any additional points participants wished to mention; and the effects of participating in this study.

The study did not specifically focus on psychological and emotional violence against women, although the physical violence disclosed by participants inevitably involved

accompanying psychological and emotional abuse. Naturally, many psychological and emotional effects of the physical violence experienced by the women participants, as recorded by them, emerged in the study. This is because physical violence against women is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, impacting the physical, psychological, and emotional foundations of a person.

The foregoing outlines how the focus of the present study was defined and delimited.

Ethical factor 12: Originality. I have demonstrated my ability to work at a high level of original conceptualisation, wording, and sentence structure, as evidenced by my master's dissertation achieving a Turnitin Similarity Index of 0% (Last, 2020a). I am also mindful of the risks of self-plagiarism (Feenstra et al., 2021) and plagiarism from other sources. I ensure that I do not use sections of someone else's work or data as if they were my own (APA, 2017). The research conducted for this study, along with its results and conclusions, reflects the generation of original knowledge in psychology, derived from participant experiences and perspectives (cf. Snowden, 2014; Uhl, 2023).

Ethical factor 13: No repetition. As clearly outlined earlier, the present study is considered unique in several respects, which further establishes its ethical compliance in terms of originality (Ramesh, 2024). It does not replicate any known previous study and stands as the first classic grounded theory exploring physical violence against women by any type of perpetrator (cf. Falatah & Conway, 2019).

Ethical factor 14: Statement of results. In this study, I have adhered strictly to ethical guidelines, ensuring that no data were fabricated and no fraudulent, deceptive, or false statements were knowingly included, in line with APA (2017) standards. I have acknowledged

data limitations, highlighted uncertainties in conclusions where relevant, and avoided overstating results. This ensures honesty, prevents false expectations, upholds informed consent, and preserves the core aim of this study — to discover the main concern of women who have experienced physical violence and how they resolve it (cf. Daly et al., 2021).

These 14 factors were carefully implemented in the present study as ongoing standards to ensure adherence to the following above principles: Integrity (Principle 1), respect for the dignity and rights of others (Principle 2), beneficence, fidelity, and responsibility (Principle 3), non-maleficence (Principle 4), and justice (Principle 5) (APA, 2017).

Method

The present study employed classic grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which eschews predetermined theoretical frameworks in favour of allowing a theoretical framework to emerge organically as the research unfolds (Glaser, 2007c). The following sections detail how this methodology was selected and applied in the present study.

Reasoned Argument for Research Design and Process

This is my reasoned argument (Wagner et al., 2012) for the research design and process of the present study's classic grounded theory of how women resolve their main concern in physical violence perpetrated against them: South Africa's provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape were selected as relevant and manageable research contexts due to their high levels of physical violence against women (cf. Gerber, 2020; Phagane, 2020). This increased the potential for participant availability. Classic grounded theory was used throughout the study as it was viewed as expedient for discovering, understanding, and explaining the main concern of women experiencing physical violence and how they resolve it, and because it allowed for the

efficiency of theoretical sampling and constant comparison to discover relevant incident similarities and differences (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The research process included iterative theoretical sampling, analysis, coding, comparison, confirmation, memoing, and sorting in classic grounded theory (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The research problem, aim, objectives, questions, and methodology were all carefully aligned to achieve the purpose of this study: To *discover* the main concern of women who experience physical violence and how they resolve it.

Research Process

The proposed research for this study was approved and ethically cleared based on a 12-stage research process (Figure 1 below).

This research process (Feulner et al., 2024) involved several iterative activities of classic grounded theory, as indicated in the bottom-right bold rectangle in Figure 1 below, which encompasses blocks 8 to 11. These activities were carried out until data saturation was achieved — the point at which no new concepts emerged from the data (Egan, 2002).

The following is a review of each of these 12 stages of the research process as applied in the present study.

As with any study, it is standard practice to begin with a review, or at least a search, of the existing literature on the topic.

Stage 1: Literature review

- Physical violence against women in South Africa
- Overcoming Bare Life

- Women Empowerment

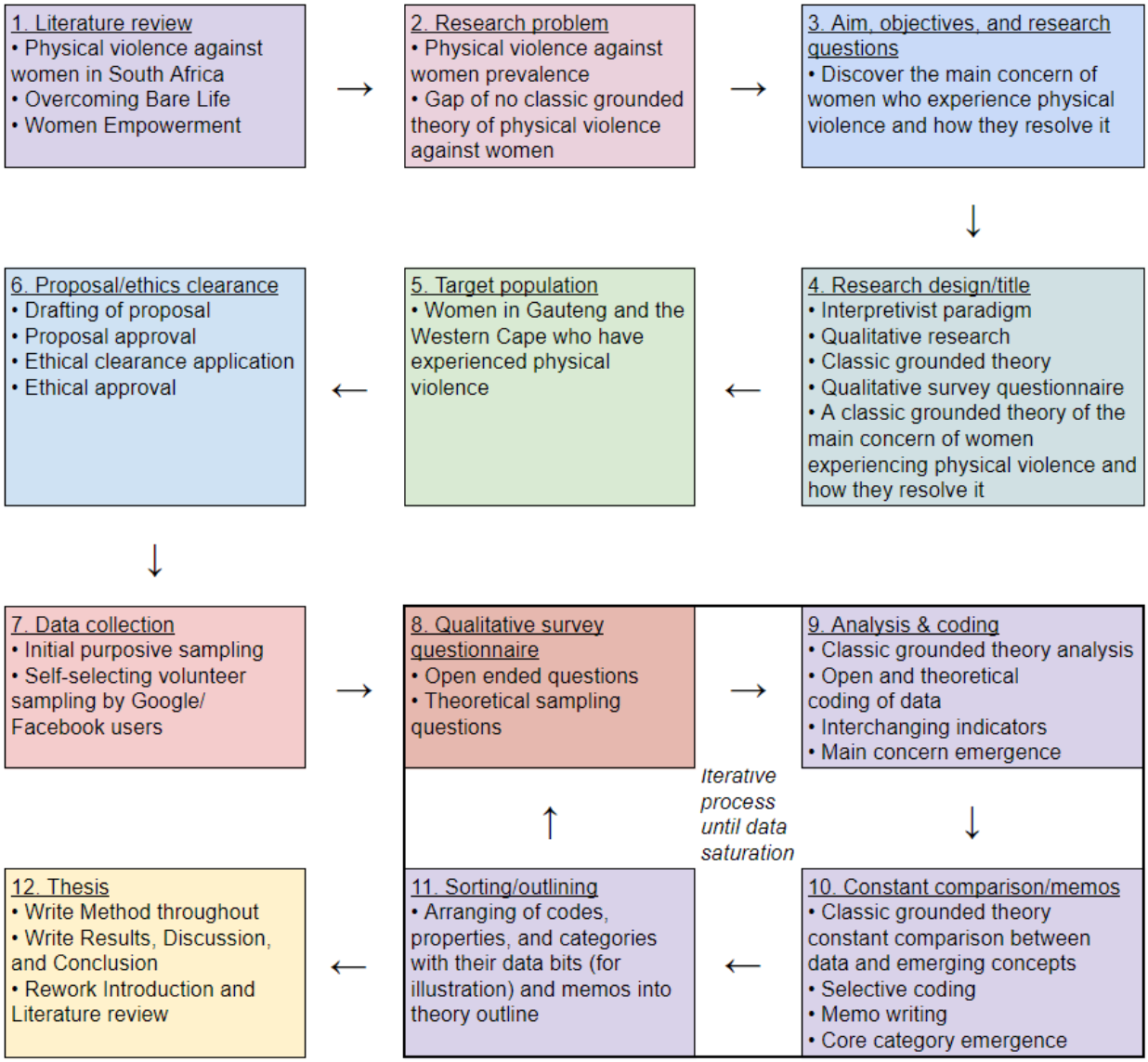


Figure 1. A 12-stage research process flowchart for the present study.

Several comprehensive literature reviews were conducted during the drafting of the proposal for the present study. Among the many topics that emerged, *Overcoming Bare Life* and *Women Empowerment* were two key themes, hence their listing above. The purpose of

these reviews was to identify what the existing literature had and had not addressed regarding physical violence against women. These reviews were then set aside and excluded from this thesis, in line with the grounded theory principles discussed earlier in the literature review section of the previous chapter (Christiansen, 2011; Erasmus, 2019; Nathaniel, 2022; cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The literature relevant to the findings of the present study is reviewed in Chapter 4 below. This was appropriately done after the emergence of the theory (Lafaurie, 2024).

Through the process of reflexivity (Racines, 2024) and the initial reviews of the literature and other sources of information (e.g. newspaper reports), the research problem for the present study was identified and defined.

Stage 2: Research problem

- Physical violence against women prevalence
- Gap of no classic grounded theory of physical violence against women

Both the prevalence of physical violence against women and the gap in the literature — specifically, the absence of a classic grounded theory on generic physical violence against women — were discussed in the previous chapter as the essential components of the research problem for this study.

This foundation enabled the development of the aim, objectives, and research questions for the study.

Stage 3: Aim, objectives, and research questions

- Discover the main concern of women who experience physical violence and how they resolve it

The aim, objectives, and research questions (Kheel, 2024) for the present study have been fully outlined in the relevant sections of the previous chapter.

Once the aim, objectives, and research questions were defined, the research design and tentative title could be formulated.

Stage 4: Research design / title

- Interpretivist paradigm
- Qualitative research
- Classic grounded theory
- Qualitative survey questionnaire
- A classic grounded theory of the main concern of women experiencing physical violence and how they resolve it

The present study employed a qualitative design, analysing data from survey responses (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020). It provides detailed, nuanced insights (Kimmons, 2021) through classic grounded theory within a critical interpretivist paradigm (Sand, 2024), enabling an open-ended exploration of participants' perspectives (Holton, 2008; Dreyer, 2018).

The initial title of the study, as approved by the ethics review committee, was as stated earlier: "A classic grounded theory of the main concern of women experiencing physical

violence and how they resolve it." As the study progressed, the thesis title evolved to: "Self-empowerment: A grounded theory of how women resolve vulnerability to physical violence."

To advance the conceptualisation and delimitation of the present study, the target population was identified (Wilkins et al., 2024).

Stage 5: Target population

- Women in Gauteng and the Western Cape who have experienced physical violence

Regarding research contexts: The topical context of this study is physical violence against women (Nivetha & Srinivasan, 2024). The geographical context encompassed Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces in South Africa (Stensland, 2023). The demographic context focused on women, primarily Facebook users, aged 18 and older in these provinces, who had experienced physical violence and were either purposively selected or self-identified (Siddique, 2021).

Demographically, the target population (Corazziari et al., 2024) for the present study included all women residing within Gauteng and the Western Cape, regardless of nationality, citizenship, or legal status. No distinctions were made in the sampling process, allowing any woman living in these areas to respond to the anonymous online survey questionnaire, provided they met the criteria of being 18 years of age or older and having experienced physical violence. For practical purposes of participant access, the target population for the present study was narrowed down to several initial purposively selected participants, followed by women who were Facebook users. At the time, there were approximately 8,300,000 Facebook users in Gauteng and 4,100,000 in the Western Cape (cf. Statista, 2022). This provided a substantial

target population (Gedris & Vance, 2024) from which sampling was conducted through the questionnaire.

The next step involved drafting the study proposal and ethics application.

Stage 6: Proposal/ethics clearance

- Drafting of proposal
- Proposal approval
- Ethical clearance application
- Ethical approval

Scientific approval for the study proposal and ethical clearance (Thapa & Shakya, 2024) was granted in due course.

With approval secured, the process of data collection could begin.

Stage 7: Data collection

- Initial purposive sampling
- Self-selecting volunteer sampling by Google/Facebook users

Sampling of Google users was not pursued.

In the first phase of data collection, responses were received from 12 women via the survey questionnaire. One participant was purposively selected (Terre Blanche et al., 2006) in Gauteng from four women I knew who had experienced physical violence, and she was willing to complete the anonymous online survey questionnaire. An additional 11 Facebook users volunteered through convenience sampling (Wagner et al., 2012), self-selecting (Moses et al.,

2024) as individuals who had experienced physical violence. The first purposive participant (Haidar & Meadan, 2024) was confidentially provided with the link (Schwarz et al., 2024) to the survey questionnaire, and her response remained fully anonymous, as no personally identifiable information was requested in the questionnaire (Žebelovičiūtė, 2024). Only I could identify her, based on familiarity with her story prior to this study. These 12 responses from Phase 1 provided a robust and diverse foundation of conceptualised data (cf. Sbaraini et al., 2011), enabling the initiation of analysis, coding, and sorting (Glaser & Holton, 2004). This process helped determine the theoretical sampling requests and questions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which were then incorporated into the questionnaire for Phase 2. This aligns with another grounded theory study that selected 18 initial purposive participants to achieve "maximum variation" before beginning theoretical sampling (Sbaraini et al., 2011). Similarly, Simmons et al. (2016), in their grounded theory study, essentially used a purposive selection of 12 participants as their sole sample and conducted theoretical sampling within that dataset. Thus, the present study's approach of having a pre-theoretical-sampling (Boskovic, 2017) sample of 12 participants' responses in Phase 1 was both practical and fully justified. A core variable (Chametzky, 2024) of *braving* emerged by the sixth participant, and a main concern of *fear* was implicit by the seventh and confirmed by the ninth participant. However, these later proved to be premature identifications (cf. Prabaharan et al., 2021), as re-analysis revealed *self-empowerment* as the core variable and *vulnerability* as the main concern. This represented an improvement, as the latter concepts subsume the former (Petit, 2020) — that is, *braving* is a component of *self-empowerment*, and *fear* is a part of *vulnerability*. This made the final analysis more comprehensive and nuanced (cf. Huang & Kumarasinghe, 2024).

In Phase 2, data were collected from 94 women in Gauteng and the Western Cape who had experienced physical violence and were Facebook users. This step was guided by the theoretical sampling process. As a result, the present study involved a total of 106 participants (cf. Abbas, 2018), a number deemed sufficient according to the principle of conceptual saturation (Glaser, 2007c; Tatlock et al., 2022) to address the research questions (Ulvtorp, 2024) related to physical violence against women.

The anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire for the present study was made available on Facebook as a Google Form hosted on my profile, antonylast@gmail.com, by activating an advertisement. The advertisement read as follows:

> **Physical Violence Against Women Survey**
> If you are a woman, 18 years or older,
> live in Gauteng or the Western Cape,
> and have experienced physical violence,
> you are invited to participate in this survey.

When the advertisement link was clicked (Hall, 2023), the user was directed to the survey questionnaire, where it could be anonymously completed and submitted (Curtis, 2020) to me. Once I had received 12 responses to the questionnaire, I paused the advertisement to prevent further visibility to Facebook users while I analysed and coded the data (Edelist et al., 2024). The initial 12 responses to a single open-ended request ("Please tell me about your physical violence experience") were sufficient to capture a broad scope of experience (Abbas, 2018; Nneka, 2021) and ensure indicator interchangeability (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Nathaniel, 2019). Once these parameters were met and the data indicated a need for elaboration on specific aspects, the questionnaire's initial request was revised to include theoretical

sampling questions for Phase 2. (Examples of these questions have already been provided in the previous chapter.) The advertisement was then reactivated until sufficient new responses were received. After this, the advertisement was paused again, and the questions were adjusted to address the next aspect highlighted by gaps in the emerging theory structure (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Hoda, 2024).

By controlling the number of questionnaire responses to the minimum required to address each specific question or request, the total number of participants was kept to the necessary minimum (cf. Shortridge, 2024), which ultimately amounted to 106. This approach aligns with the ethical principles of respecting participants, minimising harm, and collecting only sufficient data to effectively conduct the research (Borodina, 2024). As a result, there was no data wastage (Thomson et al., 2024) or exploitation of public willingness to participate (Inverarity, 2020), and the risk of adverse effects on participants was kept to a minimum (Islam, 2024). This is because with fewer participants, there should proportionately be fewer experiencing negative reactions to the process (cf. APA, 2017; Smith, 2003).

Thus, the sample in the present study appears to have been appropriate and sufficient to address and represent the target population (Mendes, 2024).

It is now appropriate to detail the use of the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire, which was designed with open-ended and theoretical sampling questions to explore experiences of physical violence against women.

Stage 8: Qualitative survey questionnaire

- Open ended questions
- Theoretical sampling questions

The present study collected data through an anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire (Iliadis et al., 2024). I developed the questionnaire (Appendix A) for this study, adhering to the principles of classic grounded theory, including open-ended questioning (Lucht, 2024), theoretical sampling, and constant comparison (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Nathaniel, 2008). The questionnaire's role within the overall research process can be seen in blocks 4 and 8 of Figure 1 above. It began with an informed and process consent (Filingeri, 2024), followed by demographic questions (cf. Jones et al., 2024), and then included one or more qualitative open-ended questions (Walker et al., 2024) related to the experience of physical violence against women. Although the questionnaire is a single instrument and is therefore referred to as a "questionnaire" rather than "questionnaires", it is important to remember that the main request in the questionnaire was modified during the theoretical sampling phase (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to include other similar and additional requests or questions, as indicated in the previous chapter.

There were several reasons for opting to collect data through an anonymous (cf. Cassidy, 1998) online qualitative survey questionnaire (Ballou-Broadnax, 2018) rather than, for instance, through simply online or in-person interviews. These reasons include the following:

1. Preventing the transmission of COVID-19 or any other harmful virus or variant by avoiding physical contact with participants (Agyemang Adarkwah & Pambour Agyemang, 2021).
2. Increasing anonymity by only requesting general demographic information from participants (Talian, 2024), such as province but not city or town, age but not

occupation, and avoiding requests for names, email addresses, or other personally identifiable information (cf. Klein et al., 2017).

3. Ensuring confidentiality, as participant information could never be linked to identifiable individuals (cf. Picón Rattel, 2024). Even in the event of unexpected data security breaches or data sharing, no participant could be implicated in disclosure of specific experiences or information (cf. Yeh et al., 2012).

4. Encouraging participants to open up (Alamrani, 2024) and be more forthcoming and truthful (cf. Betriana et al., 2022) about their experiences of physical violence, as they would know that there was essentially no way for the information to be traced back to them (cf. Mallia et al., 2013). Even IP addresses were not tracked, and participants were informed of this (Agarwal, 2020; see Appendix A).

5. Enhancing convenience and privacy (cf. Gao et al., 2024), which fosters greater autonomy, willingness to participate, and reduced defensiveness (cf. Bistarelli et al., 2016). This, in turn, promotes a more authentic sharing experience (cf. Davies et al., 2008).

6. Reaching a broader audience (Lourenco Calling, 2020). This study reached thousands of individuals, of whom hundreds clicked on the advertisement, with 106 of those participating.

7. Glaser and Strauss essentially endorse the use of a qualitative survey questionnaire (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; cf. Riley, 2024). However, the limitations of the static type they mention were overcome in the present study through the dynamic element of, after purposive sampling in Phase 1, employing theoretical sampling to adjust requests or

questions in the questionnaire (cf. Gulbinas, 2019) during the ongoing data collection process in Phase 2.

8. Online qualitative survey questionnaires have been successfully used in prior studies (e.g., Atkinson, 2023; Ballou-Broadnax, 2018; Díaz-Agea et al., 2021; Elliott, 2020; Graffigna et al., 2020; Lourenco Calling, 2020; Madeira et al., 2021; Mahony, 2015; Neville et al., 2016; Potts, 2020; Seixas & Mitton, 2020; Soaita, 2021; Vinson & Parker, 2021; Walshe & Tait, 2019). Some of these studies employed anonymous questionnaires (e.g., Belcher, 2019; Header, 2021; Orlandi, 2024), while others incorporated certain elements of grounded theory methodology (e.g., Ballou-Broadnax, 2018; Elliott, 2020; Lynch & Davison, 2024). Therefore, although there is strong precedent for using an online qualitative survey questionnaire in a wide range of qualitative studies, very few (e.g., Flenady, 2018) appear to have primarily employed classic grounded theory as their methodology. This did not pose a challenge for grounded theory in the present study, as the methodology is capable of analysing and generating theory from any type of data and any method of data presentation (Glaser, 2007a).

Other advantages of an anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire over interviews include cost savings, the ability to quickly gather a large number of responses, elimination of distortion (no inconsistencies in interviewing), the ease with which participants could skip uncomfortable questions or withdraw from the survey (cf. Bauder, 2021), and the flexibility to pose ongoing theoretical sampling questions.

Disadvantages of the survey included instances of incomplete descriptions, potential spurious self-selection (e.g., a participant misrepresenting themselves as a woman over 18 who

had experienced physical violence), and the inability to ask follow-up questions to specific participants, as the questionnaire was anonymous and there was no way to contact them (Svobodova, 2013). To address this, I relied on other self-selecting participants to answer theoretical sampling questions. This approach ultimately proved advantageous, as it ensured that theoretical concepts were derived from diverse sources, enhancing sample representivity (cf. Brosnan, 2021) and preventing the development of a theory based on a limited number of instances (Glaser, 2002).

Regarding spurious self-selection, the overall content and responses of each submitted questionnaire were assessed for consistency and face validity (Wall et al., 1989). In cases where answers appeared untruthful or contrived (which occurred only a few times), the data were still compared with existing codes and concepts. They were used if relevant or disregarded if not (Glaser, 2007a).

As for the potential lack of full descriptions in survey responses, additional survey request modifications were implemented to address the relevant issues until sufficient descriptive data were obtained for analysis (cf. Beasley et al., 2020; Seo, 2007).

The present study's anonymous (cf. Cassidy, 1998) online qualitative survey questionnaire used open-ended requests (Nathaniel, 2008) in Phase 1 of data collection to elicit qualitative descriptions of behaviour and experiences, similar to face-to-face interviews. However, responses were sometimes shorter, more reflective, and potentially more truthful (Mallia et al., 2013). During the theoretical sampling in Phase 2, in addition to other open-ended requests, semi-structured questions (cf. De Bie & De Poot, 2016; Glerum et al., 2014) were posed. These questions explored attitudes, perspectives, and meanings related to causal, mitigating, impact, support, and prevention concerns regarding the experience of physical

violence against women. These questions were guided by the emerging theory and were asked when such data had not already been provided in previous responses (cf. Cota, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mohammed, 2021).

Thus, the use of the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire enhanced the ethical integrity (cf. Adegoke, 2015) of the present study, enabling participants to provide unrestricted and uninhibited information (cf. Starns et al., 2024) about their experiences. This ensured that the study's aim and objectives were achieved: To identify the main concern (Yazdani, 2023), explain its resolution (Vitytė & Monkevičienė, 2024), understand its meaning (Albous, 2024), and develop a classic grounded theory (Sun, 2022) of how women address their main concern in situations of physical violence against them (cf. Waskul, 1996).

The questionnaire was presented in basic English to ensure it was as understandable as possible for participants whose first language was not English (Wong et al., 2024). The questionnaire also included a question about "Your home language", offering 22 options (including "Other") for languages spoken in South Africa, and asked for "Second language (optional)," with "English" or "Other" as options. These elements are believed to have helped participants feel oriented (Kambanis et al., 2024), reassured that the researcher was accommodating and respectful of diversity (Chaput et al., 2024), and more at ease (Agúndez Del Castillo et al., 2024), without feeling pressured to provide responses in "perfect English" (Cui, 2019). The approximate time expected for a participant to complete the questionnaire in Phases 1 and 2 was between 15 and 20 minutes, as indicated in the questionnaire.

As several higher-level codes, categories, and properties (Reyes et al., 2024) began to emerge, a pattern of conceptual interaction also became evident, highlighting certain concepts over others and guiding the focus toward the next most relevant item (Duncan & Theeuwes,

2024) for data collection. First, those concepts were revisited in the existing data, and where gaps were identified, additional data were gathered from participants through specific questions designed to address those gaps and achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Racines, 2024). This is the process of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as implemented through the questionnaire.

Responses to questions about feelings and meanings aligned well with the interpretivist paradigm (cf. Weinberg-Kurnik & Leichtentritt, 2024) of the present study (Levers, 2013) and were coded, conceptualised, and integrated (Lamonica et al., 2024) into the emerging grounded theory (Beese et al., 2024) based on relevance (Glaser, 2007c; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Holton, 2008).

Upon receiving data from each participant, they were analysed and coded.

Stage 9: Analysis and coding

- Classic grounded theory analysis
- Open and theoretical coding of data
- Interchanging indicators
- Main concern emergence

Once received, the data were copied and pasted into a spreadsheet (McGuirk, 2024), analysed, and open coded (Glaser, 2007c; see Appendix B). For example, data such as, "I jumped aside and ran off" were open coded as *jumping aside* and *running off*.

The data were then constantly compared (Glaser, 1965) until saturation through the interchangeability of indicators was achieved for each relevant emergent code, concept,

category, and property (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). By the end of this process, a reasonable number of categories with their properties had been tentatively outlined, with a main concern and core variable having emerged (cf. Glaser & Holton, 2004), along with an indication of gaps in the emerging theory that the current data could not address (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Up to three or four instances, incidents, or indicators of a phenomenon — such as *running off* — were sufficient to record that open code for explication and potential illustration, representing conceptual saturation for that code (Glaser, 2007c). Further indicators were reviewed but essentially disregarded for that specific code, as it had reached saturation (its indicators had become interchangeable), with no new aspects emerging for that code or concept (Holton, 2008). Some codes evolved into categories or properties of categories, depending on their significance. A central code eventually became the core category or variable (Hallberg, 2006).

Theoretical coding must be distinguished from open coding. The core category or variable addresses the main concern by interacting with its subcategories and properties, forming a theoretical framework or 'code' (Koerich & Müller, 2022; Vitytė & Monkevičienė, 2024). This theoretical code can take the form of a process, dimension, strategy, cultural representation, etc. (Hernandez, 2009), or any combination of these (cf. Glaser, 2009). Several theoretical codes emerged (Lu & Zhang, 2023) throughout this study, such as "The Six C's: Causes, Contexts, Contingencies, Consequences, Covariances, and Conditions" (Glaser, 1978, p. 74), illustrated in Chapter 4 below.

Stage 10: Constant comparison/memos

- Classic grounded theory constant comparison between data and emerging concepts
- Selective coding
- Memo writing
- Core category emergence

Data were constantly compared with open codes to identify other instances, incidents, or indicators (Kepe, 2024) of what each participant described, which either confirmed, modified, elaborated, added, or eliminated codes (Glaser, 1965).

As bottom-level open codes accumulated, they were sorted along with their data indicators into theoretical groups (see Appendix B), forming categories and properties of categories at lower and then higher levels (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example, bottom-level concepts like *jumping aside* and *running off* would have been conceptually categorised at a higher level as *escaping,* as both indicate actions used to escape a physical confrontation. At this stage, the process of selective coding (Hanson, 2024) began and continued during theoretical sampling (Connor et al., 2024), as only those concepts or indicators relevant to the emerging pattern were coded or listed (Holton, 2008).

Memos were written throughout the process, confirming the emergence of the core category (Glaser, 1992).

Stage 11: Sorting/outlining

- Arranging of codes, properties, and categories with their data bits (for illustration) and memos into theory outline

Theoretical outlining and sorting repeated from Stages 8 through 11 until conceptual saturation was achieved (Shimura, 2006).

Thus, classic grounded theory methodology aligned and integrated effectively within the broader qualitative research process (Albous, 2024) of this study.

Stage 12: Thesis

- Write Method throughout
- Write Results, Discussion, and Conclusion
- Rework Introduction and Literature review

The theory was explained and written up in memos and narrative form using concepts (categories and properties) with appropriate anonymous participant data illustrations (Kaspiew et al., 2022), following the structure of the relevant theoretical code (cf. Hernandez, 2009).

Thus, Figure 1 above, with its detailed 12-stage research process, has been presented and explained here as a logical summary model followed in this study (Gajdzik et al., 2024).

A date-bound, diary-style chronological log of the research process is provided in the following section.

Chronological Log

From July to December 2022, I collected the 106 participant stories purposively and through Facebook advertisements, analysed the data, and wrote the theory that emerged as *braving fear* — how women overcome physical violence.

Since then, it became clear that the initial theoretical sampling (Inayat et al., 2024) appeared to have restricted the scope of the emerging main concern (Connor et al., 2024) and its resolution.

Thus, in August 2024, I re-analysed the data (Wilson et al., 2024) and re-wrote the theory (Schmid-Mohler et al., 2019), which then emerged as *self-empowerment* — how women resolve vulnerability to physical violence. This does not imply that the first theory was incorrect. On the contrary, the first theory was valid but limited (Peters et al., 2023), while the final theory incorporates key aspects of the first, achieves "theoretical completeness", and "explains with the fewest possible concepts, and with the greatest possible scope, as much variation as possible in the behavior and problem under study" (Glaser, 1978, p. 125).

Now, to establish the groundwork for the second and final analysis (Alva, 2023) in August 2024, I will first provide a descriptive log of my method for obtaining and working with the data (Firdaus & Sahroni, 2023) in 2022.

2022 – 2023 Braving fear theory

19 July – 28 November 2022

19 July 2022. Phase 1: Purposive and Convenience Sample (Letseleha et al., 2024).

I received the ethics clearance certificate today and entered the approval reference number into the survey questionnaire (Appendix A).

I emailed my supervisors, outlining my approach to preparing to contact the first purposively selected participant (Mbuthia et al., 2024).

20 July 2022. I confidentially shared the link to the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire with two women in Gauteng and two in the Western Cape whom I knew had experienced physical violence (Piquero, 2015). Three acknowledged receipt, and one completed and submitted the questionnaire. I deleted all related emails and messages on my end where possible to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

I received one completed questionnaire in good order. I verified that the data appeared consistent with face validity (Wall et al., 1989) and was therefore usable (cf. Glaser, 2007a). I de-identified any personally identifiable information (cf. Klein et al., 2017) and entered the demographic data into summary tables. I then assigned a random participant number (Wilkinson-Stokes et al., 2024) — a unique random number between 1 and 100 generated using a random number generator (Random.org, 2022).

I first read through the data, then copied and pasted them into a data analysis spreadsheet (Thomas & Korang, 2024), reading them again, analysing, and open coding. Categories and properties were constructed interactively (cf. Dudovskiy, 2021) and interpretively (Holton, 2008; Levers, 2013). Data were constantly compared with codes, concepts, and other data to identify similarities and differences (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Concepts, categories, and properties (Holton, 2008) were confirmed and verified (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser & Holton, 2004). Higher-level conceptualisation (Pan, 2020) was carried out. Selective coding (Last, 2024a) was applied as the analysis progressed, focusing only on what appeared to be the main concern and resolutive data, rather than coding descriptions of

the violence itself, as the study concentrates on the main concern and its resolution, not on describing the violence. The codes and categories were sorted (Chen & Su, 2019).

Theoretical outlining (Reynolds & Hallinan, 2024) became evident, with a potential theory framework (Gong et al., 2024) emerging. However, I did not disclose these details at this stage, as doing so could make this participant, even with a random number, identifiable by matching the categories. In other words, I avoided revealing anything about this participant that could indicate she was the first participant.

At this stage, it is sufficient to note that *fear* emerged as her main concern and *braving* as the primary resolutive category, but this is based on only one set of data. This could differ for the next participant and when combining the second participant's data with the first.

Regarding theoretical memoing, it felt premature to write detailed memos at this stage. I observed the relationships between the categories and codes, which I first sorted temporally and then theoretically (Morgan et al., 2024). However, this log itself can be viewed as a form of methodological memoing, documenting the progress and development of the analysis and theory (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

21 July 2022. As I was not receiving further questionnaires from the other three purposive participants (Mack, 2023), I decided to launch the Facebook advertisement in Gauteng, using convenience sampling (Bodeman, 2024; Foster, 2020), to allow at least three women aged 18 or older, who self-identified (Nemiroff et al., 2024) as having experienced physical violence, to respond to the anonymous online qualitative survey questionnaire.

After four responses were received, I stopped the advertisement, and a fifth response came in, likely from someone who was in the process of completing the questionnaire when the advertisement was switched off.

This is how the Facebook advertisement appeared on a mobile device (Figure 2):

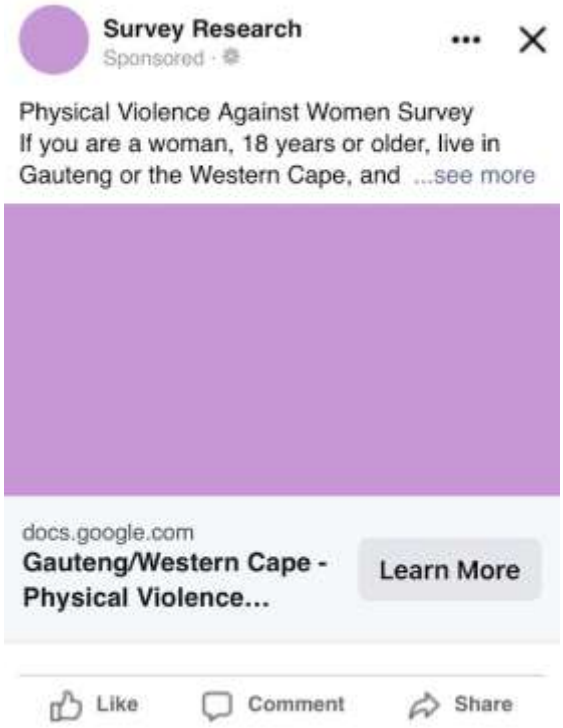


Figure 2. Mobile Facebook advertisement.

After reviewing, the data from the second participant appeared consistent and demonstrated face validity (Wall et al., 1989). I utilised this data (Glaser, 2007a). No de-identification of personally identifiable information (Klein et al., 2017) was necessary in describing her experience of physical violence. I entered her demographic data into the summary tables and assigned a random participant number. I then copied the data, pasting sentences and phrases into the data analysis spreadsheet to analyse and open code.

Two new categories were interactively and interpretively constructed from the codes (Dudovskiy, 2021; Holton, 2008; Levers, 2013), as I constantly compared data with existing codes, concepts, and other data (Schulze et al., 2022) to identify similarities and differences (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process was essential for confirming and verifying concepts such as categories and properties (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Holton, 2008). Higher-level conceptualisation was achieved (Leily, 2023) with the emergence of those two new categories. Coding was selective (Wood, 2024), focusing not on emergent categories or properties but specifically on concern and resolution (Last, 2024a) data, which is the primary focus of this study.

No memoing about concepts and categories/properties was done at this stage so as not to pre-empt connections (Moffat, 2018) and overall interactions prematurely, but implicit relations (Johnson, 2024) could be clearly seen by the position of the concepts (Baradaran, 2024) relative to each other after sorting. No theoretical sampling was done for gap-filling in the emerging theory structure (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Lund et al., 2020) as the study is not yet at the theoretical sampling stage (Niu et al., 2024). Likewise, although theoretical codes are implicit (Kerr, 2011) in the emerging structure, e.g., the categories appear to be representing stages in a temporally sequential process (Lister & Gannon, 2024), no such codes have fully emerged (Nathaniel, 2023) at this point which is understandable, having analysed only two participants' data.

All three categories from the first participant emerged in the second, plus two additional ones, despite the second participant's data being less than a quarter of the first's word count. *Fear* was again a main concern, with strong elements of *braving* both physically and psychologically. I sorted the second participant's open codes (Sweeny, 2019) and categories

within themselves, renamed the fifth category and the last two category instances from the first participant as *caring*, and then sorted these with the first participant's conceptualised data (Qutaishat, 2024), after making a copy of the sheet for backup purposes.

Although the Facebook advertisement was paused, a sixth response was received, prompting me to set the questionnaire to "Not accepting responses," a decision I was reluctant to make. There were still three links circulating with purposive participants who might have intended to use them. However, I could not risk receiving more responses from Gauteng's convenience sampling (Bäckström & Alvinius, 2024). The sixth participant could have opened the questionnaire before I stopped the Facebook advertisement, allowing her to complete it. This approach is proper procedure, as it prevents someone from being unable to submit their responses if they were in the middle of filling out the form. I ceased accepting responses over an hour after halting the advertisement, ensuring that anyone with the questionnaire open should have had ample time to complete and submit it.

The approved research proposal protocol for this phase of the study specifies "a minimum of 3 (±4)" convenience Gauteng participants for the primary question. To date, I had received responses from only one of the ±2 purposive Gauteng participants anticipated. Therefore, receiving six responses, one consisting of a single sentence and another just a few short sentences, still falls within the reasonable parameters and practical considerations of the study.

In response to the additional support question in the questionnaire, one participant wrote, "Yes, I've been affected. It's brought back sad memories." I had no means to contact this participant, and she did not reach out to me. Another participant provided her email address. I sent her the following email: "Good day, Thank you once again for participation in

the physical violence against women survey. You provided your email address and so we would like to ask if you were affected by your participation in this study and if you would like additional support. Kind regards, Antony Last." As of now, there has been no response.

22 July 2022. I numbered (Neale, 2016) and sorted the open codes of all analysed data so far (for the first two participants) according to their temporal and theoretical order. This process involved comparing the open codes (Handlovsky et al., 2024) within categories. The open codes aligned well (Crist et al., 2006), enriching the descriptions of the processes despite the differing circumstances of the violence events experienced by these two participants. To maintain strict anonymity, I did not disclose the names of categories and codes at this stage. Once I confirmed that data from a sufficient number of participants had been integrated, I outlined the emerging theoretical concepts (Nishio & Chujo, 2016).

For the third and fourth participants, I adhered to the same procedure above as for the first two participants. As this became a standard approach for each participant, I no longer detailed the process explicitly, only noting any anomalies, such as the need for de-identification of personally identifiable information. Additionally, classic grounded theory procedures such as constant comparison, open coding, sorting, and others were consistently applied, and specific mention of memoing, theoretical coding, stopping open coding (Russell, 2007), starting selective coding, or engaging in theoretical sampling was made only when relevant.

Fear emerged implicitly as a main concern in the data from the third participant, and *braving* appeared to resolve the violence for her, with a significant portion of her open codes categorised under *caring* again. I documented two memos (Bradley, 2024). Subsequently, I integrated these category-code combinations with others and continued sorting the open codes

within categories. Throughout this process, I maintained constant comparison and made adjustments to categories and concepts as necessary (Munch et al., 2021).

The data from the fourth participant aligned well with the category *caring* and demonstrated an element of resolutive *braveness*.

For the fifth participant, the data contributed to two categories. Both *fear* and *courage* were evident, apparently functioning as concern and resolution respectively.

I activated the advertisement targeting the Western Cape and waited approximately 45 minutes, during which four responses were received. After deactivating the advertisement, I allowed an additional 53 minutes for anyone still filling out the form to submit their responses, before setting the questionnaire to not accept further responses. Within 20 minutes of this change, another response was received. This was fortunate, as the penultimate response contained only 21 words. For context, the maximum word count for data from a single participant so far had exceeded 1,400 words.

23 July 2022. I now had data sets from 12 participants, comprising one purposive and eleven convenience samples, submitted through the survey questionnaire. This adheres to the Phase 1 "±" number estimates for purposive and convenience sampling as approved by the ethics committee.

The data from the sixth participant yielded more *in vivo* open codes and indicated *bravery* as the resolutive action (Leone et al., 2021). *Fear* was not explicitly present in the data but could be interpretively inferred from the circumstances described.

Of the 98 open codes from six participants so far, approximately 95% were *in vivo* — using gerunds (Moore, 2023) derived directly from the participants' words — demonstrating a

close adherence to the actual data (Bruhn, 2024). As a result, the codes and categories were straightforward, everyday terms (Hanisch, 2022), but their emergent combination and interaction (Serrano-Fuentes et al., 2018) were uniquely refreshing. Once I completed analysing and integrating the open codes (Sharafi et al., 2024) from the remaining six participants' data, I created an outline of the emerging theory (Christiansen, 2022).

The seventh participant's data also yielded several open codes. *Braving,* an aspect of the later emergent *self-empowerment,* was strongly evident in the data. Again, without interpreting beyond the data (Liland, 2024), the harrowing contextual descriptions (Herulf Scholander et al., 2024) of violence suggested *fear* (of injury, both physical and psychological), and more broadly implied *vulnerability,* likely representing the main concern in each instance described by this participant. However, as is often the case, there was no direct reference to a specific concern (Broussard Jr, 2006).

The eighth participant's data signified *braveness* (and *self-empowerment*) as the resolutive factor.

It became clear that when asked, "Please tell me about your physical violence experience", as was done in the first 12 questionnaires, most participants responded with descriptions of the violence itself rather than how they experienced it or resolved a main concern (Connor et al., 2024). Those few who addressed these aspects already contributed to shaping a fairly well-rounded emerging outline (Hadi Cahyadi, 2023). However, this highlighted the need for more specific questioning (Bannon, 2023) in Phase 2 (theoretical sampling).

The ninth participant's data provided new codes (Akinwale et al., 2024) and indicators (Wallace & Michopoulou, 2019) for several categories. *Fear* was implied in the resolutive *braveness* demonstrated by this participant in overcoming the violence. It is important to note that "ninth participant" refers to the order in which the questionnaire responses were received; this participant, like all others so far, was assigned a random number for use in this study, distinct from their response order, to enhance anonymity and confidentiality (Heymans, 2021).

Although, up to this point, the open codes *fearing* and *overcoming* had numerous instances, saturation through the interchangeability of indicators (Mundaca & Mundaca, 2024) could not yet be confirmed. Property conceptualisation (Bing-Jonsson, 2015) — an intermediate step between the emerged categories and open codes — would occur naturally at the appropriate time and help to clarify this. It also seemed possible that certain redundant codes might be deemed "unusable", such as *hurting me,* which had already been excluded, not because it was incorrect but for relevance to the emerging processes. (*Hurting me* was, however, reincorporated on 6 August 2022.)

24 July 2022. I had an early night yesterday to clear my mind and reflect (Vorlíčková, 2024) and only resumed my work today after lunch. The process of engaging with these distressing stories, as I read and analyse them, is both deeply moving and humbling. I paced myself to absorb, understand, interpret, and thoughtfully characterise (construct) the meaning behind these experiences (Basson, 2023).

The tenth participant's data, in addition to detailing incidents of violence, yielded several interesting codes, both *in vivo* and conceptually named. Interpretively, I sense *fear* as a recurring and significant concern (Wiener et al., 2024) across these incidents, with *braveness*

emerging as a superordinate theme (Mertens, 2024) in how the participant handled and survived these experiences.

The eleventh participant's data generated open codes that contributed to the elaboration of a major category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Both *fear* and *braveness* were prominently evident in the participant's descriptions.

The twelfth participant's data (de-identified) provided rich descriptions from which several significant open codes (Rostami, 2024) emerged. *Fear* was a central theme in the account, and *braving* played a key role in its resolution. However, a broader dynamic was later evident. *vulnerability* as the core concern, and *self-empowerment* as its resolution.

The study now had one main category (Mahjoubi et al., 2025), five major categories under it (Intezari et al., 2024), and 120 open codes (Delshad et al., 2024). Many of these open codes were interchangeable indicators (Akman, 2024; Kasl & Cobb, 1964; Lazarsfeld, 1956; Scarr, 1964), represented by identical or similar codes derived from different data sources (Seebacher & Schüritz, 2019), whether within or across participants.

The major category outline (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was structured as follows (Figure 3):

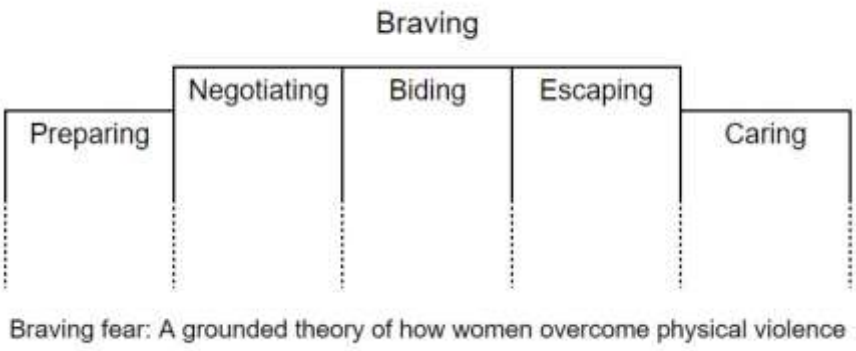


Figure 3. *The braving fear theory* initial theoretical outline.

It is important to note that, in the later *self-empowerment* theory, *preparing* remained the first phase, while *negotiating* (*speaking*), *biding* (*observing/inaction*), and *escaping* (*action*) were grouped under *defending.* *Caring* evolved into *rebuilding*, with *caring* as one of its components. Thus, as previously mentioned, the *braving fear* theory essentially integrated itself into the broader *self-empowerment* theory.

I then needed to set the analysis aside and allow time for sufficient reflection (Althouse et al., 2016) before proceeding to the next step.

I took a break.

When I came back, the data seemed to be indicating a need for elaboration on specific aspects. The questionnaire's initial request was revised to include theoretical sampling questions for Phase 2. The advertisements would then be reactivated in Gauteng and the Western Cape until sufficient new responses were received. After this, the advertisements would be paused, and the questions adjusted to address the next aspect highlighted by gaps in the emerging theory (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

This meant that Phase 2 could involve an additional 80 to 90 participants or as few as 20 to 30 beyond the 12 from Phase 1. As a result, the present study could have a total participant count ranging from approximately 30 to 100 (Abbas, 2018), which should be sufficient according to the principle of conceptual saturation (Glaser, 2007b) to address the research questions related to physical violence against women.

25 – 27 July 2022. The following remained the final question in the questionnaire: "Were you affected by your participation in this study, and would you like additional support? (If so, please WhatsApp me on 0820745319 or email me at antonylast@gmail.com)." Of the

15 theoretical sampling responses received over the previous two days, two answered "Yes," and one participant stated: "Yes, I still get triggers. But it's therapeutic reading your writing." However, no one contacted me for further support. Other responses stated: "The stories must be told. We've been silent for so long, and our attackers walk free", and "No, I need to learn to verbalise what I've been through instead of hiding and dismissing".

28 July 2022. Ten of the 15 theoretical sampling responses from the previous two days stated that they felt scared, frightened, or frozen when facing the perpetrator or attacker. The other five described feeling weak, shocked, hopeless, awful, and helpless or overpowered, emotions that partially include or imply *fear* and overwhelmingly indicate *vulnerability*. Thus, *fear* as a central concern (Wang et al., 2023) appeared to be clearly confirmed by this theoretical sample. Additionally, for some more than others, but nonetheless, *braving* (and more so *self-empowerment*) emerged as the primary way of resolving *fear* (*vulnerability*) across all 15 sets of data.

The thirteenth participant's data yielded several new and related codes under the *biding*, *escaping*, and *caring* categories. This serves as a strong example of how significant contributions to an emerging theory can arise from just over 60 words of data, highlighting the importance of data quality over quantity (Weller et al., 2023).

Once again, several robust *biding* and *escaping* elaborative and necessary interchangeable open codes were derived from just 35 words of the fourteenth participant's data.

Five new open codes and an interchangeable one, which saturated the open code *freezing*, were derived from just 27 words of the fifteenth participant's data. Most of these

codes fell under the *biding* (*observing/inaction*) category, demonstrating the consistent contribution of this theoretical sampling batch in elaborating the actual experiences of physical violence endured by women.

29 July 2022. Phase 2: Theoretical Sample 2. Eight open codes (including two saturations) across four categories were derived from the sixteenth participant's data, which consisted of only 30 words.

The seventeenth participant provided 468 words of data.

As I was nearly halfway through coding this batch of 15 responses and was already familiar with the rest of the data, having read and reflected on it multiple times, I could identify where confirmatory gaps existed within the data and emerging theory structure. I concluded that it would be wise to gather responses addressing those areas while continuing to code the current batch. Consequently, I proceeded to update the theoretical sampling questions in the questionnaire.

30 July 2022. At 09h04, I restarted the survey form (questionnaire) and the two advertisements — the one for Gauteng and the other for the Western Cape.

I continued working with the seventeenth participant's data. Seventeen open codes (six interchangeable, one saturating *medicalising,* and the rest unique) were conceptualised from the 468 words of data. Most of these codes fell under the *caring* category, with some distributed across three other categories. The terms "fear" or "scared" were mentioned seven times in this set of data. *Braving* was a recurring theme throughout the data, including in the context of an attempted suicide (cf. Cilliers, 2014).

31 July 2022. I began working with the eighteenth participant's data. Five new open codes, including one saturating and one interchangeable, emerged from the 95 words. These contributed to the *preparing*, *biding*, and *caring* categories — three of the four categories targeted by theoretical sampling. *Fear* and *courage* (*braving*) emerged as the main concern and resolutive action, respectively.

1 August 2022 – 28 November 2022. Over the rest of this period, I continued running the online questionnaire with various theoretical sampling requests, such as, "Please tell me how you felt when you were faced with the perpetrator/attacker", until emerging concepts were sufficiently saturated. The daily record of these activities (spanning another 68 pages) is no longer included here for brevity's sake, as its repetition would be redundant for the purposes of the rest of this study.

2023 – July 2024 Reframing the thesis: Evolving perspectives on the study. I continued writing this thesis. As this was progressing, a completely fresh approach dawned on me.

2024 Self-empowerment theory. Over a period of 13 days in August and early September 2024, I bracketed the above methodological work, re-analysed the data, and re-wrote the theory, which then emerged as women's *self-empowerment* resolving their *vulnerability* to physical violence. These concepts are broader than and encompass the earlier emergence of women's *braving* resolving their *fear* of physical violence.

21 August – 3 September 2024. I began the re-analysis of all the data.

21 August 2024. I copied the data from the first 12 participants into a fresh spreadsheet (Appendix B). I randomised the participant numbers (Random.org, 2024) and reordered the list

accordingly. This meant the data were no longer in the sequence they were received but in the randomised order. For example, participant eight's data now appeared first.

I then read through all 12 participants' data in the new randomised order, approaching them with renewed openness (Kwait, 2024), aiming to understand afresh the stories (Coley et al., 2024) of physical violence.

I then re-read all the data again, identifying what appeared to be the main concern and any elements of resolving that concern for each participant. *Vulnerability* emerged as the main concern for the second participant. It then became evident that this seemed to be a common concern across the other participants as well.

I began open coding (see Appendix B) to identify how the women appeared to address their *vulnerability.* The following vulnerability-resolving elements emerged from the first set of data: *Defending* (*physically*), *warning*, *disputing*, *refusing*, and *acting* (*not procrastinating*).

The second participant's data also highlighted *physical defending* as a vulnerability-resolving element. I elevated *defending* to a higher conceptual level and open-coded its sub-elements by posing theoretical sampling questions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to the data, such as: "How would you defend or protect yourself against physical violence if you were pregnant?" (The first two participants had been physically assaulted while pregnant, with no indication of how they protected or defended themselves, if at all.)

22 August 2024. The sixth participant's story revealed the following vulnerability-resolving elements: *Sneaking to check*, *checking escape routes*, *removing hindrances*, *deciding to move*, *helping each other*, *running away*, *keeping going*, and *maintaining cover*.

Five of the 12 participants mentioned some form of *running away*, *getting out*, *leaving*, or *divorcing* as their vulnerability-resolving strategy. Six participants did not directly indicate a specific vulnerability-resolving action.

I copied the next 10 participants' data into the spreadsheet and began open coding them. *Vulnerability* emerged as a multifaceted dimension, as these participants described how they felt during their experiences of violence: *Afraid*, *alone*, *angry*, *ashamed*, *depressed*, *dirty*, *dissociated*, *drowning*, *embarrassed*, *exposed*, *fearful*, *frightened*, *frozen*, *heartbroken*, *hopeless*, *horrified*, *humiliated*, *hurt*, *incredulous*, *petrified*, *relieved*, *scared*, *shocked*, *tired*, *ugly*, *useless*, *weak*, and *worthless*.

23 – 29 August 2024. I continued coding the remaining 106 participants' responses/data. I had earlier conducted a preliminary sort by open codes on the first 12 data sets. By the time I reached 596 open codes, I had only coded 62 participants' data.

The first attempt (the *braving fear* theory in 2022 for this study) generated only 432 open codes across all 106 participants because, after participant 12, I coded selectively. This time, I aimed to give all the data an open opportunity (not selective) to broaden and saturate concepts more deeply and, ultimately, more parsimoniously than before.

I conducted another sort (Glaser, 1978) by open and higher-level codes at this stage to better understand the emerging patterns before proceeding with participant 63's data.

The following outline emerged (Figure 4):

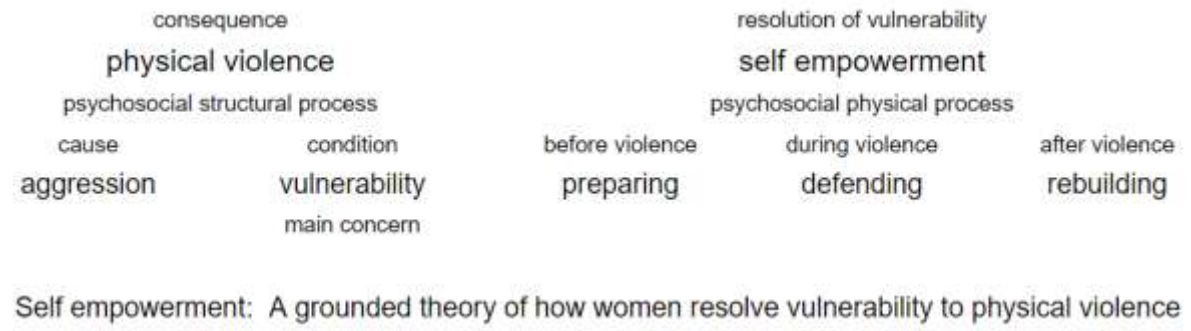


Figure 4. *The self-empowerment theory* initial emergent outline.

There are sub-dimensions which fell under the main categories of *preparing*, etc., and these can be seen below after further sorting and coding.

After many hours of additional sorting, the outline appeared as follows (Figure 5):

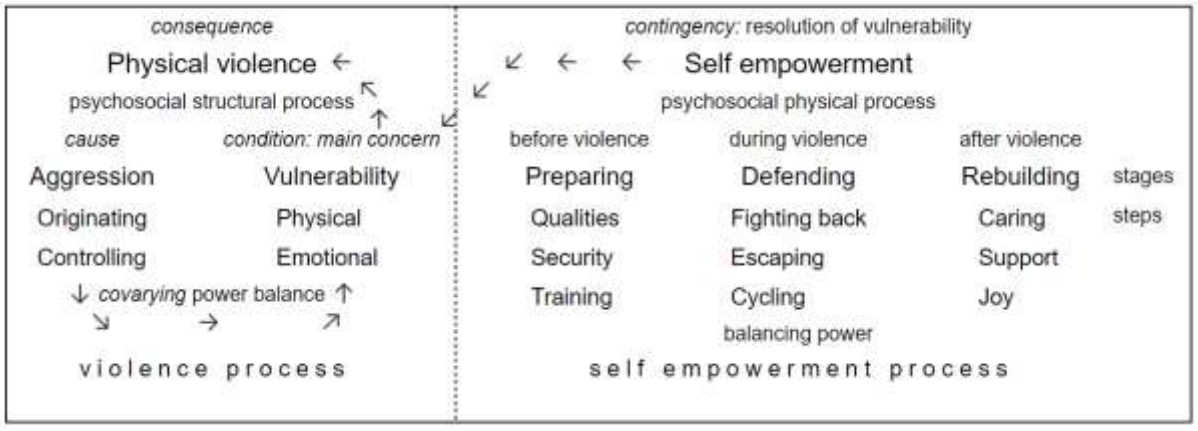


Figure 5. *The self-empowerment theory* elaborated outline.

The arrows in the figure suggest that *aggression*, interacting in *covarying power balance* with feminine *vulnerability*, may lead to *physical violence*. If *self-empowerment* is

applied to *vulnerability*, the *violence process* may be *contingently* halted or otherwise dissipated.

I then coded selectively (Holton, 2008) from participant 63 to 106 and sorted their data into the spreadsheet. This brought the total number of open codes in the sheet (Appendix B) to 638.

29 August – 3 September 2024. I wrote up the theory, as presented in the following chapter, based on the Data Analysis Sheet (Appendix B).

Conclusion

This chapter delineates the ethical and methodological foundations guiding the research. By intertwining personal convictions with rigorous academic frameworks, a robust structure was established for investigating the complex issue of physical violence against women. Grounded in the ethical paradigms of integrity, respect, and responsibility, and employing a meticulous methodological approach through classic grounded theory, this study has attempted to ensure both credibility and substantive depth. The personal beliefs and judgments expressed at the outset not only set the study's ethical tone but also clarify the reflexive nature of the methodology used, thereby safeguarding the authenticity and applicability of the findings. As this research progressed into the findings chapter, the methodology and ethical considerations outlined here provided a robust foundation for the synthesis, ensuring that the study remained grounded in both theoretical rigour and ethical integrity.

Chapter 3:

Findings: Self-Empowerment Theory

only men
who integrate the feminine
can channel the universe
— *Lao Tzu (paraphrased)*

Introduction

The outline was revised into a final theory outline (Figure 6), provided here for reference purposes.

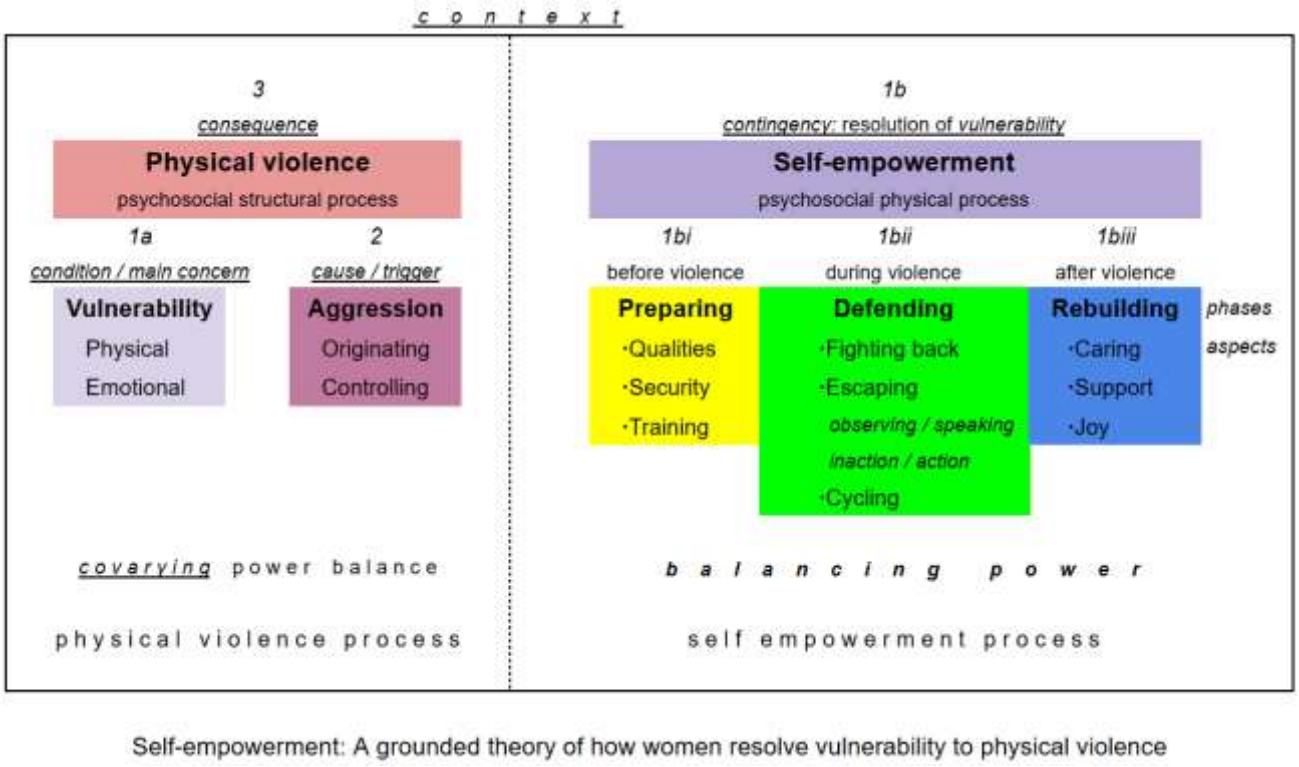


Figure 6. *The self-empowerment theory* final outline.

In this final outline (Figure 6 above), I have replaced arrows with numbered sections to facilitate clearer interpretive integration. The relationships are as follows: The *context* (positioned at the top of the figure but not numbered) is the phenomenon of women facing physical violence. *Vulnerability* (*1a*) is the condition under which *aggression* (*2*) acts, resulting in *physical violence* (*3*). This is the *physical violence process.* This process is contingent upon *self-empowerment* (*1b*) which can reduce or resolve *vulnerability* (*1a*), varying the power balance to match *aggression* (*2*), thereby averting *physical violence* (*3*). *Self-empowerment* (*1b*) operates through three phases: *preparing* (*1bi*), *defending* (*1bii*), and *rebuilding* (*1biii*).

The title of this publication was changed to from *Self-empowerment: A grounded theory of how women resolve vulnerability to physical violence* to *Self-Empowerment – Women resolving vulnerability to physical violence*.

Across the theory statement and exposition below, the first and key occurrences of certain concepts and their variants from the above final outline (Figure 6) and the Data Analysis Sheet (Appendix B) are italicised.

Theory Statement

Self-empowerment is a classic grounded theory explaining how women resolve their *vulnerability* to physical violence.

Being vulnerable is the main concern of women facing physical violence. As vulnerability is so pervasive, it essentially represents a *psychosocial structural condition* in which women find themselves. Most perpetrators of physical violence against women are men. Women are often physically more vulnerable to violence due to generally having less physical

strength than men. Additionally, they may be emotionally more vulnerable because of their heightened sensitivity to the effects of emotional stimuli resulting from physical violence.

Aggression in perpetrators of physical violence *originates* from patriarchy, upbringing, inferiority, and individual choice. Aggression may be *controlled* through various means, including women's *againststanding*, *awarenessraising*, *boundarying*, and *empowering*; men's *heartchanging*, *helpseeking*, *manningup*, and *selfremodelling*; and broader societal efforts such as *courtmonitoring* / *deinjusticing*, *deathpenaltying* / *deathsentencing*, *harshconsequencing*, *jobcreating*, *kindpolicing* / *properpolicing*, *maneducating*, and *stoppingnonstopping*.

Aggression towards women may *trigger* (*cause*) an incident of *physical violence*. Whether aggression leads to violence depends on the *power balance* between the woman and the aggressor. If her vulnerability is high, aggression directed at her is more likely to result in physical violence. Similarly, if the potential perpetrator's aggression is high, even a woman with relatively low vulnerability may struggle to prevent physical violence. Conversely, if her vulnerability is low, aggressors may be less likely to trigger physical violence against her, depending on the level of aggression. This illustrates the *covarying power balance* between vulnerability and aggression in the *psychosocial structural physical violence process*.

Thus, it can be stated that aggression covaries with the female *condition* of vulnerability, *causing* a *consequence* of some or no physical violence, depending on the *balance of power* — that is, the level of aggression relative to the level of vulnerability.

Into this dynamic enters feminine *self-empowerment* as a *contingent* process to reduce vulnerability, thereby *balancing power* and averting physical violence.

Women empower themselves, reducing and ultimately *resolving* their vulnerability to physical violence, by balancing power with aggressors through the *before*, *during*, and *after phases* of violence: *preparation*, *defence*, and *rebuilding*.

Before experiencing or facing physical violence, women prepare themselves to varying degrees. This means that some women take proactive steps, while others do not. *Preparing* to face potential violence involves cultivating key *qualities*, ensuring physical *security*, and engaging in defensive *training*.

Successful self-empowerment, that reduces vulnerability and averts violence, requires women to acquire and develop the *quality* of being positively willing to learn how to protect, defend, and care for themselves.

Such protection begins with women physically *securing* themselves as much as possible at all times. This might include locking doors, keeping dogs, filing appropriate police reports, and maintaining general vigilance for potential threats.

For women to effectively *defend* themselves against physical violence, various types of *training* can be beneficial, such as danger awareness and self-defence training.

When women *prepare* for potential violence by nurturing the *quality* of willingness to learn, maintaining and enhancing their physical *security*, and undergoing defensive *training*, they significantly increase their chances of effectively *defending* themselves if attacked.

Such defence typically includes two aspects: *fighting back* and *escaping*, with a possibility of *cycling* violence occurring.

When confronted with a physical attack by an assailant, if they cannot avoid or escape, women will *fight back* if their physical and emotional strength (power) is sufficient to counter

that of the attacker. This may or may not involve physical contact. Skill and timing in such self-defence tactics are crucial at this point, as they help control and reduce vulnerability while exerting enough power to stop, scare off, or otherwise incapacitate the perpetrator.

Women will and should *escape*, if possible, rather than physically confronting an attacker by fighting back. Such an escape can be a complex event, involving elements such as *observation*, *speech*, *inaction*, and *action*.

Women *observe* perpetrators and their surroundings to "read" what is happening and what might occur next. At this point, they must make acute assessments of whether, when, and how to *speak* — whether to plead with or shout at the perpetrator, remain silent, or combine these approaches at appropriate moments. Speaking or shouting can either de-escalate or escalate the attack, depending on various factors, and this is when women need to be most attuned to themselves and their environment. Group communication or discussion among co-victims, when possible, is often beneficial and necessary to console, motivate, and potentially devise or execute an escape plan.

During an attack, *inaction* on the part of women can be either voluntary or involuntary. A victim may be in shock, physically and emotionally "frozen", and would need to "pull herself together", speak to herself, and decide to take appropriate action at the right time, such as fighting back or attempting to escape. When voluntarily inactive, the victim strategically immobilises to gain an advantage over the perpetrator. For example, pretending to be unconscious or dead might cause an attacker to stop and flee, but it could also provoke further violence. Each situation must be approached as a dynamic set of interactive possibilities that can shift at any moment. This is where knowledge of self-defence tactics — both physical and psychological — becomes crucial.

At an opportune moment, women facing physical violence decide to *act* and escape.

If they do not fully escape and depending on the nature and intensity of the assault, they may become caught in a *cycle* of repetitive violence, being attacked repeatedly and having to fight back or escape on a protracted basis. Proper preparation can help in avoiding, managing, or escaping a physical violence attack. Inadequate preparation and rebuilding before and after violence can also contribute to the cycling of violence and defence.

Once a woman has avoided, ended, or escaped an attack, she enters a space where she can *rebuild* aspects of her life. This includes cultivating *care* for herself, seeking and providing *support*, and allowing *joy* to return and flourish.

Caring after violence involves allowing one's true peaceful nature to expand, enabling inner stillness to bring calm and fulfilment. This creates an environment where women can systematically address any physical and emotional vulnerability and needs, often through consulting a doctor, therapist, or the police. Each of these professional avenues offers benefits in terms of physical, emotional, and psychological treatment and assistance.

As caring matures, women often find upliftment by connecting, sharing, and *supporting* other survivors, encouraging and helping each other to process trauma. Safe spaces can serve as effective venues for initial refuge from attacks and for subsequent support activities.

Caring and support bring *joy* — a sense of freedom that acknowledges one is not alone, that one is not merely the constructed ego (the sum of thoughts, feelings, memories, and perceptions), but that one is essentially the cool, calm, and peaceful presence that exists everywhere.

Thus, by *rebuilding* their lives with *care*, *support*, and *joy*, women *empower* themselves to better *prepare* for potential assaults and fundamentally *defend* themselves, ultimately reducing and *resolving* their *vulnerability* to *physical violence*.

Theory Exposition

The following is an expanded, data-rich delineation of the *self-empowerment* theory. In some instances, pseudonyms are used. Since no participant names were collected in the questionnaire, any resemblance or exact match to a participant's actual name would be purely coincidental. Sources are indicated or cited as, for example, "(Participants 6, 9)," meaning the concepts or ideas are grounded in the stories or data provided by Participants 6 and 9. This citation method ensures direct data grounding and allows for conceptual and theoretical continuity and consistency checks, while maintaining anonymity. Additionally, when a citation shows only one or two participants, it must not be assumed that this is indicative of a lack of corroboration or saturation for a concept, as citations are often only source exemplifications and not necessarily indicators of comprehensive coverage. Also, not all ideas or opinions shared by participants are saturated concepts, neither do they purport to be or need to be. Sometimes, they are just that, an opinion or idea shared by a participant. In light of the stated objectives of this study as delineated in Chapter 1, each women in this study is entitled to have her opinion or idea expressed within the overall coherence of the theory.

Background

The demographic composition of the research participants is 106 women, evenly split between Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces. These individuals range in age from 18 to 79 years, with a predominant age group of 30 to 49 years. Linguistically, the group is diverse, speaking a variety of home languages, including English, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Zulu, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho,

Tswana, Shona, Swazi, and Tsonga. In terms of marital status, the majority identify as single, married, or divorced, with others being separated, widowed, or engaged.

Educational backgrounds vary significantly within the group. While many hold high school diplomas, college credits, or university degrees (up to the bachelor's level), others possess diplomas, master's degrees, or have received minimal or no formal education. From an employment perspective, 42 participants are employed full-time, 27 are actively seeking employment, 12 are self-employed, and one is engaged in volunteer work. The remaining participants are either retired, unable to work, not seeking employment, enrolled as students, or employed part-time.

All participants have encountered physical violence in various forms. The majority have suffered beatings or assaults, while others have experienced more specific forms of aggression, such as being belted, coerced, kicked, deliberately run over by a vehicle, choked, pinched, mugged, raped, or otherwise sexually assaulted. Additional forms of violence reported include being shot, stabbed, strangled, or tortured. Perpetrators of these violent acts range from partners and acquaintances to complete strangers. Notably, among these aggressors, only one was a woman; the remainder were men.

Physical Violence

Physical violence is a psychosocial structural process that can be the consequence of the covarying power balance between the main concern condition of vulnerability and the "cause" or trigger of aggression.

As such, physical violence is the phenomenon of focus in the present theory, aiming to understand and explain how women resolve their vulnerability to it.

Psychosocial structural process. Physical violence manifests as an interactive, processually structured phenomenon involving the psychological and social components of physical and emotional vulnerability and aggression — hence the descriptor *psychosocial structural process*.

This process is viewed as structural because its components and patterns are relatively stable, requiring psychosocial effort or intervention to destabilise, attenuate, or negate it.

The psychosocial structural process of physical violence is, in effect, what is termed the physical violence process.

Physical violence process. The physical violence process is the dynamic interplay between vulnerability and aggression, where their covarying power balance determines the likelihood of physical violence.

The following three excerpts from participants clearly illustrate the physical violence process:

"I was strangled and slapped a few times [*aggression* leading to *physical violence*]… during an argument [*covarying power balance*]... I was pregnant [*vulnerability*]… at that moment to make matters worse" (Participant 76).

"I was brutally assaulted [*aggression* leading to *physical violence*] and ended in hospital [*vulnerability*] and… he held me by my neck till I couldn't breathe [*covarying power balance*]" (Participant 96).

"Physically bullied [*vulnerability*] on a road rage [*aggression*]. The white guy physically assaulted me [*physical violence*] after he was fighting for a parking bay [*covarying power balance*]" (Participant 53).

The dynamics of the *physical violence process* through a *covarying power balance* are further clarified by examining its two fundamental components: *vulnerability* and *aggression*.

Vulnerability. Vulnerability refers to the increased susceptibility to harm due to physical limitations or emotional conditions, often exacerbated by societal structures and personal circumstances.

During her ordeal of physical and emotional violence, a participant described her vulnerability as follows:

> Mentally, I feel completely removed from my body when it's happening. I feel taken away and I shut down. It feels like its black and white stills instead of a connected reels of memory when recalling later on. Physically, I wet myself. I shake. I try not to cry or make any noise. I ask please stop scaring me. I can't breathe. Afterwards, I vomit and can't hold down food for a long time after. My body aches like hell in the days after. (Participant 27)

The main concern of all the participants in this study, in one way or another, during their experiences of physical violence, is the extent of their vulnerability.

Physical vulnerability. An increased risk of harm in women due to inherent strength disparities, environmental factors, or encumbering responsibilities is what is meant by *physical vulnerability*.

"He was stronger" (Participant 43).

"He was much stronger and blinded by anger no matter what I did" (Participant 48).

"Helpless and overpowered due to him being strong" (Participant 26).

Women are generally physically weaker than their assailants (Participants 15, 18, 27, 38). Janice said, "He was much stronger than me. I had to just wait until I could catch my breath enough to scream" (Participant 38). Additionally, when women are pregnant, nursing, holding babies, or protecting small children, these responsibilities automatically encumber them, making it difficult to move quickly enough to protect themselves and their children.

Some men mercilessly attack, beat, and kick women during such vulnerable moments (Participants 1, 2, 44, 46, 50, 51, 76, 78). These factors diminish their overall safety (Participants 73, 75) and place them at a disadvantage in attempting to stop an attacker. Women can be susceptible to panicking (Participants 4, 24) or going into shock, dissociating, freezing, feeling numb, and shutting down (Participants 4, 14, 16, 27), making them more easily overpowered (Participant 26). Also, some women are environmentally more exposed (Participant 15) to potential attacks, such as those living in unlocked houses for various reasons (Participants 44, 49) or on farms (Participant 6).

Other women are unprepared (Participants 29, 31, 32, 36, 37), do not expect (Participants 31, 35, 37, 38), and do not even believe they can prepare (Participants 6, 35, 38) to defend themselves against physical violence. Still other women (none in this group) end up being killed (Participants 35, 79), fear this outcome (Participant 74), or witness loved ones killed in front of them (Participant 6) or in their absence by their perpetrator (Participant 9).

Emotional vulnerability. *Emotional vulnerability* refers to an increased sensitivity to trauma, fear, and psychological harm, often exacerbated by societal marginalisation and the traumatic effects of violence.

"It felt like the guy had power on me like he owns me" (Participant 87).

"He didn't show his abusive side immediately but slowly but surely he started to mentally abuse me, followed by emotional abuse and then he started to get physical" (Participant 17).

"When he stopped hitting me, he continued to abuse me emotionally and financially" (Participant 1).

Women's emotional sensitivity increases their vulnerability to attack. Women are inherently different from men, often more acutely fearing violence, pain, and death (Participant 6). They may also more readily experience feelings of heartbreak, helplessness, hopelessness, horror, humiliation, and hurt (Participants 6, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 26, 53). For the most part, society has isolated women and made them feel inferior, leading to insecurity (Participants 21, 22, 43).

None of this is intended to "play the victim card". It is simply an acknowledgment of what women's experiences of violence, inflicted by cruel aggressors, have wrought in them. Some women have endured so much physical violence and abuse that their vulnerability reaches profound levels. As Melanie said, "Women die, suffer deep psychological issues, traumatised for life, their self-worth and confidence taken away" (Participant 35).

Aggression. *Aggression* refers to behaviours or tendencies that involve force or violence, particularly from men towards women, which can escalate into physical attacks due to loss of control, impacting emotionally and physically vulnerable individuals.

"He was always using passive aggressive behaviour towards me" (Participant 66).

"He was physically aggressive" (Participant 4).

"After attacking me, hitting… me, he forced himself on me. Most horrific moment ever in my life" (Participant 95).

The origins of physical violence against women, in the cases examined, are predominantly rooted in male aggression. Notably, only one participant reported experiencing such violence from both men and a woman.

The *origin* (Participants 6, 35, 51–62, 67, 89) and *control* (Participants 6, 35, 51–64) of men's aggression are significant factors that warrant close attention. These aspects are closely linked to the main concern faced by women experiencing physical violence.

Originating aggression. This refers to the underlying drivers of men's violence toward women, as described by participants.

This concept encompasses four interrelated contributors: Inferiority, patriarchy, choice, and upbringing. Each plays a role in creating conditions in which women's vulnerability to physical violence may be acted upon.

Inferiority. Reflecting a deep sense of personal inadequacy, a sense of inferiority in men can arise from economic hardship, role displacement, or internalised social devaluation. This dynamic was expressed in accounts of men "feeling powerless and thus choosing 'weaker' individuals to attack," linked to "a loss of their previously clearly defined roles" and "economic problems, battling with self-esteem" (Participant 62). Aggression thus becomes a compensatory act — a way to reclaim a sense of power in contexts where men feel diminished. The presence of "anger issues" (Participant 89), "disrespect and man ego" (Participant 53), and an "inferiority complex" (Participant 54) further supports this interpretation, suggesting that self-rejection and fragile self-worth are projected outward through aggression.

Patriarchy. A structural and cultural framework that legitimises male dominance and the coercive assertion of power is what is meant by *patriarchy*.

One participant attributed aggression directly to "patriarchal society" (Participant 52), while another noted its expression in "violent men" (Participant 59). Patriarchal aggression appears hasty and impulsive, reflecting a form of authority that disregards dialogue in favour of dominance. It also perpetuates shifting standards that restrict women's autonomy, with control tactics evolving across generations.

Choice. This denotes the agency men retain in deciding how to express power.

As one participant put it: "It's a choice men make. Nothing causes it" (Participant 55). Even amid conditioning, men exercise volition in whether and how they act. Social influence from other men can reinforce certain behaviours, but individual willingness to reflect and adapt remains critical in shaping outcomes. *Choice* intersects with each of the other three origins — inferiority, patriarchy, and upbringing — showing that, while shaped, aggression is not inevitable.

Upbringing. This refers to the lifelong imprint of gendered socialisation and power modelling.

Participants highlighted how boys are taught to suppress emotion, assume dominant roles, and feel responsible for providing and protecting, pressures which, when unmet, may result in aggression (Participant 35). The effects of "the way males or boy children are raised" (Participant 67) include narrow definitions of masculinity and emotional inaccessibility, compounded by historical violence, substance use, and exposure to aggressive role models. One participant traced it back to "the very beginning of a child's life" and noted that many

focus on "the behaviour and not the reason behind the behaviour" (Participant 51). A lack of early empowerment and emotional nurturing for girls was also cited as a contributing factor (Participant 60), illustrating how *originating aggression* can emerge not only through boys' formation but also through the neglect of girls' rights and self-concept.

In sum, *originating aggression* is a composite of internal, interpersonal, structural, and developmental factors, each interwoven into men's enactment of violence. This concept is foundational in understanding how physical violence against women is initiated and perpetuated within the broader trajectory of *vulnerability* and its resolution.

Controlling aggression. This refers to the ways in which coercive power dynamics can be interrupted, restrained, or redirected to prevent physical violence against women.

While *originating aggression* explains the onset, *controlling aggression* identifies the structural means through which such aggression can be held in check, by shifting or balancing power between vulnerable women and dominant men.

At its root, violence is *triggered* by men losing *control* and attacking *emotionally* and *physically vulnerable* women (Participant 6). Yet, participants described multiple mechanisms through which this process can be checked. These mechanisms can be grouped into distinct but overlapping control concepts.

*Against*standing. This represents moral resistance to aggression and its enablers. "Women standing against this, people stopping to be bystanders, and introducing harsh sentences" (Participant 53) illustrates a refusal to accept coercion, embodying a counterforce to submission and silence.

*Awareness*raising. This includes both personal and community education: "awareness of red flags" (Participant 70), "workshops for men" (Participant 61), and "self-awareness of your vulnerabilities" (Participant 68) enable recognition, prevention, and response to violence.

Boundarying. This reinforces self-worth and consequences: "Children need to understand what boundaries are… and… WHY and what the CONSEQUENCES are thereof" (Participant 51). Setting limits becomes an early, proactive control strategy.

Court*monitoring* / *de*injusticing. These call attention to flawed protection: "Policing and the courts" (Participant 60) often fail to protect women. The system must be watched and corrected, where even spurious protection orders can increase harm rather than reduce it.

Death*penaltying*. This reflects a strong response from some participants (Participant 55). "Death sentence is the way because these methods don't work" (Participant 58). Whether just or effective remains debated, but it expresses a demand for proportionate justice.

*De*vulnerabling. This involves helping "children and women who are vulnerable… to know their rights" (Participant 60), effectively strengthening their position within power relations.

Empowering. This includes both self-protection and relational restoration. "Empower women to leave… and work with men to unlearn negative components of being male" (Participant 35), affirming mutual transformation.

*Harsh*consequencing / jail*terming*. These serve as legal deterrents. "Harsh consequences for the offenders" (Participant 52) and "serious legal consequences" (Participant 54) alter the risk-reward dynamic of aggression.

Heart*changing*. This suggests inner transformation. "Only through a change of heart… by accepting God's grace" (Participant 6). This implies self-imposed regulation through moral reformation.

Help*seeking*. This opens the door to change. "Perpetrators seeking professional help" (Participant 54) presents rehabilitation as a voluntary intervention.

Job*creating*. This targets social stress. "Job creation as a solution… too tired to fight. Social stress always looks for an easy outlet" (Participant 62), reveals an indirect but impactful form of aggression control.

*Kind*policing / *proper*policing. These shift frontline power. "Police officers need to treat victims with kindness… Reporting made me feel like I was the perpetrator" (Participant 58). Negligent policing compounds harm. Kind policing disrupts it.

Man*educating*. This reframes masculinity. "When men are educated more that it is wrong" (Participant 61), social learning becomes a route to behavioural restraint.

*Manning*up. This involves facing trauma. "Men need to man up and deal with their childhood traumas" (Participant 57), showing self-regulation through responsibility and healing.

*Self*remodelling. This illustrates lived transformation. One participant recounted how her husband, after counselling, "is the one who tells men that women mustn't be abused" (Participant 93). This change, rooted in long-term process and reflection, embodies an altered power orientation.

*Stopping*nonstopping / cycle*stopping*. This reflects despair or realism. "It cannot… not even severe penalties will stop it" (Participant 62), but other participants' stories counter this through actual change.

Together, these concepts map out a complex framework of *control* that includes structural reform, individual change, and collective resistance. *Controlling aggression* is not a singular act but a multifaceted *power-balancing* process, one that, when engaged meaningfully, can shift the trajectory from *vulnerability* to *self-empowerment*.

Power balance. As a dynamic *psychosocial structure* within the phenomenon of physical violence, *power balance*, refers to the relative equalisation of strength between potential assailants and victims. It functions as a deterrent mechanism. The more equally matched the parties, the less likely violence is to occur. This balance can reduce women's vulnerability while enhancing their capacity to resist, avoid, or neutralise aggression.

Participants identified power as a central element in the violence process: "Control or power most men want to have authority over women" (Participant 56), "men wanting to exert power" (Participant 35), and "men feeling powerless and thus choosing 'weaker' individuals to attack" (Participant 62). These statements reveal that perceived dominance or inferiority plays a crucial role in triggering aggression.

To prevent violence, women must elevate their level of power, whether through physical, psychological, social, or situational means, to approximate or counteract that of a potential attacker (Participants 6, 43, 44, 48–51, 53, 57, 58). The more forceful or opportunistic the assailant, the more decisively the woman must act to resist or evade harm.

Covarying power balance. This refers to the fluctuating dynamic between aggressor and potential victim, where the outcome of an aggression encounter is shaped by the relative strength, preparedness, and empowerment of each. Violence becomes more likely when the balance tilts toward the aggressor; it becomes less likely, or even averted, when the woman asserts, gains, or regains control of the situation.

This variation is illustrated in participants' accounts:

"As an activist involved in the struggle for democracy I was beaten up, teargassed, tortured in detention, hurt myself very badly running away from police" (Participant 35).

"One guy from the back jumped out… holding a knife to my neck… I screamed, pulled him inside my neighbour's house… luckily they opened the door… and that was my savioury moment" (Participant 98).

"Was attacked… guy tried to stab me… I fought him off" (Participant 62).

The *violence process*, then, is structured around a psychosocial balance: If power resides primarily with the aggressor, violence tends to be perpetrated. If the balance shifts toward the woman, she may successfully avoid, withstand, or overcome the threat. In this way, the balance between aggressor (cause) and vulnerable target (condition) *covaries*, resulting in a spectrum of outcomes, from extreme violence to complete avoidance.

The critical determinant in this process is *self-empowerment*. It is the factor that enables women to recalibrate the power balance. No one confers this power externally. It must be self-initiated. Women who do not already possess the capacity to counter violence must acquire it, through preparation, awareness, resilience, and skill. This includes knowing how to act in the moment, how to assert one's position, and how to recover and rebuild where harm has occurred.

Self-Empowerment

Self-empowerment is a process that enhances a woman's ability to manage vulnerability through preparation, defence, and rebuilding in response to violence.

"I can be able to empower other women who experience the same" (Participant 73).

"Empower women to leave violent relationships and situations" (Participant 35).

"Empowering [women] with skills that will ensure they can self-sustain" (Participant 66).

Self-empowerment engages women's bodies, minds, and interactions with others, what may be termed a *psychosocial physical process*. It *resolves* both the felt experience and the physical reality of *vulnerability*, operating through three *phases*, typically in this order: *preparing*, *defending*, and *rebuilding*.

Preparing is the power-balance phase before violence, involving women's unique *qualities*, the extent of *security* measures they implement, and any *training* they undertake to face violence.

Defending is the power-balance phase during violence, encompassing *fighting back* and/or *escaping*, with the risk of *cycling* violence if it is not effectively ended.

Rebuilding (Participant 6) is the power-balance consolidation phase after violence, where women *care* for themselves, give and receive *support*, and inspire and experience *joy*.

Thus, by understanding how to respond in a violent situation (preparing), taking action when necessary (defending), and addressing the aftermath (rebuilding), women have

discovered, and can now share, the process of *self-empowerment*. This enables them, and other women, to effectively *resolve their vulnerability to physical violence*.

Preparing before violence. This first phase of self-empowerment involves enhancing women's readiness to *defend* themselves by developing personal qualities, implementing security measures, and undergoing training.

"I didn't prepare, it just happened" (Participant 32).

"Always look around you when walking in the road and if it's dark then you must walk under the shadow so that the thugs could not see you" (Participant 41).

"Women should… learn self-defence" (Participant 65).

Gaining a deeper understanding of the self-empowerment process is supported by examining the *preparing phase* in more detail. Exploring how its aspects — women's qualities, security measures, and training — interact and influence one another provides insight into their combined impact on women's ability to defend themselves when necessary.

Qualities. In the context of preparing for violence, **qualities** refer to personal attributes such as calmness, confidence, and a readiness to learn, characteristics that enhance a woman's ability to anticipate and respond to potential threats.

"I need to learn to verbalise what I've been through instead of hiding and dismissing" (Participant 27).

"At work I tend to be in a professional mode and use de-escalation which I've now learned" (Participant 39).

"I learnt that I was wrong, and I had to go through hell to find out that there are bad people out there" (Participant 51).

As noted earlier, some women do not anticipate an attack and therefore remain unprepared or believe that preparation is not possible. This can result in attackers causing significant injury or trauma (e.g., Participants 6, 29, 31, 32, 35–38). Unpreparedness, then, is not a beneficial quality within the context of self-empowerment. Instead, women may consider how many others have actively prepared, or have come to believe that preparation is necessary, despite their wish that such violence would never occur.

Cultivating a calm, careful, and precautionary mindset (Participant 6), together with confidence and a positive attitude, provides a strong foundation for preparation. As Bongie shared, she overcame her experience of violence by "being strong and keeping on believing in myself that I would get through" (Participant 41). Furthermore, being mentally prepared to fight back, when the power balance is favourable, can be crucial in escaping violence (Participant 30).

Openness and a willingness to learn (Participants 17, 27, 39, 51, 65, 74) are therefore important qualities that shape how women approach both security measures and training during the preparing phase of the self-empowerment process.

Security. This aspect refers to the measures and practices adopted to protect oneself from violence. These include locking doors, remaining vigilant in potentially dangerous situations, and reporting incidents to authorities.

Caroline, who was hospitalised due to an attack, said, "I still lock doors constantly and double check" (Participant 47). Most others asked about this issue shared similar practices (Participants 6, 46, 47, 48, 50).

Reporting physical violence to the police (Participants 6, 92, 103) is another way women seek to improve personal and communal security. However, responses to such reports are not always satisfactory. Katleho shared her experience:

> In South Africa, when you're an African, reporting cases of GBV and being assisted by a fellow African, it's difficult. They always remind you whatever happens inside a person's marriage, it's none of your concerns. I feel when you're assisted by a female, it's easy, and they understand. Or helped by any racial group besides Africans, it will be easier. (Participant 45)

Vigilancing, being alert in the right places and at the right times (Participants 6, 33, 41, 43), also forms a key aspect of security. Janelle described "keeping my eyes open at a red robot for any weirdos waltzing around, especially at night. I consider this just being practical and not because I am afraid, just careful" (Participant 6). Ivy said, "I sleep with a dog on my bed" (Participant 43), while Hanneli noted "being super vigilant at times when I suspected an incident" (Participant 33).

Being open, teachable, and responsive to security issues, and implementing relevant practices, are essential components of the preparing phase of self-empowerment. These efforts also strengthen the relevance and value of training as the next aspect in the process.

Training. This refers to the educational and practical activities designed to prepare women for physical violence.

Training for what? Training to prepare for physical violence. This includes creating and attending seminars and workshops specifically focused on prevention and response (Participant 69). Many participants who were asked about preparation training emphasised the value of martial arts or self-defence courses, classes, or coaching in equipping women to face violent situations (Participants 6, 34, 35, 40, 51, 53, 54, 55). Daisy further suggested that "classes about relationships, personality types, different kinds of addiction, all the basics that have fallen away" (Participant 51) would also be beneficial.

In addition to self-defence, Amahle identified awareness training as essential (Participant 54), a view supported by other participants (Participants 53, 67, 70, 77). Melanie, while also advocating for self-defence, added: "Know your worth. Know the laws that protect women and how to report. Offer skills training and employment opportunities to break the economic dependence" (Participant 35). Gisela described training as encompassing: "Education at home, in schools and tertiary institutions about how to spot danger signals, what to do re help and who to talk to" (Participant 62).

Participants also identified a wide range of practical strategies and tools that could form part of their training: The use of pepper spray, mastering tactical body movements, developing thinking-ahead skills, undergoing sexual rights education, attending abuse-recognition sessions, avoiding individuals who are angry or out of control, staying out of isolating situations, and learning when and how to lock out, fight back, back off, de-escalate, take legal action, cut ties, run away, or leave (Participants 28, 30, 33, 39, 40, 41, 51, 60, 61).

When women cultivate appropriate qualities, implement relevant security measures, and undergo training, they can be adequately prepared to defend themselves, should violence occur (Participants 19, 39, 46). In such moments, women typically defend themselves by

fighting back, escaping, or both. However, when neither of these responses is taken, or when only a partial response occurs, a cycle of repeated aggression may follow. This can be harmful for everyone involved, as it is draining, dangerous, and in some cases, life-threatening.

Defending during violence. This second phase of self-empowerment involves women actively resisting through fighting back or escaping, with the aim of mitigating harm and strengthening their capacity to respond effectively in dangerous situations.

"I would have defended myself" (Participant 46).

"I defended myself... finally" (Participant 80).

"My mother and I defended ourselves and each other, and ran out the house the first chance we got, and went straight to the police station" (Participant 19).

This section examines how some women have defended themselves by either fighting back or escaping. Their accounts may serve to remind participants of their own actions or suggest new strategies for responding to future incidents. In this way, defence becomes both a lived response and a learned skill, offering opportunities to refine one's readiness for potential future threat.

Fighting back. This aspect involves a range of defensive actions strategically employed during violent encounters to disrupt or end the aggression.

"I fight back" (Participant 105).

"[Fear] made me fight back or escape. More anger than fear" (Participant 62).

"I could not fight back out of fear of escalating the situation and my daughter getting hurt" (Participant 46).

"Sometimes I took it, other times I tried to fight back" (Participant 30)

Many women either physically fought back or viewed it as a positive and necessary action during their experiences of violence (Participants 4, 6, 14, 21, 22, 28, 34, 35, 39–41, 43–45, 47, 49–51, 53–54, 58, 62, 84).

Fighting back is not always purely physical. It may involve a sequence of strategic actions. For example, striking and then submitting, or waiting for the right moment to act. Carli explained, "It's important. If you hit them at the right time and in the right place, it could stop the attack or give you time to get away" (Participant 40). Janelle similarly noted the importance of reading the situation: "There are times to be submissive, and it's important to 'read' the responses and climate should it be possible to make a break" (Participant 6). In some cases, stillness can be a form of defence: "When I was being choked, didn't take my hands to my neck, or fight, and remained very still. I moved when I was released" (Participant 44).

Matching the aggressor's level of aggression, when done in a controlled manner, can sometimes rebalance power, creating an opportunity to stop the attack or escape (Participants 39, 44, 62). Evelyn, describing a mugging incident, recalled: "I went full attack mode, got the one guy off my friend and onto the ground, roared like a lion, the dog came to help, I chased the two men down the road" (Participant 34).

Her description of roaring "like a lion" (Participant 34) mirrors Babalwa's account, in which her attacker was described as "like a lion" (Participant 84). These accounts, although separate, powerfully illustrate how fighting back can momentarily shift the power balance. However, if a woman's response is ineffective or mistimed, the consequences can be grave. Although none of the participants in this study were killed during the violent incidents they

described, several came perilously close (Participants 19, 22, 41, 49, 68, 74, 77, 84, 90, 98, 104).

Actions such as *fearlessing*, refusing to negotiate, standing one's ground, blocking, grabbing, exerting force, wrestling, pulling, pushing, threatening, screaming, shouting, scaring, struggling, diverting attention, breaking free, stopping the attack, and calling for help all form part of fighting back (Participants 4, 6, 14, 28, 34, 35, 39–41, 43–45, 49–51, 53, 58). However, not all of these tactics are effective in every situation. Their success depends heavily on whether the balance of power, including physical skill, favours the woman. This is why self-defence training is critical. For example, shouting alone, without physical readiness, can provoke the attacker and escalate the violence (Participant 41).

In many cases, women either do not know how to or are unable to fight back, leaving them to rely on their ability to escape as their primary method of defence.

Escaping. This aspect involves strategically using observation, speaking, inaction, and decisive action to safely withdraw from situations of physical violence. These elements may occur in any sequence and be repeated as necessary until safety is secured.

The following participant statements illustrate the varied and often complex realities of escaping:

"GBV takes a long time to manifest, and a long time to escape from" (Participant 24).

"I was brave enough to eventually escape the beatings by getting a protection order" (Participant 46).

"Yhoooo dear it wasn't easy but I had to escape becoz I was only seeing death and thinking about my children. So I had to be brave and leave him" (Participant 106).

"I called the police. I've also escaped before" (Participant 27).

"Fear either got me to think and move faster and escape further harm, to keep very still and also enough strength to escape his grip" (Participant 3).

Women's accounts reveal that four core elements often contribute to successful escapes: *observing*, *speaking*, *inaction*, and *action*. While these may appear simple on the surface, each involves complex judgement and situational responsiveness. These elements can occur in any order, be combined, and repeated depending on context and opportunity. Once an effective escape is achieved, they typically cease.

The delineation now turns to these four elements, examining their roles in escaping from physical violence within the broader defence phase of self-empowerment.

Observing. *Observing* involves quietly assessing the situation during violence in order to identify the right moment for action. It includes drawing on environmental and behavioural cues, through all of the senses, to de-escalate, plan an escape, or prepare for defence.

One participant described how careful observation during a violent incident enabled her to time her actions strategically and escape:

> We were still in the bathroom listening to them rummaging through our house, trying to start our… bakkie… I had managed to free my hands again… I had lost so much blood… We then ran into the bush and kept going until we came to a neighbouring farm, all the while sticking to the bush as we could hear the bakkie driving up and down the road. (Participant 6)

Many women practise observing by remaining silent during violence, either involuntarily due to shock or tactically to create a sudden opportunity, such as screaming

(Participant 38) or making a demand, like the release of a child, which one woman achieved when the attacker complied (Participant 44). Silence may also serve to de-escalate when the power balance is unfavourable (Participant 43), or as a strategy of endurance until escape, separation, or divorce is possible (Participants 6, 31, 37, 60).

Observation enables women to listen, reflect, think clearly, assess their environment, focus on what matters, and summon courage. By "keeping things simple", some women were able to rapidly comprehend the situation and act swiftly to escape (Participants 6, 35, 44, 47, 101).

Effective *observing* supports appropriate speaking when required and forms a critical foundation for timely and strategic responses during violence.

Speaking. *Speaking* during violence involves the strategic use of communication to de-escalate tension, comply temporarily, or negotiate, potentially creating an opportunity to plan an escape or gain a momentary advantage.

During violence, speaking is often reactive. This is not always beneficial, as it can worsen the situation, particularly when the power balance is unfavourable. In such instances, survival may depend on de-escalation through agreement, compliance, cooperation, and controlled conversation (Participants 6, 16, 36, 39, 44).

One participant described her experience using speech in confronting sexual violence:

> The instinct to be calm, and ask questions, rather than fight or react/argue and to be very still caused my attacker to be calmer but I could see his rage. If I'd fought, attacked him, or become angry, I don't think I would have gotten away in the case of the rapist. Bravery also helped me to talk to my rapist casually asking questions, sharing his

> fantasy that nothing had happened, even showing interest and empathy in what he had to say. Not showing any fear and not confronting him helped, as if nothing was wrong. (Participant 44)

Another participant recalled, "I complied and talked to him. I think I dissociated" (Participant 16). In such cases, speaking was not a show of agreement but a survival tactic under extreme duress.

At other times, particularly when the woman holds the power, speaking may involve shouting to startle, intimidate, or repel the attacker, thereby facilitating escape (Participants 34, 41). Asking or begging the perpetrator to stop may or may not be effective; in some instances, it can provoke further violence (Participants 6, 35, 41, 58). Peace negotiations or promises may reduce immediate danger if the perpetrator is or becomes receptive (Participants 33, 40), while insisting and explaining may be effective when the power balance is in the woman's favour (Participant 28).

Speaking can also take a more spiritual form, such as praying. For some participants, prayer, even out loud, served as a way to appeal to God, stay calm, sharpen observation, and focus on escape options (Participants 6, 30, 35).

In group situations, *speaking* may be used cooperatively. As Janelle noted, "In a group, when possible, you can talk to each other to try and calm each other (this is only possible when the perpetrator/s are not present). One person in the group can be a distraction or 'cooperate,' leaving the others to work out a plan of escape" (Participant 6).

Thus, speaking, like observing, is a strategic, flexible, and situational escape strategy within the broader defence phase of self-empowerment.

Inaction. *Inaction* during violence refers to a state in which individuals freeze, either involuntarily due to fear, or voluntarily as a tactical choice, using the pause to monitor, assess, and plan potential escape or response.

"I froze" (Participant 16).

"I was literally frozen with fear" (Participant 6).

"… he was fully inside me. Then I froze. Then I left. I consider it to be assault" (Participant 31).

While often involuntary, inaction can offer a critical moment to observe and regain control. Freezing due to fear is a real and well-documented response (Participants 6, 31, 39). As Olivia explained, "It is difficult to tell what the right move is in the moment, and when your body stops responding, it becomes hard to react" (Participant 31). However, prolonged freezing can be dangerous. Participants emphasised the importance of speaking internally to oneself in order to break the freeze and recover the ability to act (Participants 6, 31, 41, 44, 45, 47, 49). Bongie shared how she did this: "By trying to breathe and keep calm and paying attention to the attack" (Participant 41).

When inaction is voluntary, women may remain still (Participant 44) in order to concentrate, observe, and wait for the right moment to escape (Participants 29, 35, 37, 38). In this way, inaction can serve as a deliberate component of defensive escape within the wider defence phase of self-empowerment.

Action. *Action* during violence involves decisive movements taken to escape or end the threat, with the primary aim of achieving safety and, where possible, reporting the incident.

"Fear got me to move quickly to escape" (Participant 44).

"I packed what I could and ran away. I took only what was important so that people couldn't notice I'm running away" (Participant 49).

"Legal action is finally taking place, and I can see a light at the end of the tunnel and justice to finally be done" (Participant 30).

Once a woman breaks a freeze or makes the decision to act, the next step is to carry out the necessary action to escape. This may include loosening bindings, summoning courage, identifying and timing escape routes, planning, and physically removing herself from danger. Women described taking back their power by removing obstacles, calling for help, calming themselves, assisting one another, running, maintaining cover, reaching safety, and reporting the incident (Participants 6, 7, 9–15, 17–19, 21–27, 29–32, 35, 37, 39–41, 44–47, 49, 58, 62, 77, 88, 90).

In some cases, action has also involved hiding, packing essentials, ending relationships, leaving home, or initiating divorce proceedings (Participants 13, 21, 25, 51, 60).

Importantly, fighting back and/or escaping as part of defence may not be one-off events. They may need to be repeated over time. This is where *cycling* enters the dynamic, as women may find themselves navigating multiple episodes of violence before attaining sustained safety.

Cycling. This refers to the repeated experience of fighting back or attempting to escape during violent incidents.

"He still does beat me. I have not overcome it" (Participant 105).

"Ndiyabethwa ngu myeni nanje [I am being beaten by my husband even now]" (Participant 86).

"Endured physical, mental and financial abuse, and it's still ongoing." (Participant 7).

For various reasons, some women experience repeated cycles of violence (Participants 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 56, 61, 82, 83, 87, 99, 105, 106). Cycling may result from situational coincidence, such as exposure to multiple potential perpetrators, the absence of adequate security measures, or, in cases of violent relationships, a decision or constraint not to leave.

To address and break the *cycle of violence*, women can strengthen their readiness through preparation, including the development of key qualities, the implementation of effective security practices, and the use of self-protection skills. This may involve fighting back or escaping when necessary and, where applicable, learning how to leave harmful or violent relationships.

Finally, rebuilding life after violence, through care, mutual support, and the reclaiming of joy, can help women interrupt and ultimately break the cycle of violence, restoring stability and self-empowerment.

Balancing power. As an executive process of self-empowerment, *balancing power*, involves enhancing one's strength or skill to effectively repel or escape an attacker. This is achieved through psychological tactics, speed, force, and self-defence techniques, each aimed at establishing parity or superiority in confrontational situations and ultimately contributing to peace (Participants 6, 33, 46, 75).

"Fear became a part of my daily routine and fear in a sense gave me the skills to be ten steps ahead" (Participant 51).

"Fear… got me… enough strength to escape… I used force to get away from his grip and push him out the door giving me enough time to get help" (Participant 44)

To effectively use one's power to avoid, resist, or escape an attacker, one must either be stronger or more skilled than the aggressor (Participants 43, 48, 50). Skill in this context includes psychological insight, swiftness, physical force, and learned self-defence moves (Participants 34, 44, 101). By contrast, unchannelled anger (Participant 44) or simply being "a loudmouth" (Participant 49) is unlikely to succeed against a determined aggressor.

One participant recounted: "He has strangled me, he has hit me, punched me, pulled my hair, thrown bricks through my car window, kicked me when I was pregnant, pushed me downstairs, broken my wrist, my elbow and many scars" (Participant 51).

Such experiences highlight the extreme imbalance of power women may face and the deep awareness that follows, recognising the need to *prepare*, train, and strengthen oneself to prevent recurrence.

Rebuilding aspects of one's life after violence also contributes to *balancing power* between oneself and any future aggressor, enabling women to move toward lasting peace and autonomy.

Thus, through fighting back and/or escaping, women have shown that they can interrupt the cycle of violence by actively balancing power, reclaiming or asserting it in ways that embody the core process of self-empowerment.

Power takeback. *Power takeback*, or *reclaiming power*, refers to a psychosocial shift from vulnerability to self-empowerment. It enables women who have been subjected to violence to reclaim their autonomy and strength, transitioning from victims to empowered victors who seek personal security and peace.

"I became brave when I stopped giving him that power over me" (Participant 51).

"It made a Strong woman" (Participant 73).

"I decided to be strong enough" (Participant 83).

"It's difficult to reason with a narcissist. They don't hear. Impossible. Your actions as in taking back your power is the only language they understand" (Participant 30).

Violence-induced emotional sensitivity often places women in a vulnerabilised state, one shaped by years of psychological and societal conditioning. This makes resolving vulnerability particularly difficult, as it involves overcoming deeply internalised resistance. Still, many women remain optimistic in the aftermath of violence. They survived, otherwise, they would not be here to tell their stories.

Women believe they have the right, like anyone else, to stand up for themselves, reclaim their power, and resist or escape violence. What they seek is not revenge, but the chance to live peacefully and thrive. They were once victims, but they are no longer. They fought back or escaped. In that sense, they are victors, women who have discovered, and are continuing to refine, self-empowerment as their way of resolving vulnerability to physical violence.

Rebuilding after violence. *Rebuilding* after violence involves repairing physical, emotional, and social damage through *caring* for oneself, giving and receiving *support*, and rediscovering *joy*. This process strengthens resilience and deepens self-empowerment following traumatic experiences.

Janelle described her experience of this phase:

> I would call the period after violence "rebuilding". You have to rebuild your faith and your trust in your fellow human beings but at the same time be wide awake and aware of what and who is "in your space". You have to rebuild confidence in yourself, and

> the most powerful and productive action in rebuilding your life is to forgive the perps. That sets you free. It takes time, but that is the road I travelled, and would say I am in a rebuilding (putting back together) period that will most likely persist forever. (Participant 6)

Facing physical violence from a vicious attacker is no small matter. After an attack, there is often damage, to the body, self-esteem, and, at times, to others, including children, parents, pets, loved ones, and even personal belongings. This damage creates a need to rebuild multiple areas of life.

Women have done this, and continue to do so, through acts of care, connective support, and the pursuit or rediscovery of joy. These are not superficial outcomes but deeply reparative forces. The following aspects illustrate how women engage in rebuilding as a critical phase of self-empowerment following violence.

Caring. This involves actively engaging in self-preservation and healing practices after violence, with the aim of rebuilding one's sense of self and restoring emotional health.

Immediately following violence, it may feel as though one has lost touch with oneself, remaining frozen, unable to care, and in need of external assistance (Participants 32, 37, 42, 98). Janelle described this phase as "the numb period. Where nothing seems real" (Participant 6).

Melanie observed that women's self-care can at times provoke male envy, which may in itself lead to violence: "… socialisation issues, coupled [with] abuse of substances and women's ability to take care of themselves, are making men violent" (Participant 35). This

implies that post-violence self-care must also include a vigilant, preparatory awareness of potential future threats.

In the aftermath of violence, some women may wish to withdraw from most situations (Participants 31, 36, 39), and may experience symptoms of depression or CPTSD — chronic post-traumatic stress disorder (Participant 65).

Thus, rebuilding begins with caring, a commitment to ensuring both physical and emotional healing. This may involve seeking medical or psychological support (Participants 12, 28–30, 34, 35, 38, 45, 46, 57, 92, 96), as well as legal steps such as reporting the incident, laying charges, or applying for a protection order (Participants 6, 13, 25, 46, 52, 58, 60, 92, 103, 104). Women must care enough about themselves to prioritise their own well-being (Participant 95).

Janelle affirmed the liberating effect of self-reflection through "forgiveness set me free" (Participant 6), and Basetsana offered a powerful expression of self-directed care: "I forgive myself for enduring the things I went through" (Participant 49).

It is important to distinguish between "switching off" (Participant 33) and silencing. Silencing involves suppressing or denying the experience, "never telling anyone," "pretending it never happened," or "managing to forget" (Participants 37, 94). In contrast, "switching off" can be understood as a form of inner retreat, an intentional resting in awareness, where one witnesses thoughts, feelings, and emotions without being consumed by them (Participants 6, 34, 46).

Peace is the ultimate goal of self-empowerment (Participants 6, 33, 46, 60, 75). In this inner stillness, women often rediscover that they are not the transient content of their

experiences, but the peaceful presence beneath it all. Thoughts, emotions, and memories arise and pass. What remains is the enduring essence, calm awareness itself. Interestingly, glimpses of this peace sometimes emerge even in the midst of violence (e.g., Participants 6, 41, 44), and afterwards, women may recognise it as their true nature.

Caring, in this deepest sense, is not merely a healing method. It is a return to one's unshakable presence. Self-empowerment brings about this realisation. It is not an idea or belief, but a direct, experiential knowing. This is the essence of caring.

Support. This includes the emotional, practical, and institutional assistance provided to individuals recovering from violence, aimed at promoting resilience and overall wellbeing.

Caring naturally extends into support, as women begin to channel their energy constructively, further process trauma, and assist one another (Participants 41, 46, 97). Through sharing experiences, learning coping strategies, and building mutual encouragement, women find strength and solidarity in moving forward (Participants 17, 35, 45–47, 63).

Michelle reflected on how participating in this study contributed to her process: "Not affected, don't need support but thank you for this. It has taken me back but also reminded me how strong I have become" (Participant 47).

Thembisile explained how support from friends played a key role in her recovery: "Started to tell my friends who gave me support to ensure I stay away from my perpetrator" (Participant 97).

Nyeleti described how she grew through her experience and began supporting others:

> It's almost a year now, I am in a better place emotionally. Talking to other women helped. Almost every woman I've spoken to has undergone some sort of abuse, but

> they are afraid to leave. They don't know where to go, how to start afresh coz the abuser is provider. It is not my place to judge but to offer emotional support. Leaving my ex was the best decision ever. (Participant 71)

Support can also be institutional. Safe spaces and shelters should be established in schools, colleges, and workplaces, environments where women can access counselling, speak without fear of judgment, and experience empathy and acceptance. Empowerment workshops are also vital (Participants 36, 46, 51, 54–56, 60, 61, 65).

Crucially, supporting women includes removing violent offenders, ensuring incarceration where appropriate, and always prioritising the victim (Participants 52, 53). Police stations must offer better training and include female counsellors. One participant insisted: "Justice, empathy is needed at police stations, even nurses… need some training" (Participant 58).

Melanie articulated this need clearly:

> Safe spaces need to be created in every area, township and suburb. Women need to be taught to go to school and make something of their lives, so they are not dependent on men. The state must provide shelter and alternative housing for women who have experienced physical violence. We should have access to comprehensive mental health services. (Participant 35)

Janelle added a spiritual dimension to support, suggesting women be uplifted "by loving them with the love of God and helping them experience the love of God for themselves" (Participant 6).

In all its forms, support plays a vital role in rebuilding life after violence and sustaining the process of self-empowerment.

Joy. In the context of recovery from violence, *joy* refers to the profound relief and happiness that survivors experience as they reclaim their identities and embrace a renewed sense of personal empowerment.

"I was glad to share my experience. I do have support. Thank you" (Participant 70).

"I'm glad I could share this. It's always eating me up. I live alone, so I sometimes think about it and get mad at myself..." (Participant 91).

Women express joy in having survived, regaining their sense of self, speaking about their experiences, and moving forward in life (Participants 40, 41, 47, 70, 85, 91). Cebisa shared how opening up became a source of lightness: "Talking about physical abuse is helping me 'cos I am not bottling things inside" (Participant 94).

Janelle linked joy to her process of forgiveness and inner release: "I have reached a place (it took a long time) where I am able to forgive, and this has set me free to have peace and joy in my life again" (Participant 6).

Bongie echoed this, reflecting on the transformative power of joy: "Being happy… is playing a big role in my life because it's making me not to think about the past. Being happy is also giving me hope and strength to carry on in life" (Participant 41). Her words point again to the reality of peaceful presence, a quality of grounded awareness in the present moment, sometimes rediscovered after violence, and sustained through conscious living in the Now.

By integrating caring, support, and joy, women form a resilient and self-affirming defence that reduces and resolves vulnerability, empowering them to resist any further attempts

by potential aggressors to take advantage of them. This triad, care, connection, and inner lightness, sustains the path of self-empowerment.

Conclusion

Women are consistently prepared to counter both physical and emotional harm. They are ready to defend themselves with strength and resolve, and to rebuild what has been damaged in the aftermath.

Their basic request is simple: To be respected as equal to any other human being. But should this respect not be given, one must reckon with their self-empowerment. Women will resist, outwit, and transform any aggressor (Participants 6, 35, 51–62).

Chapter 4:

Discussion and Literature Integration

"bei mir bistu shein"

words and phrases matter
they are the garments of ideas
the veils which simultaneously
conceal and point to
the truth
— T. Polonius, c. 9,625 BCE
(first cave etching of palaeolithic epistemology)

Introduction

Grounded theory speaks in relations between concepts, not necessarily in descriptions and an abundance of quotations (Glaser, 2011).

This chapter sets the grounded theory of self-empowerment in dialogue with the literature related to physical violence against women. Each section begins with a theory statement extract, often enriched with synonyms, and clarified through discussion and integration, or refined via selective use of the theory exposition. This approach sets convenience aside, challenges convention, and remains committed to precision and integrity.

The chapter speaks in propositional form because it is an integration, a "weaving" of the theory "into its place in the pertinent theoretical and substantive literature" (Glaser, 1978,

pp. 137, 139). Here, theory and literature fuse into literacised theoretical statements, where each expression breathes as part of the whole. For the most part, argumentative stylistics recede, yielding to disciplined fidelity to conceptual truth (Glaser, 2014b).

Furthermore, in this chapter, I draw mostly on full-text literature, refusing to pay exorbitant fees for access to a few sentences, sometimes only one, often containing a solitary keyword. Academic research paywalls are not only unfair (James, 2020) but are, in truth, a criminal attempt to extort the public and should be made illegal (cf. Mapes & Terigele, 2023). Is it not enough to earn submission and publication fees, without also denying the world access to knowledge the gatekeepers neither funded nor produced? Such access fees are unethical and should be prohibited. Journals, however prestigious they may appear, that impose them are predatory and merit boycott (Swist & Magee, 2017). Grounded theory discussion and integration require knowledge liberated from the constraints of paywalls.

Reference below to "the theory", or simply "theory", refers to the self-empowerment theory as presented in the previous chapter's theory statement and exposition. The theory extracts are preserved word-for-word, with emphasis altered only where appropriate. Italics in this chapter indicate any phrase or concept drawn from the theory and, occasionally by context, signal general emphasis.

Self-Empowerment

Theory extract: "*Self-empowerment* is a classic grounded theory explaining how women resolve their vulnerability to physical violence."

Synonyms of *self-empowerment*: self-efficacy, personal agency, self-determination, autonomy, self-actualisation, psychological empowerment, self-reliance

Firstly, an any time Google Scholar title-search (to ensure relevance) for terms "self-empowerment", "violence", and "women" yields one result: "Self-Empowerment for Women Experiencing Spousal Violence…" by Chia Sok Hia (2007). This study is about a group counselling programme which helps women who have recently left abusive relationships, "empowering women to reclaim their own sense of worth and dignity" (p. 5). This resonates with the theory's *rebuilding* after violence. However, this only deals with the final phase of three in the theory. It essentially does not include the crucial initial and central phases of *preparing* before and *defending* during violence.

Self-Efficacy *("self-empowerment" synonym)*

"Self-efficacy" is narrowly associated with violence against women in regard to the provision of microcredit (Shahriar & Shepherd, 2019) and education (Taghdisi et al., 2015), both to address domestic violence. The theory's *self-empowerment* is much broader, explaining how women resolve their vulnerability by physical engagement with any type of perpetrator.

Personal Agency *("self-empowerment" synonym)*

Short training in "personal agency", as in direction to participate in economic activities, reduced partner and non-partner violence (Kalra et al., 2024). This aligns with the qualities and training preparatory aspects of the theory as well as its support indicators.

Self-Determination *("self-empowerment" synonym)*

When previously colonised peoples reclaim or exercise "self-determination" over themselves, it can restore an inherent cultural balance in which women are naturally more empowered and less subject to violence (Charters, 2024). This is a broader societal reclamation of people- and

women-power than envisaged in the theory and can be seen as an extended *power balancing* effect possible of realigning human relations on an incrementally larger scale.

Autonomy *("self-empowerment" synonym)*

When "autonomy" is defined as women's requirement of condom use or refusal to engage in sex, Aboagye et al.'s (2022) study showed that this predominantly increases exposure to intimate partner violence. One out of many other countries showed an opposite effect, indicating the possible importance of *power-balancing* contextual variables, such as the theory's aspects of development of women's personal qualities and security arrangements. This also alludes to the importance of the theory's timing and action/inaction techniques in defending against violence.

Self-Actualisation *("self-empowerment" synonym)*

Udayanga & Kunaratnam (2017) report that cultural or societally ideological violence stemming from hegemonic patriarchy militates women's "self-actualisation", thereby damaging community growth and wellbeing. The theory also sees the cultural *origination* of *aggression* as taking advantage of women's *vulnerability*, thereby triggering violence and militating women's personal and collective self-actualisation. Thus, we may conclude, like the theory, that women self-actualise when resolving their vulnerability through self-empowerment.

Psychological Empowerment *("self-empowerment" synonym)*

In a magnificent dissertation, Dr Róisín Murtagh (2023) shows how modern psychotherapy works against women's "psychological empowerment" and recovery from violence and that this burgeoning awareness by practitioners bodes cautiously well for the profession. Such

negative influences are a part of the structural conditions which lead to violence resolvable by women not waiting on possibly misguided therapists but simply going ahead and empowering themselves as the theory indicates through adequate *rebuilding*, *preparation*, and *defence*.

Self-Reliance *("self-empowerment" synonym)*

"Self-reliance", as developed through shelters, has been shown to empower survivors in escaping violence and becoming independent (Seo, 2015). This aligns with the theory's exposition of *support* being "institutional" with participants calling for the establishment of "safe spaces and shelters" "in schools, colleges, and workplaces, environments where women can access counselling, speak without fear of judgment, and experience empathy and acceptance".

Thus, concerning the theory's central idea of *self-empowerment*, extant literature treats it both narrower and broader than the theory but misses crucial aspects as indicated.

Vulnerability

Theory extract: "Being *vulnerable* is the main concern of women facing physical violence. As *vulnerability* is so pervasive, it essentially represents a psychosocial structural condition in which women find themselves. Most perpetrators of physical violence against women are men. Women are often physically more *vulnerable* to violence due to generally having less physical strength than men. Additionally, they may be emotionally more *vulnerable* because of their heightened sensitivity to the effects of emotional stimuli resulting from physical violence."

Synonyms of *vulnerability*: risk, exposure, susceptibility, insecurity, fragility

Women's essential vulnerability to violence is assumed by Bek and Półtorak (2025).

A study by Bukuluki et al. (2023) indicated that vulnerability to gender-based violence increased when respondents received information about gender-based violence. This seemingly counterintuitive finding could be due to a priming effect of exacerbating a capacity when it is inadequately informed and addressed (cf. Forgas, 1995). The theory undertakes to overcome such an unfortunate effect by explaining the importance of proper *preparation* for violence.

Risk (*vulnerability* synonym). Torres Munguía (2025) found that women whose sexual initiation occurred in childhood were at greater "risk" for (i.e., are more vulnerable to) intimate partner violence, indicating a need for protecting girls from such abuse. The theory addresses such issues through its dimensions of *againststanding*, *awarenessraising*, *boundarying*, *devulnerabling*, and *empowering* used in resisting aggression.

Exposure (*vulnerability* synonym). "Exposure" to violence in the literature mainly refers to children or adolescents viewing violence within the family (e.g., Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018; Pretelli, 2021) and the effect this might have on them. It generally does not refer to the exposure women experience as adults. The theory addresses this gap through it consideration of women's vulnerability as a relatively defenceless form of exposure.

Susceptibility (*vulnerability* synonym). A study by Kabaria et al. (2017) showed that male partner alcohol/drug use, infidelity, low earning/education, and unemployment, as well as female partner early marriage, inability to conceive and give birth, unemployment, and having a battered mother were perceived by women as making them "susceptible" to intimate partner violence. The theory bears this out in its delineation of aggression originating factors such as inferiority, patriarchy, choice, and upbringing impinging upon female vulnerability.

Insecurity (*vulnerability* synonym). This word is used in the literature with reference to economic and housing "insecurity" predisposing to violence (Fedina et al., 2023; cf. Willie et al., 2024). This speaks to the theory's characterisation of vulnerability as a pervasive *psychosocial structural condition* in which women find themselves, with countermeasures of increasing *security* and acquiring *training*.

Fragility (*vulnerability* synonym). "Fragility" is an interesting synonym for women's vulnerability. As such it does not speak down to women but refers rather to fragile settings or circumstances (e.g., Vahedi et al., 2023) in which they may, once again, find themselves that may make it more likely they will encounter violence. This is caught in the theory's conceptualisation of women's vulnerability as a physical and emotional condition of varying dimension.

Accordingly, however the literature refers to women's vulnerability ("risk", "exposure", "susceptibility", "insecurity", "fragility", or simply "vulnerability") to violence, it sees it as a fundamental qualitative concern for them. This confirms the theory's discovery of vulnerability, no matter how termed, as essentially women's main concern in physical violence against them.

Aggression

Theory extract: "*Aggression* in perpetrators of physical violence *originates* from patriarchy, upbringing, inferiority, and individual choice. Aggression may be *controlled* through various means, including women's *againststanding*, *awarenessraising*, *boundarying*, and *empowering*; men's *heartchanging*, *helpseeking*, *manningup*, and *selfremodelling*; and broader societal efforts such as *courtmonitoring* / *deinjusticing*, *deathpenaltying* / *deathsentencing*,

harshconsequencing, *jobcreating*, *kindpolicing / properpolicing*, *maneducating*, and *stoppingnonstopping*."

A study by Ghuneim (2023) supports the theory's discovery that aggression originates partially from patriarchy and upbringing. In addition to these, Ingoldsby (1991) explains how aggression proceeds from a choice to counter feelings of inadequacy (cf. Fernanda, 2023), that is, from inferiority and individual choice, also emergent in the theory.

***Against*standing** (controlling aggression). "Against standing", a preposition-participle combination appears over sixty times in the literature, but only it seems in a phrase such as "party officials often advised women against standing for election" (Maigari et al., 2019, p.8). Here, the phrase "against standing" expresses opposition to the act of standing. This is not what the theory means. Akin to "withstanding", *againststanding* is a neologistic compound noun, formed from a preposition ("against") and a participle ("standing"), used to denote the act of resisting or opposing something, in the theory, standing against aggression.

***Awareness*raising** (controlling aggression). *Awarenessraising*, as a potential control on aggression, appears in scores of papers from 1994 to the present. Petrović (2025) indicates how *awarenessraising* helps women to become more assertive. This could aid in controlling aggression in others, either by defensive attack (verbal or physical) or escape as in the theory. Assertion also counterbalances patriarchy's assertion of power as per the theory. When an aware woman asserts or regains situational control, violence may be averted. Countering violence includes an *awarenessraised* knowing how to act in the moment, how to assert one's position, and how to recover and rebuild where harm has occurred.

Boundarying (controlling aggression). The concept of *boundarying* appears in several literature items from 2020 to the present. García and Perosa (2025) position it as an intersectional ethnosexual lens for understanding personal relationships. As such this is implicit in the theory's *boundarying* which protects the woman from invasions of self and personal space by aggressors.

Court*monitoring* (controlling aggression). Perhaps a little unexpected, "court-monitoring" has developed into a growing legal socialisation force (Reinke & Marx, 2025), holding the legal system accountable for integrity and justice (Last, 2024b). *Courtmonitoring* in the theory is a social attempt to control aggression by ensuring perpetrators receive due punishment for violence against women.

Death*penaltying* / death*sentencing* (controlling aggression). These concepts from the theory, do not appear in the literature in this form, but do so quite naturally as "death penalty" and "death sentence". The theory sees the death penalty and sentence as a means of stopping and reducing violence against women. Bangladesh has a legal provision for up-to-the death penalty for violence against women (Bhuiya et al., 2003) and Pakistan a death sentence for rape (Ali, 2025).

***De*injusticing** (controlling aggression). *Deinjusticing* is the sister process of *courtmonitoring*, trying to remove unnecessary injustice from the legal system thereby supporting victims and more appropriately sentencing perpetrators. Although *deinjusticing* does not appear in the literature, the process of "injusticing" does and Last's (2024b) paper that deals with it calls for *deinjusticing*, just not in that term.

***Harsh*consequencing** (controlling aggression). Funny that, in the current patriarchal culture, harsh legal consequences are only seen as applying to victim women for fighting back or exposing their attackers (e.g., Foomani & Reimer, 2025; Hussein, 2025). In the theory the coined compound *harshconsequencing* is a way of socially controlling aggression and refers to the need expressed by women for perpetrators of violence against them to be punished in proportion (harshly) to the harm they have inflicted.

Heart*changing* (controlling aggression). *Heartchanging* could be found in only one other paper (Tejalaksana, 2022) in which the author refers to a "heartchanging" question asked by children seeking a father figure. This is exactly what the theory is referring to, things that impinge on the human mind and soul as to awaken a *change of heart* in another, as can happen to aggressors against women.

Help*seeking* (controlling aggression). *Helpseeking* appears over a thousand times in the literature and refers to an action of a person seeking help from another, especially a woman escaping violence (e.g., Lelaurain et al., 2017). This action is similar to that arising from the data, except that in the theory it is aggressors seeking voluntary rehabilitation, an apparently lesser phenomenon.

Job*creating* (controlling aggression). *Jobcreating* in this form appears in few papers (e.g., Andersen, 1995) but only the theory sees it as an antidote to aggression.

***Kind*policing** (controlling aggression). *Kindpolicing* or even *kind policing* is not a term used in the literature in the theory's sense, however, the concept is nonetheless well-researched in for example Tyler's (2006) work on procedural justice which emphasises treating people with respect, dignity, and fairness.

Man*educating* (controlling aggression). The coined composite of *maneducating* was found in only one paper (Xin et al., 2021) in the following form, "man/educating", referring to teaching students how to be morally upright. It is a close reflection of the theory's use of the term to educate men in such a way as to encourage control of aggression against women.

***Manning*up** (controlling aggression). Continuing with male efforts to control aggression as forthcoming from the theory, *manningup* is a combination used in no extant sources. It does however show up in hundreds as simply "manning up", referring variously to machismo maintenance (Cheryan et al., 2015) and most relevantly to balanced masculinity (Johnson & Cousineau, 2018). It is in this latter sense that the theory uses the term, men facing up to their past traumas, regulating self through responsibility and healing.

Self*remodelling* (controlling aggression). Only one instance of *selfremodelling* in relation to violence against women could be found in the literature as "self-remodeling" (Croll, 2002). This pertains to therapeutic change or progress of abused women. In the theory, *selfremodelling* refers to men controlling aggression by altering their power orientation through personal reflection.

***Stopping*nonstopping** (controlling aggression). *Stoppingnonstopping* in the theory indicates the necessity and ability to stop cycling of unending violence against women. Herman (2015) deals with the need to interrupt the ongoing internal and interpersonal reenactment of violence, conceptually aligning with this notion of *stoppingnonstopping*.

Thus, the theory's propositions of the origin and control of aggression, whilst utilising some interesting term coinage, are on the whole supported by the literature.

Physical Violence Process

Theory extract: "Aggression towards women may *trigger* (*cause*) an incident of *physical violence*. Whether aggression leads to violence depends on the *power balance* between the woman and the aggressor. If her vulnerability is high, aggression directed at her is more likely to result in physical violence. Similarly, if the potential perpetrator's aggression is high, even a woman with relatively low vulnerability may struggle to prevent physical violence. Conversely, if her vulnerability is low, aggressors may be less likely to trigger physical violence against her, depending on the level of aggression. This illustrates the *covarying power balance* between vulnerability and aggression in the *psychosocial structural physical violence process*."

Synonyms of *physical violence process*: cycle of violence, escalation of violence, pattern of abuse, trajectory of harm, dynamics of assault

The term *physical violence process* does not appear in the literature, but "process of physical violence" does, several times. According to Abbiati (2024), the "process of physical violence" is by its personal nature somehow shielded from conceptual analysis and possible thorough understanding.

The "settler colonial **process of physical violence**" controls entire jurisdictions (countries or states) by targeting different groups, such as women (Grand'Maison & Soldatić, 2024). This speaks to the structural process of physical violence within society at large as illustrated in the theory. It can also be clearly seen in the Israeli Occupation Forces' recent and current physical violence against hundreds of thousands of women in Gaza (Last, 2025). In fact, Last (2025, p. 2) indicates that the "psycho-physical process" of "erasure" carried out by

the colonial aggressors involves a physical violence process of "violating bodies" (raping, wounding, torturing), "eliminating lives" (murdering, killing, executing), and "devastating environments" (bombing, displacing, destroying). This is akin to the theory albeit on a larger scale, but it is significant that the publicly available firsthand data on Gaza remarkably aligns with the theory on the consequence (result) of physical violence when vulnerability and aggression are high and the latter uncontrolled.

Cycle of violence (*physical violence process* synonym). Where Abbiati (2024) suggests the phenomenon defies analysis, Bentovim (2000) just went ahead and did an analysis. It shows that female vulnerability under aggression will decrease its intensity, breaking the "cycle of violence" by supplementing defence with weaponry, such as a knife or other amenable object. This aptly illustrates the theory's *power balance* dynamic in the *physical violence process* and *preparation* for violence as key to stopping a violence cycle.

Escalation of violence (*physical violence process* synonym). "Escalation of violence" essentially refers to the relative intensity of violence (Nikolaou et al., 2025), which, again by the theory's principles, is conditional upon the relative *balance* between vulnerability and aggression.

Patterns of abuse (*physical violence process* synonym). "Patterns of abuse" include isolation (Nelson, 2025), for example, to conceal physical damage to the victim, which could occur when aggression and vulnerability are high, calling for *againststanding* and *boundarying* on the victim's part, *helpseeking* and *selfremodelling* by the aggressor, and *maneducating* and *stoppingnonstopping* by the community.

Trajectory of harm (*physical violence process* synonym). The "trajectory of harm" for physical violence survivors, especially women, is a kind of self-replicating aggression-on-vulnerability experienced by survivors, even from so-called well-meaning others such as healthcare providers who compound the damage and cause the staying-away of sufferers from the medical profession (Hooper & Meyrick, 2025). Such aggression irrespective of gender, passive or otherwise, *originates*, as the theory corroborates, in *patriarchal upbringing*, *inferiority* projections, and individual *choice* and is controllable through several mechanisms such as *awarenessraising*, *helpseeking*, and *self-remodelling*.

Dynamics of assault (*physical violence process* synonym). "Dynamics of assault" refers to the increasing social and temporo-spatial aspects of assault, such as, respectively, divorce rates and late-day urban activities (Işik, 2024; Masron et al., 2025). Both align with the theory's dynamics of increased vulnerability in women and uncontrolled aggression in men.

Thus, the synonyms of *physical violence process* as found in the literature being "process of physical violence", "cycle of violence", "escalation of violence", "pattern of abuse", "trajectory of harm", and "dynamics of assault", appear to be similar to, subsumed by, or broader than the *physical violence process* presented in the theory, harmonising, resonating, and substantiating it.

Covarying Power Balance

Theory extract: "This illustrates the *covarying power balance* between vulnerability and aggression in the psychosocial structural physical violence process.

"Thus, it can be stated that aggression covaries with the female condition of vulnerability, causing a consequence of some or no physical violence, depending on the balance of power — that is, the level of aggression relative to the level of vulnerability."

Synonym of *covarying power balance*: shifting power dynamic.

The term *covarying power balance* does not appear in the literature, however "varying power balance" does, referring to, for example, power differentials between social media platforms and users (Jones, 2020).

Shifting power dynamic (*covarying power balance* synonym). "Shifting power dynamic" refers, for example, to relationships between researchers, obstetric service providers, and their clients wherein the service providers actions involve verbal and physical violence against women (Mayra, 2021). This aligns with the theory's *covarying power balance* between vulnerability and aggression.

Psychosocial Structural Process

Theory extract: "This illustrates the covarying power balance between vulnerability and aggression in the *psychosocial structural* physical violence *process*."

Synonyms of *psychosocial structural process*: psychological structural process, social structural process

The term *psychosocial structural process* does not appear in the literature. However, "psychological structural process" does in regard to cultural identity silencing (Leigh, 2018) and so does "socialstructural process" referring to sexual objectification (Holt, 2023).

Thus, the neologism *psychosocial structural process* reflects the intertwined psychological and social structures that shape, constrain, and reinforce women's experiences of physical violence across intrapersonal and societal levels.

Self-Empowerment Reducing Vulnerability

Theory extract: "Into this dynamic enters feminine self-empowerment as a contingent *process to reduce vulnerability*, thereby balancing power and averting physical violence.

"Women empower themselves, reducing and ultimately resolving their vulnerability to physical violence, by balancing power with aggressors through the before, during, and after phases of violence: preparation, defence, and rebuilding."

Synonyms of *process to reduce vulnerability*: empowerment strategy, protective intervention, risk mitigation process, safeguarding mechanism

The United Nations Development Programme (2022) conceptualises resilience as a "transformative process to reduce vulnerability through empowerment" (p. 8). In this sense, resilience is seen as self-empowerment, a beautifully rich linkage of the theory's contingent action of self-empowerment upon vulnerability, balancing out feminine power against various types and levels of aggression, thereby minimising physical violence.

Empowerment Strategy *("process to reduce vulnerability" synonym)*

Apolewicz and Kuzborska-Pacha (2025) note that an "empowerment strategy" could reduce social tolerance of violence against women by making it harder for men to get away with such violence. This, as such, is part of the theory's postulations in *againststanding* and *harshconsequencing* as controllers of aggression. Of course, it would be ideal if governments

treated violence against women with genuine seriousness rather than the nominal efforts as outlined for example in the research problem section of the first chapter on frameworks.

Protective Intervention *("process to reduce vulnerability" synonym)*

Salter et al. (2025) further emphasise the importance of "protective intervention" by others (the theory's *stoppingnonstopping* and *group communication*) as commonly absent from scenarios of aggression on vulnerability.

Risk Mitigation Process *("process to reduce vulnerability" synonym)*

Belongingness (cf. Erasmus, 2019) and self-efficacy (self-empowerment) are key elements in any "risk mitigation process" (Elliott, 2022). Belongingness is embodied in the *rebuilding* phase of self-empowerment, where women, through care, support, and connection with others, re-establish their emotional resilience and sense of place, laying a critical foundation for "risk mitigation" and healing.

Safeguarding Mechanism *("process to reduce vulnerability" synonym)*

Furthermore, education (the theory's *awarenessraising*, *maneducating*, and *training*) can be a "safeguarding mechanism" (i.e. reduce vulnerability) to aggression and consequential violence (Russell, 2024).

The *reduction of vulnerability* is a part of its *resolution* which according to Elhendi and Buzzanell (2024) can be accomplished through job creation. This reminds of the theory's *jobcreating*, which while positioned as an antidote to aggression, has mixed results in vulnerability *reduction* for women, as it can empower them or make them targets for aggression (Kotsadam & Villanger, 2025). Hence the need to know if, when, and how to *defend* as per the theory.

Preparation Before Violence

Theory extract: "Before experiencing or facing physical violence, women *prepare* themselves to varying degrees. This means that some women take proactive steps, while others do not. *Preparing* to face potential violence involves cultivating key qualities, ensuring physical security, and engaging in defensive training."

The term "preparation before violence" seems to arise in only one full-text inaccessible paper which has to do with perpetrators (Cornell et al., 1996). *Preparing for violence*, on the other hand, occurs plentifully in the literature. It often refers to aggressor or potential aggressor preparation (e.g., Lind, 2025), but seldom to women *preparing for violence* such as schoolteachers (predominantly women) preparing for shooter lockdown drills (Perry et al., 2025). This indicates that that the theory's idea of women *preparing for violence* does not seem to arise much in the recent literature.

Quality of willingness to learn. Theory extract: "Successful self-empowerment, that reduces vulnerability and averts violence, requires women to acquire and develop the *quality* of being positively *willing to learn* how to protect, defend, and care for themselves."

Synonyms of *willingness to learn*: readiness to learn, eagerness to learn, enthusiasm to learn

The split phrases *willing to learn to protect/defend* and *willingness to learn to protect/defend/care* do not appear in the literature.

The phrase "willingness to learn self-defence" occurs once in the literature in connection with karate research (Cynarski & Niewczas, 2017), whereas "willingness to learn

how to fight" and "willingness to learn fighting skills" are used with reference to what motivates people to begin martial arts training (Witkowski et al., 2013).

Research by Poraj (2004) reveals a "willingness to learn the techniques of self-defence" as a quality in both schoolboys and girls.

In Fadillah et al. (2024), women are appealed to, to be "willing to learn self-defense" to protect themselves from people who have hateful intentions towards them.

In relation to women looking to themselves after violence "willing to learn to care" does not appear in the literature.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the theory's framing of women's *willingness to learn*, especially to protect, defend, and care for themselves, offers a unique contribution largely absent from existing literature.

Now, turning to the synonyms in the literature for women's *quality* of *willingness to learn* in relation to physical violence against them, the following is discovered.

Readiness to learn *("willingness to learn" synonym)*. Balensiefen (2023) noted that a "readiness to learn" among nurses can contribute to the prevention of obstetric violence. This reflects potential perpetrator (nurses') willingness, rather than potential victim (women's) *willingness* as described in the theory. It is interesting and probably more germane to this topic than one might first realise that "readiness to learn" presupposes general physical health, including sufficient rest and nutrition (Cross, 2022), and no doubt exercise. Hence the importance of encouraging and ensuring where possible these physical factors for all women so they may effectively "acquire and develop the quality of being positively *willing to learn* how to protect, defend, and care for themselves" (the theory).

Eagerness to learn *(willingness to learn synonym).* "Eagerness to learn" in matters of violence against women can stem from curiosity, a desire for improvement, and courage to face reality (Hakim & Julianti, 2024).

Enthusiasm to learn *(willingness to learn synonym).* "Enthusiasm to learn", although intuitively expected to be more readily present in women affected by violence, has been found to be curtailed in women who have been subjected to sexual violence (Phuyal, 2024). It is almost as if the graceful light of the soul has been dimmed, if not nearly eclipsed, by the unjust imposition of another's unchecked desires. This is a deeply troubling reality and signals the importance of the theory's *caring* and *support* aspects for rebuilding women's power.

Security of the body. Theory extract: "Such protection begins with women *physically securing* themselves as much as possible at all times. This might include locking doors, keeping dogs, filing appropriate police reports, and maintaining general vigilance for potential threats."

Synonyms of *security of the body*: physical security, bodily integrity, personal physical safety

The name of this section "Security of the body" does not appear in the theory but arose simply from the consideration of what "women *physically securing* themselves" essentially means. *Security of the body* is a core human right, along with equality, choice, autonomy, and security of person (Merry, 2017). In the theory, *securing the body* is something that women *do* to protect themselves. This emphasises the role of agency, whether individual or collective, in ensuring the effective application of women's human rights. When a woman is aware of the insecurity of her body, a definite desire to actively address that insecurity may arise (Brännlund

et al., 2024). This may lead to *securing the body*, caring for self, and achieving peace of mind, all aspects of mental health and stability (Trijsburg, 2023).

Theory phrases. *Locking doors* as a part of the theory's security measures for "women physically securing themselves as much as possible at all times" is corroborated by the police encouraging crime awareness and preventive measures such as "locking doors and windows" (Horgan et al., 2025, p. 483). *Keeping dogs* for security purposes as mentioned by the theory can also provide the added benefits of companionship, loneliness and stress reduction, depression alleviation, and human interaction stimulation, enhancing dignity and identity (Kamal, 2022). While bolstering physical safety through mental and emotional orientation, awareness, and stability, these additional benefits also coalesce with the theory's *rebuilding* after violence aspects of *caring*, *support*, and *joy*.

The theory mentions *filing appropriate police reports* as an indirect physical security measure. In this sense it is important for potentially preventing perpetrators physically reattacking their victims. In addition, Al-Zumair et al. (2025) stress the necessity of activities such as counselling, free legal court assistance, and monitoring cases against perpetrators, as aiding physical safety.

The theory suggests *maintaining general vigilance for potential threats* as a means of contributing to physical security. However, Altier (2020) cautions that increased "vigilance to protect against potential threats" (p. 23) due to vulnerability triggered by loneliness can impair sleep. Thus, the need for a balance in managing loneliness and measures to ensure physical safety, so that one does not become unnecessarily hypervigilant.

Synonyms of "security of the body". Ghaderzadeh and Moghadam (2025) see the protection of women's "physical security" as a main obligation of government who must "make it clear to the citizenry that women's lives matter, that they have the right to be free of harm in the family and community" (p. 16).

Closely associated with the idea of physical security is the notion of "bodily integrity" which refers to a woman's innate right to control and have complete freedom in relation to her body (Ali & Ghose, 2025). This right must be respected at all times, under all circumstances, including in the home by all family members (cf. Ali & Ghose, 2025), and can be ensured by women themselves by the various "physical security" measures discussed above as well as *training* in psychological and physical self-defence discussed in the next section.

Women cannot remain behind locked doors, so "personal physical safety" for women moving in the world is important, especially these days in the workplace where women often face violence of one form or another (cf. Arısoy et al., 2025). The theory's *defending phase* provides aspects of *fighting back* and *escape* from any potential threat to the "personal physical safety" of women.

Thus, women's "physical *security*" in self-empowering *preparation* for any eventuality of physical violence as portrayed in the theory is upheld and elucidated by the literature through a holistic understanding of the interplay between *safety of the body* balanced with various *psychosocial* elements like peace of mind and respectful human relations.

Training as preparation. Theory extract: "For women to effectively defend themselves against physical violence, various types of *training* can be beneficial, such as *danger awareness* and *self-defence* training."

Synonyms of *training*: stranger danger workshops, resilience training, empowerment training, skill-building, instruction, capacity building, preventive education

Johnson and Cole (2025) conducted research on women's *self-defence training* (theory phrase) and found that it led to fewer violence incidents and fewer stress symptoms. Thus, not only would the training have prepared the women to physically defend themselves, but it seems that their aura after training had a preventative effect. This is the essence of self-confidence engendered through self-empowerment, claiming or reclaiming one's power.

Behavioural change "stranger danger workshops" (*training* synonym) for women and others can be helpful in cultivating *danger awareness* (theory phrase) for preparing women to avoid assault (for example, by training not to enter dark streets or go home with strangers) but might suffer from the flaw that often assailants are not strangers (Lietz & Tunney, 2015). Similar to the theory's mention of *danger awareness*, Last (2020a) calls attention to the foundational role of *danger awareness* in preparation to defend against potential violence, noting (emphasis adjusted):

> *Danger awareness* is the first cutting point in safetifying, when the target's safety status is instantly in question… The target assesses for danger source and extent, and will respond by fighting, fleeing, or freezing, whatever appears to provide the best momentary chance for safety… Making the right choice is crucial. (Last, 2020a, p. 194)

"Resilience training" (*training* synonym), for example, information-gathering and harm reduction, can be seen as preparation for the trauma of physical violence against women (Martin & Murrell, 2020). "Resiliencing", as a processual moment in safetifying during violence, involves the techniques of modulating, tolerating pain, and enduring, and as a passage

in safetifying after violence, involves the steps of reclaiming, believing, selfloving, independenting, asserting, confidenting, and positiving (Last, 2020a). These resilience development techniques and steps can be discussed, roleplayed, and inculcated in training sessions for women.

UN Women and the WHO coordinate and support "empowerment training" (*training* synonym) for girls and women which includes safe spaces, life skills, and mentoring (Ullman et al., 2025). These too can help prepare women to *defend* against unwanted but possible physical violence against themselves and their loved ones.

Now, turning to other synonyms of *training*, "skill-building" programmes for women are recommended by Gondal (2024) to overcome violence against women. These appear to be other than defensive skills, likely including legal and financial literacy, vocational training, digital skills, and practical abilities for everyday life.

Another *training* synonym, "instruction", in the service of protecting women against violence, is an interesting one in that gender-based violence vocabulary instruction, such as using terms like "sexual exploitation" or "sexual violence", "femicide", "victim blaming", "forced prostitution", etc. (Trajkovska, 2025) can heighten women's awareness and prepare them to be more effective in identifying direct and related aspects of physical violence against them, empowering themselves to engage in better defence.

Verma's (2020) women empowerment research recommends female "capacity building" (*training* synonym) by leadership enhancement and rights awareness training, using modern methods and technology. These functions can strengthen women's self-belief, resolve,

confidence, and focus, self-empowering them and helping to make them ready to face any violence that may come their way.

"Preventive education" (*training* synonym) is important for young people, for example in schools, colleges, and universities to challenge intransigent beliefs that trivialise or normalise violence against women (Iglesias et al., 2025). This could be seen as part of educating men (*maneducating*) and *empowering* women in *againststanding* as preparation for violence.

Thus, the theory posits *danger awareness* and *self-defence training* as effective means for women to prepare for violence. The literature corroborates these and adds other types of preparatory training, such as resilience, empowerment, skills, vocabulary, capacity (leadership and rights), and belief change.

Defending During Violence

Theory extract: "When women prepare for potential violence by nurturing the quality of willingness to learn, maintaining and enhancing their physical security, and undergoing defensive training, they significantly increase their chances of effectively *defending* themselves if attacked.

"Such *defence* typically includes two aspects: fighting back and escaping, with a possibility of cycling violence occurring."

Synonyms of *defending*: averting, battling, confronting, counteracting, deterring, fending, forestalling, opposing, protecting, repelling, resisting, safeguarding, shielding, warding off, withstanding

The theory presents women's *defending* themselves during violence as comprising the two aspects of fighting back and escaping. Klimczak (2024) points out that both boys and men can assist women in preventing and *defending* against violence. There has been a significant legal discussion about a woman's right to *defend* herself against violence, pregnant or not, and it revolves to a large extent around proportionality of the *defence* to the attack (Sepinwall, 2005). The theory speaks to this issue of proportionality as can be read later below. Suffice it to say at this point that violence committed by women is often framed in political discourse as a justified response to male-instigated violence (Korosi, 2025), whether proportional or not, and in some quarters women's *defence* can never be seen as abuse (Besong, 2024).

If a woman is inadequately prepared, she may still incur injury, regardless of resisting or *defending* (Zumair et al., 2025), as also stated in the theory exposition: "… some women do not anticipate an attack and therefore remain unprepared or believe that preparation is not possible. This can result in attackers causing significant injury or trauma (e.g., Participants 6, 29, 31, 32, 35–38)."

A study by Fileborn et al. (2022) revealed that women use their natural characteristics as *defence* elements in any potentially dangerous situation, such as height and physical presence, and indicates a cautionary of complying with political or social correctness to the disregard of guiding intuition.

Sometimes violence against a woman occurs because of her inclination or attempts to *defend* herself against perpetration (Karim et al., 2021). This is, as per the theory, when she must know that her power is sufficient to fight back or rather escape if the situation is overwhelming. Either way she is empowering herself.

Relevance of synonyms of *defending* in the literature. The discussion and integration of these synonyms follows. This is a disciplined but concerted enquiry, calling for fulfilment, so please bear with me, and hopefully it will emerge as inspiring and enjoyable.

Averting *("defending" synonym).* Physical violence against women may be "averted" for women by men becoming religious and practicing religion (Murugesan, 2024; cf. Jepkemei, 2024). This is akin to the theory's *heartchanging*, *selfremodelling*, or even a "selfmodelling" if done in pre-perpetrators who then hopefully would never perpetrate. Last (2020a) says (emphasis altered), "… the target will need some rapid momentary decisioning for *averting* danger… *Averting* danger means doing sensible things even when it feels embarrassing, like turning around and going in the opposite direction, or simply leaving abruptly" (pp. 196, 197).

Battling *("defending" synonym).* This concept is used in the literature in the sense of social or legal battles, etc. against perpetrators and violence (cf. Rathee, 2023). Much like "averting", "counteracting", "fending", "forestalling", "opposing", and even "defending" and "protecting" in the literature, "battling" does not seem to refer often to women's actual physical *defending* against physical violence as in the theory.

Confronting *("defending" synonym).* Perpetrator confrontation can be a "soft" solution (Lamb, 1999) leading to *cycling* of violence.

Deterring *("defending" synonym).* Falling into the same category as "battling" above, "deterring" is illustrated by Last (2020a), thus (emphasis altered): "Safetifying is additionally dimensionalised by preventing, which includes *deterring* crime and violence and hardening targets…" (p. 247).

Repelling *("defending" synonym).* This concept is used in the literature as follows: An unlawful unprovoked attack may be "repelled" with only as much force required for defence without intention to kill; a person unlawfully assaulted who causes death or serious harm in "repelling" is justified if they reasonably fear death or serious harm from the assault or its continuation, and they reasonably believe no other means exist to preserve their life or safety (Randall, 2004). This is the doctrine of proportionality mentioned above and elucidated further below.

Resisting *("defending" synonym).* "Resisting" is used in the literature, generally to things like oppression, occupation, and activism, and less in the sense of actual physical defence by women (Zumair et al., 2025) such as fighting off a rapist (Liuzzi, 2025). Last (2020a) provides a comprehensive description of what "resisting" violence can entail (emphasis adjusted):

> **Resisting**. If the victim has not yet stopped the perpetrator, she may now realise that she has the backbone to protect herself in every way possible including verbally, emotionally, and physically, even the right to yell and fight back. Even in the process of receiving violence and abuse and acquiescing, the victim suddenly realises that she does not have to comply and can **resist**/fight back, but that it must be done carefully…
>
> If being physically assaulted as in rape, she uses forceful resisting strategies appropriate to the situation like punching, kicking, wrestling, scratching, biting, threatening, screaming, and yelling, and non-forceful ones like pulling away, *shielding*, and fleeing. If she is being raped, she might resist physiologically by vomiting, urinating, or defecating. She may also try tricking/conning the perpetrator. She does not use

> non-forceful resisting like talking, crying, reasoning, pleading, or begging as she knows these do generally not work and she will be raped…
>
> If the perpetrator tries to seriously assault her, such as her life is endangered, she warns him if possible, and if he does not stop, she shoots or otherwise incapacitates him…
>
> *Resisting* is fed, synchronised, simultaneoused, and alternated with the gauging, tacticking, and stopping techniques of finishing in optimal phasic protective sequences. It is inextricably linked to a final decision to be victorious—to survive—to live. (Last, 2020a, pp. 224-225)

Safeguarding *("defending" synonym).* Some women "safeguard" as a means to protect themselves from violence by displaying either vulnerability or aggression learned in childhood; however, these, if inappropriate to the instance, might exacerbate the violence against them (Snyder, 2017). This speaks to the power balance referred to throughout the theory and the importance of managing it intuitively well.

Shielding. As a synonym for *defending*, the reader is referred to its use in the above quotation from Last (2020a) on "resisting". Hossain et al. (2025) use "shielding" to refer to the protective effect of the absence of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use in husbands. Again, Last's (2020a) use of the term is that of physical engagement with a perpetrator as in the theory, whilst others use it in more passive ways. Shukla (2022) comments that, in a physical violence attack, "the head is always shielding one side" (p. 55). That is a curious comment, yet an interesting perspective on the philosophical consideration of the wonder of the human body and physical form in general.

Warding off *("defending" synonym).* Levine (2018) states that targets should be able to "ward off" aggressors who do not actually make physical contact in their violence. Besides wondering at the apparent inanity of such a pronouncement, this appears to be too great a generalisation, as *power balance* and target incapacitation are factors that do not necessarily require physical contact for creating an unbearable effect in the target, rendering the target essentially unable to "ward off" or escape, especially if a stronger man is attacking a less strong woman as contemplated in the theory.

Withstanding *("defending" synonym).* Some women stay in a violent setup out of necessity, preferring to "withstand" the shocks, and try to convince themselves that things will get better (Zewude & Habtegiorgis, 2021). This is *cycling* of violence as per the theory. Thus, "withstanding" in the literature is tolerating, not defending as in fighting back or escaping as in the theory, where *defending* refers to physical action in facing perpetrators and not passive after-the-event effects at addressing violence, such as "averting", "battling", "deterring", and numerous other similar descriptors utilised in the literature. This makes the theory's practical orientation stand out somewhat amid violence against women research as does Last's (2020a) theory statements on *resisting* and his work (Last, 2020a) amid interpersonal violence literature.

Fighting Back. Theory extract: "When confronted with a physical attack by an assailant, if they cannot avoid or escape, women will *fight back* if their physical and emotional strength (power) is sufficient to counter that of the attacker. This may or may not involve physical contact. Skill and timing in such self-defence tactics are crucial at this point, as they help control and reduce vulnerability while exerting enough power to stop, scare off, or otherwise incapacitate the perpetrator."

Synonyms of *fighting back*: striking back, hitting back, fighting off.

Pyakurel (2025) discovered in her research that when a woman "fights back" after extreme physical violence from a husband, he can back off and reduce his aggression. The theory would say that she reduced her vulnerability by exerting sufficient power to scare him off.

Beşpınar et al. (2024) enumerate various responses women make to deal with violence, including fighting back, avoiding, quieting, placating, threatening, stopping, ending, helpseeking, and planning to escape. Most of these concepts fit in with the theory's description.

"Fighting back" when there are several perpetrators focused on hurting a woman can lead to greater injury (Bunina et al., 2024). As the theory says, "… women will *fight back* if their physical and emotional strength (power) is sufficient to counter that of the attacker". Otherwise, it may only infuriate the perpetrator and raise the severity of the attack (Hossain et al., 2022).

Now some key synonyms for *fighting back* found in the literature are examined.

"Striking back" refers to a movement of women who use violence against men who use violence against women (Chisholm, 1992). This hearkens to women's *againststanding* as articulated in the theory. When women "strike back", some kill husbands who repeatedly abuse them (Thompson, 1989). This can be seen as a stark poetic enactment of the theory's notions of *boundarying*, *harshconsequencing*, and *deathpenaltying*.

"Hitting back" (*fighting back* synonym) of violent husbands by their wives takes place in fewer numbers than expected, fewer still pre-emptively "hit back", and fewer still "hit back" several times (Issahaku, 2012). In some instances, women's consciences will not allow them

to hit their husbands back even though they might be very angry and want to (Vauquline, 2015), while others have no problem and hit back with any handy object as weapon (Jonathan, 2018).

"Fighting off" (*fighting back* synonym) "attackers" in simulations during rape aggression defence training was cheered on by those watching, adding credence to the notion that such training enhances self-efficacy (self-empowerment) in women (Brecklin & Middendorf, 2014). Some women are inebriated when "fighting off" and killing their inebriated violent partners (Caro, 2017). One might speculate that they drank to bolster their courage to effectively stop the perpetrator, or that they inebriated the partner to render him a more subduable target. However, corroborating such ruminations would likely require further research, the procurement of which data unfortunately lies beyond the scope of this work.

Fighting back in the theory is also an interactive *psychosocial physical process* like self-empowerment as a whole. *Fighting back* or "off" and "striking" or "hitting back" are multi-dimensional realities requiring skill, focus, and willingness to act when necessary.

Escaping. Theory extract: "Women will and should *escape*, if possible, rather than physically confronting an attacker by fighting back. Such an *escape* can be a complex event, involving elements such as observation, speech, inaction, and action."

Synonyms of *escaping*: fleeing, running away, getting away, exiting, breaking free, withdrawing, evading, avoiding

Escaping in the theory is understood as a preferred and often necessary response, prioritised over direct physical resistance. It encompasses more than simply fleeing. It may involve strategic awareness, verbal engagement, deliberate stillness, or timely movement, all used to avoid direct confrontation.

In the literature, "escaping" from physical violence against women is restricted by social constraints like patriarchy (male dominating wrath), lockdowns, unavailability of health services or shelters, unaffordability, and the like (Çakmur, 2023; Johnbull & Ikiriko, 2024; Kunasagran et al., 2023; Mahlangu et al., 2022; Valarmathi & Sarkar, 2022). "Escaping" is also seen as a daily trauma barrier breaker and a means of accessing job and other financial opportunities for women outside the home, with a view to permanent escape (Greulich & Dasré, 2022; Portillo, 2024; Richmond, 2024). Although permanent escape may initially involve a struggle to make ends meet (Javakhishvili, 2024), it carries a sense of being worth it in the end, with tantric and infusive qualities like the sun rising on the face first thing in the morning (cf. Greulich & Dasré, 2022).

Unlike the literature, the theory discovers *escaping* as an intentional, adaptive act within the attack itself, rather than constrained flight, uniquely revealing women's strategic agency and *self-empowerment*.

Synthetic interweaving (Glaser, 1978) will now be applied to the synonyms of *escaping*, including fleeing, running away, getting away, exiting, breaking free, withdrawing, evading, and avoiding.

Some women "flee" for their lives from cruel power-obsessed men who rape and beat them close to death (Ezennadiri & Tony-Ugbejie, 2024), some to well-equipped shelters (MacDonald, 2023). Others "run away" from home to "avoid" violence, only to find that they are now pregnant and often just live with the socially stigmatised shame or marry a boyfriend only to be abused again as one who is desperate (Machariah, 2025). Others only dream of "running away", but stay put due to society's strict code of endurance, and sustain much violence and many forced pregnancies, only to remain trapped for years until the perpetrator

dies (Pyakurel, 2025). This is a sad portrayal of cycling of violence as emergent in the theory and discussed below. Some push Big Daddy away, freeing themselves (Indriati, 2022), and "run away" with the money, an increasingly popular trend, leaving violence to implode in the deserted home (Dahal et al., 2022). "Getting away" from violence can be accomplished by admitting the reality of the situation and taking action to leave. This may include boundarying to ensure a successful "exit", cutting ties, learning new skills, seeking healing and wholeness, moving toward becoming who one longs to be, not feeling the need to shrink behind the shadows of what one has endured (Magwaza, 2023).

"Breaking free" or "withdrawing" (Djamba & Kimuna, 2015) from the cycle of physical violence against women reclaims the self (Magwaza, 2023), but often requires time (Valarmathi & Sarkar, 2022) and dealing with immediate circumstances as well as dismantling the broader social structures that quietly enable such violence to endure (Pyakurel, 2025).

"Evading" potential perpetrators and "avoiding" dangerous places are types of covert resistance to violence of use when other types of risk reduction or resistance are not feasible (Lukasiak et al., 2024). Although "avoiding" appears in hundreds of recently published research papers which mention "physical violence against women", only one or two use the word to refer to avoiding an actual instance of violence. The theory only uses "avoiding" to refer to *avoiding* "an attacker", "a physical attack by an assailant", or a "threat". Unlike the literature, the theory restores precision to the word "avoiding", placing the emphasis where women place their lives: On "evading" the violence itself.

Observation and speech. Theory extract: "Such an escape can be a complex event, involving elements such as *observation*, *speech*, inaction, and action.

"Women *observe* perpetrators and their surroundings to 'read' what is happening and what might occur next. At this point, they must make acute assessments of whether, when, and how to *speak* — whether to plead with or shout at the perpetrator, remain silent, or combine these approaches at appropriate moments. Speaking or shouting can either de-escalate or escalate the attack, depending on various factors, and this is when women need to be most attuned to themselves and their environment. Group communication or discussion among co-victims, when possible, is often beneficial and necessary to console, motivate, and potentially devise or execute an escape plan."

Synonyms of *observing*: watching, noticing, attending to, spotting, monitoring, threat detection, risk cue recognition, environmental scanning, situational awareness

Types of *speaking* as per the theory: pleading, shouting, remaining silent, communication, discussing, consoling, motivating, devising, planning.

Synonyms of *speaking*: begging, crying out, screaming, protesting, objecting, refusing, warning, confronting, demanding, denying, calling for help.

Neither "observation", "observing", nor "observe" appear to be used in the physical violence against women literature as they are used in the theory to refer to women *observing* "perpetrators and their surroundings" during violence "to 'read' what is happening and what might occur next".

"Watching" (*observing* synonym) also is not used in the literature that can be easily found to mean *observing* as in the theory, except that Last (2020a) comes closest to it in his safetifying theory after violence, when he states (emphasis altered): "Victors take the time to go for and help with training other people in awareness, securitising, shooting, self-defence,

and safetifying, encouraging action, *developing watch groups*, tailoring interventions, promoting nonviolence, and improving coping and safety skills… " (p. 259). Although not necessarily a *during violence* activity, that kind of watching is women watching or observing for potential violence predators, a concept that is seemingly absent from the other literature.

Amidst control and conflict, related to physical violence, women "notice" (*observing* synonym) increases in predator aggression (Janislawski, 2023). This is akin to *observation* in the theory as it portrays a concerted outer focus on the situation which is paramount to assessing it correctly for further *action/inaction*. Otherwise "noticing" appears not to be used in recent literature to mean *observing* during an attack as in the theory.

"Attending to" (*observing* synonym) does not appear in any of the 68 available literature items in the past five years that mention "physical violence against women" in the sense that *observing* is used in the theory.

In Gothic literature, "spotting" (*observing* synonym) often belongs to the perpetrator, whose gaze initiates the spectralisation that threatens to erase a woman's identity and commit physical violence against her (Hritz, 2014). In the theory, this dynamic is subversively reversed: Women themselves do the spotting, *observing* perpetrator cues not to be reduced to a ghostly projection but to resist erasure, escape violence, and preserve life.

"Monitoring" (*observing* synonym) of a perpetrator for long hours as a way of anticipating possible violence is a type of extended form of what the theory sees as *observing* during violence, and it has the effect of wearing down a woman's resistance to attack (Beşpınar et al., 2024). It would seem to go hand in hand with the theory's *cycling*, not being able to extricate oneself from the violent environment (cf. Last, 2020a). Other than that, "monitoring"

is often used in the literature to refer to the perpetrator observing the target (e.g., Afzal et al., 2024).

Gupta et al. (2023) propose camera system algorithms that "detect threats" (*observing* synonym) and features such as someone following a woman, abnormal object handling, clothing colour, and an inhuman act to identify perpetrators of violence against women. While this sounds admirable there are obvious privacy invasion issues associated with such possibilities. However, it does speak to the general implication of women using electronics, whether video or audio recording, as "detection", deterrence, or evidence concerning any violence intentions or attempts against them. An adjunct to such AI "threat detection" is an acoustic device which a woman would wear (bracelet or pendant) that detects threats such as a fearful emotional reaction (physiology and voice) to violence allowing for an appropriate protective response for example from security or trusted contact (Calero et al., 2022; cf. Latha et al., 2024). Although apparently not yet fully available or deployed, it again indicates the level of interest and effort present for technology use to detect threats of violence against women.

"Risk cue recognition" (*observing* synonym) appears in only two literature items. In the paper by Davis et al. (2009), women's "risk cue recognition" as a cognitive function was adversely affected by consumption of alcohol which enhanced feelings of comfort, leading to possible assault (Melillo, 2014).

"Environmental scanning" (*observing* synonym) is used by women to consciously monitor for the presence or absence of perpetrators, and such sometimes continuous observing can be reduced by protection order (Cleven, 2021). This is the only instance in 88 literature items from the past five years to use the term 'environmental scanning' in this manner. Most

others use it for something quite different such as a type of research methodology (e.g., Mbah & Ezegwu, 2025).

Varshney (2025) states that training women in self-defence including "situational awareness" (*observing* synonym) can increase confidence and lower vulnerability, enhancing control of potential violence (Velonis et al., 2025). For Last (2020a), as per his induction from the literature, "situational awareness" is all about the technique of "awarenessing" which includes "observing signs, anticipating trouble, and averting danger" (p. 197).

Speaking as a form of self-defence leading to escape will now be considered. During violence: To speak or not to speak? That is the question. And how? The theory uses the following types of *speaking*: pleading, shouting, remaining silent, communication, discussing, consoling, motivating, devising, and planning.

The literature reveals its content through the presence or absence of the relevant information:

Speaking: Recent literature (42 results for the past 5 years) shows no traceable use of *speaking/speak* as a woman's tool in self-defence of physical violence.

Pleading (theory term): A lost, unstable, weak, snivelling coward of a man can *plead* with his woman to let his absolutely vitriolic and cruel attacks against her be bygones, as after all "Did she not fail to avoid the conflict?" and "Does she not see that she is anyway guilty for not making a fully successful marriage?" Then after all the cajoling, niceness, and lavish presents, just give it a little while, and what happens? He does it again. She is beaten, sometimes to a pulp, others to within an inch of her life. But it is, after all, "for her own good": "Dear God, when will she ever learn just to do as I say!?" She better only learn how to extricate

her precious self from such evil (cf. Hernández et al., 2016). So, the perpetrator uses *pleading* to great advantage (cf. Viñas-Racionero et al., 2025). Men also *plead* for sex (Rikhotso, 2022), and not to be beaten, from ancient times even, like during the reign of Amenhotep III in c. 1375 BCE (Sales, 2018). Now, does the woman ever get to *plead* and how far does it get her? No. When her beating begins, she buckles and bends, inwardly to ward off the assault on her soul, and bodily to fend off the strikes, which are hitting hard, on soft, gentle spots of her body which she has compelled into service, day and night, night and day, of this being who is now crouched over her, delivering "the just deserts" of a lifetime of contraction and ego engorgement. No sound issues from her mouth, only bursts of expulsive groaning through her nostrils, as she grits her teeth, her body receiving the blows, kicks, fists, and lashings which "she must get, after all, it *is* her fault". No noise from her mouth. There is no scream, no curse, no *pleading* (Vijaya, 2018). She is, after all, accustomed to her treatment. "Thank you God. It is for my very own good." The kidneys of her beautiful but badly bruised body had now finally ruptured after this, her umpteenth beating, and in thirteen painful minutes, her soul sank back into God. When the perpetrator goes to court, he *pleads* innocence (Krishnan, 2022). When women do *plead* for fairness or for the violence to stop, their *pleas* often just go unheeded, or just simply ignored, while they are objectivised or beaten up in return (Bonner, 2018; Lespinasse, 2022; Noor & Missal, 2024). Sometimes a woman's *pleading* for a long time is somewhat heeded, and she might achieve some kind of result, maybe a little bit of dignity (Šūpule, 2016). Radical feminists see through the façade of both conservatism and liberalism as two sides of the same patriarchal pane; they do not *plead* to be included in a man's world; they fight to replace that world with something fresh, new, beautiful, and authentic (Pakarinen, 2023). Last (2020a) discovered the downside of *pleading* when resisting a perpetrator, as indicated earlier: "She

does not use non-forceful resisting like talking, crying, reasoning, pleading, or begging as she knows these do generally not work and she will be raped…" Also, the theory declares: "Asking or begging [*pleading* with] the perpetrator to stop may or may not be effective"; women "must make acute assessments of whether, when, and how to… *plead* with… the perpetrator… at appropriate moments; [that] can either de-escalate or escalate the attack, depending on various factors, and this is when women need to be most attuned to themselves and their environment." Thus, the theory positions *pleading* as a situational tactic. In other words, it can be used constructively or destructively.

Shouting (theory term): Perpetrators insult, manipulate, and *shout* at women, humiliating them (Aghababaei et al., 2024), often leading to or accompanied with physical violence (Fathony et al., 2024; Shumba et al., 2025). In contrast, women reveal that anger does not remain silent within them; it breaks forth in *shouting*, a fierce cry against those who violate their bodies and dignity, a defiant voice that refuses to be subdued (Fine et al., 2024; Whiteman, 2024). Some awaken from sleep and *shout* "they have come to get me, to rape me"; this is how haunting and engraved upon the psyche physical violence against women can be (Lukasiak et al., 2024). Again, in the theory, *shouting* is situational, but when the *power balance* is in the woman's favour, it can be extremely effective at chasing perpetrators off.

Remaining silent (theory term): As in the theory, women *remain silent* as a tactic to avert more violence (Viafara et al., 2025). Sometimes they are forced to *remain silent* whilst they are being violenced (Machariah, 2025). This is not good, and the theory speaks to other means of *defence*, like *acting* to *escape*.

Communication (theory term): Good *communication* skills can help a victim extricate herself from a violent encounter (Pyakurel, 2025). Some perpetrators force women to desist

from *communication* with other people as a form of control (Viñas-Racionero et al., 2025). The theory positions *communication* with others as a constructive means of achieving *escape* from violence.

Discussing (theory term): The literature does not present *discussion* as a strategy victims employ during violence to create a means of *escape*, a distinctive contribution advanced by the theory.

Consoling (theory term): The literature likewise overlooks *consoling* as a strategy shared between co-victims, used to steady their predicament through mutual communication while anticipating *escape*, as identified in the theory.

Motivating (theory term): Recent literature does not identify *motivating* as a dynamic among victims that enables them to take effective *action* toward *escape*, as delineated in the theory.

Devising (theory term): Women *devise* ways of enduring the impacts of violence (Muzuva et al., 2023). In contrast to recent literature, the theory alone frames *devising* as a collective action among victims in preparing to *escape* an in-violence situation.

Planning (theory term): *Planning* to leave a perpetrator can be dangerous if he retains ongoing access to the victim, as it may expose her to further violence (Tushar, 2025). In contrast, group *planning* among victims, as articulated in the theory, can succeed when they act together to *escape*.

Next, the synonyms of *speaking* are examined: crying out, screaming, protesting, objecting, refusing, warning, confronting, demanding, denying, calling for help.

For the sake of brevity, this integration will be concise:

Women have been "protesting" violence for decades (Dynda, 2023). They "cry out" in pain after physical violence (Flood, 2017) and "scream" during beatings (Mishra & Aman, 2022). "Objecting", "denying", or "refusing" can bring on severe violence (Ambe, 2013; Kamat et al., 2010; Mahato, 2025). A "warning" from community members to a perpetrator on behalf of violenced women can stop the violence (Murugesan, 2024). "Confronting" does not necessarily stop physical attacks (Pyakurel, 2025) and "demanding" may be gaslit as anti-male (Botto & Gottzén, 2024.) "Calling for help" can avert danger or an attack and safetify from violence (Last, 2020a). Thus, to "speak" or not to "speak"? That is the question concerning the most effective way of *escaping* violence. And it is answered by the theory in that women must intuitively ("attuned to themselves and their environment") assess each situation for the appropriate approach.

Besides observation and speech, *inaction* and *action* are further aspects in the theory that women use to escape.

Inaction and action. Theory extract: "During an attack, *inaction* on the part of women can be either voluntary or involuntary. A victim may be in shock, physically and emotionally "frozen", and would need to "pull herself together", speak to herself, and decide to take appropriate action at the right time, such as fighting back or attempting to escape. When voluntarily inactive, the victim strategically immobilises to gain an advantage over the perpetrator. For example, pretending to be unconscious or dead might cause an attacker to stop and flee, but it could also provoke further violence. Each situation must be approached as a dynamic set of interactive possibilities that can shift at any moment. This is where knowledge of self-defence tactics — both physical and psychological — becomes crucial.

"At an opportune moment, women facing physical violence decide to *act* and escape."

Inaction. Theory concepts surrounding *inaction*: inaction, voluntary inaction, strategically immobilises, gain an advantage over the perpetrator, pretending to be unconscious, pretending to be dead, cause an attacker to stop and flee, provoke further violence, dynamic set of interactive possibilities, knowledge of self-defence tactics, physical self-defence tactics, psychological self-defence tactics, involuntary inaction, in shock, physically frozen, emotionally frozen, pull herself together, speak to herself, decide to take appropriate action.

Synonyms of *inaction*: non-resistance, passivity, immobility

Unlike the *inaction* that inflicts violence (Demura, 2024), the professional *inaction* that prolongs abuse (Piippo, 2024), or patriarchy's casting of it as culpability (Chirongoma & Zvingowanisei, 2022), the theory reveals women's *inaction* as a deliberate pause, gauging danger, resisting, surviving, and *escaping*.

Provoke further violence (theory term): Resisting a perpetrator or participating in research on violence against women can *provoke further violence* (Jansen et al., 2012; Leppakoski, 2007; Mas' udah et al., 2024). The theory indicates that *inaction* in facing violence can *provoke further violence* showing the importance of a woman knowing how to handle various types of violence encounter.

Hodge (2013) describes spiritual and religious competence as a "dynamic set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills" (p. 115) cultivated over time, which is the closest the literature comes to the theory's concept of a *dynamic set of interactive possibilities.* Just as competence requires continuous growth and adaptability, so too does a woman's capacity to navigate violent encounters demand a readiness to shift strategies within unfolding moments, affirming

that survival rests not in fixed responses but in a fluid, context-attuned awareness. Pierson (2019) points to the growing emphasis on *physical self-defence* for women, extending even to forceful responses against perpetrators. In the theory, *physical self-defence tactics* are part of a *dynamic set of interactive possibilities*, enabling women to move from strategic stillness to timely resistance or *escape*. Daniel et al. (2022) notes that professionals may resort to *psychological self-defence* to shield themselves from vicarious trauma, while in the theory such *tactics* describe women's own strategies to withstand violence and preserve the strength to stay alive and *escape*.

While UNICEF (2011) depicts being *in shock* as the aftermath of sexual assault, the theory reveals *in shock* as the paralysing moment within violence itself, a freezing that must be broken through with inner resolve to gauge danger, reclaim agency, and seize the path to extrication.

Morrison (1991) depicts a mother urging her daughter to *pull herself together* as a call to suppress turmoil, and Wilson (2008) presents it as a turn to self-examination in the face of mortality, while the theory reveals *pulling herself together* as an urgent inner rally in the midst of violence, gathering strength, breaking through shock, and seizing the moment to resist or *escape*.

The theory advances numerous terms/concepts absent from existing literature on physical violence against women, including voluntary inaction, strategic immobilisation, gaining advantage over the perpetrator, pretending to be unconscious or dead to prompt withdrawal, drawing on knowledge of self-defence, experiencing involuntary inaction through physical or emotional freezing, speaking to oneself, and deciding the moment for appropriate action.

Next, the synonyms of *inaction* are addressed: non-resistance, passivity, immobility

Liuzzi (2025) makes clear that "non-resistance" or passive submissiveness cannot be equated with consent, and Tripathy (2000) shows that the judiciary has long recognised that helpless resignation under compulsion is not acquiescence. The theory adds that *inaction* within violence is not surrender but a charged stillness, a protective stance that preserves agency until the moment to press through and *escape*.

Albertín-Carbó and Vázquez-Ahumada (2025) appear to link women's "passivity" (*inaction* synonym) to learned helplessness in the aftermath of violence, whereas the theory situates passivity within the moment of attack as deliberate *inaction*, a tense holding that shields, measures danger, and prepares the ground for continuance and *escape*.

Charapa (2021) notes that victims of sexual trauma often respond with tonic "immobility" (*inaction* synonym), a freezing that courts now recognise as evidence of non-consent. In the theory, such immobility is understood not as passive defeat but as *involuntary inaction* within violence, a momentary paralysis that must be overcome to gather strength, regain agency, and seek survival through resistance or *escape*.

Action. Theory concepts surrounding *action*: action, appropriate action, action at the right time, action through fighting back, attempting to escape, opportune moment, facing physical violence, decide to act and escape.

Synonyms of *action*: movement, reaction, response, manoeuvring, step, doing, execution

Out of over a hundred literature items from 2025, the following is the only one that could be found referring to *action* during violence, yet it is not by the victim as in the theory.

Leon et al. (2025) appear to state that bystanders move from deciding on an appropriate response to *acting* on it, while the theory presents *action* as a considered step taken within unfolding violence to alter its course and open a way to safety. *Appropriate action* (theory term) in recent literature refers only to passive, after-violence measures (e.g., Kieser, 2023), not to the immediate, within-violence responses described in the theory.

Langelan (1993) provides the only traceable account in the literature where immediate *action through fighting back* (theory term) is described as the strongest way to confront an attack, demonstrating women's capacity to turn danger into defeat for the perpetrator. The theory elucidates this further by situating such decisive resistance within its dynamic set of interactive possibilities, where *action* at the right moment transforms *vulnerability* into endurance and *power*.

Laniya (2005) recounts media coverage that sensationalised images of a woman *attempting to escape* (theory term) her attackers, reducing her struggle for survival to a spectacle for ratings. The theory contrasts such exploitative portrayals by recognising *attempting to escape* as a vital form of *action* within its dynamic set of interactive possibilities, where the woman's effort to break free is not entertainment but a decisive step in resisting violence and reclaiming safety. Harpur and Douglas (2014) note that survivors who rely on abusive partners for communication face acute barriers when *attempting to escape* or seek help. The theory shows that such attempts, though fraught with obstacles, remain a critical form of *action* within violent encounters, a movement toward preserving life that resists control and opens the possibility of freedom.

The theory phrases *opportune moment*, *facing physical violence*, and *decide to act/escape* do not appear in the literature on physical violence against women, which again

shows the distinctive phraseology of the theory and the uniqueness of the data from which it arose.

Next we consider certain synonyms of *action*: movement, reaction, response, manoeuvring, step, doing, execution

'Movement' is used in the theory exposition: "Action during violence involves decisive movements taken to escape or end the threat, with the primary aim of achieving safety…" It does not appear to be used in the literature in this sense.

Barnawi (2017) found that the most common "reactions" (*action* synonym) to domestic violence were seeking separation or doing nothing, concluding that responses were generally passive. In contrast, the theory avoids the language of "reaction", instead introducing *action* as an immediate, deliberate choice within violence, not a passive aftermath but a decisive step taken to resist, live, and *escape*. Last (2020a) describes a woman "reacting" instinctively when threatened, using voice, stance, and movement to deter danger and remove herself from harm. Similarly, the theory recognises such "reaction" as a form of *action* within violence, an immediate, embodied decision that channels fear and intuition into coming through.

In his paper on how women survive physical violence, Last (2025) describes the central solution of reclaiming as a "response" (*action* synonym) to violent erasure, enacted through acts such as resisting, rebuilding, and leading. In the theory, response functions as direct dimension of *action*, not a delayed "afteract" but an immediate, deliberate engagement within violence itself, shaping survival through timely resistance or *escape*. Gutmann et al. (2025) distinguish between primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, with secondary measures offering an immediate "response" once violence is underway. In contrast, the theory presents

response not as an external intervention but as women's own *action* within violence, a decisive engagement that determines whether survival is secured or not. Last (2020a) describes safetifying as a during-attack "response", where calling for and giving help becomes an immediate tactic of averting danger. In the theory, such response is framed as *action* within violence, a timely engagement that transforms *vulnerability* into survival.

Last (2020a) describes tactical "manoeuvring" (*action* synonym) as concentrated physical execution, where fear is channelled into purposeful movement to exit danger. In relation to the theory, this illustrates how immediate *action*, through awarenessing, resiliencing, finishing, futuring, and victoring, forms part of a dynamic set of interactive possibilities, enabling women to transform moments of peril into resilience and *escape*.

Fatigued by this process, it is evident that the remaining synonyms — step, doing, and execution — are both arbitrary and far too weak to capture the gravity of *action* as a means of extricating oneself from violence. They are therefore set aside, moving now to the next part of the theory for further discussion and integration.

Cycling. Theory extract: "If they do not fully escape and depending on the nature and intensity of the assault, they may become caught in a *cycle* of repetitive violence, being attacked repeatedly and having to fight back or escape on a protracted basis. Proper preparation can help in avoiding, managing, or escaping a physical violence attack. Inadequate preparation and rebuilding before and after violence can also contribute to the *cycling* of violence and defence."

Theory concepts related to *cycling*: cycling of violence, cycling of defence, not fully escape, nature and intensity of the assault, caught in a cycle, repetitive violence, attacked repeatedly, fight back on a protracted basis, escape on a protracted basis.

Synonyms of *cycling*: rotating, persistent, continuous

The theory introduces the *cycling of violence and defence* to capture how women who do not fully *escape* may be drawn into rotating episodes of persistent assault, compelled to fight back or flee on a continuous basis. This *cycling*, shaped by the *nature and intensity* of the attack, shows that *inadequate preparation* and limited rebuilding can entrench *repeated violence*, whereas *proper preparation* creates openings to break the *cycle* and reclaim safety.

Ryan (2013) and Çivi et al. (2008) show that childhood exposure to domestic violence establishes an intergenerational *cycling of violence*, where witnessing or experiencing abuse increases the risk of later victimisation or perpetration. The theory extends this understanding by situating *cycling* not only across generations but within the immediacy of an assault itself, where women, unable to fully *escape*, may be caught in persistent, repeated attacks, compelled to fight back or flee on a protracted basis until the *cycle* is broken.

The phrases *nature of the assault* and *intensity of the assault* do not appear in the literature on physical violence against women in relation to repetitive *cycling*, yet the theory identifies both as crucial for recognising when violence becomes *cyclical*. For example, in a home relationship where physical attacks recur after short intervals, or where verbal degradation alternates with physical assault, the nature of the violence signals a *cycle* taking shape. Likewise, a single episode of extreme intensity may propel a woman into repeated defensive encounters, while less severe assaults might not create the same entrapment.

Together, these dimensions serve as a wake-up call for victims to understand how the type and intensity of violence contribute to assessing when abuse has entrenched itself as a *cycle* demanding timely intervention and *escape*.

The theory phrase *caught in a cycle* does appear in the literature, often linked to abuse sustained through subtle control, verbal degradation, or learned helplessness (McCormick, 1998; Mc Evoy, 2012; Shearer-Cremean, 1997). Yet the theory advances its use beyond these frames, showing that being *caught in a cycle* may also arise directly from the nature and intensity of repeated physical assaults, where women are forced into protracted patterns of *fighting back* or attempting to *escape*. In this way, the theory broadens the meaning of being *caught in a cycle*, situating it not only in psychological conditioning but also in the immediate physical reality of surviving recurrent violence.

Jenkins (1999) notes that tensions within intimate relationships, fuelled by persistent dissatisfaction and unresolved conflict, can give rise to *repetitive violence* (theory phrase), with records showing recurring assaults in family and partner contexts. The theory extends this understanding by situating *repetitive violence* within the *cycling* of violence and defence, where women who do not fully escape are drawn into successive assaults, forced into repeated acts of resistance or attempts to flee.

The phrases *cycling of defence*, *cycling of violence and defence*, *not fully escape*, *attacked repeatedly*, *fight back on a protracted basis*, and *escape on a protracted basis* are absent from the literature on physical violence against women, showing the originality of the theory's language and the fresh insights it brings to understanding women's experiences of repeated assault.

The following considers the synonyms of *cycling* — rotating, persistent, continuous — and their relevance to the processes women use to resolve vulnerability to physical violence..

The synonym "rotating violence", whilst sounding descriptively innovative and of potential use in conceptualisations, is not found in the literature on physical violence against women, confirming it, at least for the purposes of this study, as an arbitrary term rather than one in established use.

The literature frequently refers to "persistent violence" (*cycling* synonym) against women, though often in varying contexts and without direct connection to the *cycling* described in the theory. Joshi et al. (2008) describe "persistent violence" as a mechanism to silence women, curtail decision-making, and control sexuality. Nilan et al. (2014) report that "persistent violence" continues despite programmes aimed at reducing gender inequality. Sattarzadeh et al. (2019) found that "persistent violence" often begins in adolescence and may continue into adulthood, shaping lifelong vulnerability. Wilcox (2000) shows that "persistent violence" can endure even after women leave abusive relationships, leaving them with limited security and support. The theory shows that persistent violence forms part of the *cycling* of violence and defence, where repeated assaults confine women in ongoing struggles to resist or escape.

The literature refers to "continuous violence" (*cycling* synonym) primarily in relation to its psychological and emotional toll. Afzal et al. (2024) link "continuous violence" with severe psychiatric outcomes, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Dahal et al. (2022) note that women often remain silent in the face of "continuous violence", fearing escalation or family breakdown. Orang et al. (2018) show that women enduring "continuous" threat and "violence" benefit from trauma-oriented therapeutic interventions.

The theory advances this further by positioning continuous violence within the *cycling* of violence and defence, where unbroken assaults trap women in ongoing encounters that require not only resilience but also timely strategies to fight back or escape.

By this stage, if not earlier, one realises that the repetitive consideration of synonyms for the theory terms quickly becomes redundant; once a concept reaches saturation, presenting the same conclusion repeatedly inevitably drifts into pointlessness.

Rebuilding After Violence

Theory extract: "Once a woman has avoided, ended, or escaped an attack, she enters a space where she can *rebuild* aspects of her life. This includes cultivating *care* for herself, seeking and providing *support*, and allowing *joy* to return and flourish."

Theory concepts associated with *rebuilding*: rebuilding after violence, enters a space, rebuild aspects, cultivating care, seeking support, providing support, allowing joy, returning joy, flourishing joy.

Synonyms of *rebuilding*: restoring, renewing, recovering, re-establishing, reconstructing, reclaiming, healing, re-anchoring

The theory states that when a woman breaks free from an attack, she steps into a realm where she may *rebuild* her existence, nurturing care for herself, drawing and extending support, and letting joy rise again, expanding until it flourishes in the fullness of her survival.

The term *rebuilding after violence* does not appear in the physical violence against women literature. However, the literature does affirm the centrality of *rebuilding* after violence, though in limited or externalised terms. Albertín-Carbó and Vázquez-Ahumada (2025) describe rebuilding as a deeply personal process of self-renewal. Kunasagran et al.

(2023) note that *rebuilding* requires long-term support, with financial stability and safe shelters essential to sustain freedom from violence. Last (2025) portrays *rebuilding* as an agentic counterforce of reclaiming, with women reporting, leading, and shaping futures even in the aftermath of immense violence and destruction. Earlier work on safetifying (Last, 2020a) shows how *rebuilding* engages mind and body in reciprocity; as survivors reclaim confidence, resist blame, and connect with supportive networks, they strengthen both inner and outer safety. In the theory, *rebuilding* after an attack is a transformative space where women cultivate care, seek and provide support, and allow joy to return and flourish, turning survival into renewal.

Theory Concepts. The theory's conceptual phraseology of *enters a space*, *rebuild aspects*, *cultivating care*, *allowing joy*, and *flourishing joy* do not appear in the literature on physical violence against women, again reflecting the theory's unique phrasing and its fresh articulation of how survivors experience reconstructing their lives after violence.

The literature mostly frames *seeking support* (theory conceptual phrase) in terms of access and barriers. Ghoshal et al. (2024) note that integrated services can strengthen women's confidence to *seek* help, while Okyere et al. (2024) find that higher education expands the avenues through which *support* may be accessed, reducing vulnerability. At the same time, cultural and religious norms, as observed by Kunasagran et al. (2023) and Chaurasia et al. (2024), frequently discourage disclosure, pressuring women to remain silent or endure abuse. Earlier work on safetifying (Last, 2020a) adds that *support* is not only received but also shared, as survivors help others to perceive, disentangle, and understand their situations. In the theory, *seeking support* after an attack becomes a deliberate step in *rebuilding*, strengthening safety, and allowing care and joy to return.

The literature mostly treats *providing support* (theory phrase) as a function of formal structures and organised responses. Fusheini et al. (2024), Joly et al. (2025), and Ismail (2023) describe initiatives that offer services aimed at protection, specialised care, and advocacy for survivors, pointing to the need for broader preventive strategies. Martins et al. (2024) and Kunasagran et al. (2023) again show how restrictions and controlling dynamics curtail women's access to *support* yet also demonstrate that the *provision* of care can empower survivors to confront abuse and liberate themselves from such control. In the theory, providing support is not limited to institutional structures. It is primarily a survivor-driven act, encompassing care, encouragement, and solidarity, and ensuring that safety and renewal are shared by survivors rather than remaining largely structurally superficial.

Rebuilding Synonyms. Now, the fascinating synonyms of *rebuilding* are explored: restoring, renewing, recovering, re-establishing, reconstructing, reclaiming, healing, re-anchoring,

The literature reveals fragments of "restoring", though never with the breadth that *rebuilding* is articulated in the theory. Last (2025) depicts "restoring" lives through acts of sheltering, aiding, and supporting, where survivors and networks preserve hope in the face of physical violence. Earlier work on safetifying (Last, 2020a) presents "restoring" confidence as central to breaking cycles of violence, showing how self-reliance and inner strength are painstakingly rebuilt. Hussain and Mishra (2021) trace "restoring" rights as a demand rooted in long-standing traditions of justice, while Magwaza (2023) notes "restoring" a sense of self as part of the healing journey, involving rediscovery, independence, and forgiveness. In the theory, *rebuilding* life after violence, through care, mutual support, and the reclaiming of joy, restores stability and self-empowerment. *Caring* here entails active self-preservation and

healing practices aimed at restoring emotional health, turning survival into a renewed sense of self.

"Renewing" (*rebuilding* synonym) as a process like *rebuilding* after violence, only appears in one full-text literature item that mentions physical violence against women. Rooks (2009) describes "renewal" through programmes that equip women with awareness, education, and skills, enabling them to regain stability and strength on the path to self-sufficiency. The theory extends this idea, presenting "renewing" not as a programme-driven outcome but as a lived *rebuilding* process after violence, where survivors reclaim their footing through care, support, and the return of joy. In this sense, "renewing" becomes more than skill-building. It is a reinvigoration of life itself, restoring stability, cultivating dignity, and opening space for flourishing beyond survival.

The literature presents "recovering" (*rebuilding* synonym) as a journey shaped by identity, support, and resilience. Albertín-Carbó and Vázquez-Ahumada (2025) link "recovery" to shifting positions of agency, while Stewart (2025) shows it strengthened by cultural care. Salzberger (2024) views "recovering" as regaining the capacity to live, with Anwar (2024) framing it as reclaiming the self. Muzuva et al. (2023) point to the shadow of future fear, and Magwaza (2023) depicts "recovery" as both inner work and the rebuilding of daily and social life. In the theory, recovering is not mere return but a *rebuilding* process in which care, support, and joy converge to reestablish stability and empower flourishing.

Seal (2021) shows women "re-establishing" (*rebuilding* synonym) family ties, while Parkinson and Zara (2011) reveal how "re-establishing" life after disaster can deepen vulnerability. Koepke et al. (2014) expose how "re-establishing" power is misused by aggressors, and Bonora (2014) extends the concept to societies seeking normality after mass

violence. In the theory, re-establishing after an attack is a decisive act of reconstructing safety and dignity, making space for joy and sororal solidarity to surge.

While the literature uses "reconstructing" (*rebuilding* synonym) to describe forensic analysis (De Paola et al., 2024), reshaping within patriarchal systems (Di Bianca, 2023), healing perceptions of self (Magwaza, 2023), narrative retelling (Marcucci, 2024), or recounting histories of abuse (Kiconco, 2019), it does not connect the term to women's immediate *rebuilding* after violence. In the theory, reconstructing is precisely that: A conscious act of reconstituting safety, dignity, and joy, transmuting the shadow of violence into luminous life.

The literature frames "reclaiming" (*rebuilding* synonym) through activism, testimony, and renewed participation (Altınay & Arat, 2009; Hopkins, 2012; Thawre & Singh, 2021), while Sharma (2025) shows its role in "reclaiming" stories and rights, and Türkoğlu (2013) exposes its distortion in threatened manhood. Last (2025) defines "reclaiming" as the central solution to erasure, through resisting oppression and rebuilding futures. The present theory moves further: "Reclaiming" is not deferred to activism or remembrance but enacted in the immediacy of violence itself, a deliberate act of self-empowerment, reviving dignity, safety, and joy, igniting vibrant freedom.

Magwaza (2023) shows that "healing" (*rebuilding* synonym) after violence begins when women recognise abuse and act to reclaim their lives, a contribution filling a long-standing gap. Bhandari et al. (2006) stress the rebuilding of dignity and self-esteem, while Stewart (2025) demonstrates how professional and communal support nurture renewed confidence. Schneider (2025) highlights "healing" as the parallel struggle of body and voice, and Carrasco-Miró (2025) frames group healing as revolt against patriarchy. Last (2024b)

extends this through comforting, where survivors provide solace even across relational divides, and Last (2021b) links "healing" to physical nourishment and psychological renewal. Earlier, Last (2020a) noted that gratitude, apology, and compassionate connection catalyse healing and form safe new models of relating. In the theory, healing is not only post-violence but a series of deliberate acts of self-empowerment, from rebuilding through preparing and defending, and back to rebuilding, transforming wounds into fertile ground for inspired living.

While Kaderi (2018) uses "re-anchoring" (*rebuilding* synonym) to describe the reinforcement of divisive religious narratives, the theory paints a personal picture of women re-rooting in learning, security, defence, and care to empower themselves, resolve vulnerability, and overcome violence.

Caring after violence. Theory extract: "*Caring* after violence involves allowing one's true peaceful nature to expand, enabling inner stillness to bring calm and fulfilment. This creates an environment where women can systematically address any physical and emotional vulnerability and needs, often through consulting a doctor, therapist, or the police. Each of these professional avenues offers benefits in terms of physical, emotional, and psychological treatment and assistance."

Theory concepts associated with *caring*: caring, caring after violence, allowing one's true peaceful nature to expand, enabling inner stillness, bring calm and fulfilment, systematically address any physical and emotional vulnerability and needs, through consulting a doctor, therapist, or the police, professional avenues, physical, emotional, and psychological treatment and assistance.

Synonyms of *caring*: attentiveness, compassion considerateness, gentleness, good-hearted, kindhearted, loving, mindfulness, nurturing, responsiveness, sympathetic, tender-hearted, thoughtfulness, understanding, warm, warm-hearted

The theory concepts associated with *caring* are addressed first:

Theory concepts. Surprisingly, out of 70 results in the past two years, no literature item associated with physical violence against women was found that positions *caring* as in the theory, as *caring* for oneself after violence. This lack of orientive understanding may be what is at the core of many women's inability to heal after violence (cf. Slatton & Richard, 2020).

Only one item in all literature was found with the theory term *allowing one's true nature* to arise (Ugale & Singh, 2021). It is in the context of therapeutic practices aimed at promoting authentic self-expression and emotional well-being. This demonstrates that the literature's focus parallels the theory's concept of expanding one's true peaceful nature for inner stillness and fulfilment.

The theory terms *caring after violence*, *enabling inner stillness*, and *bring calm and fulfilment* are not found in any existing literature.

The theory phrase *address physical vulnerability* is not found in any literature related to violence against women. *Address emotional vulnerability* is found only once among such items in the context of screening strategies for health workers (Lemmo et al., 2025). The phrase *doctor, therapist, or police* appears in only one accessible literature item, in relation to the disclosure of child sexual abuse (Tang et al., 2008).

It is interesting that the theory sees the police as a potentially therapeutic source of addressing women's vulnerability and needs. This aligns with the theory's further dimensions

of *properpolicing* and *kindpolicing* as societal mechanisms to contribute to the control of aggression.

The term *professional avenues* appears once in literature related to physical violence against women, specifically in regard to incels (involuntarily celibate men) seeking assistance in exiting inceldom (Gheorghe & Clement, 2023).

Mwalungali (2022) mentions violence being caused by harmful *physical, emotional, and psychological* cultural practices and economic restraints. This contrasts with the theory's *physical, emotional, and psychological treatment and assistance* available from trained professionals.

Next, synonyms of *caring* in the literature on physical violence against women are considered: attentiveness, compassion, considerateness, gentleness, good-hearted, kindhearted, loving, mindfulness, nurturing, responsiveness, sympathetic, tender-hearted, thoughtfulness, understanding, warm, warm-hearted

Synonyms of caring. "Attentiveness" (*caring* synonym) cannot be found in the literature associated with physical violence against women to mean attention directed at women by themselves in a *rebuilding* process after violence.

The term "compassion" (*caring* synonym) cannot be found in the 47 literature items associated with physical violence against women of the past two years referring to a *caring* stance of a woman toward herself after experiencing violence. While Garrity (2011) speaks of "considerateness" (*caring* synonym) in cultural competence, the theory deepens its meaning into *caring* that turns inward, a profound consideration for a woman's feelings, her true inner

Self, her pain, and botherations of mind, affirming that real healing begins where she dares to hold herself with "compassion" (*caring* synonym) after violence.

In the literature, "gentleness" (*caring* synonym) appears paradoxically within the context of violence, as in Karhikalembu's (2014) analysis of symbolic force and Márkus's (2013) depiction of a "gentleness" entwined with acts as brutal as murder, where it reflects a deceptive softness masking destructive harm. By contrast, in the theory, gentleness is embodied by fine feminine qualities of desire to train and secure, poise to proportionally repel violence, and care to tend the whole person. This transforms "gentleness" from violence to self-empowerment.

"Good-hearted", "kindhearted", "tender-hearted", and "warm-hearted" (*caring* synonyms) are not used in the literature associated with physical violence against women to point to the tender, loving care a woman gives herself after the trauma of violence as in the theory.

Kamlongera (2025) links loving (*caring* synonym) with women's strength in providing for family health and care, while Lamour (2025) uses it in the cultural image of a fiancée cast as a devoted wife. Davis and Kettrey (2024) present "loving" as self-acknowledgment and comfort. Each of these reflects contexts where "loving" is relational or symbolic. In the theory, however, loving is turned inward as a practice of selfloving (cf. Last, 2020a). The woman *cares* deeply for her own physically and emotionally wounded self, treating her pain and worries, and grounding her recovery not in cursory recognition, roles, or external expectation but in the sustained tender, restorative power of valuing herself.

Koroglu and Durat (2025) link "mindfulness" (*caring* synonym) with therapeutic interventions such as yoga or meditation for reducing stress in survivors of violence, while Vejdani et al. (2025) describe "mindfulness" techniques as part of educational and cognitive approaches to emotion regulation and resilience. Pandya (2017) notes its spiritual use among practitioners, associated with letting go and peace. In the theory, however, the idea of mindfulness is not presented as a technique or adjunct therapy but as "allowing one's true peaceful nature to expand, enabling inner stillness to bring calm and fulfilment", a state of *caring* that nurtures and aligns body and mind in the wake of violence.

Across recent literature on physical violence against women, "nurturing" (*caring* synonym) most commonly appears as a socio-cultural or externalised construct, focused on the roles women are expected to perform for others or the environments believed to mitigate violence. For instance, Madigele and Chitando (2024) refer to "nurturing cultures of peace" as a strategic response to reduce the cost of violence across the African continent, situating nurturing at the level of communal or policy initiatives rather than as a deeply personal process. Rahman et al. (2025) similarly advocate for "nurturing healthy social norms" (p. 12), making nurturing a corrective to social conditions that allow violence to persist. This is echoed in the work of Shavazi et al. (2025), where "nurturing" is associated with healing through institutional or external supports, such as those provided by societal and global organisations.

Meanwhile, the social expectation that women assume the burden of care is repeatedly reinforced in several studies. Sarkar (2024) identifies the multiplicity of roles, such as mother and child-rearer, that women must perform, while Bhoyar and Yenkar (2024) point to the pressure on women to be the "nurturing" figure, even while suffering the aftermath of violence. Khurshid et al. (2024) critique the gendered assignment of "nurturing" as a domain reserved

for women, imposed regardless of personal circumstance or well-being. These constructs cast "nurturing" as a serviceable function directed outward, towards families, children, and communities, rather than inward as a self-directed cultivation of well-being.

Even in psychological and emotional contexts, "nurturing" is tied to stereotype or dependency. Guermazi et al. (2024) link "nurturing" to emotional dependency and excessive efforts to sustain relationships, presenting it as a symptom of pathology rather than a pathway to empowerment. Onkwani et al. (2025) further observe that educational materials reinforce stereotypes of women in "nurturing" roles, casting them as cheerful caregivers and marginalising their presence in roles of authority or resilience.

In stark contrast, the theory constructs nurturing not as an obligation imposed by culture or a trait associated with dependency, but as a purposeful self-cultivation. Within the theory, nurturing is an act of holistic self-care, where a woman tends to all her physical and emotional needs in order to *rebuild* her life from within. It is not necessarily associated with care for others or motherhood but connected to conscious repair and self-regard. This type of nurturing allows resting when tired, eating when hungry, tending to emotional or physical wounds, and keeping internal balance. It is not an imposed tendency but an elected orientation.

Such reconceptualisation takes "nurturing" back from stereotype and points it toward self-empowerment. Instead of playing a role, a survivor nurtures her own recovery. Nurturing as self-care transforms the woman from passivity to actively participating in her own restoration. Thus, the theory unsettles standard narratives and returns to the essence of nurturing as an affirming, honouring act of *rebuilding*.

"Responsiveness" (*caring* synonym). In the theory, responsiveness is not a formal term, yet its essence permeates the envisioned image of a woman who, after enduring violence, gently allows her true inner self to engage with stillness, with its invitations toward calm, clarity, and wholeness. This responsiveness is not reactive but attuned, a focussed, soft opening to what is real, present, and needed within. It emerges not from external encouragements or institutional obligations but from an inward unfolding, as the woman meets each of her physical and emotional needs with interest, compassion, love, and *care*. This is not a performed task, but a lived nature, sincere, self-honouring, and unifying.

This internal responsiveness differs sharply from how the literature typically positions the concept. In much of the recent discourse, "responsiveness" is institutional, technical, or programmatic. In Henmpoano (2024), "responsiveness" is described as a quality of "trauma-informed care" (p. 9), where providers must adapt to victims' preferences and triggers. While commendable in its aims, this model conceptualises responsiveness as something that must be externally delivered, an attribute of the healthcare worker rather than an arising within the survivor. The woman's experience remains something to be managed, not lived through and met from within.

Similarly, in the collaborative community work described by Mattson et al. (2020), "responsiveness" to violence within ethnic minority groups is discussed in terms of "culturally distinctive interventions" (p. 3) and community-based support systems. Once again, responsiveness is projected onto structures, important and necessary structures, but the individual woman is not the site of its origin. Rather, she is the recipient of responsiveness shaped and controlled by others, filtered through programmatic norms, professional frameworks, or cultural strategies.

Mlaki (2024) offers a more intimate approach, closer to the theory's perspective. In expressing a desire to listen deeply to physical violence experienced mothers of children with disabilities, the author gestures toward a kind of awareness-led "responsiveness", a response born of attentiveness and compassion. Yet even here, responsiveness is motivated externally, prompted by a social welfare role and a policy concern. The mothers are invited to share their voices in order to generate systemic change, not necessarily to deepen their own internal healing process.

In contrast, the theory's notion of responsiveness is sovereign and interior. It is not a response to inquiry or support from outside, but a natural inward answering to the stillness within. The survivor does not await the responsiveness of others. She becomes responsive to her own vulnerability and suffering and their resolution. This responsiveness is a manifestation of her aliveness, her presence, and her unfolding return to wholeness. It is not merely a practice but a living recognition that her needs matter and that meeting them is the beginning of healing. Where the literature sees "responsiveness" as service delivery, the theory sees it as self-communion.

This portrayal invites a reimagining of *care*, not as something administered, but as something discovered within, available not because systems exist, but because the woman herself exists, and is choosing to respond to herself with love.

We could go on with the remaining synonyms of *caring* — sympathetic, tender-hearted, thoughtfulness, understanding, warm, and warm hearted — but I submit that the reader gets the picture that these synonyms for *caring* are usually found to be referring to something external, whereas the theory's orientation for *caring* is internal, an intimate process going on within a woman's soul.

Support after violence. Theory extract: "As caring matures, women often find upliftment by connecting, sharing, and *supporting* other survivors, encouraging and helping each other to process trauma. Safe spaces can serve as effective venues for initial refuge from attacks and for subsequent support activities."

The theory concepts associated with *support*: caring matures, find upliftment, connecting, sharing, supporting other survivors, encouraging and helping each other, process trauma, safe spaces, effective venues, initial refuge from attacks, subsequent support activities.

Synonyms of *support*: helping others, aid, assistance, intervention, facilitation, solidarity

Support. In the physical violence against women literature, "support" is predominantly framed as an external service or intervention provided to survivors, such as legal aid, psychosocial assistance, or institutional care, aimed at mitigating harm, aiding recovery, or promoting access to justice and rights (Farid, 2025; Gutmann et al., 2025; Hossain et al., 2025; Schmidt et al., 2025; Zarbighalehammami & Kahraman, 2025). While these forms of support are essential and often lifesaving, they focus largely on what is done for survivors, not what survivors do with their own strength. In contrast, the theory's conception of *support* emerges as a second aspect of *rebuilding*, an uplifting, self-initiated offering by the survivor to other women, marking a turn outward after deep inner repair. This *support* is not institutional but relational, an empowering movement of connection, encouragement, and shared strength, grounded in lived understanding and a desire to help others rise from similar experiences.

Theory Phrases. We now consider the key words and phrases contained in the theory statement: "As caring matures, women often find upliftment by connecting, sharing, and

supporting other survivors, encouraging and helping each other to process trauma." The first is *caring matures*.

Caring matures (*support* related theory phrase). In the luminous interplay between the two rare invocations of "caring matures", a singular vision emerges, one where the act of caring evolves into a quiet, radiant force of altruistic ministry. Angrosino (2006) situates "caring" within the institutional landscape of hospital culture, where it rises from routine behaviour into a visible, value-laden force, "maturing" into a communal ethic that shapes not only the initiated but the many. It becomes a structuring presence, caring not as sentiment, but as institutional compass. Thorgren (1991), by contrast, traces this maturation inward, through the moral journey of self-transcendence: As "caring matures", it sheds egoic attachment, revealing a generosity that nurtures not out of possession, but out of reverence for the other's distinct life. Between these and echoing the theory's line, "as *caring matures*, women often find upliftment by connecting, sharing, and supporting other survivors", we glimpse a unifying truth: The self, in its truest caring, ministers to itself through others. Whether in sacred halls or hospital corridors, this ripened care flows from one soul to another, momentary human appearances of the universal tending gently to its own.

Find upliftment (*support* related theory phrase). To *find upliftment*, in the theory, is not merely to rise, but to be gently lifted, as if by a breeze that knows the weight of what has been endured. It speaks to the weary soul who, through caring for others, rediscovers her own light, not by escape, but by turning toward connection. In Skimmer's (2019) image of wild places, where spirit and mind are restored in the hush of unspoiled beauty, we find a parallel: Just as nature heals through its vast, wordless embrace, so too does the act of *supporting* another become a sacred return to self. Whether among trees, in sunlit gardens, or simply in a shared

moment of tenderness, this upliftment is the breath of life after suffocation, a step into wholeness, a walking prayer within God's essence.

Connecting (*support* related theory term). In the theory, *connecting* refers not to the pursuit of affiliation for personal advancement or validation, but to a grounded, healing process initiated by survivors of violence as caring begins to mature. As expressed in the theory statement, "women often find upliftment by *connecting*, sharing, and supporting other survivors", this connecting is an inner-led movement toward meaningful engagement with others that develops mutual encouragement and trauma processing. It is not superficial or transactional. It is intimate, honest, and deeply rooted in safety and self-support.

This is powerfully reinforced in Last (2020a), where stepping into "connecting" in a passage of self-transformation after interpersonal violence is preceded by organising, goalsetting, and self-supporting as precursors to true connection. The victor is "not an island", and "connecting" brings fulfilment, healing, and the freedom to be open without judgment. The text describes how such openness can reduce psychological distress, aided by nonjudgmental interactions that make it possible to connect not only with others but also with oneself and the broader environment. Here, "connecting" is restorative. It grounds the survivor in the company of trusted allies — friends, family, professionals — who uphold her safety and enable her growth.

Cochrane and Mansell (2025) offer external validation of this concept, noting that peer support groups serve as "vital resources used for connecting with others, offering solidarity and helping combat isolation and backlash" (p. 17). Their study confirms that genuine connection has a psychosocial protective function. Yet, whereas their framing focuses on social mechanisms and structures of support, the theory's portrayal goes further inward:

Connecting is not merely about being with others, but about being able to share, support, and stand with others from a place of inner readiness and trust. This is not a strategy for survival alone, but a movement toward shared thriving.

In contrast to any view of "connecting" as the accumulation of contacts or performative belonging, the theory's stance presents connection as a soulful act of mutual strengthening, one that is neither self-serving nor passive, but profoundly alive.

Sharing (*support* related theory term). *Sharing*, as conveyed in the theory statement, forms a vital element in women's journey of upliftment following violence. It is not merely the act of telling, but a mutual offering, a reciprocal act of strength in vulnerability, that enables survivors to process trauma together. This type of sharing arises from a cultivated readiness, not obligation. It reflects an inner resourcefulness that reaches outward to encourage and support others, not only to be heard but to enable healing and affirmation through shared experience.

Gumani's (2012) grounded theory of critical incidents management among South African Police Service officers offers a significant parallel. Though situated in a different context, the study explains how "mutual sharing" in supervision settings can help normalise disrupted thought patterns and support psychological wellbeing. Here, sharing is framed as a vital tool for grounding the service provider, enabling reflection, and gently reordering internal disarray caused by traumatic encounters. Gumani (2012) also details how officers' spouses play a quiet but powerful role by creating an opportunity to share, even in the absence of direct disclosure. The wife's attentive presence, noticing subtle cues of withdrawal, helps facilitate sharing that is not forced but enabled, echoing the theory's depiction of gentle readiness.

Such insight is deeply constructive for the theory's own conception of *sharing*. It shows that when a nonjudgmental and observant other holds space without pressure, whether supervisor or spouse, the possibility of meaningful sharing is heightened. Gumani's (2012) work thus affirms the value of relational conditions that cultivate inner safety, and, by extension, meaningful disclosure.

Yet, while Gumani's (2012) discussion still involves structured roles and task-based interaction, the theory introduces a more interiorised form of *sharing*, one not dependent on professional relationship or familial role, but arising between women who stand on common ground through trauma. It is survivor-to-survivor, woman-to-woman. *Sharing* becomes an act of mutual lifting, a flowing exchange of insight, compassion, and encouragement rooted in lived realities. This is not simply catharsis. It is transformative affirmation of experience, where trauma is not hidden, but humanised, and where the act of telling is part of becoming whole.

Supporting other survivors (*support* related theory phrase). In Tatton's (2023) deeply personal and academically grounded work, the act of "supporting other survivors" is portrayed not as an externalised function but as a continuation of the survivor's own healing and resistance. Her dual position, as both researcher and victim-survivor, breathes life into her role within a counter discourse, shaped by personal witnessing and active engagement in the third sector. This intimate involvement is similar to the theory's conceptualisation of *supporting other survivors* as a shared journey of mutual upliftment, arising from pain and emerging strength. In both contexts, support does not flow from distance or detachment, but from walking the same path, from knowing violence, coercion, silence, and resurgence. In this way, support becomes sacred, survivor embracing survivor, sharing trauma and becoming. It is this quiet but

strong solidarity that transforms isolation into belonging, and counter-narrative into unitary truth.

Encouraging and helping each other (*support* related theory phrase). The theory's use of *encouraging and helping each other* expresses a profoundly mutual and nurturing engagement, one survivor uplifting another, each drawing on lived strength to support the other's ongoing restoration. It is not about exhortation from above nor critique from without, but a standing beside, deeply respectful, quiet, and attuned.

This spirit of mutual upliftment finds faint reflections in the broader literature, though in settings quite removed from the lived trauma of women recovering from violence. Mueller (2019), for instance, gestures toward a cultural aspiration for mutual aid in cultivating healthier self-images. Yet the tone, while benevolent, remains externalised, more an ethical suggestion for societal function than a reflection of soul-to-soul relationality.

In a radically different register, a record from Communist China (Chang, 1960) captures a form of collective reform by "encouraging and helping each other" through ideological struggle, group criticism, and re-education. While rhetorically invoking mutual support, it is clear that this is a means to a state-prescribed political end, bearing little resemblance to the theory's image of voluntarily emerging encouragement among equals seeking healing.

A closer parallel may be found in St. Basil's account of ascetics living together in community (Emilanos, 1997). He describes a shared striving toward perfection, where each one benefits from the example of the other. The language of mutual encouragement here is not institutional nor directive, but spiritual, revealing an older understanding of koinonia as symbiosis in the cultivation of inner life. However, this reflects rather than matches the

theory's depiction of survivors walking together in mutual empowerment, finding in one another the courage, companionship, and clarity needed to process trauma and rebuild life.

Thus, while each of these sources touches on encouragement and mutual aid, none quite arrives at the internal, experiential, and healing oriented reciprocity envisioned in the theory. There, *encouragement* is not ideological, moralistic, or monastic. It is born of lived happenings, of pain met with care, and of trauma transfigured through togetherness.

Process trauma (*support* related theory phrase). We continue discussing the theory concepts associated with *support*. Contextualising theory statement: "As caring matures, women often find upliftment by connecting, sharing, and supporting other survivors, encouraging and helping each other to *process trauma*."

In contrast to the theory's understanding of *processing trauma* as a chosen, nurturing engagement with one's emotional and physical healing, Nauyoma (2021) describes how many women subjected to violence remain unable to articulate their experiences, either falling into silence or expressing themselves incoherently. Trauma remains unprocessed, manifesting instead in psychological disturbance and behavioural symptoms. The theory, however, encourages a survivor to step away from unsafe conditions, whether through resistance or escape, and to *process trauma* in the company of those who offer mutual care and help to regain coherence and strength.

Now we turn to synonyms of the theory's conceptualisation of *support* which may be found in the literature for discussion, elucidation, and integration with the theory.

Synonyms of support. These synonyms of *support* are helping others, aid, assistance, intervention, facilitation, and solidarity.

Helping others. We now compare and integrate the following literature items with the theory's helping statement: "As caring matures, women often find upliftment by connecting, sharing, and supporting other survivors, encouraging and *helping* each other to process trauma."

The theory's *helping* statement, where matured caring moves women toward connecting, sharing, and offering mutual aid to process trauma, finds strong resonance across multiple contexts in the literature.

Last (2020a) conceptualises "helping" as an active, relational process that builds personal and collective safety. Beyond individual acts, this helping includes structural measures such as resource access, personal and property protection, awareness creation, aid distribution, and the establishment of supportive infrastructures. This broad framing aligns with the theory's view of helping as both personal and socially embedded, where survivors uplift others while contributing to the security of the wider community.

In Last (2025), the concept extends to large-scale, crisis-driven contexts, where aiding and supporting become essential lifelines. Women's reciprocal care, whether through tending to the injured, sheltering the vulnerable, or maintaining solidarity, parallels the theory's interpersonal dimension while revealing its applicability in collective survival and political advocacy. These actions demonstrate that "helping" is not merely person-to-person assistance but also a stance of resistance and resilience in the face of systemic harm.

Last (2021b) adds an explicitly altruistic lens, where "helping" is pursued for the fulfilment derived from others' thriving. Here, helping is bound up with self-development, supporting others to know themselves, make informed decisions, and draw on culturally and

ecologically grounded methods. This elaborates the theory's notion of uplifting connection by showing that *helping* can build both personal growth and cross-cultural understanding.

In Last (2024b), "helping" emerges even within complex, tension-laden relationships, where survivors assist those who have caused them harm, while maintaining boundaries. Acts such as retrieving lost items, aiding family members, or intervening in life-threatening situations illustrate a nuanced, pragmatic form of helping, balancing compassion with self-protection. This reinforces the theory's emphasis on matured caring, but adds the dimension of helping as an intentional, boundary-aware practice.

Steele et al. (2025) ground "helping" in the lived motivation of survivors who, despite ongoing struggles, seek to support others through direct service, such as working in shelters. This echoes the theory's portrayal of *helping* as a means of mutual upliftment, while also illustrating how personal experience can be transformed into vocational commitment to help.

Gumani (2012) shows how "mutual help" can facilitate a positive re-understanding of traumatic experiences. By engaging with peers, victims' relatives, family, and the community, individuals reframe negative perceptions into more constructive ones, shifting from harmful to healthy cognitive schemas. This transformation not only strengthens their own resilience but also sustains their capacity to continue assisting others, demonstrating that helping can be both a restorative and sustaining force.

The Department for Education (2025) frames "helping others" as integral to wellbeing, positioning it alongside physical activity, outdoor time, and social connection. This situates the theory's *helping* statement within broader public health and educational contexts, confirming its relevance beyond trauma recovery into everyday health promotion.

Across these perspectives, the theory's *helping* statement is both affirmed and expanded. *Helping* is simultaneously a personal act of solidarity, a collective survival strategy, a pathway to mutual growth, and a recognised contributor to societal wellbeing.

As for the remaining synonyms of support in the theory, namely aid, assistance, intervention, facilitation, and solidarity, it is considered that the preceding discussion has already addressed the concept comprehensively. Further exploration here would risk redundancy and contribute little of substance while potentially slipping into pedantry that might disengage the reader. We therefore turn to the next topic in the theory, *safe spaces*, and will now increase the pace of discussion and integration for the sake of both concision and reader engagement.

Safe spaces. The theory states that "safe spaces can serve as effective venues for initial refuge from attacks and for subsequent support activities". Recent studies on physical violence against women show both the potential and the challenges of maintaining such spaces.

Nithammer (2025) illustrates how the concept of *safe spaces* has entered contested political and ideological debates. In one national context, legal changes have been framed by opponents as allowing potential abuse of women's shelters, with claims that individuals could gain access under self-identification laws. This highlights that the integrity and perception of *safe spaces* are not only dependent on physical security but are also shaped by socio-political narratives, which may influence accessibility and trust.

Erasmus (2019, pp. 66-67) introduces the idea of "squading" as a form of social "boundary setting" within youth groups. While not gender-specific, "positive squading", where group activities foster care, belonging, and mutual protection, can be adapted into

community-based informal *safe spaces* for women. Such networks could provide a sense of security, practical support, and identity reinforcement, especially in areas lacking formal shelters. However, Erasmus also cautions that "negative squading" may lead to unsafe behaviours, showing the need for guidance and constructive norms in such initiatives.

Martins et al. (2024) focus on the structural side of provision, advocating for expanded *safe spaces* as part of a broader strategy to combat gender-based violence. They link these spaces to awareness-raising, user-friendly reporting systems, and coordinated public campaigns, showing how formalised venues can be integrated into wider responses to violence against women.

Dziakowska (2024) presents a more intimate and relational view of *safe spaces*, portraying them as moments of shared joy, trust, and mutual care. Here, safety is co-created through friendship and solidarity, offering emotional refuge alongside physical presence. Such experiences reflect the theory's emphasis on support activities beyond the immediate aftermath of violence, showing that *safe spaces* can also be sustained through ongoing relational bonds.

Altogether, these perspectives reinforce the theory's position that *safe spaces* are multifaceted. They can be formal or informal, physical or relational, and their effectiveness depends not only on infrastructure but also on trust, shared norms, and the surrounding socio-political context.

Joy after violence. Theory extract: "Caring and support bring *joy* — a sense of freedom that acknowledges one is not alone, that one is not merely the constructed ego (the sum of thoughts, feelings, memories, and perceptions), but that one is essentially the cool, calm, and peaceful presence that exists everywhere."

The theory concepts associated with *joy*: caring and support bring joy, a sense of freedom, one is not alone, one is not merely the constructed ego, the sum of thoughts, feelings, memories, and perceptions, one is essentially, cool, calm, and peaceful presence that exists everywhere.

Synonyms of *joy*: happiness, delight, pleasure, elation, gladness

Joy, as expressed in the theory, is the outcome of caring and support, bringing a sense of freedom, belonging, and the recognition that one's identity is more than the constructed ego. It points to a deeper, calm, and peaceful presence that is shared universally. This *joy* is not a fleeting emotion but a sustained state grounded in connection, self-awareness, and inner stillness.

Gumani (2012) supports and elaborates this perspective by linking joy to spirituality. This form of joy arises from an awareness of life's mysterious and non-material dimension, which imbues existence with meaning. It encompasses hope, faith, love, acceptance, gratitude, forgiveness, and creativity, each contributing to a life that is both meaningful and fulfilling. Such joy transcends external circumstances, aligning closely with the theory's depiction of *joy* as an inner presence that is both calm and expansive.

Erasmus (2019) adds that joy can be nurtured through belonging. Feeling needed, valued, and accepted within relationships, and finding harmony between one's own character and the surrounding environment, creates conditions for emotional joy. This reflects the theory's link between joy, caring, and support, showing that sustained, caring relationships strengthen the sense of not being alone, and enhance both personal freedom and emotional well-being.

By contrast, Deeb (2024) presents a different construct of joy in the concept of *jouissance*. There, joy is entwined with pain, deriving from an unaware pleasure in ongoing suffering. This form of satisfaction is not actually joy and is associated with destructive impulses, standing apart from the theory's understanding of *joy* as a peaceful and freeing state. Instead, *jouissance* reflects a "joy" that binds the individual to cycles of harm, rather than liberating them into the calm presence described in the theory.

As a group, these perspectives confirm that joy can arise from supportive connection, spiritual awareness, and belonging, but they also caution that not all experiences labelled as "joy" are life-giving. The theory's framing distinguishes *joy* as liberation from "joy" as entrapment in destructive patterns.

Again, I consider it unnecessary to conduct an exhaustive search for and discussion of every term related to joy in the theory and its synonyms in the literature. This is not from any lack of effort but rather as a courtesy to the reader's time and engagement, and a step away from the notion that the discussion above has not adequately addressed the concept of joy as it appears in both the theory and the literature.

Self-Empowerment — The Real Way

Final sentence in the theory statement: "Thus, by rebuilding their lives with care, support, and joy, women *empower themselves* to better prepare for potential assaults and fundamentally defend themselves, ultimately reducing and resolving their vulnerability to physical violence."

The theory concludes that by rebuilding their lives with care, support, and joy, women *self-empower* to prepare for potential assaults and defend themselves, reducing and ultimately resolving their vulnerability to physical violence. This outcome is not a sudden transformation

but the result of deliberate, sustained processes that integrate recovery, preparation, and the acquisition of defensive capability.

Pyakurel (2025) offers a lived example of these processes. In rebuilding her life, a survivor reclaims her education, develops financial independence, and mentally frees herself from the control of her abuser. Her trajectory demonstrates that inner peace and self-reliance can emerge even while navigating adverse environments. Such resilience aligns closely with the theory's core of *self-empowerment* as both an inner state and an outward capacity, making the survivor less susceptible to future harm.

Gumani (2012) presents a structured framework in which self-protection, self-empowerment, and self-restoration forms the prerequisite for effective coping and operational competence. Self-protection involves proactive measures to prevent harm before it happens or to stop ongoing harm, mirroring the theory's defensive element. Self-empowerment, as described, is the acquisition of skills and knowledge to perform successfully in critical situations, producing psychological autonomy and mastery over one's circumstances. In her analysis, empowerment is both a health approach and an active process, built through experiential learning, ongoing education, and deliberate skill development. Self-restoration addresses the aftereffects of trauma, enabling the return to usual functioning and supporting the rebuilding process. This triad of self-protection, self-empowerment, and self-restoration forms a parallel structure to the theory's preparing, defending, and rebuilding, each element reinforcing the others to create long-term resilience against violence.

Gumani's (2012) delineation of trauma handling approaches, multilateral and linear, further illustrates how these coping prerequisites can be flexibly applied depending on the context, with each approach drawing on internal resources, environmental support, and

professional guidance. Such adaptability ensures that survivors can respond to varying challenges and threats, maintaining the balance between immediate safety, the capacity to act decisively when danger arises, and long-term recovery.

Damra and Abujilban (2022) add a cautionary note by identifying how women in constrained situations may avoid self-empowerment behaviours to preserve what limited resources they already have. This tendency, while understandable, brings attention to the importance of creating conditions in which women can engage in preparation and defence without risking the stability of their existing support systems. The theory's framing addresses this challenge by presenting empowerment not as an optional extra but as a necessary foundation for safety and autonomy.

Erasmus (2019) brings a complementary depth through her discussion of powers within critical realism. She explains that "causal powers", whether latent or active, exist independently of observation and can be triggered into operation. Applied to the theory, this suggests that women may already possess dormant capabilities for preparation, defence, and rebuilding, which can be activated through supportive environments, skill development, and experiential learning. When these powers interact, new emergent capacities can arise, strengthening a survivor's ability to anticipate, respond to, and overcome threats. Just as the real domain contains events that may remain undetected until their effects manifest, so too can a woman's preparatory, defensive, and restorative capacities remain hidden until cultivated or activated through focused empowerment processes.

Gaana (2022) shows how self-empowerment can emerge from "self-introspection" and "self-understanding", enabling acceptance of oneself and the capacity to transcend marginalisation. This mirrors the theory's view that empowerment is both personal and social,

rooted in an inner transformation that enhances outward agency, a *psychosocial physical process*. In this way, empowerment is not simply a matter of defence but a recalibration of identity that makes *vulnerability* less structurally possible.

Together, these works confirm that the resolution of *vulnerability* to physical violence is not achieved through isolated acts but through the integrated processes of *preparation*, *defence*, and *rebuilding*. These processes draw on inner resources, acquired skills, and supportive networks, transforming latent potential into active capability.

Women resolve their *vulnerability* to physical violence through *self-empowerment*, knowing how to *prepare*, *defend*, and *rebuild* themselves.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the theory alongside the literature, showing that *self-empowerment* is both practical and sustainable when it unites *preparation*, *defence*, and *rebuilding*. The evidence affirms that these processes, supported by relationships, abilities, and transformation, can turn *vulnerability* into *empowerment*.

Through self-empowerment, women rebuild, defend, and prepare, resolving their vulnerability to physical violence.

Chapter 5:

Study Conclusion, Evaluation, and Implications

the universe resounds
when women reclaim their power

— Prof. Sue Potente
Nova Vita University

Entrée

The self-empowerment process by which women resolve vulnerability to physical violence — through preparing, defending, and rebuilding — stands as a singular grounded theory in the literature. This chapter draws together the study's key findings, reflects on the robustness and limitations of the methodology, explores implications for research and practice, and considers broader areas where the theory may inform understanding and action. It also offers personal reflections, linking the intellectual journey with the practical significance of the theory.

Self-Empowerment Ability and Practice

The present study and its theory contribute to a *best-practice* model (cf. Munn et al., 2018) showing how women resolve their vulnerability to physical violence through self-empowerment.

Self-empowerment theory explains women's physical and emotional vulnerability to aggression. When this aggression interacts with an imbalanced power dynamic, it can result

in physical violence, which women can contingently counter through self-empowerment achieved via effective preparation, defence, and rebuilding.

This self-empowerment *practice* emerged from the 106 women in this study and, consequently, the *capacity* for such self-empowerment would appear to inhere in all women.

If women generally do not yet *practise* these effective self-empowerment principles, all that is required is to study the theory (Chapter 3), reflect on it both intellectually and intuitively, and apply it thoughtfully within their own context.

In this way, they can transform theory into *practice*, ultimately making it a second-nature *ability*.

Study Purpose Achievement

Reiterating from Chapter 1, this study set out with a defined aim and specific objectives. Interpolated here are statements indicating how the aim and each objective was achieved.

Aim

To *discover* the main concern of women who experience physical violence and how they resolve it.

The main concern of the 106 women in this study, all of whom experienced physical violence, consistently emerged as their physical and emotional vulnerability to the aggression that precipitates such violence. In effect, this constitutes a vulnerability to physical violence itself. In response, self-empowerment emerged as the psychosocial physical process through which women resolve this vulnerability, achieved via thorough preparation (qualities, security, and training), power-balancing defence that includes fighting back and escaping, and through caring, supportive, and joy-infused rebuilding.

Thus, this study *discovered* the main concern (vulnerability) of women who experience physical violence and how (self-empowerment) they resolve it.

Objectives

The objectives for this study included the following:

1. To *understand* the intensity and meaning for women of the experience of physical violence.

The emergent self-empowerment theory reflects a profound *understanding* of the intensity and significance of women's experiences of physical violence. This *understanding* has been achieved through systematic analysis and abstraction of participants' accounts, capturing the psychosocial structural and physical processes by which women perceive, interpret, and respond to violent aggression. The theory conveys how women recognise power imbalances, prepare themselves, and develop strategies to ensure such experiences are not repeated.

2. To *explain* how women deal with the experience of physical violence against them.

The entire self-empowerment theory emergent in this study is an *explanation* of how women deal with the experience of physical violence against them.

3. To *understand* women's causal, mitigating, impact, support, and prevention opinions and concerns regarding the experience of physical violence.

This study obtained and presented many clear statements and conceptualisations from women regarding their opinions and concerns on the causes, prevention (reducing/stopping), and impact of physical violence and what and how support after physical violence is and should be provided. Thus, a clear *understanding* of these factors was shown.

4. To *develop* a classic grounded theory of how women resolve their main concern in physical violence against them.

This thesis comprehensively delineates the *development* of a classic grounded theory of how women resolve their main concern in physical violence against them. This involved *development* of the research problem, philosophical framework, methodology, data analysis and synthesis, theory statement and exposition, literature integration, and study evaluation.

It is evident from the foregoing that the present study achieved its purpose through the full realisation of its aim and objectives.

Study Findings Evaluation

The present study is now evaluated in terms of trustworthiness and the quality of the emergent theory.

Trustworthiness of Findings

Guba (1981) identifies four elements for evaluating the trustworthiness of a qualitative study: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Carcary (2009) proposes a reconceptualisation of validity, reliability, and generalisability for qualitative research within an interpretivist paradigm, as employed in this study. The following integration of Guba's and Carcary's approaches demonstrates that the present study exhibits a high degree of trustworthiness..

Element 1: Credibility. In qualitative research, credibility corresponds to internal validity in quantitative studies (cf. Shenton, 2004). It asks whether the study accurately captures what it sets out to understand, and how effectively the chosen method investigates the intended phenomena (Carcary, 2009).

Using a well-established methodology, such as classic grounded theory, provided a solid and credible foundation for the present study (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011). Credibility was further reinforced through measures ensuring participant honesty, including personal anonymity, data confidentiality, and iterative questioning during theoretical sampling. The study also demonstrated classic grounded theory credibility by showing how theory elements emerged directly from meanings implicit in the data, detailing how coding analysed the data, how properties and categories interrelated (Glaser, 1965), and how phenomena instances were illustrated. Saturative theoretical sampling in Phase 2 enhanced credibility further, producing empirical concepts and relationships that accurately identified and interpretively described the phenomena under investigation (Carcary, 2009; Glaser, 2005).

Two experienced academic supervisors guided the present study. Their expertise in violence research and in grounded theory methodology is particularly relevant and significantly strengthens the study's credibility.

The supervisors' profiles have been removed for confidentiality reasons.

Accordingly, the careful and precise description of phenomena, combined with my supervisors' oversight and assessment of data collection, analysis, conceptualisation, and synthesis, confirmed a strong interpretivist alignment between participant and researcher understanding and meaning, thereby enhancing the study's credibility (Carcary, 2009).

Element 2: Dependability. In qualitative research, data-analysis dependability — its repeatability — is analogous to reliability in quantitative research (cf. Shenton, 2004). Reliability reflects how consistently a measure assesses what it is intended to measure (cf. Hays

et al., 1993). Dependability refers to the extent to which a study could be repeated, yielding the same or similar results.

The following technique was employed in the present study:

Description of research process, methods, and audit trail. Interpretively, careful attention has been paid to the data, ensuring they were neither misconstrued nor fabricated. Dependability in the present study has therefore been achieved through transparent, reflective, and systematic recording of methods and procedures, including consistent data collection, methodical analysis, evidence-based interpretation, balanced consideration of viewpoints (Carcary, 2009), and a coherent system for participant citation.

Fortuity and serendipity have conspired to ensure a certain kind of confirmatory consequence in this study's results. The "confirmatory consequence" refers to the dependable repeatability demonstrated by the final theory: women's self-empowerment resolving their vulnerability, which broadens and encompasses the initial theory of women braving to resolve their fear.

The final theory represents a dependable, yet more comprehensive, iteration of the initial theory. Accordingly, repeatability and dependability have been clearly demonstrated in the present study.

Element 3: Transferability. Qualitative data-analysis transferability is equivalent to quantitative research generalisability or external validity (Shenton, 2004). In the present study, transferability is demonstrated through classic grounded theory's concept of indicator interchangeability (Holton, 2008). That is, empirical instances or incidents—referred to as 'indicators' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)—can be carefully fitted or matched to other similar

contexts using constant comparison (Glaser, 1965). This process, applied consistently throughout theory development, as well as during the literature discussion and integration, indicates a high degree of transferability. Further illustration is provided in the other substantive area fit section below.

The following is particularly relevant to the present study's transferability:

Description of the research context. Interpretively, the detailed analysis and recording of the study provide sufficient conceptual context to allow meaningful comparison with other empirical or substantive contexts (Carcary, 2009).

Element 4: Confirmability. Qualitative data-analysis confirmability is equivalent to quantitative research objectivity. It safeguards against undue subjective influence on the research process and outcomes (Shenton, 2004).

The following technique was applied:

Audit trail. Maintaining a technical and personal audit trail is essential for confirming the authenticity of a research project and its findings (Carcary, 2009; Wagner et al., 2012). This was systematically achieved throughout the entire thesis production and is evident in every section. It was particularly clear in the chronological log included in the method chapter, which allows for tracing and verification of the researcher's influences, decisions, and actions.

Process and product quality ultimately determine the trustworthiness of a study (Carcary, 2009), and as the preceding account demonstrates, such quality has been satisfactorily achieved in the present study.

In addition, classic grounded theory provides its own criteria for assessing theory quality.

Classic Grounded Theory Quality

Classic grounded theory defines four theoretical measures of quality: fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability (Holton, 2006). A theory demonstrates quality when it fits the research context from which it emerged, relevantly identifies and shows resolution of the participants' main concern, is workable in that its components interact meaningfully to explain behaviour, and can be constructively modified through constant comparison with new conceptual data in similar or related fields (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The process and product of the present study clearly embody fit, relevance, and workability, while modifiability is thoroughly demonstrated throughout the preceding literature discussion and integration chapter.

Study Limitations and Strengths

In evaluating possible limitations, several contextual factors were considered. Concerning information bias, the sensitive nature of the topic did not appear to compromise responses, likely due to the amenable and carefully structured presentation of the survey questionnaire. No apparent shortcomings emerged from the sampling or data collection methods employed, which were consistent with classic grounded theory procedures. Language was not a concern, as English was used in a manner comprehensible across a wide range of respondents, and all responses were intuitively interpretable. Data collection took place between July and November 2022 in South Africa, a period when COVID-19 restrictions were minimal. While the broader societal aftermath of the pandemic could theoretically have had an effect, no discernible impact on the study was evident.

The present study focused exclusively on the experiences and perceptions of women regarding physical violence, reflecting the study's specific aim. Participant recruitment was limited to two provinces in South Africa for practical reasons, which may constrain the generalisability of findings to other regions (Albuquerque & Nappo, 2018). Nonetheless, as the study produced a robust classic grounded theory, the resulting framework may transcend these contextual limitations, retaining wide potential relevance and applicability (Glaser, 2016). Additional strengths include the study's careful design, rigorous methodological execution, and adherence to qualitative research trustworthiness principles.

Research Approach Evaluation

Classic grounded theory served as the methodology for the present study. Its systematic processes — open coding, categorising, sorting, theoretical sampling, theoretical coding, and memoing — effectively facilitated the development of a parsimonious, practical theory explaining how women achieve self-empowerment to resolve their vulnerability to physical violence.

However, as with my master's dissertation (Last, 2020a), many Stratad Theory (Last, 2021a) principles were informally integrated into the application of grounded theory in the present study. This integration was compatible with grounded theory, enhancing its precision and grounding without altering its fundamental methodology.

One might reasonably ask how this is possible.

The explanation is as follows:

Realistic naming in Stratad Theory effectively enforces *in vivo* open coding for nearly all concepts, whereas in grounded theory, *in vivo* coding is often the exception rather than the

norm (cf. Holton, 2007). Consequently, *realistic naming* provides a stronger grounding for theory conceptualisation than standard open coding in grounded theory. Moreover, Stratad Theory's use of spreadsheet *alphabetical ordering* and *manual arrangement* offers a far more thorough and precise method of sorting than the hand-sorting typical of grounded theory (Glaser, 2005).

The fact that grounded theory does not prioritise accuracy (Glaser, 2007a) is beside the point. This may even represent a fundamental flaw, allowing such latitude to creative theorising that the emergence of main concern and resolution becomes virtually arbitrary (Glaser, 1978). One might even be forgiven for concluding that Glaser regards accurate conceptualisation as taboo (Glaser, 2007a).

Grounded theory can also disregard verification (e.g., Thulesius, 2019), misidentify main concerns (e.g., Schurch, 2015), fault core categories (e.g., Glaser, 2014a), speculate in theoretical coding (e.g., Glaser & Strauss, 1965), and prematurely prioritise categories and memoing (Holton, 2006). All of these potential weaknesses were carefully guarded against in the present study through the application of common sense and the integration of additional Stratad Theory (Last, 2022) techniques, including concatenated arrangement, higher naming, chief issue identification, central solution recognition, structuralisation, stratification, functional naming, functional statement, theory title articulation, similarity sourcing, rotational repetition, idea association, concatenated noting, and narratival delineation. These techniques did not alter the fundamentals of the classic grounded theory methodology employed but instead refined and strengthened them, producing a more precise and rigorous outcome.

Therefore, it can be stated that classic grounded theory is fundamentally fit for purpose 'as far as it goes' (Glaser, 2007b), and that, with the refinement of certain procedures —

effectively those enhanced by Stratad Theory — it is capable of producing high-quality theories.

Future Research Implications

The premise of this thesis is that physical violence against women remains a persistent and serious problem. Consequently, there is a clear and pressing need for innovative research to explore this issue further, alongside creative and practical implementation of findings to reduce such violence effectively.

Below, three emergent areas for future research are presented. Following this, I propose what I consider the most precise and rigorous methodology for such research. Subsequently, five additional substantive areas are identified where self-empowerment theory may be applicable to varying degrees, providing guidance for improved practice. Finally, as a logical extension of the present study, potential sources are outlined for the development of a formal, general theory of women's self-empowerment.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

Research area 1: Death penalty and alternative punishments/treatments. Building on the information in the preceding chapters, further research is required into the potential implementation of the death penalty, or at minimum, stricter and more effective punishments or treatments for femicide, rape, and other forms of physical violence against women. Such research should critically examine legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and comparative outcomes to determine what interventions most effectively reduce these crimes and protect women.

Research area 2: Understanding and helping violent men. Another important area for future research involves exploring the perspectives and motivations of men who perpetrate violence. Understanding their thoughts, feelings, and underlying issues could inform the development of interventions, rehabilitation programmes, and preventative strategies aimed at reducing abuse and supporting behavioural change.

Research area 3: Self-empowerment seminars. Open-ended discussion seminars based on the principles of self-empowerment theory should be offered to interested women. With informed consent, participants could be monitored longitudinally to evaluate the impact of these seminars on their ability to prepare for potential violence, defend themselves effectively, and rebuild their lives.

Recommendations for Future Research Methodology

Considering the key requirements for rigorous and precise qualitative research, Stratad Theory (Last, 2024c) is recommended for future studies over classic grounded theory. This preference is not based on bias, but on the methodology's demonstrated ability to more effectively ground, organise, and synthesise concepts, functions, and overall theoretical content.

Other Substantive Areas of Fit and Practice

The following areas illustrate where various aspects of self-empowerment theory appear to align naturally and where their application could inform more effective practice.

Substantive area 1: Business. Self-empowerment theory has potential relevance for supporting women entrepreneurs in their business endeavours (Alinejad et al., 2022; Özsan, 2024; Sharma & Agarwal, 2024). Concepts such as qualitative and training preparation, rights

defence, support, and caring could serve as practical guides for women in strengthening both their personal and professional empowerment.

Substantive area 2: Dual roles. Self-empowerment theory may inform the empowerment of women managing dual societal roles, such as domestic responsibilities alongside professional work (Weliangan et al., 2024). Through adequate preparatory training for both home and workplace contexts, women can be equipped to assert their rights (rights defence) while also cultivating their lives and future through caring, support, and self-directed development.

Substantive area 3: Racial oppression. Self-empowerment theory may be applicable in contexts of racial oppression (Yasmine & Anwar, 2024), demonstrating how preparation, rights defence, and rebuilding can enable women to better understand, withstand, and overcome the effects of systemic and interpersonal racism.

Substantive area 4: Breast cancer. Self-empowerment theory may support women confronting breast cancer (Li et al., 2024) by providing a framework that emphasises preparation, defence, and rebuilding throughout the illness and recovery process.

Substantive area 5: Interpersonal violence. Self-empowerment theory can fit, modify, and be modified by safetifying theory (Last, 2020a) — the theory of safetifying from interpersonal violence — in a mutually constructive manner. Conceptual intersections include physical violence; inferiority projection of the elite onto "the people" and women in particular by patriarchy; socialisation into giving and receiving violence; awareness of danger and potential attacks; preparation for assaults; observing contextual signs of violence; stopping and fighting back; receiving help; and self-transformation through rebuilding. Other aspects

of each theory could mutually inform and enrich understanding and practice. Practical applications might include lobbying to influence legislation, alleviating poverty and creating jobs, combating organised crime, assessing and avoiding danger, mastering self-defence tactics, cultivating resilience, and experiencing happiness.

Substantive area 6: Self-empowerment webinars. Self-empowerment webinars can provide a dynamic and participatory environment in which women actively engage with the core principles of preparation, rights defence, support, caring, and rebuilding. Through dialogue, reflection, and shared experience, participants might strengthen their capacity to navigate business challenges, balance dual societal roles, withstand racial oppression, confront health battles such as breast cancer, and protect themselves from interpersonal violence. These sessions could provide insight, nurture confidence, and cultivate skills in real time, offering women not just knowledge, but a rhythmic, sustained rehearsal of empowerment that crescendos into practical, transformative action in all areas of life.

Formal Theory

Self-empowerment theory could potentially draw from areas where key principles of women's self-empowerment are also evident, including the five previously discussed domains— business, dual roles, racial oppression, breast cancer, and interpersonal violence — as well as additional contexts such as community reform (Akalu, 2022; Rasheed, 2023), self-help groups (Bariya et al., 2023; Pereira, 2022), pregnancy health (Astuti et al., 2023; Supriyana & Runjati, 2021), and self-consciousness or self-awareness (Imran et al., 2022). From these sources, the core processes of preparation, defence, and (re)building — encompassing both the rebuilding of what has been lost and the building of strengths already present — could be elaborated into a formal or general theory of women's self-empowerment (Glaser, 2007b). Indeed, as Erasmus

(2019) notes regarding related theoretical frameworks, the ultimate value of such a theory lies in its potential integration into a broader theory, with further research required to extend and refine its application.

Personal Learning

Re-orienting, essentially scrapping, and rewriting this thesis has taught me the value of brevity and the art of cutting the waffle. Life is short. Nobody wants to wade through waffle.

This journey has shown me that bridging different approaches, weaving together ideas that at first seem contrasting, often yields the richest insights (Gumani, 2012).

Not that I did not already know or believe it, this study confirmed that women's resilience, intelligence, and innate intuition equip them for authentic self-empowerment, to run, to defend, to build their lives, and to shape and lead the world (Higginson, 1881, 2024; Hunt, 2007; Strachan et al., 2019). This is self-empowerment proven not by my words but by women themselves.

As John Gerzema and Michael D'Antonio (2013) observe, "Time and again, we heard people say that the skills required to thrive in today's world — such as honesty, empathy, communication, and collaboration — come more naturally to women" (p. 2).

And finally, reiterated throughout this thesis, is the apparently platitudinous but piercingly true synoptication by Orwell of Dicken's message, "If men would behave decently the world would be decent" (Orwell, 1940, para. 7).

I rest my case.

Finale

The present study is unique in that it is a classic grounded theory of how women resolve their main concern in physical violence against them from any type of perpetrator. The research problem of physical violence against women was worth investigating because of the vast and deep impact of such violence on the lives of so many women.

The present study has advanced knowledge in the recognition of *vulnerability* as the main concern of women experiencing physical violence and in the emergence of *self-empowerment* as their means of resolving it.

This may enrich the lives of women and inform psychological policy and practice.

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of the making of articles there is no end
wisdom lies in what we cite
some peer-review is shallow
some unreview is deep

— Dr. Elan Sift
Institut de Citationeum Bibliographique

Note: Overlong links have been shortened with TinyURL.

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Gauteng/Western Cape - Physical Violence Against Women Survey

Informed and Process Consent.
This is a study on physical violence against women in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Study ethical clearance no. [2022 - confidentiality withholding].

Hi, I am Antony Last, a psychology doctoral student at the University of [name removed]. If you are a woman, 18 years or older, live in Gauteng or the Western Cape, and have experienced physical violence, you are invited to participate in this survey. No personally identifiable information, like your email address and name, is asked, and this form does not track your IP address. All it requires is about 15 to 20 minutes (longer if you like) of your time to answer several main questions about your physical violence experience and a few other questions like gender, age, province, etc. Participation is voluntary and not paid for. Please read the items carefully and answer truthfully. Your information is confidential, known only to me, and stored on secure passworded servers. You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw before submitting without penalty by simply closing this page. You may be withdrawn from the study for professional reasons if I think it necessary.

You may find participating informative or helpful in some way. If participating seems to have a negative effect on you, please inform me so we can discuss this and perhaps refer you to professional help. Neither [university name] nor I provide medical or other insurance for the study, and we cannot be held responsible for any unexpected response. You will be able to find the final research report (thesis) by searching [...] here: [https://stratadtheory.com/publications/] (Suggestion: Make a note of this) as and when it is published online; this is expected to be in early 2023.

If you have any questions or concerns, please Whatsapp (082 074-5319) or email me (antonylast@gmail.com) or contact my supervisor, Prof. [name removed], at [phone number removed] or [email address removed] (Suggestion: Make a note of these details, copy and paste them, or screenshot this page and store securely). By continuing, you are agreeing to these terms and conditions and are giving informed and process consent to participate in this study, and for your anonymous responses to be used for research purposes now and in the future. (If you do not agree, you may stop now by closing this page.)

Thank you.

* Indicates required question

Some details please...

No personally identifiable details, like name or email, are asked. Only Gender, Age and Province are required, but it would be of help to receive other answers. Do not answer a question if you feel it may make you more easily identifiable.

1. Your gender: *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other: _____

2. Your age: *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 18 - 29 years
- ◯ 30 - 39 years
- ◯ 40 - 49 years
- ◯ 50 - 59 years
- ◯ 60 - 69 years
- ◯ 70 - 79 years
- ◯ 80 - 89 years
- ◯ 90 and older

3. Province where you live: *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Gauteng
- ◯ Western Cape

4. Your home language (optional):

Mark only one oval.

- Afrikaans
- English
- German
- Greek
- Gujarati
- Hindi
- isiNdebele
- isiXhosa
- isiZulu
- Khoi
- Nama
- Portuguese
- Sepedi
- Sesotho
- Setswana
- siSwati
- Tamil
- Telegu
- Tshivenda
- Urdu
- Xitsonga
- Other: _____

5. Second language (optional):

Mark only one oval.

- English
- Other: _____

6. Relationship status (optional):

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Single
- ◯ Engaged
- ◯ Married, or in a domestic partnership
- ◯ Separated
- ◯ Divorced
- ◯ Widowed
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other: _____

7. Education (optional):

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ No school
- ◯ Some school
- ◯ High school
- ◯ Some college/university
- ◯ Diploma
- ◯ Bachelor's degree
- ◯ Master's degree
- ◯ PhD or higher
- ◯ Trade school
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other: _____

8. Employment status (optional):

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Employed full time (40 or more hours per week)
- ◯ Employed part time (up to 39 hours per week)
- ◯ Unemployed and currently looking for work
- ◯ Unemployed and not currently looking for work
- ◯ Student
- ◯ Retired
- ◯ Homemaker
- ◯ Self-employed
- ◯ Unable to work
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other: _____

Thank you. Here is the Main Question...

In your answers, do not provide personally identifiable information like names of people and places, etc.

9. Please tell me about your physical violence experience *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Please tell me anything else you would like to mention

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Almost done...

11. Were you affected by your participation in this study, and would you like additional support? (If so, please Whatsapp me on 0820745319 or email me at antonylast@gmail.com)

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Google Forms

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	1	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		being killed	74	That one day he	It was emotional
	2	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		can't breathe	27	Mentally, I feel c	The latest incide
	3	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		completely remo	27	Mentally, I feel c	The latest incide
	4	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		death	79	Some women ha	I was physically
	5	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		decautioning	44	Not much. Becau	I was physically
	6	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		decautioning	49	I hate closing do	I was beaten by
	7	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		dissociated	16	I froze, dissociat	Rape
	8	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		dying loved ones	6	All the while my	This took place c
	9	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		exposed	15	I felt dirty and ex	I have been rape
	10	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		farming	6	This took place c	This took place c
	11	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		feeling nothing	4	I suppose I was	I was breaking u
	12	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		frozen	14	Frozen and frigh	Attempted rape
	13	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		frozen	16	I froze, dissociat	Rape
	14	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		hurting baby	76	I was worried tha	I was strangled a
	15	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		impacting	52	Physical impairm	Partner physicall
	16	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		impacting	54	They loose confi	Physical abuse b
	17	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		impacting	35	They die, suffer	[running] I have
	18	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		impacting	57		It started out with
	19	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		overpowered	26	Helpless and ove	My previous boy
	20	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		pain / anger	27	The pain on my l	My husband bea
	21	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		panicked	24	Scared, panicke	I had a boyfriend
	22	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		panicking	4	I **struggled** s	I was breaking u
	23	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		passionhitting	12	The way he hit n	Used to be beate
	24	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		preg - child*affect*	78	My kids witnesse	My ex used to be
	25	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		preg - children	46	I was forced to	[cycling] My ex h
	26	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		preg - holding ch	44	I was physically	I was physically
	27	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		preg - protecting	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
	28	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		preg - small child	46	[cycling] My ex h	[cycling] My ex h
	29	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		pregnant	2	I was once throw	I was once throw
	30	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		pregnant	1	I was often hit by	I was often hit by
	31	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		pregnant	50	The guy hit me c	The guy hit me c
	32	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		pregnant	51	I have unfortuna	I have unfortuna
	33	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		pregnant	50	It didn't	The guy hit me c
	34	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		protection order	51	ndathi nanje nde	ndiyabethwa ngu
	35	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		safety	73	I worried about n	I was beaten by
	36	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		safety	75	Safety of my kids	Physical abuse b
	37	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		scarring	76	I have anger and	I've been abused
	38	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		shut down	27	Mentally, I feel c	The latest incide
	39	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		trapping	47	Fear helped noth	I had a boyfriend
	40	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		trying - to save -	51	I have unfortuna	I have unfortuna
	41	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		unlocked house	6	I was sitting on	This took place c
	42	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		unprepared	6	We were both sc	This took place c
	43	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		vigilancing	33	I switched off. I v	Growing up in ar
	44	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		weak	15	I felt dirty and ex	I have been rape
	45	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		weak	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a
	46	A11	vulnerability	before	physical		wet myself	27	Mentally, I feel c	The latest incide
	47	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		afraid	19	I was afraid	My step father b
	48	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		afraid	23	Afraid	Assaulted by hus
	49	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		afraid of injury	6	I was walking wit	I was walking wit
	50	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		alone	17	I lived in fear all	I met the father c
	51	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		angered	25	First husband sta	Both my first and
	52	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		angry	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	53	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		anticipating	51	Well in the begin	I have unfortuna
	54	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		ashamed	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a
	55	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		ask please stop	27	Mentally, I feel c	The latest incide
	56	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		blinding	4	And I was so **bl**	I was breaking u
	57	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		compromising	4	And I was so bli	I was breaking u
	58	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		dehumanizing	5	It helped me not	I was physically
	59	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		deprecated	6	Vulnerable,like u	Physically abuse
	60	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		depressed	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a
	61	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		dirty	15	I felt dirty and ex	I have been rape
	62	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		disgusted	25	First husband st	Both my first and
	63	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		distrust	35	I remain fearful c	[running] I have
	64	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		drowning	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a
	65	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		embarrassed	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a
	66	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fear not always r	48	Nothing	[reliving] Physica
	67	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fearing	51	Well in the begin	I have unfortuna
	68	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fearing	61	[overcoming] I'm	It was very violer
	69	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fearing	35	I remain fearful c	[running] I have
	70	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fearing death	6	So we were the	This took place c
	71	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fearing pain	6	So we were the	This took place c
	72	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fearing violence	6	So we were the	This took place c
	73	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fearless	7	I am usually a fe	he pushed me a
	74	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		fractured	53	[feeling] Humulia	Physically bullied
	75	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		frightened	14	Frozen and frigh	Attempted rape
	76	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		heartbroken	15	I felt dirty and ex	I have been rape
	77	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		heartbroken	17	I lived in fear all	I met the father c
	78	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		helpless	26	Helpless and ov	My previous boy
	79	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		hopeless	21	I felt hopeless ar	[running] My late
	80	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		horrified	22	Scared, horrified	My fiance shot m
	81	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		horror	6	The bathroom d	This took place c
	82	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		humiliated	53	[feeling] Humulia	Physically bullied
	83	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		humiliated	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a
	84	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		hurt	17	I lived in fear all	I met the father c
	85	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	51	Self worth, self e	I have unfortuna
	86	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	53	Police not taking	Physically bullied
	87	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	55	They build a wal	I was sexually as
	88	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	56	Low self-esteem	[cycling] I am cu
	89	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	6	Probably sufferir	Have already
	90	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	58	The emotional st	I was sexually as
	91	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	59	Usually violence	When I was 18,
	92	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	60	They live a life h	I was sexually m
	93	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	61	Losing yourself i	It was very violer
	94	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		impacting	62	Lack of trust. Ho	1. Was attacked
	95	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		incredulity	20	I couldn't believe	Punched, kicked
	96	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		inferiorising	21	The psychologic	IPV
	97	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		insecurity	22	Insecurity	Stabbed
	98	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		isolation	43	I had nowhere el	My late husband
	99	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		petrified	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a
and taking back	100	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		protecting	51	[protecting] Brav	I have unfortuna
	101	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		relief	6	We were both sc	This took place c
	102	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		relieved	22	Scared, horrified	My fiance shot m
	103	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		reliving	55	[reliving] I was d	I was sexually as
	104	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		scared	13	i ended up being	i was beaten by

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	105	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		scared	22	Scared, horrified	My fiance shot m
	106	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		scared	24	Scared, panicke	I had a boyfriend
	107	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		scared	32	I couldn't care, a	Was abuse beat
	108	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		scared/fear	17	I lived in fear all	I met the father o
	109	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		scared/fear	20	I was scared. I fe	Punched, kicked
	110	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		self-esteem loss	54	[biding fear] I los	Physical abuse b
	111	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		shake	27	Mentally, I feel c	The latest incide
	112	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		shocked	20	I couldn't believe	Punched, kicked
	113	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		silencing	45	We could not tell	My father physic
	114	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		terrified	6	We were both te	This took place o
	115	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		terrified of being	6	they were comin	This took place o
	116	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		terror	6	So we were the	This took place o
	117	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		tired	17	I lived in fear all	I met the father o
	118	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		too awful to cont	25	First husband sta	Both my first and
	119	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		try not to cry or r	27	Mentally, I feel c	The latest incide
	120	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		ugly	21	I felt hopeless ar	[running] My late
	121	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		useless	21	I felt hopeless ar	[running] My late
	122	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		valuing self	4	And I was so bli	I was breaking u
	123	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		worthless	18	Petrified. Angry.	Was married to a
	124	A12	vulnerability	before	emotional		worthless	26	Helpless and ov	My previous boy
	125	A21	aggression	before	originating		causing	54	Inferiority comple	Physical abuse b
	126	A21	aggression	before	originating		causing - power	35	Many societal fa	[running] I have
	127	A21	aggression	before	originating		choicing	55	Its choice men m	I was sexually as
	128	A21	aggression	before	originating		confidencing	60	Not being educa	I was sexually m
	129	A21	aggression	before	originating		controlling - pow	56	Control or power	[cycling] I am cu
	130	A21	aggression	before	originating		cycling	59	Violent men	When I was 18,
	131	A21	aggression	before	originating		disrespecting	53	Disrespect and r	Physically bullied
	132	A21	aggression	before	originating		educating	60	Not being educa	I was sexually m
	133	A21	aggression	before	originating		exampling - pare	51	Look physical vic	I have unfortuna
	134	A21	aggression	before	originating		insecurity	58	In this case he w	I was sexually as
	135	A21	aggression	before	originating		issuing	57	I believe men ha	It started out with
	136	A21	aggression	before	originating		man-egoing	53	Disrespect and r	Physically bullied
	137	A21	aggression	before	originating		nurturing	60	Not being educa	I was sexually m
	138	A21	aggression	before	originating		patriarchising	52	Patriarchal socie	Partner physicall
	139	A21	aggression	before	originating		power issues	62	Men feeling pow	1. Was attacked
	140	A21	aggression	before	originating		realising	51	Look physical vic	I have unfortuna
	141	A21	aggression	before	originating		remodelling nee	89	We need to teac	Emotional, phys
	142	A21	aggression	before	originating		social*stressing*	62	I only see extens	1. Was attacked
	143	A21	aggression	before	originating		upbringing	67	The way males c	I have experienc
	144	A21	aggression	before	originating		vulnerability	51	Look physical vic	I have unfortuna
	145	A21	aggression	before	originating		vulnerability	6	Really dont knov	Have already
and stood my gr	146	A21	aggression	before	originating		wrong people	61	Just the wrong p	It was very violer
	147	A22	aggression	before	controlling		againststanding	53	Women standing	Physically bullied
	148	A22	aggression	before	controlling		alcohol	52	Partner physicall	Partner physicall
	149	A22	aggression	before	controlling		awareness*raisin*	61	Awareness raisir	It was very violer
	150	A22	aggression	before	controlling		awareness*raisin*	53	Awareness, jail t	Physically bullied
	151	A22	aggression	before	controlling		boundarying	51	[overcoming] Ed	I have unfortuna
	152	A22	aggression	before	controlling		courtmonitoring -	60	It is 3 fold. Firstly	I was sexually m
	153	A22	aggression	before	controlling		death*penaltying*	55	Death penalty	I was sexually as
	154	A22	aggression	before	controlling		death*penaltying*	55	Death penalty	I was sexually as
	155	A22	aggression	before	controlling		death*sentencing*	58	Death sentence	I was sexually as
	156	A22	aggression	before	controlling		devulnerabling -	60	It is 3 fold. Firstly	I was sexually m

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
nen resolve vulne	157	A22	aggression	before	controlling		easy*outletting*	62	I only see extens	1. Was attacked
	158	A22	aggression	before	controlling		empowering	35	Empower wome	[running] I have
	159	A22	aggression	before	controlling		empowering	35	Empower wome	[running] I have
	160	A22	aggression	before	controlling		harsh*consequen*	52	Harsh conseque	Partner physicall
	161	A22	aggression	before	controlling		harsh*consequen*	54	Serious legal co	Physical abuse b
	162	A22	aggression	before	controlling		heart*changing*	6	Only through a c	Have already
	163	A22	aggression	before	controlling		help*seeking*	54	Serious legal co	Physical abuse b
	164	A22	aggression	before	controlling		jail*terming*	53	Awareness, jail t	Physically bullied
	165	A22	aggression	before	controlling		jail*terming*	54	Serious legal co	Physical abuse b
	166	A22	aggression	before	controlling		job*creating*	62	I only see extens	1. Was attacked
	167	A22	aggression	before	controlling		kindpolicing	58	Police officers ne	I was sexually as
	168	A22	aggression	before	controlling		man*educating*	61	When men are e	It was very violer
	169	A22	aggression	before	controlling		*manning*up	57	Men need to ma	It started out with
	170	A22	aggression	before	controlling		non*stopping* - cy	59	[overcoming] It c	When I was 18,
	171	A22	aggression	before	controlling		nonstopping - cy	62	[overcoming] It c	1. Was attacked
	172	A22	aggression	before	controlling		properpolicing	59	[reporting] Capal	When I was 18,
	173	A22	aggression	before	controlling		properpolicing	60	It is 3 fold. Firstly	I was sexually m
	174	A22	aggression	before	controlling		punishing	53	Women standing	Physically bullied
	175	A22	aggression	before	controlling		punishing	54	Respect, [overco	Physical abuse b
	176	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	51	This is also some	I have unfortunat
	177	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	52	Judged harshly	Partner physicall
	178	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	53	Jail time or heav	Physically bullied
	179	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	54	They should be r	Physical abuse b
	180	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	55	The same way th	I was sexually as
	181	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	56	Jail time but beir	[cycling] I am cur
	182	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	35	They should be r	[running] I have
	183	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	6	They should be r	Have already
	184	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	57	Like digs becaus	It started out with
	185	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	58	Wiped them out	I was sexually as
	186	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	59	Normally	When I was 18,
	187	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	60	[reporting] They	I was sexually m
	188	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	61	[reporting] I think	It was very violer
	189	A22	aggression	before	controlling		rehabilitating	62	Depends on the	1. Was attacked
	190	A22	aggression	before	controlling		remodelling self	63	My husband was	My husband was
	191	A22	aggression	before	controlling		selfrestraint	64	Men should knov	While in a relatio
	192	A22	aggression	before	controlling		skillparenting	60	Parents of very y	I was sexually m
	193	A22	aggression	before	controlling		skillparenting	60	It is 3 fold. Firstly	I was sexually m
	194	A22	aggression	before	controlling		therapeuting	35	Empower wome	[running] I have
	195	A22	aggression	before	controlling		timetaking	51	My answer here	I have unfortunat
	196	A22	aggression	before	controlling		unsuring	56	Not sure	[cycling] I am cur
	197	A22	aggression	before	controlling		visible*policing*	53	Awareness, jail t	Physically bullied
	198	A22	aggression	before	controlling		womenrighting	52	Women and mer	Partner physicall
	199	A22	aggression	before	controlling		womenrighting	56	Men need to be	[cycling] I am cur
	200	A22	aggression	before	controlling		womenrighting	60	It is 3 fold. Firstly	I was sexually m
	201	B11	preparing	before	qualities		believing	41	Being strong and	It was 2009 or 20
	202	B11	preparing	before	qualities		calming - being c	6	Remaining comp	Done
	203	B11	preparing	before	qualities		carefulling	6	Fear is no longe	Done
	204	B11	preparing	before	qualities		practicaling	6	Fear is no longe	Done
	205	B11	preparing	before	qualities		praying	6	Remaining comp	Done
	206	B11	preparing	before	qualities		precautioning	6	home open whe	Done
	207	B11	preparing	before	qualities		responsibiling	6	Fear is no longe	Done
	208	B11	preparing	before	qualities		stronging	41	Being strong and	It was 2009 or 20

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	209	B11	preparing	before	qualities		suspecting	33	I would step in b	Growing up in ar
	210	B11	preparing	before	qualities		taking it	30	Sometimes I too	Whilst married 9
	211	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unanticipated	35	You cannot prep	I have not experi
	212	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unexpected	31	I was not expect	I was sexually as
	213	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unexpected	37	I didn't - never kı	Being knocked o
	214	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unexpected	38	I couldn't prepar	I was physically
	215	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unpreparable	35	You cannot prep	I have not experi
	216	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unpreparable	38	I couldn't prepar	I was physically
	217	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unpreparable	6	You can't. It is n	Done
	218	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unpreparable	6	You can't. It is n	Done
	219	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unprepared	29	wasn/t prepared	-
	220	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unprepared	31	I was not expect	I was sexually as
	221	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unprepared	32	I didn't prepare, i	Was abuse beat
	222	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unprepared	36	I was never prep	I was beaten by
	223	B11	preparing	before	qualities		unprepared	37	I didn't - never kı	Being knocked o
	224	B11	preparing	before	qualities		weak - feeling w	38	I couldn't. He wa	I was physically
	225	B12	preparing	before	security		double checking	47	Still a big role as	I had a boyfriend
	226	B12	preparing	before	security		locking	46	I always ensure	[cycling] My ex h
	227	B12	preparing	before	security		locking	47	Still a big role as	I had a boyfriend
	228	B12	preparing	before	security		locking	48	All of the above	[reliving] Physica
	229	B12	preparing	before	security		locking	50	Helps me feel sa	The guy hit me d
	230	B12	preparing	before	security		locking security g	6	Fear is no longer	Done
	231	B12	preparing	before	security		protecting	6	home open wher	Done
	232	B12	preparing	before	security		reporting	45	They did not play	My father physic
	233	B12	preparing	before	security		vigilancing	6	Fear is no longer	Done
	234	B12	preparing	before	security		vigilancing	43	I sleep with a do	My late husband
	235	B13	preparing	before	training		aheadstepping	51	Well in the begin	I have unfortunat
	236	B13	preparing	before	training		avoiding	39	I try to avoid situ	Many minor ones
	237	B13	preparing	before	training		backing off	28	Back off and try	-
	238	B13	preparing	before	training		being vigilant	33	I would step in b	Growing up in ar
	239	B13	preparing	before	training		cutting ties	30	Sometimes I too	Whilst married 9
	240	B13	preparing	before	training		de-escalating	28	Back off and try	-
	241	B13	preparing	before	training		defending	40	Self defence cou	Was beaten up r
	242	B13	preparing	before	training		ending	41	Is to end the rela	It was 2009 or 2(
	243	B13	preparing	before	training		fighting	40	Maybe trigger yc	Was beaten up r
	244	B13	preparing	before	training		fighting back	30	Sometimes I too	Whilst married 9
	245	B13	preparing	before	training		flighting	40	Maybe trigger yc	Was beaten up r
	246	B13	preparing	before	training		leaving timeously	40	Probably not mu	Was beaten up r
	247	B13	preparing	before	training		legal action	30	Sometimes I too	Whilst married 9
	248	B13	preparing	before	training		locking out	30	Sometimes I too	Whilst married 9
	249	B13	preparing	before	training		looking around	41	Always look arou	It was 2009 or 2(
	250	B13	preparing	before	training		run - ending	41	Always look arou	It was 2009 or 2(
	251	B13	preparing	before	training		running away	41	[running] By may	It was 2009 or 2(
	252	B13	preparing	before	training		seminars, works	69	Seminars, works	Was stabbed
	253	B13	preparing	before	training		skilling	51	Well in the begin	I have unfortunat
	254	B13	preparing	before	training		spraying	41	[running] By may	It was 2009 or 2(
	255	B13	preparing	before	training		stepping in betw	33	I would step in b	Growing up in ar
	256	B13	preparing	before	training		training	51	Nothing can prep	I have unfortunat
	257	B13	preparing	before	training		training	~~52~~	Mental and phys	Partner physicall
	258	B13	preparing	before	training		training	53	Self defense coa	Physically bullied
	259	B13	preparing	before	training		training	54	Self defense, aw	Physical abuse b
	260	B13	preparing	before	training		training	55	Self defence	I was sexually as

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	261	B13	preparing	before	training		training	56		[cycling] I am cu
	262	B13	preparing	before	training		training	35	Self Defence, Kr	[running] I have
	263	B13	preparing	before	training		training	6	I diubt there is a	Have already
	264	B13	preparing	before	training		training	57		It started out wit
	265	B13	preparing	before	training		training	58	It's just wrong ar	I was sexually as
	266	B13	preparing	before	training		training	59	None	When I was 18,
	267	B13	preparing	before	training		training	60	Sexual rights sh	I was sexually m
	268	B13	preparing	before	training		training	61	Informative sess	It was very viole
	269	B13	preparing	before	training		training	62	Education at hor	1. Was attacked
	270	B13	preparing	before	training		training	34	Training in marti	I was mugged.
	271	B21	defending	during	defending	1	defending	19	My mother and I	My step father b
	272	B21	defending	during	defending	1	defending - aggr	39	I responded with	Many minor one
	273	B21	defending	during	defending	1	defending - timin	46	I only feared for	[cycling] My ex h
5. How importan	274	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	accuracy	40	It's important. If	Was beaten up
	275	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	aggression	39	I responded with	Many minor one
	276	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	angering	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
	277	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	angering	62	[overcoming] Ma	1. Was attacked
	278	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	attacking	34	I went full attack	I was mugged.
	279	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	blocking	28	It was very quick	-
	280	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	breaking free	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
	281	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	breaking free	49	I would kick his	I was beaten by
	282	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	buying time	44	It didnt and I didi	I was physically
	283	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	chasing	34	I went full attack	I was mugged.
	284	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	delaying - diverti	44	By pretending br	I was physically
	285	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	depending	40	Either the best o	Was beaten up
	286	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	deterring	40	Maybe deter the	Was beaten up
	287	B21	defending	during	fighting back	2	escalating	39	I wasn't in contro	Many minor one
	288	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	exerting strength	44	It didnt and I didi	I was physically
	289	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	extricating	44	It didnt and I didi	I was physically
	290	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	fearless	39	I wasn't in contro	Many minor one
	291	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	fearlessing	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
	292	B21	defending	during	fighting back	2	fighting	39	I wasn't in contro	Many minor one
	293	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	fighting back	21	I started fighting	[running] My late
	294	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	fighting back	54	I fought back ph	Physical abuse b
	295	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	fighting back	62	[overcoming] Ma	1. Was attacked
	296	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	fighting back	39	I responded with	Many minor one
	297	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	fighting back - m	22	He missed shoo	My fiance shot m
	298	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	fighting off	62	1. Was attacked	1. Was attacked
	299	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	getting help	44	It didnt and I didi	I was physically
	300	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	grabbing	6	I was afraid of w	I was walking wi
	301	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	grounding	34	I went full attack	I was mugged.
	302	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	groundstanding	45	To heal and also	My father physic
	303	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	groundstanding	6	Stopped it from	I was walking wi
	304	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	groundstanding	51	[protecting] Brav	I have unfortuna
and stood my gr	305	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	groundstanding	53	I ultimatetly park	Physically bullie
	306	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	groundstanding	58	I was sexually as	I was sexually as
	307	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	groundstanding -	43	Only when he w	My late husband
	308	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	groundstanding -	44	Being quiet, and	I was physically
	309	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	groundstanding -	44	Being quiet, and	I was physically
	310	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	hitting	40	It's important. If	Was beaten up
	311	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	kicking	49	I would kick his	I was beaten by
	312	B21	defending	during	fighting back		like a lion - powe	84	I ended up dont	Was bitten more

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	313	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	louding	39	I responded with	Many minor ones
	314	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	no negotiating	34	I didn't.	I was mugged.
	315	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	no negotiating	6	From experience	Done
	316	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	no negotiating -	35	In unrest situatio	I have not experi
	317	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	pulling	34	I went full attack	I was mugged.
	318	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	pulling	41	but I **screamed**	It was 2009 or 2(
	319	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	pushing away	50	I pushed him aw	The guy hit me c
	320	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	pushing out	44	It didnt and I didı	I was physically
women take back	321	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	rebirthing - regai	47	When I did it I fe	I had a boyfriend
	322	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	scaring off	50	He got scared	The guy hit me c
	323	B21	defending	during	fighting back		screaming	41	It was 2009 or 2(	It was 2009 or 2(
	324	B21	defending	during	fighting back		shouting	41	but I **screamed**	It was 2009 or 2(
	325	B21	defending	during	fighting back		shouting	41	I quietly told him	It was 2009 or 2(
	326	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	stopping	6	Stopped her fron	I was walking wit
	327	B21	defending	during	fighting back		stopping attack	40	It's important. If y	Was beaten up r
	328	B21	defending	during	fighting back		struggling	4	I was breaking u	I was breaking u
	329	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	threatening	44	It didnt and I didı	I was physically
	330	B21	defending	during	fighting back	3	throwing	44	It didnt and I didı	I was physically
	331	B21	defending	during	fighting back		timing is very imp	40	It's important. If y	Was beaten up r
	332	B21	defending	during	fighting back		wrestling	14	I ran the other gu	Attempted rape 3
observing	333	B22	defending	during	escaping	100	keeping quiet	44	Being quiet, and	I was physically
observing	334	B22	defending	during	escaping	100	keeping quiet	43	It didn't. Being q	My late husband
observing	335	B22	defending	during	escaping	100	keeping quiet	60	[getting out] I wa	I was sexually m
observing	336	B22	defending	during	escaping	100	keeping quiet	31	I didn't speak, I v	I was sexually as
observing	337	B22	defending	during	escaping	100	keeping quiet	37	Either kept quiet	Being knocked o
observing	338	B22	defending	during	escaping	100	keeping quiet	6	Let them shout. I	Done
observing	339	B22	defending	during	escaping	100	keeping quiet - s	38	I couldn't speak.	I was physically
observing	340	B22	defending	during	escaping	200	catching breath	38	I couldn't. He wa	I was physically
observing	341	B22	defending	during	escaping	300	listening	6	While we were s	This took place c
observing	342	B22	defending	during	escaping	300	reading respons	6	Very important. T	Done
observing	343	B22	defending	during	escaping	400	reflecting	35	I remain brave in	[running] I have
observing	344	B22	defending	during	escaping	400	reminding self	47	Brave kept me m	I had a boyfriend
observing	345	B22	defending	during	escaping	400	saving lives	6	[overcoming] It s	Have already
observing	346	B22	defending	during	escaping	500	reading climate	6	Very important. T	Done
observing	347	B22	defending	during	escaping	500	simplifying	101	It help me to take	It was just a misu
observing	348	B22	defending	during	escaping	500	thinking	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
speaking	349	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	agreeing - forcea	36	I had to agree or	I was beaten by
speaking	350	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	asking	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
speaking	351	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	asking - begging	6	I begged them p	This took place c
speaking	352	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	asking forgivene	41	When I see that	It was 2009 or 2(
speaking	353	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	asking not to hur	35	In unrest situatio	I have not experi
speaking	354	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	begging	58	I was sexually as	I was sexually as
speaking	355	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	begging - provok	6	When they took	This took place c
speaking	356	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	begging & action	6	Periodically they	This took place c
speaking	357	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	complying	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
speaking	358	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	complying	16	I complied and ta	Rape
speaking	359	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	confronting	29	I asked him dont	-
speaking	360	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	cooperating	6	From experience	Done
speaking	361	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	cooperating	6	Somehow they k	This took place c
speaking	362	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	crafting	6	My youngest dau	This took place c
speaking	363	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	crying	32	Just cried and tri	Was abuse beate
speaking	364	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	de-escalating	39	I responded with	Many minor ones

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
speaking	365	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	de-escalation	6	Made sure it didı	I was walking wit
speaking	366	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	talking	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
speaking	367	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	talking	6	In a group,when	Done
speaking	368	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	talking	16	I complied and ta	Rape
speaking	369	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	empathising	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
speaking	370	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	explaining	28	I insisted that my	-
speaking	371	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	insisting	28	I insisted that my	-
speaking	372	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	interesting	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
speaking	373	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	negotiating peac	33	Negotiating peac	Growing up in ar
speaking	374	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	permitting to take	35	In unrest situatio	I have not experi
speaking	375	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	praying	30	Praying	Whilst married 9
speaking	376	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	praying	35	[running] Prayed	I have not experi
speaking	377	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	promising	33	I promised to spe	Growing up in ar
speaking	378	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	reducing danger	40	When your life is	Was beaten up r
speaking	379	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	roaring	34	I went full attack	I was mugged.
speaking	380	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	screaming	38	I couldn't. He wa	I was physically
speaking	381	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	sharing	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
speaking	382	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	shouting - don't -	6	Let them shout. I	Done
speaking	383	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	shouting - don't -	41	Shouting can ma	It was 2009 or 20
speaking	384	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	shouting for help	41	Shouting can ma	It was 2009 or 20
speaking	385	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	truthing	6	I said we don't ha	This took place c
speaking	386	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	worsening - pow	43	It made him mor	My late husband
speaking	387	B22	defending	during	escaping	5	worsening - pow	49	He would punisl	I was beaten by
inaction	388	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	keeping still	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
inaction	389	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	keeping still/quie	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
inaction	390	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	mitigating	31	I didn't speak, I v	I was sexually as
inaction	391	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	freezing	39	I responded with	Many minor ones
inaction	392	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	freezing and rea	31	I didn't speak, I v	I was sexually as
inaction	393	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	freezing from fea	6	I knew he was g	This took place c
inaction	394	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - acti	6	By retaliating an	I was walking wit
inaction	395	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - atte	41	By trying to brea	It was 2009 or 20
inaction	396	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - brea	41	By trying to brea	It was 2009 or 20
inaction	397	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - caln	41	By trying to brea	It was 2009 or 20
inaction	398	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - free	47	[freezing] I pacifi	I had a boyfriend
inaction	399	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - free	31	I involuntary diss	I was sexually as
inaction	400	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - mov	44	I dont know or I	I was physically
inaction	401	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - runr	45	We ran away	My father physic
inaction	402	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	unfreezing - runr	49	[also running] Ki	I was beaten by
inaction	403	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	dissociating	16	I complied and ta	Rape
inaction	404	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	standing	29	I just stood there	-
inaction	405	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	waiting	6	waited while we	This took place c
inaction	406	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	waiting - for oppo	29	I just stood there	-
inaction	407	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	waiting - for oppo	35	[running] Prayed	I have not experi
inaction	408	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	waiting - for oppo	37	When opportunit	Being knocked o
inaction	409	B22	defending	during	escaping	6	waiting - for oppo	38	I couldn't. He wa	I was physically
action	410	B22	defending	during	escaping	7	acting - taking ac	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
action	411	B22	defending	during	escaping	7	loosening	6	only hunting rifle	This took place c
action	412	B22	defending	during	escaping	7	loosening	6	At this point my	This took place c
action	413	B22	defending	during	escaping	10	sneaking to chec	6	At this point my	This took place c
action	414	B22	defending	during	escaping	15	checking escape	6	Very important. T	Done
action	415	B22	defending	during	escaping	15	checking escape	6	At this point my	This took place c
action	416	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	braving	62	[overcoming] De	1. Was attacked

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
action	417	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	deciding to move	6	At this point my	This took place
action	418	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	indecision	31	I didn't speak, I v	I was sexually as
action	419	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	moving	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
action	420	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	moving	41	It is important be	It was 2009 or 2
action	421	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	packing	49	I packed what i c	I was beaten by
action	422	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	planning escape	6	In a group,when	Done
action	423	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	deciding to leave	77	I left him I decide	I was abused by
action	424	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	deciding to leave	90	I just decided to	My ex boyfriend
action	425	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	taking back pow	30	It's difficult to rea	Whilst married 9
action	426	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	timegiving	40	It's important. If y	Was beaten up r
action	427	B22	defending	during	escaping	20	timing is very imp	6	Very important. T	Done
action	428	B22	defending	during	escaping	25	removing hindra	6	At this point my	This took place
action	429	B22	defending	during	escaping	25	removing hindra	6	At this point my	This took place
action	430	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	attacking - group	40	All attack him at	Was beaten up r
action	431	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	attacking - group	41	By working in a g	It was 2009 or 2
action	432	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	call for help	26	The final day wa	My previous boy
action	433	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	call police	27	I called the polic	The latest incide
action	434	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	calling for help	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
action	435	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	calling for help	46	Then things esca	[cycling] My ex h
action	436	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	calming	44	The instinct to be	I was physically
action	437	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	calming	6	In a group,when	Done
action	438	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	calming	6	It made me go in	Have already
action	439	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	calming down	41	When I see that	It was 2009 or 2
action	440	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	cooperating	6	In a group,when	Done
action	441	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	distracting	6	In a group,when	Done
action	442	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	helping	15	I was saved	I have been rape
action	443	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	helping each oth	6	At this point my	This took place
action	444	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	helping each oth	19	My mother and I	My step father b
action	445	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	helping escape	88	My husband got	My husband got
action	446	B22	defending	during	escaping	30	observeraffecting	45	Shouting doesnt	My father physic
action	447	B22	defending	during	escaping	33	getting help	44	None. There was	I was physically
action	448	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	escaping	46	I have shared my	[cycling] My ex h
action	449	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	leaving - knowing	47	I remembered it	I had a boyfriend
action	450	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	leaving - staying	49	Not always good	I was beaten by
action	451	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	run - divorce - lo	30	Whilst married 9	Whilst married 9
action	452	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	run - freeze and	31	I was sexually as	I was sexually as
action	453	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	run - leaving	41	but I **screamed**	It was 2009 or 2
action	454	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away	29	I just stood there	-
action	455	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away	35	[running] Prayed	I have not experi
action	456	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away	49	I ran away from	I was beaten by
action	457	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away	32	Just cried and tri	Was abuse beat
action	458	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away	24	[running]I usually	I had a boyfriend
action	459	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away	27	I called the polic	The latest incide
action	460	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away - d	25	I took out a restr	Both my first and
action	461	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	6	and hold me up	This took place
action	462	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	7	Never experienc	Never experienc
action	463	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	9	Was married to a	Was married to a
action	464	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	12	Abused badly fo	Abused badly fo
action	465	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	10	I was beaten mu	I was beaten mu
action	466	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	11	My ex beat me t	My ex beat me t
action	467	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	21	[running] My late	[running] My late
action	468	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	22	My fiance shot m	My fiance shot m

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
action	469	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	14	I ran the other gu	Attempted rape 3
action	470	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	17	It got to a point v	I met the father c
action	471	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	18	Married 17 years	Was married to a
action	472	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away/ge	19	My mother and I	My step father b
action	473	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running out	37	Either kept quiet	Being knocked c
action	474	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running outside	37	When opportunit	Being knocked c
action	475	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	divorcing	60	[getting out] I wa	I was sexually m
action	476	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	ending	13	i got him arreste	i was beaten by
action	477	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	escaping	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
action	478	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	escaping	62	[overcoming] Ma	1. Was attacked
action	479	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	escaping - route	62	1. Was attacked	1. Was attacked
action	480	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	leaving	51	Well in the begin	I have unfortuna
action	481	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	locking self	27	The latest incide	The latest incide
action	482	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	passing out	23	Would pass out a	Assaulted by hus
action	483	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	run - getting awa	40	It's important. If y	Was beaten up r
action	484	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	running away	49	I packed what i c	I was beaten by
action	485	B22	defending	during	escaping	35	suiciding	17	It got to a point v	I met the father c
action	486	B22	defending	during	escaping	37	arresting	46	I attempted to s	[cycling] My ex h
action	487	B22	defending	during	escaping	37	arresting	13	i got him arreste	i was beaten by
action	488	B22	defending	during	escaping	40	keeping going	6	and hold me up a	This took place c
action	489	B22	defending	during	escaping	45	maintaining cove	41	Always look arou	It was 2009 or 20
action	490	B22	defending	during	escaping	45	maintaining cove	6	and hold me up a	This took place c
action	491	B22	defending	during	escaping	45	hiding	21	[running] My late	[running] My late
action	492	B22	defending	during	escaping	45	hiding	25	I took out a restr	Both my first and
action	493	B22	defending	during	escaping	45	stealthing - main	62	1. Was attacked	1. Was attacked
action	494	B22	defending	during	escaping	50	reporting	58	I was sexually as	I was sexually as
action	495	B22	defending	during	escaping	50	reporting	19	My mother and I	My step father b
action	496	B22	defending	during	escaping	50	reporting - calling	27	The latest incide	The latest incide
	497	B22	defending	during	escaping		uncontrolled	39	I wasn't in contro	Many minor ones
	498	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	cycling	46	I was forced to **r**	[cycling] My ex h
	499	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	cycling	56	[cycling] I am cur	[cycling] I am cur
	500	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	cycling - ptsd	48	Temporary relea	[reliving] Physica
	501	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	delaying force - c	44	It didnt and I didn	I was physically
	502	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	divorcing - persis	46	It took me **18 m**	[cycling] My ex h
	503	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	fighting back	56	[cycling] I am cur	[cycling] I am cur
	504	B23	defending	during	cycling		fighting back	105	I fight back I too	My partner is ver
	505	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	hiding	46	I attempted to **s**	[cycling] My ex h
	506	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	hitting back - cyc	56	I am now hitting	[cycling] I am cur
	507	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	hitting back - cyc	56	[fighting] I didn't	[cycling] I am cur
	508	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	improving financ	46	I sought out **cou**	[cycling] My ex h
	509	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	incapacitating - v	46	I could not fight b	[cycling] My ex h
	510	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	injusticing	46	After years in co	[cycling] My ex h
	511	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	keeping quiet	46	I attempted to s	[cycling] My ex h
	512	B23	defending	during	cycling		leave*knowing*	83	I would like to en	I was assaulted a
	513	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	leaving	46	I have shared my	[cycling] My ex h
	514	B23	defending	during	cycling		making the breal	106	we didn't divorce	he strangled me
	515	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	observeraffecting	46	It did not help at	[cycling] My ex h
	516	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	power balancing	46	It did not help at	[cycling] My ex h
	517	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	protecting	46	Then things esca	[cycling] My ex h
	518	B23	defending	during	cycling		re-engaging / ren	82	I left my previous	I have experienc
	519	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	reminding - balan	45	We first suggest	My father physic
	520	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	reporting	46	He loaded our da	[cycling] My ex h

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	521	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	reporting	46	I attempted to s	[cycling] My ex h
	522	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	returning	46	I was forced to r	[cycling] My ex h
	523	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	run - leaving	46	but our neighbo	[cycling] My ex h
	524	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	run - leaving	46	A few months l	[cycling] My ex h
	525	B23	defending	during	cycling		selfrespecting	99	I have not, am sl	It was hectic
	526	B23	defending	during	cycling		speaking out - br	87	I spoke to some	My boyfriend use
	527	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	unfreezing - free	46	[freezing] There	[cycling] My ex h
	528	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	unfreezing - kick	49	[also running] Ki	I was beaten by
	529	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	walking away - c	61	[overcoming] Wa	It was very violer
	530	B23	defending	during	cycling	55	withdrawing case	46	He forced me to	[cycling] My ex h
	531	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	balancing power	48	Worsened the at	[reliving] Physica
or profending <-	532	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	balancing power	44	In multiple exepr	I was physically
	533	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	dangerous - pow	6	From experience	Done
	534	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	43	It didn't. He was	My late husband
	535	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	48	He was much sti	[reliving] Physica
power - how wor	536	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	48	Just added to ab	[reliving] Physica
power - how wor	537	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	49	I was beaten for	I was beaten by
	538	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	50	He stopped	The guy hit me d
	539	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	53	Physically bullied	Physically bullied
	540	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	57	It started out with	It started out with
	541	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	58	[being happy] I h	I was sexually as
	542	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power balancing	51	I have unfortuna	I have unfortuna
	543	B24	defending	during	balancing powe	70	power stopping	51	[protecting] Brav	I have unfortuna
	544	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		apologising	6	We then sat dow	I was walking wit
	545	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		approaching	6	We then sat dow	I was walking wit
	546	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		avoiding	31	I don't go on dat	I was sexually as
	547	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		avoiding	36	I decided not to	I was beaten by
	548	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		avoiding	39	Just getting awa	Many minor ones
	549	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		befriending	6	We then sat dow	I was walking wit
	550	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		clarity	34	I spoke about it.	I was mugged.
	551	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		depression cptsd	65	It caused extrem	Domestic violenc
	552	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		fasting	34	I spoke about it.	I was mugged.
	553	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		firsting	95	By trusting that	I suffered physic
	554	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		frozen	42	Frozen tell now	Physical and em
	555	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		healing	30	Alone single mot	Whilst married 9
	556	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		healing	38	I had to see a do	I was physically
	557	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		healing	96	I'm still in a lot of	I was physically
	558	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		helping each oth	33	I switched off. I v	Growing up in ar
	559	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		hugging	6	We then sat dow	I was walking wit
	560	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		losing self	98	I decided to leav	It was 2009 or 2(
	561	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		medicalising	29	I went to the hos	-
	562	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		medicalising	35	I got medical trea	I have not experi
	563	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		medicalising	38	I had to see a do	I was physically
	564	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		needing help	32	I couldn't care, a	Was abuse beat
	565	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		peacing - peace	34	I spoke about it.	I was mugged.
	566	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		pretending	37	Pretend it never	Being knocked o
	567	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		protecting	28	Tried to protect r	-
	568	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		protection order	104	Will pass this on	Very painful I wa
	569	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		reporting	6	I was advised to	I was walking wit
	570	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		reporting	103	Reporting it to th	Partner abused r
	571	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		reporting / couns	92	I reported to poli	It was between r
	572	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		reviewing	34	I spoke about it.	I was mugged.

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	573	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		silencing	37	Pretend it never	Being knocked o
	574	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		speaking out	34	I spoke about it.	I was mugged.
	575	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		stopping animos	6	We then sat dow	I was walking wit
	576	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		switching off	33	I switched off. I v	Growing up in ar
	577	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		treatment	12	Abused badly fo	Abused badly fo
	578	B31	rebuilding	after	caring		uncareable	32	I couldn't care, a	Was abuse beat
	579	B32	rebuilding	after	support		couraging	46	I have shared m	[cycling] My ex h
	580	B32	rebuilding	after	support		energydiverting	45	To heal and also	My father physic
	581	B32	rebuilding	after	support		forgiving	6	Forgiveness set	I was walking wit
	582	B32	rebuilding	after	support		forgiving self	49	I forgive myself	I was beaten by
	583	B32	rebuilding	after	support		healing	45	To heal and also	My father physic
	584	B32	defending	during	support		healing	46	I have shared m	[cycling] My ex h
	585	B32	defending	during	support		helping others	46	I have shared m	[cycling] My ex h
	586	B32	defending	during	support		helping others	45	I am able to help	My father physic
	587	B32	rebuilding	after	support		making peace	46	I have shared m	[cycling] My ex h
	588	B32	rebuilding	after	support		moving on	47	It allowed me to	I had a boyfriend
	589	B32	rebuilding	after	support		sharing	46	I have shared m	[cycling] My ex h
	590	B32	rebuilding	after	support		learning	17	It got to a point v	I met the father c
selective coding	591	B32	rebuilding	after	support		coping skills	63	Thank you for th	As a child I was
	592	B32	rebuilding	after	support		medicalising	58	I was sexually as	I was sexually as
	593	B32	rebuilding	after	support		processing	35	[running] I have	[running] I have
	594	B32	rebuilding	after	support		protection order	46	I was brave enou	[cycling] My ex h
	595	B32	rebuilding	after	support		protection order	13	i got him arreste	i was beaten by
	596	B32	rebuilding	after	support		protection order	25	I took out a restr	Both my first and
	597	B32	rebuilding	after	support		reporting	52	[reporting] Some	Partner physicall
	598	B32	rebuilding	after	support		reporting	58	[reporting] It cau	I was sexually as
	599	B32	rebuilding	after	support		reporting	60	[reporting] It affe	I was sexually m
	600	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	51	Creating safe sp	I have unfortuna
	601	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	52	Remove the offe	Partner physicall
	602	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	53	Jailing perpetrat	Physically bullie
	603	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	54	Counselling, con	Physical abuse b
	604	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	55	Dont judge them	I was sexually as
	605	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	56	Easy access of p	[cycling] I am cu
	606	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	35	Safe spaces nee	[running] I have
	607	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	6	By loving them w	Have already
	608	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	57		It started out with
	609	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	58	Justice, empathy	I was sexually as
	610	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	59	The domestic vio	When I was 18,
	611	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	60	Support by mear	I was sexually m
	612	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	61	To provide them	It was very violer
	613	B32	rebuilding	after	support		supporting	62	Have female cou	1. Was attacked
	614	B32	rebuilding	after	support		talking	41	Being strong and	It was 2009 or 2(
	615	B32	rebuilding	after	support		talking	97	Taking charge ar	I was physical vi
	616	B32	rebuilding	after	support		therapeuting	36	I had to go for th	I was beaten by
	617	B32	rebuilding	after	support		therapeuting	55	I started talking a	I was sexually as
	618	B32	rebuilding	after	support		therapeuting	46	A few months	[cycling] My ex h
	619	B32	rebuilding	after	support		therapeuting	35	I got medical trea	I have not experi
	620	B32	rebuilding	after	support		therapeuting	57	[therapeuting] UI	It started out with
	621	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		being yourself	47	It allowed me to	I had a boyfriend
	622	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		alive	40	I'm happy I lived	Was beaten up r
	623	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		forgetting	42	I even forget abo	Physical and em
	624	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		forgetting	6	I just wanted it to	Done

Sub-dimension	No.	O1	categories	stage	dimensions	O2	open codes	P no.	coded data	data
	625	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		forgetting / movi	85	I had to act as if	I was emotional
	626	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		forgiving	6	I have reached a	Done
	627	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		freesetting	6	I have reached a	Done
	628	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		glad to share	70	I was glad to sha	I discovered that
	629	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		glad to share	91	I'm glad I could s	My ex boyfriend
	630	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		hope	41	Being happy I ca	It was 2009 or 2(
	631	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		joy	6	I have reached a	Done
	632	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		lucky	41	Relieved and luc	It was 2009 or 2(
	633	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		peace	6	I have reached a	Done
	634	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		presenting - livin	41	Being happy I ca	It was 2009 or 2(
	635	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		relieved	40	Relieved.	Was beaten up r
	636	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		relieved	41	Relieved and luc	It was 2009 or 2(
	637	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		strength	41	Being happy I ca	It was 2009 or 2(
	638	B33	rebuilding	after	joy		the beginning of	94	Tolking about ph	Beaten ../.. Rape