

Manifestations in the Lives of African American Women:

Interpersonal Violence & Traumatic Brain Injuries

Presented by

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Centre for Research & Education
on Violence Against Women &
Children

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Purpose

Provide attendees with information on traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and the associated symptoms that manifest among African American women who experience intimate partner violence

Intimate Partner Violence Statistics

- More than 1 in 3 women (35%) in the United States have experienced, rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Approximately 39 million women (33%) experienced physical abuse by an intimate partner (Black, et al., 2011).

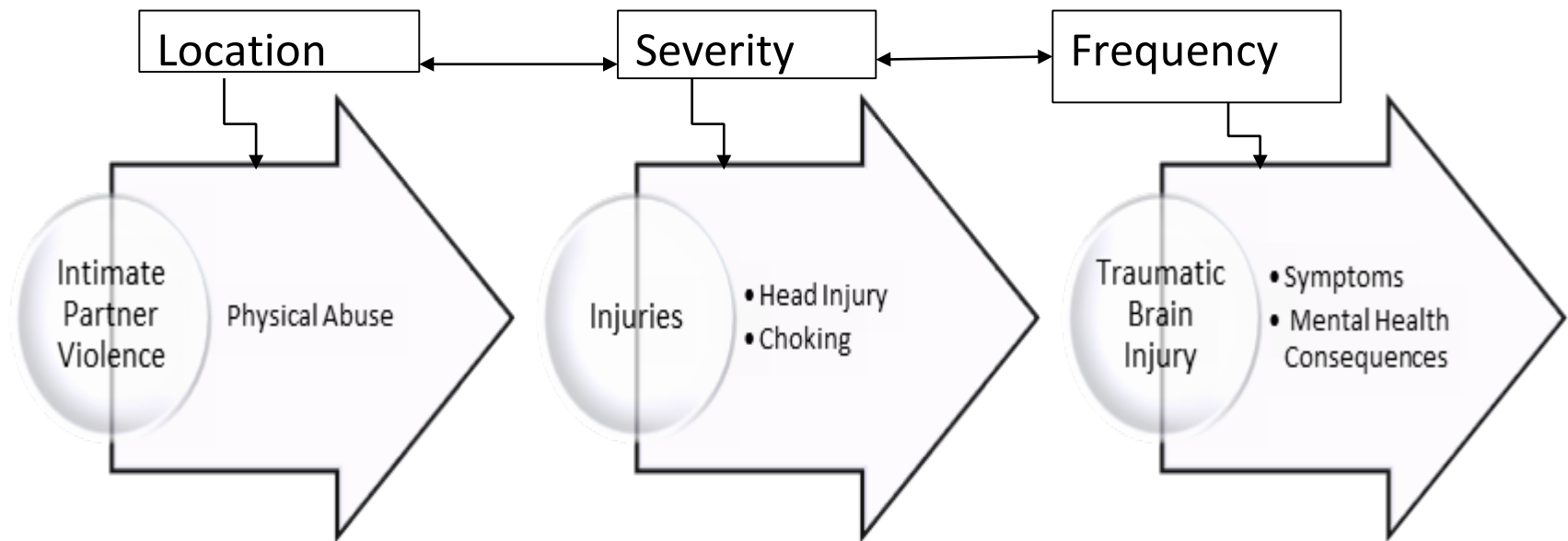
Traumatic Brain Injury Statistics

- Traumatic brain injuries affect approximately 1 to 1.8 million Americans annually and leave these individuals with “life-altering physical, cognitive, or behavioral disabilities” (Faul, Xu, Wald, Coronado, 2010; Webb, Wrigley, Yoels, & Fine, 1995, p. 1113).

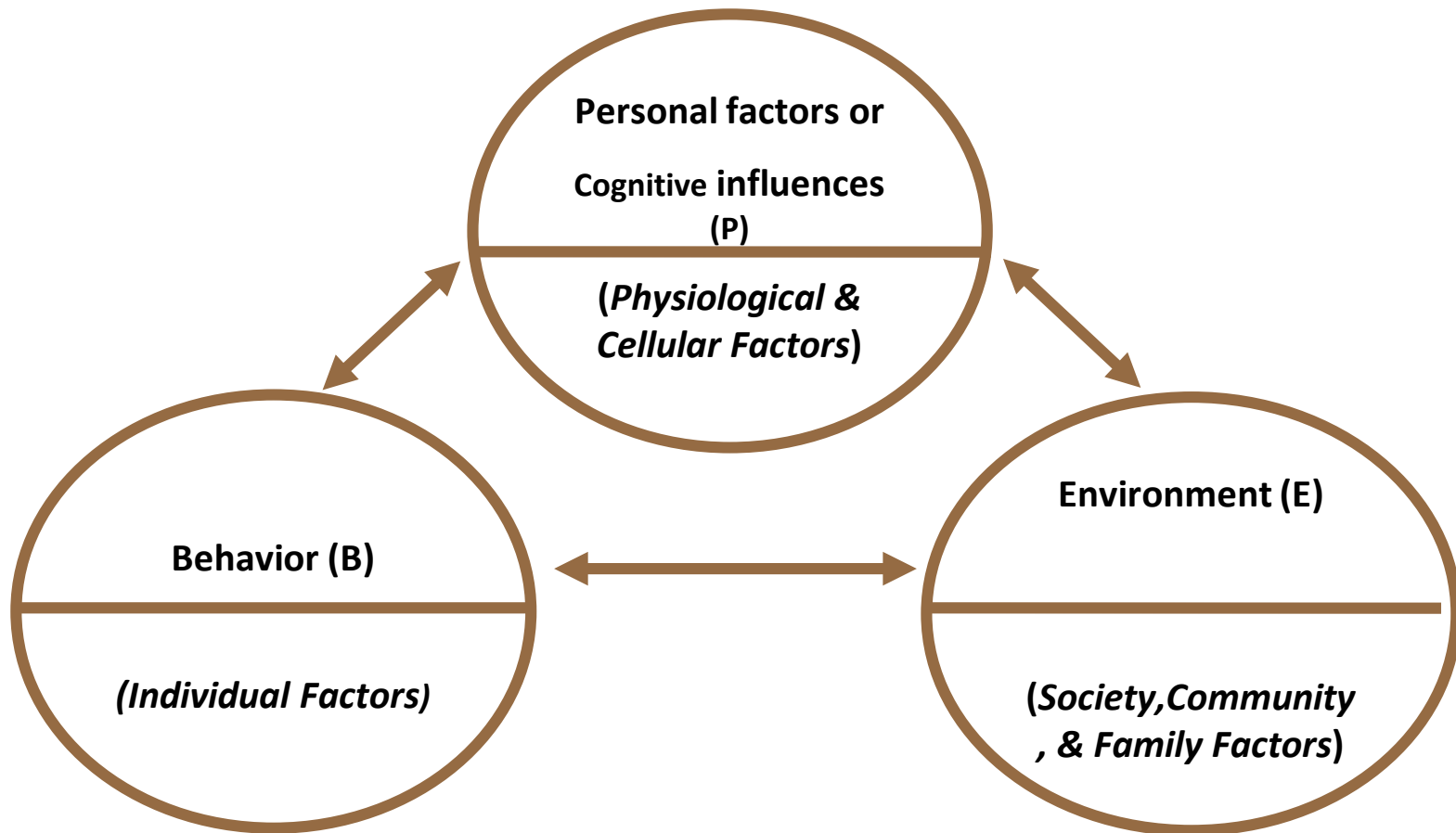
Previous Studies of Intimate Partner Violence & Traumatic Brain Injury

- Among women who are raped and/or physically assaulted, their perpetrators “will often target the woman’s head, face or neck” in the violent attack (Banks & Ackerman, 2002, p.134; Wu, Huff, & Bhandari, 2010).
- Women who report head, neck, or facial injuries also report feeling more anxious, depressed, and more likely to experience PTSD (Banks & Ackerman, 2002).

Mechanisms of Traumatic Brain Injury in Violent Relationships



Conceptual Framework: Social Cognitive Theory & Society to Cells Framework



(Bandura, 1989; Szanton and Gill, 2010)

Mixed Method Research Design

- Gathered both quantitative and qualitative data
- Qualitative strand the dominant method
- Sequential framework
 - Quantitatively identified women who experience a probable TBI and/or post concussive symptoms
 - Qualitative data gained a deeper understanding of how these injuries and/or symptoms impact daily functioning.
 - Explored the underlying mechanisms of probable traumatic brain injury; an aspect of research that is noticeably missing in the literature.

Quantitative Research Questions

- Is there a significant relationship between experiences of trauma and probable traumatic brain injury among abused women?
- Is there a significant relationship between experiences of trauma and post concussive symptoms?
- Is there a significant relationship between probable traumatic brain injury and post concussive symptoms?
- Which set of the following factors best describes the impact of post concussive symptoms among women with a probable traumatic brain injury: coping, social support, resiliency or self-efficacy?

Qualitative Research Questions

- How do injuries, that are representative of a traumatic brain injury, impact the cognitive functioning of abused women?
- How do post concussive symptoms influence a woman's ability to successfully execute behaviors required to take care of her and her family?
- How do coping mechanisms and perceptions of social support help women living with probable traumatic brain injuries and experience post concussive symptoms?

Measurement Instruments Used

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptom Scale- Interview -Assess the presence and severity of PTSD symptoms in individuals with a known trauma history

Brain Injury Screening Questionnaire- Records frequency of injuries and assess post concussive symptoms (including psychological distress) and impact on daily living. Scale includes 100 symptoms of traumatic brain injury.

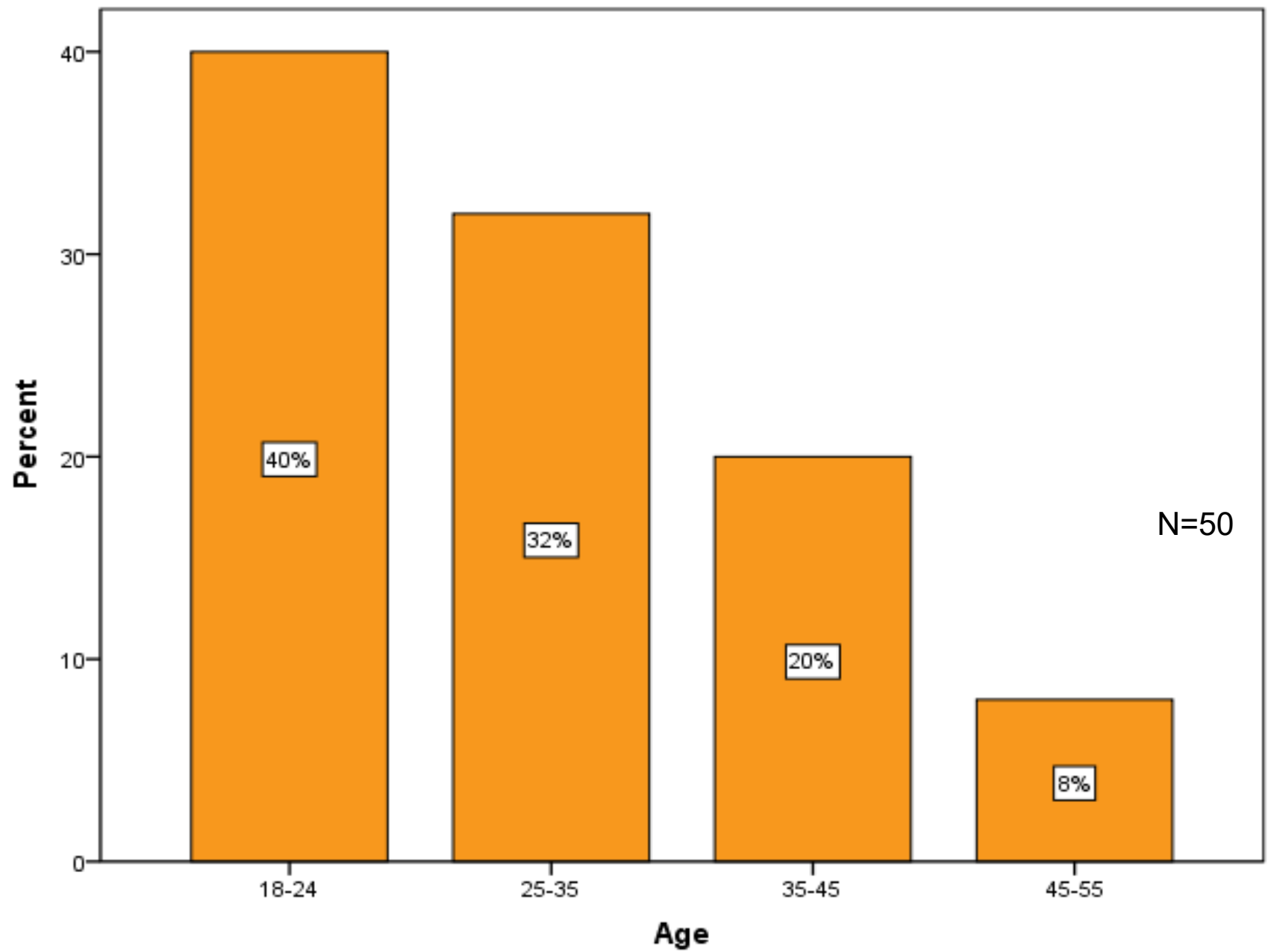
Ways Of Coping Scale- Measure coping efforts amidst stressful events

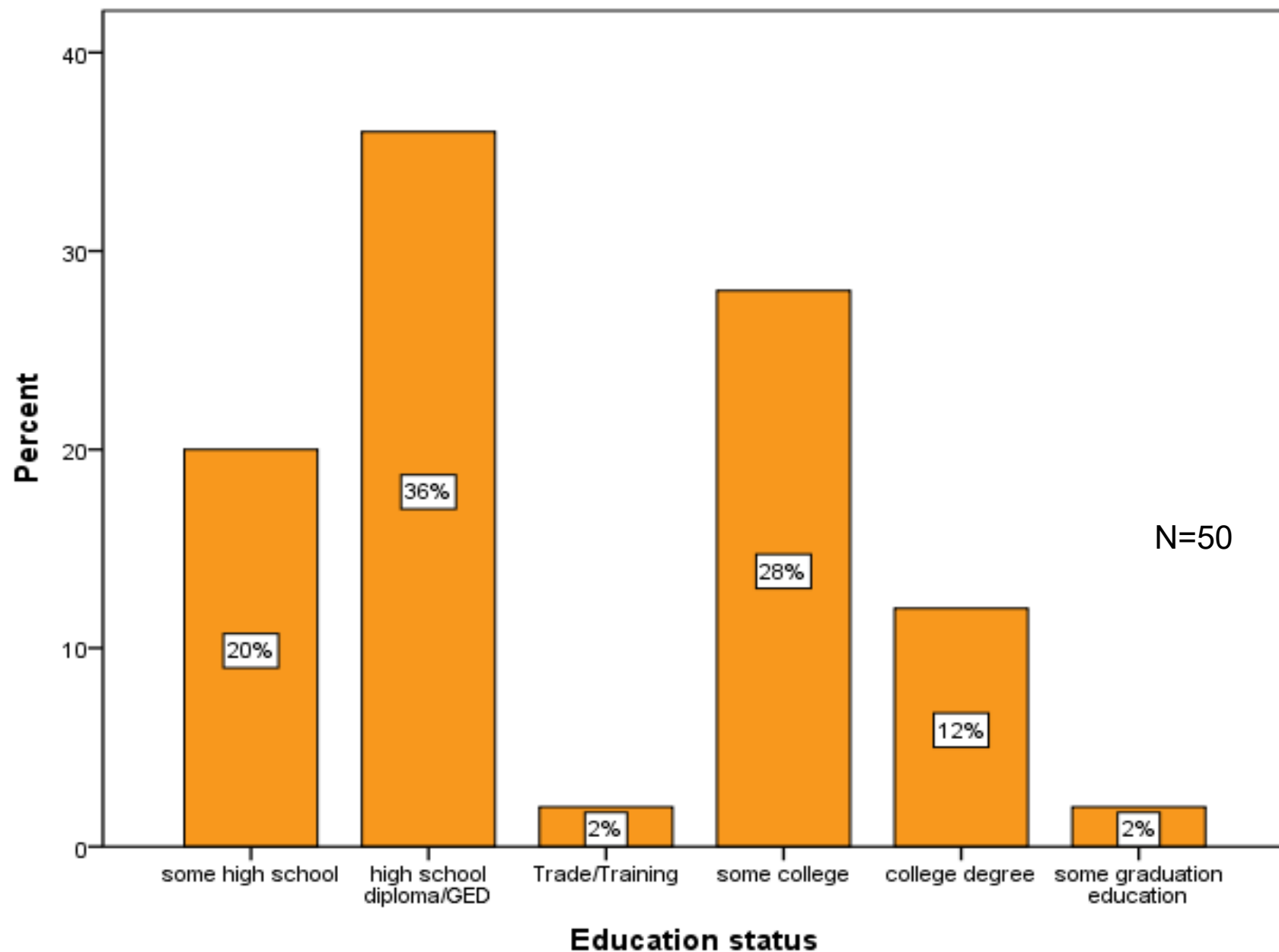
Multi-Dimensional Social Support Scale- Measure how satisfied an individual is with the social support available to them

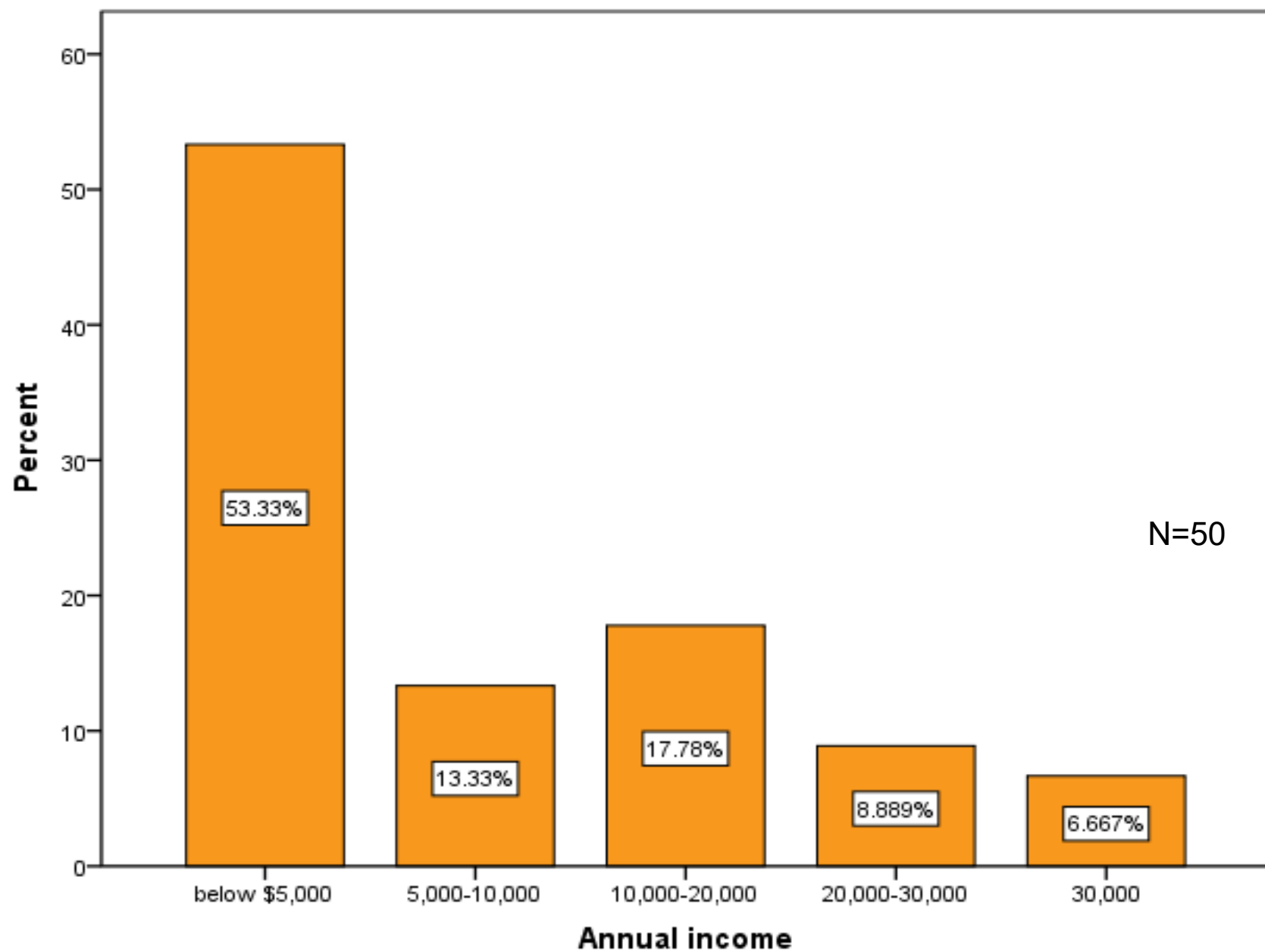
Self Efficacy Scale for Abused Women- Assess belief in one's ability to make decisions and take action

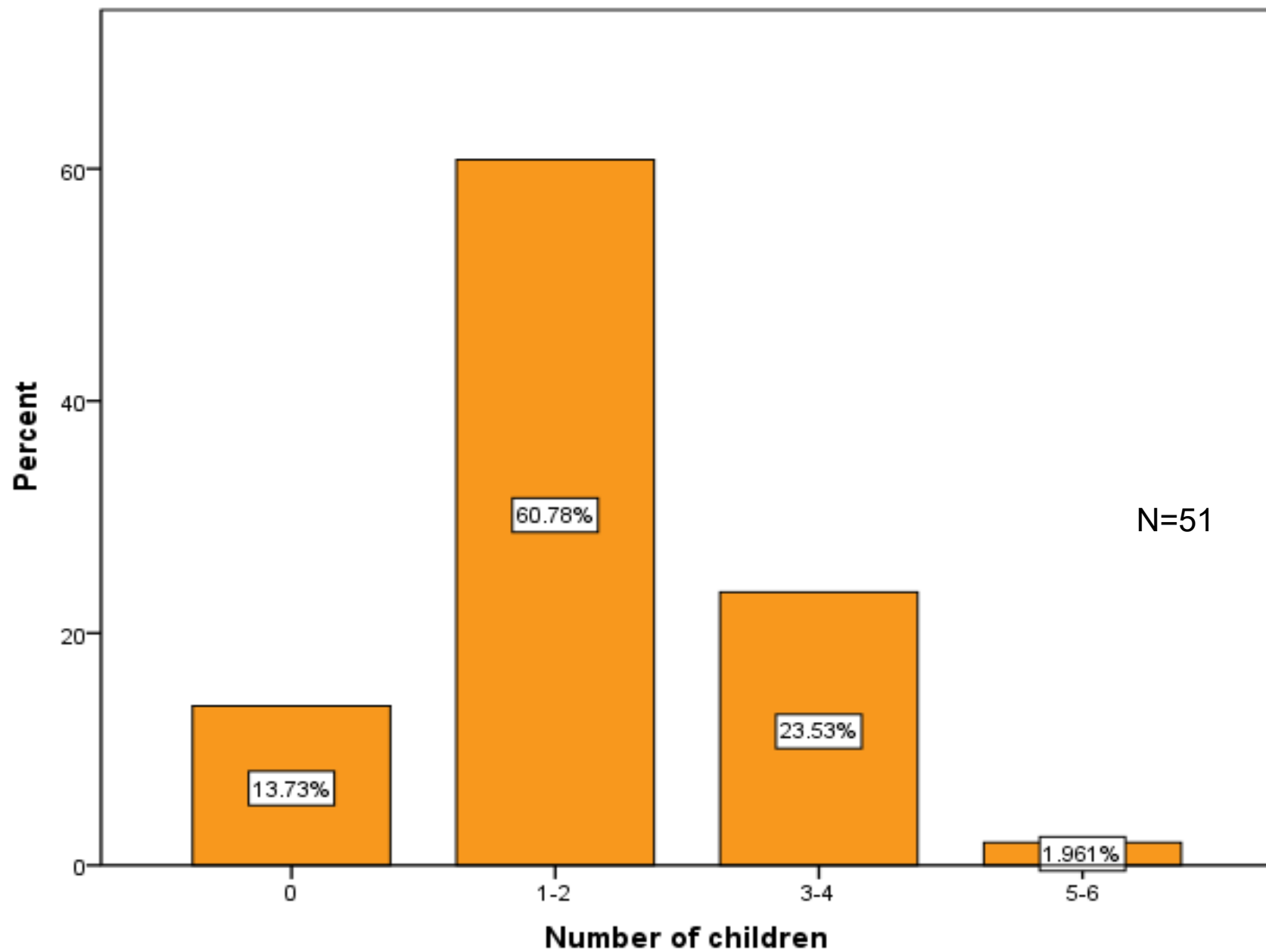
Connor Davidson-Resiliency Scale- Assess personal qualities that enable one to thrive in the face of adversity

Quantitative Results









Question 1

Is there a significant relationship between experiences of trauma and probable traumatic brain injury among abused women?

Variable	r	r ²	p
Blow to the Head	.46	.21	<.05
Other Physically Abusive Events	.27	.07	>.05

Question 2

Is there a significant relationship between experiences of trauma and post concussive symptoms?

Variable	r	r^2	p
Post Concussive Symptoms	.65	.42	<.05

Question 3

Is there a significant relationship between probable traumatic brain injury and post concussive symptoms?

Variable	r	r^2	p
Blow to the Head	.39	.01	<.05
Other Physically Abusive Events	.28	.8	>.05

Quantitative Phase

Question 4:

Which set of the following factors best describes the impact of post concussive symptoms among women with a probable traumatic brain injury: coping, social support, psychological distress, resiliency or self-efficacy?

Factor	R	R ²	β	t	p	F	df	p
Risky Coping	.54	.29	.41	2.81	.008	13.74	1	.001
Family Support	.63	.39	-.35	-2.41	.022	10.74	1	.000

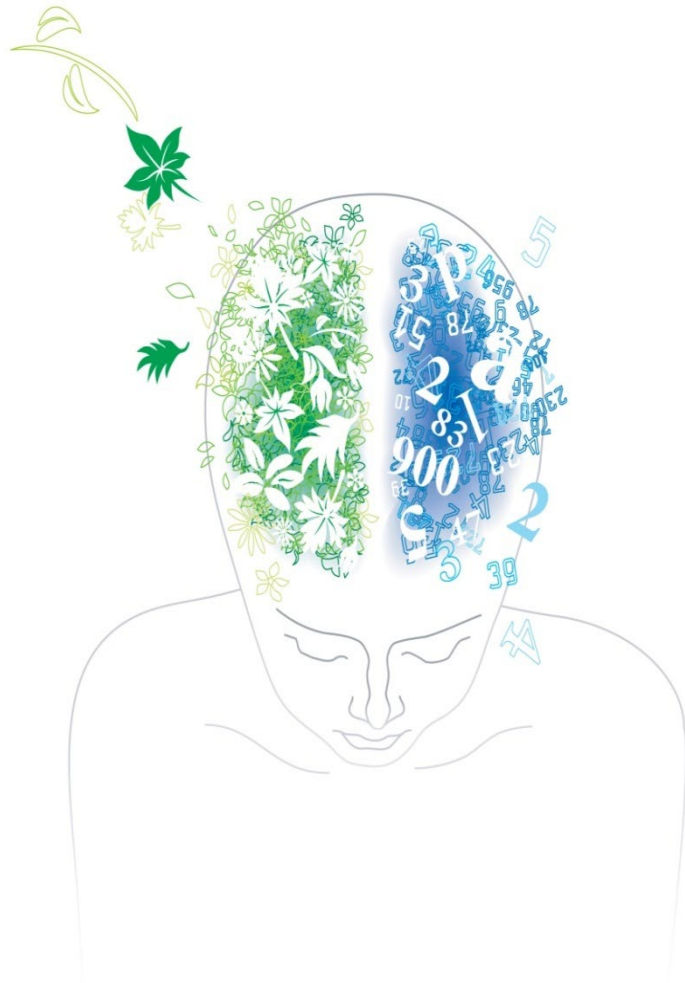
Qualitative Method

Grounded Theory

- **Phase1:**
 - Codes were created based on the meanings, feelings, and actions, that the women assign to their experiences of
 - Trauma
 - Injuries
 - Coping strategies
 - Support
 - Resiliency
 - Self efficacy
 - In-Vivo codes assigned to the “interactive process” the women described with their social environment
 - Interpretive Codes assigned to the interaction of trauma, TBI, self efficacy, support, and resiliency
 - Short memos regarding codes created
- **Phase 2:**
 - The emerging categories were reviewed repeatedly to “differentiate and account for variation” among the data (i.e. meanings, feelings, and actions provided by the women).
 - Clusters based on the literature were created from the research questions and conceptual framework and compared to the In-vivo categories during analysis.
 - After the codes start to gel and no new codes emerged, data was selected for insertion in manuscript to summarize experiences.
 - Quotes that captured similar events or thoughts were moved under core categories or that represent key elements of the emerging model that explains TBI among abused women

Qualitative Results

TBI in Abusive Events



"my eyes were, I guess he was choking me so tight that I had like red lines in my eyes. I had lines in my eyes and I had the marks, fingerprints around my neck."

"I got slapped so hard one time he broke a vessel..in the eye you can see that red string across...that was a ringing of the ear kind of day."

Post Concussive Symptom Cluster: 'Stuck in my tracks'

- *I'm almost stuck in my tracks, [when outdoors for fear of seeing him].*
- *I would have to sit and um and be patient and wait for a thought to occur or happen. And then I would have to remember what am I sitting here waiting on? I thought I was probably losing my mind or about to have a nervous breakdown or something.*

Traumatic Stress, Post Concussive Symptoms Not Related to TBI

He choked me...I just blacked out and once I realized it is when I woke up I was like did I just black out? So once I did that I was trying to get out the door but he was chasing me out the door and so he just dragged me out the door..

Cause like I said he never left any bruises and like I said with the stars thing it was less than a minute and the doctors are gonna be like why you here you should've called the police.

Traumatic Stress, Post Concussive Symptoms Related to TBI

I kinda slipped and he took and banged my head into the and I can't really say if it was the sink or the bathtub but it was one or the other... I passed out...

How long you think you were out or unconscious?

I really don't know but it was long though...

So after that happen how were you feeling?

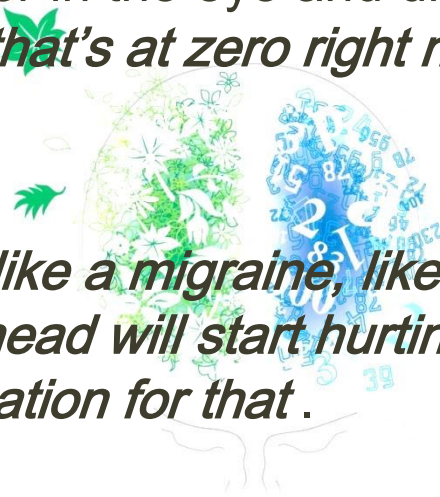
I was really light headed and I had a really, really bad headache...I was also vomiting. Like a migraine headache and I had a knot at the back of my head.

Let me ask about the red lines again. How long did they stay?

A couple days. Headaches lasted a couple days.

Traumatic Stress, Post Concussive Symptoms Related to TBI

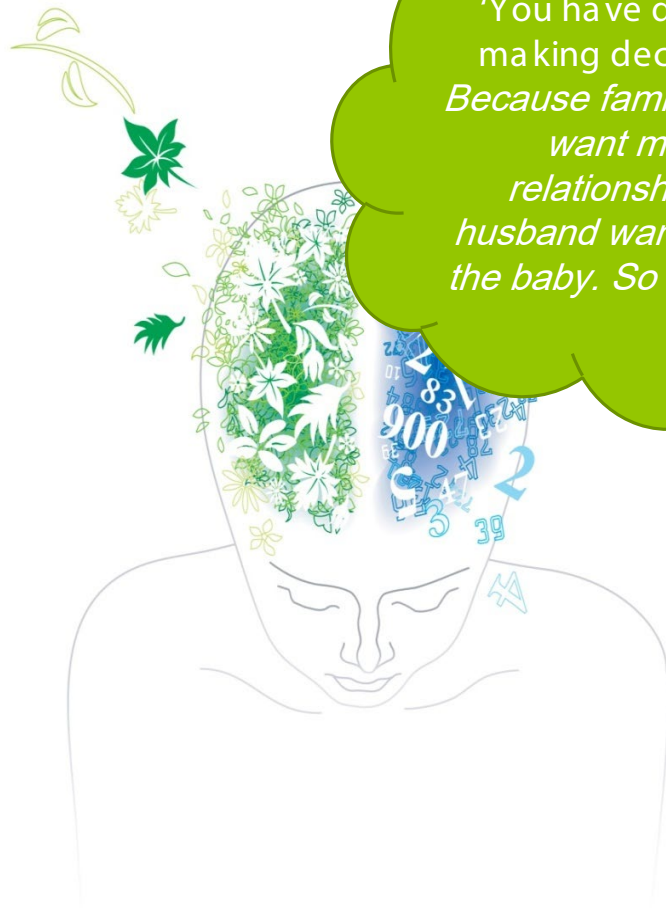
- Impacted employment
 - Abuser punched her in the eye and driving was “*a way that I made money and that’s at zero right now.*”
- Impacted health
 - *I have um almost like a migraine, like if I get too frustrated I’ll black out and my head will start hurting on the left side and he gave me medication for that .*
- Impact ability to cope with stressful situations
 - *It is because I seem to cry a lot...I’m so frustrated*



Post Concussive Symptoms Impact

- Feeling stuck impacts goals
 - *Um it keeps me stuck some days I don't wanna move. Like I said some days I have to push myself to even get up out the bed because of the depression.*
- Depression impact caring for children
 - *I did a lot of hiding. Staying in the house. A lot of crying. Sunk into depression. Really couldn't take care of the kids, you know what I'm saying, cause I didn't want them to see it*

Nothing to do with...

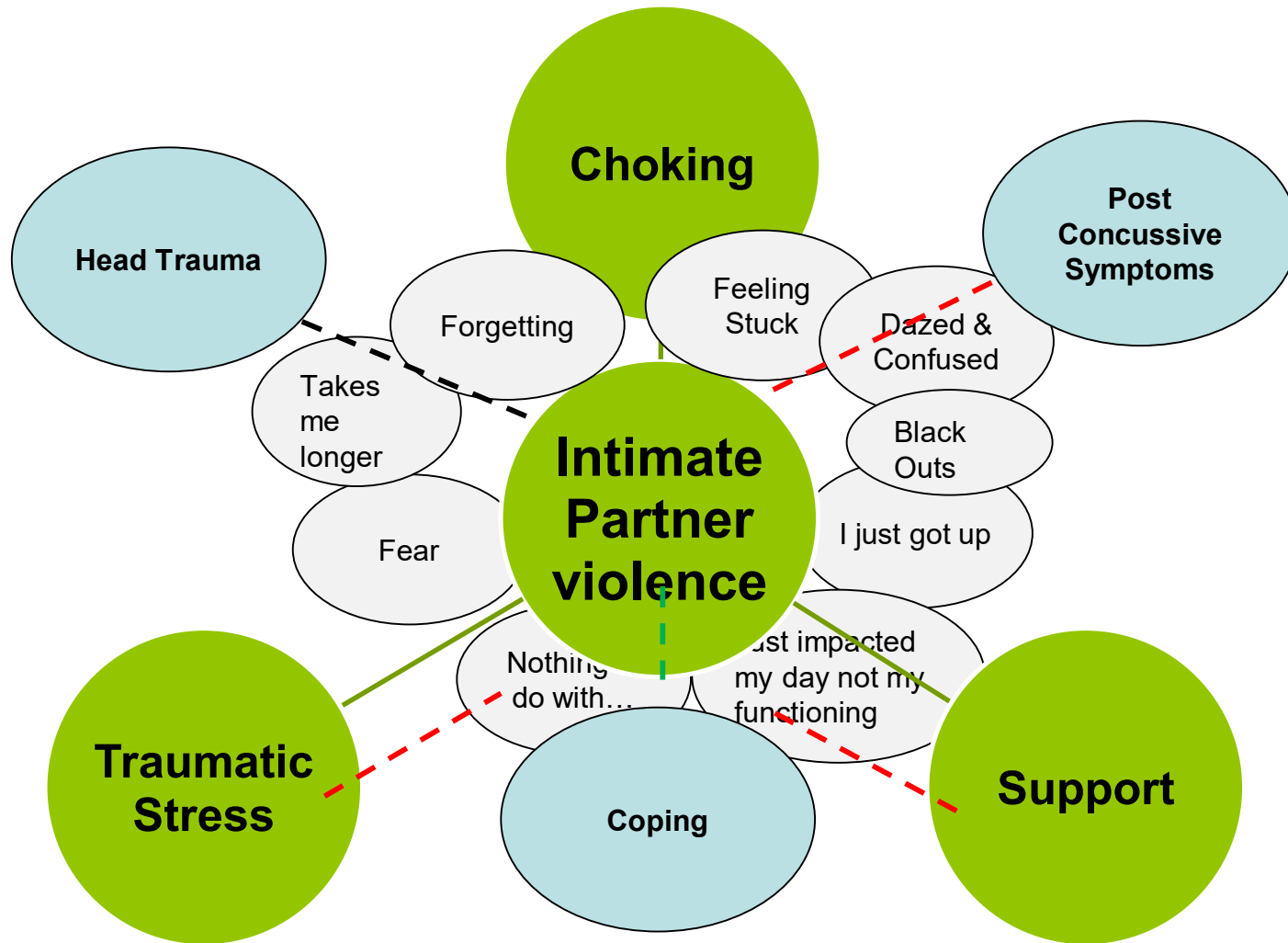


*'You have difficulty making decisions?'
Because family doesn't want me in relationship. My husband wants to see the baby. So confusing*

No it didn't have nothing to do with the forgetting it was just the situation I was in. As far as the housing that have something to do with not having a job and the job it just seem like it's so hard for me to get one.

Ok difficultly learning new information...? I probably be giving up or something. I told you I can't keep appointments with my psychologist or therapist. Like I'm supposed to be meeting up to get my license I don't even know where the book at I can't do it. I can't concentrate like that.

Manifestation Model



Manifestation Model: Themes

- *A circuitous Relationship: Post Traumatic Stress & Traumatic Brain Injury*
 - Context important
- *Resiliency Among an Unknown Threat: Relationship Violence & Post Concussive Symptoms*
 - insignificant relationship between relationship violence and post concussive symptoms
 - abusive context was often to blame for their symptoms

Manifestation Model Themes, cont.

- *Choices to Make: Me, Traumatic Stress & Post Concussive Symptoms*
 - significant relationship between traumatic stress and post concussive symptoms
 - the overlap in these symptoms is not the prevailing issue
 - The context itself can pose as a challenge to identifying traumatic brain injury among abused women.

strategy codes - I have to get things done, almost stuck,
God and prayer, now I literally write things down, stuck in
tracks strategy, my daughter is inspiration

Attention Deficits

- Rehabilitation focuses on restoring attention abilities through repeated practice
- How?
 - Inform case managers or advocates of the need to have tasks, appt., goals, etc. repeated
 - Not consider the client as difficult
 - Provide context-centered cognitive rehabilitation
 - “I was really good about writing my things down that I had to do. It was focusing on them...”

Irritability & Aggression

- Symptoms of brain injury can sometimes be mistaken as mental illness; leading to inappropriate pharmacological responses
- Rehabilitation focuses on information processing - how she perceives and interpret her experiences
 - “We have no place to live. My life is really not...life is just like turned upside down...”

Memory & Problem Solving

- Self-Regulation
- Rehabilitation focuses on being able to perform a series of steps in a particular sequence
 - Compartmentalize tasks associated with goals for treatment
 - Incorporate support system (advocate, family, friends, women in the shelter)

Manifestation Model Themes, cont.

- What does the literature say about co-morbidity with depression and PTSD?
- TBI education and interviewer training
 - Staff
 - Clients
- Instrument
 - Integration with other measures
 - Need translation
- data processes
 - BISQ- computerized scoring format that must be purchased
- Referral and network building
 - What to do with a positive screening?

Limitations

- Traumatic brain injury cannot be diagnosed solely from self-reports of experiencing the injury, and the symptoms associated with TBI. Especially if there is no loss of consciousness (Wilson, 2009).
- Knowing they may have a TBI did not really make a difference to the women
- Self-efficacy based on task completion and not perception of one's overall beliefs of self in various settings
- Sampling strategies prohibit generalizations to be made to the larger population of abused women



Thank You