



PREDICTING RECIDIVISM AMONG DOMESTIC OFFENDERS:

Examining the interconnections between program participation, gender, and family-of-origin issues

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Abstract

Individuals arrested for domestic violence (DV) offenses are often required to participate in a batterer intervention program (BIP). Evaluations of traditional BIPs have produced mixed results, leading to the generation of novel programming options. Using a sample of 250 domestic offenders, the current study examines whether participation in a therapeutic, non-punitive intervention program is tied to recidivism. Results revealed that the number of sessions participants attended was inversely associated with the odds of later arrest for DV offenses, but these effects were moderated by participants' gender and history of physical abuse during childhood. Additional analyses predicting the odds of arrest for non-DV offenses produced a similarly complicated—but promising—pattern of results. The findings demonstrate the need to move away from the standard “one-size-fits-all” approach used by most BIPs and highlight the importance of considering participants' gender and family-of-origin issues as part of DV programming.

Introduction

In the United States, it is estimated that approximately 31.5% of women and 27.5% of men have been physically assaulted by a romantic partner; in 2011 alone, approximately 2.8 million women and 2.4 million men experienced some type of severe physical violence by an intimate partner during the prior year (Breiding, Smith, Basile, Walters, Chen, & Merrick, 2014). Unfortunately, the high incidence of domestic violence (DV) is not a recent phenomenon. Over the past few decades, human service organizations, legislators, advocates, and penal institutions have developed a range of intervention programs to reduce the prevalence of DV, with varying degrees of success (Barner & Carney, 2011). Some of the variability in program effectiveness may be attributed, at least in part, to the lack of homogeneity among program participants (Cunha & Gonçalves, 2013). Although a growing number of researchers and practitioners have called for an end to the one-size-fits-all approach that is typical of most DV interventions (e.g., Cunha & Gonçalves, 2013; Eckhardt, Holtzworth-Munroe, Norlander, Sibley, & Cahill, 2008; Simmons & Lehmann, 2009), relatively few programs have been developed that are flexible enough to meaningfully accommodate participants of both genders or that intentionally address participants' family-of-origin issues. What's more, evaluations of DV intervention programs have historically failed to examine the ways in which domestic offenders' personal attributes *interact* with program participation to predict recidivism.

To address this gap in the literature, I examined the arrest records of 250 randomly selected individuals who participated in a Resolution Counseling Intervention Program (RCIP), an innovative therapeutic intervention for domestic offenders. Specifically, I sought to determine whether session attendance was tied to a reduced likelihood of (a) recidivism and (b) later arrest for non-DV offenses, and if these associations were moderated by participants' gender or history of physical abuse during childhood.

The Evolution of Batterer Intervention Programs

Beginning in the 1980s, jurisdictions began instituting mandatory arrest policies for individuals who committed DV offenses (Schmidt & Sherman, 1996), meaning that emergency responders to DV-related incidents were required to arrest one or both parties involved. Around the same time, many areas began to institute “no-drop” prosecution policies (Hanna, 1996), thereby giving the state the power to prosecute, even when the victim is unwilling to press charges (Corsilles, 1994). Perhaps not surprisingly, the introduction of such policies produced a massive influx of DV cases, resulting in

administrative burden and case backlog (Davis, Smith, & Taylor, 2003). As part of this broad community response to DV (Barner & Carney, 2011)—and offering the added benefit of providing some type of intervention to domestic offenders as they await trial (Gondolf, 2002)—batterer intervention programs (BIPs) have proliferated over the past few decades.

Besides simply reducing recidivism, the general purpose of BIPs is to teach alternatives to violence and increase offenders' sense of accountability (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004). BIPs occur in a group setting and typically last between 12 and 52 weeks, with a recommended duration of 24–26 weeks (Gordon & Moriarty, 2003). The most prominent intervention model, the Duluth model (so-named for its origins in the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project; Pence & Paymar, 1993), also emphasizes consciousness-raising as a means of contesting men's belief that they have the right to exert power and control over their partners (Babcock et al., 2004; Barner & Carney, 2011). In addition to challenging participants to examine the connection between the patriarchal aspects of society and their violent behaviors, the Duluth model is designed to teach men about the importance of trust, support, and negotiation in relationships (Healey & Smith, 1998). The facilitators of such programs do not draw upon therapeutic principles but rather adopt a psychoeducational approach—indeed, part of the reason the traditional BIP model is described as “pro-feminist” is because of its focus on the safety of the victim and not the rehabilitation of the offender (Price & Rosenbaum, 2009).

Of course, the Duluth model is not without its limitations (e.g., Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Stuart, 2005). For instance, the notion that DV is perpetrated solely by men is unfounded (Stuart, 2005); not only are women just as likely (if not more likely) as men to engage in less severe types of DV (e.g., Kelly & Johnson, 2008), but it is also becoming more common for women to be arrested for DV-related offenses (Miller, 2001). Additionally, the assumption that all intimate partner violence can be traced to issues of power and control is misguided, as the majority of DV incidents are generally mild and situational in nature (e.g., Johnson, 2006). In such cases, teaching individuals how to manage their stress or communicate in a positive manner may be more useful than focusing on individuals' underlying sexist attitudes (which may not even be a contributing factor; Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Another side effect of the program's narrow view of DV is that other contributing factors—such as high levels of stress, communication skill deficits, emotion dysregulation, or offenders' own histories of abuse—tend to be viewed as excuses or as attempts to rationalize one's violent behavior (Crockett, Keneski, Yeager, & Loving, 2015; Dutton & Corvo, 2006).

Most importantly, support for the efficacy of the Duluth model has been mixed at best. A small handful of studies have demonstrated that individuals who participate in a BIP that subscribes to the Duluth model are less likely to be rearrested for DV offenses relative to those who receive no such intervention (e.g., Babcock & Steiner, 1999; Palmer, Brown, & Barrera, 1992). For instance, Taylor and colleagues (2001) found that, relative to those who were assigned to 40 hours of community service, individuals placed in a psychoeducational intervention group were significantly less likely to commit another DV-related offense against the same partner in the 12 months after exiting the program (according to their criminal records). However, other findings indicate that BIPs which follow the Duluth curriculum are no more effective at deterring interpersonal violence than other forms of punishment, such as probation (Feder & Dugan, 2002; Gordon & Moriarty, 2003) or other forms of judicial monitoring (Labriola, Rempel, & Davis, 2008). Even more striking, Shepard (1992) found that 40% of Duluth participants reoffended within 6 months of program exit (based on criminal justice data)—which, as Dutton and Corvo (2006) point out, is a higher rate than the 21% observed among individuals who received no intervention (Babcock et al., 2004).

In an effort to provide a more productive form of treatment, practitioners have introduced alternative intervention models, the most popular of which is rooted in the principles of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Rather than viewing DV as a byproduct of offenders' patriarchal values, the CBT model treats violence as a learned behavior that can ultimately be avoided through the use of positive communication strategies, anger management techniques, and self-assertion (e.g., Babcock et al., 2004; Stover, Meadows, & Kaufman, 2009). Thus, CBT interventions tend to be more skills-based than programs anchored in the Duluth curriculum.

Unfortunately, it appears that CBT-based interventions are no more effective than the Duluth model at reducing recidivism. For instance, in their meta-analysis of 22 intervention studies, Babcock and colleagues (2004) found that the effect sizes for CBT and psychoeducational interventions did not significantly differ from one another, regardless of whether police reports or victim reports were examined. Part of the lack of differences between the two models can be attributed to a general "blending" of the two approaches, with many interventions drawing upon both psychoeducational and non-individualized cognitive-behavioral techniques (Babcock et al., 2004; Price & Rosenbaum, 2009).

The Potential Benefit of Resolution Counseling Intervention Programs

In recent years, other therapeutic interventions have been developed to provide an alternative to these more traditional programming options (e.g., Crockett et al., 2015; Gondolf, 2011; Lee, Uken, & Sebold, 2004; Simmons & Lehmann, 2009). One such model is the Resolution Counseling Intervention Program (RCIP), a group-based therapeutic model designed to meet the specific needs and vulnerabilities of its participants. Rooted in counseling principles, RCIPs are led by trained clinicians and emphasize the centrality of the client-therapist relationship. Although certain topics covered in traditional BIPs are also addressed through RCIPs—such as the various definitions of violence, the importance of safety planning, the impact of violence on family members, and the need for personal accountability for one's violent behaviors—RCIP facilitators foster a supportive and respectful environment in which to address these issues and deliberately avoid shaming participants (Crockett et al., 2015). In contrast to standard BIPs, RCIPs downplay issues of power and control and instead emphasize healthy relationship skills, such as conflict resolution, anger management, and positive communication. RCIPs also allow for more individualized treatment by helping offenders cope with any violence they may have experienced in their family of origin and understand how substance use may exacerbate relationship conflict. Thus, RCIPs provide a more meaningful experience to participants than traditional BIPs (Crockett et al., 2015).

To date, only one study has examined the effectiveness of RCIPs in reducing violent behaviors and promoting positive relationship dynamics. Crockett and colleagues (2015) utilized a pre-test/post-test design to assess changes in participants' attitudes and behaviors that contribute to violence, as well as their self-reported psychologically and physically violent behaviors upon completion of an RCIP. Controlling for the tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner, the researchers found that participants' ability to manage their anger, their willingness to take accountability for violent behaviors, their desire to change their violent behaviors, and their intention to engage in safety-planning strategies significantly increased from pre-test to post-test, and their levels of perceived stress showed a marked decrease. Additionally, participants reported engaging in less psychological and physical violence upon completion of the program. Although these findings provide compelling evidence of the potential benefits of RCIPs, the use of self-reported measures provides a less-than-objective assessment of the program's efficacy. What's more, because the post-test was administered at the conclusion of participants' final session of the RCIP, these findings shed little light on whether the presumed reduction

in participants' violent behaviors persists over time and whether individuals who fail to complete the program derive any benefits from their participation. The current study seeks to address both of these shortcomings by examining the criminal records of participants in an RCIP two to eight years after they exited the program, irrespective of whether or not they completed their assigned number of sessions.

The Importance of Considering Participants' Duration of Program Involvement

One of the fundamental principles underlying BIPs—and RCIPs in particular—is that individuals' attitudes toward violence can change and that alternatives to violence can be learned (Miller, Gregory, Iovanni, 2005; Sheehan, Thakor, & Stewart, 2011). However, these attitudinal shifts and the development of such skills require adequate exposure to the intervention (Daly, Power, & Gondolf, 2001). Indeed, one common explanation offered for the modest effects of BIPs on recidivism is the high rate of program attrition; as a result, those who fail to complete the program may not have received the necessary “dosage” to effectively modify their behavior (Bennett, Stoops, Call, & Flett, 2007; Daly & Pelowski, 2000). In line with this perspective, Gondolf (2002) examined four BIPs and found that program completion reduced the risk of recidivism by 46–66%. A more recent review of 30 BIPs revealed that program completion lowered the likelihood of re-arrest for a DV offense by 39–62% (Bennett et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, considering that DV intervention programs can range anywhere from four weeks to two years in length (Daly & Pelowski, 2000), program completion in-and-of-itself may not be an especially meaningful indicator of success. Rather, the *number of sessions* that participants complete may shed greater light on the level of intervention that is required to reduce the likelihood of recidivism among domestic offenders. As Daly and colleagues (2001) pointed out, examining the number of sessions attended provides better insight into individuals' exposure to treatment and allows for greater generalizability across studies compared to that of program completion.

Generally speaking, the more treatment sessions that participants attend, the lower their likelihood of re-arrest following program exit (Babcock & Steiner, 1999; Gordon & Moriarty, 2003, but see Maxwell, Davis, & Taylor, 2010). As part of a broader study of strategies designed to enhance program attendance, Taft and colleagues (2001) found that individuals who completed a greater number of group counseling sessions engaged in fewer physical assaults and caused fewer physical injuries following treatment (based on partner reports), compared to those who completed fewer sessions. What's more, attending a greater number of sessions was associated with fewer DV-related criminal charges following program exit.

Similarly, others have posited that even a “partial dose” of treatment may help to reduce violent behaviors among domestic offenders (Jones, D'Agostino, Gondolf, & Heckert, 2004). For instance, Tollefson and Gross (2006) found that 53% of individuals who attended an intake session but did not complete any treatment sessions ultimately reoffended, relative to only 16% of those who attended at least one session. In order to promote a better understanding of the incremental effect of attendance on recidivism, the current investigation examines the number of sessions participants completed, in lieu of overall program completion.

The Potential Moderating Role of Gender. Importantly, the association between session completion and later recidivism may be informed by a number of factors, such as participants' gender. Although men and women engage in milder forms of violence at comparable rates, the victims of DV incidents resulting in police involvement or injury are disproportionately female (e.g., Archer, 2000;

Straus, 1999). This disproportionality is further reflected in the gender imbalance generally observed across DV intervention programs, as the majority of BIPs typically cater to men relative to women (Miller et al., 2005).

In light of such findings, it is not altogether surprising that male domestic offenders appear to be at greater risk of recidivism relative to their female counterparts (e.g., Renauer & Henning, 2005; Shorey et al., 2012; Ventura & Davis, 2005; Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2002). For instance, Henning and Feder (2004) found that twice as many men than women who were arrested for domestic offenses had a history of *prior* arrests for DV-related incidents. The researchers concluded that, based on their constellation of risk factors, men in their sample were more likely to reengage in partner violence compared to women. Others employing prospective methodologies involving those arrested for DV-related offenses have reached similar conclusions; as an example, Renauer and Henning (2005) utilized police records in two cities to identify individuals who committed domestic offenses and examined whether these individuals were rearrested for a DV-related offense over the course of the next three to five years (the data collection strategy differed between the two cities). Their analysis revealed that men were not only more likely to recidivate than women, but that men were more likely than women to be repeat offenders (i.e., have two or more later offenses).

To date, however, only a small handful of studies have examined gender differences in recidivism following the *completion* of a DV intervention program. The majority of these studies relied on participant self-report and found that men and women tend to show similar declines in their physically violent behaviors following treatment (Crockett et al., 2015; O’Leary, Heyman, & Neidig, 1999). In a rare study that utilized BIP participants’ arrest records to assess gender differences in recidivism, Kingsnorth (2006) found that men and women were equally likely to be rearrested for a DV-related offense (see Muftić & Bouffard, 2007, for a similar pattern of results). However, not all individuals included in the sample had been assigned to or completed a BIP, and the small proportion of female offenders may not have provided adequate power to detect any underlying gender differences. Thus, it remains unclear whether men and women who participate in a DV intervention program differ in their rate of recidivism, and if this difference varies as a function of the number of sessions that they complete.

The Potential Moderating Role of Child Abuse. The odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense upon exiting an RCIP may also be moderated by individuals’ history of child abuse. One of the most commonly touted findings in the family violence literature is that individuals who were abused as children are more likely to engage in violent or abusive behaviors as adults (Whiting, Simmons, Havens, Smith, & Oka, 2009; Widom & Wilson, 2015)—with the important caveat that the majority of individuals with such a history do not ultimately behave violently themselves (e.g., Loseke, 2005; Maxfield & Widom, 1996). Although much of the work on the intergenerational transmission of abuse has examined the connection between a history of child abuse and individuals’ tendency to abuse their own children as adults (e.g., Berlin, Appleyard, & Dodge, 2011; Kaufman & Zigler, 1989; Pears & Capaldi, 2001), other evidence suggests that those who were abused as children may also be more likely to behave violently toward their partners (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kim, 2012; Gover, Kaukinen, & Fox, 2008; White & Widom, 2003). For instance, in their survey of over 300 men arrested for DV, Elmquist and colleagues (in press) found that experiencing physical abuse by one’s mother or father during childhood was associated with self-reported perpetration of physical and psychological violence against one’s partner.

What's more, it appears that perpetrators who have a history of child abuse appear to be at greater risk of recidivism. In her study of 100 batterers assigned to a community intervention program, Shepard (1992) found that a history of abuse in one's family-of-origin was a key differentiating factor between recidivists and non-recidivists. In a similar vein, Tollefson and Gross (2006) found that, among domestic offenders mandated to attend a BIP, individuals who were abused as children were approximately three times more likely to reoffend, compared to those who lacked a history of abuse.

Despite the compelling evidence that experiencing abuse as a child increases the risk of recidivism for DV-related offenses, it remains unclear whether the likelihood of reoffending varies as a *function* of one's participation in a DV intervention program. Although studies examining the connection between individuals' history of child abuse and later recidivism often control for the number of intervention sessions attended (or program completion), researchers have historically overlooked the potential interaction between one's history of child abuse and session completion. The current study builds on the existing literature by testing whether experiencing physical violence in one's family of origin moderates the association between session completion and the odds of reoffending.

Could Participating in an RCIP Reduce the Likelihood of Non-DV Arrests?

Although the primary goal of the current study is to examine whether the number of RCIP sessions that individuals complete is tied to later arrest for a DV-related offense (and whether this expected association is moderated by participants' gender and history of physical abuse during childhood), it is possible that participation in an RCIP may also reduce the odds of arrest for non-DV offenses. RCIPs are designed to equip participants with a number of valuable skills—such as emotional regulation, conflict resolution strategies, and mindfulness—that may not only reduce their aggressive tendencies toward their partners, but also deter them from engaging in other criminal offenses. Considering that DV offenders tend to engage in more general patterns of criminal behavior (rather than “specializing” in DV offenses; Piquero, Brame, Fagan, & Moffitt, 2006; Richards, Jennings, Tomsich, & Gover, 2014)—and given that the failure to complete a BIP is associated with later arrest for any offense (Eckhardt et al., 2008; Olver, Stockdale, & Wormith, 2011)—such results are plausible.

What's more, the variables expected to moderate the association between session completion and rearrest for DV-related offenses—specifically, participants' gender and their history of child abuse—have been previously tied to broader patterns of criminal behavior. For instance, in her review of the literature, Gartner (2011) found that, across societies and historical periods, a far greater proportion of crimes—particularly violent offenses—have been committed by men relative to women. With respect to the connection between one's history of child abuse and later arrest, Milaniak & Widom (2015) found that individuals with a documented history of abuse or neglect were more likely to be arrested for criminal violence (unrelated to DV) compared to a sample of matched controls. In light of these findings, a secondary goal of the current study is to examine whether session completion is tied to a reduction in the odds of arrest for non-DV offenses following program exit, and whether this association is moderated by participants' gender or their history of physical abuse during childhood.

Overview of the Current Study

The overarching goal of the current study was to determine whether greater exposure to RCIP programming translates to reduced criminal behavior after program exit, and whether the effects of program participation vary according to select characteristics of the participants. To do this, I examined the criminal records of a random sample of domestic offenders who previously participated in an RCIP program. Specifically, I tested whether participation in the program was associated with a reduced

likelihood of (a) recidivism and (b) later arrest for a non-DV offense, and if these associations were moderated by participants' gender and history of physical abuse during childhood. Although I hypothesized that individuals who completed more sessions would have lower odds of arrest for either DV-related or non-DV offenses upon exiting the program, given the limited work on the *interconnections* between program attendance, gender, and individuals' history of child abuse, I approached these potential interaction effects from an exploratory angle.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of a random selection of 250 individuals (130 males and 120 females) who attended an RCIP in Travis County between 2004 and 2009. During this time, a total of 4,602 individuals participated in the program (76.47% male, 23.53% female). In order to meaningfully test for gender differences, women were oversampled.¹

The majority of individuals who attended the program as a result of a specific DV offense were pre-adjudication (83.60%).² A smaller number of individuals attended as a result of deferred prosecution (3.20%), to meet the terms of their parole (2.40%), by their own volition (1.60%), as a part of deferred adjudication (0.80%), or for some other reason (4.80%; data were missing for three participants).

Participants varied widely in terms of age, race and ethnicity, educational attainment, income, and their relationship status at intake. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 72, with an average age of 32.07 ($SD = 9.51$; this information was missing for one individual). With respect to race and ethnicity, 51.46% self-identified as Hispanic, 29.66% were non-Hispanic Whites, 17.07% were African American, 1.63% were Native American, 0.41% were Asian, and 4.49% identified as some other race.³ The average participant attended 12 years of school ($SD = 3.17$, range = 0–24 years; 15.60% missing), and the majority were employed at the time of intake (67.21%; 1.20% missing) and earned an average annual income of \$17,138.63 ($SD = \$21,904.79$, range = \$0–\$200,000; 10.80% missing). Regarding their relationship status at intake, 27.69% of participants were married, 28.93% self-identified as separated or divorced, and 0.41% were widowed (3.20% missing).

Procedure

Program Description. Prior to 2013, individuals arrested for DV offenses in Travis County were often required to complete a family violence assessment through Travis County Counseling and Education Services (TCCES), in order to determine their necessary level of intervention and receive a referral to an appropriate intervention program within the community (either the RCIP or a more

¹ All analyses were weighted to adjust for this oversampling.

² The specific referral sources varied widely across both pre- and post-adjudication participants, with 138 individuals (55.20%) attending as a requirement of their personal bond, 33 (13.20%) attending as a requirement of probation, 26 (10.40%) attending by judge mandate, and 18 (7.20%) attending in order to satisfy the terms of a protective order.

³ The percentages add up to more than 100%, as participants were first asked whether or not they self-identify as Hispanic or Latino and then were asked about their racial heritage. Eleven individuals did not provide information about their ethnicity and were excluded from the analyses, and an additional six participants only provided partial information about their racial identity.

traditional BIP).⁴ Upon being referred to the RCIP, offenders attended an orientation session and completed a comprehensive intake, during which counselors collected participants' basic demographic information, a detailed account of the incident that brought them to the program, and information pertaining to their mental and physical health. Based on the information gathered during intake (specifically, the severity of the incident and their estimated likelihood of reoffending), as well as the recommendation offered by TCCES, offenders were assigned to either a 21-week or 30-week program. The majority of participants (64.63%) were assigned to the 21-week program.

All groups consisted of participants of the same gender and met once per week for a two-hour session. Each session was led by a licensed professional counselor and consisted of no more than 12 individuals in order to ensure that each participant received individualized attention during the sessions. Participants were encouraged to attend the same group each week and not rotate between groups, so that they could develop rapport with the counselor and other group members. The groups permitted rolling admission, however, so those who were new to the program were often attending sessions alongside individuals who were about to complete the program. The completion rate of the RCIP was 61.94% (61.24% for men and 62.71% for women). Thus, the attrition rate for the current program (38.06%) is comparable to that of other therapeutic intervention models (approximately 40%), but lower than the rate observed among Duluth-Model intervention programs (approximately 55%; Babcock et al., 2004).

Coding Procedure. Participants' criminal records were pulled from the Texas Department of Public Safety's Conviction Database, which contains publicly available information pertaining to individuals' arrests, prosecutions, and case dispositions (provided the arrest was for a Class B misdemeanor or a more serious offense, and that the information regarding the conviction or deferred adjudication for a specific offense had been reported to the Department). Two reviewers independently coded each criminal record, indicating the specific reason for arrest (or reasons, if multiple charges were associated with a single arrest). Inter-reviewer discrepancies were resolved by a third reviewer (the author), who provided the initial training for coding the criminal records.⁵

Measures

Descriptive information for all major variables in the study can be found in Table 1.

Session Attendance. Participants' attendance was determined by examining counselors' attendance logs. On average, participants attended 16.83 resolution counseling sessions (*SD* = 10.80; *Mdn* = 21.00), with a range of 0 to 50 sessions. Although participants were assigned to either the 21-week or the 30-week program, four individuals went to more than their prescribed 30 sessions as, on rare occasions, some offenders are not deemed ready for graduation at the completion of the program and are encouraged by the counselors to attend a certain number of additional sessions.⁶

Gender. Participants' self-identified gender was collected during the intake process (0 = men; 1 = women). As mentioned above, men and women were comparably represented within the sample (52.00% men, 48.00% women).

⁴ Since 2013, individuals are not referred to TCESS for assessment until after they have been adjudicated.

⁵ Across all charges, the weighted kappa was .94, indicating excellent interrater reliability (Viera & Garrett, 2005).

⁶ When participants who attended more than 30 sessions were excluded from the analyses, the substantive pattern of results was not affected.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Major Study Variables

Variable	Men		Women	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
History of physical abuse during childhood	9	6.98	27	22.50
Racial/Ethnic minority	98	77.17	73	64.04
Employed	97	75.78	69	57.98
History of substance abuse counseling	37	31.36	25	21.01
Post-adjudication	25	19.53	16	13.45
Cohabiting	25	19.38	29	24.17
Assigned to 30-week program	56	44.44	31	25.83
DV-related arrests after program exit	10	7.69	2	1.67
Non-DV arrests after program exit	29	22.31	20	16.67

	Men		Women	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Number of sessions	17.72	11.04	15.87	10.50
Income	\$22,696.25	\$27,285.21	\$11,004.28	\$10,935.91
Age	32.50	9.93	31.62	9.10
Time since program exit (years)	5.56	1.43	5.66	1.37

History of Physical Abuse During Childhood. As part of the intake process, participants were asked whether they experienced any physical abuse from their caregivers as children. Overall, 14.46% of participants reported a history of physical abuse during childhood.

Arrests Following Program Exit. After participants' arrest records were coded, each charge was categorized as either a DV-related or non-DV offense. DV-related offenses included assault causing bodily injury to a family member, violation of a protective order, and terroristic threat of a family or household (other offenses, such as family violence charges involving suffocation or impeded circulation, would have been included, but no participants were arrested for such offenses). Non-DV offenses included both person-related offenses (such as simple assault, sexual assault, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon) and non-person offenses, including crimes against property (e.g., arson, shoplifting, burglary of vehicle), drug-related offenses (e.g., possession of marijuana, manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance), serious motor vehicle offenses (e.g., driving while intoxicated, driving with a suspended license), and obstruction of justice (e.g., fleeing police officer, evading arrest or detainment), among others. The date of each offense was then compared to the date that the participant was dismissed from the program so that only arrests that took place after program exit would be considered. Two dichotomous variables were then created to identify individuals who were arrested for a DV-related or non-DV offense after exiting the program (0 = no, 1 = yes). Just under 5% of participants were arrested for a DV-related offense after they stopped receiving services (4.80%), and 19.60% were later arrested for non-DV offenses.

Covariates. A variety of potential covariates were considered to reduce the likelihood that any observed effects of session attendance, gender, or history of child abuse on the odds of later arrest could be attributed to confounding factors. Specifically, participants' age at intake, race and ethnicity (0

= non-Hispanic White, 1 = racial/ethnic minority), annual income, and employment status at intake (0 = unemployed, 1 = employed) were all included, as these factors have been previously tied to the perpetration of DV and other offenses (e.g., Babcock & Steiner, 1999; Ellison, Trinitapoli, Anderson, & Johnson, 2007; Feder & Dugan, 2002).⁷

In addition, I examined notable personal and interpersonal characteristics that may impact participants' likelihood of engaging in criminal activity, including their history of drug or alcohol counseling (a proxy for a history of substance abuse; Stuart, Moore, Kahler, & Ramsey, 2003), and whether or not they lived with their romantic partners at program intake (Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2002). History of substance abuse counseling was assessed using a single item ("Have you ever received drug or alcohol counseling?") and was coded dichotomously (0 = no, 1 = yes). A little more than a quarter of participants (26.16%) reported that they received counseling for a substance abuse issue at some point in time. With respect to their cohabitation status, participants were asked to describe their living situations as part of the intake process, and counselors recorded whether or not they reported living with a romantic partner (0 = no, 1 = yes). Approximately 21.69% of participants indicated that they shared a residence with their partner at the time of intake.

Finally, three program-related variables (adjudication status, assigned program length, and the amount of time that elapsed since program exit) were considered as potential covariates. Participants who were awaiting their sentencing by the court were considered pre-adjudication, and those who had already been sentenced were classified as post-adjudication (0 = pre-adjudication, 1 = post-adjudication). Adjudication status was determined based on participants' referral source; specifically, individuals who were sent to the program in order to satisfy the terms of their probation, parole, or deferred prosecution were considered post-adjudication, and those who arrived at the program by any other means (e.g., volunteer, in order to meet the requirements of their personal bond) were categorized as pre-adjudication. As described above, participants were assigned to either a 21-week or 30-week program, based on their assessed level of risk and the recommendation of TCESS (0 = 21-week, 1 = 30-week). The amount of time that elapsed between the date that participants exited the program and the date their criminal records were pulled was measured in years ($M = 5.61$; $SD = 1.40$; $Mdn = 5.86$; range = 2.57–7.87).

Results

The primary goal of the current study was to assess whether men's and women's participation in an RCIP interacts with their history of physical abuse during childhood to predict the odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense after exiting the program. Additionally, I examined whether the same combination of variables could be used to predict the odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense after exiting the program.

⁷ Participants' prior arrests were not included as a potential covariate, as it would not be feasible to reliably remove the inciting arrest (which resulted in their participation in the RCIP) from this variable. This complication is partially due to the fact that a substantial amount of time generally elapsed between the inciting incident and their enrollment in the program, making it essentially impossible to identify a prior DV charge as the incurring arrest. What's more, many individuals opt to have their inciting DV arrest expunged from their records after participating in the RCIP (indeed, 63.20% of participants had no arrests on their record dated prior to their enrollment in services). Nevertheless, when participants' arrests prior to intake were included in the model (coded dichotomously, where 0 = no prior arrests and 1 = prior arrests), the substantive pattern of the key results remained the same (with the exception of one interaction effect, which is discussed further below).

Analytic Strategy

To test these hypotheses, I conducted a series of binary logistic regressions using SAS Proc Logistic. I entered the three predictors of interest (the number of sessions completed, gender, and participants' self-reported history of physical abuse during childhood) and three interaction terms (Number of Sessions × Gender, Number of Sessions × Child Abuse, Gender × Child Abuse) into the model to predict the odds of arrest for a specific type of offense upon exiting the program.⁸ I also tested whether the theoretically relevant covariates described in the prior section emerged as meaningful predictors; as expected, all of these variables emerged as significant in at least one model. Any covariates or interaction terms that did not emerge as significant within a given model were excluded.⁹ As described above, all dichotomous variables were dummy-coded in order to ease the interpretation of the models. Participants' age at intake and their annual income were mean-centered. However, the number of sessions that participants attended was not centered, as this variable had a meaningful zero value (specifically, a value of zero indicated that the participant did not attend any sessions of the RCIP after program intake; importantly, the decision to leave this variable uncentered did not impact the reliability of the interactions terms, nor did it affect the pattern of results).¹⁰

Prediction of DV-Related Arrests

The results of the logistic regression predicting DV-related offenses upon program exit can be found in Table 2. With the exception of participants' cohabitation status and the Child Abuse × Gender interaction, all other predictor variables were significant and were retained in the final model.

Examination of Covariates. Counter to expectations, participants who were employed had higher odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense, relative to their unemployed counterparts. Yet, for every additional \$5,000 that participants earned, their odds of being arrested for such an offense declined proportionally by 20.7%. Thus, it appears that merely being employed is not enough to meaningfully reduce the likelihood of arrest; rather, jobs need to be high quality and pay adequately to function as protective factors (see Uggen, Wakefield, & Western, 2005).

Interestingly, the odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense were significantly lower for participants who identified as an ethnic/racial minority, relative to those who identified as non-Hispanic White. Although a handful of studies have demonstrated little connection between participants' race and later recidivism (e.g., Babcock & Steiner, 1999; Ventura & Davis, 2005), the current findings are among the first to demonstrate that, once other important demographic and contextual factors are accounted for, racial and ethnic minorities may actually show *lower* odds of recidivism relative to non-Hispanic Whites.

Consistent with prior work demonstrating that younger individuals are at greater risk of recidivism (Murphy, Musser, & Maton, 1998; Ventura & Davis, 2005), participants' age was also inversely related to their odds of being arrested for a DV-related charge upon exit, such that, for each additional year in age, their odds of being arrested for such an offense declined by 3.8%. On the other

⁸ Follow-up analyses tested for the significance of a three-way interaction between the variables of interest (Number of Sessions × Gender × Child Abuse); this interaction effect was not significant and thus was not included in the final models.

⁹ The inclusion of any non-significant covariates or two-way interaction terms did not meaningfully impact the key findings (although the main effect of gender declined to marginal significance in the analyses for non-DV arrests, $B = -.37$, $SE = .21$, Wald $\chi^2 = 3.28$, $p = .07$).

¹⁰ For additional details regarding model fit or the odds ratios for the interaction effects, please contact the author.

Table 2. Results of the Logistic Regression Predicting DV-Related Arrests

Parameter	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	OR (95% CI)
Constant	-1.67***	.43	15.25	—
Predictors of Interest				
Gender ^a	-8.26***	1.43	33.12	—
Child abuse ^b	2.49***	.32	58.89	—
Number of sessions ^c	-.05***	.01	42.65	—
Gender x Sessions	.29***	.05	32.95	—
Abuse x Sessions	-.18***	.04	16.90	—
Additional Covariates				
Racial/Ethnic minority ^e	-.50**	.19	6.67	.61 (.42–.89)
Job ^e	1.03***	.24	18.37	2.79 (1.75–4.46)
Income ^f	-.00***	.00	20.97	.79 (.72–.88)
Age ^g	-.06***	.01	28.27	.94 (.92–.96)
Substance abuse ^h	.71***	.15	23.35	2.04 (1.53–2.72)
Adjudication status ⁱ	.86***	.19	6.67	2.35 (1.63–3.39)
Years since program exit ^j	-.17**	.05	9.41	.85 (.76–.94)
Pseudo <i>R</i> ²	.91			
Max-rescaled pseudo <i>R</i> ²	.91			

Note. *n* = 201. *SE* = standard error; OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

^aReference category is male. ^bReference category is no history of physical abuse during childhood. ^cSessions are measured in one-session increments. ^dReference category is non-Hispanic White. ^eReference category is unemployed. ^fIncome is measured in \$5,000 increments. ^gAge at program intake is measured in one-year increments. ^hReference category is no history of substance abuse counseling. ⁱReference category is pre-adjudication. ^jYears since program exit is measured in one-year increments.

p* ≤ .01. *p* < .001.

hand, for those who previously received some type of substance abuse counseling, their odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense after exiting the program were 2.72 times greater than those who had never received some form of substance abuse counseling. Such results lend further support to the notion that individuals with a history of substance abuse (and substance abuse treatment) are more prone to reoffending relative to those without such histories (e.g., Shepard, 1992).

Participants' adjudication status and the length of time that elapsed since exiting the program also proved to be meaningful predictors. The odds of being arrested for another DV-related offense after program exit were markedly higher for individuals who waited until after their sentencing to enroll in the program, compared to their counterparts who began services prior to being adjudicated. It is possible that individuals who agree to participate in the program prior to sentencing are more motivated to change their behavior or have a higher stake in conformity (cf. Eckhardt et al., 2008; Thistlethwaite, Wooldredge, & Gibbs, 1998), which may, in turn, be tied to reduced recidivism upon exiting the program. With respect to the amount of time that elapsed between the date participants exited the program and the date their criminal records were pulled, the odds of arrest for DV-related offenses declined by 15.5% for each additional year. These findings suggest the presence of some type of cohort effect, such that individuals who participated in the program more recently showed heightened odds of reoffending upon exiting the program relative to those who participated in the program at an earlier point in time.

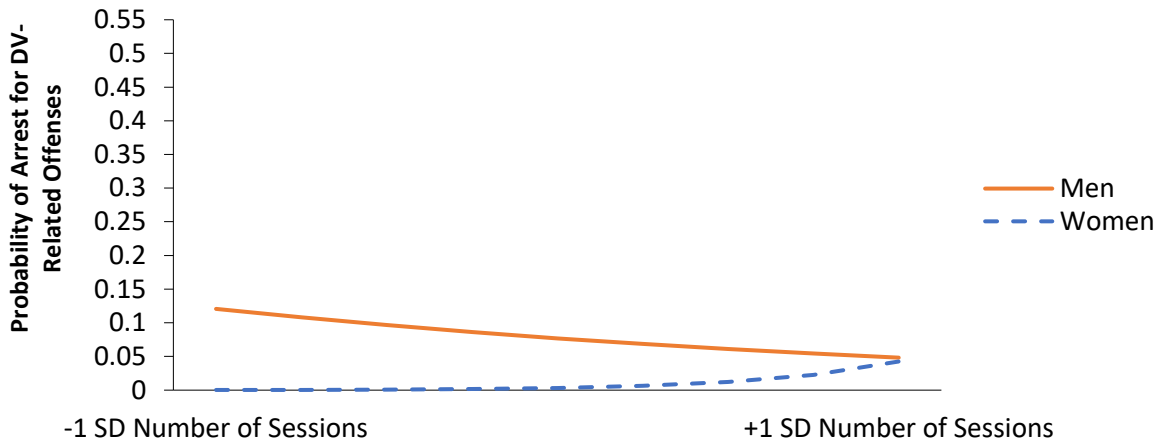


Figure 1. *The association between the number of RCIP sessions attended and the probability of arrest for DV-related offenses following program exit as moderated by participants' gender.*

Primary Analysis. Of particular interest, the predicted interaction between participants' gender and the number of sessions that they completed emerged as significant (see Figure 1). Relative to women, men who chose not to complete any sessions of the RCIP had greater odds of later being arrested for a DV-related offense, but their odds of arrest for DV charges declined as they completed more sessions. On the other hand, women's odds of being arrested for DV-related offenses increased as they completed more sessions, with their odds of arrest for such charges showing progressively sharper increases after they completed approximately 20 sessions. After completing 27 sessions, the odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense after leaving the program were comparable for both sexes.

The interaction between participants' history of physical abuse during childhood and the number of sessions that they completed was also significant (see Figure 2). As individuals who were

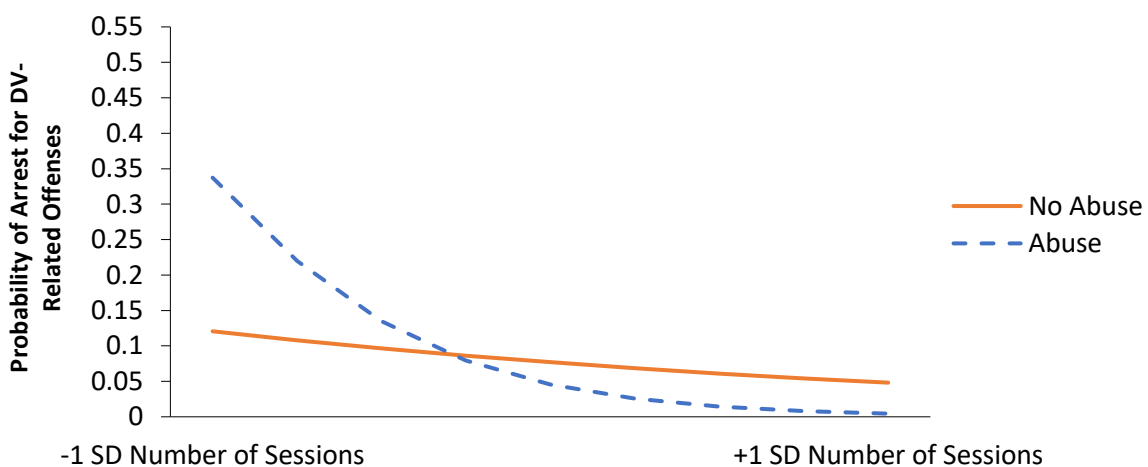


Figure 2. *The association between the number of RCIP sessions attended and the probability of arrest for DV-related offenses following program exit as moderated by participants' history of physical abuse during childhood.*

Table 5. Results of the Logistic Regression Predicting Non-DV Arrests

Parameter	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald χ^2	OR (95% CI)
Constant	-1.88***	.28	45.29	—
Predictors of Interest				
Gender ^a	-.59***	.13	21.59	—
Child abuse ^b	2.88***	.34	71.64	—
Number of sessions ^c	-.02***	.00	15.20	—
Gender x Abuse	-.82*	.35	5.47	—
Abuse x Sessions	-.12***	.02	46.10	—
Additional Covariates				
Race/Ethnic minority ^d	.33**	.12	7.49	1.40 (1.10–1.78)
Job ^e	-.26*	.12	4.60	.77 (.60–.98)
Income ^f	-.00***	.00	13.91	.93 (.89–.97)
Age ^g	-.07***	.01	109.57	.94 (.93–.95)
Cohabitation status ^h	-.74***	.12	41.25	.48 (.38–.60)
Substance abuse ⁱ	.71***	.10	52.40	2.03 (1.68–2.46)
Program length ^j	.55***	.09	34.91	1.74 (1.45–2.09)
Years since program exit ^k	.08*	.04	5.28	1.09 (1.01–1.17)
Pseudo R^2	.97			
Max-rescaled pseudo R^2	.97			

Note. $n = 200$. *SE* = standard error; OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

^aReference category is male. ^bReference category is no history of physical abuse during childhood. ^cSessions are measured in one-session increments. ^dReference category is non-Hispanic White. ^eReference category is unemployed. ^fIncome is measured in \$5,000 increments. ^gAge at program intake is measured in one-year increments. ^hReference category is not cohabiting. ⁱReference category is no history of substance abuse counseling. ^jReference category is the 21-week program. ^kYears since program exit is measured in one-year increments.

* $p < .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p < .001$.

physically abused as children completed more sessions, they showed decreasing odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense upon exiting the program. Among those who enrolled in the RCIP but did not attend any sessions, the odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense were more than twelve times greater for those with a history of child abuse relative to those who lacked such a history. However, the odds of being arrested for such an offense declined for these individuals as they completed more sessions; for those who completed eleven sessions, their odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense were not significantly higher than those who were not abused as children. In fact, after completing 24 sessions, the odds of being arrested for a DV-related offense after exiting the program were significantly *lower* for those with a history of child abuse, relative to their counterparts who were not abused as children.

Prediction of Non-DV Arrests

Table 5 shows the results of the logistic regression predicting the likelihood of arrest for a non-DV offense following program exit. In contrast to the analysis for DV-related offenses, neither participants' adjudication status nor the Number of Sessions \times Gender interaction emerged as significant. Thus, neither of these terms was included in the final analysis. However, cohabitation

status, the length of program to which participants were assigned, and the Gender × Child Abuse interaction emerged as significant and were incorporated into the final model.

Examination of Covariates. In contrast to the analysis for DV-related offenses, participants who were employed had significantly lower odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense, compared to their unemployed counterparts. However, consistent with the first set of findings, participants' odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense upon exiting the program were inversely related to their level of income. Specifically, for each additional \$5,000 that participants earned annually, their odds of being arrested for such an offense declined by 7.1%. Thus, whereas a high-quality, well-paying job seemed to be necessary to reduce the odds of arrest for DV-related offenses, it appears that any employment minimizes the likelihood of later arrest for non-DV offenses (although individuals who reported higher incomes also showed lower odds of arrest).

The pattern of results for participants' racial/ethnic identity also differed, as individuals who identified as a racial/ethnic minority demonstrated higher odds of arrest relative to those who identified as non-Hispanic White. Considering participants who identified as a racial/ethnic minority showed *reduced* odds of arrest for DV-related offenses after accounting for other meaningful factors, it is possible that other unmeasured factors such as criminal profiling, racial stereotyping, community attributes, or a cultural conflict of norms contribute to their higher odds of arrest for non-DV offenses (see Hawkins, 1995; Welch, 2007).

In line with the findings from the first set of analyses, participants' age and history of participating in substance abuse counseling were both associated with their odds of arrest for non-DV offenses. Specifically, for each additional year of age, participants' odds of being arrested for such offenses decreased by 6.4%. On the other hand, the odds of arrest for non-DV offenses were a little over two times greater for those who previously participated in a substance abuse counseling program, relative to those who lacked such a history.

Living with one's romantic partner, on the other hand, served as a protective factor, as the odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense were 52.2% lower for those who resided with their romantic partners at intake compared to those who were not living with their partners when they enrolled in the program. It is possible that residing with one's partner may act as a stabilizing force and deter individuals from engaging in illegal activities (Sampson, Laub, & Wimer, 2006).

The program length to which participants were assigned and the amount of time that elapsed since program exit both emerged as significant in the current analysis. Specifically, individuals who were assigned to the 30-week program had markedly higher odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense upon exiting the program, compared to those who were assigned to the 21-week program. In contrast to the pattern that emerged for DV-related offenses, participants' odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense increased by 9% for each additional year that passed after leaving the program.

Primary Analysis. Importantly, two interactions effects of interest (Gender × Child Abuse and Number of Sessions × Child Abuse) emerged as significant. Because the number of sessions that participants attended was moderated by their history of abuse during childhood—which was in turn moderated by participants' gender—the odds ratios of being arrested for a non-DV offense are shown

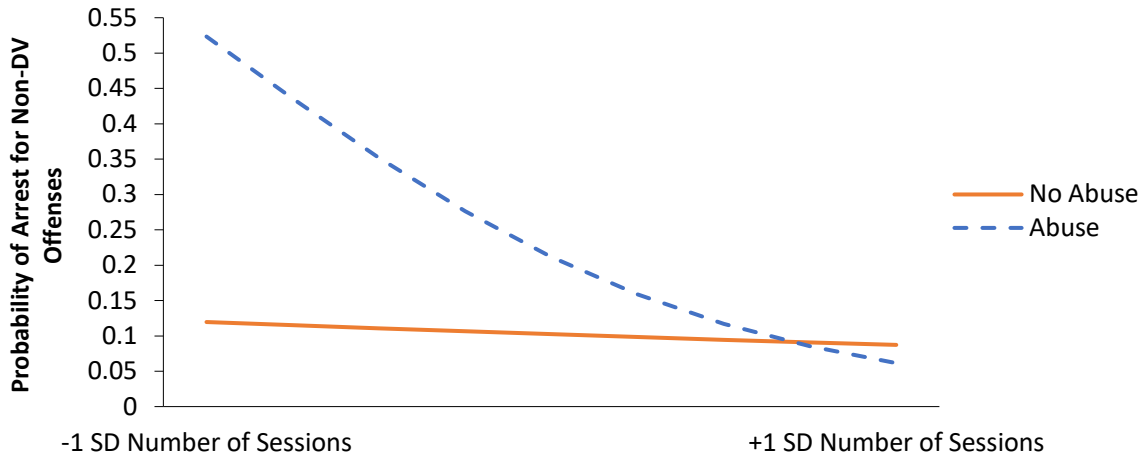


Figure 3. The association between the number of RCIP sessions attended and the probability of arrest for non-DV offenses following program exit as moderated by participants' history of physical abuse during childhood.

as a function of all three of the predictors of interest.¹¹ Among those who did not complete any sessions of the RCIP, the odds of arrest for a non-DV offense were nearly two times greater for men who lacked a history of physical abuse relative to their female counterparts, and the odds of arrest for such an offense were more than four times greater for men who were physically abused as children compared to women who shared such a history. As may have been deduced, men who were physically abused as children had substantially greater odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense relative to men who lacked such a history (for those who completed no sessions of the RCIP, their odds of later arrest for such offenses were nearly 18 times greater). Similarly, compared to women who were not physically abused as children, women who reported a history of physical abuse during their childhoods had markedly greater odds of being arrested for non-DV offenses (for those who completed no sessions of the RCIP, their odds of later arrest for such offenses were nearly eight times greater).

However, as they completed more sessions of the RCIP, participants who were physically abused as children showed a substantial decrease in their odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense upon exiting the program (see Figure 3). By the time men who were physically abused as children completed 20 sessions, their odds of being arrested for such an offense were not significantly different from men who were not abused as children and completed the same number of sessions. Similarly, after completing 14 sessions, women's odds of being arrested for non-DV offenses did not significantly differ as a function of their history of physical abuse during childhood. In fact, by the time these women completed 23 sessions, their odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense were significantly *lower* than those of women who were not physically abused as children.

¹¹ When participants' history of arrest prior to intake was included in the model, the Child Abuse \times Gender interaction did not emerge as significant ($B = -.49$, $SE = .36$, Wald $\chi^2 = 1.92$, $p = .17$). The inclusion of this variable also caused the main effects of participants' gender and race/ethnicity to decline to non-significance ($ps = .06$ and $.11$, respectively).

Discussion

Although a handful of studies have examined whether session attendance, gender, and participants' history of child abuse are *independently* tied to recidivism (e.g., Gordon & Moriarty, 2003; Kingsnorth, 2006; Tollefson & Gross, 2006), the current study is unique in that it assessed whether these factors *interact* to predict the odds of later arrest. Using a random sample of domestic offenders enrolled in an RCIP, significant interactions were detected among these variables when predicting the odds of arrest for both DV-related and non-DV offenses following program exit. These findings illustrate the impact of program participation is far more complicated than is generally suggested.

The Odds of Recidivism

As predicted, the first set of analyses revealed a significant inverse association between the number of sessions that participants completed and their odds of later arrest for a DV-related offense. However, this association was qualified by participants' gender, as well as their history of child abuse. Among those who failed to complete any sessions of the RCIP, men's odds of recidivism were far greater compared to those of women. These findings are consistent with prior studies demonstrating that male domestic offenders tend to reoffend at higher rates than their female counterparts (e.g., Renauer & Henning, 2005; Shorey et al., 2012). To the extent that men completed more sessions, their odds of recidivism declined significantly. Women, on the other hand, showed the reverse pattern—their odds of arrest significantly *increased* to the extent they completed more sessions. In fact, after completing 27 sessions, men and women did not differ in their likelihood of recidivism. This pattern of results complements and extends prior research demonstrating that men and women show comparable rates of recidivism upon exiting a BIP (Kingsnorth, 2006; Muftić & Bouffard, 2007). It appears that this similarity in outcomes is not exclusively driven by men's reduced recidivism but is also achieved, in part, by women's accompanying rise in recidivism.

Why is it that women who completed more sessions of the RCIP showed an increase in their odds of later arrest for DV-related offenses? Perhaps the most straightforward explanation is that women who were assessed as having a higher risk of lethality were mandated to attend a greater number of sessions, and these individuals are more likely to reoffend in general. Alternatively, it is possible continued exposure to other violent individuals—even within a therapeutic context—normalized the prospect of engaging in violent behavior. Polaschek and colleagues (2008) found that violent offenders hold a variety of implicit theories about their behavior and share these beliefs during intervention sessions as a way of rationalizing their behavior. Hearing other group members' explanations for their violence may inadvertently desensitize women to such behaviors and increase their odds of engaging in violence in the future. Another possible explanation is that mandatory participation in a lengthy BIP may carry more social consequences for women than for men. Collins (2010) eloquently argued that women who commit violent offenses violate social norms and may subsequently be ostracized or disconnected from their social networks, undermining their likelihood of rehabilitation. These patterns may be exaggerated when women are incarcerated for long periods of time or, as in the current study, when women are required to participate in a lengthy intervention program. Regardless of the underlying mechanism, these findings lend support to the notion that ongoing participation in a therapeutic intervention is not always tied to better outcomes (Howard, Kopta, Krause, Orlinsky, 1986).

Consistent with the notion that experiencing physical abuse as a child may predispose individuals to behave violently toward their partners (e.g., Elmquist et al., in press), domestic offenders who were physically abused as children and who did not participate in any sessions had far greater odds

of recidivism compared to those who did not have an abusive childhood. However, to the extent that these individuals completed more sessions, their rates of recidivism declined markedly; in fact, after completing 11 sessions, their odds of recidivism were comparable to those without a history of physical abuse during childhood. In contrast to traditional BIPs, RCIPs acknowledge and address participants' exposure to violence in their family of origin (Crockett et al., 2015). This therapeutic approach not only gives participants the opportunity to process their prior experiences in a supportive environment, but also understand the connections between their history of abuse and their more recent violent behaviors. By addressing participants' hostility, negative patterns of communication, and emotional regulation deficits, RCIPs also target a number of factors that may mediate the association between participants' history of child abuse and the perpetration of domestic violence (see Elmquist et al., in press, and Fruzzetti & eun Lee, 2012). The promising results observed among this subset of participants lends support to Saunders' (1996) claim that "[t]he assumption that all offenders will benefit from highly structured psychoeducational groups that avoid discussion of childhood issues needs to be questioned" (p. 411).

The Odds of Later Non-DV Arrests

Among those who did not complete any sessions of the RCIP, men with a history of child abuse had the greatest odds of being arrested for a non-DV offense, followed by their female counterparts. Men and women who were not physically abused as children had lower odds of being arrested for non-DV offenses, and women in this group had particularly low odds of later arrest. These findings are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that individuals who were abused as children are more likely to engage in violent crime outside of the home (Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, 2012; Milaniak & Widom, 2015; Reckdenwald, Mancini, & Beauregard, 2013) and other criminal offenses (Maxfield, Weiler, & Widom, 2000; Mersky et al., 2012), compared to those with no history of child abuse. What's more, nearly 50% of offenders explicitly cite their prior abusive experiences as the root cause of their criminal involvement (Belknap & Holsinger, 2006).

The heightened risk of later arrest observed among women with a history of child abuse are not altogether surprising, in light of prior findings demonstrating that female offenders are more likely to have grown up in severely dysfunctional families (Aalsma & Lapsley, 2001), have a history of multiple types of child abuse (Chen & Gueta, 2016; McClellan, Farabee, & Crouch, 1997), and experience abuse for a longer period of time (McClellan et al., 1997). Exposure to such childhood trauma may disempower women and undermine their relationships, increasing their risk of substance abuse and their likelihood of engaging in criminal activity (Chen & Gueta, 2016). Indeed, Salisbury and van Voorhis (2009) found that female offenders who were abused as children were more likely to experience mental health issues, which in turn were associated with substance abuse and incarceration. Accordingly, researchers have called for multimodal interventions that incorporate principles of trauma-informed care in order to more effectively prevent recidivism among female offenders (e.g., Tripodi & Pettus-Davis, 2013).

Thus, the fact that participation in an RCIP was associated with reduced odds of non-DV arrests among both women *and* men with a history of child abuse is intriguing. The range of topics addressed as part of the RCIP—such as family-of-origin issues, emotional regulation, personal accountability, positive communication, and the impact of substance abuse—not only appears to reduce the odds of further engagement in DV (at least among men), but also minimize the likelihood that participants of both genders will be arrested for unrelated offenses. For instance, many offenders have issues with impulsivity and anger control (e.g., Howard, Huband, Duggan, & Mannion, 2008), and these factors are generally believed to be tied to their criminal activity and recidivism (Beaver, DeLisi, Mears, & Stewart,

2009; Gardner, Boccaccini, Bitting, & Edens, 2015; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; but see Loza & Loza-Fanous, 1999, and Mills & Kroner, 2003). Although “anger management” interventions have shown mixed success at preventing recidivism (see Novaco, 2013), multimodal programs that incorporate emotional regulation skill-building opportunities appear to be effective, particularly among emotionally volatile offenders (Low & Day, in press). In a similar vein, the emphasis that RCIPs place on personal accountability may help offenders self-monitor their cognitions and decision-making processes, thereby empowering participants to make alternative choices and avoid later criminal activity (see Lipsey, Landenberger, & Wilson, 2007). Future research should examine the specific topics (or combination of topics) that contribute to the lower odds of arrest for non-DV offenses among those who attended a greater number of sessions.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the strengths of the current study, several limitations are worth noting. Perhaps most importantly, the current study relied exclusively upon participants’ arrest records in order to assess their recidivism (and other criminal offenses). The use of partner reports in lieu of (or in combination with) arrest records would have provided a more stringent way of determining whether or not participants reoffended. Indeed, one study found that for every documented arrest, offenders engaged in approximately 35 assaults against their victims (Dutton, Bodnarchuk, Kropp, Hart, & Ogloff, 1997). Although arrest records have their limitations, they have the advantage of being accessible for all participants, whereas partner reports would be limited to partners who could be located and agree to participate (Davis, Smith, & Nickles, 1998). This problem is further complicated by the fact that participants may have changed partners, may have multiple partners, or may not be romantically involved with anyone at the time of follow up. Additionally, even though the *volume* of offenses captured by arrest records and partner reports varies, others have noted that the underlying *trends* in the data are generally comparable (Berk & Newton, 1985; see Kingsnorth, 2006). Nevertheless, future studies should attempt to replicate these patterns using alternative methodologies.

The current investigation could have also been strengthened by the inclusion of a control group. Because participants were not randomly assigned to the RCIP, the observed pattern of results cannot definitively be attributed to the intervention itself. It is possible that offenders’ participation in the program and odds of later arrest could be explained by some underlying characteristic that was not measured or accounted for as a part of the current study. However, because a range of factors that have previously been linked to both program participation and recidivism were incorporated into the statistical models (e.g., Babcock & Steiner, 1999), the current findings strongly suggest the effectiveness of RCIPs at reducing the odds of later arrest.

In a similar vein, future investigations should attempt to replicate the current pattern of results using alternative treatment models. Although a substantial number of studies have considered how participants’ gender, history of child abuse, and session attendance are uniquely tied to recidivism (e.g., Babcock & Steiner, 1999; Renauer & Henning, 2005; Tollefson & Gross, 2006), researchers have historically failed to examine the *interconnections* of these variables when assessing program effectiveness. Despite the unique emphasis that RCIPs place on participants’ family-of-origin issues, it is possible (but unlikely) that a more traditional BIP could produce the same pattern of results. Future studies should not only test to see whether such interactions emerge within the context of other interventions, but also examine whether the link between session attendance and recidivism is moderated by other important factors, such as participants’ age, race, or income level.

Finally, it is worth noting that the intervention was implemented at a single site, restricting the geographic representativeness of the findings. States vary with respect to their federal funding allocations, mandatory arrest laws, court structures, sentencing policies, and procedures for record expunction (Barner & Carney, 2011; Boba & Lilley, 2009; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1985; Cissner, Labriola, & Rempel, 2015; Durfee & Fetzer, 2016), potentially limiting the expansion of RCIPs or the replicability of the findings. However, apart from these legal and structural constraints, there is little reason to believe that the program itself would be less effective in other areas of the United States.

Implications

Despite its limitations, several recommendations for DV intervention and prevention programming can be drawn from the current study. Most notably, these findings provide support for moving away from the “one-size-fits-all” approach that is characteristic of most BIPs and moving toward a more individualized program model that addresses participants’ family-of-origin issues. Accordingly, programs should conduct a comprehensive intake in order to identify any factors which, if ignored, may place participants at a greater risk of recidivism, such as any unaddressed family-of-origin issues.

The association between the number of sessions that participants attended and later recidivism varied as a function of their gender and history of physical abuse during childhood, suggesting that the length of the intervention should be determined on a person-by-person basis. In general, the duration of the intervention is determined by program design, state standards, judge ruling, or a measure of participants’ immediate lethality (e.g., Boal & Mankowski, 2014), but little empirical attention has been paid to the number of sessions necessary to reduce recidivism, much less how the required dosage varies based on participant characteristics. As Milner and Singleton (2008) asked, “[W]e wonder how programmes [sic] that insist on a set number of sessions arrive at a figure—where is the evidence that twelve or twenty-four sessions, say, are necessary for change...?” (p. 43). Based on the current findings, women begin to show a pronounced increase in their odds of recidivism after completing approximately 20 sessions, whereas the decline in men’s odds of recidivism largely levels off after approximately 25 sessions. After completing 11 sessions, the odds of recidivism are comparable for those with or without a history of physical abuse during childhood, indicating that the gender-based findings provide a more conservative estimate of the number of sessions required to see meaningful change. Similarly, fewer sessions are required to minimize the odds of later arrest for non-DV offenses among those with a history of child abuse; specifically, the gap in the odds of arrest becomes non-significant for women after 14 sessions, and it becomes non-significant for men after 20 sessions. Thus, it appears that female participants need only complete 14–20 sessions in order to receive the maximum benefit from the RCIP, whereas male participants typically require approximately 25 sessions in order to receive the most benefit from the program.

Lastly, as Bennett and colleagues (2007) recommended, practitioners should explore the possibility of expanding *prevention* programming for DV, rather than focusing primarily on intervention. Such programming may be particularly beneficial for individuals who were physically abused as children, such as youth in the foster care system. Not only are those with a history of child abuse at an elevated risk for engaging in DV (e.g., Elmquist et al., in press; White & Widom, 2003), but youth also tend to engage in DV at a higher rate relative to older individuals (e.g., Peters, Shackelford, & Buss, 2002). RCIPs could easily be adapted to be applied as a prevention model, with the goal of teaching vulnerable individuals alternatives to violence, preventing initial DV-related assaults and arrests, and ultimately minimizing the need for intervention programming.

Conclusion

Individuals arrested for DV-related offenses are often required to participate in BIPs, but the duration and type of services that participants receive are often not tailored to their individual needs. By fostering an emotionally supportive, non-punitive environment, RCIPs provide a promising alternative to traditional BIPs, with the flexibility to address participants' family-of-origin issues and other risk factors. The current study demonstrates that RCIPs have the potential to reduce the odds of later arrest for both DV and non-DV offenses, particularly among those who were physically abused as children. Additionally, it appears that the intended benefits of RCIPs can be obtained after fewer sessions than the standard number of sessions required by most BIPs.

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