The Need for my Research

- Contemporary research has identified barriers to accessing support for women experiencing/ survivors of intimate partner violence (1).
- Currently, there is little qualitative work on the role of pathways to support and women’s experiences of disclosing their experiences of domestic abuse in different contexts in the United Kingdom (2).
- My research is based in the UK and by using qualitative interviews I desired to obtain the narratives of women who have experienced intimate partner violence in their relationships, reflecting on the barriers they have faced throughout the help-seeking process.

Barriers to Help-Seeking

Barriers are often more than one and interlinked (1)

- Violence
- Patriarchy
- Partner Attachment
- Socio-demographic Factors
- Religion
- Social stigma
- Children
- Psychology of Violence
- Environmental Barriers

3 Stages of Help-Seeking

The three stages outlined below suggest a conceptual framework for help seeking (3). All stages are influenced by individual, interpersonal and socio-cultural factors

- Violence Recognition
- Decision to take action
- Choosing Help provider

Formal/ Informal support

Formal
- Police
- Healthcare Provider
- Support Agencies

Informal
- Friends
- Family
- Colleagues

The stronger the informal support, the greater the chances of accessing formal support (3)

Initial Findings

- I had suicidal thoughts and even tried to end it once
- I just wanted him to be happy but I would always end up upsetting him
- I wanted my children to have a father…you see I hadn’t had one and it was important to me
- Everyone thought he was great
- At first I thought I was imagining it, he would act as if nothing had happened.
- I was walking on egg shells all the time
- I never saw it as abuse until he actually hit me
- I hated who I had become
- He knew exactly where I was, he had a tracker on my phone
- He monitored my social media…if I liked a boys picture, then I was having an affair
- I was so alone
- I was so alone
- I just wanted him to protect me
- I felt like it was my fault, like I let him do all those things to me
- I stopped talking to friends and family without realising until I had no one.
- I loved him…I thought I could change him
- If I didn’t do as he wanted, he’d hit me or sulk, the sulking was much worse than the hitting
- I didn’t know coercion was not consent
- They kept saying ‘why don’t you just leave?’
- He was in my whole life, had taken over it and I don’t know how it happened.
- I didn’t think anyone would believe me
- I didn’t tell anyone, I didn’t want them to hate him, he wasn’t always like that
- Self harming was my way of coping
- I just wanted him to protect me

My research sits within a wider project being undertaken by the None in Three Research Centre, funded by GCRF (through UKRI) and the University of Huddersfield. The aim of the Centre is to reduce gender based violence. The project is multi-country (UK, India, Uganda and Jamaica) and all countries are tackling issues that are most prevalent to them. The UK focus is intimate partner violence in young people’s relationships. The Centre is developing an interactive computer game as an intervention to be played in schools allowing children 14-18 years of age to reflect on their intimate relationships, helping them to recognize manipulative, coercive and abusive behaviours and the impact of those on others, whilst understanding healthy relationships. The experiences of women interviewed will influence the script and storyline of the game, paying particular attention to dialogue delivery, attitudes and perceptions. The Centre will also be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention.

References