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# Intimate Partner Violence Impact Panels for Batterer Intervention: a Mixed-Methods Evaluation of a Restorative Justice Process

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Intimate Partner Violence Impact Panels for Batterer Intervention:  
A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of a Restorative Justice Process

by

Kate Louise Sackett

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science  
in  
Psychology

Thesis Committee:  
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Portland State University  
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## Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is an extremely prevalent and concerning social issue, with limited current intervention and prevention strategies. Batterer intervention programs (BIPs) have demonstrated some small effects of programs in reducing offender recidivism, however there is a growing understanding that not all offenders respond similarly to batterer intervention and the problem of IPV persists. Restorative justice programs including impact panels may be an important addition to BIPs, but research is extremely limited on impact panel effectiveness and whether panels are appropriate for IPV or pose additional safety risks to survivors.

The current study consists of a naturalistic mixed-methods evaluation of the use of IPV impact panels in the context of batterer intervention. Data collection methods include an ethnographic inquiry of the program setting and participant experiences, archival data analysis of offender responses to the panel ( $N = 287$ ), and focus groups ( $k = 4$ ) with survivors, offenders, and BIP providers to investigate the panel's impact on survivors and offenders and generate potential indicators of panel outcomes for survivors and offenders. Findings suggest that panel impacts on survivors include reaching new understandings, healing, and empowerment; panel impacts on offenders include connection with survivor speakers, reaching new understandings, and healing. Implications, limitations, and future aims of this program of research are discussed.

## Dedication

To my mom, Kristi, Dad, Brian, brother, Logan, and the rest of my family.  
Everything that I am able to do and be is because of you. I love you all so much.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
I. Background and Specific Aims.....	1
Intimate Partner Violence.....	1
Batterer Intervention Programs.....	4
Offender characteristics.....	7
Restorative Justice.....	10
Definitions and theoretical models.....	10
Theoretical outcomes.....	20
Considerations for use in IPV contexts.....	24
Stand-alone restorative justice programs for IPV.....	28
An auxiliary restorative justice program for IPV.....	33
Current Study.....	45
II. Methods.....	48
Design.....	48
Study Context.....	52
Participants.....	53
Procedure.....	55
Ethnography.....	55
Archival survey data collection.....	61
Focus groups.....	62
Measures.....	71
Archival survey data feedback form.....	71
Demographics survey.....	71
Focus group materials.....	72
Analysis.....	72
Ethnographic analysis.....	72
Archival survey quantitative data analysis.....	75
Archival survey and focus group qualitative analysis.....	76
My Positionality and Reflexive Stance.....	80
III. Findings.....	90
RQ1 Findings: Sequential Activities and Interactional Processes of the Panel.....	91
Panel setup.....	92
Panel introduction.....	95
Speakers share their stories.....	97
Question and answer session.....	104
Panel wrap-up and debrief.....	111
Restorative panel processes.....	112
RQ2 and RQ3 Findings: Perceptions and Impacts of the Panel.....	122
Survivor experience.....	124

Offender transformative experience.....	.138
Offender static experience.....	.153
Offender evaluations of the panel on feedback forms.....	.156
Consistencies and Inconsistencies in Findings Across Study Sources.....	.160
Cultural Considerations.....	.164
IV. Discussion and Implications.....	.169
Contributions to the Impact Panel Literature.....	.170
Contributions to the Literature on Restorative Justice for IPV.....	.177
Contributions to the Restorative Justice Theoretical Literature.....	.183
Contributions to the Literature on the Systemic Response to IPV.....	.192
Limitations.....	.195
Future Aims.....	.200
Tables.....	.203
Figures.....	.219
References.....	.220
Appendices.....	.231
Appendix A. IPV Impact Panel Focus Groups Recruitment Script.....	.231
Appendix B. Consent Form for Offender Focus Groups.....	.232
Appendix C. Consent Form for BIP Provider Focus Groups.....	.234
Appendix D. Consent Form for Survivor Focus Groups.....	.236
Appendix E. Moderator Script for Offender Focus Groups.....	.238
Appendix F. Moderator Script for BIP Provider Focus Groups.....	.240
Appendix G. Moderator Script for Survivor Focus Groups.....	.242
Appendix H. Sample Feedback Form (Version A) with Survey Items.....	.244



## List of Tables

1. Proposed Standards for Restorative Justice (Braithwaite, 2002).....	203
2. Restorative Justice with Respect to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Block & Lichti, 2002).....	204
3. Research Questions and Corresponding Methods of the Current Study.....	206
4. Demographic Characteristics of Survivor Focus Group Participants.....	207
5. Coded Interactional Processes by Data Source.....	208
6. Speakers' and Offenders' Perceptions of the Panel.....	210
7. Coded Impacts of Panel on Survivors by Data Source.....	211
8. Key Panel Impacts on Speakers.....	213
9. Coded Impacts of Panel on Offenders by Data Source.....	214
10. Key Panel Impacts on Offenders.....	216
11. Survey Items and Descriptive Statistics of Feedback Form Versions A and B.....	217
12. Inter-Item Correlations of Feedback Form Versions A and B.....	218

List of Figures

1. Flowchart of panel activities and interactional processes.....219

## **I. Background and Specific Aims**

### **Intimate Partner Violence**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most pressing social problems facing the United States. The 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (Black et al., 2011) defines IPV (sometimes called “domestic violence”) as physical violence, sexual violence, threats of violence, stalking and/or psychological aggression by a current or former intimate partner. Black et al. (2011) estimated in 2010 that more than one in three women and one in four men in the United States experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

The current response to IPV is most often a form of tertiary prevention (Caplan, 1964), targeted at individuals directly responsible for and affected by IPV. In this proposal, the term “offenders” will be used to describe individuals responsible for IPV (otherwise referred to as “men who batter” or “perpetrators of violence”). The term “survivors” will be used to describe individuals who experience IPV (otherwise referred to as “victims”). Separate services are typically offered to survivors and offenders through the criminal justice system, advocacy organizations, and batterer intervention programs (BIPs). The most widely implemented institutional responses to IPV are connected to the retributive criminal justice system and include police arrest, protection orders, civil and criminal court cases, and BIPs.

Although the retributive criminal justice system has the power to enforce sanctions, research shows some limitations of these responses. For example, survivors who are dissatisfied with their experience in the criminal justice system subsequently

indicate a reluctance to use the system in the future (Hotaling & Buzawa, 2003). Furthermore, individuals marginalized in American society in multiple ways, such as black women by race- and gender-related oppression, may be particularly underserved by the criminal justice system and be less likely to seek help through police, health systems, or shelters (Hampton, LaTaillade, Dacey, & Marghi, 2008). Although advocacy services can increase social support for survivors, they have not been demonstrated to increase survivors' abilities to live free of violence (Sullivan, Campbell, Angelique, Eby, & Davidson, 1994). A review of shelter and police outreach interventions for survivors similarly found that program effects over time were not sustained over time in reducing violence in survivors' lives (Stover, Meadows, & Kaufman, 2009).

In order to coordinate different components of the systemic response to IPV, a model of coordinated community response (CCR) was developed (Hart, 1995) and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Klevens, Baker, Shelley, & Ingram, 2008) to promote community coalition-building in the United States. Although the presence of council-based CCRs has been linked to distal changes in system response (Allen, Todd, Anderson, Davis, Javdani, Bruehler, & Dorsey, 2013), these changes are limited by the priorities and assumptions of the current system (e.g., that equates access to plenary protection orders with victim safety).

A crucial problem facing these councils is the lack of representation of survivors on the councils, which limits the direct input councils have of survivor perspectives. Although such councils include a stated position for a "Survivor Representative," Allen (2006) found that such coordinating councils did not include any survivor representatives

on councils and that no councils had an advisory board of survivors. The goal of having a single such representative is itself potentially problematic, implying that one individual can speak for the entire range of experiences and perspectives of all survivors. In addition, having a single representative with lived experience on a council of professionals including service providers, law enforcement, attorneys, advocates, health care providers, and mental health providers creates the potential for perhaps the only direct survivor perspective on the council to be lost in a sea of other perspectives and their priorities and goals or to struggle to have their stories heard and their views respected. Although survivors' voices may be represented by members who serve on the council based on their professional identity who also personally have histories of IPV themselves, the burden is then placed on these individuals to subtly or overtly share their personal experience in their participation

Advocates are often perceived (as in Allen, 2006) as representing survivor voices in lieu of direct survivor input, but there are many problems with this assumption. Advocates' perceptions of survivors' needs can vary widely from survivors' own stated needs. For example, a survey of advocacy service consumption found a gap between the services women actually used, found most helpful, and perceived as having adequate access to compared to providers' perceptions of the services that were most necessary for these women to receive. While providers prioritized services such as counseling and emotional empowerment, survivors' highest priorities corresponded to physical and practical needs (Postmus, Severson, Berry, & Yoo, 2009). These priorities make sense, given that programs that provide financial resources, such as a microfinance loan

program in South Africa (Kim et al., 2007), have been shown to reduce the risk of physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Without direct collaboration with survivors and elevation of their voices, important differences in actual versus perceived needs and priorities for survivor services are potentially ignored or lost in the criminal justice system response to IPV.

### **Batterer Intervention Programs**

BIPs began in the 1970's as a tertiary prevention (intervention) response to IPV and initially focused on anger management and couples counseling. Over time, IPV intervention programs have moved to a model of coordinated community response (CCR) and the majority of BIPs use cognitive behavioral, group process, gender-based curricula that frame IPV as a choice to exert power and control over an intimate partner (Gondolf, 2004). BIPs also link IPV to social norms about masculinity and the acceptability of violence.

Many professional organizations, including the Institute of Medicine and the American Psychological Association, have promoted the use of evidence-based practice (Sackett, Straus, Richardson, Rosenberg, & Haynes, 2000), defined in psychology as “the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences” (APA Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice, 2006, p. 280). Uniform evidence-based guidelines for batterer intervention have yet to be established. Program evaluations of BIPs conducted in an effort to identify standards for evidence-based practice in this field have found conflicting results regarding the efficacy of batterer intervention. In one of the most thorough and

methodologically clear meta-analytic reviews to date of experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of BIP efficacy in reducing recidivism, Babcock, Green, and Robie (2004) found an overall pattern of small to moderate effect sizes for cognitive behavioral and Duluth model (feminist psychoeducational) approaches.

The lack of clear evidence regarding whether BIPs “work” and the simultaneous debate regarding which practice guidelines should be followed for batterer intervention are related to issues in how the evaluations themselves were framed. For example, a meta-analysis conducted by Miller, Drake, and Nafziger (2013) compared evaluations of two categories of intervention programs, “Duluth model” programs and “non-Duluth group-based treatment” programs, in testing whether BIPs have a significant causal relationship with reduced recidivism. The authors used the following inclusion criteria for studies in the meta-analysis, based on their conceptualization of research design rigor: using a comparison group similar to the treatment group either by random assignment or quasi-experimental comparison using statistical controls, reporting outcome information for all individuals assigned to the treatment to calculate “intention-to-treat” effect sizes, and explicitly excluding those who dropped out of the program in outcome comparisons (Miller et al., 2013). Their meta-analysis indicated that the average effect size of Duluth model BIPs was not statistically different from zero and therefore that BIPs “do not work.” Their categorization of programs, however, appeared to be loosely defined, as evaluations included in the “Duluth model” category included not only Duluth model programs but also “couples group therapy,” “substance abuse treatment” and “relationship enhancement therapy” programs (terms specified by Miller et al., 2013).

Given the wide variety of program activities in the studies that were included in this category, it is not surprising that the average effect size calculated of “Duluth model” programs was not statistically different from zero. Unfortunately, some readers of that meta-analysis might conclude from these results that BIPs overall are not effective in reducing IPV recidivism, when in fact these results do not clearly support that conclusion. It is unclear whether measurement error, program heterogeneity, participant heterogeneity, or an actual lack of program effect contributed to the authors’ calculated effect sizes. There continues to be a need for research on BIP effectiveness, especially research that takes into account program context and participant heterogeneity.

Participant heterogeneity in particular is becoming more apparent to program facilitators as an important consideration to address in designing BIPs. Offenders can be categorized in terms of their history of abuse, risk assessment, batterer typology (e.g., family only), motivation in treatment, and other factors (Scott, 2004). Many of these factors also likely interact with one another to produce differential outcomes. For example, treatment engagement has been found to be a salient indicator of program completion and decreased risk of recidivism (Gondolf & Wernik, 2009). Individuals who complete BIPs have also demonstrated lower (less than half) rates of recidivism compared to program dropouts (Coulter & VandeWeerd, 2009; Gondolf, 2004), however a large limitation of this quasi-experimental comparison is that there may be other pre-existing differences between these non-equivalent groups (program completers versus program dropouts) due to selection bias. Therefore, this difference in outcome (recidivism) may not be a reflection of program effect alone. In other words, pre-existing



differences between these groups that relate to their likelihood of completing a program could also play a role in their subsequent likelihood of recidivating, regardless of what effect the program might have on their recidivism.

**Offender characteristics.** Research has indicated that some offender characteristics appear to be linked to a higher risk of recidivism, and these factors constitute a complex interplay of both static and dynamic characteristics related to the offender's situation. Depending on how the factors change over time, an offender can move between lower and higher states of risk. These characteristics include the presence or absence of physical violence, defensiveness, evasiveness, avoidance, silence, insincere agreement, forceful counterarguments, minimization, denial, and externalization of blame (Black et al., 2011).

Researchers have also attempted to classify offenders into distinct groups in an effort to understand these different patterns of offender characteristics. For example, a batterer typology suggested by Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan (2004) categorizes offenders into family-only, dysphoric/borderline, and generally violent/antisocial (as well as a less severely abusive antisocial subgroup). Research is still in an early stage of determining whether these and other classification systems are reliable, distinct categories or behaviors/tendencies that vary over time. Thus far, there is conflicting evidence on the stability of types, particularly in under-studied populations such as with female offenders or offenders with gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender survivors, and their link to outcomes such as re-arrest, pattern of violence, and empathy development (Holtzworth-Munroe & Meehan, 2004; Nicholls, Pritchard, Reeves, & Hilterman, 2013).

One of the most crucial concerns in light of these potential differences between offenders is how to maintain survivor safety when offenders pose different levels of risk to current or former partners. Research indicates that a relatively small, distinct group of offenders (20% in one sample; Gondolf, 2004) display the most severe types of IPV, with high resistance to intervention. These individuals are extremely violent, more likely to drop out of BIPs, and pose more of a danger to their partners due to their high risk to recidivate. Analysis of qualitative interviews with this sample (Gondolf, 2004) found that the intervention system failed these men (e.g., absence of alcohol treatment when it was indicated as possibly necessary; no court follow-up after individuals did not show up for the program; and/or little service connection for partners) and it is crucial to try to identify these higher risk offenders and connect them with appropriate services.

In response to this understanding that not all offenders are the same, some BIPs are attempting to fit better programs to different groups of offenders in the belief that “one size does not fit all.” When program facilitators have a clear picture of an offender’s level of risk, it can be possible to tailor programming to fit their needs on a more individual basis. Research has indicated some promising effects in lowered IPV recidivism (based on re-arrest rates) when matching offenders with different types of BIP programming based on offender characteristics, particularly the chronicity of violence and co-occurring issues (Coulter & VandeWeerd, 2009). It is important to note, however, that the validity of these effects is difficult to determine as the primary comparison was between offenders who did and did not complete the program at each level of programming. Therefore, other differences may have existed between the groups in

addition to the different levels of programming they received.

One promising possible outcome of tailoring treatment to the needs of different offenders is an increased likelihood of offender retention and program completion in BIPs. An evaluation of a BIP in Colorado that attempted to match offenders with different severity levels of treatment based on an assessment of their risk level of recidivating (Gover, Richards, & Tornisch, 2015) found this to be the case. Offenders were assessed when they entered the program on a variety of risk factors including attitudes that condone or support partner assault, separation from partner within the last six months, unemployment, prior IPV-related incidents, and criminal history other than IPV. Using this risk assessment, offenders were sorted into treatments of different intensity levels from low to high. In a sample of 3,311 court-ordered offenders entering BIPs, nearly half the participants were assessed as needing the lowest intensity level (47%) and moderate intensity level (43%) of batterer intervention programming, with the remaining 10% assessed as needing the highest intensity level of programming. Ongoing assessment was conducted to determine whether offenders needed to be re-assigned to a different treatment level throughout the program, with high consistency of programming need and originally assigned treatment level. Matching risk level and intervention strategy led to greater rates of program completion for offenders in programs, particularly for participants in the lowest (89% program completion) and moderate (68% program completion) intensity levels. These are large improvements on typical rates of program drop out, which tend to range between 40% and 60% of offenders mandated to attend BIPs (Eckhardt, Murphy, Black, & Suhr, 2006).

## **Restorative Justice**

The evidence reviewed above regarding the criminal justice response to IPV through BIPs demonstrates that the system is at least partially failing to meet the needs of all IPV survivors and offenders. Given that a clear model for IPV intervention and prevention has yet to be conclusively identified, it is necessary to consider what possibilities for this effort lie outside the traditional criminal justice system response alone. In the remainder of this literature review, I describe restorative justice theoretical models and outcomes, discuss considerations for the use of restorative justice programs in the context of IPV, and review what is known about two categories of restorative justice programs for IPV. Restorative justice programs may exist as complete and stand-alone programs or within a separate on-going treatment or intervention program, what I am terming “auxiliary restorative justice programs.” First, I discuss the use of stand-alone programs for IPV cases, and then the use of impact panels as a specific example of an auxiliary restorative justice program. The discussion of impact panels begins with a description of what is known about the impact of DUI/DWI impact panels, as the majority of research on impact panels has been done on this subject. Finally, I review the small body of literature that exists on the use of impact panels specifically for IPV cases.

**Definitions and theoretical models.** Restorative justice refers to a holistic response to crime that involves not only offenders but also victims/survivors of crimes and members of the community (Zehr, 1990). The restorative justice movement in the United States began in the 1970’s as an alternative approach to justice with an explicit focus on healing conflict (Zehr, 2002). Restorative justice processes were first used for

property crimes and “minor conflicts” but over time have been applied to more severe harms such as drunk driving homicide, assault, and murder. Several specific definitions of restorative justice have been posed and are reviewed here, with early attempts to define restorative justice doing so in reference to other systems characterized by values that it does not share (Braithwaite, 1999).

Restorative justice is most commonly discussed in relation to criminal justice. One key difference between these two is the way in which crime is defined: criminal justice considers criminal acts a violation of laws punishable by the state, whereas restorative justice frames crime as a violation of individuals, relationships and communities (Zehr, 1990). The way in which crime is defined subsequently determines the rationale for how to prevent crime or reduce recidivism. The threat of punishment through criminal justice is meant to deter individuals from committing crimes, whereas increasing offenders’ empathy and responsibility for their own actions through restorative justice is meant to result in multi-level healing of stakeholder harms resulting from crime and potentially reduce recidivism (Zehr, 1990). In addition, processes unfold differently in criminal justice than in restorative justice. Criminal justice is an adversarial process that is non-participatory, with professionals representing the offender and the state, and external authority imposing outcomes according to law. Restorative justice is an inclusive process with outcomes decided by participants and recognized stakeholders, primarily victims and individuals involved in the situation (Zehr, 1990). A final difference between restorative justice and criminal justice is the primary focus of each process. Criminal justice is most focused on determining what happened, who committed the act(s), and

what that person or people deserve in retribution for that act, while restorative justice is most focused on the harm or hurt that resulted from an act, what the roles were and are of the individuals involved, the subsequent needs resulting from that act, and whose obligation it is to address those needs (Zehr, 1990; 2002). There is also a general consensus in research on restorative justice interventions that these programs work best when all participants enter the process voluntarily (though criteria for what constitutes “voluntary” vary), and that this voluntary quality for process participation is especially imperative for survivors who participate (Cheon & Regehr, 2006).

Definitions of restorative justice have evolved over time (Roche, 2001), beginning with process-focused definitions (e.g., Marshall, 1996) and shifting to a multi-dimensional values- or principles-focused conceptualization (e.g., Bazemore, 2000). Marshall (1996, p. 37) defined restorative justice as “a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offense come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offense and its implications for the future.” This process-focused definition emphasizes the means by which restorative justice may occur, with the following ingredients required: 1. All stakeholders in an offense., 2. A collective process with everyone participating., and 3. A process focused on deciding how to deal with the offense and its present and future effects.

Restorative justice theorists have proposed two primary models of restorative justice, Purist and Maximalist, in an effort to define and further differentiate restorative justice from other frameworks, such as retributive justice. The Purist model of restorative justice (McCold, 2000) is a theoretically conservative model that is consistent with

Marshall's (1996) definition of restorative justice as a process. This theory of restorative justice involves defining restorative justice only by elements that are purely restorative, rather than elements of obedience or treatment involved in other paradigms like retributive justice or clinical or other treatment. McCold was interested in setting a clear framework and terms for the field to clarify the theory of restorative justice. His definition was explicitly limited to restorative justice programs that responded to "common crimes," such as theft and assault, as a first effort to clearly delineate restorative justice from other paradigms. His conceptualization of the Purist model also prioritized generalizability, meaning he wanted to set clear standards for what restorative justice was and was not, in order for the principles, practices and outcomes of "pure" restorative justice programs to generalize across contexts. The Purist model proposes that crimes create injuries or harms, and those harms have a direct relationship with a need to repair them and a responsibility to satisfy that need. Primary stakeholders are defined as victims, offenders, and micro-communities (i.e., secondary victims and communities of support), while secondary stakeholders are macro-communities (i.e., neighborhoods, townships, and societies). In this model, McCold proposes a series of needs structures at each stakeholder level: victim, offender, affected community, local community, and state/society. These needs structures outline potential injuries, needs, and responsibilities experienced by each of these groups following a crime, which may or may not all be present for everyone involved following a crime.

With these needs structures in mind, the purpose of restorative justice in the Purist model is to identify needs and obligations following a crime in order to put things right,

using a process where victims and offenders hold central roles and are encouraged to engage in dialogue to find a mutual agreement. The direct, real-time encounter between parties involved in the crime or harm is the key process in the Purist model of restorative justice. This is also in line with Zehr's (1990) conceptualization of restorative justice. The success of restorative justice can then be determined by the extent to which responsibilities were assumed and needs were met, ideally leading to but not requiring healing for a process to be considered successful.

Bazemore (2000) diverts from McCold's (2000) assertion that restorative justice can only be assessed on a single spectrum of "restorativeness" based on the process components that make up a restorative practice. Bazemore (2000) asserts that the definition restorative justice must be flexible and open to the possibility of future needs and stakeholders in order for restorative practices to evolve in response to what might be needed in the future. Rather than base a definition on specific key ingredients that a process must have in order for it to be considered restorative justice, Bazemore argues that the definition of restorative justice should be based on principles, not rigid types of programs. In what has been termed the Maximalist model, restorative justice encompasses but is not limited to programs that involve face-to-face encounters between victims and offenders directly involved in a crime (Bazemore, 2000). Instead, individuals should have the *opportunity* for active involvement, but may also use creative ways to repair harm and promote relational healing as long as processes are attuned to the following core principles: 1. A focus on repairing harm and working to heal victims, offenders, and communities (i.e., stakeholders) that have been injured by crime., 2.



Stakeholder opportunity for active involvement in the justice process as early and as fully as possible., and 3. Re-envisioning the roles and responsibilities of the community and government to promote justice. The Maximalist model of restorative justice sets an intention-based definition including “every action that is primarily oriented toward doing justice by repairing the harm that has been caused by a crime” (Bazemore & Walgrave, 1999, p. 48). This focus places more emphasis on the intent behind processes and procedures than on specific types of processes themselves. It also focuses more on outcomes of healing sought by stakeholders rather than necessarily reconciling the relationship between the parties involved in the crime or harm.

It is important to note several critiques and concerns about when or how to use different definitions of restorative justice. There is a tension between wanting to make the medium of restorative justice available as an option to more victims, offenders, and community members, while at the same time not expanding programming availability without regard for the integrity of restorative practice. Purist model critics of the Maximalist model of restorative justice (e.g., McCold, 2000) would say that practices that do not adhere strictly to those outlined in the Purist model run the risk of departing too much from the necessary elements of what differentiates restorative justice from other responses to crime, such as criminal justice or offender treatment. They caution that expanding the definition beyond what is purely restorative justice compromises the model, particularly because the Purist model posits that a face-to-face encounter between individuals directly involved in the same crime is the only way to promote relational healing.

However, it is also important to recall that the Purist model of restorative justice defined by McCold (2000) was explicitly in reference to only a certain limited group of “common crimes” (e.g., theft) and therefore this definition may be too limited for other types of harms or offenses. Bazemore (2000) emphasized that expanding the range of potential programs included under the umbrella of restorative justice by adhering to the core principles referenced above would give practitioners the opportunity to create programs that meet multiple needs and emerging groups of stakeholders. These needs and groups might not otherwise be considered appropriate for restorative justice from a Purist perspective.

In response to the Purist model, Bazemore (2000) also raised the point that its process-based definition does not have an explicit focus on repairing harm caused by the crime and is therefore too limited a definition. Taken to an extreme, a process that included all the elements (i.e., voluntary participation, face-to-face encounter, involvement of all stakeholders in the process) would meet the definition of restorative justice in the Purist model (McCold, 2000) even without a goal of repairing harm. The voluntary nature of participation is also seen as limiting because only certain kinds of crimes or “less serious” offenders would potentially participate. This could frame restorative justice as a “soft” alternative to the criminal justice system rather than as a system of practices with the potential to put pressure on courts, corrections, and other parts of the system to become more responsive to the needs of survivors, offenders, and community members. This could mean that a “serious” crime that is not deemed suitable for restorative justice, or in which one or more potential participants did not voluntarily

elect to participate, would only have one system available to address the crime (i.e., criminal justice). If all parties (e.g., survivors) were not satisfied with that path, there would be no other option or pressure to reform the current system.

Another point where Purist and Maximalist models of restorative justice differ is in whether or not coercion is considered permissible in a restorative justice practice. The Purist model (McCold, 2000) argues that coercion is a tool of retributive justice and therefore is inherently incompatible with the requirements of a purely restorative process. In this model, there is no place for coercion in any type of restorative justice practice because restorative justice can only take place under conditions of completely voluntary participation on the part of all parties involved. On the other hand, the Maximalist model (Bazemore, 2000) allows more room for the possibility of the presence of coercion or non-voluntary participation in a restorative justice process, as long as the overarching intent and principles of the process are still in line with those described above (e.g., to repair harm). Bazemore (2000) clarifies that a purely coercive process would not be in line with restorative justice principles, however a practice such as a formal court-ordered sanction could still be compatible and part of a restorative process.

As the focus of this study is on IPV impact panels within the context of batterer intervention, it is important to consider to what extent these panels qualify as restorative justice according to both the Purist and Maximalist models. The Purist model sets the minimum requirements for restorative programs as: 1. Involving survivors, offenders and their communities in face-to-face meetings., 2. No aspect of coercion., and 3. Following a process in which the stakeholder participants determine the outcome (McCold, 2000). In

this model, IPV impact panels that are conducted as part of a BIP would not meet the minimum requirements to be considered a restorative justice practice. Although survivors and offenders engage in face-to-face meetings in the panels, they are not directly involved in the same crime because they come from different relationships. There is also no mutual agreement between the panel participants in terms of a process outcome to reconcile their harms and injuries. In addition, while survivor panelists participate on the panel completely voluntarily, offenders' panel participation cannot be considered strictly voluntary because BIPs and probation officers mandate them to attend the IPV impact panel. The connection to BIPs further renders the panels inconsistent with the Purist model of restorative justice because the context of the panels contains an element of treatment or intervention for offenders. Thus, the panel would not be considered "pure" restorative justice.

The question of whether only processes involving face-to-face encounters of survivors, offenders, and community members directly connected by the same crime may qualify as a restorative justice practice is especially relevant when considering whether and how restorative justice could potentially meet the needs of survivors and offenders of IPV. In this type of harm, face-to-face encounters not only might not be healing for participants but could actually exacerbate harms or re-traumatize individuals. Relational repair might not be a desired goal or outcome of a restorative justice process in cases of IPV, and requiring a direct face-to-face encounter between survivors and offenders could render the panels *not* restorative. In these cases, Purist models might not be possible or even appropriate to respond to the harms and needs of individuals involved. Instead, a

principle-based definition that is more flexible and driven by stakeholder commitment and desire to participate in a healing process and responsive to participant needs, as in the Maximalist model, could be more fitting. This flexible process might include goals of reconciliation, reparation, and/or repair of various harms that resulted from the abuse, but goals should be set by participants and especially responsive to survivors' needs.

The use of coercion to any extent to motivate participation is also a particularly relevant issue in the case of the IPV impact panels because attendance is required for offenders to complete the BIP and therefore their presence is not completely voluntary, even though survivor panelists' participation is voluntary. However, in conversations with panel facilitators and BIP providers I have come to understand that this requirement is not strongly enforced (i.e., there is no known monetary or other consequence for failing to attend) and if an offender has not attended an IPV impact panel by the time they are ready to complete a BIP, this typically does not prevent them from graduating from the program. The "softness" of this requirement therefore indicates that IPV impact panel attendance is at least somewhat voluntary on the part of offenders, although the requirement does introduce an element of coercion into the experience that should not be forgotten when considering how offenders are impacted by the panel.

Given these characteristics, the IPV impact panels fit Bazemore's (2000) Maximalist model of restorative justice fairly well. Bazemore and Walgrave (1999) emphasize that the intent behind a process is more important than strict ingredient activities for restorative justice. IPV impact panels reflect this definition of restorative justice as an action primarily concerned with repairing harm caused by a crime,

promoting opportunities for participation by survivors, offenders, and community members, and building community in terms of norm affirmation and collective stakes in the issue of IPV (Bazemore & Green, 2007). Therefore, the use of the term “restorative justice” throughout this study will primarily refer to Bazemore’s (2000) Maximalist model conceptualization of restorative justice.

**Theoretical outcomes.** The theoretical models reviewed above describe not only the process but also outcomes that could be expected of restorative justice programs. Several candidates have been identified by different models as likely proximal or distal outcomes of restorative justice processes. As these theories have not been explicitly applied to the literature on restorative justice for IPV in the use of IPV impact panels, a range of possible outcomes might be relevant in this study.

The principles described by McCold (2000) in his definition as well the injuries, needs, and responsibilities for each stakeholder can be used to generate a pool of possible outcomes of IPV impact panels. In the victim needs structure, many of the injuries, needs, and responsibilities appear to be relevant to survivors of IPV, particularly those categorized as mental or emotional. For example, the injury “disbelief in experience” (p. 366) creates the needs “to tell their story, to be heard, deminimization, deprivation, truth telling” (p. 366) and the responsibilities “to face their pain, expect others to take seriously, willingness to break the silence/disclose, faith in your experience” (p. 366). The injury “loss of control” (p. 366) creates the need for “empowerment over disposition of case” (p. 366) and the responsibility to “take opportunities to exert influence” (p. 366). Finally, the injury “indignation” (p. 366) creates the need for “validation that it was

wrong” (p. 366) and the responsibility to “reaffirm value system” (p. 366).

The offender needs structure also contains many injuries, needs, and responsibilities that seem relevant to the possible outcomes of the IPV impact panel. For example, the injury “diminished integrity” (p. 368) creates the need “to be held responsible for our behavior” (p. 368) and the responsibility “to own our behavior, admit it was wrong” (p. 368). The injury “disconnect from true feelings” (p. 368) creates the need “to feel empathy, opportunities to express sorrow” (p. 368) and the responsibility “to learn how others were affected, connect to their true feelings” (p. 368). Lastly, the injury “loss of standing” (p. 368) creates the need “reconciliation with family group” (p. 368) and the responsibility to “behave responsibly toward community”(p. 368).

In addition, standards for restorative justice programs proposed by Braithwaite (2000) in response to McCold (2000) and Bazemore (2000) are relevant when considering potential program outcomes. These standards emphasize the importance of hearing the stories of individuals who have been harmed following a crime and identify emotional restoration as a key indicator of a successful justice practice. Braithwaite (2002) drew upon international standards for human rights in developing these restorative justice standards and they are a useful way of mapping how time interacts with restorative justice practice before, during, and after engaging in restorative justice (see Table 1). Braithwaite (2002) first specifies “constraining standards” that detail specific rights and limits that he believes need to be honored and enforced as constraints of a process in order for it to be restorative. For example, the first constraint listed is non-domination, meaning a restorative justice process must provide every stakeholder with

the support and opportunity to participate if they so choose and be able to speak and be heard meaningfully (with limits against dominating speech). An additional constraining standard is “empowerment,” wherein stakeholders are empowered to tell their stories in their own way to uncover any sense of injustice they wish to see repaired. Braithwaite states that “maximizing constraints” should be actively encouraged to the extent possible in restorative processes, including additional constraints that are good consequences in themselves. Maximizing constraints are not necessarily required or applicable to every process, but should be a goal of a restorative justice process to the extent possible. Finally, “emergent standards” are distal goals or desired outcomes of restorative justice, but Braithwaite clarifies that these are not possible to achieve if they are “mandated” or “required” in a restorative practice. Setting these as requirements would actually render them meaningless, as these standards inherently depend on genuine willingness and choice on the part of participating individuals. For example, demanding remorse or requiring apology or forgiveness makes these acts and feelings meaningless, as it is not possible to enforce them externally but must be intrinsically motivated. Instead, these are better characterized as long-term desired outcomes that may only emerge naturally as a result of engaging in restorative justice over time.

Bazemore and Green (2007) also call attention to a lack of clear standards in the field for methods of assessing a program’s integrity and logical mechanisms to describe how practices relate to immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term changes in the well-being of survivors, offenders, and communities. Through a national case study of qualitative interviews with restorative group conferencing practitioners in



eight states and observation of conferences in two jurisdictions in the United States, Bazemore and Green (2007) and Bazemore, Elis, and Green (2007) further developed the principles-based approach of the Maximalist model in an evaluation of restorative justice programs. This was a first step in sharpening the principles-based model for evaluating restorative justice programs, so the authors chose to focus on crime victim impact and build their model based on their contact with non-adversarial decision-making processes and group conferencing programs (i.e., victim-offender mediated dialogue, family group conferencing, neighborhood accountability boards, and peacemaking circles). The primary principles of restorative justice programs identified by the case study (Bazemore & Green, 2007; Bazemore et al., 2007) were repairing harm (with the sub-dimensions of making amends and relationship building), stakeholder participation (with the sub-dimensions of victim-offender exchange, mutual transformation, and respectful disapproval), and community building (with the sub-dimensions of norm affirmation/values clarification, collective ownership, and skill-building).

Although there is a very compelling case for the need for standards in both the implementation and evaluation of restorative justice programs, it is not at all clear whether these three principles (Bazemore & Green, 2007; Bazemore et al., 2007) are entirely relevant to IPV impact panels. For example, making amends may not be a direct goal of this process for survivors, for reasons of personal safety and well-being. Although these theoretical principles are potentially relevant to the specific practice of IPV impact panels, parts of these principles may not directly apply in this case because they were developed in different contexts and based on the evaluation of different types of

restorative justice programs.

Pranis (2004) elaborates on the tension between defining restorative justice as a philosophy or vision, as emphasized in the Maximalist model (Bazemore, 2000), and as a practice, as in the Purist model (McCold, 2000), to critically question how to discuss and evaluate whether restorative justice “works”. She asserts that restorative justice depends on both philosophy and process, defining it as a cluster of practices that put the philosophy into effect. In order for restorative justice to “work,” it must produce change that moves closer to the world described by the vision (the “ends”) in a way that is still consistent with the philosophy and values embedded in that vision (the “means”). In Pranis’s (2004) view, characteristics or signs that a restorative justice program is “working” include providing victims an opportunity for increased involvement in the practice, increasing offender understanding of the harm of the behavior to the victim, the community, and the self, and encouraging offenders to take responsibility for the harm done. She explains that a program is not required to include all of these characteristics in order to be considered restorative justice practice, but that at least one must be present and its implementation must not conflict with or undermine any of the other characteristics. Two practices that she highlights specifically for IPV impact panels (in her example for offenders on probation or in prison) are increased offender understanding of the impact of their behavior, which she links to offenders taking responsibility, and the opportunity for survivors to tell their story, which she links to the healing process for many survivors.

**Considerations for use in IPV contexts.** The majority of writing about

restorative justice for IPV relates to debates in theory, philosophy, and views of professionals and victims about the use of restorative justice for IPV rather than evaluations of programs themselves. Some researchers and practitioners that address IPV, sexual assault, or other gender-based crimes are concerned that restorative justice programs may de-legitimize the perceived harms of these crimes and undermine how seriously both offenders and the general public view them (e.g., Busch, 2002; Stubbs, 2002). For example, Stubbs (2007) expressed concern that this type of process could compromise survivors' safety, either by opening lines of communication between survivors and offenders without proper security guards in place or by leading survivors to believe that offenders have changed when they have not genuinely accounted for their responsibility and worked through their patterns of abuse to truly change. This could lead a survivor to remain in or return to a relationship with an offender who appears to have reformed, but who truly continues to put the survivor at further risk for continued abuse. Another major concern is that restorative justice, while claiming to be victim-centered, could shift attention to offenders' situations too easily and lead to coddling or excusing offenders in an effort to understand their behavior and what contributed to the situation (e.g., offender's personal trauma), further disempowering victims. These concerns have also been raised about BIPs, so they are all the more relevant to this study of IPV impact panels that are situated within BIPs.

One unfortunate side effect of these understandable concerns is that it may limit our ability to fully understand the potential for restorative justice approaches as IPV intervention. In some cases, concerns about the sensitive nature of the use of restorative

justice processes for IPV have influenced the ability to conduct research on the activities. One group of researchers attempting to understand the use of victim-offender mediation for IPV cases in Finland were unable to observe any such mediations or interview individuals who had participated because mediation officers deemed these cases “too sensitive” (Uotila & Sambou, 2010). While the safety and well-being of research participants must always be prioritized (e.g., to prevent verbal or physical abuse in a meeting between survivors and offenders or stalking of the survivor by an offender following a meeting), over-caution in this area could also prevent safely conducted research from creating a better understanding of how restorative justice interventions could address IPV.

An empirical investigation of the concerns of survivor advocates about restorative justice yielded promising results regarding their perceptions of its potential to address IPV. Curtis-Fawley and Daly (2005) examined the views of survivor advocates on the use of restorative justice as a response to gendered violence in Australia. The individuals expressed concern over what researchers identified as three major failings of the criminal justice system: the lack of validation of survivors’ accounts of their experiences and not being at fault, the inability to effectively handle cases between two partners in a continuing relationship, and the inability to adapt to fit the needs of children when they were involved in a case. Overall, advocates had more positive beliefs than the researchers had expected about the potential of restorative justice than criminal justice to help survivors of gendered violence. Five of the fifteen advocates had generally positive attitudes, seven had “cautiously positive” attitudes with some reservations, and three had

generally negative attitudes toward restorative justice. Interviewees who had more experience with or exposure to restorative justice tended to have more favorable attitudes toward it, and those who had more experience working in the field seemed less optimistic about survivors benefiting from the criminal justice system and more willing to consider alternative approaches. Potential benefits of restorative justice for survivors described by the interviewees included the ability to speak more about their experience, to be empowered by having more influence over the decision-making process, and to have an opportunity to confront the offender. Some also saw restorative justice as an opportunity to address the power imbalance between offenders and survivors by prioritizing survivors' voices and experiences. Interviewees also believed restorative justice could facilitate offenders' acknowledgment of their violence and their responsibility, potentially aiding in survivor healing by hearing that acknowledgment.

Nevertheless, the unique characteristics of IPV relative to other crimes, where trauma is not just a single instance of threat/loss but rather an ongoing cycle of abuse perpetrated by someone known to survivors, underscore the importance of using caution and safety when implementing these restorative justice practices in IPV interventions (Umbreit, Vos, & Coates, 2005). Differences between IPV and other crimes could affect how and why restorative justice programs take place in different contexts. Block and Lichti (2002) expand on the differences between a retributive justice paradigm and a restorative justice paradigm outlined by Zehr (1990) to offer suggestions on how to tailor a restorative justice process to IPV and sexual assault cases (see Table 2). For example, the general recommendation in restorative justice (Zehr, 1990) to set dialogue and

negotiation as the process norm is amended to include concern for the survivor's protection and holding the offender accountable (Block & Lichti, 2002).

In response to concerns about using restorative justice programs for IPV, Zehr (2002) recommends attending to the core principles of restorative justice throughout the entire process. Restorative justice formats include dialogue circles, family group conferencing, community reparative boards, sentencing circles, and impact panels. All of these programs have a common goal of facilitating some form of encounter, direct or indirect, between individuals affected by a crime. Recall that restorative justice frames crime as a violation of people and of interpersonal relationships, which create obligations to address the violation. This places an obligation primarily on the offender, as well as on the community, to put right the wrong. Restorative justice also views society and its members as interconnected and therefore assumes that crime also damages the web of relationships among members of a community, which may also lead to further crimes and harms. Restorative justice practices primarily differ based on who participates in the encounter and in what manner, as well as in their goals for the encounter (i.e., diversion from criminal justice process or sentencing, healing or therapeutic, and transitional goals). An in-depth exploration of each type of restorative practice is outside the scope of this review, but more specific information regarding restorative justice programs used for IPV is contained in the next section.

**Stand-alone restorative justice programs for IPV.** Given the considerations described above regarding the use of restorative justice programs for IPV cases, it is not clear whether findings from evaluations of restorative justice programs for other types of

cases would replicate in this context. The majority of research on restorative justice programs has been conducted on programs that were not available for IPV cases. For example, an evaluation of the Reintegrative Shaming Experiments (RISE; Sherman, Strang, Barnes, Braithwaite & Inkpen, 1998) in Australia specifically excluded cases of IPV. Although these experiments in the mid-1990's found that individuals who had been randomly assigned to restorative conferences had a net reduction in recidivism of 38% compared to those who went through normal court processing in Canberra, it is unknown whether this same effect could be expected for IPV cases. This section will discuss the nature of research that has been conducted on stand-alone restorative justice programs for IPV, meaning complete programs that are not part of a separate program (e.g., a BIP).

Due at least partly to the limited availability of restorative justice programs for IPV, studies evaluating the use of restorative justice in this context tend to focus on smaller samples or single case studies of individuals' experiences. For example, Miller and Iovanni (2013) conducted a case study of one couple who elected to go through a post-conviction restorative justice dialogue about their experience with severe IPV and its effects. This case study found some promising potential for the use of restorative justice processes for IPV, such as advantages of the restorative process being distanced from the crime. This temporal distance created time for survivors and offenders to process their experiences, begin to heal as survivors, and to accept responsibility as offenders. The case study was based on individual interviews with both participants (three years post-dialogue and eighteen months later), case files of meetings with the dialogue facilitator, mutual letter-writing that had taken place in preparation for the dialogue, and the viewing

and transcription of the video recording of the dialogue in order to gather rich, in-depth information about the phenomenon. Some of the benefits of the post-conviction restorative justice dialogue highlighted in the case study include the survivor's feelings of empowerment to have control over what was going to be discussed during the dialogue, a flipped power balance in the dialogue so that she could show the offender how strong she was now, and validation that the offender said none of the abuse was ever something that the survivor deserved or did anything to cause. The offender expressed remorse during the dialogue and a commitment to behavioral change, and said he felt transformed by participating in the dialogue to try to help his victim heal from the abuse and also grateful for the opportunity to help her heal. While case studies are extremely limited in their generalizability or transferability and thus do not allow strong inferences or conclusions to be made regarding program effectiveness, they generate rich descriptive information about possible outcomes of the programs that provide the foundation for the development of valid outcome measures for use in larger, experimental evaluations.

Some restorative justice programs that included IPV cases have been studied using more robust research designs. For example, Pennell and Burford's (2002) study of a restorative justice conference program in Canada used a quasi-experimental design of non-random assignment to measure 32 families from so-called "difficult cases" assigned to family group conferencing (FGC) and 31 families designated as a comparison group. The conference process included a coordinator, who prepared family members to participate safely and effectively in consultation with a community advisory panel, service providers, and a diverse range of family members who designed the conference in



consultation with the coordinator. The purpose of the conference was to address areas of concerns introduced by representatives from protective authorities (e.g., Adult or Youth Corrections) and create a plan to address those concerns. One unique element of this specific type of restorative justice process is that the families were given privacy to discuss and create the plan themselves after hearing from service providers what resources would be available for their utilization. The plan was then presented to the entire conferencing group and had to be approved by the protective authorities.

Pennell and Burford's (2002) pre- and post-test evaluation of this FGC program was strengthened by the use of multiple data methods including interviews and file analyses, multiple sources including families, communities, and government officials, and mixed methods analyses. Key outcomes associated with the FGC restorative justice program included reduced reports of child maltreatment and IPV and increased ratings of social support. The authors' analysis of possible mechanisms underlying these changes led them to conclude that it involved a feminist praxis, wherein the politics of gender identity influence the bidirectional relationship between thought and action by interrupting gender identity assumptions while building links between individuals to collectively end oppressive injustice (Pennell & Burford, 2002).

Only one published study (Mills, Barocas, & Ariel, 2013) has evaluated the effects of restorative justice programs for IPV compared to the typical response of batterer intervention using a randomized controlled trial. This study compared outcomes of court referrals to either a BIP or a peacemaking circle program (Circles of Peace; CP). The CP program is twenty-six weeks in length and consists of circles that are led by a

restorative justice facilitator. An offender attends a series of circles with voluntarily-participating family members and a designated support person for the offender. A survivor is also able to participate in several of the circles with any family members and their own designated support person, although the survivor is not required to participate. Survivors only attend up to a few sessions of the circles if they do choose to participate, in order to decrease the potential for coercion in the process. Survivors may also elect one or more individuals to represent their wishes and needs in the decision-making process if they do not wish to participate in the process directly. The circles are meant to develop a plan collaboratively with all participants that addresses the violence and heals the survivor, family members, and community as much as possible. This involves covering the history of abuse, triggers and other factors involved in the abuse, and making a social compact each session with the offender to change their behavior and make reparations as much as possible. The content covered in circles is similar to that of BIPs in some areas, such as discussing power and control, conflict resolution, cultural and religious influences, and community influences in contributing to violence. However, the circles are notably different than BIPs in other ways, particularly in their use of a consensus-based decision-making process among all circle participants, including offenders and survivors, and a strong effort to engage offenders more actively in defining the problem and plan for the future. The circles are also meant to address the isolation, shame, and fear that some families and community members feel when addressing IPV by creating a group process involving more than the offender alone or the offender and survivor only.

Offenders who had been found guilty of an IPV-related crime were randomly

assigned to either a BIP ( $n = 70$ ) or CP ( $n = 82$ ) program, but attrition was a concern throughout the study. Fewer participants actually started (BIP = 44, CP = 58) and completed treatment (BIP = 28, CP = 42). As mentioned earlier, attrition is a common issue in BIP evaluations, particularly for court-mandated programs, as not all offenders who are mandated to attend BIPs actually enroll in programs. Even after enrolling, average dropout rates from programs range from 40% to 60% (Eckhardt et al., 2006). The study collected data from participants twenty-four months after their treatment assignment and compared arrest records for IPV and non-IPV charges. Comparisons of arrest records in both categories six, twelve, eighteen, and twenty-four months after treatment assignment found no significant differences between participants in each program. Although this finding does not indicate that the restorative justice program was more effective than a BIP in decreasing offender recidivism, it does suggest that the restorative justice program was similar to the BIP and that CP did not create any greater risk for survivor safety, even when survivors participated in the circle process.

**An auxiliary restorative justice program for IPV.** This final section of the literature review discusses the use of impact panels as a specific auxiliary restorative justice program, meaning a program that typically is not stand-alone but rather is offered as an addition to, or in conjunction with, other treatment or intervention programs (e.g., BIPs). First, I review what is known about the use of impact panels for DUI/DWI intervention, as the majority research of research evaluating impact panels has been conducted on that subject. Finally, I discuss the small number of studies that specifically focus on IPV impact panels.

Impact panels, also called victim impact panels, are a specific type of restorative justice process (Van Ness & Strong, 1997) that attempts to address the needs and harms of individuals of crime through a panel process in which survivors of crimes speak to individuals who have perpetrated similar crimes. Typically there is no direct connection between the survivors and offenders participating in the panel. Survivors speak about their experiences and the impact of the crime on their life. Offenders listen to these voices, based on the belief that they will increase their understanding of the effects of the crime they committed and also increase their empathy for the victims of their crime. Some degree of interaction between panel speakers and offender attendees may be possible, for example in a question and answer period during the panel or informally following the end of the panel. Panels are often part of a larger intervention or treatment designed to change attitudes and behaviors in order to prevent future recidivism.

Relatively little research exists on the use of impact panels as a component of IPV intervention, but insight can be gained from the literature on the process and effects of impact panels that have been utilized for DUI/DWI intervention. Impact panels are a common intervention for DUI/DWI treatment as a tertiary form of prevention targeting individuals who have already committed a crime in order to decrease rates of future re-offending, with some research indicating these panels may lead to lower rates of future DUI/DWI arrest (Fors & Rojek, 1999). In a quasi-experimental evaluation of DUI re-arrest rates following DUI/DWI impact panel attendance, Fors & Rojek (1999) found a significantly lower recidivism rate (6%) for those who had attended the panel compared to an equivalent comparison group who had not (15%) twelve months after their initial

arrest. Researchers have also found evidence in a small sample of incarcerated offenders with multiple previous DUI convictions that DUI/DWI impact panel attendance ( $N = 46$ ) compared to an alcohol and drug awareness program without panel attendance ( $N = 62$ ) was more influential in changing self-reported attitudes toward driving while impaired and behavioral intentions to prevent others from drinking and driving (Badovinac, 1994). However, the DUI/DWI impact panel was not found to change self-reported empathy.

A study with a much larger sample ( $N = 5238$ ) compared the five-year recidivism rates of individuals who had been mandated versus not mandated to attend a DUI/DWI impact panel following their first DUI arrest (C'de Baca, Lapham, Paine & Skipper, 2000). Researchers found a small significant protective factor in DUI/DWI impact panel attendance, but no evidence of any long-term differences in recidivism. These results could indicate that DUI/DWI impact panels did not have any effect on these offenders, although the study's design leaves room for other interpretations given the limitation of longitudinal randomized control trials to measure whether or not individuals actually adhered to their assigned conditions. Offenders were compared based on whether or not they were mandated to attend the panel, not based on their actual panel attendance record, so the comparison groups could be less distinct than the researchers intended. It is difficult to say whether panel attendance truly differentiated members of each group. It is also possible that a DUI/DWI impact panel could be more effective for moderate-level offenders rather than first-time offenders, as the latter group may be more able to distance themselves from the individuals described in the panel (e.g., "I'm not like that person, they did something much worse than I did") and therefore the panel might impact them

less than those who are more able to identify with the stories described. The study did not conduct this analysis on groups of moderate versus first-time offenders so it is not possible to evaluate this question, but it remains open for consideration in future research. The evaluation results from this large sample indicate that there were no significant differences in five-year recidivism rates between individuals mandated to the DUI/DWI impact panels compared to individuals that did not attend the panels.

An additional study of DUI/DWI impact panel attendance compared the two-year re-arrest rates of a small sample ( $n = 56$ ) of individuals who completed either standard treatment following a DUI or treatment along with DUI/DWI impact panel attendance (Wheeler, Rogers, Tonigan, & Woodall, 2004). Researchers found no differences in re-arrest rates based on panel attendance, indicating the DUI/DWI impact panel did not give any additional measured benefits to attendees on top of the usual treatment approach. When considered with the results of C'de Baca et al. (2000) discussed earlier, it appears likely that the impact of DUI/DWI impact panels has a limited persistence of less than two to five years.

A matched control longitudinal study further investigated the influence of DUI victim impact panel attendance on recidivism, spanning DWI-related crashes and violations up to four years following the intervention (Shinar & Compton, 1995). Researchers found evidence that DUI/DWI impact panel attendance significantly reduced the risk of recidivism for older participants (36+ age group), but it was not clear whether this reduction was due solely to the intervention or to pre-existing differences in the groups and bias in who was referred to the DUI/DWI impact panel.

Researchers evaluating impact panels have also investigated whether DUI/DWI impact panel attendance relates to outcomes other than recidivism, such as to offenders' stage of change (Polascek, Rogers, Woodall, Delaney, Wheeler, & Rao, 2001). The Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983) of the process of intentional behavior change conceptualizes change as a series of stages. An offender's stage of change refers to their linear or nonlinear progression over time through stages of precontemplation ("not ready"), contemplation ("getting ready"), preparation ("ready"), action (in which behavior modification occurs), maintenance (in which the modifications persist), and termination (in which the change is complete). Polascek et al. (2001) used a randomized control experimental design to assess the impact of DWI school compared to DWI school with DUI/DWI impact panel attendance over a two-year period. They found no difference in offenders' progression through the stages of change based on panel attendance.

Impact panels for DUI/DWI intervention programs are different from IPV impact panels in several important ways. DUI/DWI impact panels tend to be held in large auditoriums or spaces that can hold a sizeable audience, typically with one hundred or more attendees per panel. For example, the DUI/DWI impact panel evaluated by Wheeler et al. (2004) was held in the same courtroom in which offenders had been sentenced. This is an extremely different setting than the public county buildings where the IPV impact panels of the current study are held. Other DUI/DWI panels have been held in correctional centers (Badovinac, 1994), county commission chambers (Fors & Rojek, 1999), and university auditoriums (Polascek et al., 2001). Speakers for DUI/DWI panels

may include individuals who were victimized by their own drinking or reformed offenders, rather than strictly victims/survivors as on an IPV impact panel. There is also typically little to no interaction between the speakers and the audience during or after the presentations at DUI/DWI panels, in contrast to the interaction that takes place between survivor speakers and offender audience members during the IPV impact panels.

In addition, the relationship between individuals involved in the harm and the nature of the harm itself is different between those involved in a DUI/DWI compared to those involved in IPV. Individuals harmed by and those responsible for a DUI/DWI are more likely to be strangers in these cases, whereas individuals in an IPV relationship are by definition not strangers, with a history of abuse that took place over some extended period of time. The nature of a DUI/DWI is also different than the nature of IPV. The former is a disastrous single encounter between individuals, and although the person responsible for the DUI/DWI made extremely poor choices, potentially suffering from addiction, and endangered others recklessly, they likely did not intend to harm anyone with their behavior. The nature of IPV, in contrast, is an intentional exertion of control or power by a current or former intimate partner over the other, and may include behaviors such as physical violence, sexual violence, threats of violence, stalking and/or psychological aggression (Black et al., 2011).

Very limited research has examined the effects of impact panels on survivors and offenders in IPV cases and the community at large. Just as outcomes of restorative justice programs for non-IPV crimes might not replicate in restorative justice programs for IPV, findings from previous research on DUI/DWI impact panels might not predict findings



for this study on IPV impact panels. Two articles (Burkemper & Balsam, 2007; Fulkerson, 2001) have been published that specifically evaluate the use of IPV impact panels.

Burkemper & Balsam (2007) reviewed the use of restorative justice for IPV cases and described efforts to develop IPV impact panels as an element of the response to IPV in one judicial circuit in Missouri. They describe the panel model, which more closely resembles the Family Group Conferencing model of Pennell & Burford (2002) than a DUI/DWI impact panel, with participants including a survivor's family member and/or adult child, an offender's family member, a rehabilitated former offender, community members such as police, business leaders, elected officials, and faith leaders along with survivors and offenders. The authors describe the promising anticipated effects of using impact panels in IPV cases, but their account lacks any description of quantitative data on individual participants' change. The panels were still under development at the time of publication and longitudinal measures and analyses of change were not possible at that point. Rather, the authors describe their impressions of the program in an anecdotal manner and report positive outcomes from one panel based on an interview with the program director. These outcomes included offenders' increased understanding of the impact of IPV and survivors' increased healing and empowerment.

The remaining study of IPV impact panels used a random assignment mechanism to evaluate their use as a sentencing and treatment option for IPV cases (Fulkerson, 2001). The participant pool consisted of individuals involved in 391 misdemeanor-level IPV cases that had been seen in court in five districts in Arkansas over a six-month period

in 1998. A notice was mailed to all individuals in this pool, 340 survivors and 391 offenders, requesting that they attend an IPV impact panel to be held at the courthouse. Fifty-five survivors and eighty-five offenders agreed to participate, amounting to approximately 16% and 22% participation rates, respectively. After volunteering and consenting to participate, the sample was randomly assigned to an experimental group of panel participation (survivor  $n = 26$ , offender  $n = 40$ ) or control group of panel non-participation (survivor  $n = 29$ , offender  $n = 45$ ). This removed some of the selection bias from the study's resulting comparisons between the experimental and control groups, as both had self-selected to participate in the IPV impact panel.

The evaluation consisted primarily of self-report surveys regarding participants' experiences in the criminal justice system and of the IPV impact panel. Survivors and offenders were surveyed on whether they thought their experiences with the judges and police officers involved in their cases were fair, and overall reported relatively high opinions of both of these components of the criminal justice system. Survivors tended to rate them as more fair than did offenders, with slightly over half of survivors rating the judge as fair and only 10% rating the judge unfair, and 60% of survivors rating the police officer as fair and 18% rating the police officer as unfair. 41% of offenders rated the judge as fair and only 37% of offenders rated the police officer as fair, while 24% of offenders rated the judge as unfair and 38% of offenders rated the police officer as unfair. One survey question asked whether participants had a positive feeling about the criminal justice system as a whole, with which an equal percentage of survivors and offenders (31%) agreed or strongly agreed.

Survivors and offenders who participated in the IPV impact panel endorsed high evaluative ratings of their experience in the panel, with 80% of survivors (4% disagreeing) and 57% of offenders (5% disagreeing) rating the panel as a worthwhile procedure. Seventy-three percent of survivors and 52% of offenders who participated in the panel rated their experience as positive. Eighty-five percent of survivors and 53% of offenders in the experimental group would recommend the use of survivor impact panels for IPV cases.

Follow-up interviews were conducted in a six-month window after panel participation with four survivors and ten offenders. Descriptions of the interviews were somewhat limited though, with reports such as “most of the offenders expressed positive comments about the panel session” (Fulkerson, 2001, p. 365). One offender indicated the panel did not change his attitude and was not beneficial. Nine offenders expressed positive attitudes about the panel process and named “awareness and empathy for the victim” as positive outcomes of panel participation. Three of the four survivors interviewed expressed positive opinions of the panel process, but the remaining survivor indicated it was not beneficial.

Researchers also attempted to measure recidivism related to panel participation by analyzing court records of the counties included in the evaluation in the twelve months after the panels took place. Only two offender participants had an IPV charge in the follow-up period, one from the experimental and one from the control group. The author concluded there was therefore no difference between groups in recidivism based on panel participation.

In addition to the article's unique contribution to the field as the only published evaluation to date that randomly assigned consenting individuals to participate in IPV impact panels, strengths of the evaluation include the process evaluation of both survivors' and offenders' experiences with judges and police officers and the longitudinal design over a six-month period. These strengths increase the confidence placed in the results of the study. The randomized design decreases the likelihood of pre-existing differences between the experimental and control groups that might have influenced any differences in results across the groups. The process evaluation increases the depth of knowledge obtained regarding what IPV impact panels look like in this context and decreases the likelihood of specification error in future research. The longitudinal design gives some indication of whether any impacts of the panel persist over time. As a whole, the study sheds some much-needed light on survivors' and offenders' experiences in the criminal justice system and in IPV impact panels.

However, there were also major limitations of this evaluation. The evaluation lacked some clarity in defining its measures, as no description was given of the actual panel activities, timing of the panel in relation to other court activities, and timing of survey administration. This lack of information makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about research questions, such as whether survivors who participated in the IPV impact panel as part of their court experience would endorse higher opinions of the criminal justice system following panel participation because the nature of panel participation itself is not completely known. In addition, the study did not clearly state the specific way in which IPV impact panels were incorporated into the court process. No

details were provided about any of the cases' specific court decisions, therefore it is not possible to evaluate whether survivors and offenders were receiving other services that may have influenced participants in the study.

Results of the study could also be biased due to selection effects mentioned earlier, as the individuals who participated in the panel were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control condition only after agreeing to participate in the first place. Thus while the random assignment likely rendered the experimental and control groups statistically comparable, both of these groups could potentially differ in meaningful ways from the general population of IPV survivors and offenders who had contact with the criminal justice system and might not agree to participate in an IPV impact panel. Based on the low participation rates of all the survivors (16% participation) and offenders (22% participation) contacted for study inclusion, it seems likely that there may be barriers to participating in either the panel process itself or in a study of this process for both groups. It is also difficult to confidently draw conclusions from the results obtained, as the relatively small sample sizes of the experimental and control groups limited the statistical power of quantitative tests. In addition, measures were administered at only one time point, which allowed only for analysis of between-groups comparisons of difference rather than within-person changes over time or any indication of causality related to the panel participation.

In sum, evaluation research on the use of IPV impact panels, particularly in the context of BIPs and other IPV intervention programs, is still at an early stage. IPV is a clearly pressing social issue, and research on BIPs and offender characteristics suggests

there is room for improvement in attempts to effectively work with offenders to change their behavior. Restorative justice processes are one potential complementary program to BIPs, with research indicating restorative justice programs may lead to increased survivor empowerment and offender remorse. However, some survivor advocates and others remain concerned about whether restorative justice processes are appropriate to use in IPV cases, as increasing contact and communication between survivors and offenders could lead survivors to believe inaccurately that offenders will change or have changed their behavior. This belief could create a false sense of security that leads them to remain or return to relationships where they may actually face continued increased risk of further abuse. This same concern is voiced about BIPs themselves, so including a restorative justice process within BIPs makes these concerns all the more relevant. Although only very limited research to date compares the use of a restorative justice program (specifically peacemaking circles) to a BIP (Mills, Barocas, & Ariel, 2013), it is encouraging to recognize that researchers found no difference in recidivism between the programs, as this indicates that at least the restorative justice program posed no additional safety risk for participants.

Restorative justice processes have historically been used less frequently for IPV than for crimes that are less severe and interpersonal in nature, so the extent to which theories based on restorative justice programs for other crimes will apply to IPV cases is unclear. Competing models of restorative justice conflict in how they define restorative justice and in what processes are considered most effective in programs, so it is also uncertain whether any of these models are capable of predicting outcomes specifically of

impact panels. Research on DUI/DWI victim impact panels has shown some support for their use in decreasing short-term rates of recidivism and changing attitudes and intentions about drinking behavior, however other studies have shown no difference in long-term recidivism rates between individuals who did and did not attend these panels. Research on the use of IPV impact panels has shown some preliminary support that they increase offenders' understanding of the impact of IPV and increase healing and empowerment of survivors, but specific types of impact have not been further examined. Thus, the use and outcomes of IPV impact panels have yet to be thoroughly researched.

### **Current Study**

Given these significant gaps in current knowledge, particularly the lack of support in theory or previous studies to guide the selection of comprehensive and sensitive program outcome measures, it is premature to conduct an outcome evaluation of IPV impact panels for IPV. I am particularly wary of the possibility of specification error that could be interpreted by readers as evidence that a program does not work rather than as evaluation failure in not measuring the appropriate outcomes. This caution also stems from the nature of current conflicts in the field of batterer intervention regarding interpretations of BIP program evaluations, and resulting debate regarding what should be considered "best practice." This conflict has led to concerning real-world changes, such as a call from some practitioners to return to previously used intervention methods such as couples counseling for IPV, while others continue to criticize those methods. The current study's methods therefore prioritized close attention to the process and experiences of individuals in the IPV impact panel rather than use pre-defined expected

outcomes that might curtail the range of information gathered. This approach was meant to generate ecologically-valid outcome candidates for consideration and use in future research on IPV impact panels.

Given the little published work around IPV impact panels in the context of BIPs, existing research has not reliably identified constructs that would be expected to change based on theory or prior empirical studies. Although recidivism rates are frequently used as a primary indicator of program success in both BIP and restorative justice program outcome evaluations, Zehr (2002) and Bergseth & Bouffard (2012) caution that recidivism rates may not accurately indicate program functioning in restorative justice programs. Reducing recidivism is not an inherent goal of restorative justice but rather an associated potential result of restorative justice processes, which suggests that it might not be a useful measure to include in some restorative justice evaluations. Although the impact of panel participation may be reflected in lowered recidivism rates, examining the process more closely to generate ecologically valid outcomes of panel participation could identify other indicators of outcome that are more relevant in this context. Other issues that arise in BIP evaluations are also likely to be salient in an evaluation of this component of a social intervention program, particularly since this is a relatively brief component (~2 hours as a single session that most offenders only attend once) that is situated within a longer program designed to impact offenders. In his report on the most comprehensive multi-site longitudinal evaluation of batterer intervention program effectiveness to date, Gondolf (2004) emphasized the value of naturalistic, context-specific evaluation methods and analyses to prioritize contextual validity, especially for



social intervention evaluations.

In addition, evaluation efforts of BIPs and IPV impact panels could be strengthened through the use of an ecological perspective that considers individual behavior within the social and cultural context in which it occurs. Kelly's (1966) conceptualization of social ecology emphasizes the importance of recognizing the ecology of a community system and the multiple levels at which interventions can be targeted in light of the system's interdependence, meaning that affecting one element of a system will have ripple effects on the rest of the system and changes in one area have the potential to effect changes in other areas. Trickett (1996) also encouraged the use of a contextual philosophy of science and recognition that theory develops in context. Research designs that include a diversity of perspectives and experiences within a community intervention, through the use of multiple methods of observation and data sources, aid researchers in assessing the fit of restorative justice theories in this context.

The goals of this study were to understand the IPV impact panel activities and processes, the experiences of participants in the panel, and the panel's immediate or proximal impacts on survivors and offenders. Three research questions were posed:

RQ1. What are the sequential activities and interactional processes of IPV impact panels?

RQ2. How do survivors and offenders experience and evaluate IPV impact panels?

RQ3. What are the perceived impacts of IPV impact panels on survivors and offenders?

## II. Methods

### Design

This study utilized a multi-method, multi-source approach in an attempt to investigate several gaps identified in the literature regarding the use of survivor impact panels in the context of IPV and batterer intervention. There is no consensus in the literature regarding an ideal model of IPV impact panels and specific details of the panel process have not been described in detail in any published accounts of this type of impact panel. Therefore, the study included: 1. An ethnographic inquiry of the panel process and participants, including an account of panel activities, participant characteristics, panel setting(s), and participant experiences during the panel. Strengths of ethnography as a method include its capacity to address a large range of behaviors and interactions among participants and to study a program, its setting and participants in-depth and over an extended period of time (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). It also included: 2. An archival data analysis of panel feedback forms to determine which survey items are found to register change and variation in offenders' response to the panel and which do not. Finally, the study included: 3. Focus groups with a variety of stakeholders (survivors, offenders, and BIP facilitators) to gather a range of information regarding what are likely indicators of the panel's impact on survivors and offenders. These impacts could be perceived by any or all of these stakeholders. Focus groups allow a broad range of information on the topic to be collected and to observe interaction of participants that would not be possible to gather from individual interviews (Morgan, 1988). This naturalistic, multi-method study was designed to obtain ecologically valid information on

the IPV impact panel context, activities, and experiences of participants and generate potential outcomes to measure in follow up studies on the program. The research questions and corresponding data methods used in the current study are summarized in Table 3.

These methods have been selected to complement one other, with each method bringing strengths in areas where others have limitations. Ethnographic inquiry increases the likelihood of observing naturalistic behaviors results, which focus groups alone might not capture due to the moderator's role and involvement in arranging the group and facilitating (even unstructured) group interviews (Morgan, 1988). Focus groups increase the range of perspectives on the study topic and increase the possibility of observing interaction among participants in the group discussion, which naturalistic observation in ethnography alone might not reveal. Finally, archival survey data analysis provides individual-level data on offenders' thoughts and reactions to the panel, which naturalistic observation and focus groups do not capture. Survey data also balances information obtained through direct interaction with participants, which might be over-valued or considered more meaningful as a result of its vividness compared to statistics or summaries of quantitative information (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

The study was also designed to increase the trustworthiness of this naturalistic inquiry using guidelines suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) regarding credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the results. Long-term, continuing interaction with study participants through ethnographic inquiry protects against internal validity threats (e.g., maturation) and increases the ability of researchers to

comprehensively and adequately represent the multiple constructions of reality made by stakeholder participant groups regarding the program processes and potential outcomes. This prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the setting builds trust and rapport between researchers and study participants, increases researchers' ability to observe and account for consistencies and inconsistencies in participants' experiences and perceptions of the panel across time, and allows researchers to identify candidates of panel outcomes that are likely to reflect the impact of the panel on survivors and offenders in the current study. In addition, engaging in the setting for an extended period of time increases the ability of researchers to observe contradictory cases, test and retest assumptions and interpretations of observations, and correct any initial misconceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Peer debriefing and member checks are also thought to increase credibility of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as an external check on the research process and interpretations. The proposed study incorporated peer debriefing through regular research team meetings and supervision meetings with my advisor. Peer debriefing allows researchers to test working hypotheses, make findings and interpretations of the study explicit, and reflect on their own positionality and on the research process that could otherwise remain unexamined. Although member checks were not formally included as a final step in the research process due to time constraints, survey results and interpretations will be presented to stakeholders, including panel facilitators, survivor participants, and BIP providers, to obtain their interpretation of the data analysis and incorporate their perspectives in future studies of this subject.

The study's use of multiple methodologies using multiple sources also increases the credibility of results through triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), as in the use of multiple directional antennas in radio triangulation to precisely determine a broadcast's point of origin. Triangulation in research design refers to the use of multiple methods in the study of phenomena (Denzin, 1978) and includes four types: triangulation of methods, sources, analysts, and theories. This study utilized methods triangulation, meaning different data collection methods, and triangulation of sources, meaning different data sources within the same method. Multiple methods and sources generate a richer, more comprehensive account of the setting, program activities and potential outcomes than would be obtained through a single source. Sources were checked for both consistencies and inconsistencies to yield a deeper insight into the studied phenomenon. Although the point is not to replicate or verify information across sources, the appearance of findings across more than one source or method reduces the uncertainty of its interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and increases confidence in the study findings.

In order to allow readers to evaluate the transferability, dependability, and confirmability of study findings, I have provided a comprehensive and inclusive description of the study setting, study processes, observed phenomena, and analysis strategies in the subsequent section. Although the "proof" of transferability, or representativeness of the data and applicability in other contexts, is not a primary concern of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), knowing how information was exchanged and received in the study by researchers and participants allows readers to judge a study finding as raw information and decide on its transferability themselves. In addition, the

study includes a written account of any instability or phenomenal change in the study methods as they have occurred, and study materials have been available to my advisor for audit at his discretion. These steps should increase readers' ability to evaluate the dependability and confirmability of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Study Context**

The current study is situated within the Washington County (Oregon) Domestic Violence Survivor Impact Panels, one of eight known current or previously run impact panels for IPV found in the United States. At these panels, survivors of IPV speak about their experiences of abuse and its impact on them to a group of IPV offenders who are enrolled in BIPs and mandated by their programs to attend the panel.

The IPV impact panels in this study include survivor speakers who participate in the panel on a completely voluntary basis. Offenders are required to attend the panels after participating in BIP groups for at least 26 weeks. When offenders arrive, they check in with a panel facilitator or volunteer and pay \$25. Funds collected by offender attendees are used to continue to run IPV impact panels. When the panel begins, the panel facilitator describes what will happen in the panel and sets ground rules for all participants to behave respectfully throughout the panel process and specific rules for what kinds of questions are acceptable during the question and answer session at the end of the panel (e.g., no victim-blaming questions such as "What did you do to provoke your ex-partner?"). During the panel, speakers typically sit at a table in front of offenders in the audience and each speaker shares their experience in previously abusive relationship(s) as they see fit, with no specific criteria for how or what aspects of their

stories they share. When the speakers are finished sharing, speakers and audience members engage in a question and answer session where offender attendees are able to ask clarifying or follow-up questions of speakers regarding the speakers' experiences. Following the conclusion of a panel, offenders complete feedback forms on the panel, exit the room, and then survivor speakers participate in an informal debriefing with panel facilitators and volunteer attendees (such as survivor advocates, potential speakers, judges, and lawyers) about their experience of the panel and the feedback from offender attendees of the panel. Panels are scheduled for two hours and are held one evening per month in alternating local counties, usually in rooms in county government buildings.

### **Participants**

Participants included female survivors of IPV, male offenders in BIPs, and BIP providers. Demographics were collected for participants in survivor focus groups ( $k = 2$ ,  $n = 7$ ), one provider focus group ( $n = 2$ ), and an individual interview with an offender. No demographic information was collected from the male offenders ( $n = 287$ ) who attended the 11 impact panels from which archival data was analyzed in their feedback form responses or officially recorded from the 18 panels that I observed in person.

All participants in the survivor focus groups identified their gender as female. Five of the seven participants had children, with one participant each having one, two, and three, children, and two participants having four or more children. All participants were currently in the pool of panel speakers actively participated on the panel at the time of recruitment and data collection. Of the three participants who indicated they were referred to the panel by a source other than those listed, one participant wrote that she

was “asked to speak,” another that she “was asked to join by participant,” and the third indicated that she was referred by the Washington County website. Statistics describing the complete demographic information for the survivor focus group participants are reported in Table 4.

The offender who participated in the interview was 37 years old and identified as male and White/Caucasian. He was married, with a relationship length of 10 years, and had three children. His highest education level completed was some college/trade school and he was currently employed. He indicated he had three prior arrests, was currently enrolled in a BIP, and had been in the program for 11 months. The interview took place two weeks after he attended the impact panel.

One participant in the provider focus group identified their gender as female and one participant identified their gender as male. Their mean age was 53.5 ( $SD = 0.71$ ) and both identified as White/Caucasian. One participant’s highest education level completed was their GED/high school diploma while the other’s was a graduate degree. Both were currently employed as BIP providers and currently referred offenders from their groups to the panel at the time of the focus group. One participant indicated they first heard about the panels through a probation officer or probation department, and both wrote they heard about them from the time the panels began. Both wrote that they had been referring offenders from their programs to the panel from the start of the panels, with one estimating this to be at least 15 years. One participant wrote they had referred 12 offenders from their own group and an additional 12 from their agency, while the second wrote they had referred group members to “all” the panels.



## **Procedure**

**Ethnography.** An ethnography (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994; Miller, Hengst, & Wang, 2003) was conducted as a first step of entering and understanding the study context. The ethnography consisted of my first-hand examination of and deep immersion in the everyday context of the impact panel through repeated, varied forms of data collection. I used a discovery-based approach to observe and understand the activities and perspectives of actors that is most concerned with understanding their lived experience (Banister et al., 1994). Rather than use deductive, predictive theoretical models, ethnography uses in-depth, open-ended interviewing and observation to gather rich information that can orient researchers and others to the context and history of the setting and activities (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). The findings from this type of ethnographic inquiry can subsequently lead to the generation of hypotheses and predictive theoretical models to use with other methods of data collection to test the associations found among domains. Knowledge generated through an ethnography consists of a complex set of tasks including deep engagement in the setting to foster understanding, recording those experiences and observations, and careful and continuous reflection on the meanings that researchers and participants make of their experiences in the setting (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013).

This ethnographic inquiry was the basis upon which I established relationships with individuals in the panel setting, including panel facilitators, recurring panel speakers, and probation officers. In their description of essential ethnographic methods, Schensul and LeCompte (2013) recommend building empathetic understanding through

lived experience as a method of building relationships with others in the setting and accurately conveying accounts of the community context and situations in a socially valid manner. In the effort to build such relationships with multiple stakeholders, I was consistently transparent with participants about my goal to engage in the research setting and my role as a graduate student affiliated with Portland State University.

The primary methods of data collection and interpretation in Schensul and LeCompte's (2013) description of essential data collection include observation, conversation and interviewing along with the skills necessary for integrating into the setting (i.e., relating, listening, explaining, observing, questioning, communicating, recording, discussing, and revising). As researchers themselves are an instrument for data collection in ethnography, Schensul and LeCompte emphasize the importance of recognizing and describing for readers the perspective of researchers in reference to community members and situations throughout the process of engaging in the setting. Personal characteristics such as physical characteristics, age, language skills, and gender may have facilitated or hindered the field experience and impacted my positionality as "outsider" or "insider" in the setting. Entry and acceptance into the setting was not only a single task at the beginning of a field experience but rather something that was negotiated and renegotiated continuously. My shifting positionality in relation to community members and situations also influenced what information was or was not revealed in the setting (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013).

At the start of ethnographic inquiry, researchers can build a formative model, or initial set of ideas about which conditions or concepts are important in contributing to the

phenomenon of interest in the study (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). These formative models allow researchers to organize field notes and communicate the motivation and progress of the study to others. The unstructured approach to data gathering allows for the gradual emergence of key issues through analysis (Banister et al., 1994), such as the creation and use of formative models. As researchers become more knowledgeable of different groups, opinions, and views within the setting, they are better able to overcome the distance and power differential between researchers and community members to access and produce more valid information. For example, as my role in the setting, relationship with the convener of the impact panels, and relationships with regular panel speakers developed over time, I gained access to different information and observed different interactions than at I did at the start of my engagement in this setting.

Validity in the context of ethnography refers to convergent or similar information over time from multiple sources and of multiple types of data (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013) that increase confidence in the interpretation of the data. For example, an impact of the panel on offenders such as an increased understanding of the effect of emotional or verbal abuse that is reflected by multiple sources, such as spontaneous comments by panel speakers in unstructured interviews, questions asked by multiple offenders over different impact panel sessions, and changes in the body language of offenders when speakers talk about the impact of emotional or verbal abuse, would increase my confidence in identifying this as a salient panel impact on offenders. This confidence could be further increased if this domain emerged as relevant through other data sources as well, such as in the analysis of the feedback forms or in focus groups with participant

stakeholders.

In summary, ethnographic data collection consisted of the following steps: 1. Listening., 2. Observing, recording and interpreting behavior., 3. Organizing information and understandings in formative models that increasingly aligned with future observed events., 4. Reflecting on the influence of what was observed on the behavior, attitudes, and values of both researchers and community members., and 5. Reflecting on how my personal traits shaped the information I acquired and how my experiences changed my own behavior, values, and identities (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013).

***Completed activities.*** I conducted participant observations of eighteen IPV impact panels from October 2014 to January 2017, spending over 45 hours in the panel setting to observe activities including the set-up of the panel, arrival of offenders and their entry into the room in preparation for the start of the panel, delivery of an introduction to and guidelines for the panel by the panel facilitator, sharing of stories by survivors speaking about their personal experience with IPV and how it has affected them, question and answer period where offenders ask questions of speakers regarding aspects of the speakers' stories, completion of feedback forms by offenders at the conclusion of the panel, and an immediate debriefing with speakers, facilitators and observers following the conclusion of a panel. I also conducted spontaneous, on-site unstructured interviews with panel facilitators, speakers and offenders following panels, as the speakers, facilitators, and panel observers typically remained in the setting after panels to discuss their experiences for approximately 15-30 minutes. In addition, I monitored twenty monthly two-hour meetings of local BIP providers for topics and discussions about and

pertinent to the impact panels. This list of planned activities for data collection for this ethnographic inquiry was adjusted in an inductive manner based on what is learned in each step of the process, increasing observations from the planned twelve panels and six provider meetings. I witnessed the panels expand to neighboring counties and cease in one of those counties, glimpsing the embroiled network of relationships among probation, judges, BIPs, and advocacy organizations to effect different levels of support for this process. I also participated in a community corrections meeting with judges and others about the use of these panels and the possibility of incorporating them into batterer intervention in an additional county. I have also attended and contributed to a new program related to the panels coordinated by DVSD, the Speakers Workshop series, since it began. This is a bi-monthly workshop created in October 2016 for both IPV survivors and former offenders to practice speaking about their experiences in preparation to sit on a new panel of survivors and offenders. During the workshop, new speakers receive training and support on public speaking, practice telling their story within different time limits, and practice sharing in front of audiences with different community members. Speakers receive feedback from one another and from the community audience members. Experienced panel speakers could also share their stories in this setting if they chose. Although these workshops were not necessarily attended by all survivor speakers who participate on the survivor impact panel, my observations of these workshops informed my understanding of how both survivor and offender speakers evolve in their storytelling, as many new speakers focused on more general aspects of IPV that they believed were important to communicate to the audience in their first attempt to share their story.

Feedback and additional practice in other workshops helped them become more specific in their storytelling, sharing more details from their personal experiences of IPV, either as a survivor or offender.

Throughout these forms of data collection, I took detailed observation notes as soon as possible following observations and unstructured interviews. After hearing the panel policy that none of the audience members take notes with them out of the panel to respect the privacy of the speakers, I did not feel it was appropriate to ask to breach this privacy by taking notes myself during the panel. After attending the panels for over a year, I felt that I had both established enough trust and familiarity with the panel facilitator and speakers and shared my research ideas and rationale with these regular members of the setting to make it possible to request an exception to this policy for this study. My prolonged engagement in the setting at that point allowed me to negotiate their approval to take field notes in the setting. I was thus able to take direct field notes during five impact panels, held between February 2016 and January 2017.

Observations of the panels continued as feasible until the information collected reached the point of “saturation,” at which little or no additional relevant information or themes were observed or able to be obtained from my perspective as a panel observer (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; O’Reilly & Parker, 2012). Over the course of the observations, I began to see many of the same speakers share their stories in different combinations until I became so familiar with their stories that I could predict which aspects of their experience they would focus on when speaking. Although some new details might be shared, or told in a slightly different order, or more time spent on some

details than others across panels, eventually I could anticipate most of what speakers would say, sometimes even verbatim phrases or entire sentences that were vivid details that speakers consistently included in telling their stories to new audiences. I came to know their stories so well that while typing up de-identified notes, I can identify the moment when I recognize whose story I am reading from certain details or phrases and I think, “Oh, so-and-so.” Examples of panel processes began to overlap rather than introduce new categories (e.g., another victim-blaming question, another question focused on children, another example of a speaker relating to the audience). After more than two years of observing the panels, I felt confident that I had become fully saturated in the data that was possible to gather through observation alone.

**Archival survey data collection.** Archival survey data was collected from offender panel attendees by panel facilitators over a period of two years. Feedback forms were developed by an unknown number of individuals who originally facilitated the panel, with a slight adjustment in the wording of one item across the two-year period of data collection that differentiate two versions of the forms (A and B) used during this time. The feedback forms were designed as post-panel evaluations to assess program outcomes for individual participants. Each form contains nine items and the two are described in further detail in the study measures section.

Feedback forms were administered to offender panel attendees immediately after the conclusion of the panel and were collected by panel facilitators prior to offenders receiving a receipt as proof for their BIP group facilitators of their attendance. Offenders were instructed to respond to the questions honestly to give their feedback on the panel

and help panel facilitators improve the process for future panels. Offenders were also able to take notes on these forms in preparation for the question and answer period with the speakers, with the understanding that they would turn in the forms before leaving so as not to take any private or confidential information about the panel speakers and their stories with them outside of the panel setting.

**Focus groups.** Focus groups were conducted in order to gather a variety of responses from stakeholders regarding their perceptions and experiences of the panel and of the perceived impact of the IPV impact panel on survivors and offenders. Focus groups are a dynamic form of data collection that typically includes 8-12 participants and a moderator that leads the group through an interview guide (Morgan & Krueger, 1993). Interview guides and moderator leadership styles can range from completely unstructured, in which discussion focuses mainly on topics that group members think are most important, to completely structured, in which discussion topics are wholly determined by researchers (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). A major strength of this research method is its ability to gather a wide range of ideas regarding a topic from the perspectives of multiple participants who can respond to one another, ideally increasing the breadth of information found in a study (Morgan & Krueger, 1993).

***Sampling frame and participant recruitment.*** Participant observation and consultation with stakeholders conducted to date have identified the following groups as most likely to hold varying important pieces of information about the panel process: survivors participating as panel speakers, offenders who attend the panel, and BIP providers.



As the current pool of survivor panelists is small ( $N = 12$ ), the sampling frame included all survivors from the pool who consented to be contacted for panel participation ( $n = 10$ ). Survivors in the speaker pool were contacted by the panel facilitator to ask for their consent to share their contact information (phone numbers or emails, at their discretion) with me. From this pool,  $n = 9$  replied to recruitment emails and phone calls and  $n = 8$  could be scheduled to participate in focus groups. I then used the recruitment script (see Appendix A) to contact and invite survivors to participate in a focus group. During this stage of recruitment, I described the topic of the focus group to sensitize participants to what will be discussed and provide time prior to the focus group itself for participants to consider the topic and generate richer data during the focus group itself (Zeller, 1993). Although many of the speakers know one another from the current pool given their regular interaction when participating in the panels together, the limited participant pool made it infeasible to schedule focus groups only with speakers who were strangers to one another. While facilitating these groups, I acknowledged the likelihood that the survivor participants were at least somewhat familiar with one another through their interactions on the panel and encouraged them to adhere to the ground rules for group discussion described below to minimize the risk that their relationships would influence their interactions during the focus group (Smith, 1972). One participant arrived after the cut-off time, so  $n = 7$  speakers ultimately participated in the survivor focus groups ( $k = 2$ ).

The sampling frame for offender focus groups included all panel attendees between August 2016 and January 2017. From the three panels that were held in this time

period, an estimated 40-50 attendees were invited to participate. At the conclusion of each panel, I made an announcement using the recruitment script (see Appendix A) that briefly introduced the study, the topic of the focus groups, and compensation procedures. I attempted to schedule participants in person, but was not able to recruit any participants at the majority of the panels. Efforts to recruit offenders through announcements only, announcements and flyers, and holding a brief group debriefing conversation as a short focus group immediately after a panel were unable to increase the pool of participants. I only received contact information from two panel participants and although I scheduled both of them for a focus group, only one of them arrived and so I conducted a one-on-one interview using the focus group script with this participant.

The sampling frame of BIP providers included any BIP provider who attended ( $n = 11$ ) a monthly local batterer intervention provider network meeting between July and October 2016. An unknown number of additional BIP providers may have also seen the announcements for study recruitment over the online listserv for this provider network and could also be considered to be in the sampling frame. I first attempted to recruit providers by making regular announcements at these meetings using the recruitment script (see Appendix A) to introduce the study, the topic of the focus groups, and compensation procedures, and take down phone numbers and emails of interested potential participants. Through in-person announcements, I was only able to recruit two potential participants, as many of the meeting attendees were not eligible for participation (i.e., they were not working directly in batterer intervention and were not referring offenders to the panels). To broaden the potential provider pool, I sent an email based on

the recruitment script to all individuals on the network contact list to invite any providers who referred offenders to the Washington County Impact Panels to participate. I also made a website advertising the study and included this link in the email. Responses indicated that scheduling focus group meetings would not be possible for most providers, so I was only able to schedule two providers over email for a focus group. I followed up with other eligible participants through informal phone interviews ( $n = 4$ ). As the pool of local BIP providers is somewhat small, these providers also knew one another from their professional history. While facilitating these groups, I acknowledged their professional relationship and encouraged them to adhere to the ground rules for group discussion described below to minimize the risk that their relationship would influence their interactions during the focus group (Smith, 1972).

Although I attempted to hold focus groups with at least 6-8 participants per group, scheduling 12-14 participants per group, participant availability and the lack of success in original recruiting efforts constrained my ability to meet this 20% over-recruitment goal, recommended by Morgan (1988) and others based on their recruitment experience. For participants who were scheduled, reminder calls or emails (depending on preferred method of contact) were sent 24 hours prior to the scheduled focus group to encourage attendance and give directions to the focus group site, including the specific room to be used, and asking participants to arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the focus group. Both a survivor focus group and an offender interview were held in a private room of a local BIP (Portland, OR; see Appendices B and D), as this location was deemed reasonably close to where the panels are held for participants to be able to transport

themselves to this location. The BIP provider focus group was held in the same location as where the batterer intervention provider network meetings are held (Portland, OR; see Appendix C), as these participants were already familiar with and able to transport themselves to this location based on their prior attendance at these network meetings. The final survivor focus group was held in a community meeting space near the non-profit organization that coordinates the panels to accommodate the convenience of participants' schedules and access to the location.

***Moderator selection.*** In consultation with my advisor, I decided to conduct the focus groups so that I could draw on my familiarity with and understanding of the setting and processes of the impact panel based on my ethnographic work and panel observations. This experience allowed me to quickly place the content of what was shared in the focus groups within my broader understanding of how the impact panel functioned and understand subtle references to shared experiences (e.g., audience behavior from a recent panel) to understand what was being communicated by participants during groups. This also allowed me to ask probing questions to clarify what participants shared during the focus groups when I was aware of multiple possible meanings that they could be endorsing. I conducted the focus groups with the help of a trained undergraduate research assistant who acted as a co-moderator for the first focus group to aid in observation and administration of the group. This assistant also helped record the order of speakers in the discussion to aid in the transcription process.

***Conducting the groups.*** Focus groups were conducted with the participants over a 90-minute period with members seated in chairs arranged in a circle, as per the

recommendations of Morgan and Krueger (1993) and Stewart and Shamdasani (1990). Groups were held in familiar settings for each participant when possible as is commonly recommended (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). All participants were given \$25 gift cards and \$5 cash transportation compensation at the beginning of the panel and provided light refreshments during the focus group itself as compensation for their participation.

I planned to conduct two focus groups with each stakeholder group ( $k = 6$ ), as Knodel (1993) recommends conducting at least two groups per “break” characteristic in the sample, or characteristic of division between participants (in this study stakeholder roles) in order to allow comparisons to be made across focus groups and increase confidence in the data obtained if it is consistent across groups from the same stakeholder type. In practice, it was not feasible to follow this recruitment plan, and a contingency plan was followed that prioritized recruitment of survivor speakers, followed by BIP providers, followed by offender panel attendees in order to adequately gather the range of opinions and experiences within one stakeholder group before adding additional stakeholder groups. This resulted in my conducting two focus groups with three and four survivor speakers ( $n = 7$ ), one focus group with BIP providers ( $n = 2$ ), and a focus group with offender panel attendees in which only one participant arrived ( $n = 1$ ).

At the start of each focus group, I introduced the topic of the group discussion and set ground rules for the discussion regarding respectful participation (only one person speaking at a time, no side conversations, relatively equal participation without dominating the discussion). I also discussed the consent process (see Appendices B-D) and participant confidentiality to the extent possible in a group setting, asking permission

to audio record the group only for the purposes of data collection and transcription for accuracy, let everyone know they were free to leave at any time, established safe space and made it clear that everyone's opinions were not only valued but necessary for the group's functioning to establish a safe space for discussion and the open, honest participation of group members (Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The introduction reinforced the ownership of and responsibility for generating and sustaining the discussion on the participants, emphasizing my role as a learner from them rather than as a guide who structured the content of the discussion (Morgan, 1988).

Focus groups were conducted in a funnel format (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990) that began with general questions and narrowed to specific topics as the discussion progressed. This format attempted to meet the four criteria outlined by Merton, Fiske, and Kendall (1990) for conducting effective "focused interviews": range, specificity, depth, and personal context. Range refers to the topics covered in the interview, which should be not only topics deemed important by researchers but include the possibility of covering issues unanticipated by researchers. To maximize range of topics, the discussion was not preemptively narrowed by researchers (e.g., by focusing exclusively on a single concept when there might be multiple involved in a phenomenon of interest). Specificity refers to the data produced by the interview, which should be directed toward participants' experiences to elicit concrete, detailed accounts, rather than generalities that may not be based on or apply to participants' own experiences. Depth refers to the personal feelings of participants expressed during their interactions in the interview, which ensures personal involvement with the interview material and motivation to share their

perspectives rather than again limiting discussion to generalities. Personal context refers to participants' use of their own context when responding to the interview topic, which can be illuminated by interaction with others in the group with the goal of discovering as many different perspectives as are present in the group.

Focus group scripts tailored to each stakeholder group with common interview questions are included in Appendices E-G. The focus group moderation guide was followed with the offender participant even though the participant's responses were collected in an individual interview, as a second potential participant had been scheduled for the planned focus group and it was completed as an individual interview only due to participant attrition (i.e., the second scheduled participant did not arrive for the focus group). Participants were first asked to describe experiences with a common reference point to their role in relation to the panels (i.e., as speakers, audience members, or observers of offenders in groups as BIP providers) to establish rapport among participants (Morgan & Krueger, 1993) and write down their response before sharing their responses aloud. This discussion-starter activity was meant to establish a comfortable atmosphere for group participation and also help deter any tendency for individuals to engage in "groupthink" (Janis, 1982), the tendency to appear to be in (what may be a false) consensus or suppress any (potentially real) disagreements with other members (Morgan, 1988). By asking everyone to respond to an initial prompt first in writing and then out loud, all participants have the space to share their experiences at the start of the process and before a consensus emerges (Morgan, 1988). This activity also served as an impromptu guide for the moderator on potential probes based on what participants share

at the start of the discussion, tracking consensus and diversity and returning to those topics throughout the interview, in addition to pre-planned probes that may not emerge from participants themselves (e.g., “One thing I haven’t heard mention of so far is ‘xyz’. Does that fit or conflict with anyone’s experience?”; Morgan, 1988). Participants were subsequently asked to respond to prompts related to their experiences participating in or interacting with the panels to gather detailed information on how survivors and offenders experience IPV impact panels and participants’ perceptions about the impact of the IPV impact panel on survivors and offenders.

During the focus group discussion, I primarily allowed participants to guide the range of topics explored in response to the few prompts provided, but I was ready to ask several prepared follow-up probes to encourage discussion among all participants. Probes were fairly general, such as “Has anyone else had a similar or different experience?”, but left space for participants to notice one another’s levels of participation and the possibility that they will ask one another probing or follow-up questions themselves. Comparisons that participants make when interacting in the discussion regarding one another’s experiences and opinions are especially valuable when studying complex behavior (Morgan & Krueger, 1993).

In the last ten minutes of the focus groups, participants were asked to sum up their experiences and opinions after the discussion about the study topic in a culminating statement from everyone in response to the final focus group prompt. This final statement can provide insight into possible constructs or themes of particular importance to participants (Morgan, 1988). Afterward they were thanked for their input during the



discussion, debriefed regarding the study goals, and given time to ask any clarifying questions. Following completion of the focus groups, audio recordings were transcribed for data analysis and interpretation.

## **Measures**

**Archival survey data feedback form.** Two versions of feedback forms that have been used by panel facilitators to receive feedback from offenders on their experience of the panel were included in this archival analysis. The forms were developed by panel facilitators and do not utilize any existing validated scales. The forms contain eight statements panel facilitators believed would provide the most important feedback on offenders' experience of the panel. Participants are asked to rate the extent to which they agree with the eight statements (e.g., "I better understand how my physical abuse has harmed my victim(s)") on a five-point Likert-type scale from "No" (1) to "Extremely" (5). Participants are also asked two open-ended questions with room for them to write qualitative responses to each question (e.g., "Please describe how these presentations might influence your choices about how you behave toward others in relationships (partner, children, etc.)"). Survey items can be found in a sample feedback form (Version A) included in Appendix H.

**Demographics survey.** A demographics questionnaire was administered to focus group participants, including measures of participant's role relative to the panel (e.g., survivor, offender, BIP provider), age, gender, ethnicity, marital status (survivors, offenders only), children (survivors, offenders only), education, employment, prior arrests (offenders only) prior assault arrests (offenders only), and length of participation

in or contact with the panel. Specifically, survivor participants were asked about their tenure in the IPV impact panel, including when and how they discovered it, the length of time in months or years that they have consented to be contacted to speak on the panel, and the estimated number of panels on which they have participated. The offender participant was asked about their tenure in a BIP (name of program, length in the program, and if they are currently enrolled in or have completed the program), which panel they attended (month, year, and location), and who their BIP facilitator is or was. BIP facilitator participants were asked about their knowledge of the IPV impact panel, including when and how they discovered it, the length of time they have referred offenders to the panel, and the estimated number of panels in which they were aware of their group members' attendance.

**Focus group materials.** The primary question in the unstructured focus groups is what survivors, offenders, and BIP providers believe the perceived impacts are of the IPV impact panel on survivors and offenders. A funnel design allowed survivors, offenders, and program facilitators to broadly discuss their experiences with IPV impact panels before narrowing down to this culminating question for the final segment of the focus groups. Three scripts were used in the focus groups with survivors, offenders, and BIP providers (see Appendices E-G). Focus group materials also included any notes participants made during the panel (i.e., their initial responses to the discussion-starter activity).

## **Analysis**

**Ethnographic analysis.** To address RQ1 and RQ2 (see Table 3 for a summary of

research questions and methods), I have produced a narrative sequential description of the administrative procedures, social-interactional processes, and survivor and offender experiences of in IPV impact panels. This temporally-oriented narrative delineates the steps for offenders and survivors to enter the panel, the sequence of activities that occur in the panel, and observed ways in which survivors and offenders experience the panel. Ethnographic observation notes were analyzed using an inductive, systematic and generative approach to generate “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the panels and the experiences of panel participants. In addition, regular discussion and consultation with my advisor guided my processing and reflection on developing an account of the impact of IPV impact panels on survivors and offenders.

Two research assistants who assisted me in this study also informed my account of the panel processes and impacts, as they made written reflections on their activities for the study and interpretations they made in their work. One research assistant was involved only in the transcription process for one focus group recording (the second survivor focus group), while the other examined and corrected the data entry of the archival data (offender feedback forms), observed eight panels with me and discussed our observations in post-panel debriefing conversations, assisted in pilot testing the focus group scripts and protocols, co-moderated a focus group with me (the first survivor focus group), and discussed the data gathered in a post-focus group debriefing conversation with me.

During data analysis of the ethnographic material, I attempted to clarify the pattern of events that informed my understanding of the setting and activities (Banister et

al., 1994). It is important to note that the criteria for evaluating the data in analysis and reporting are different than what would typically be considered as indicators of reliability or validity in a positivist framework (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). Instead of isolating and carefully controlling elements of an intervention or setting as in an experimental study, ethnography is concerned with the ongoing interaction of factors and events and the techniques used to investigate this in ethnography cause researchers themselves to become embedded in the social worlds they attempt to study (Banister et al., 1994).

A major strength of ethnography is its potential for high internal validity, or the extent to which the reality of study participants is authentically represented by researchers' observations and interpretations (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). Although external validity, or the extent to which results can be considered generalizable across other contexts and individuals, in some ways conflicts with the nature and goals of ethnography, I have attempted to fully explain and describe in the findings below all settings, setting-observer interactions, activities and methods used in the study in order for readers to assess the value and appropriateness of the research, its conclusions, and the extent to which this ethnographic account is comparable and translatable to other settings (Schensul and LeCompte, 2013).

Stages of writing in ethnography that were incorporated into this component of the study include inscription and description. Inscription consisted of learning how to notice important elements of the setting according its members and accurately writing them down (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). My previous experiences, personal characteristics, research questions, training in research paradigms, and worldview all

influenced this process. Description consisted of writing down jottings, field notes, or other records to producing “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973), meaning narratives of behaviors, conversations, and activities in the setting along with their interpretations and explanations. Over time, my descriptions became increasingly focused and honed in on key features of the setting (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013) and a coherent account emerged of the reality of the setting and its participants in response to the research questions and theories related to the study.

**Archival survey quantitative data analysis.** To address RQ3, I analyzed quantitative responses to feedback forms collected from 2009 to 2011 regarding offenders’ self-reported perceptions of the panel’s impact on them. Specifically, I examined the means, standard deviations, and inter-item correlations of offenders’ responses to the feedback form items to examine which items were ranked higher than others on average, which items were responded to in greater variation than others, and which items were strongly correlated with one another. This analysis was performed on two versions of the feedback forms that were nearly identical (A and B) in order to examine how offenders responded to the panel. The theoretical basis of the decision to include items for each version of the feedback form is unknown, therefore this analysis focused on the largest set of feedback form responses available to me at the time of the study’s design. The two versions differ by only one word in one of the eight statements. Version A states this item as “The presentations helped me understand the long-term effects of abuse of others,” while Version B lists this item as “The presentations helped me understand the long-term effects of my abuse of others” (underlined to emphasize the

one differing word). Together, responses to these two versions of the feedback form total  $N = 289$ , with  $n = 103$  (A) and  $n = 186$  (B). With only the slight difference between these form versions, the analysis could be based on both form versions in order to increase the sample size base on which the analysis was conducted. Analysis of the forms therefore included a descriptive analysis of the quantitative survey items and scale reliability in terms of Cronbach's alpha (1951) to determine the most valid way to report the perceived impact of the IPV impact panel on offenders from the feedback forms.

**Archival survey and focus group qualitative analysis.** To further investigate RQ2 and RQ3, I conducted an inductive content analysis of the themes evident in the qualitative data regarding how survivors and offenders experience and evaluate the IPV impact panels and the perceived impacts of the panel on survivors and offenders. Specifically, this analysis was conducted on the qualitative data obtained from offenders' responses to open-ended questions on the feedback forms and the responses from survivors, offenders, and BIP providers in the focus groups. A content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) is a systematic technique that describes and quantifies key words or phrases found in participants' responses in order to generate domains of concepts related to the phenomenon of interest. These content domains condense the data by capturing the range of responses and the frequency or prevalence of common domains. The steps of inductive content analysis followed in this study include data preparation, organizing, and reporting. During preparation, responses were examined to determine the average length of response and select a unit of meaning for analysis. Sentences were found to contain multiple meaningful pieces of information and so the unit of analysis was set at phrases.

Next, data were organized through a process of open coding, category creation and abstraction to generate a codebook. As the reliability and validity of this largely ethnographic study was not grounded in a positivist or post-positivist framework of replicability, I determined that it would be more useful to obtain feedback from as many members of my research team as possible to increase the perspectives and multiple interpretations of the codebook itself than to train a single second coder on the codebook and document whether someone could consistently apply the same codes that I did to the data. Therefore, multiple raters were not trained on the codebook to independently apply codes to the data, as measuring inter-rater agreement with Cohen's kappa (1960) would not be as informative as a rich discussion of my and others' interpretations of the codes. Rather, the codes, definitions, and sample references assigned to each code were shared with a research team including two undergraduate research assistants, three other graduate students, and my faculty advisor. The content covered codes used to describe both the panel's interactional processes and impacts on survivors and offenders. Team members had at least a week to review and consider the content and structure of the codebook before gathering for an hour-long discussion of the content. The discussion helped me surface my own blind spots and assumptions about how I had made sense of the data at that point and informed my final understanding of the data, presented in the findings below.

Sets of survivor and offender experiences were then identified by examining grouped processes and impacts in the NVivo software analysis of all my panel observation notes, notes from informal interviews with BIP providers, feedback form

open-ended responses, and focus group transcripts. In order to better understand how processes and impacts were meaningfully (e.g., logically) linked by participants across sources, I performed a conditional analysis of interdependent co-occurrence of group-endorsed themes for restorative process codes and the perceived panel impacts on survivors and on offenders. Specifically, I performed two matrix queries to search for “near” content within the selected nodes for these three categories of codes: restorative process codes, survivor impacts, and offender impacts. The first matrix query searched for near content between restorative process codes for survivors and offenders and all offender impact codes. The second matrix query searched for near content between the same set of restorative process codes and all survivor impact codes. The near content searches specified custom contexts of 50 words, meaning that content was searched for the selected nodes that were applied to “near” sections of text within 50 words. This context length was specified after preliminary examination of similar searches with contexts specified of 25 words and 100 words. The former search context was too brief to capture linked comments in data sources of longer length (e.g., focus group transcripts in which a single participant might respond at length followed by an immediate response from a second participant) while the latter context was too large to isolate meaningful links between comments (e.g., notes from informal interviews with BIP providers that responded to each of my questions but did not linked across questions). Results were examined to find meaningful links between processes, perceptions, and impacts within sources that were linked in proximity by source (e.g., a provider describing a panel process followed immediately by a perceived impact on offenders). These links were not



examined if they were across sources (e.g., between feedback form responses from different participants) as I was searching for logical links from the same perspective of how the processes and impacts unfolded in the panel.

The unit of analysis in focus group research is most commonly the group, rather than the individuals within the group, as data from individuals within the same focus group are not independent given the presence of group cues and influences participants may have on one another during the discussion (Hughes & DuMont, 1993). Therefore, themes are compared for *consistencies* or convergence across groups and nested within the perspectives of each group. These comparisons were made across the two survivor focus groups, the single provider focus group, and the single offender individual interview. Morgan (1988) also recommends considering the interplay of individual-coding and group-level for a more comprehensive coding of focus group content that includes first whether all participants in a group mentioned a given code and second whether each group's discussion contained a given code. Therefore, *inconsistencies* across themes have also been examined at both the individual and group level. Although these comparisons were made in relation to the three perspectives represented in the data (i.e., if findings are consistent across all three perspectives or if one or more findings are unique to survivors, offenders, or BIP providers only), the primary focus of the data analysis was to address the research question of what the perceived impact of the panel is on survivors and offenders rather than to segment responses by group type (i.e., survivor, offender, or BIP provider).

As the current study involves data collected from multiple sources and methods,

information linked across forms of data collection and analysis was compared to one another as well as to current theoretical models of restorative justice processes and outcomes. Discrepancies between data from different sources (survivors, offenders, and BIP facilitators) or methods (ethnography, archival data analysis, and focus groups) do not inherently favor one over the other (Morgan, 1988), rather both consistencies and inconsistencies are important sources of information in building on previous restorative justice theory to understand the IPV impact panel activities and processes, the experiences of participants in the panel, and the panel's impact on survivors and offenders. Findings were compared across different sources of data (from survivors, offenders, and BIP providers) to see if they converge in content about the experiences of survivors and offenders in IPV impact panels and whether the same conclusions are reached through analysis of different methods of data collection (ethnography, archival data analysis, and focus groups) regarding the perceived impacts of these panels on survivors and offenders.

### **My Positionality and Reflexive Stance**

This section describes how my questions and interpretations of the panel process and its impact on survivors and offenders evolved over the course of the study in order to examine the assumptions I made at different points of the research process, how my focus came to center on the findings I subsequently present, where my breakthroughs in understanding originated, and how this influenced my interpretation of my observations and other data. Just as my own perspective influenced the information that I noticed and the meaning that I made out of the various forms and sources of data, you as a reader will

bring your own situated perspective to your interpretation of this document. What seems noteworthy or questionable to you will be influenced by your own personal, professional, or other experiences, and I hope that you will consider your own position with respect to this subject material while digesting the findings and my interpretations.

Reflecting on the many notes that I took on my understanding of the panel, the way that this understanding changed is most apparent to me in the many questions that I considered about this process, from September 2014 to April 2017. Before I ever attended an impact panel, I had initial questions and assumptions about how the panel might operate and what influence the panel would have on survivors and offenders. My first questions were primarily focused on offender change, as I wondered whether this change that I assumed took place after they attended an impact panel could be in their thoughts about their own behavior or their partner's experience of their abuse. I was curious why offenders were attending the panels, whether the program mandated their attendance and if so whether they had any other personal motivation to attend. I had similar questions about the survivor participants, how they felt after speaking on the panels, what their impression of the impact was on offenders, their motivation to participate, and whether they themselves changed as a result of participating.

I had not worked directly with men enrolled in BIP groups before. My only work with IPV survivors was in my previously held position as a sexual assault advocate and crisis counselor, and while I had some training on the dynamics of IPV and the overlap with sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence, I did not consider myself an expert on the subject and felt I had a lot to learn about their experiences. My advocacy

background provided a filter for my initial impressions of the panel that I became increasingly aware of, as the training I received to be an advocate gave me an initial framework for understanding the nature of sexual assault and IPV. Even in my own initial notes on possible plans, such as one of looking at the historical context of how the response to sexual assaults and/or IPV in this local area developed, considering newer programs that used any type of restorative justice model, I was extremely careful how I framed my research ideas and reasons why I was interested in the use of restorative justice for IPV cases. One of my earliest concerns was that focusing on restorative justice responses to IPV would discount or ignore the effort spent building existing programs and the monumental work it took over decades to establish IPV and related violence as a crime recognized by state and federal governments. My previous work as an advocate had led me to believe that sexual assault (and I assumed IPV) survivors' needs were not being met by the existing criminal justice system responses, but I was still thinking of their role in this response as primarily program recipients in the system. Although I critiqued what was being offered in the current system, I thought that what primarily needed to change was the menu of options offered by the system (e.g., increasing access to restorative justice programs).

I was also very concerned with not “stepping on anyone's toes” when I first began researching this subject. I did not want to insult or disparage the work that it took to get these acts recognized as crimes, or somehow “set the clock back” by having any research on this subject be used to argue that such cases should not be handled by the criminal justice system at all but always managed privately between couples or within families. I

was especially focused on the question of “safety” and sought out literature on theory or previous studies that could inform whether restorative justice programs were “safe” to use in this context.

I also wondered whether such programs could address or change the power differential between IPV survivors and offenders, possibly to a unique extent compared to other interventions through BIP or other criminal justice processes. I began to wonder how the local community perceived these responses to IPV and their attitudes toward using criminal justice and restorative justice for these cases here. My concern over the safety of restorative justice practices with IPV cases for survivors shifted slightly to wondering whether these practices and/or restorative justice principles could adequately address the power dynamic of IPV cases and whether it could truly be a survivor-centered practice.

Attending my first panel drew my attention to a point of tension in the panel process: whose needs come first, the panelists (survivors) or the audience members (offenders)? I talked with the facilitator about how speakers are recruited for the panels and wondered in those conversations how much emphasis was placed on the panel's impact on speakers and how much on the panel's impact on offenders. Implicitly, I was setting this up as an either/or question: either the panel primarily serves the needs of the survivors or those of the offenders. In conversations with other stakeholders who interact with the panel, such as BIP providers, I heard this same either/or logic and different decisions around whose needs should first be prioritized.

I came away from the first panel with many more logistic questions: when do men

attend, do they come from all programs, what is the PO's role, who are the speakers and how long have they been in the pool, how many speakers are in the pool, how often are new referrals made for new speakers, and how does this compare to other activities that the men are doing in BIP groups to increase empathy? I also wondered how the panels were described to the men in BIPs before they arrived at the panel and how the men understood the purpose of the panel. Across my time observing the panels, I would find answers to questions that would lead to new clarifying or expanding questions. It was a continual process of discovery.

My reading led me to recognize very early on that definitions of restorative justice and related concepts can be very difficult to pin down. I had started to consider many possible points of data for understanding these panels, but given the sometimes slippery nature of what restorative justice is and what it looks like, I decided a process and impact evaluation was the most necessary first step to understanding what was happening in the panels and how it was potentially impacting participants. This seemed particularly relevant for a restorative justice program assessment, given the difficulty in defining the concept and the gaps in understanding how restorative justice could be used for IPV intervention with this specific panel process.

As I was designing this study, many different potential outcomes came to mind that could be relevant for the participants. I struggled with how to concretely define and measure different components of restorative justice, such as recognition of wrongdoing, healing conflict, rebuilding trust, promoting safety, and committing no further crimes (Von Hirsch, Ashworth, & Shearing, 2003). I continued to wonder how the panel impacts

offenders, and was especially excited about the possibility that it shifted them from an external to internal motivation not to re-offend.

I had many holes in my understanding of how these processes and impacts might happen for participants. I thought the panel might be an opportunity to empower the disempowered group (i.e., the survivors), but if this was the case I did not know what mechanisms drove this impact. Would the presence or the magnitude of this impact depend on the number of people attending the panels? Would it instead or additionally depend on the “quality” or “intensity” of the listeners and their interactions?

Looking back on this now, I can see assumptions that I held about why people were motivated to participate, who could benefit and how from these panels, and whose position it was to make decisions about all of this. I brought binary assumptions of either/or benefits, external authority, entering with an attitude of humility from not knowing anything about this work at all but implicitly believing that it was the place of professionals to optimize and deliver this program and eventually I might be in a place of enough knowledge or experience to help guide those external decisions. I thought that one of the most pressing concerns for people (professionals) wondering whether restorative justice is appropriate to implement for IPV was how to know when program participants would be ready to engage in the process in a safe and effective way? I wanted to know how to optimize these decisions about participant readiness for program effectiveness, and implicitly I assumed that this optimization would be done by an outside force, some kind of external judge (professional) who would know best when and how to offer and administer these programs.

When I was attempting to understand whether the panel could repair harm in any way for the panel participants, I assumed that this act of repair was usually unidirectional. Offenders could repair the harm to victims and/or to communities. I assumed that this act of repair would only really be impactful if it was happening in the direct pairs of people who had been harmed and who had done the harm, and in cases of IPV this did not seem possible. I did not have an understanding of how surrogate interactions could still bring healing or repair harm, and I assumed that this act of repair could only be done *from* one group *to* another group. I did not know whether speaking in public as a survivor could be an act of self-repair, repairing their harm by their own actions. I assumed that happened more in counseling settings, support groups, or other related settings where professionals worked with survivors to bring healing. I did not know whether listening alone on the part of offenders would be enough of an action to repair harm.

I also assumed that these impacts would be possible to differentiate from other intervention program impacts or other work/changes that participants were doing in other ways. I was used to thinking about cause and effect in terms with positivist assumptions, that an action would have a clearly observable (when looking in the right place) reaction and that this reaction would persist over time if it was truly meaningful. For example, I imagined that if the panel affected offenders' defensive thinking, it might do so in a way that this defensive thinking decreased over time after the panel and persisted in a noticeable way.

A major breakthrough in my understanding came when I realized that the hyperconcern with participant safety implicitly assumed that the speakers were not capable of



taking care of themselves and required some sort of external approval of the panel as “safe for survivors.” Much of what I could find in the literature on the subject of whether restorative justice was safe to use for IPV cases drew on secondary sources such as advocates who spoke for survivors (e.g., Curtis-Fawley & Daly, 2005), implying that they knew best because they were professionals and they had survivors' best interests in mind. From listening to speakers describe their frustrating experiences with other types of IPV services, I realized this desire to “protect” survivors was paternalistic and condescending, communicating that they could not be trusted to know whether a process was safe for them to engage in or not. This realization helped me begin to focus on the unique quality of speaker control over the panel process and what that process was capable of creating for survivor and offender participants.

Another breakthrough in my perspective as a panel observer resulted when I attended a training on transformative justice and wondered afterward what it means to be afraid of seeing offenders as people, or as fully human. This deepened the layers of complexity contained in the panel process from my perspective and helped me think about the process more completely. I began to see seemingly contradictory processes and impacts taking place simultaneously within the panel, such as the tension between treating offenders with respect and non-judgment while not excusing or condoning their abusive behavior. These men in the panel audiences did severe damage to those around them and on the one hand the panel would not function as a restorative justice process if it minimized that damage; the primary focus after all is on understanding the impact of abuse. On the other hand, the men themselves are hurting and that hurt is inextricably tied

up in their actions; they need to be met with compassion and seen as fully human, not only as “offenders,” or they will keep their defenses up and not engage in the process.

As I continued to attend and observe the panels, my position within the research setting shifted from a welcome but unfamiliar observer, careful not to interject in debriefing conversations for fear of influencing the naturally occurring process, to recognized researcher and a regular presence at panels for speakers and panel facilitators. I remember how receiving funding from the National Science Foundation for a graduate student fellowship to study the process and outcomes of this restorative justice process for IPV increased my confidence in the value of the time I had been spending observing, and seemed to solidify my identity for others in the setting as a legitimate researcher. Over time, many of the speakers became familiar with me and seemed to increase their trust in sharing information about their panel experiences with me. Other aspects of my identity as a white, female student in her late twenties from Portland State University were likely salient to offender audience members who would meet me for the first time at panels and who formed first impressions of me based on those characteristics, not being regular members of the panel setting and so unavailable to build rapport or trust with me over an extended period of time in the setting. My contact with providers through the local BIP provider network meetings slowly turned me into a regular face, recognized as affiliated with the university and eventually more established as a regular presence there too from taking minutes for the meeting.

Although my understanding has changed over time, becoming more refined as I have heard from stakeholders with multiple perspectives on the panel and gathered data

through multiple types of observations, I have also circled back to center on earlier points in my understanding that I believe are most crucial to emphasize in my interpretation of the data in this study. Questions that I first asked over two years ago are still relevant to me today, such as whether and how the IPV impact panels address the power dynamics of IPV.

I am inherently tied to the means of data collection and knowledge production in this ethnography and so I have reflected on and described how research questions, data collection, analysis and interpretation were filtered through and emerged from my perceptions and observations in order to establish credibility in the findings (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). I followed the recommendations of Schensul and LeCompte to minimize threats to internal validity by delineating what is constant and what is subject to change in accounts of observations and by allowing sufficient time and resources to observe a wide enough range of experiences, participants, opinions, and activities to achieve a deep understanding of the setting.

### III. Findings

In this section, I describe and interpret the major findings that resulted from the analysis plan described above (see Table 3 to recall the study research questions and methods). To address RQ1 and RQ2, I have delineated the sequential activities and social-interactional processes of the IPV impact panel in a temporally-oriented narrative. The major sequential activities and linked interactional processes that tend to occur within specific panel activities are presented as a flowchart in Figure 1. This narrative description is organized with headings that correspond to the separate stages of the panel process (displayed in Figure 1). I also highlight interactional processes that are especially restorative from the Maximalist perspective of restorative justice in the narrative description. All interactional processes and the sources in which they were observed, by method and by participant perspective, are listed in Table 5.

Next, I present findings from the inductive content analysis of qualitative data regarding how survivors and offenders experience and evaluate the IPV impact panels. To address RQ2 and RQ3, I created experience sets that describe survivors' and offenders' experiences of the panel, including their perceptions of the panel and the perceived impacts of the panel on survivors and offenders. The inductive content analysis was conducted on the qualitative data from offenders' responses to open-ended questions on the feedback forms and focus group and interview responses from survivors, offenders, and BIP providers. One experience set is described for survivors, as the data across sources indicated that survivor experiences tended to be fairly uniform. Two experience sets are described for offenders, as data across sources indicated that there are at least two

distinct types of panel experiences for offenders: a transformative experience and a static experience. In the transformative offender experience set, I also present findings from the quantitative analysis of the feedback forms to address RQ3 regarding offenders' self-reported perceptions of the panel's impact on them. These experience sets also include my own self-reflexive writing to give some examples and context to readers for what it is like to experience these panels as an observer. To further address RQ2 and RQ3, findings were compared across study sources to present consistencies and inconsistencies across sources. Finally, I describe cultural considerations for the panels that emerged from multiple data sources to hold in mind as context for the research questions and findings.

Survivors' and offenders' primary perceptions of the panel are listed in Table 6. All perceived panel impacts on survivors and the sources in which they were observed, by method and by participant perspective, are listed in Table 7. The key impacts on survivors for each thematic category (reaching new understandings, healing, and empowerment) are listed with frequency counts of their coded text units in Table 8. All perceived panel impacts on offenders and the sources in which they were observed, by method and by participant perspective, are listed in Table 9. The key impacts on offenders for each thematic category (either connection with speakers, reaching new understandings, and healing, or panel rejection) are listed with frequency counts of their coded text units in Table 10.

### **RQ1 Findings: Sequential Activities and Interactional Processes of the Panel**

At each of the 18 impact panels that I observed, the sequential activities always took place in the same series of steps (see Figure 1). A complete list of all interactional

processes and the sources in which they were observed, by method and by participant perspective, can be found in Table 5. The panels were held from 6 and 8 P.M. on the third Thursday evening, every other month, in a public building for Washington County, Oregon (12 panels), or on rotating Wednesday evenings in a county building for Clackamas County (6 panels).

**Panel setup.** I would arrive between 5:30 and 5:45 P.M., assisting with the panel setup if necessary or making small talk waiting for the panel to begin. The panel facilitator would put folded nametags, water, and tissues on the table where the speakers would sit. Other observers would also arrive at this time, including other graduate students such as one in Social Work who was interning at a domestic violence resource center, current partners or family members of the speakers, judges, lawyers, domestic violence advocates, and batterer intervention program providers. There were typically less than five other observers present at the panels that I observed, with sizes ranging from a single observer of one (when I was the only person present) to more than ten when a judicial group observed together to consider including the panel in their sentencing mandates. The speakers would arrive at this time as well, choose a seat and settle in at the table at the head of the auditorium and wait for the panel to begin. One or more probation officers (POs) would also arrive typically by 5:30 P.M. to assist with panel setup, such as taking payments from and signing in the offenders as they arrived.

POs are present to assist with setup, if needed, and maintain order during the panel. This audience control is usually passive, merely from their presence, but became active when necessary. Initially, the POs' role was explained to me by the panel facilitator

as primarily ensuring the safety of panel participants, particularly the speakers, but I never observed any combative disruptions from audience members at the panels I attended. None of the providers or facilitators that I spoke to recalled there ever being any dangerous outbreaks from the offenders in the history of running these panels. Rather than containing violent or extreme outbursts from the audience, active audience control by the probation officers consisted of actions such as stepping outside to talk to an offender who has arrived late, walking around the sides of the auditorium to check if anyone is sleeping or otherwise incapacitated, and sitting behind or speaking with any audience members who are drifting off, looking at their phones, or distracting other audience members to address their behavior. As a provider said when this task was performed by rotating providers in the Washington County area, this control can also include verbally addressing the audience, such as “I just want to stop for a second and remind you of your body language, you know, we need to be respectful, you know, whether you disagree or not, you know, you should still be respectful.” Nevertheless, their presence signals safety to the speakers. In a focus group, one speaker explained how this feels to her at a panel: “Nobody's gonna hurt me or yell, 'cause there's, like, the parole people there, they're, you know, like [the panel facilitator], there's, um, people that are monitoring the whole thing.”

When the offenders arrive, they check in with the person leading the sign in process. They pay a fee to the organization that facilitates the panels for their attendance (\$25 when I began observing, later increased to \$30) and tell the person their name and the name of the BIP in which they are currently enrolled. Rarely, offenders attend who

are not currently enrolled in a BIP and instead are directed to attend by their probation officer. The panel facilitator has a list of names and affiliations of expected audience members based on what they hear from BIP providers who are sending their group members on any given night. The offenders need to be cleared by their provider to attend the panel, meaning they have been enrolled in the BIP for at least 26 weeks and that their provider believes they are progressing enough in their work in the BIP to be able to behave respectfully at the panel and potentially be impacted by it. Several providers said that the 26-week minimum attendance is more of a rough guideline as a general way of providing baseline criteria for attendance than a strict indicator of who is ready to attend. In an informal interview, a provider listed signs beyond length of time in the program that indicate to them that an offender is ready to attend the panel, including “expressing a lot of remorse, already taking responsibility, talking about what they’ve done, expressing strong desire to change.” They continued to list other behavioral indicators of panel readiness: “are they invested in the group, are they doing the assignments, what do they look like, is it still [a] victim stance/victim blaming or finally focusing on what they’ve done and look at the impact on other people...[a] definite shift that you see is this shift and click in accountability, people were willing to say ‘I did this’...they’re not sitting there and saying ‘But she...’” Offenders who are earlier on in their programs often have not moved past their resistance to be able to listen and consider what is being shared by the speakers. These offenders have not moved out of a victim stance and instead are preoccupied with their perceptions of victimization and unable to consider how their partner was negatively impacted by their abusive behavior. Another provider also said



that “occasionally you're gonna get clients who, uh, I just would not send because they just never really get there.” In these cases, providers said they show a video of survivors from the community describing how they were impacted by abusive relationships as an alternative to offenders attending a live panel. Although this video is similar to the live panel, it limits the experience to listening to pre-recorded stories and loses some of the panel processes (e.g., the question and answer session). Once a provider clears an offender for panel attendance, they let the panel facilitator know that the offender is planning to attend and their name and affiliation goes onto the list maintained by the facilitator for each panel.

After paying the entrance fee and checking in, offenders receive a feedback form to provide comments after the panel and are instructed to keep the form and fill it out at the end of the panel. They are then directed inside the auditorium to take a seat in the first three rows and wait for the panel to begin. The panel fee serves to cover the costs of renting space for the panels and also is made in lieu of any payment the offender would make to their BIP, as some offenders go to the panel instead of their group that week and so are not doubling up on such fees.

#### **Panel introduction.**

The panel begins with an introduction from the facilitator, usually a male who works at the restorative justice non-profit that coordinates the panels and who previously worked as a BIP group facilitator. In his absence, the director of the restorative justice non-profit organization facilitates the panels. They welcome everyone, explain that the panelists will speak, then the floor will be opened up for questions from the audience, and

finally the audience will be given a few minutes at the end to fill out their evaluation forms before turning the forms in and leaving. The facilitator lets the offenders know that they can take notes on the evaluation form to remember questions they might want to ask, but asks that they not take any notes with them after the panel in order to respect the privacy of the speakers. The offenders are encouraged to be as open and honest as possible when filling out the evaluation form about what they liked or did not like about the panel, how it will help them in their program, what they would change or improve about the panel in order to help the facilitator and speakers improve the panel process for the future.

Before the speakers begin sharing their stories, the panel facilitator also goes over guidelines for the audience and suggestions for getting as much as they can out of the panel experience. The panel facilitator frames the purpose of the panel as to help the men from BIP groups better understand what it feels like to experience abuse, develop empathy for the people who they abused and for others who experience abuse, help them move forward in their program, and help them understand how abuse affects those who experience it. The facilitator asks everyone to be respectful, explains the point at which audience members will be able to ask questions, and discusses with the audience what kinds of questions will be appropriate to ask (e.g., not victim blaming questions). The facilitator recommends asking questions that are more general rather than specific to their own particular relationship in order to better understand the experiences of the panelists and how their experiences of abuse affected and continue to affect them. He cautions that the panel is not meant to be a platform for asking for advice about something (e.g., an

audience member's personal issue) but focused on the panelists and better understanding their experiences. He said that he would step in if needed to redirect or rephrase a question or recommend that a question be taken back to their BIP groups instead of addressed at the panel that night. When the panels were first organized, BIP providers used to periodically facilitate the panels. In a focus group, a provider remembered examples of how panel facilitators might address an inappropriate comment or question, such as saying “We're not gonna talk about that. That's not really the goal of tonight” or “So I'm wondering why you're asking that question. Can you please clarify why you're asking this question?”

### **Speakers share their stories.**

After the facilitator completes this introduction, the floor is turned over to the speakers for them to share their stories, focusing on the abuse they experienced and how it affected and continues to affect them. The speakers share their stories in sequence (the first, second, then third speaker), usually lasting about an hour in total. During the panels in which I was able to record lengths of speaking time, an individual speaker's time sharing her story ranged from 12 to 37 minutes, at an average of 23.14 minutes ( $SD = 6.93$ ).

The speakers take turns sharing their stories and decide what they would like to focus on that night. Their stories are some of the most vivid parts to listen to as an observer. Some of the speakers are survivors of abuse since childhood, while others encountered abuse only in adult relationships. They tell stories of mental and emotional abuse, verbal abuse, financial abuse, and physical abuse. Some have experienced extreme

forms of physical violence while others never experienced any physical abuse. More commonly shared are examples of less extreme forms of physical abuse, such as their partner blocking their path to prevent them from leaving a room or building.

One of the consistent messages from speakers is that of all these forms of control and maintaining power over someone, the emotional and verbal abuse is what feels most damaging to them and has the longest-lasting effects on their lives even to that day. The speakers have much in common in their experiences, but every person's story is also distinct. Even the same speaker tells her own story slightly differently each time, describing certain parts more than others on different nights. In a focus group, a speaker explained that these differences can be related to what she notices from the audience or recent experiences that she has had that seem relevant to discuss that night.

The stories usually contain multiple examples of different forms of abuse that they experienced, such as one speaker who experienced financial, spiritual, and emotional abuse. During a panel, this speaker said that she experienced "everything but physical" abuse, but did not recognize her experiences as a form of IPV. "All I knew was physical, so I didn't know what was going on." She was isolated from friends and family and her husband often lied and cheated on things before saying he was sorry and that it "won't ever happen again." They had children together and he would call their daughters when they were five years old to tell them to go get the mail and "hide it from Mommy so she doesn't get mad." She said that "after a while you just start living in that way," in constant anxiety, from the results of her husband's financial decisions like not carrying car insurance for 20 years. This anxiety permeated all aspects of her life during her time

in that relationship: “not knowing when he was gonna unload, or...I don’t know.” He also used their connection to churches and pastors to control her. When they were teenagers, he threatened to tell the church if she went to her prom when he did not want her to go, and that threat prevented her from acting on her desire to attend. Later on in their relationship, when she turned to the church for guidance about the financial and other problems they were experiencing, leaders told her, “You’ve got to handle the money, he’s not good at that. Be more submissive.” When they told her “You can’t leave, you have to stay,” she started thinking “maybe I have to stay...” She said “I tried to figure it out for 20 years. I couldn’t.”

Although I heard survivors speak multiple times, I realize that I likely do not know the whole story of their experience. For example, I heard this speaker share her story of financial and other abuse multiple times, but there are parts of her story that she does not share every time and possibly parts that she never shares on the panel. When she trailed off that night, saying “not knowing when he was gonna unload, or...” it sounded ominous to me and I realize there are experiences in that pause that she has not or maybe will not ever share in this setting.

Another speaker described how her early childhood experiences primed her for later experiences of abuse. She saw her parents in an abusive relationship and thought that was normal, and later met and married a man who had a similar history of relationships modeled for him. They had children and she was very controlled by his expectations of her, such as strict times for having dinner ready, constantly keeping the house clean and the children absolutely quiet, even when they were very young and not

easily able to do at their age. If anything was out of place he would get angry, and she made a habit of running through a mental checklist to figure out what he was upset about (“Did I get dinner on the table, are the kids where they should be, did we have sex at least three-four times this week” and so on). This took a considerable emotional toll on her and she began to gain weight and have health problems as her body shut down. She became depressed, eventually sleeping over twelve hours a day, and she entered therapy to work on her depression. Through that work, she began to realize that her relationship was not normal and was driving her depression. Finally, during a therapy session in which she was describing a recent incident of abuse, her counselor asked her whether she wanted to address the problem or wait for “next time.” This helped her realize that she needed to make major changes in her life to address IPV as the root of the problems she was experiencing. At this point, her story diverges from those of the other speakers, as those changes resulted in both her and her husband going through separate counseling, including a BIP for her husband, and they are still together, working on their relationship today.

One speaker’s story contains some of the most extreme examples of physical abuse heard on the panel, though not all of the following details might be shared in a single panel. At different panels, she will describe some or all of how her abuser “kept my baby as collateral,” gave her multiple concussions, and would kick her with steel-toed boots while she was pregnant. After a brain injury, these attacks would force her to make a “daily decision” to protect either her head or her belly. She said she felt “stuck” because her abuser threatened that he would “kill me or take my kids” if she left. One of the most

emotional parts of her story when she tells it is an attack she faced from her abuser in a hotel room, while she was pregnant and their five-month-old son was in the room with them. Her abuser held a gun to her head after chasing her around the room and she remembers, “I told God I just can’t fight this anymore, I just accepted it. I remember I stopped fighting. I was nobody, nobody would believe me because of who he was and who I was.” Many of the speakers jump between details of their experience while sharing their stories, explained by speakers in one of the focus groups as stemming partly from a time pressure to wrap things up for the next speaker or panel process but also because the traumas they have experienced make it difficult to remember their experiences in sharp temporal focus. Some speakers that have experienced a lifetime of abuse also struggle to fit their range of experiences into a neat linear narrative, so speakers sometimes describe example after example without much transition in between. On the day that this speaker who survived extreme physical abuse left her abuser, she got a call from her doctor’s office while her abuser was at home with her and pretended that they asked her to come in for a make-up appointment, confusing the receptionist on the other end of the line. She explains, “I wanted somebody to expect me somewhere. I wanted somebody to look for me.” She safely made it out and has both of her kids now, but she says the effects of that relationship are still lasting: she startles easy, checks the locks at home often, and does not like to be yelled at, especially by a man. She gets very uncomfortable and often does not trust other people, but it is hard to be so closed off and not trust anyone. She says about the panel, “I do this, it’s very hard for me. I want to help people in that situation – and I also want to help people on the other side of this situation.”

The speakers' histories of abuse sometimes are not only from current or former partners, but also from family members or from witnessing abuse between their parents. Some of the hardest parts of the stories for me to listen to are the almost nonchalant, everyday manner in which they describe heartbreaking details from their experiences. One speaker said when she was an adult she "found Polaroids of my Mom black and blue from head to toe; I suppose they were evidence." She also found a note at her mom's house that the speaker's boss when she was a sophomore in high school had written to her, saying that they were "glad [she was] back to your old self." The speaker had forgotten that she had received the note after she attempted to commit suicide when she was 16 years old. Another speaker said that she remembers that when she was a child, she saw men standing over her mother with a butcher knife, and in a very matter of fact, sing-song voice, she said at the panel "so, had to call the police."

I respond differently to different parts of their stories and I strive to be aware of my own responses as I record my observations. I am especially aware of moments speakers downplay their own suffering or how they have been hurt, like in one speaker's story of staying at the hospital for an examination and saying that they found "found things, bruises, you know, little things, because I got out before he did too much damage." Her comment, "you know, little things," tears at my heart and my advocacy training springs to mind. I also work not to impose my own understanding of their stories on the speakers, such as one speaker who described being thrown down stairs and having her path blocked by her husband to not let her leave the house, saying that she never called the police because she was not "physically abused" as he never punched her or hit



her. He punched the wall next to her, he pulled her hair, but he never used his hand to hit her, so it did not seem like physical abuse. An alarm sounds in my head – that is physical! Blocking someone’s path means they are using their body to control your movement and your freedom -- that is physical abuse. I have to remember that I am not there to act as an advocate but as a researcher, working to understand rather than advocate for them. I do feel a strong sense of loyalty to the speakers and want to show how incredibly powerful they are and how much they have gone through to get to the point of sitting on these panels, but I do not want to impose my view of their stories on how I present them. They can speak for themselves.

When sharing their stories, speakers were found to most often focus on the impact of abuse on themselves, followed by the impact of abuse on children (either their own children or how abuse can affect children in general). For example, a speaker who described feeling guilt for their children witnessing abuse while she was in the abusive relationship indicates the impact of abuse on the speaker herself. In contrast, another speaker explained that her daughter is reluctant to say anything to her when she is upset because she is afraid of upsetting her mother because it could lead to people going away or leaving her.

Less frequently, speakers also described the impact of abuse on those who perpetrated the abuse, either their current or former partners, family members, or others. One speaker did this by saying that the situation seemed to end badly for her abuser, as he was stripped of his job and had a bad legal ending. Another described how her ex-husband was prevented from reaching out for help because he would have potentially lost

his job if they found out he was abusive: “That vulnerable piece [of reaching out], he was blocked from that, we would’ve been homeless, there are consequences for that.” Rarely, speakers do not end up sharing much personal information or details from their experiences but instead speak more generally about IPV as a social problem or how it affects survivors in general. For example, one speaker shared her knowledge of IPV more than examples of her direct experience with it, explaining that in dire situations, people can engage in either fight or flight: “that’s your brain’s response.”

#### **Question and answer session.**

After the third speaker finishes telling her story, the floor is opened up to follow-up questions from the audience. It is during moments in this question and answer (Q & A) session that the majority of social interactions, or interactional processes, are possible to witness as an observer. If the audience seems hesitant to ask a question or if there is a lull in the question asking, the panel facilitator jumps in with a question for the speakers, intended to prompt additional questions from the audience. During the panels in which I was able to record lengths of speaking time, the length of the Q & A session ranged from 23 to 50 minutes, at an average of 37 minutes ( $SD = 11.22$ ). The majority of questions and comments were posed by offender audience members, though in one panel a community observer asked a question. The question from the community observer was unexpected, as typically the panel facilitator directs observers to silently observe and not otherwise participate during panels so that they do not disrupt the panel process. The panel facilitator asked one to five questions in these panels, usually asking one or none. Offenders asked between four and ten questions, at an average of seven questions. In

three of these panels, questions were all from unique offenders in the audience. In the remaining two panels, one offender asked two out of ten total questions that night and two offenders each asked two out of seven total questions the other night.

The majority of the questions that I observed offenders asking were focused on the speaker's experience, such as "How did that affect your future relationships?" They also asked questions focused on their own or the speaker's children, the speaker's abuser(s), or their own personal problems. At one panel, an offender focused on children in his question, asking, "Has he (your son) ever heard you talk about all the things he (ex) did to you and if so, how did your son respond?" Questions about the speaker's abuser(s) might focus on whether they had a history of domestic violence before their relationship, if they have changed at all, or what (if any) consequences they faced for their behavior, such as "Did your husband lose his job?"

Speakers respond with additional details about their experiences. Occasionally, a speaker will give advice to an offender in response to a question, such as one speaker who replied to an offender's question about how to tell potential future partners about their history of abuse perpetration: "I think you should be honest, like with a new partner, because you don't want them to find out elsewhere, they deserve to know."

The interactions between the speakers and offenders in the audience are very compelling to watch. At one panel, an audience member asked, "Can you find compassion, love in your heart for your dad at all?" The speaker replied, "Yes, absolutely." After finding compassion for herself and that it was not her fault, "then I could see my father in a different way." Another audience member asked a speaker, "Do

you have your voice today?”, referencing part of the story shared by this speaker, who replied, “It’s an honor to bring light to my sister’s story. We tend to – I tend to focus on externals around me before seeing if I’m okay. Through doing this tonight, coming here, I think that’s flipping, changing.”

The rhythm of the panel can shift in ways that can signal more or less engagement between the speakers and audience members. At times I would notice a lot of energy moving back and forth between the audience with their questions and responses from speakers, with lots of nodding on both sides, “Mhmm”‘s, and even laughter. Sometimes the speakers would make jokes, like how it would “probably help if he rode a motorcycle” when describing the prospect of getting in a relationship again, which would ease the tension in the room and caused the energy to lift, seen in effects like a big laugh in the whole room. The speakers at that point appeared very comfortable, leaning back in their chairs or leaning on their side on the table, and the men in the audience and the women at the front of the room seemed to be speaking directly to each other, not waiting now for the facilitator to call on the questioners but jumping in themselves after waiting for a natural pause in the flow of conversation.

Offender engagement in the panel was observed primarily through behavioral indicators such as taking five pages of notes without being prompted to do so, raising their hands to ask a question or volunteer for an activity, and moving their heads to make eye contact with different speakers. A verbal indicator of offender engagement was referencing speakers’ comments, such as when one asked, “Did I hear you say that your son lives with your abuser?” Another encouraged a speaker, saying, “You did pretty well

for being nervous,” after the speaker shared it was their first time on the panel. One offender who volunteered for a perspective-taking activity in which audience members read note cards created by the speaker representing things her abuser had said to her prefaced his participation by saying, “It says to shout this in an angry voice but I know you said that loud male voices bother you, [Name of other speaker].” References to speaker’s words can also be found in the written comments from the offenders on the feedback forms, such as one comment, “I can only work on my stuff,” that reflected a phrase used by a speaker during the panel.

Speakers were usually engaged during the panel, which was not surprising given that their participation is completely voluntary. Engagement was observed through their listening and responding to other speakers’ stories or to offenders’ comments and questions, indicating they were paying attention to other panel participants and considering how their information compared to their own experience. They made eye contact with one another at times and with the audience, sometimes turning their body to face more toward one participant or another while they were speaking.

Speakers showed emotion and vulnerability during the panel, demonstrating their emotional engagement and that they felt safe enough in the setting to be vulnerable in front of this audience. One speaker seemed to get emotional while describing the “excruciating work” it took “re-learning everything” after leaving the abusive relationship. Another showed increased emotion while describing being chased by her abuser around a hotel room while she was pregnant and their five-month-old son was in the room. Speakers can also be seen taking tissues from the table where they sit and

dabbing at their eyes while they talk or while listening to others' stories. Voices waver, speakers sometimes cry, and others look down at the table while taking deep breaths to steady themselves before continuing to speak.

Silence can also signal the level of engagement in the room. When one speaker was describing how her husband was physically abusive, she said that she “used to tell him if you’d just hit me, it would be kinder than what you’re doing to me. Because then at least” (long pause) “someone would care about me, someone would see that I needed help.” She reached for tissues. She said “he never hit me (he said that, it was true). He never punched me or slapped me across the face. He did strangle me, throw me down the stairs, pulled me by my hair, pried the phone from my bruised hands, blocked me.” She said that it is “hard to explain how physical abuse is not scary,” but only “now remembering and looking back that it is scary to remember being strangled” or choked so that she couldn’t breathe and still thinking “but there was no possible way he was going to kill me because he loves me.” It was only when she attended a training on strangulation after her abusive relationship that she learned what it meant to have the symptoms she had after being strangled where it “hurt to swallow for a month and a half” and she can “still start to panic, still get emotional” about it. She realized in that training that she “actually could have really died at that moment.” As she tells this part of her story, it is so quiet in the room that I am afraid of turning the page of my notebook or making any noise. There is no shifting in seats, adjusting, or coughing, and it feels like we are all right there with her in the moment waiting for her to tell us what happened. She said that his actions had nothing to do with his love for her or her love for him, but

neither of them knew that about strangulation. Nevertheless, she said, “if I had died, I know he would have been defensive.” If that happened, in the moment he would not have been sad or upset that she died, but defensive “that he didn’t mean to, it was an argument, he was just trying to get his phone...” She acknowledged that she “shouldn’t put words in his head” but she knows that he would have reacted that way based on his previous behavior, “because those were the excuses he gave afterward.” She believes that his excuses and defensiveness “would have been the same regardless of if she made it or not.” In the audience, everyone is facing her, looking at her, or looking down at the ground. Of those who are staring at the ground, one or two sometimes look up at her. She went on to talk about domestic violence services in the community and how at the time, she “didn’t want somebody to *save* me...I wanted someone to save *him*, get him the help that he needed. There was really nothing I could do to fix it, to save our relationship, protect our children, no matter how hurt I was, no matter what I did, unless *he* wanted to.”

Lack of engagement was observed only in the offenders, not in the speakers. This was not surprising, as the offenders are required to attend the panel based on their probation officer’s mandate and enforced by the BIP provider so participation is not completely voluntary. In one panel, a man appeared to be either sleeping or kept his eyes closed most of the time. The panel facilitator and the probation officer assisting with the panel each went over twice to talk to him and request that he be more respectful. Other examples of lack of engagement included appearing to be incapacitated (e.g., withdrawing from a substance) or otherwise not paying attention, having a lull or lack of

questions from the audience, offenders leaving the auditorium for a period of time (presumably to use the building facilities), or engaging in other activities while present at the panel (e.g., reading a book). These latter acts of more extreme disengagement are relatively rare, as I only saw audience members leave the auditorium during a panel once. A provider said that they also saw these extreme forms of disengagement only rarely, such as once seeing an offender reading a book.

Distinct from lack of engagement, offender resistance was observed as actively engaged against the panel process before or during the panel, usually due to assumptions or preconceptions about the panel. Rather than simply not paying attention or passively waiting for the panel to conclude, resistance required some form of active thought or behavior on the part of an offender. This could be heard in offenders' comments in the question and answer session or from providers describing what they hear from some offenders about the prospect of attending the panel. Offender comments I heard included "Honestly I didn't really want to come/be here tonight, I didn't know how it was going to go" and "to be honest I was pretty irritated that I had to come tonight, I feel like I like my group, I like the guys in my group, and yeah I didn't want to come to this." Providers said they have heard men make comments such as "Oh, it's a bother" and "They're just gonna be male-bashing, and make us feel like a piece of dirt." These comments have only been heard during panels when offenders admit this before describing how their impression changed after the panel began (which I describe further in the sets of perceptions and impacts in the section below), but if a few audience members voice this it is likely that others are sitting and thinking this to themselves. Perhaps those who do not voice these



admissions do not change their impression but carry resistance forward in panel rejection (also described in Impacts below).

### **Panel wrap-up and debrief.**

At 8 P.M., the panel facilitator concludes the Q & A session and the men fill out the feedback forms, which they hand to the panel organizers in order to receive their receipt as confirmation that they attended the panel. They have to bring this receipt back to their programs or directly to their probation officer to show that they attended and could not get this receipt without turning in an evaluation form. The speakers, panel facilitator, and any community member panel observers stay afterward for 15 to 30 minutes to debrief the panel, read the feedback forms out loud, and discuss how things went before leaving. These discussions are an opportunity for the speakers to talk about what they noticed about the panel and the audience that night and any thoughts and feelings about their own participation that they want to share with the group. The panel observers are also able to share their impressions, letting others in the debriefing group know about their background and why they wanted to observe the panel that night, and make connections to other aspects of their life or work if that is relevant. For example, a domestic violence advocate who came to observe one of the panels in support of a survivor who spoke that night said that she had some emotional anxiety before attending, as she had not really been around abusers before. She said that the panel felt comfortable though and added “I knew it would be safe though.”

The offenders do not formally debrief their panel experience that night, but wait until their next BIP group session when they are led through a short debriefing at the

beginning of the session by the BIP provider facilitating the group. Those few offenders who attend but are not currently enrolled in a BIP do not participate in such a group debriefing, though some may discuss their panel experience with their probation officer when they show them that they attended the panel. Debriefing in the BIP group allows the men not only to review their own experience and impressions of the panel, but also to share that information with others in the group. This can serve to inform other men in the group, who are earlier on their course of BIP group sessions, about what to expect when they attend the panel or even teach these men lessons that the attendee learned as a result of the panel. The debriefing is done during check-in, the first part of a BIP group session, before moving on to any planned material for the bulk of the session. Providers support this debriefing by asking questions such as “What can you learn from her story?”, what they thought of it, what was their takeaway from it that was helpful for them, and “How does this, something that really stood out, relate to your own experience?”

**Restorative panel processes.** Speakers, offenders, and those involved in coordinating the panel (the panel facilitator, probation officers, and BIP providers) were all found to engage in different types of restorative processes. These were identified based on their congruence with the Maximalist principles of restorative justice, specifically: 1. A focus on repairing harm and healing not only victims but also offenders and communities., and 2. Re-envisioning the roles of the community to promote justice. Processes that describe the relational aspects of the panel, from speakers relating to offenders to offenders affirming speakers’ experiences, demonstrate how the panel creates

new roles for speakers and offenders to engage in a process together with the intention of bringing healing to everyone impacted by abuse, including survivors and offenders.

*Speaker restorative processes.* One of the key processes that occur during the panel is the exercise of control in terms of ownership and authority that speakers have over the panel itself. Speakers are able to freely choose what to share of their experiences, which I heard in their responses to offenders' questions that contained comments such as "I'm going to answer that question on my mom's behalf, if that's alright," and "I'm not going any further, I don't want to talk about my relationships." Another speaker re-directed the conversation during a Q & A session once, saying, "I want to go back to that question you asked," when she did not get a chance to respond before another offender jumped in with a new question. Speakers also interacted confidently with community member observers and with the offenders themselves during the panel, further demonstrating their control navigating the panel processes. Prior to the introduction and ground rules discussion of the panel, one speaker was heard asking the guys in the audience to move forward into the first one or two rows. Another time, a speaker initiated and facilitated the post-panel debrief discussion, asking the community observers, "Y'all have any questions?"

On the other hand, speakers can also feel pressure from the panel facilitator or other constraints to share their stories in particular ways rather than based on their own feelings or decisions. For example, one speaker felt pressure from a time limit she was trying to meet when telling her story. She indicated that she was very conscious of the time and would jump ahead to different points of her story to try to finish quickly. The

tension between speaker control and external control over the panel process is described further in “Other restorative processes.”

Speakers audibly relate to offenders at the panel while they share, sometimes explicitly tailoring their responses to what they think offenders need to hear that night. I heard this happening in comments that speakers made on the similarities of their experiences and offenders’ experiences at the panel or beyond, such as one speaker mentioning that her husband went through the BIP that men in the audience were in that day. Speakers also comment on the shared difficulty of the hard work it takes to be in the room for the panel, such as one who reassured the men in the audience, “so if you’re feeling a little stress, know you’re not alone in being uncomfortable...it’s not easy sitting on this side of the table, I’m sure it’s not easy on that side either.” Speakers also gain insights themselves by relating to offenders at the panel, such as one speaker who explained to the audience at a panel one night that “when I meet people like you, that was like, oh - you’re doing your work, so that means I can do my work, and he [her ex] has to do his work - it was eye-opening.” Another speaker connected with an offender at a different panel whose mother was killed by his abusive father when he was younger: “And I’m sorry for your mother, I’m so sorry about your mother because it’s so difficult to see how it’s going to go. It’s so hard to see that and it’s impossible to see that it would end that way – even if she was put in the hospital, she couldn’t have seen that.”

Speakers also affirm the offenders, positively recognizing and praising their choices and behaviors to work on themselves in their BIP groups and in the panel that night. One speaker shared, “I’m always heartened to see men, especially young men,

come here because there's such a change you can make." Another encouraged the audience, saying, "one good thing is that you're here, maybe you're pissed off but you're here, and that's more than a lot of others would do, you didn't have to come." A third affirmed the work the offenders are doing and what they have gained from it: "You guys are doing the work, you know it's never this or that, it's always and, and this and that," referring to the complexity of understanding these IPV experiences.

Speakers show gratitude or appreciation to offenders, thanking them for showing up to the panel. "I can't tell you what it means to me, to have you here tonight." One speaker said she was "so grateful to have you all here tonight. You didn't have to show up, you made a choice, other options were offered to you, but you're here."

This affirmation from speakers of offenders is not the only way they respond to audience participation, as speakers also challenge offenders if their questions or comments are victim-blaming or otherwise inappropriate, saying something that contradicts or re-frames their comment or question to emphasize a different perspective or see something in a new light. When one audience member seemed to invalidate or dismiss a speaker's experience and how she framed her previous relationship, asking "What was it in the man that made you stay for so long?", the speaker replied, "I hate this question," while looking at the panel facilitator. Another speaker followed up, "Why isn't the question why did he keep abusing her?"

Speakers also verbally or behaviorally affirm one another as they participate on the panel together. For example, speakers nod as the other panelists speak, note moments of resonance or common experiences, and emphasize the points that other speakers make

during the panel. During one panel, a speaker affirmed and expanded on the points of the prior two speakers: “Well I agree with you both that the verbal lasts and is hard, in some ways the physical is hard because it’s still lasting in some ways.” They will compliment each other and state when they agree with one another, saying comments like “[Other speaker’s name] is right, words are like knives.”

Speakers also show non-judgmental respect to offenders, through comments such as “I really respect the work you’re doing.” At one panel, a speaker explained that she and the other speakers were “not here to judge you or point fingers or anything.” The lack of judgment can also be seen in their attempt to remove blame or shame from the process of speaking about their experiences in abusive relationships. One speaker said at a panel that the panel addresses IPV by “removing it from being a secret, something to be ashamed about it, on either side.” She said that the “only people who should feel ashamed are those who know what they’re doing and have the tools to not hurt people and still do, but those who are working and trying to change shouldn’t feel ashamed.”

Speakers even showed compassion for abusers themselves during various panels, either for people who directly or indirectly abused them or other people who have been abusive (e.g., the men in the audience). Their compassion recognizes the losses that abusers experience from their own abusive behavior. During one panel, a speaker said that she has “great compassion for husbands who don’t get help, they miss parts of their lives they can never get back.” In the same panel, a second speaker said that eventually she had found compassion for her father, who left her with an abusive step-father,

explaining, “after compassion for myself, it wasn’t my fault - then I could see my father in a different way. I’m glad I got out with my life, sanity, to be functional.”

*Offender restorative processes.* Offenders affirmed the speakers in several ways during the impact panels I observed. Often this was in the form of nodding or saying “Mhmm” in response to speakers’ comments in affirmation or recognition of what speakers said, but other comments were more explicitly affirming. In one panel during the Q & A session, I heard an offender tell the speakers “what you do, it does help.” Another offender said that sharing their stories as speakers “took courage” and a third told the speakers, “I commend you, [it] takes fortitude to speak.” Offenders also stayed after the panel concluded to shake hands with the speakers and have brief follow-up conversations with them. All of these acts of affirmation indicate that offenders agree with and value the perspective and experiences of the speakers.

In contrast, some offenders invalidated or dismissed speakers’ experiences through their comments or questions. Occasionally, offenders asked victim-blaming questions at different panels, such as “What was it in the man that made you stay for so long?” These interactions were always responded to in a positive way though by the speakers, such as the example provided earlier of a speaker who challenged such a question, replying, “Why isn’t the question why did he keep abusing her?” Rarely, offenders also took a victim stance in their comments on the feedback forms, using the panel as a forum particularly during the question and answer session or in written feedback forms to discuss how they believe they were victimized by their current or

former partners. For example, one offender wrote on his feedback form that he learned not to let himself be a victim and that he was victimized by his partner.

The offenders also expressed gratitude, appreciation, and respect to the speakers after they share their stories. In multiple panels, audience members spontaneously thanked the speakers by name clapped after hearing each of the speakers' their stories. One audience member said, "Thank you guys, what you do, it does help. Thank you." Audience members sometimes shook hands with the speakers after the panel. After every panel concluded, there were usually at least one to three offenders who stayed longer to have brief follow-up conversations with the speakers. In one of these conversations, I overheard one audience member tell a speaker "It's very special to me, what you said."

Offenders also showed disapproval of abusive behavior. For example, offenders shook their heads in response to descriptions of abusive behavior described by the speakers, such as in response to one speaker describing how her ex-partner was charged with domestic violence after their relationship ended for violently threatening a different woman in a subsequent relationship. In the same panel, another offender responded in this way to a speaker's story of a man putting down a dog that his wife loved, saying, "That's just cruel, not cool."

***Other restorative processes.*** Panel facilitators, probation officers, and BIP providers can also engage in restorative processes with both speakers and offenders. Probation officers and panel facilitators affirm speakers by showing them respect, such as facilitators treating the speakers with care or a probation officer saying "it's always a pleasure and honor" to support this work.



At the end of the last panel that I attended, this respect was even demonstrated by a facilities person that assisted with the panel coordination. After the panel ended and I was about to leave, she checked in with me asking how everything went and if there were any problems. She said that she wished she was inside all the time it was going and that they were doing wonderful work there, but thought it best to stay outside and monitor instead.

In contrast, panel facilitators can also exert control over the panel process in a way that undermines the speakers' ability to share their story and use the panel as they see fit. In the first panel that I observed, the panel facilitator was facilitating for the first time that night. He interjected during one of the speaker's stories to let her know how much time had passed and asked her to wrap things up to be able to get to the question and answer session. This led to a discussion about the facilitator's decision to do this at the end of the panel, during the debriefing with the speakers afterward. Two of the speakers asked the facilitator why he cut off the second speaker and whether it was due to a new time format. The facilitator said that he thought it was most important to focus on room for questions from the audience because he believed that is where the guys really learn and that the speakers need to spell out for them "This is the abuse, this is how it affected me" rather than have the open-ended format and talk about a lot of content, because he was concerned that the speakers would lose the men in their stories. The third speaker replied that she understood what he meant but was feeling very frustrated hearing him say that, because that was not why she came there. She said she was there to share her story in the way she wanted as part of her own healing. The second speaker agreed

with her. The facilitator listened but was still focused on his version of what was most important to focus on in the stories based on what he believed would work for the men from his experience working with offenders in BIP groups. After further discussion with the speakers and others who coordinated and observed the panel, including probation officers, the facilitator learned from one of the probation officers that usually the panel went longer and it was surprising that things had been cut short. The officer agreed with the speakers, saying that is why they do this and that the focus should be on the speakers, it was not their job to spoon-feed the men in the audience. The facilitator heard all of this feedback and adjusted his approach from then on. I have not heard him interrupt a speaker since that time or ask anyone during a panel to move more quickly through their story. These different perspectives and exertions of control over the panel process show a tension in the design between whether the panel is primarily designed for the offenders or for the speakers, and whose needs and goals should be prioritized over others. Formal and informal interviews with providers showed their concern over speaker selection, as they are especially concerned with offenders being impacted by the panel. One provider explained that the selection of speakers needs to be done very carefully. “They have to have done their own work, and, um, I've seen examples where they weren't selected carefully enough...occasionally it's clearly been too soon, where she's really struggled to articulate, um, she's getting pretty triggered herself.”

In addition to speakers being too early in their own process of recovery to be able to speak on the panel, providers have also expressed concern over speakers being too rehearsed, practiced, or polished if they have spoken on the panel many times. “I think

more often than not, they've used the same people and I've gone 'I think you guys really need to- you need to add some new people.' ” These providers were concerned that if speakers are not selected carefully enough, they will potentially have a harmful or negative experience themselves on the panel (e.g., if they become absorbed in their own trauma when they speak) and that the offenders will not relate to speakers' stories (e.g., if they are too practiced), not connect as much, and not be as reached or impacted by the stories.

Providers affirm offenders by addressing their questions or concerns about the panel before panel attendance. During informal interviews, providers explained how they might address offenders' anxiety, questions, or concerns about the panel before they attend. One provider said that she encourages men from her groups to be open to the experience, reassuring them “all you have to do is relax and consider the possibility of what's going on here. Nobody is going to tell you what to think about it, no one is going to blame you, just go and relax and listen and be open.” This can even entail simply explaining basic details about the panel process, as one provider explained, “We try to tell them that, you know, you're gonna go, and women are gonna share their story and you'll have the opportunity to ask questions.” Despite this, some offenders may still not know much about what to expect when they show up for a panel or may bring in other assumptions, worries, or fears about how things will go during the panel.

The panel facilitator similarly affirms offenders by discussing the panel guidelines described earlier, sharing guidelines, rules, and tips about the panel with offenders before the panel starts. This action demonstrates that they think this work is possible and

valuable and that the offenders in the audience are worthwhile enough to merit taking the time to explain this to them. The panel facilitators also treat the offenders with respect, even by holding the panel in a community setting that signals a lower level of perceived threat from the audience members than might be signaled by setting characteristics such as armed security guards or locked doors. A provider who used to help facilitate these panels explained that the offenders are “welcomed in” and that the facilitators “treat them like human beings. They aren’t animals, they’re human beings. And we don’t have to be worried about them killing us, you know” in reference to another provider’s comment about the safety of working with this population compared to other criminal populations.

### **RQ2 and RQ3 Findings: Perceptions and Impacts of the Panel**

To address RQ2 and RQ3, in this section I describe the perceived impacts of the panel on survivor and offender participants within three different sets of perceptions and impacts that characterize three types of panel experiences, one for survivors and two for offenders. These findings resulted from the inductive content analysis of qualitative data regarding how survivors and offenders experience and evaluate the IPV impact panels and the perceived impacts of the panel on survivors and offenders to address RQ2 and RQ3. The perceived impacts were found to be more proximal, short-term effects of the panel rather than longer-term, distal outcomes. I also present findings from the quantitative analysis of the feedback forms in one of the offender experience sets to further partially address RQ3, regarding the perceived impacts of the panel on offenders. Finally, I compare the consistencies and inconsistencies of findings across sources.

I first describe the perceptions that characterize each type of experience, followed

by the panel impacts found within each type of experience. Speakers' and offenders' perceptions of the panel before, during, and after attending are listed in Table 6. All perceived panel impacts and the sources in which they were observed, by method and by participant perspective, are listed for survivors in Table 7 and for offenders in Table 9. The perceived panel impacts on survivors and offenders are also organized by thematic categories. The key impacts for each thematic category with frequency counts of their coded text units are listed for survivors in Table 8 and for offenders in Table 10. These tables use bolded text to emphasize and de-emphasize impacts that were suggested to be more or less important for survivors and offenders through data sources and methods. For example, "Speaker feels vulnerable during the panel" is bolded although this code was only applied to seven references, while "Speaker feels uncomfortable with audience or panel process" was not bolded although this code was applied to a greater number of references: ten. The bolding here reflects the great importance that speakers placed on having space where they could safely be vulnerable and its connection to their healing even though this point was only briefly brought up across sources, while lengthy discussions occurred in focus groups of the rare occasions when speakers felt uncomfortable with the audience or panel process and so this code was applied to a higher number of distinct text units. I also reference interactional processes described earlier in order to explain the nature of each experience type.

The speakers' experience is described as a single set as sources revealed a fairly coherent single narrative of survivors' perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of their experience. Although there is individual variation in how different speakers

experience the panel, a shared group narrative also emerged that was more unified than the offender narratives. The offenders' experiences are thus described as two narratives, as some offenders were found to shift into a more open space than others during the panel and therefore engaged in different processes and had different impacts from the panel. The sets are first framed by the guiding perceptions of the experience, as different perceptions set participants up to engage or not engage in certain processes, which lead to certain impacts, which cycle back to those or other processes, which lead to further impacts, and so on. Perceptions not only influence how participants first enter and interact with the panel setting but also how they make meaning out of their panel experience, including evaluations and judgments of the panel, and integrate that into their personal understandings.

**Survivor experience.** Speakers perceive the panel as a safe, welcome space where they can prioritize their own needs. As one speaker puts it, they can prioritize themselves and their experience by speaking on the panel: “it's the one time we get to be selfish with our own stories, it's our journey.” They are choosing to take up space and time by sitting on the panel as a speaker. Because the panel setting is explicitly designed to focus on their experiences and welcome their personal stories, the panel is perceived as removing the shame from speaking about abuse that is implicit or explicit in other settings. In a focus group, one speaker explained that abuse is difficult to talk about in other settings even with friends, so being able to talk about it publicly frees them from the shame of their experiences. She explained, “it's very secret and shameful and private thing that, um, even your friends...they have no idea, they don't understand...it's not that

they don't care, they just- nobody wants to talk about it...and so for years I never [pause] told anybody...So, uh, the feeling of- have a place, a safe place, to be able to share these things that I kept secret for years and years and years and years, very free- freeing.” This perception is strengthened by the restorative processes, described earlier, particularly the speaker's control of the panel process and choice in what to share of her experience. The safety also allows them to engage in restorative processes, including affirming other speakers and offenders, relating to offenders, and showing non-judgmental respect and gratitude or appreciation to offenders.

There are also some aspects of the panel experience that are not entirely comfortable for the speakers, but in the context of this setting that they have made safe for themselves, these negative impacts are not mutually exclusive from the positive impacts. In other words, the experience is complex, containing both benefits and challenges, but the overall process is a beneficial one that leads to desired changes for the speakers. This is still a coherent single experience; some aspects of change are uncomfortable, but it is not an either/or, all or nothing experience.

Speakers feel anxiety, discomfort, or nerves at times during the panel process. This impact is often around the prospect of speaking on the panel for various reasons, such as one speaker who has social anxiety and regularly discloses this during panels to the audience. The knowledge of an upcoming panel can also cause some anxiety or noticeable discomfort in the days leading up to speaking. One panelist told the audience one night of a panel that “she was feeling anxious, she was irritable in the couple days leading up to this, didn't sleep well” and “so it's hard to be here.” Another source of

anxiety can be struggling to decide what part of their experience to focus on in a 10-20 minute story, both in terms of what the audience members might need to hear that night and in the sheer task of reducing sometimes decades of abuse into a coherent narrative. When speakers are aware of a pressure to tell their story succinctly this anxiety can also become higher, as some say on the panel that they are “running out of time” or “don't have time to tell the whole thing.”

Rarely, speakers can feel uncomfortable with the audience as a whole, individual audience members, the panel process, other speakers, or the energy in the room. One speaker in a focus group gave an example of how “sometimes you can feel the energy and the energy will be kind of...not a threatening energy, but...you can kind of feel like it's kind of uneasy, maybe.” The discomfort with other speakers was surfaced in a focus group as worrying about other speakers. One speaker explained that she becomes concerned about the well-being of another speaker when she listens to her story on the panel, saying “I just feel like I'm always afraid for her.” When speakers only share their story in particular ways, such as very rehearsed, this can also lead to speakers not completely trusting what that person shares. One speaker said that the way another speaker shares her story “doesn't make me feel trusting with her...because you only get this prepared part of her, you don't get the core.” Importantly, these moments of discomfort are discussed in isolation as rare examples of how the panel is challenging for speakers, and does not affect their global perception of the panel being a safe space in which they can engage.



Speakers sometimes question their ability to participate or quality of participation on the panel. For example, during a focus group, one speaker shared that she questions her ability to share worthwhile information on the panel and worries about how audience members might receive her story: “I always think my story isn't really gonna matter, why would I...they don't wanna hear that part.” She also wonders how to tell her story (e.g., which parts to tell or where to focus) and said that she wonders “if anybody actually hears me and is it okay to speak?” These concerns are natural in this context and are overcome by the act of speaking, shifting over the course of the night to feeling empowered and validated for having shared.

*Reaching new understandings.* The panel creates the opportunity for speakers to process or re-frame their experiences of abuse in ways that lead to a different understanding of their experience of abuse. The speakers' acts of processing can be seen in many aspects of their panel involvement. Processing occurs during the preparations that speakers make before coming to a panel. One night, a speaker shared with the audience that for her she does this preparation because she needs to “pull [the] box out” of her experiences, which is “kind of like re-living it all.”

The act of processing and coming to new realizations or understandings also takes place during the panels, as speakers process emotions related to their own experience while sharing their story. One speaker explained that it is unavoidable to process emotion when speaking on the panel, saying that each panel requires “revisiting my emotions, 'cause I don't know how to do this without being honest.” Listening to other speakers' stories also spurs processing, sparking emotions and thoughts as speakers recognize parts

of their experiences in other speakers' stories. For example, during the debriefing after a panel, one speaker told another that hearing her say a line that her own abuser used to say to her was like a dagger through her heart. She said that she thought she was going to break down listening to that.

The panel can also facilitate speaker processing by allowing speakers to pay attention to or notice something about how they are processing their experiences of abuse. This can occur as a result of being invited to speak on the panel or from speaking on the panel itself. For example, one speaker realized when she was invited to the panel that her first reaction was, "Oh it wasn't that bad for you, [Speaker's own name]." She said that this was a sign that "uh oh - I'm isolating again, I'm getting the wall up, I won't be able to hide."

The speakers also describe behavioral indicators that they are emotionally and cognitively processing their experiences by participating on the panel. Speakers may feel a rush of energy or adrenaline during or after the panel, as heard in comments such as "I'm usually pumped with adrenaline by the time the panel is over." Some speakers feel tired, exhausted, or emotionally/ mentally/physically drained after the panel, for example, "then afterwards I'm finally hungry and then I'm worn out." Speakers also express a need and appreciation for debriefing after the panel, with others at the panel to discuss how things went and read the feedback forms or with support people following the panel. Ex: "I'm glad we debrief afterward. I think...if they were just like, 'Okay! That was nice, bye!' Ohh...I would be a mess. I wouldn't know what to do with all my thoughts."

The re-framing or re-definition of a survivor's experience of abuse can also happen from taking on the role of a speaker and continuing to participate in the panel. One of the speakers has talked about how she believes she made it out of the abusive relationship for a reason on several of the panels that I observed. Each time, she says that this is why she is there at the panel, sharing her story that night. She has defined her panel participation as the reason she survived her abusive relationship. Another speaker joined the impact panel because her abuser told her she would never be able to speak about what happened to her in that relationship, and she tells audience that is the reason that she is there, doing it. She is also an advocate who trains law enforcement on domestic violence cases. In her words, she is taking her experience of abuse and “trying to turn that situation into something beautiful.”

**Healing.** The word “healing” was explicitly mentioned in the survivor focus groups as one of the main ways they are impacted by talking about their experiences on the panel. One speaker explained, “Each time I shared, I found that I kind of healed a little bit, um, wasn't quite as bad and that must be why I talked about different things.” Another added that it is a continual benefit from participating on the panels, “And if it stopped doing for me what it does, I wouldn't be there anymore. But it continues to help me achieve healing in my life or I wouldn't be there.” The healing is experienced by some speakers as a release or freedom that comes from sharing, as one speaker shares: “if you start sharing, you're gonna be released and you're gonna be free.”

Although speakers themselves did not indicate that the panel could be a traumatizing experience, providers were concerned about the possibility of speakers

being traumatized by speaking on the panel, particularly if they perceived speakers as too early on in their own healing process to be able to revisit their experiences without this impact. As the providers explained in a focus group, a speaker could be traumatized by sharing her experience on the panel when she has not processed it enough to not be fully absorbed in her experience by telling it to this audience. One of the focus group participants said that rather than simply becoming emotional while sharing their story and communicating that the experience broke her heart, a speaker who is too absorbed in her experience while telling it will communicate “It's breaking my heart, I don't know what to do.” The other participant agreed and added, “Right now, in this moment...and now I'm not even fully present with you because I'm... in my trauma.”

Speakers indicated that they usually feel safe or comfortable with the audience and panel process, even as they feel vulnerable participating, which facilitates their healing. Speaker feels safe being at the panel, comfortable with the audience as a whole and the panel process, and safe given the presence of the panel facilitator(s) and probation officers present. One speaker explained in a focus group that “most of the time I feel pretty safe in those rooms.” Another added that the panel process feels safe because “it's not confrontational. It's not scary...nobody's gonna hurt me or yell.” Speakers feel vulnerable during the panel by sharing information about their experiences in the process, as one speaker described in a focus group, “the DV panels are just raw. I don't know another word to use, because it requires so much honesty and so much courage on the part of the panelists who are willing to come in and sit down and share- share that part of themselves.” A speaker in the other survivor focus group added that she is deeply

appreciative of this aspect of the panel experience, saying “I love being able to be vulnerable.” It is powerful for this group of women to be in a setting where it is safe to be vulnerable doing this work of sharing their experiences with this particular audience.

Speakers feel less alone as a result of participating on the panel, feeling supported by other speakers on the panel and their shared experiences. During a focus group, one speaker said that one of the things she appreciates about the panel is “not feeling like I was the only one who had gone through this. ‘Cause for years you think, kind of, you're the only one because nobody talks about it.” Speakers also feel hopeful from what the panel does for herself and for others, as one speaker mentioned on the panel one night that the panel shows her that “there is hope for things I never dreamed were possible.”

This process of connection can also extend to speakers connecting with audience members, as speakers make emotional or mental connections or relationships with audience members during the panel. One speaker in a focus group described this process of what it feels like to reach an offender as connection, saying “they're with me now. They're right here, they're right with me.” A speaker in another focus group explained that the question and answer session lets her start to connect with audience members as individuals, explaining “When we're done and we start asking questions then all of a sudden I, like, can focus in on them and now they're people.” A second speaker added in that focus group that connecting with specific audience members facilitates her sharing on the panel, saying “I always have to focus on one or two, otherwise I can't talk. Even though I'm as nervous as I am, I have to connect with one or two otherwise I can't...I have to notice something about somebody.” This connection does not happen between all

speakers and all offenders, as speakers explain they sometimes participate without registering much information about even noticeable details about audience members. One speaker shared in a focus group that “if you say, like someone was crying or something, like, I have no idea. I have zero idea.”

When connections are made between speakers and offenders, they are impactful on all of those involved. In a focus group, a speaker gave an example of this in a recent exchange that she had with two offenders after the panel that she participated in after one of the offenders asked, “What do you think is the most important part of this panel?”

And I said to him, ‘Do you have children?’ He said ‘I have a- a two and a three-year old.’ And I said... ‘Would you ever one day in your life want your son sitting where you’re sitting or have your daughter sitting where I’m sitting?’ And he started crying and I started crying and [the speaker snapped] there was that connection. Because this is about real people. This isn’t about somebody else. Just because the abusers don’t know us, doesn’t mean they don’t have those reflective feelings, they do. And it was very powerful for me and I felt like I was successful, because I knew at least with this guy and his friend sitting next to him, he’s crying too, um, that that connection had been made.

***Empowerment.*** Speakers also named specific ways in which they feel empowered by participating on the impact panel. During one panel, one of the speakers that night, sharing her pride with the audience about the work she had done on herself to be able to be at the panel and “stand up, say I’m working on my stuff.” She said that “it’s hard to put words to – I never thought I’d be...enough to do this.” Another speaker in a focus group

named her experience specifically as being “empowered,” explaining, “I feel empowered being able to be there and to tell my truth. And I like the idea that I can stand up before men who have been abusers.”

Speakers are able to recognize their own growth by participating on the panel, as the setting gives speakers the opportunity to look back on their experiences and see how they have grown over time to be able to speak on the panel. One reflects “I’m always thinking of how many years of work go into this with all of us sitting here in the room.” Another shares how she can see that she has “made great strides” because she “would not have been able to sit in front of you guys a few years ago.”

Speakers also recognize the influence they hold over the audience, signaling how the panel empowers them to be able to influence them in different ways. Speakers see how their actions and choices can influence the offenders in the audience during the panel, such as seeing the men respond to their stories or the way they tell their stories or making a difference in their lives or the lives of those they know when they leave that night. One speaker shared a story in one of the focus groups about running into an offender who had been an audience member at a previous panel. He came up to her and asked if she remembered him, and although she did not remember his face, he said that he recognized her, explaining, “Oh, well, we- you know, we- you were the speaker.” She said it was surprising to realize that she could be such an impact on someone in the audience that they would not only remember her but go out of their way to approach her and tell her that he knew her. When another speaker in the focus group asked her what that was like for her, she replied, “It was- it kind of took me aback a little bit, it was

like... 'Woah he remembered me,' you know?" Speaker also described in the focus groups what it was like to witness offenders shift over the course of the panel, interpreting these moments as changes within the offenders from their responses to what the speakers say. One speaker explained, "You'll notice a couple of 'em, it's like, 'Oh, wait, that!' You know? It's like the light bulb comes on, kind of thing?...You can see their whole being just kinda change and it's like, ooh, they got something, I bet they got something."

Speakers also feel like the panel validates or affirms that their experiences are real and valuable, and that they are heard and understood by others when sharing them on the panel. Speakers who participated in the focus groups described this validation in many ways. One speaker said that when she thought of what she appreciated about the panel, "I wrote, uh, the word affirmation, that different, that what happened was real...that this is, like a real thing." Another speaker explained, "I get to say what I need to say and share it with people who are there to hear it." Later on in the focus group conversation, a third speaker mentioned, "And it's special to me to be heard. I feel like I've lived so much of my life, and I've not been heard. So this- I'm heard. Those guys are gonna sit there and listen to me. That is a wonderful feeling to have! It's empowering to know that they can get up and walk out, I'm not saying they can't, but they're- they're there by their choice and so am I."

Audience members are also perceived as distinct entities who are not defined by their abusive behavior alone, which allows the speakers to affirm the person while condemning the behavior. Although there are some rare exceptions where an audience



member may make a speaker uncomfortable based on their behavior during the panel, overall the audience members are not perceived as threatening by the speakers. The offenders are also perceived as “works in progress,” neutralizing their potential to invalidate, harm, or minimize speakers' experiences with their comments or behavior during the panel. For example, a speaker in another focus group explained that she is not bothered by whatever offenders are in their process of change. If they “screw up” during the panel by making an inappropriate comment or asking a victim-blaming question, she is not negatively affected “because they're not sitting there in any kind of authority, they don't have any power, we have all the power, we're on the panel, we're the ones who have all the authority, I'm not expecting them to know anything. So if they say something that's wrong, I- they get a pass! I mean, now, we may say something to them, but we're not- I'm not gonna take it personally, 'cause you're not saying you're done cookin'!” This means that positive offender behavior can reinforce speaker empowerment but their empowerment is impervious to negative offender behavior.

Speaker empowerment is also not diminished even if some of the audience members do not seem to be engaged or impacted by the panel, because speakers do not feel responsible for the men and their reactions. One speaker explained in a focus group that the offenders are “not my issue. I'm there for what I need to do for me, I'm not there for them, so, learning how to handle that and making that part of my process for healing” is part of her panel experience. When speakers do feel invalidated, this is usually from their own internal self-doubts or their own evaluation of how well they spoke on the panel on a given night.

The perceptions that speakers have of their work on the panel are also empowering interpretations of what they believe the panel accomplishes. The perceptions reflect the power that speakers have over the process and the influence they hold over audience members and others by participating on the panel. It is empowering to perceive your actions as having an impact on others.

Many speakers perceive their involvement on the panel as helping others, including offenders in the audience, other people who attend the panel, or people that panel attendees later come into contact with. This perception was indicated by direct statements during panels, such as a speaker sharing with the audience that she participates on the panel because she wants to “help people like yourselves.” Other speakers alluded to this perception more indirectly, such as one who stated on the panel, “I do this and I want to give back, because I got out,” suggesting that participating on the panel for her is a way to “give back” to, or help, others. Clarifying that this help is focused on the offenders as well as those connected to the offender, a speaker explained in a focus group, “you want to feel like you’re...helping *them* too. You wanna feel like you’re helping them or helping their...children or helping, you know, their families, or their mother, or, you know, their life in some way or someone they’re connected to in some way too.” Another speaker shared in a focus group that this perception relates to how she sees herself, saying “I can become a resource for women, for guys” from participating on the panel. Even if most of the audience is not reached, speakers view their panel involvement as potentially helping people on a small scale, as a third speaker explained in another focus group: “And then hopefully- and I always think in my head, just one person that might be

changed, uh, not like that second but their, um, paradigm shift of how they perceive abuse. So that's, you know, just as long as I can just get through to one person, you know?" This perception is also shared on the panel, as this same speaker told the audience, "We're hoping that sharing will help even just one life, open your eyes, take a step back and see how this affects the people you were with."

Similarly, speakers perceive their involvement on the panel as a way of helping to prevent future abuse more broadly. A speaker explained that she participates on the panel "to help people to prevent future abuse and to help people stop abusing, save lives of future victims and of perpetrators too." Specifically, the panel is perceived as bringing light to domestic violence, a subject that is often not looked at or discussed in public. In a focus group, one speaker said that she believes the panel has the potential to shift public conversation about domestic violence because "now that we're talking about it it's shining a little bit of light on it." Another explained how shining this light can prevent future abuse, because "you begin to have this dialogue of really getting to the root of things." This contradicts the hidden, secret nature of domestic violence, with speakers viewing the purpose of the impact panels as "to have these conversations, get everything out in the open." This can be a global perception of bringing light to abuse because this is happening in a public space, or individually as speakers have the opportunity to say things to the audience that they could not or were not able to say to their abuser(s). During a focus group, one speaker said that one of the things she appreciates most about the panel is that it allows her to "not keep my secrets. To [pause] to say them out loud, because family secrets were a big deal in my home. And I don't do that on the panel. I

don't keep secrets." In other words, bringing light to abuse entails "getting it out in the open" and "not keeping secrets," in direct contrast to what many of them were encouraged or forced to do while experiencing abuse.

Speakers also perceive their involvement on the panel as honoring, validating, and speaking out for not only their own experiences but the experiences of their family members, such as their mothers, siblings, or children). One speaker prefaced her story when sharing on the panel by explaining, "It's my story but it's my mom's too – she didn't have a voice, she didn't have a place like this to talk about it." Another explained that "for my kids, like, my kids were, you know, I was a victim but they were really innocent in all of it, and, you know, he did all that stuff while I was pregnant, in front of [Speaker's older son's name], and so, like, this is my way to just speak out for my kids."

**Offender transformative experience.** Offenders initially enter the panel with one or multiple preconceptions or expectations about what they will experience in this setting. Offenders and providers voiced that some offenders expect the process to be confrontational or antagonistic towards them in some way and some expect that the experience will not be relevant to them and view the panel as no more than a requirement that they attend in order to complete.

These preconceptions cause offenders to feel anxiety about the panel or begin the panel with some sense of resistance to the process. In an interview, an offender explained where this anxiety stemmed from for him about attending the panel and at the start of the panel about what to expect, as he imagined that the men in the audience would be shamed or blamed or judged. "I kind of- I was really expecting that, I guess, attitude...from the

speakers, like...you guys are all bad people because you're here.” Program logistics can also cause anxiety for offenders, as a provider explained in an informal interview, from navigating to the panel location to being able to afford the fee for attendance. For some offenders, these preconceptions change over the course of the panel as they see that their expectations of antagonism and irrelevance are not met and that the process is instead not confrontational and they are not met with judgment from the speakers. They become more comfortable with the process as the panel unfolds and lower their defenses, decreasing any resistance to the process, and engage more openly with the speakers and the process. Some offenders feel safe and supported by the panel and perceive the environment as friendlier than they expected after the panel begins. The offender who was interviewed said that this was a pleasant surprise. “This was more of, just, kind of an open conversation, so...I actually appreciated that.”

One of the most unusual aspects of this process for offenders that I was not initially aware of until hearing this from providers in a focus group is that this is one of or the only time(s) that an offender will be identified in a public setting as a known member of a BIP group. This identification happens in front of people they may have never met before, including the panel facilitator(s), probation officers, speakers, and community member observers. In a focus group, a provider explained that in comparison to probation appointments where their officer will know their record but those around them will not beyond their status as a generally criminal offender, “this is one of the only times they're gonna be in public, identified as an abusive partner.” Offenders expressed appreciation for the panel in many ways, including their written comments on the feedback forms.

One offender wrote, “I think the forum is an excellent way for us to learn about the impact of our poor choices.” Another indicated that he believed no improvements were necessary to the process, writing, “The presentation was really a great [experience] for me and I wouldn't change anything.”

Offenders perceive the panel and the impacts of abuse described by speakers as more realistic, “real life,” or serious than other settings for sharing this information, such as in BIP groups. Comments that indicated this perspective focused on the word “real” or the phrase “taking it seriously.” Providers described how the panel is different than a BIP group or other intervention programs and surfaced this perception in a focus group. One provider explained that contrary to a video of similar content, with the panel “you’re in the room with that voice. It’s not a piece of paper, it’s not on the screen, it’s a real person sharing this effect.” A second provider endorsed this perception as well, saying the experience for offenders is “something different than hearing it just from their facilitator.” Offenders also endorsed this perception themselves, usually in written comments on the feedback forms. One offender wrote “Hearing from the victim brings empathy to reality.” A second offender's feedback response emphasized the realness of the speakers in the panel's influence: “Listening to real life people in person could only have a very strong influence on anyone.” The impact was clarified in a third offender's written feedback, “The topics they have brought up were very impactful and help make things very real.”

On the other hand, in some cases offenders perceived the panelists as practiced, overly rehearsed, or not sincere. For example, in response to final open-ended question on the feedback form asking for ways to improve the panel, one offender's suggestion

was to have speakers who are “not quite as practiced in telling their respective stories.” A provider shared this perception when describing how offenders that they have referred to the panel responded when they returned to the BIP group, “I've heard comments in the past about 'She seemed new, she seemed very polished', and I do think that if it feels too smooth, it feels like you're at a, you know, at a motivational speaker.”

Although some speakers experienced a breakdown in the barrier between speakers and offenders during the panel interactions, offenders do not seem to perceive the panel as creating space or breaking down a barrier between speakers and offenders to talk together about IPV. In the only direct conversation about this with an offender, he explained why he perceived the panel as limited in being able to do this. “I think it was...just less back and forth. I mean, it was still good, it was, you know, a lot of good knowledge and listening, um, but I did still, I think, feel like it was kind of, like, you know, like 'victims' and 'aggressors,' you know, like there was that sort of barrier there.”

If offenders are able to experience the shift in perception of the panel to take it seriously and connect, they can get something new from their panel experience than other intervention experiences. Offenders express unique benefits of attending the panel compared to anything else they are doing or have done, such as an offender who wrote on a feedback form “I have never heard the victims of domestic violence speak about their experience before. I hear mostly the experiences of the abusers at [BIP name].”

***Connection with speakers.*** In order for any of the subsequent categories of impact to be possible, offenders must first connect in some way with the speakers. This process includes lowering their defenses that many bring into the setting and relating to speakers.

Lowering defenses or decreasing resistance is facilitated by listening to speakers who are not their direct victims or listening to other men in the BIP group discuss the panel. An informal interview with an offender who attended the panel months prior to this conversation explained that “to hear that from not the person I had abused was helpful.” Speakers notice what happens when offenders relax after their defenses lowered, as one explained during a focus group: “And once they figure out we're not there to make them responsible for our pain, and they can relax a little bit, they can allow themselves to be a little more sensitive and to talk about things that they're embarrassed about talking about, their secrets.” In the example quoted at length earlier, where a speaker described a connection she recently made with two offenders after her most recent panel, she also alluded to the men's decision to allow themselves to connect and lower their defenses in that moment. She explained, “I think that- I think when people reach that moment in their lives [referring to the moment of connection after the panel], they have a decision to make. Am I gonna shut back down? Or am I gonna go ahead and just let these feelings happen and think about things a little differently next time.” Providers also see that offenders lower their defenses during the panel in their BIP group debriefing when an offender returns from a panel. One provider described this process as relieving for offenders, saying, “They talk about the relief that these women did not do any of those things...which is also...quite disarming, actually, of them...That's a common thing I hear afterwards, is one of the surprises, is how non-angry these women are.” Recognizing speakers' comfort with the panel process can also be disarming, as one offender expressed during an interview. Seeing that speakers are stable and comfortable participating on the



panel and interacting with offenders in that setting for the duration of the panel was extremely surprising to him. He said, “I felt like they were okay with us being there...I didn't really feel like they were scared, or intimidated, or like they held any kind of resentment against us...which, I kind of- I guess I almost expected that.”

Offenders also expressed that they were bothered by their perception of audience resistance or disengagement, as they themselves were engaged and expected others to do so as well. The offender who was interviewed said that he felt frustrated and distracted by the behavior of another man in the audience when he attended the panel. He explained, “There was a guy in front of us that kept falling asleep, it was a little distracting...and frustrating...I thought it was kind of rude.” This disapproval is expressed out of a sense of respect for the speakers and possibly the belief that other audience members should be striving to connect with the speakers.

These moments of decreasing resistance can also be seen in the interactions between offenders and speakers during the question and answer session. An offender asked a question that initially sounded confrontational: “All right I'll go. What advice do you have for us on this side? You're all on that side, what advice do you have for us?” One speaker replied, “How much do you want to change? You have to want it.” A different audience member was seen nodding in response to her answer. A second speaker at that panel followed up, saying, “You are the only one who can change. If you're not listening, angry you have to be here...[you're] not going to change. What is your part? Their part is their part but what is your part? What can you do? How far do you want to go back to deal with this hurt?” At this point, the questioner himself actually started

nodding. The second speaker continued: “There's a root of pain, hurt there.” The questioner kept nodding. “Because this thing (the panel) this one thing isn't gonna do it, it takes time.” The questioner replied, “Thank you.” The third speaker then said, “And we don't want it to take time!”, which got a big laugh from the room. The third speaker said that her ex had shame, and she was not sure if anyone here at the panel that night has shame – which some guys in the audience replied to with “Mhmm”s – “but,” she said, “shame means it has to be someone else’s fault” because it's too shameful if it is their fault. The first speaker concluded the interaction by talking about making amends, saying, “That's all you can do,” while making eye contact with the questioner. The questioner continued to nod, and the first speaker said to consider what their ex-partner's feelings might tell them about themselves: “If they're still hurt maybe there's more work I need to do, all I can do is work on myself.” Connecting with the speakers allows the offenders to engage in restorative processes including expressing gratitude or appreciation to speakers and affirming speakers.

Offenders also can be observed breaking down their resistance to the process by relating to the speakers' stories. The same offender said, “To be honest I was pretty irritated that I had to come tonight, I feel like I like my group, I like the guys in my group, and yeah I didn't want to come to this, but after listening I really feel like [pause] I want to thank you, [Speaker's name], for sharing your story because you can tell how much it continues to affect you, it seems like you carry a big weight on your shoulders.” Offenders may relate to a particular speaker and what she is going through or may be reached by particular aspects of speakers' experiences. The offender who was interviewed

explained that details from the speakers' experiences helps him find connections between his experience and their stories, and said that more details would be helpful to hear to facilitate those connections and “the relatability” of their experiences. Some offenders state how they related to the speakers' stories in their written comments on the feedback forms, such as one who wrote “I really related to [Speaker's name]'s story tonight – I had done many things she said her husband did.” This can create a sense of intimacy or relationship with speakers during the panel, as one provider described, as the panel creates opportunities for more intimate connection or relationship with the speakers in a way that is very personal, more than is possible in other settings or interactions. This provider explained, “The question and answer part is very important” during the panel because the interactive nature of the panel at that point “makes it more intimate...It's not just you detached, listening, where you can hide out.” In other words, interacting with speakers during the question and answer session personalizes the process and makes it so that offenders cannot “hide” their selves from the speakers in those moments.

***Reaching new understandings.*** The panel does lead some offenders to reach new or deeper understandings of the material covered in the panel, such as the impact of abuse. This can be heard directly during panels, such as when one offender described this process for him during the question and answer session of a panel. “I honestly never saw before or thought before that it could have such a big impact and such a long impact. I have never seen this before.” These realizations can come from considering the experience of abuse in the speakers' lives or in the lives of their own victims. This offender who described his realization was also prompted to take his own victim's

perspective, as he explained. “I just never thought it could, and now I'm thinking about my victim, our incident happened three years ago, and I've talked with her a couple of times in the last year and she still says things like 'yeah you were crazy' or 'I didn't know what was going on'...And I never realized that this is going to probably affect her for a long time, I never thought about how it could keep affecting her.” Although new or deeper understandings of abuse are desired impacts on offenders, some audience members might not make any new or further realizations or understandings as a result of attending the panel. One offender indicated that he had not reached any new insight, writing on a feedback form, “How I spe[a]k to people. I don't see a way to make it bett[e]r.”

Offenders' responses to feedback forms can show how they reach some of these new insights or understandings. Offenders express how they are considering their victim's point of view in various ways during the panel, such as how their victim was affected by their actions. One offender wrote that the panel “made me think back to the way I treated my family.” Another offender wrote in his feedback that the panel “really makes me think about the effects on my children.” Feedback form responses also show that offenders are wrestling with thoughts or questions during the panel and that they need time to cognitively process what they are experiencing during the panel. An offender expressed this need in his feedback, writing, “I need to think about this. I need time.” Another offender wrote notes on the back of his feedback form illustrating his thought process during the panel and consideration of whether a question would be appropriate to pose or

not to the speakers. He wrote, "If I ask? Did the guy who committed suicide's parents blame you [Speaker's name]? for the death is that wrong?"

Offenders' new understandings can be reinforced by seeing their own experience of the panel reflected in others' experiences of the panel, such as similarities in how they experienced the panel and how men in their same BIP group experienced the panel. During the interview with an offender, he described the debriefing process in his BIP group as such an experience for him. Multiple men from his group had attended the same panel with him, and he said that when they discussed it back in group, "I heard...the way that I felt was pretty much what I heard from everybody. Um, I know that a lot of the guys really- it resonated, when [Speaker's name] said that, you know, like, her partner wanted help for them."

As can be seen in the BIP group debriefing among many other processes, the panel's impact on offenders mingles with the impact that their BIP group and other experiences have on them. The impact from the panel is connected to other previous or ongoing work the offenders engage in, such as the BIP group, counseling, 12-step self help groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous), or other experiences. A provider describes this mingling metaphorically, explaining that "Seeds that are planted for them in the group are watered and nurtured by the panel, the panel plants some additional seeds and then in the group those get watered." This provider explained that the panel is a vital enhancement to the group process. As a standalone experience it would be important, but together with the BIP group she said it is really vital, because either one alone is not enough to do the work from her point of view. This mingling could also be seen in offenders' responses to

the feedback forms, as one wrote: “This presentation reinforced what I have been learning.” Another explained, “It puts a face to all the knowledge we've gotten.” These comments imply that they have already been working on understanding the impact of abuse or other material covered by the panel, and that rather than introducing this material for the first time, the panel facilitates further understanding.

There are also behavioral indicators that offenders have reached new understandings and integrated that information into their ongoing work. Offenders recall details from the panel, repeating or sharing comments or details from speakers' stories after the panel or acting on their recollections of the panel. Offenders also can teach other members in their BIP group about what they have gained from attending the panel, covering everything from what to expect at the panel to more personally substantive aspects of their experience. A provider described what it was like to witness this in group, as an offender who was completing an assignment shared something new in the group that he had not shared before. When the provider commented on the novelty of what the offender shared, he replied “Well I thought about what So-and-So said [referring to a panel speaker] and it really shifted that for me” and the provider said that “it wasn't until he had to do this presentation that he talked about that.”

**Healing.** Healing in this context for offenders includes emotional processing and impacts that relate to their desire to change or changes they make following the panel. Offenders who lower their resistance can also become emotional or uncomfortable at the panel, which could be a result of their listening and being troubled by what they hear and how it relates to their own behavior. One offender who seemed very resistant and upset

about needing to pay a larger fee than he expected to attend the panel said, “Honestly I didn’t really want to come be here tonight, I didn’t know how it was going to go, but I heard what you said, [Speaker's name], about wanting to give back because you made it out and...I wrote that down.” He paused here and seemed to get choked up or emotional, as if it was hard to talk. He continued, “That really impacted me and I want to thank you for what you said and thank all of you for being here tonight.”

I saw offenders appear to experience heightened emotions during the panel, such as getting “choked up” or crying. While participating in a perspective-taking activity that one of the speakers leads volunteers from the audience through when she participates on the panel, one offender described how he felt uncomfortable standing in for the survivor. While he was under a pile of sheets meant to symbolize all the abusive things her partner had said and done to her in their relationship, the offender described how it felt as “isolated, trapped...” and “scared.”

Offenders feel uncomfortable during the panel, experiencing emotional or other discomfort sitting in the audience or participating in the panel, but this discomfort contributes to the panel impact of healing. For example, an offender shared during a panel that the content was “hard to listen to.” In my observations I recorded offenders sitting with “frozen” facial expressions. Other offenders wrote in their comments on feedback forms that “It was good but hard to see the feelings on [Speaker's name] and [Other speaker's name]'s face” and “Discussing the effects on children is very helpful, painful, but very effective.” This discomfort is a beneficial impact of the panel on offenders according to one of the providers in the focus group, who explained, “So part

of what my challenge is, without traumatizing the men or punishing them, is how can they sit with a little dis-ease. And, um, honestly, uh, I think potentially the survivor panel is one of the most real ways you can do that.”

Sitting with discomfort can lead offenders to feel humbled or sobered, as offenders show humility or solemnity or indicate that they feel bad, troubled, or sad about their behavior. An offender expressed humility in his written feedback form comments, saying, “Thank you for allow[ing] me to be present.” Another described the panel's impact in the feedback forms as “It really gave me the chills. Made me feel bad about what I have done.” The offender I interviewed connected the importance of feeling uncomfortable during the panels to sitting with this dis-ease, as he described the difficulty of realizing how long the speakers' experiences of abuse have continued to affect them and how likely it is that his abuse toward his wife will affect his daughter much longer than he anticipated. “And so that's, like, a- [pause, sighs] I mean, it makes me sad...for me at least, it's just the, you know, knowing that I did those things, um...I would say it's- it's hard to hear, but I need to hear it.”

Even as offenders sit with their discomfort, they feel supported by the panel process, due to the panel environment, the attitude from the speakers, or by having other men in the audience with them to go through the panel together. One offender wrote on a feedback form that “It is very helpful to be in an intimate setting to discuss matters so close to home.” In the interview, another offender explained that the overall attitude he got from the speakers made him feel supported during the panel, that it was “okay” and that the speakers almost seemed to appreciate the offenders for being there. He also had



other members of his BIP group attend the panel with him and he said that they all sat together during the panel and that was also supportive.

Offenders feel hopeful about themselves or the future after attending the panel. On feedback forms, offenders wrote “I liked the message of hope at the end” and “I foresee positive self-growth for myself.” A provider explained how she thinks offenders get this hope, as they see that somebody can be hurt without wanting to hurt someone else back (in this case, the offenders in the audience), which gives them hope for their own potential to change. Offenders also recognize and appreciate moments when speakers show compassion for their abuser. In the interview, an offender said that one of the aspects of the panel that he most appreciated was one speaker's story in “how she shared about the abuse that her husband did to her and, um, how that made her feel and her feelings of wanting help for her husband. Um, [long pause] just, you know, for my experience, that was helpful to hear.”

Offenders also express a willingness or desire to change after attending the panel. The offender who described reaching a new understanding and taking his own victim's perspective during the question and answer session of a panel also expressed a desire to change, saying, “I don't want to have that kind of impact on the people in my life like that.” On a feedback form, another offender wrote simply “I need to change myself.” Offenders also express plans or future intentions for how they will use this experience or how the panel will influence their behavior in the future. An offender wrote on his feedback form about the panels that “They are going to help me be not abusive.” Other offender feedback form responses listed more specific plans, such as “won't mistreat my

children, will be part of their lives more now,” “I feel like I will try to empathize more in my relationships,” “Try to understand how others might feel,” and “I will pay more attention to my choice of words and how they might impact others.”

Some offenders reach new levels of responsibility or accountability following their panel attendance. A provider in an informal interview gave an example of how the panel led to an increase in her group member's accountability, explaining that he admitted after the panel that he had done something to his partner that he had never admitted before to her as a provider or in the group to the other men. She said he disclosed committing a very violent, damaging form of physical abuse to his partner at a time when she was in a very vulnerable position, which paralleled the experience of one of the speaker's on the panel that he attended. She said that the panel was transformative for this man and that “this really was a turning point for him, he became more serious and it really changed him.” Another provider agreed that the panel can get offenders to take things more seriously, adding that she saw changes once they became more serious like offenders not tending to blame their victims as much after attending the panel.

Behavioral indicators of offender healing include offenders attending multiple panels or modifying their behavior after attending a panel, though offenders do not always follow through on their behavioral intentions. Occasionally, offenders will attend more than the single required panel, which some providers view positively and others view negatively. In the provider focus group, one provider said they could imagine that the desire to attend multiple panels came from a desire to bring healing multiple times to the speakers with their attendance, while the other provider said that they would be

concerned about an offender's motivation to attend multiple panels. One offender reportedly modified his abusive behavior after he recalled what the speakers shared at the panel he attended according to the panel facilitator, who heard from the audience member's partner that when he would engage in abusive behavior he would stop, saying he was thinking of the panelists, and would decrease the abuse over time even though he recidivated. Nevertheless, offenders may not act on their behavioral intentions, for example they might not attend multiple panels even though they indicate they want to go more than once. In the provider focus group, one provider explained, "I've had guys say they want to but they don't usually do that...I've had a few guys make comments about it, like, at the end, 'Yeah I want to go do that again.' But I don't know that any of them ever have."

**Offender static experience.** In contrast to those who have a transformative experience at the panels, some offenders do not shift out of their anxiety or resistance or lack of engagement in the process and instead have a static experience across the panel. Their resistance or lack of engagement remains throughout panel and does not change, preventing them from experiencing the impacts on offenders described above, including connection with the speakers or the process, reaching new understandings, and healing. The primary impact instead is panel rejection.

**Panel rejection.** Occasionally, an offender will explicitly and actively reject the panel after it is complete. This is most commonly seen in written comments on the feedback forms after the panel. Comments that indicated panel rejection included writing that the panel was "garbage" or "just a man bashing session" on feedback forms.

Providers confirmed that some offenders do not reach any new understandings and do not seem to relate to, connect with, or find things in common with any of the speakers, instead maintaining their panel resistance. A provider explained that not everyone gets to a point where they can relate to what the speakers are sharing, instead, “Some are like 'That could never be me, I would never do that.' ” Another provider shared his concern in a focus group that certain types of content that speakers share may prevent offenders from relating to their experiences. The provider explained, “sometimes when they have panelists who are like, it's all, like, super severe, worst forms of domestic violence, um, or physical violence I should say, is- a lot of the men will then- there's like this- they just shut them off, 'cause it's like 'I never did that. I'm not like that'...And so it's easy for them, if the stories get extreme, for them to distance themselves. 'He sounds like a real asshole' and 'No wonder she, you know, but mine wasn't-'”

Offenders who remain in resistance throughout the panel are the hardest group to make inferences about, as they are not likely to volunteer to participate in follow-up interviews or stay after the panel concludes to engage the speakers or others in conversation. Provider accounts are the primary means of understanding this group, based on their understanding of the men when they return to their BIP groups and debrief with the providers. Rarely, these offenders may make audible comments during the panel such as during the question and answer session, possibly out of a motivation to follow instructions from their provider if they believe they are expected to participate during the interactive session. Their comments may invalidate or dismiss speakers' experiences though if they have not been listening or emphasize victim-blaming aspects of their

stories. I periodically heard victim-blaming questions at panels, despite the instructions and ground rules that the panel facilitator discussed at the start of the panel, such as “What could you have said to get your partner to see this was not okay to do to you?” It is important to note though that these moments of invalidation or dismissal from offenders can also be opportunities for shifts from an offender's static experience of resistance across the panel to the transformative experience of shifting perceptions described earlier, as the speakers respond by challenging offenders in these moments which can also break down the offender's resistance. The example described earlier, where an offender began with an aggressive question but subsequently shifted to affirming and expressing gratitude to the speakers is an example of the potential mobility of offenders' experiences from resistance or defensiveness to openness.

Offenders who do not shift but remain in a static state of defensiveness or resistance may feel uncomfortable during the panel, as described earlier in the transformative experience, but if they do it is not likely that they “sit with” their feelings of discomfort but instead push their feelings aside, minimize, or ignore them. These offenders may also show disapproval of abusive behavior as described earlier, but rather than genuinely disapproving of the abuse it could be done in an effort to demonstrate how much better their behavior is than that of the abusers described by the speakers. There was an unusual interaction in one of the panels I attended where one of the community member guests observing the panel in the back of the auditorium asked the speakers a question about what patterns they would like to see in a future partner of positive behavior in relationship. This was unusual not only because guests are usually instructed

not to make any comments or questions during the panel itself, but because after the speakers responded to the question, an offender who was sitting in the audience in the front row interjected to ask whether that question came from “their” part of the program (meaning a BIP or other recovery program, according to the offender), because he said the question would concern him as a red flag if the person who asked the question was a batterer who might be trying to learn more controlling behaviors. As I typed up my notes that night after I got home from the panel, I wrote that this interaction reminded me of other times I had observed offenders presenting themselves to others as in recovery and fully accountable with language from their BIP programming, when I could not tell if their words and behavior were more for show than from genuine thoughts or feelings. At other times, offenders expressed disapproval of abusive behavior in ways that seemed more genuine to me, such as shaking their heads at particularly painful details of the abuse the speakers shared.

#### **Offender evaluations of the panel on feedback forms.**

*Preliminary quantitative analysis.* To further address RQ2, feedback forms completed by offenders immediately after the panel were analyzed. Data were first examined to check for any missing data points before performing further analyses. Forms with missing data were excluded from sample analyses, as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) to prevent overfitting the data in small sample sizes. Next, the skewness and kurtosis of the variables was assessed to see whether the sample distributions of variables violated the assumed normal distribution based on responses in this sample before proceeding to other analyses that rest on this assumption. Item distributions were

found to violate the assumption of normality, with seven of the eight items negatively skewed and the eighth item (assessing participants' interest in participating in an additional restorative justice process) positively skewed. Survey item descriptive statistics of feedback forms version A and B are listed in ranked mean order in Table 11, including item skew and kurtosis.

*Descriptive findings.* The two items that differed on each form version were closely inspected and determined there were no systematic differences in their means, standard deviations or inter-item correlations. In addition, an independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate the mean difference in responses to survey item 12 and survey item 13 on version A and version B, respectively. The mean responses were not found to significantly differ between version A ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) and version B ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ),  $t(284) = -0.54$ ,  $p > .10$ . As the items were not found to be normally distributed, a Mann-Whitney test was performed to confirm these results and also found that the mean responses were not significantly different ( $U = 9049.50$ ,  $p > .10$ ). As no systematic differences were indicated by these tests, the sub-samples for version A and B were collapsed and results are reported for the entire sample ( $n = 289$ ).

Next, responses were examined at the item-level to provide further insight into how offenders evaluate the panel. Specifically, item-level means and standard deviations were examined to evaluate how offenders responded to each question on average and how much variability was found across responses. Again, survey item descriptive statistics of feedback forms version A and B are listed in ranked mean order in Table 11. The quantitative responses from offenders on the feedback forms provide further insight

into how offenders evaluate and experience the panel. These item rankings are consistent with the finding that the panel's impact mingles with BIP groups' or other intervention programs' impact on offenders. The highest ranked items with the least amount of variation that measure offenders' understanding of the impact of abuse refer to helping them understand the long-term effects of abuse on others ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ), understanding what survivors of domestic violence experience ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), and understanding how their verbal and emotional abuse harmed their victims ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), indicating that offenders generally agree substantially (the scale anchor corresponding to a value of 4 is "quite a bit") with the statements. Understanding how physical abuse harmed their victims was less endorsed and with greater variation ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) than most of the other statements. An item referring more generally to the panel changing how offenders think or feel about domestic violence had the lowest mean response and highest variation ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ). This is not surprising, as the generality of this item implies that the panel has unique or overarching reach regarding this impact, when in reality this process is taking place in the context of other intervention programs that are also designed to influence offenders' thinking on this subjects.

Responses were also tested for correlations among items to see whether the items seem to covary in how participants respond to them. The inter-item correlation matrix for items collapsed across feedback form versions A and B is reported in Table 12. All items were significantly correlated with one another, with seven of the eight items strongly correlated ( $p < .001$ ) with coefficients ranging from  $r = 0.54$  to  $r = 0.73$ . The eighth item,



assessing participants' interest in participating in an additional restorative justice process, was moderately and significantly correlated with the other items, with coefficients ranging from  $r = .20$  ( $p = .001$ ) to  $r = .24$  ( $p < .001$ ). The largest correlation in magnitude was between the top two mean-ranked items: "The presentations helped me understand the long-term effects of (my) abuse of others." and "I feel more understanding about what survivors of Domestic Violence experience." All other correlations between items, excluding the item assessing a behavioral intention, were large, ranging from  $r = .48$  to  $r = .65$ , and highly statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). The lowest correlations were still statistically significant, with all at an alpha level of  $p < .001$  except for one at  $p < .01$ , but were moderate in magnitude, ranging from  $r = .22$  to  $r = .27$ . The largest correlation that included the behavioral intention item was with "The presentations were helpful to me." This was also a moderate correlation of  $r = .27$ , suggesting that offenders were more likely to rate a higher behavioral intention to engage in a second restorative justice process if they perceived the impact panel as being helpful to them. Scale reliability estimates of all eight items showed strong internal consistency of items ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

Overall, offenders' ratings of these feedback form statements are consistent with other findings regarding the panel's impact, particularly with offenders reaching new or deeper understandings of the impact of abuse. These findings are relevant not only to RQ2, regarding how offenders experience and evaluate the panel, but also RQ3, regarding how offenders are impacted by the panel. Offenders' lack of follow-through on their behavioral intentions described earlier from provider sources is also consistent with how offenders respond to the quantitative items on the feedback form, as the substantially

lowest endorsed item is the single behavioral item that evaluates offenders' interest in participating in an additional restorative justice process (a one-on-one dialogue) to talk about their offenses and the impact of their domestic violence and verbal abuse ( $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ).

### **Consistencies and Inconsistencies in Findings Across Study Sources**

To further address RQ2 and RQ3, the multiple sources and perspectives that generated data were compared. The analysis showed that sources both overlapped and diverged in meaningful ways. For a list of the interactional processes and the sources in which they were observed, by method and by participant perspective, see Table 5. All perceived panel impacts and the sources in which they were observed, by method and by participant perspective, are listed for survivors in Table 7 and for offenders in Table 9.

Of the codes identified to describe the interactional processes of the panel, over one quarter were used in the four source/perspective categories: my panel observations, survivors in focus groups, offenders in an individual interview or on feedback forms, and providers in a focus group or informal interviews. These overlaps show some of the core qualities of the panel process, including speaker and offender engagement, speakers focusing on the impact of abuse on themselves, offenders asking questions focused on the speaker's experience, and the panel facilitator introducing the panel guidelines.

Restorative processes that were recognized by all sources include offenders affirming speakers, speakers showing emotion or vulnerability, and speakers and offenders showing gratitude or appreciation to one another. All sources also recognized some of the less productive aspects of the panel process, specifically offender resistance to the panel

process and offenders invalidating or dismissing speaker's experiences. Many more interactional processes (37 categories, or 88.10%) were recognized in my panel observations than categories of panel impact on survivors (12 categories, or 33.33%) or offenders (10 categories, or 26.32%), indicating that impacts may be happening more internally than externally during the panel or take time to unfold following panel attendance. Alternatively, this difference could suggest that there are fewer distinct impacts of the panel on survivors and offenders than there are interactional processes. In addition, a higher percentage of survivor than offender impacts were observed during panels, which makes sense given that much more time is spent on survivor than offender sharing during the panel in the survivors' individual speaking times and in the question and answer session. Additional sources were able to surface a greater range of survivor and offender impacts out of the survivor, offender, and provider interviews and offenders' feedback form responses.

Additional processes were surfaced in different combinations by the four sources, showing the benefit of drawing on these multiple sources to generate as complete a picture as possible of the panel process and the interactional processes that are possible within this setting. If a process was not referenced by a source, this does not necessarily reflect that the process is not considered important by that source, but rather that it may not have been possible to surface by that source alone. For example, my direct observation of the panels was not be able to identify processes that did not take place during the panel but took place prior to or following the panel meeting instead (e.g., providers screening offenders for panel attendance). Patterns of overlapping and missing

references to an interactional process across the four sources may also indicate natural convergences in perspective due to other common settings or experiences in which sources do and do not interact. For example, offenders debriefing the panel in their BIP group was referenced by offender and provider but not survivor sources, which is understandable as offenders and providers interact in the BIP group and both take part in that interaction and speakers do not engage in this aspect of the panel process.

A higher number of panel impacts on offenders were recognized by multiple sources than were panel impacts on survivors, indicating a conscious or unconscious emphasis on how the panel changes offenders over survivors. Only four categories of impact were recognized by all sources, all of which are panel impacts on offenders: offenders becoming emotional, offenders feeling uncomfortable during the panel, offenders reaching new understandings, and offenders relating to speakers. Many speaker impacts were recognized by all of the sources except offenders, indicating that offenders' lack of awareness of how the panel may impact speakers contributes largely to this imbalance. However, categories of impacts that were recognized by three or more sources in any combination were more than twice as high in the offender (13 categories, or 34.21%) than survivor impacts (6 categories, or 16.67%).

Survivor sources indicate that survivors are more self-aware and aware of their own group of panel participants (i.e., other speakers) than offenders, with only two categories (5.56%) of survivor impacts not referenced by survivors and seven categories of offender impacts not referenced by offenders (18.42%). Survivors are also more aware of potential panel impacts on offenders than offenders are of panel impacts on survivors,

as survivors referenced twelve panel impacts on offenders (31.58%, including the four that were recognized by all sources) while offenders only recognized one category (2.78%) of panel impact on survivors: speakers feeling validated. Offender sources tended to focus on the panel process, their interactions with the panel, and the panel's impact on themselves and did not indicate much awareness of the panel's impact on speakers.

Provider sources showed much more awareness of the panel's impact on speakers (8 categories, or 22.22%) than did offender sources, but an even greater awareness of the panel's impact on offenders (27 categories, or 71.05%). Some of the categories of impact on survivors that providers recognized did not converge with speaker's own framing of their experience. For example, providers indicated that survivors could potentially be traumatized by speaking on the panel (if they were not ready to do so), which speakers did not name when describing their own experience of the panel. This could be due to differences in sampling of perspectives, as the survivors that I interacted with during the panels and interviewed in focus groups were likely different than the survivors that providers may have had in mind when describing this potential panel impact on survivors. That is, a survivor who indeed was traumatized by speaking on the panel would likely not continue to speak on the panel, reducing my chances of observing this impact directly in a single or multiple panels or of recruiting this survivor from the pool of regular panel speakers to participate in a focus group and discuss this impact.

In sum, sources more frequently converged in findings related to the panel processes than the panel impacts. Codes related to panel processes that were consistent

across the four types of sources/perspectives correspond to some of the core qualities of the panel process, such as speaker and offender engagement and speakers and offenders focusing on the impact of abuse on survivors. Some restorative processes were also recognized by all four sources, such as offenders affirming speakers and speakers and offenders showing gratitude or appreciation to one another. My direct observations of the panels were able to surface many more codes related to interactional processes than impacts on survivors or offenders, and a higher percentage of survivor than offender impacts were observed during panels. There were more consistencies across sources regarding panel impacts on offenders than panel impacts on survivors, indicating a potential over-emphasis on how the panel impacts offenders rather than survivors. Overall, these consistencies and inconsistencies show the benefit of drawing on multiple sources through multiple methods to generate as complete a picture of the panel as possible.

### **Cultural Considerations**

There are several ways in which the IPV impact panel seems to be limited in reaching diverse cultural groups, for both speakers and audience members, that should be kept in mind when considering the transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the findings described above. These include language barriers, lack of communication or shared knowledge between the panel facilitators and BIP providers regarding how the panel may fit with providers' culturally-specific facilitation of BIP groups, lack of ethnic or racial diversity among panel speakers, and perceived rigid cultural beliefs of some offenders that seem to prevent offenders from being impacted by the panel or to which the impact

panel may not be relevant as an intervention.

Language barriers were rarely observed to prevent offenders from attending impact panels or fully engaging in the panel processes. The Washington County IPV Impact Panels are all held in English and only use English-language feedback forms to assess offender responses to the panel. In one observed panel, an offender arrived who appeared to primarily speak Spanish and with whom panel facilitators had difficulty communicating (as they do not speak Spanish). The BIP provider who referred this offender to the panel later said that she believed the offender was not able to follow much of the content shared during the panel from the speakers' stories or during the Q & A session. Although language was not often observed as being a barrier to offenders' participation in the panel, it could be that this barrier is preventing offenders from being referred to the panels in the first place and so direct observation of the panels alone is not capturing this experience of some offenders.

Similarly, it is difficult to detect through panel observation alone whether offenders from culturally-specific BIP groups experience any barriers to participating in or engaging with the IPV impact panel. In an informal interview, a facilitator of one such BIP group indicated that he does not currently refer men from his program to the panel due to his concern that the panel may not fit with or adequately reinforce, or even may undermine, the specific cultural programming he delivers in his group. He said that because he is busy and removed from what the panel organizers are doing (i.e., he is not directly involved in setting up or creating the panels himself), he is hesitant to "expose his guys to the process" because he has worked very hard to get them to a point where

they are receptive to what is happening in the BIP group. His programs are all at least 12 months long and he works hard to encourage men to stay involved afterward as graduates. He said that it is delicate work to get them to that point and so he does not want to “open Pandora’s box” by sending his men to a new process when he does not know exactly where the panels are coming from and does not want to automatically assume that the effect would be good. One of the concerns about the panel process that the provider named during the informal interview was that he was not sure whether there would be enough debriefing with the offenders of their panel experience to support their process of change, as he tries to do with his men throughout their work in the BIP groups.

He also said that he does not refer many of his clients to the panel because the men in his groups “are not your ‘typical’ batterer,” in his words. He said that compared to the general population of offenders, his clients are more conniving and may not be influenced by the panel process. He could recall one client though whom he thought would be appropriate to refer to the panel and this client not only attended a panel but also volunteered to participate in an additional restorative justice process afterward. The provider described this client as someone who was a college graduate who may also have had a masters’ level education (or somehow been exposed to that). The client did the work in the BIP group and kept going for eight months after completing the first year of the program. “And so,” the provider said, “yeah, this is someone who this [referring to the panel] is appropriate for.”

The lack of ethnic or racial diversity in the panel speakers could also be due to language barriers, other access barriers, or a lack of relevance of the panel process to



their experiences, needs, or desires. Towards the end of my observations of panels, I began observing related activities such as a Speakers Workshop, in which survivors and offenders met bimonthly to practice sharing their stories related to IPV. During one workshop, a speaker jokingly asked the panel facilitator whether he would translate for her while she shared her practice story. He laughed and replied that his Spanish was not good. She explained that she asked about translation because sometimes it is hard to communicate the emotions she feels while sharing her story when she is trying to say it all in English, and so it “comes out differently.” Another woman attending the workshop then asked this speaker in Spanish if she wanted her to act as a translator, the speaker accepted, and the woman sat next to the speaker and translated several words for the speaker while she shared. These interactions suggest that in addition to language differences creating barriers for offenders to understand the material shared during panels, potential speakers who primarily speak languages other than English may not be comfortable or able to share their story as fully or honestly as they wish to due to how language influences the storytelling process. This may dissuade some survivors from participating on the panel or limit the way in which these survivors are impacted by the panel if they do participate.

Finally, the fit of the panel process with offenders’ needs or impact of the panel on offenders may also be limited for offenders from certain cultural backgrounds or with incompatible cultural beliefs. The homogeneity of speakers in terms of their ethnic and racial background, gender, or other characteristics may contribute to these limitations, if certain offenders do not connect with or relate to certain speakers. During a focus group,

one speaker shared an example of an audience member who she perceived to be not open to change from the impact panel: “Many years ago...we were reading the comment cards and one guy said, ‘Do you have to use cuss words? If women use cuss words in my village in Africa, they would be severely beaten.’...and one of the people who was there from the community said...that culturally, that was okay. In fact it was required of men to manage their wives. And it was like nothin’ was gonna get past that cultural belief system he had.” In another focus group, another speaker said that “the military people” were a particular group she noticed responded to the panel differently than others in general. These impressions of cultural considerations regarding the panel processes and impacts on survivors and offenders could be evaluated further in future studies.

#### **IV. Discussion and Implications**

As a whole, the findings described above provide a rich, in-depth account of an IPV impact panel's processes and perceived impacts on survivors and offenders. In addition, the ethnographic inquiry brought a new depth of understanding to this type of restorative justice process through a detailed account of specific panel processes, participant experiences, and program settings, filling this gap in the literature on restorative justice panels for IPV cases. Findings from this multi-source, multi-method study also increased the range of information known regarding the use of IPV impact panels as part of BIPs from the perspectives and experiences of different stakeholder groups (survivors, offenders, and BIP providers).

To address RQ1 regarding the sequential activities and interactional processes of IPV impact panels, I created a temporally-oriented narrative to describe the panel processes and a flowchart of the panel activities and example interactional processes that can occur within or resulting from each activity in Figure 1. To address RQ2 regarding how survivors and offenders experience and evaluate the IPV impact panels and RQ3 regarding the perceived impacts of the panels on survivors and offenders, I created an experience set for survivors and two sets for offenders that describe how these groups tend to perceive and be impacted by the panels. The panel impacts on survivors were grouped into themes of reaching new understandings, healing, and empowerment. Impacts on offenders were grouped into somewhat consistent themes of connection with speakers, reaching new understandings, and healing. Again, the key impacts for each thematic category are listed for survivors in Table 8 and for offenders in Table 10, with

frequency counts of their coded text units and bolded emphasis.

In this discussion, I compare the current study's findings to the literature reviewed above and describe the contributions that this study makes to the gaps in knowledge regarding the use of impact panels for IPV cases, the use of DUI/DWI impact panels, the use of other restorative justice programs for IPV, restorative justice theories, models, and definitions more broadly, and finally the criminal justice system response to IPV. I then discuss limitations of the current study's methods, findings, and interpretations and conclude briefly with the study's future aims.

### **Contributions to the Impact Panel Literature**

Previous research on the use of impact panels for IPV cases suggested that these panels increase offenders' understanding of the impact of IPV and increase survivors' healing and empowerment (Burkemper & Balsam, 2007). However, the only two known published studies on IPV impact panels did not describe the panel processes in sufficient detail for these findings to be considered transferable to other contexts with any confidence. Findings from the current study therefore add considerable depth and breadth to what is known about IPV impact panels.

One evaluation focused on a panel process that more closely resembled family group conferencing than DUI/DWI impact panels or the IPV impact panel studied here, with a wider range of panel participants including family members, rehabilitated offenders, police, business leaders, elected officials, and faith leaders (Burkemper & Balsam, 2007). Despite these differences and the lack of description of the types of activities and interactions that took place during these panels, anecdotal evidence from an

interview with the program director was consistent with findings from the current study. Similar to the positive outcomes reported by the program director, offenders' increased understanding of the impact of IPV and survivors' increased healing and empowerment were common themes found in the current study. In addition, the current study extended the known positive impacts of the panel on survivors and offenders with evidence that the panel process also leads to new understandings for survivors (e.g., processing or re-framing their experience of abuse) and healing for offenders (e.g., feeling humbled or sobered and expressing intention to use the panel experience to further their process of change).

The current study also found more specific ways in these impacts consistent with Burkemper and Balsam's (2007) study seem to occur for survivors and offenders. For example, offenders' increased understanding of the impact of abuse included perceiving the panel content as more serious or "real" in comparison to other settings that delivered similar messages (e.g., BIP groups). Survivors' increased healing involved specific impacts such as simultaneously feeling vulnerable and safe during the panel. Their increased empowerment included feeling validated, recognizing their own growth over time as a result of participating on the panel, and recognizing the influence they hold over the audience during panels. The consistency in the findings between Burkemper and Balsam's (2007) study and the current study also support Bazemore's (2000) assertion that the specific ingredients of a restorative justice process are not as crucial for restorative program impacts as the intentions or principles behind restorative processes. Despite differences between the processes of the impact panel of focus in that study (e.g.,

processes similar to family group conferencing) and those of the impact panel studied currently, the panels resulted in similar impacts on participants.

Comparisons are more difficult to make between the current study and the other published study of IPV impact panels (Fulkerson, 2001). Although Fulkerson's study included rigorous evaluation methods such as a random assignment mechanism intended to isolate differences between those assigned and not assigned to the use of impact panels for IPV case sentencing and treatment, the lack of process description in this study limits the conclusions that can be drawn from their results. The author assessed survivor and offender ratings of procedural justice from interactions with judges, police, and the criminal justice system overall, whether their panel experience was "positive," and whether they would recommend the use of impact panels for other IPV cases. The report lacked any description of the activities or interactional processes that took place during the impact panels and also did not describe outcomes in any great detail. Findings from follow-up interviews six months after the panels were very limited, such as "most of the offenders expressed positive comments about the panel session" (Fulkerson, 2001, p. 365).

Despite the limited description contained in Fulkerson's (2001) study, there was some overlap between his findings and those of the current study. Positive evaluations of the impact panels were found for some participants in both studies. Nine of the offenders interviewed in follow-up by Fulkerson (2001) expressed positive attitudes about the panel process, similar to the high number of references of appreciating the panel found in offender feedback forms, comments during the panel, and in the interview with an

offender in the current study. Both studies also found that not all offenders appreciated or seemed to benefit from the panel process. In a follow-up interview in Fulkerson's study, one offender indicated that the panel did not change his attitude and was not beneficial. In the current study, offender resistance to or lack of engagement with the panel process could indicate that they were not benefiting from the panel. Instances of offenders' explicit panel rejection or indication that they did not reach a new understanding from the panel in the current study, though rare, also parallel Fulkerson's finding of offender lack of attitude change or panel benefit. In contrast to Fulkerson's finding that awareness and empathy for the victim were commonly named by offenders as positive outcomes of panel participation, increased empathy was not found to be a primary panel outcome for offenders in the current study. "Awareness for the victim" might parallel the increased understanding of the impact of abuse in the current study, but it is difficult to draw this conclusion with any confidence, as Fulkerson did not describe this outcome in sufficient detail.

Differences between Fulkerson's (2001) findings and those of the current study could also be due to differences in the time frame of data collection for the two studies. Participants' comments regarding panel outcomes were primarily made in the follow-up interviews six months after the panel process in Fulkerson's study, while comments in the current study came from observed sources during panels, sources immediately after the panels through feedback forms or debriefing conversations, or a source one week after attending the panel by the offender who was interviewed. The impacts found in the current study thus focus more on proximal effects during, immediately after, or soon after

the impact panel process, whereas the outcomes described in Fulkerson's study could be more distal outcomes (e.g., empathy) that participants believed the panel contributed to over time. Fulkerson also compared offender recidivism rates between those who did and did not participate in the panel and found no differences, which is a more distal outcome than was possible to measure or considered a meaningful indicator of the panel's impact on offenders in the current study.

Potential differences in the panel process between these two studies could also explain the discrepancies in the studies' findings. One key difference between Fulkerson's (2001) study and the current study is that after volunteering and consenting to potentially participate in an impact panel, not only offenders but also survivors were randomly assigned to engage or not engage in the panel process. It is not clear whether assignment to the impact panel condition for survivors meant that they themselves were then speaking on the panel or if they were listening to a panel (as offenders likely were). In either case, the survivors' experiences in that study were likely very different than the experiences of survivors in the current study. If they were assigned to participate on the panel, it is not likely that they received any or much preparation before speaking (as survivors in the current study do), and it appears that they would only have participated on a single panel rather than the multiple panels that survivors in the pool of speakers regularly participate on in the current study. If survivors were assigned not to speak on a panel but instead to sit in the audience and listen to a panel, then the process would be even more different than what survivors in the current study engage in on panels here. It is therefore not surprising that while three of the four survivors interviewed in



Fulkerson's study expressed positive opinions of the panel process, one survivor indicated it was not beneficial, in contrast to the overwhelmingly positive impression of the panel that speakers in the current study have of the panel. As all speakers in the current study continually choose to participate on the panel voluntarily, it would be unlikely for any of them to indicate that they believe the panel is not beneficial.

Many of the studies of DUI/DWI impact panels also focus on distal outcomes such as recidivism, so findings from the current study were generally not consistent with these studies' findings. The majority of the DUI/DWI impact panel studies focus on recidivism as the primary or only outcome of interest (C'de Baca et al., 2000; Fors & Rojek, 1999; Shinar & Compton, 1995; Wheeler et al., 2004). Again, the current study focused on more proximal effects during or immediately after the panel process, as the distal outcome of recidivism was not expected to reflect any of the panel impacts on participants.

The only DUI/DWI impact panel study with findings that were similar to those of the current study focused on other types of outcomes than recidivism alone. This study of DUI/DWI impact panels found that the panel influenced participants' self-reported attitudes toward driving while impaired and their behavioral intentions to prevent others from drinking and driving, but did not influence self-reported empathy (Badovinac, 1994). Similarly, the current study found that some offenders expressed disapproval of abusive behavior during IPV impact panels, reached new or deeper understandings of the impact of abuse, and expressed a willingness or desire and intention to change after the impact panel. These findings parallel one another in attitudes and behavioral intentions

regarding the negative behavior that each panel focuses on: either drinking and driving or perpetrating IPV. The lack of change in self-reported empathy was also consistent with the current study's findings. This further supports the interpretation that these panels more detectably influence proximal than distal effects (e.g., attitudes, behavioral intentions), which may contribute to but are distinct from distal outcomes (e.g., empathy).

Just as the specific processes of IPV impact panels described in other studies differ from the processes identified in the IPV impact panel of the current study, the process of DUI/DWI impact panels also differs from the IPV impact panel processes of the current study in important ways that may explain the inconsistencies in these studies' findings. DUI/DWI impact panels tend to be larger in panel size (e.g., 100+ attendees per panel) and held in different physical settings such as a courtroom, correctional center, or university auditorium (Badovinac, 1994; Polascek et al., 2001; Wheeler et al., 2004). Two of the most crucial ways in which they differ from IPV impact panels in the current study are in the identities of panel speakers and in the panel processes. At DUI/DWI panels, speakers can include individuals who were victimized by their own drinking or reformed offenders and there is typically little to no interaction between the speakers and the audience during or after the presentations at DUI/DWI panels. In contrast, two definitive aspects of the IPV impact panels are that speakers are only those who have direct experience surviving abusive relationships and that space is created for interactions to take place between survivor speakers and offender audience members in the Q & A session of these IPV impact panels. The elevation and sole focus on speakers' experiences facilitates many of the perceived impacts found in the current study (e.g., empowerment

and healing for speakers), while the interactive Q & A session facilitates key panel processes and impacts especially for offenders (e.g., lowering their defenses, connection with speakers, and reaching new or deeper understandings).

### **Contributions to the Literature on Restorative Justice for IPV**

Restorative justice processes have historically been used less frequently for IPV than for crimes that are less severe and interpersonal in nature, so it was not clear whether or how theories based on restorative justice programs for other crimes would apply to the use of these programs for IPV cases. Multiple models of restorative justice also conflict in how they define restorative justice and in what processes are considered most effective for programs, so it was uncertain whether any of these models would be capable of predicting outcomes specific to IPV impact panels. Findings from these multiple sources and methods did relate in interpretable ways to existing theory and models of restorative justice processes to further illuminate consistencies and inconsistencies between restorative justice theoretical models and real-world program practices and enhance or further develop ecologically-informed theories of restorative justice. In the remainder of this section, I first compare the current study's findings to research reviewed earlier on the use of restorative justice programs for IPV and concerns about the use of restorative justice programs in this context. I then evaluate the findings with respect to multiple theories and models of restorative justice. Finally, I compare the study's findings with definitions and overviews of the practice and efficacy of restorative justice (Cheon & Regehr, 2006; Pranis, 2004; Zehr, 1990; 2002).

The current study's findings were largely consistent with those of a case study of

a restorative justice dialogue for an IPV case between a survivor and offender from the same relationship (Miller & Iovanni, 2013). The couple voluntarily consented to this post-conviction dialogue that focused on their experience with severe IPV and its effects. The case study found some promising potential benefits of restorative justice processes for IPV, such as having temporal distance from the crime(s), which allowed the participants to process their experiences, begin to heal, and to accept responsibility (on the part of the offender) before engaging in the dialogue process. Temporal distance was also found to be beneficial in facilitating the IPV impact panel process of the current study, as survivors usually have distance of at least a year from the time of their abusive relationship(s) before they start preparing to speak on the panel in order to facilitate similar processes of personal healing prior to the panel. Offenders also have the temporal requirement of being in a BIP group for at least 26 weeks before attending an IPV impact panel in order for them to begin moving through their process of change and decreasing their resistance to the material covered in the panel. Providers and the offender who was interviewed indicated that it is helpful for offenders to go to the panel after some time in the program so that they are less resistant to the panel process and more likely to be impacted by the panel.

Other benefits of the post-conviction restorative justice dialogue highlighted in the case study (Miller & Iovanni, 2013) included the survivor's feelings of empowerment to have control over what was going to be discussed during the dialogue, a flipped power balance in the dialogue so that the survivor could show the offender how strong she became, and validation that the offender said none of the abuse was ever something that

the survivor deserved or did anything to cause. The offender expressed remorse during the dialogue, expressed a commitment to behavioral change, and said he felt transformed by participating in the dialogue and grateful for the opportunity to try to help his victim heal from the abuse. Although this post-conviction dialogue differed in terms of the relationship between program participants compared to the IPV impact panels in the current study, the program benefits were fairly consistent across these different processes. Although the IPV impact panels do not involve individuals from the same previously abusive relationship, similar themes to the dialogue's benefits were found in the current study, including survivor empowerment through a different balance of power in which the speakers are in control of the panel process, speakers can recognize and demonstrate their own growth over time to an audience of offenders, and speakers are validated in their experiences by others including the offender audience members. Similar to the offender's remorse expressed during the post-conviction dialogue, offenders in the current study expressed disapproval of abusive behavior, a desire to change, an intention to use this experience in the future, felt uncomfortable and humbled or sobered, and saw the panel content as more serious and "real." These impacts are not directly identical to remorse but are similar to this outcome, potentially identifying proximal effects that could be built on (e.g., through BIP groups) and lead to the distal outcome of remorse.

While case studies such as Miller and Iovanni's (2013) are extremely limited in their generalizability or transferability and do not allow strong inferences or conclusions to be made regarding program effectiveness, it is encouraging that the rich descriptive information generated by the authors regarding possible outcomes of the post-conviction

restorative justice dialogue is consistent with many of the processes and impacts found in the current study. This increases confidence that these perceived impacts are a reliable foundation for the development of valid outcome measures that can be used in larger quasi-experimental or experimental evaluations in future research. Consistency across this study and other studies of similar but distinct types of restorative justice processes also bolsters support for the transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) of the current study's findings beyond this single studied context.

It is again difficult to compare the current study's findings to the only published study that compared the use of a restorative justice program for IPV to the typical response of batterer intervention through a randomized controlled trial (Mills et al., 2013), as the only outcome measured in the latter study was recidivism indicated by re-arrest rates at four time points. Although it is promising to note that the authors' findings imply that this restorative justice program for IPV is at least as safe in terms of recidivism risk as batterer intervention, the current study suggests that other, more proximal, effects are also important to measure in examining the functioning and impact of restorative justice programs. Evaluating survivors' new understandings, healing, and empowerment, as well as offenders' connection with speakers, new understandings, and healing, could provide much more meaningful information about how this restorative justice program impacts participants.

Concerns about using restorative justice programs for IPV cases can be greatly informed by the current study's findings. Many of the studies that focus on this issue make implicit assumptions about aspects of restorative justice program processes. For

example, Stubbs (2007) expressed a concern that a restorative justice process could compromise survivors' safety, either by opening lines of communication between survivors and offenders without proper security guards in place or by leading survivors to believe that offenders have changed when they have not genuinely accounted for their responsibility, worked through their patterns of abuse, or truly changed. If such safety compromises occurred, a survivor could remain in or return to a relationship with an offender who appears to have reformed, but who truly continues to put the survivor at further risk for continued abuse. IPV impact panels are an example of a restorative justice process to which these concerns do not directly apply, as it is a surrogate process in which survivors and offenders interact but are not from the same abusive relationship. Stubbs also was concerned that restorative justice, while claiming to be victim-centered, could actually further disempower victims by shifting attention to offenders' situations too easily and coddling or excusing offenders in an effort to understand their behavior and what contributed to the situation (e.g., offender's personal trauma). Although I initially wrestled with this question of whether the IPV impact panel ultimately elevates survivors' or offenders' needs over the other group, I found that the panel process is able to hold both priorities simultaneously by centering survivors' experiences and having speakers control their own panel participation while respecting and promoting offenders' potential to change and to be impacted by the panel process.

The current study's findings were more consistent with a study of survivor advocates' perceptions of the use of restorative justice as a response to gendered violence in Australia (Curtis-Fawley & Daly, 2005). The authors found that advocates anticipated

that some survivors could benefit from the use of restorative justice in ways such as being able to speak more about their own experiences, be empowered by having more influence over decision-making processes, and having an opportunity to confront the offender. Although these do not directly translate to the IPV impact panel due to differences in some of the components of other restorative justice processes that are not present in the impact panel (e.g., decision-making processes), there are important similarities in these study findings that may not be immediately recognized or expected. Although the panel does not involve members of the same abusive relationship, it nevertheless provides an opportunity to interact with other offenders that creates possibilities for empowering and healing impacts, such as being able to say things to these men that survivors did not or could not say to their abuser(s). There are still subtle differences between the restorative justice processes though, as the panel is not confrontational and so is not intended to have survivors “confront” the offenders but rather to engage with and speak directly to them.

An additional consistency between the current study’s findings and the study of advocate perceptions of restorative justice is the view of some advocates that restorative justice could potentially address the power imbalance between offenders and survivors by prioritizing survivors’ voices and experiences (Curtis-Fawley & Daly, 2005). They also believed restorative justice could facilitate offenders’ acknowledgment of their violence and their responsibility, potentially aiding in survivor healing by hearing that acknowledgment. The potential benefits of restorative justice programs for survivors named by these advocates are consistent with the findings of the current study. The IPV impact panel prioritizes survivors’ voices and experiences and aids survivor healing by



seeing some of the offenders acknowledge the impact of abuse and express their desire to change. It facilitates some offenders' acknowledgment of the impact of abuse and their responsibility for their abusive behavior by having them listen to surrogate survivors, with whom they can lower their defenses, make connections with, reach deeper or new understandings, and promote healing and change.

The potential for the IPV impact panel to address the power imbalance that advocates mentioned (Curtis-Fawley & Daly, 2005) can be further understood by recognizing that the panel processes and impacts that elevate and validate survivor experiences are a sharp contrast to what many survivors endured during abusive relationships, when abusive partners and others minimized survivors' voices and interpretations of their own experience (e.g., that the abuse was not harmful or not real) and also minimized abusers' responsibility for their behavior (e.g., that their actions were the survivors' fault). Three major failings of the criminal justice system were identified by advocates (Curtis-Fawley & Daly, 2005), including the lack of validation of survivors' accounts of their experiences and that survivors were not at fault for the abuse. Findings from the current study, particularly the theme of survivor empowerment and specifically the impact of validation of their experiences, suggest that the IPV impact panel may at least partially address some of the ways in which the criminal justice system fails to meet the needs of survivors.

### **Contributions to the Restorative Justice Theoretical Literature**

As described earlier, the IPV panel process of focus in the current study is more consistent with Bazemore's (2000) Maximalist model of restorative justice than with

McCold's (2000) Purist model, as the process does not involve face-to-face encounters between individuals involved in and affected by the same crime. That said, findings indicate many of the perceived impacts of the panel on survivors and offenders are consistent with both the principles of Bazemore's Maximalist model as well as McCold's proposed outcomes of the Purist model. Of the three main principles that Bazemore (2000) suggests should guide restorative justice processes, those focused on repairing harm and on the transformation of roles and responsibilities are particularly relevant to the IPV impact panel. Although the panel does not explicitly state that "repairing harm" is a primary goal of the process, findings indicate that this impact is present for both survivors and offenders, as "Healing" is a major category of panel impact for both of these participant groups. This impact is directly in line with the first principle of the Maximalist model, a focus on repairing harm "to heal victims, offenders, and communities that have been injured by crime" (Bazemore, 2000, p. 464). The third principle of the model, re-envisioning the roles and responsibilities of the community and government to promote justice, is also not an explicit focus of the panel process, but the panel accomplishes a similar re-envisioning by creating unique roles and opportunities for survivors and offenders to engage in a process together. This study focused on the panel processes and impacts on survivors and offenders alone rather than on larger communities, so the findings stated here cannot speak to the roles or responsibilities of communities or governments. Future research could expand this analysis to include such processes and outcomes for these other stakeholder levels. The typical intervention role for survivors is transformed from one of passive service recipient to active controller of a

process focused on her experience and perspective. The typical intervention role for offenders is similarly transformed, from stigmatized criminal to a person who is affirmed for working to take responsibility for his behavior. Although the requirement of panel attendance does influence offenders' preconceptions about the process, some are able to lower their defenses, relate to speakers, and deepen their understandings of the impact of abuse on others.

Surprisingly, findings are also consistent with McCold's (2000) proposed outcomes of the Purist model in terms of injuries, needs, and responsibilities, despite the lack of congruence between the IPV impact panel process and McCold's process-focused criteria for restorative justice programs. The injury of "disbelief in experience" (p. 366) is very relevant to IPV survivors, and findings from the current study suggest that the panel is able to at least partially meet survivors' resulting needs, including the need to tell their story, to be heard, to de-minimize their experience, and to tell the truth. The panel also seems to facilitate the responsibilities for survivors to face their own pain, for others to take them seriously, and willingness to break the silence about their stories. Some of these outcomes directly parallel processes and impacts found in the current study, such as the consistency of impact between offenders' perceptions of the panel content as being more serious or "real" and others taking the experiences and pain of survivors seriously. "Loss of control" (p. 366) is another injury named by McCold (2000) that is also extremely relevant to IPV survivors. Again, findings from the current study suggest that the panel addresses survivors' resulting needs for empowerment and provides an opportunity for survivors to assume the responsibility to "exert influence" (p. 366) by

taking control of the panel process. Findings also indicate that survivors' needs for "validation" (p. 366) that the crime or harm was wrong are also able to be addressed by the IPV impact panel, as validation was the only panel impact on survivors perceived not only by speakers but also by offenders in the current study. Many other injuries, needs, and responsibilities named by McCold (2000) are actually quite consistent with the perceived panel impacts on survivors found in the current study, including the need for safety to disclose, loss of faith and the need to know that justice will take place, sense of isolation and the need for social support and acceptance, cognitive shock and the need for making meaning by seeking understanding, enmity and the need to acknowledge the pain under the anger, and fear and the need for strategies for the future and assurance this will not happen again to self or to others by taking action to take control.

The current study's findings of the perceived impacts on offenders were also somewhat consistent with McCold's (2000) proposed restorative justice outcomes. The injury that is most consistent with the processes and impacts found in the current study is offenders' "disconnect from true feelings" (p. 368), which creates the need to feel empathy and have opportunities to express sorrow and the responsibility to learn how others were affected and connect to their true feelings. These outcomes parallel impacts found in the current study, including offenders feeling uncomfortable during the panel, feeling sobered, and feeling humbled, similar to an "opportunit[y] to express sorrow" (p. 368). The impact of connection with speakers, relating to speakers, and reaching new or deeper understandings of the impact of abuse parallels the responsibility to learn how others were affected. Finally, the panel impact on offenders of becoming emotional

during or after the panel parallels the responsibility to connect to their true feelings. Other longer-term injuries, needs, and responsibilities may be partially met by the panel and further met by additional interventions such as BIP groups, just as the panel's impacts on offenders were found to build on and contribute to further impacts from BIP groups in the current study. These longer-term outcomes include offenders' diminished integrity, the need to be held responsible for their behavior, and the responsibility to own their behavior and admit it was wrong.

Many of Braithwaite's (1999) proposed standards for restorative justice (listed in Table 1) are also consistent with the panel processes and impacts found in this study. The constraining standard of empowerment, wherein stakeholders are empowered to tell their stories in their own way to uncover any aspect of injustice they wish to see repaired, is consistent with the panel impact on survivors of speakers feeling empowered, validated, and in control of the panel process. Increased empowerment of IPV survivors has also been documented in other restorative justice interventions (e.g., Miller & Iovanni, 2013). Respectful listening as a constraining standard is consistent with the guidelines introduced by the panel facilitator at the start of the panel and agreed to by all attendees before the speakers begin sharing their stories. Many of the maximizing standards are also consistent, including restoring human dignity and social support to offenders, to promote their human development and healing and prevent future injustice (in this case, IPV). The restoration of safety is also consistent with the panel as perceived by speakers, but it is important to emphasize that safety in the panel environment is not wholly dependent on the external provision of safety by authority figures (e.g., probation

officers, law enforcement, or other professionals) but is also fostered by the control that speakers have over the panel process. They are able to choose how and to what extent to share their stories or engage in panel processes, which makes it possible for speakers to participate in the way they are most comfortable. The restoration of compassion or caring is also consistent with the identified impacts of the panel on offenders, particularly in their lowering their defenses to be able to connect with speakers and take their victim's perspective, rather than keep their defenses up to shield against blame or fail to take responsibility for the impact of their abuse on others. Some of Braithwaite's emergent standards were not found to be relevant to the panel process (e.g., apology), as the process does not involve individuals who were directly involved in the same relationship. Findings were consistent with other emergent standards though, including censure of the act and forgiveness of the person, as some offenders expressed disapproval of abusive behavior during panels and speakers sometimes indicated in their stories that they had forgiven their partner when sharing on the panel.

Similarly, many of the elements of restorative justice that Block and Lichti (2002) suggest need to be tailored for use in the context of IPV and sexual assault (see Table 2) were represented in this study's findings. The panel prioritizes victim's protection but again not only through external means but through the speakers' control of the process. Accountability and responsibility of the abuser are upheld and not minimized, but IPV is recognized by speakers as a complex problem that affects everyone involved, resulting from a combination of factors.

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of the panel process is that the impact of

the power imbalance between IPV survivors and offenders is not only recognized in this setting but transformed to invert the dynamics, empowering survivors and support offenders as they sit in their discomfort, making connections and coming to sobering new understandings, flipping the power dynamic in a way that promotes survivors but also does not shame or attack offenders during the panels. In other words, the panel emphasis on speaker control restoratively allows the panel to invert the dynamics of IPV in a positive way for all participants. This process elevates the experiences of formerly abused partners and puts control of the process firmly in their hands. Rather than abuse that power to shame or blame the former abusers in the audience though, the speakers exert their influence to process and re-frame their own experiences and can end up connecting with the offenders over the shared difficulty in doing work like attending the panel. The dynamics of this new setting address cultural beliefs and norms about power and dominance in relationships learned by both survivors and offenders from their experiences with abuse. Offenders who may enter the panel with some anxiety, resistance, or disengagement are treated with respect by panel facilitators and affirmed by the speakers for attending, which allows some offenders to decrease their resistance, lower their defenses, reach new understandings and take the perspective of their own victim's to see how their abuse may continue to impact them. The panel process implicitly trusts survivors to make choices for themselves about entering and behaving in a setting in which they will interact with former offenders. The setting creates the potential for them to re-frame their experience of abuse and turn it into “something beautiful,” as one speaker stated during a panel.

Also in line with Block and Lichti's (2002) depiction of restorative justice for IPV and sexual assault, speakers are also able to leave responsibility for the abuser in the hands of abusers themselves and the larger community. In further contrast to the dynamics of IPV, where abusers often work to blame their abused partner for the abuse, speakers in the panel setting let go of responsibility for the offenders, indicated by panel impacts such as speakers not being bothered by where offenders are at in their process of change. Although providers were concerned that speakers might feel pressure to “teach” or “give advice” while sitting on the panel that could place responsibility for offenders’ learning or change on speakers’ shoulders, even speakers who engage in such interactions do so in a way that does not assume this responsibility. Speakers can simultaneously offer their knowledge and perspective to the audience while not putting offenders' needs or priorities for the panel process above their own, especially their own growth and healing. As one survivor explained during a focus group, “If it stopped doing for me what it does, I wouldn't be there anymore. But it continues to help me achieve healing in my life.” In sum, findings indicate that many of the restorative justice principles and models are relevant to the panel as a restorative justice process likely to manifest in outcomes that would be worthwhile to measure in more detail in future studies.

The processes and perceived panel impacts found to be present in the IPV impact panel are also consistent with many of the characteristics or signs that a restorative justice program is “working,” according to Pranis (2004) in her review of restorative justice processes and their efficacy. Specifically, providing victims with an opportunity for increased involvement in a justice process, increasing offenders’ understanding of the



harm of their behavior to their victim(s), to their community, and to themselves, and encouraging offenders to take responsibility for the harm done are consistent with the processes and impacts of this panel. Two practices that Pranis names as specifically relevant to impact panels (used for offenders on probation or in prison) are increased offender understanding of the impact of their behavior and the opportunity for survivors to tell their story. The current study's findings are directly in line with these impacts, as one of the primary offender impacts is reaching new or deeper understandings of the impact of abuse and the focus on survivors telling their stories as one of the main activities that takes place during the panel. In addition, Pranis links these outcomes to offenders taking responsibility (rather than increasing empathy) and survivor healing, which are additional impacts found in the current study.

The IPV panel process and impacts were also found to be consistent with many components of restorative justice definitions. Restorative justice frames crime as a violation of individuals, relationships and communities (Zehr, 1990), and the impact panel centers the process on the individuals who were violated (i.e., survivors who control the panel process) in order to repair the harms for both those violated and those who perpetrated the violations (i.e., offenders). Many restorative justice programs have a common goal of facilitating some form of encounter, direct or indirect, between individuals affected by a crime (Zehr, 2002), which was also found in the IPV impact panel process, in which a direct encounter is facilitated between individuals affected by similar (though not directly identical) crimes. Restorative justice programs also have broad goals of increasing offenders' empathy and responsibility for their own actions,

bringing multi-level healing to stakeholder harms that result from the crime, and potentially reduce recidivism (Zehr, 1990). Many of the panel impacts on offenders found in the current study are similar to these broad goals, such as reaching new or deeper understandings of the impact of abuse, expressing desires or intentions to change their behavior, and reaching new levels of responsibility or accountability. In addition, healing was found to be a thematic panel impact in the current study for both survivors and offenders, aligning with the intention for restorative justice processes to result in multi-level healing of stakeholder harms. An important difference between the IPV impact panel and other restorative justice processes though is that the panel is not a stand-alone process focused on addressing a specific crime or harm involving individuals from the same incident(s), as in a dialogue or conferencing process. Therefore the panel is not intended to result in specific outcomes decided by participants, primarily victims and individuals involved in the situation (Zehr, 1990), although it is an inclusive process that encourages participation widely among survivors and offenders from BIPs.

### **Contributions to the Literature on the Systemic Response to IPV**

The evidence reviewed earlier regarding the criminal justice system response to IPV through BIPs specifies ways in which the system is at least partially failing to meet the needs of all IPV survivors and offenders. Additionally, differences in the effectiveness of BIPs based on different offender characteristics suggests one avenue for improvement by recognizing and differentially working with offenders based on these characteristics (e.g., Gover et al., 2015). Since participant heterogeneity is one source of variation that may be influencing the perceptions of BIP effectiveness, tailoring treatment to different

offenders could be supported by differential referral to IPV impact panels. Findings suggest there are at least two distinct types of offender experiences of the IPV impact panel, a transformative and a static experience, though there may be more fine-grained distinctions between these experience sets (or additional experience sets) that could be investigated further. Future research could therefore focus on how offenders differentially respond to the IPV impact panel based on certain offender characteristics. Similar to the need to account for participant heterogeneity in BIP evaluations, findings from the current study indicate that a “one-size-fits-all” approach should not be taken for IPV impact panels.

Findings from the current study suggest that IPV impact panels lead to meaningful impacts on some offenders that complement the programming and goals of BIPs, such as reaching new or deeper understandings of the impact of abuse, taking their own victim’s perspective, feeling humbled or sobered, and perceiving the panel content as serious and real. Given that the panel’s impact was found to overlap with the impact of BIPs on offenders, according to both providers and offenders, it is difficult to isolate and examine how the IPV impact panel uniquely influences offenders. Thus it will be important for future studies to guard against sweeping claims that IPV impact panels largely “do not work” that have been made with respect to BIPs (e.g., Miller et al., 2013), as these types of social interventions are difficult to measure and specific mechanisms of change or impact difficult to isolate.

While BIPs tend to use cognitive behavioral, group process, gender-based curricula to link IPV to social norms about masculinity and the acceptability of violence

(Gondolf, 2004), the IPV impact panels focus on survivor accounts of the harms of IPV to increase offenders' understanding of abuse, bring healing to survivors and offenders, and empower survivors. The panel also creates unique interactional processes between offenders and survivors that are not possible to have in any other setting or context, as intentional interactions between survivors and offenders are extremely unlikely to occur through other programs or activities within the systemic response to IPV. The impact panel activities and interactional processes are therefore largely unique and can only happen in this setting, such as offenders affirming speakers and speakers showing non-judgmental respect to offenders.

Finally, findings from the current study suggest that IPV impact panels address many of the limitations for survivors of the criminal justice system's response to IPV, a system that survivors may be reluctant to use for various reasons (e.g., Hotaling & Buzawa, 2003). In contrast to well-intentioned, but unsatisfactory, efforts to include survivor voices on CCR councils (e.g., Allen, 2006), the panel process truly elevates survivors' experiences through a process primarily controlled by the survivor speakers themselves. While evaluations of advocacy services (e.g., Sullivan et al., 1994) and shelter and police outreach interventions (Stover et al., 2009) have not found these programs to eliminate violence in survivors' lives, it may be though that these absent effects parallel the lack of BIP or other program effectiveness in reducing offender recidivism. In other words, living without violence may be too distal an outcome to find any detectable effects from interventions for survivors, including the IPV impact panel. Focusing on more proximal effects, such as survivor validation, may aid evaluation

efforts in future studies of these programs.

Previous research has also indicated that rather than counseling or emotional support, survivors' highest immediate priorities in seeking advocacy services relate to physical and practical needs (Postmus et al., 2009) and that providing financial resources to survivors may be more effective in reducing their risk of IPV (Kim et al., 2007) than other advocacy services. The current study's findings do not contradict this, but suggest that the temporal nature of healing and recovery may influence when survivors need and benefit from different processes. The temporal distance of typically one or more years between a speaker's experience(s) of abuse and their participation on the panel likely means that their immediate needs (e.g., financial resources) have been met and survivors are instead seeking different impacts, such as re-framing or processing their experience of abuse, feeling validated and empowered, and perceiving their panel participation as helping others and preventing abuse.

### **Limitations**

Although the findings and implications described above suggest that IPV impact panels create unique interactions between survivors and offenders that lead to promising impacts including healing and reaching new understandings for both survivors and offenders, there are several ways in which these findings are limited. Selection effects of panel and study participation mean that the data obtained in the study, even from multiple sources with multiple methods, captures only certain perspectives of IPV survivors, offenders, and BIP providers. Given that typical rates of BIP drop out tend to range between 40% and 60% of offenders mandated to attend these programs (Eckhardt,

Murphy, Black, & Suhr, 2006), the screening period for offenders of completing at least 26 weeks of BIP groups before attending the panel means that only those who have not dropped out by that point in the program are actually referred to attend the panel. Offenders referred to the panel therefore are a sub-set of all offenders mandated to attend BIPs. In addition, not all offenders who are referred to the panel actually complete this requirement for panel attendance (though this rate of completion is currently not known), meaning that offenders in the sampling frame of the current study are a further sub-set of offenders who were not only referred to the panel but arrived at the panel. Panel observations therefore only included this smaller pool of offenders from BIPs. Finally, offender response rates for focus group recruitment indicated that the vast majority of offenders who attended the panel were not interested in, willing, or available to participate in focus group interviews about their panel experience. Thus, the single offender who was scheduled and arrived for the focus group (which became an individual interview) represents an even smaller group of offenders who experienced the IPV impact panel.

Selection effects similarly constrained the range of perspectives and data gathered from BIP provider and survivor participants. Despite efforts to recruit widely from the pool of BIP providers who refer offenders to the panel, potential participants' extremely limited availability prevented multiple focus groups or a larger single focus group from being conducted about their experiences. Although speakers had the highest response rate of the three types of participant samples in this study, limited availability prevented two speakers from participating and an additional two speakers in the pool of panel

participants did not respond to any study recruitment messages. Finally, speakers who were observed participating on the panel or who participated in focus groups represent a subset of IPV survivors who have heard about the existence of the IPV impact panel, sought out the opportunity to participate, and continuously choose to speak on the panel. The perspectives of survivors in this study therefore differs from potential survivors who have either not heard about the opportunity to speak on a panel or have chosen not to do so.

In addition, the data obtained through my panel observations are limited by what is possible to be observed within the panel alone. There is a wider range of observable activities related to the speakers than there is related to the offenders, making it difficult to infer how the offenders are experiencing the panel and whether or not they are impacted by it. During panel observations, it is much easier to observe the behavior of the speakers than that of the offenders, as the speakers have much more freedom to act in a wider range of ways than do the offenders. The speakers also both individually and as a group vocally participate in the panel much more than the offenders. Future research would be strengthened by more direct measures of offender engagement and processing during the panel (e.g., monitoring emotional responses or attention throughout their attendance) as additional indicators of offender impact. It is also difficult to know how this experience interacts with other experiences they offenders have in their BIP groups or other programs, as the impact of the panel may mingle with other impacts from those settings. Additional interviews or focus groups with offenders and providers would be very helpful in future studies to gain further insight into how offenders experience the

panel and how it relates to their ongoing work in BIP groups.

Several other limitations are present within the current research design. One key theoretical limitation based on the current practices of this specific community intervention program is the conditions under which offenders participate in the IPV impact panels. Currently, offenders are required by participating BIPs to attend a panel in order to meet requirements set by their POs. However, restorative justice theory emphasizes that restorative justice practice ideally takes place between individuals who are all entering the process voluntarily and with genuine openness and willingness to engage in the process, and that the voluntary nature of participation in restorative justice processes is especially important for survivors (Cheon & Regehr, 2006). Although offenders are required to attend the impact panels, a mandate from POs that is enforced by BIP providers, there were no recorded instances of POs or BIP providers enforcing monetary or other consequences if offenders failed to attend the panel by the time they completed the program. Therefore, meeting this requirement of panel attendance could be considered somewhat, though not completely, voluntary on the part of offenders. Nevertheless, this partially voluntary or involuntary condition of offender participation limits the extent to which findings from the current study may be transferrable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to other restorative justice programs.

The survey data utilized in the archival analysis of feedback forms are also limited in several ways. The single time point at which this data was collected (i.e., after panel participation only) means that average ratings of offenders' impression of the panel and variance between their responses may not indicate differential influences of the panel



alone, but rather other pre-existing differences between offenders not measured in the survey. Therefore, offenders' feedback form responses were carefully weighed against data gathered through other methods and sources in this study to make interpretation as comprehensive as possible. Although offenders' responses to the feedback forms provided some insight into their experience of the panel, they may also have highly endorsed most of the quantitative items or written positive impressions of the panel and its impact in response to the open-ended questions because of a desire to appear favorable to the panelists or the panel facilitators. The conditional withholding of payment receipts that prove panel attendance for offenders until they turn in a completed feedback form could also influence a conscious or sub-conscious decision to rate the panels more favorably, as offenders need to receive this receipt as evidence of their panel attendance for their BIP providers. This could potentially impact the trustworthiness of responses gathered from these sources, although the triangulation of information that was possible through the research methods (Denzin, 1978) mitigates some of that concern.

Finally, the nature of this investigation involved my in-depth and prolonged engagement in the program setting and panel activities to increase confidence in my findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) through participant observation, ethnographic inquiry, and moderation of focus groups. Although my deep involvement in data collection, analysis, and interpretation poses a risk of introducing the same source of bias to each stage of the research process, ongoing consultation with my advisor and research team members as well as the involvement of other research team members in select data collection activities and qualitative data analysis mitigated this risk. In addition, my

practice of reflexivity regarding my positionality, background, perspective, and interpretive lenses throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting illuminated as many sources of bias as possible that could have been introduced in this way so that readers can more transparently see and interpret the analytic process that resulted in my formulation of the study findings.

### **Future Aims**

Findings from this study will be shared with survivor and offender participants via email and with local BIP providers, IPV survivor advocates, or other audiences through planned community presentations. These findings may inform and guide their ongoing interactions with the IPV impact panel (e.g., via increased program referrals from previously skeptical individuals after gaining a deeper understanding of the process and preliminary impacts of the panel on survivors and offenders). Findings from this study could also be used to generate hypotheses about the panel's impact on participants for further testing with quantitative methods and contribute to the creation of survey items (Morgan, 1988) for ongoing evaluation of the IPV impact panel. Utilizing information gathered through this study's multiple sources and methods could reduce potential sources of error in future research, such as specification error through omitting relevant constructs or domains of experience that may or may not be predicted by existing restorative justice theoretical models. Increasing the amount of information known about the process of IPV impact panels and their perceived impact on survivors and offenders through panel participants' voiced understandings of their own experiences (Morgan, 1988) could increase the likelihood of measuring relevant domains in future studies.

The study design yielded data that inform current theoretical understandings of restorative justice processes and highly ecologically valid results relevant to this specific context of IPV intervention. The combination of data collection methods, sources, and analyses generated rich information, the analysis of which that involved not only inductive processes via participant contact but also deductive processes of engaging with theory (Morgan, 1988). Turning to the direct source of a program's participants, in this case the survivors and offenders who participate in the IPV impact panel, effectively specified salient activities, interactional processes, and perceived impacts of the panel on survivors and offenders, can be used in future studies to measure and improve ongoing efforts to effectively deliver this community-based intervention (Morgan, 1988).

Follow-up studies could further evaluate the indicator outcomes specified by study participants. Such studies could focus on several additional research areas beyond the scope of the current study, such as antecedents like offender characteristics that may predict how offenders differentially participate in and are impacted by the IPV impact panel. Studies could also focus on uncovering more specific mechanisms through which panel processes, perceptions, and impacts are inter-related for survivor and offender participants (e.g., in a process and outcome model of the impact panel). Finally, further investigation is needed to address the cultural considerations described earlier, regarding whether the panel meets the needs of various cultural groups and if so whether there are any barriers or facilitating processes that influence participation rates from members of these groups.

A follow-up longitudinal quasi-experimental study using random assignment or

propensity score matching of offenders who do and do not participate in an IPV impact panel would be useful to further to assess the processes and impacts of the panel identified in this study. In such a study, BIP providers could serve as regular raters of offender behavior along in combination with self-reports from offender participants in order to better clarify the ways in which the impact of the IPV impact panel mingles with that of BIP groups. Longitudinal follow-up studies would also help determine how the proximal processes and outcomes identified in the current study relate to longer-term, distal outcomes for survivors and offenders, such as offender remorse and living free of violence. Promising results could illuminate the proximal and distal processes of change for survivors and offenders and guide the development of more comprehensive, coordinated responses to IPV that include restorative justice programs for IPV prevention and intervention.

Table 1

*Proposed Standards for Restorative Justice (Braithwaite, 2002)*

Constraining Standards	Maximizing Standards	Emergent Standards
Non-domination	Restoration of human dignity	Remorse over injustice
Empowerment	Restoration of property loss	Apology
Honoring legally specific upper limits on sanctions	Restoration of damaged human relationships Restoration of safety/injury/health	Censure of the act Forgiveness of the person Mercy
Respectful listening	Restoration of communities	
Accountability, appealability	Restoration of the environment	
Respect for the fundamental rights specified in human rights declarations <sup>a</sup>	Emotional restoration Restoration of freedom Restoration of compassion or caring Restoration of peace Restoration of a sense of duty as a citizen Provision of social support to develop human capabilities to the full Prevention of future injustice	

<sup>a</sup>Declarations specified are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Second Optional Protocol, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power.

Table 2

*Restorative Justice with Respect to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Block & Lichti, 2002)*

Old Paradigm: Retributive Justice <sup>a</sup>	New Paradigm: Restorative Justice	Restorative Justice with respect to Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
1. Crime defined as violation of the state.	1. Crime defined as violation of one person by another.	1. Crime defined as violation of both one individual by another and relationship.
2. Focus on establishing blame, on guilt, on past (did s/he do it?).	2. Focus on problem-solving, on liabilities and obligations, and on future (what should be done?).	2. Focus on the past, present, and future, with the abuser taking responsibility for the abuse. It is the responsibility of the abuser along with the support of the larger community to take action toward changing behavior.
3. Adversarial relationships and process normative.	3. Dialogue and negotiation normal.	3. Concern for the protection of the victim primary. Accountability of the abuser upheld.
4. Imposition of pain to punish and deter/prevent.	4. Restitution as a means of restoring both parties; reconciliation/ restoration as goal.	4. Restitution as a means of restoring both parties -- restoration of healthy human beings as the goal. The development or restoration of an ongoing violence-free relationship between victim and abuser may follow but is not necessary.
5. Justice defined by intent and by process: right rules.	5. Justice defined as right relationships; judged by outcome.	5. Justice (Greek) as "a context in which persons seek to restore right relationship and provide for the needs of the one who has been made a victim by an [abuser], and to prevent the [abuser] from continuing to harm others."
6. Interpersonal conflictual nature of crime obscured, repressed; conflict seen as individual vs. state.	6. Crime recognized as interpersonal conflict; value of conflict recognized	6. Crime recognized as a result of a combination of factors including the presence of oppression and sexism in society, socialization, inability to deal with emotions, and an individual's action against a vulnerable person. Impact of power imbalance on relationship between victim and abuser recognized.
7. One social injury replaced by another.	7. Focus on repair of social injury.	7. Focus on education, healing for the victim and abuser, and societal change.
8. Community on sideline, represented abstractly by state.	8. Community as facilitator, restorative process.	8. Community as intervener for the abuser, embracer /upholder for the victim, and ally in the healing/ change process for both.
9. Encouragement of competitive, individualistic values.	9. Encouragement of mutuality.	9. Encouragement of empowerment of victim and abuser towards lives free of violence.
10. Action directed from state to offender: victim ignored offender passive.	10. Victim's and offender's roles recognized; victim rights/needs recognized; offender encouraged to take responsibility.	10. Victim's and abuser's roles recognized; victim given protection and opportunity for healing; abuser encouraged to take responsibility for action and given support to change behavior.

(continued)

Table 2 Continued

Old Paradigm: Retributive Justice	New Paradigm: Restorative Justice	Restorative Justice with respect to Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
11. Offender accountability defined as taking punishment.	11. Offender accountability defined as understanding impact of action and helping decide how to make things right.	11. Abuser accountability defined as understanding impact of action, agreeing to participate in a process to examine values, patterns, and taking action to change values and behaviors. Victim has voice in accountability of abuser. Community takes responsibility for hearing abuser's voice and holding him/her accountable.
12. Offense defined in purely legal terms, devoid of moral, social, economic, political dimensions.	12. Offense understood in whole context -- moral, social, economic, political.	12. Offense understood in whole context - historical, moral, social, economic, political.
13. Debt owed to state & society.	13. Debt/liability to victim recognized.	13. Debt/liability to victim recognized.
14. Response focused on offender's past behavior.	14. Response focused on harmful consequences of offender's behavior.	14. Response focused on harmful consequences of abuser's behavior.
15. Stigma of crime irremovable.	15. Stigma of crime removable through restorative action.	15. Stigma of crime removed through change in behavior and restorative action.
16. No encouragement for repentance and forgiveness.	16. Possibilities for repentance and forgiveness.	16. Possibilities for taking responsibility for violence and repentance. Forgiveness not an expectation but may follow in the victim's own time.
17. Dependence upon proxy professionals.	17. Direct involvement by participants.	17. Direct involvement of victim and abuser, with both given a safe place to speak. Others involved (e.g., professional or lay people from the community) must have an awareness of dynamics of domestic violence.

<sup>a</sup>The authors cite Howard Zehr as creating the initial comparison between the Old Paradigm of Retributive Justice and the New Paradigm of Restorative Justice and expand this to include considerations for Restorative Justice with respect to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Table 3

*Research Questions and Corresponding Methods of the Current Study*

Research Question	Research Method		
	<u>Ethnography</u>	<u>Focus Groups</u>	<u>Archival Survey Data</u>
1. What are the sequential activities and interactional processes of IPV impact panels?	●		
2. How do survivors and offenders experience and evaluate IPV impact panels?	●	●	
3. What are the perceived impacts of IPV impact panels on survivors and offenders?		●	●



Table 4

*Demographic Characteristics of Survivor Focus Group Participants*

Variable	Sample ( $n = 7$ )
Mean age ( <i>SD</i> )	48.43 (14.83)
Ethnicity (%)	
African American	0
Caucasian	85.7
Hispanic/Latino	14.3
Other	0
Marital Status (%)	
Single	28.6
Living together	42.9
Married	28.6
Separated	0
Divorced	0
Mean relationship (years) ( <i>SD</i> )	4.27 (2.91)
Education (% highest completed)	
Some high school	0
GED or high school diploma	28.6
Some college/trade school	28.6
College degree	28.6
Some graduate school	14.3
Graduate degree	0
Currently employed (%)	57.1
Length of time participating on panels (%)	
1 year	28.6
2-3 years	42.9
3-5 years	0
5-10 years	0
10-15 years	28.6
Number of panels participated as a speaker (%)	
1-3	28.6
4-5	28.6
10	14.3
40+	28.6
Panel referral source (%)	
DVSD	28.6
Advocate/advocacy organization	0
Counselor/counseling organization	28.6
Other	42.9

Table 5

*Coded Panel Interactional Processes by Data Source*

Interactional Process	Source			
	<u>Panel Obs.</u>	<u>Survivors</u>	<u>Offenders</u>	<u>Providers</u>
Speaker engagement in panel process	●	●	●	●
Offender engagement in panel process	●	●	●	●
Speaker focuses on impact of abuse on herself	●	●	●	●
Offender asks question focused on speaker	●	●	●	●
Speaker shows emotion or vulnerability	●	●	●	●
Speaker shows gratitude or appreciation to offenders	●	●	●	●
Offender affirms speaker	●	●	●	●
Offender shows gratitude or appreciation to speaker	●	●	●	●
Panel facilitator discusses panel guidelines	●	●	●	●
Offender resistance to panel process	●	●	●	●
Offender invalidates or dismisses speaker	●	●	●	●
Speaker controls the panel process	●	●		●
Panel facilitators control panel process	●	●		●
PO or facilitators show respect to speakers	●	●		●
PO active audience control	●	●		●
Panel facilitator asks speakers a question	●	●		●
Speaker pressured to share in a particular way	●	●		●
Offender lack of engagement in panel process	●	●		●
Offenders debrief panel in BIP group	●		●	●
Offender takes victim stance	●		●	●
Offender references speaker's comments	●	●	●	
Provider screens men for panel attendance		●	●	●
Speaker affirms offenders' efforts to change	●	●		
Speaker affirms other speakers	●	●		
Speaker relates to offenders at panel	●	●		
Speaker shows non-judgmental respect to offenders	●	●		

(continued)

Table 5 Continued

Interactional Process	Source			
	<u>Panel Obs.</u>	<u>Survivors</u>	<u>Offenders</u>	<u>Providers</u>
Speaker shows compassion for abusers during the panel	●	●		
Speaker challenges offender	●	●		
Speaker gets feedback on own processing of their experiences	●	●		
Speaker chooses what to share of her experience	●	●		
Speaker focuses on impact of abuse on kids	●	●		
Speaker focuses on impact of abuse on her abusive family member or partner	●	●		
PO passive audience control	●	●		
Offender asks question focused on kids	●			●
Offender asks question focused on his personal problems	●			●
Provider addresses offender's concerns			●	●
Provider asks debriefing questions of offenders post-panel			●	●
Speaker shares few or little personal details of her experience	●		●	
Offender shows disapproval of abusive behavior	●			
Offender asks question focused on speaker's abuser	●			
Speaker gives offender advice	●			
Offender treated with respect by panel facilitators				●

Table 6

*Speakers' and Offenders' Perceptions of the Panel*

<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Perceptions</b>		
	<u>Pre-Panel</u>	<u>During Panel</u>	<u>Post-Panel</u>
<b>Speaker</b>	Panel is a safe, welcome space to share their experiences	Panel removes shame from speaking about abuse	Panel removes barriers between survivors and offenders
<b>Offender</b>	Panel expected to be confrontational or antagonistic	Panel feels more open and comfortable than expected	Panel perceived as more realistic, serious, or "real life" (e.g., compared to BIP or other groups)
	Panel expected to be not relevant to them; attend only to fulfill requirement	Panelists can be perceived as genuine or as practiced, rehearsed, or insincere	Panel rejected; perceived as not "garbage" or "man bashing"

Table 7

*Coded Impacts of Panel on Survivors by Data Source*

Impact	Source			
	<u>Panel Obs.</u>	<u>Survivors</u>	<u>Offenders</u>	<u>Providers</u>
Speaker feels empowered	●	●		●
Speaker experiences healing	●	●		●
Speaker processes or re-frames their experience of abuse	●	●		●
Speaker perceives their panel involvement as helping others	●	●		●
Speaker recognizes own growth over time	●	●		●
Speaker has anxiety or nerves or discomfort about panel engagement	●	●		●
Speaker makes their own needs a priority	●	●		
Speaker perceives panel as unique experience	●	●		
Speaker perceives panel as shining a light on domestic violence	●	●		
Speaker perceives panel as honoring family members	●	●		
Speaker perceives their panel involvement as helping prevent abuse	●	●		
Speaker feels validated		●	●	
Speaker says things to audience she could not to her abuser		●		●
Speaker connects with audience member		●		
Speaker feels safe or comfortable with panel process		●		
Speaker feels vulnerable		●		
Speaker feels uncomfortable with audience or panel process		●		
Speaker processes emotion		●		
Speaker recognizes influence they hold over the audience		●		
Panel removes shame from speaking about abuse		●		

(continued)

Table 7 Continued

Impact	Source			
	<u>Panel Obs.</u>	<u>Survivors</u>	<u>Offenders</u>	<u>Providers</u>
Speaker feels less alone		●		
Speaker not bothered by where offenders are at in their process of change		●		
Speaker processes lack of offender engagement		●		
Speakers need to debrief or ground themselves after panel		●		
Speaker feels adrenaline rush		●		
Speaker feels drained or tired		●		
Speaker worries about other speakers		●		
Speaker does not trust other speakers		●		
Speaker questions herself or her participation on the panel		●		
Speaker relates to other speakers' experiences		●		
Speaker witnesses offender shifts		●		
Speaker brings other speakers onto the panel		●		
Speaker feels invalidated		●		
Speaker does not connect with audience members		●		
Speaker traumatized by panel experience				●
Speaker feels hopeful	●			

Table 8

*Key Panel Impacts on Speakers*

Theme	Code	Frequency <sup>a</sup>
Reaching new understandings	<b>Speaker processes or re-frames their experience of abuse*</b>	47
	<b>Speaker processes emotion</b>	13
	<b>Speaker gets feedback on own processing of experience</b>	4
	Speaker expresses need for/appreciation of debriefing after panel	4
	Speaker experiences adrenaline rush	4
	Speaker feels drained or tired afterward	4
	Speaker relates to other speaker's shared experiences	2
Healing	<b>Speaker experiences healing*</b>	32
	<b>Speaker has anxiety, nerves, or discomfort with speaking*</b>	38
	<b>Speaker connects with audience members</b>	25
	Speaker does not connect with audience members	4
	<b>Speakers feel safe during the panel</b>	17
	<b>Speaker feels vulnerable during the panel</b>	7
	Speaker feels uncomfortable with audience or panel process	10
	Speaker says things to audience she could not say to abuser(s)	5
	Speaker feels less alone in their experience	5
	Speaker feels concerned/worried about or not trusting of other speaker	4
	Speaker feels hopeful	2
	Speaker is traumatized by panel experience	2
Empowerment	<b>Speaker feels validated**</b>	42
	Speaker feels invalidated	7
	<b>Speaker feels empowered*</b>	29
	<b>Speaker perceives their panel involvement as helping others*</b>	25
	<b>Speaker not bothered by offender actions or reactions</b>	22
	<b>Speaker recognizes own growth over time*</b>	16
	<b>Speaker recognizes influence they hold over the audience</b>	17
	Speaker witnesses offender shifts	9
	Speaker perceives panel involvement as preventing abuse	9
	Speaker prioritizes their own needs	4
Panel removes shame from speaking about abuse	4	

*Note.* \*Codes that were endorsed by three sources (observation, survivors, and providers).

\*\*Sole speaker impact code endorsed by offenders (also endorsed by survivors).

<sup>a</sup>Frequency refers to total number of text reference units to which the code was assigned.

Table 9

*Coded Impacts of Panel on Offenders by Data Source*

Impact	Source			
	<u>Panel Obs.</u>	<u>Survivors</u>	<u>Offenders</u>	<u>Providers</u>
Offender relates to speaker	●	●	●	●
Offender reaches new understanding	●	●	●	●
Offender becomes emotional	●	●	●	●
Offender feels uncomfortable during the panel	●	●	●	●
Offender lowers defenses		●	●	●
Offender feels humbled/sobored		●	●	●
Panel impact on offenders mingles with impact of BIP and other experiences		●	●	●
Offender recalls details from the panel		●	●	●
Offender feels anxiety about panel process		●	●	●
Offender rejects panel process		●	●	●
Offender sees panel as more real or serious	●		●	●
Offender takes own victim's perspective	●		●	●
Offenders feel more comfortable as panel progresses	●	●	●	
Offender reaches new level of accountability or responsibility			●	●
Offender feels hopeful			●	●
Offenders appreciate panel process			●	●
Offender recognizes speaker compassion for their abuser			●	●
Offenders experience intimacy or relationship with speakers during panel			●	●
Offender bothered by audience resistance or disengagement			●	●
Offender does not relate to speaker			●	●
Offenders perceive panel as not real or not sincere			●	●

(continued)



Table 9 Continued

Impact	Source			
	<u>Panel Obs.</u>	<u>Survivors</u>	<u>Offenders</u>	<u>Providers</u>
Offender teaches others in BIP group	●			●
Offender attends more panels than required	●			●
Offender expresses intention to use experience moving forward	●		●	
Offender experiences transformation		●		●
Offender expresses willingness or desire to change			●	
Offender feels supported by panel process			●	
Offender gets something new from panel experience			●	
Offender wrestles with thoughts or questions			●	
Offender recognizes speaker comfort with panel process			●	
Offender sees own experience reflected in other's experiences of the panel			●	
Offender expresses need for time to process panel			●	
Offender does not reach new understanding			●	
Offender does not perceive their presence at the panel as bringing healing to speakers			●	
Offender decreases victim blaming				●
Offender modifies behavior when recalling the panel				●
Offender identified as in a BIP in public				●
Offender does not follow through on behavioral intentions				●

Table 10

*Key Panel Impacts on Offenders*

Theme	Code	Frequency <sup>a</sup>
Connection with speakers	<b>Offender relates to speaker*</b>	58
	Offender does not relate to speaker	9
	<b>Offender lowers defenses</b>	21
	Offender recognizes speaker comfort with panel process	4
	Offenders feel sense of relationship or intimacy with speakers	2
Reaching new understandings	<b>Offender reaches new or deeper understanding about the impact of abuse or how they can change*</b>	121
	Offender does not reach a new understanding about the impact of abuse or their process or how they can change	1
	<b>Offender perceives the panel content as more serious or “real life”</b>	37
	<b>Panel impact extends and contributes to BIP’s impact</b>	34
	<b>Offender takes own victim’s perspective</b>	33
	Offender references speaker’s comments during the panel	19
	Offender later recalls details about the panel	12
Healing	<b>Offender expresses intention to use panel experience in the future</b>	74
	<b>Offender appreciates the panel experience</b>	38
	<b>Offender becomes emotional*</b>	21
	<b>Offender feels uncomfortable during the panel*</b>	20
	<b>Offender expresses willingness or desire to change after the panel</b>	19
	<b>Offender feels humbled or sobered</b>	17
	Offender feels more comfortable with the panel as it progresses	16
	Offender reaches new level of responsibility or accountability after attending the panel	6
	Offender feels supported by the panel process	4
	Offender feels hopeful about themselves or the future	3
Panel rejection	Offender rejects the panel after attending	6
	Offender perceives panelists as overly rehearsed, not genuine, or insincere	2

*Note.* \*Codes that were endorsed by all four sources (observation, survivors, offenders, and providers).

<sup>a</sup>Frequency refers to total number of text reference units to which the code was assigned.

Table 11

*Survey Items and Descriptive Statistics of Feedback Form Versions A and B*

Item	N	M	SD	Kurtosis		Skewness	
				Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
1. The presentations helped me understand the long-term effects of (my) abuse of others. <sup>a</sup>	286	4.17	0.95	-0.63	0.29	-0.72	0.14
2. I feel more understanding about what survivors of Domestic Violence experience.	283	4.16	0.93	-0.30	0.29	-0.76	0.15
3. I better understand how my verbal and emotional abuse has harmed my victim(s).	287	4.10	0.91	-0.96	0.29	-0.45	0.14
4. I feel more convinced that I should stop being violent and controlling in my relationships.	279	4.08	0.98	-0.79	0.29	-0.53	0.15
5. The presentations were helpful to me.	287	3.92	0.91	-1.04	0.29	-0.18	0.14
6. I better understand how my physical abuse has harmed my victim(s).	277	3.85	1.00	-0.49	0.29	-0.40	0.15
7. The presentation has changed how I think/feel about Domestic Violence.	284	3.81	1.12	-0.42	0.29	-0.60	0.15
8. I am interested in participating in a meeting/discussion with a survivor of domestic violence to talk about my offenses and the impact of my domestic violence and verbal abuse.	257	1.69	1.28	1.69	0.30	1.75	0.15

*Note.* Survey items rated on a five-point scale of 1 (No), 2 (A little), 3 (Yes), 4 (Quite a bit), 5 (Extremely).

<sup>a</sup>Item variation between Version A and Version B indicated by word in parentheses.

Table 12

*Inter-Item Correlations of Feedback Form Versions A and B*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. The presentations helped me understand the long-term effects of (my) abuse of others. <sup>a</sup>	-							
2. I feel more understanding about what survivors of Domestic Violence experience.	.72**	-						
3. I better understand how my verbal and emotional abuse has harmed my victim(s).	.62**	.55**	-					
4. I feel more convinced that I should stop being violent and controlling in my relationships.	.60**	.61**	.65**	-				
5. The presentations were helpful to me.	.54**	.63**	.62**	.64**	-			
6. I better understand how my physical abuse has harmed my victim(s).	.54**	.48**	.66**	.59**	.57**	-		
7. The presentation has changed how I think/feel about Domestic Violence.	.55**	.65**	.55**	.55*	.60**	.55**	-	
8. I am interested in participating in a meeting/discussion with a survivor of domestic violence to talk about my offenses and the impact of my domestic violence and verbal abuse.	.22**	.23**	.22**	.22*	.27**	.22**	.22**	-

Note. <sup>a</sup>Item variation between Version A and Version B indicated by word in parentheses.

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

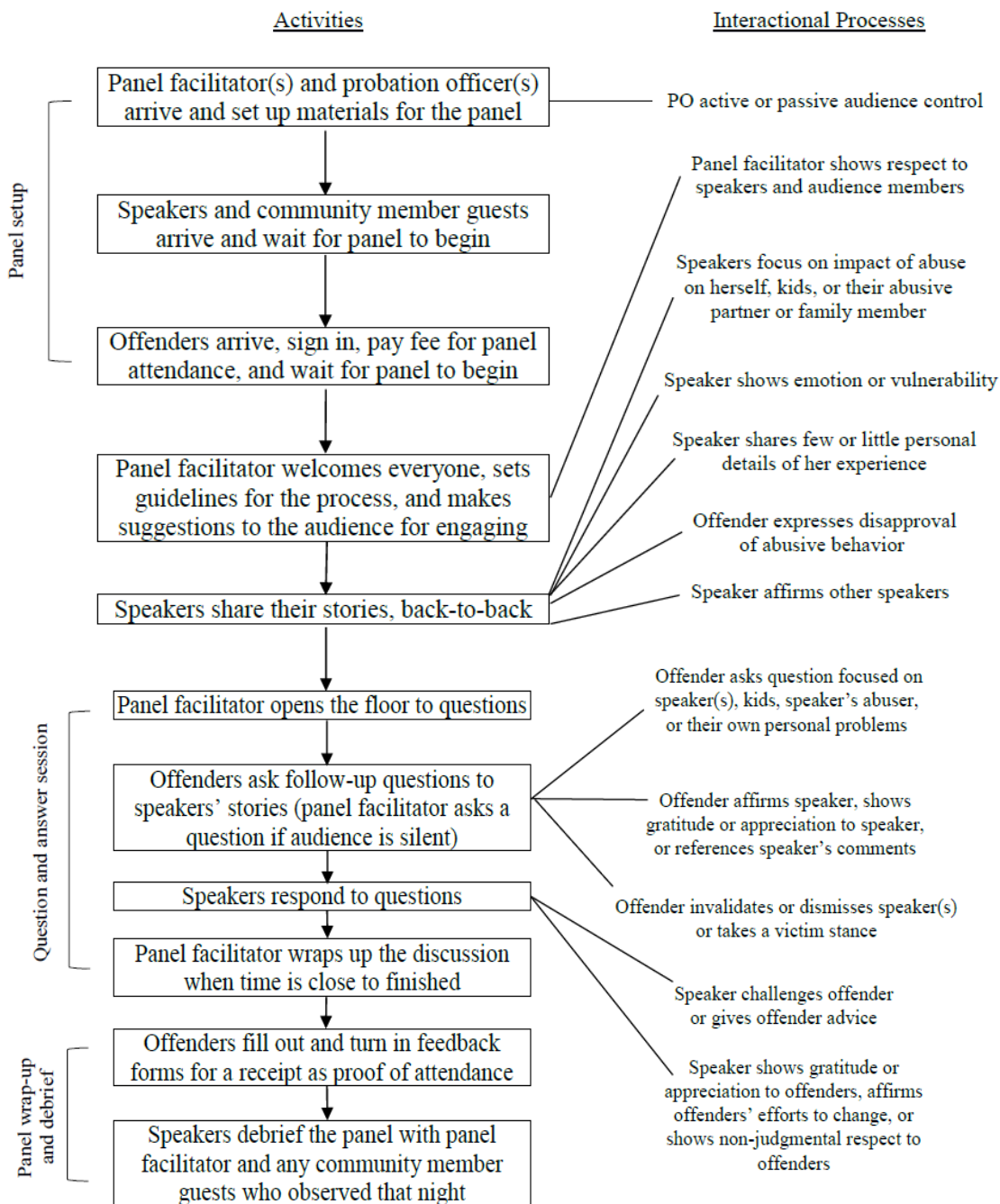


Figure 1. Flowchart of panel activities (left) and interactional processes (right).

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## Appendix A

### IPV Impact Panel Focus Groups Recruitment Script

Hello All,

My name is Kate Sackett, I'm a doctoral student working with Professor Eric Mankowski at Portland State University. I've been involved with intimate partner violence impact panels and the community of batterer intervention providers in the Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas County area over the past two years.

I am interested in learning about the impact of attending this panel on all of you in the audience and I would like to host a conversation with anyone who has attended the panel about your experience and opinions about it. These focus groups will be held on [*Month*] [*Day*], 2016 at [*Time*] over light refreshments in this room where the impact panels are regularly held. I have fliers with some additional information for anyone who is interested in participating.

This work is part of my Masters thesis, which will describe the impact of intimate partner violence impact panels on both panel attendees and panel speakers, including the perspectives of survivors, offenders, and batterer intervention program facilitators. A better understanding of the panel's impact may help you reflect on your experience at the panel today and bring that into your work in batterer intervention program groups or other areas of your life. I'll be distributing my findings in the community, with the hope that individuals connected to the field of intimate partner violence intervention either personally or professionally will find them useful and pertinent to their work or other aspects of their lives.

I'd be very appreciative of the chance to learn your perspectives on this topic. I hope that you'll take advantage of this opportunity to come together with others who have attended the panel to share your thoughts and opinions.

I will be staying after the panel to answer questions or gather contact information if anyone is interested in participating. If you cannot stay afterward but would like more information or would like to sign up to participate, you can also reach me via my contact information on these fliers.

Thank you,  
Kate Sackett

## Appendix B

### Consent Form for Offender Focus Groups



#### IPV Impact Panel Study Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a focus group conducted by Kate Sackett, a doctoral student from Portland State University. The researcher hopes to learn about the process and potential impact of intimate partner violence impact panels on panel speakers and on individuals who attend from batterer intervention programs. You were selected as a possible participant because you recently attended an impact panel.

If you decide to participate, you will take part in a small group conversation about your experience attending the impact panel and your perspective on the panel's impact on attendees. Other group members will be men who have also recently attended an impact panel, with whom you may or may not regularly attend groups in a batterer intervention program. The researcher will facilitate the group, along with an undergraduate research assistant. At the start of the focus group, the researcher will provide some ground rules for the conversation and introduce the topic.

The researcher will pose several questions to the group, and you will be asked to share your experiences and opinions about them. **You have the right to refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to or find uncomfortable, for any reason, without penalty.**

The focus group will be recorded with a digital recorder so that the researcher can concentrate on what is being said and guide the conversation. The recording will only be heard by the research team, and kept in a locked laboratory on the Portland State University campus.

If you choose to participate, your identity as a participant will not be revealed to anyone who is not present at the time of the focus group. **Your identity will not be attached to any information that the focus group produces.** However, the researcher cannot guarantee that other group members will keep information that you share during the focus group confidential. Additionally, if you report any behavior that suggests that you are at an immediate risk of harming yourself or another person, this information will be reported to the police.

The discussion will be held on [*Day*] [*Date*] in **Room [#]** of the Beaverton location of **Allies in Change (1675 SW Marlow Ave. #110, Portland OR, 97225)**. The discussion is expected to last for about an hour and a half. It is possible that participating in the

discussion will make you remember events that were upsetting, or realize new things about the people in your life that may be uncomfortable. Participating in this focus group may be beneficial to you in that you will have the opportunity to talk about and reflect on your experience attending the survivor impact panel and the potential impact it has had on you or other panel attendees.

It is also possible that you may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this conversation, but the information that you share will be used to develop a longitudinal evaluation of the panel's impact on attendees over time. The results of this study may also contribute to a better understanding among local survivors, offenders, and BIP providers regarding the panel's impact and panel facilitators' ability to run the panel more effectively for future participants.

**Your participation is voluntary.** You do not have to take part in this focus group, and whether or not you choose to participate will not affect your standing or relationship with any batterer intervention programs, probation officers, or anyone else who referred you to the impact panel. You may also withdraw from this focus group at any time without affecting your status with these groups or individuals.

If you have concerns or problems with your participation in this focus group or your rights as a research participant, please contact the Portland State University Human Subjects Research Review Committee at The Office of Research Integrity, 1600 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Market Center Building, Suite 620, Portland, OR 97201; phone (503) 725-2227 or 1 (877) 480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, contact either the principal investigator, Eric Mankowski, at [mankowskie@pdx.edu](mailto:mankowskie@pdx.edu) or 503-725-3901, or Kate Sackett at [ksackett@pdx.edu](mailto:ksackett@pdx.edu) or 503-725-3955.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this focus group. Please understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty, and that, by signing, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Consent Form for BIP Provider Focus Groups



#### IPV Impact Panel Study Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a focus group conducted by Kate Sackett, a doctoral student from Portland State University. The researcher hopes to learn about the process and potential impact of intimate partner violence impact panels on survivors and offenders in batterer intervention programs. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a BIP provider in the state of Oregon and attend Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network meetings.

If you decide to participate, you will take part in a small group conversation about your experience working with offender group members who attend the impact panels and your perspective on the panel's impact on attendees. **Other group members will also be local BIP providers.**

No BIP clients will attend the focus group. The researcher will facilitate the group, along with an assistant researcher if needed. At the start of the focus group, the researcher will provide some ground rules for the conversation and introduce the topic.

The researcher will pose several questions to the group, and you will be asked to share your experiences and opinions on them. **You have the right to refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to or find uncomfortable, for any reason, without penalty.**

The focus group will be recorded with a digital recorder so that the researcher can concentrate on what is being said and guide the conversation. The recording will only be heard by the research team, and kept in a locked laboratory on the Portland State University campus.

If you choose to participate, your identity as a participant will not be revealed to anyone who is not present at the time of the focus group. **Your identity will not be attached to any information that the focus group produces.** However, the researcher cannot guarantee that other group members will keep information that you share during the focus group confidential.

The discussion will be held on [*Day*] [*Date*] in the **conference room** of the **Multnomah County Southeast Health Center where the Tri-County meetings are held (3653 SE 34<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR, 97202)**. The discussion is expected to last for about an hour and

a half. It is possible that sharing information about your clients or your organization's practices may make you uncomfortable. However, you may choose to cease your participation at any time, or to abstain from addressing any questions that you would rather not answer.

Participating in this focus group may be beneficial to you in that you will have the opportunity to discuss your experience related to the survivor impact panel and the potential impact it has had on any of your or other BIP group members and hear from your colleagues about their experiences regarding this topic as well.

It is also possible that you may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this conversation, but in the information that you share will be used to develop a longitudinal evaluation of the panel's impact on attendees over time. The results of this study may also contribute to a better understanding among local survivors, offenders, and BIP providers such as yourself regarding the panel's impact and panel facilitators' ability to run the panel more effectively for future participants.

**Your participation is voluntary.** You do not have to take part in this focus group, and whether or not you choose to participate will not affect your standing or relationship with the Tri County Batterer Intervention Provider Network. You may also withdraw from this focus group at any time without affecting your status with the Tri County Batterer Intervention Provider Network.

If you have concerns or problems with your participation in this focus group or your rights as a research subject, please contact the Portland State University Human Subjects Research Review Committee at The Office of Research Integrity, 1600 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Market Center Building, Suite 620, Portland, OR 97201; phone (503) 725-2227 or 1 (877) 480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, contact either the principal investigator, Eric Mankowski, at [mankowskie@pdx.edu](mailto:mankowskie@pdx.edu) or 503-725-3901, or Kate Sackett at [ksackett@pdx.edu](mailto:ksackett@pdx.edu) or 503-725-3955.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this focus group. Please understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty, and that, by signing, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### Consent Form for Survivor Focus Groups



#### IPV Impact Panel Study Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a focus group conducted by Kate Sackett, a doctoral student from Portland State University. The researcher hopes to learn about the process and potential impact of intimate partner violence impact panels on panel speakers and on individuals who attend from batterer intervention programs. You were selected as a possible participant because you are in the current pool of speakers for these impact panels.

If you decide to participate, you will take part in a small group conversation about your experience participating in the impact panel and your perspective on the panel's impact on attendees. **Other group members will be women who are also in the current pool of speakers for these impact panels, with whom you may or may not regularly participate on panels.** The researcher will facilitate the group, along with an undergraduate research assistant. At the start of the focus group, the researcher will provide some ground rules for the conversation and introduce the topic.

The researcher will pose several questions to the group, and you will be asked to share your experiences and opinions about them. **You have the right to refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to or find uncomfortable, for any reason, without penalty.**

The focus group will be recorded with a digital recorder so that the researcher can concentrate on what is being said and guide the conversation. The recording will only be heard by the research team, and kept in a locked laboratory on the Portland State University campus.

If you choose to participate, your identity as a participant will not be revealed to anyone who is not present at the time of the focus group. **Your identity will not be attached to any information that the focus group produces.** However, the researcher cannot guarantee that other group members will keep information that you share during the focus group confidential. Additionally, if you report any behavior that suggests that you are at an immediate risk of harming yourself or another person, this information will be reported to the police.

The discussion will be held on [*Date*] [*Date*] in **Room [#]** of the Beaverton location of **Allies in Change (1675 SW Marlow Ave. #110, Portland OR, 97225)**. The discussion is

expected to last for about an hour and a half. It is possible that participating in the discussion will make you remember events that were upsetting, or realize new things about the people in your life that may be uncomfortable. Participating in this focus group may be beneficial to you in that you will have the opportunity to talk about and reflect on your experience attending the survivor impact panel and the potential impact it has had on you or other panel attendees.

It is also possible that you may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this conversation, but the information that you share will be used to develop a longitudinal evaluation of the panel's impact on attendees over time. The results of this study may also contribute to a better understanding among local survivors, offenders, and BIP providers regarding the panel's impact and panel facilitators' ability to run the panel more effectively for future participants.

**Your participation is voluntary.** You do not have to take part in this focus group, and whether or not you choose to participate will not affect your standing or relationship with the impact panels, Domestic Violence Safe Dialogues (DVSD), or anyone else who referred you to the impact panel. You may also withdraw from this focus group at any time without affecting your status with these groups or individuals.

If you have concerns or problems with your participation in this focus group or your rights as a research participant, please contact the Portland State University Human Subjects Research Review Committee at The Office of Research Integrity, 1600 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Market Center Building, Suite 620, Portland, OR 97201; phone (503) 725-2227 or 1 (877) 480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, contact either the principal investigator, Eric Mankowski at [mankowskie@pdx.edu](mailto:mankowskie@pdx.edu) or 503-725-3901, or Kate Sackett at [ksackett@pdx.edu](mailto:ksackett@pdx.edu) or 503-725-3955.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this focus group. Please understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty, and that, by signing, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E

### Moderator Script for Offender Focus Groups

Today I would like to hear your thoughts about the intimate partner violence impact panel you attended. I am here to learn about your experiences before and after the panel and how panels affect people who attend them. I am also interested in how this fits in with other programs, like batterer intervention program groups.

#### **#1: Consent forms**

First I'd like to go through the consent forms to make sure everyone understands what is involved in participating here today. Does everyone have two copies of the form? We'll walk through the main points and then I'll ask everyone to please sign and date one copy. The second copy is yours to keep for reference and if any questions come up in the future.

Before we begin, let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please share a name that you would like others here to use, and tell us how long you've been working at [*Name of BIP(s)*]. In order to increase the confidentiality of the group, you can use a pseudonym or your real first name (it is your choice) but please do not share your last name.

My hope for this conversation is that we'll brainstorm **a list of experiences that audience members have at the panel and ways that the panel impacts the audience during the panel or afterward**. We are still learning about this process so I'd like to encourage everyone to share in as much detail as you're comfortable with, even if it seems obvious to you that is something that might not be widely known so your experience and expertise here is very valuable.

#### **How the conversation will go:**

- **A conversation between you.** [Co-moderator] and I will be sitting a little bit outside the circle this evening, supporting the conversation, and we'll both be taking notes on particular topics you all raise tonight. I'll step in to guide the conversation, but about dialogue between all of you since we're mainly hoping to learn more about your experiences.
- **Wide participation would be great**—I'd like to hear from everyone! I'm here to listen and learn about everything that you think matters on this topic.
- While it would be great to hear from everyone, I also want to make sure you know that everyone has the right not to answer any questions, for any reason. You also all have the right to stop participation at any time, for any reason, without penalty.
- I'd also like to ask that we **speak one at a time**. I would also appreciate it if you could silence your cell phones if possible.
- While it's likely that we have a diversity of opinions represented in this group, and we welcome disagreement, I'd like to ask that you disagree with each other respectfully—the **goal is not to reach consensus**. I'd like to hear about as many



different ideas as possible in as much detail as you can, so please share any examples and stories you have on the topic.

- A lot of the questions ask about what it's like to refer offenders to the panel as a provider and responses could be positive or negative (or both), so I don't want there to be any pressure to respond in a certain way. It is always okay to agree or disagree with one another, we don't know how everyone's experience might be similar or different so that's what we're trying to find out.
- Finally, just like in batterer intervention programs, what people say in the group should stay in the group. Please remember not to discuss any information with others that would reveal the identities of **other people who are here today**.
- One more note before we get started: just like in a usual BIP group, the limits of confidentiality apply here as well. This means that **as researchers, we also have a responsibility to report to law enforcement authorities if you say anything about anyone's immediate plans to harm themselves or someone else.**

Does this sound alright? Anything to add? If not, **I'll go ahead and turn on the recorder...**

I have a few questions to get us started.

1. What is the panel like as an audience member? (*Discussion-starter activity; pass around notecards*) Please write an example of something that you as an audience member appreciated about being at a panel on one side of the card and an example of something that was challenging about being at a panel on the other. We'll take a few minutes for everyone to write these down and then share them out loud. **I'll collect the cards when we are all done at the end of this evening so please don't write your name on the card.**

2. What did you or others you know expect to experience as an audience member at the panels? *Probes:* What is it like before coming to a panel? Is there anything surprising about what the panel is like compared to what people expect?

*Possible contextual introduction of question, e.g., "So my understanding is that this is a required part of batterer intervention programs around Portland. So from your perspective in those groups, what do people expect to experience at the panel?"*

3. What types of experiences did you (or others you know or observed) have at panels as an audience member? *Probes:* What do audience members learn/feel? How do audience members act?

4. What is it like after going to a panel? *Probes:* Is there anything that happens immediately after going? Days later? Weeks later? Months later?

5. What is different about going to a panel compared to another program (e.g., batterer intervention groups)?

6. What unique contribution (benefit or harm) do panels give audience members?

## Appendix F

### Moderator Script for BIP Provider Focus Groups

Today I would like to hear your thoughts about the intimate partner violence impact panel that offenders in your program go to and your experiences working with BIP group members who attend the panel. I am interested in how panels affect people who attend them and the ways that the panel fits in the work they do in BIP groups.

#### **#1: Consent forms**

First I'd like to go through the consent forms to make sure everyone understands what is involved in participating here today. Does everyone have two copies of the form? We'll walk through the main points and then I'll ask everyone to please sign and date one copy. The second copy is yours to keep for reference and if any questions come up in the future.

Before we begin, let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please share a name that you would like others here to use, and tell us how long you've been working at [name of BIP(s)]. In order to increase the confidentiality of the group, you can use a pseudonym or your real first name (it is your choice) but please do not share your last name.

My hope for this conversation is that we'll brainstorm **a list of experiences that BIP providers have in working with offenders who go to the panel and ways that the panel impacts offenders during the panel or afterward**. We are still learning about this process so I'd like to encourage everyone to share in as much detail as you're comfortable with, even if it seems obvious to you that is something that might not be widely known so your experience and expertise here is very valuable.

#### **How the conversation will go:**

- **A conversation between you.** [Co-moderator] and I will be sitting a little bit outside the circle this evening, supporting the conversation, and we'll both be taking notes on particular topics you all raise tonight. I'll step in to guide the conversation, but about dialogue between all of you since we're mainly hoping to learn more about your experiences.
- **Wide participation would be great**—I'd like to hear from everyone! I'm here to listen and learn about everything that you think matters on this topic.
- While it would be great to hear from everyone, I also want to make sure you know that everyone has the right not to answer any questions, for any reason. You also all have the right to stop participation at any time, for any reason, without penalty.
- I'd also like to ask that we **speak one at a time**. I would also appreciate it if you could silence your cell phones if possible.
- While it's likely that we have a diversity of opinions represented in this group, and we welcome disagreement, I'd like to ask that you disagree with each other respectfully—the **goal is not to reach consensus**. I'd like to hear about as many

different ideas as possible in as much detail as you can, so please share any examples and stories you have on the topic.

- A lot of the questions ask about what it's like to refer offenders to the panel as a provider and responses could be positive or negative (or both), so I don't want there to be any pressure to respond in a certain way. It is always okay to agree or disagree with one another, we don't know how everyone's experience might be similar or different so that's what we're trying to find out.
- Finally, just like in batterer intervention programs, what people say in the group should stay in the group. Please remember not to discuss any information with others that would reveal the identities of **other people who are here today**.
- One more note before we get started: just like in a usual BIP group, the limits of confidentiality apply here as well. This means that **as researchers, we also have a responsibility to report to law enforcement authorities if you say anything about anyone's immediate plans to harm themselves or someone else.**

Does this sound alright? Anything to add? If not, **I'll go ahead and turn on the recorder...**

I have a few questions to get us started.

1. What is the panel like for offenders in batterer intervention groups? (*Discussion-starter activity; pass around notecards*) Please write an example of something that people seem to appreciate about being at a panel on one side of the card and an example of something that seems to be challenging about being at a panel on the other. We'll take a few minutes for everyone to write these down and then share them out loud. **I'll collect the cards when we are all done at the end of this evening so please don't write your name on the card.**

2. What do offenders expect to experience at the panels? *Probes*: What do they talk about before coming to a panel? Is there anything surprising about what they expect panels to be like?

*Possible contextual introduction of question, e.g., "So my understanding is that this is a required part of batterer intervention programs around Portland. So from your perspective running those groups, what do offenders expect to experience at the panel?"*

3. What different types of experiences do offenders seem to have at panels? *Probes*: What do they learn? What do they feel? How do they act?

4. What are offenders like in BIP groups after they go to a panel? *Probes*: Is there anything that happens to them immediately after going? Days later? Weeks later? Months later?

5. What is different for offenders about going to a panel compared to going to a regular BIP group session?

6. What unique contribution (benefit or harm) do panels give offenders?

## Appendix G

### Moderator Script for Survivor Focus Groups

Today I would like to hear your thoughts about the intimate partner violence impact panel you participate in. I am here to learn about your experiences with offenders before and after the panel and what how panels affect people who attend them. I am also interested in how this fits in with other programs that survivors and offenders might attend, like batterer intervention programs, advocacy organizations, and counseling.

#### **#1: Consent forms**

First I'd like to go through the consent forms to make sure everyone understands what is involved in participating here tonight. Does everyone have two copies of the form? We'll walk through the main points and then I'll ask everyone to please sign and date one copy. The second copy is yours to keep for reference if any questions come up in the future. Before we begin, let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please share a name that you would like others here to use, and tell us how long you've been participating in these panels (in years and approximate number of panels). In order to increase the confidentiality of the group, you can use a pseudonym or your real first name (it is your choice) but please do not share your last name.

My hope for this conversation is that we'll brainstorm **a list of experiences that speakers and audience members have at the panel and ways that the panel impacts speakers and the audience during the panel or afterward**. We are still learning about this process so I'd like to encourage everyone to share in as much detail as you're comfortable with, even if it seems obvious to you that is something that might not be widely known so your experience and expertise here is very valuable.

#### **How the conversation will go:**

- **A conversation between you.** [Co-moderator] and I will be sitting a little bit outside the circle this evening, supporting the conversation, and we'll both be taking notes on particular topics you all raise tonight. I'll step in to guide the conversation, but primarily the dialogue will hopefully be between all of you since we're mainly hoping to learn more about your experiences.
- **Wide participation would be great**—I'd like to hear from everyone! I'm here to listen and learn about everything that you think matters on this topic.
- While it would be great to hear from everyone, I also want to make sure you know that everyone has the right not to answer any questions, for any reason. You also all have the right to stop participation at any time, for any reason, without penalty.
- I'd also like to ask that we **speak one at a time**. I would also appreciate it if you could silence your cell phones if possible.
- While it's likely that we have a diversity of opinions represented in this group, and we welcome disagreement, I'd like to ask that you disagree with each other respectfully—the **goal is not to reach consensus**. I'd like to hear about as many

different ideas as possible in as much detail as you can, so please share any examples and stories you have on the topic.

- A lot of the questions ask about what it's like to go through the panel as a speaker and responses could be positive or negative (or both), so I don't want there to be any pressure to respond in a certain way. It is always okay to agree or disagree with one another, we don't know how everyone's experience might be similar or different so that's what we're trying to find out.
- Finally, what people say in the group should stay in the group. Please remember not to discuss any information that would reveal the identities of **other people who are here today**.
- One more note before we get started: there are some limits of confidentiality that apply here. This means that **as researchers, we have a responsibility to report to law enforcement authorities if you say anything about anyone's immediate plans to harm themselves or someone else**.

Does this sound alright? Anything to add? If not, **I'll turn on the recorder...**

I have a few questions to get us started.

1. What is the panel like as speakers? (*Discussion-starter activity; pass around notecards*) Please write an example of something that you appreciate as a speaker about being in the room at a panel on one side of the card and an example of something that is challenging about being in the room on the other. We'll take a few minutes for everyone to write these down and then share them out loud. **I'll collect the cards when we are all done at the end of this evening so please don't write your name on the card.**
2. (a) What did you or others you know expect to experience as a speaker at the panels? *Probes:* What is it like before coming to a panel? Is there anything surprising about what the panel is like compared to what people expected? (b) What do offenders seem like when they arrive before the panel starts? *Probe:* Is there anything surprising about how they act or what they seem like before the panel starts? (*Possible contextual introduction of question, e.g., "So my understanding is that this is a completely voluntary activity that speakers do. So from your perspective on the panel, what do people expect to experience before coming to participate on the panel?"*)
3. (a) What different types of experiences do you (or others you know or observe) have as a speaker at panels? *Probes:* What do speakers learn? What do speakers feel? How do speakers act? (b) What different types of experiences do audience members seem to have at panels? *Probes:* What do audience members seem to learn? What do audience members seem to feel? How do audience members act?
4. (a) What is it like for you (or others you know) after speaking at a panel? *Probes:* Is there anything that happens immediately after going? Days later? Weeks later? Months later? (b) What do offenders seem like after the panel is over? *Probe:* Does anything seem to happen to offenders immediately after the panel?
5. What is different for speakers about going to a panel compared to another program (e.g., support groups, advocacy organizations, counseling, etc.)?
6. What unique contribution (benefit or harm) do panels give speakers?

### Appendix H

#### Sample Feedback Form (Version A) with Survey Items

(Survey/Evaluation Sample)

Please check which DV Treatment Provider you are going to for counseling:

Allies in Change       Family in Focus  
 ARMS                       Men's Resource Center  
 Change Point               Other (please list): \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK THE BOXES THAT INDICATE HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:	No	A little	Yes	Quite a bit	Extremely
The presentations were helpful to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel more convinced that I should stop being violent and controlling in my relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I better understand how my physical abuse has harmed my victim(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I better understand how my verbal and emotional abuse has harmed my victim(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The presentation has changed how I think/feel about Domestic Violence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel more understanding about what survivors of Domestic Violence experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The presentations helped me understand the long-term effects of abuse of others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am interested in participating in a meeting/discussion with a survivor of domestic violence to talk about my offenses and the impact of my domestic violence and verbal abuse. (Note: the survivor would be a stranger to you and facilitators would be present.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you are interested, print your name below so we can contact you through your provider					

Your comments below are extremely helpful.

Please describe how these presentations might influence your choices about how you behave toward others in relationships (partner, children, etc.):

How might these presentations be improved to further help audience members understand the effects of abuse, be accountable for their abuse, and chose to stop using abuse and control in relationships?