

ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATIONSHIPS USING THE DVSA

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Purpose: The Domestic Violence Survivor Assessment is an outcome measurement tool developed using the transtheoretical model of change and six relationship issues and six personal issues that women face when deciding and acting on changing from a relationship with intimate partner violence (IPV) to one without IPV. The validity and reliability of a clinician form and a women's form was previously reported (Dienemann et al 2002). This study focuses on evaluation of a revision of the women's form based on feedback and analysis from the previous study.

Method: IRB approval was received from the university and administrative approval from the agency. 133 women receiving IPV counseling in a Southeastern city consented and completed the DVSA at their first meeting with the counselor. Participants included women in domestic violence counseling (voluntarily, or required by their TANF case plan, or court ordered). Counseling interventions included individual and psycho-educational groups. Inclusion criteria was an DV counseling adult woman client who read English.

Findings: Psychometric testing on the DVSA revealed a three-factor solution using principal component analysis with oblique rotation. The factor solution accounted for 56.7% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy was 0.822 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at 0.001. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.65 for the entire instrument.

The first and largest factor, Resolution of Abuse, accounted for 36.5% of the variance and included 6 of the 11 items (5 items related to the relationship and one item to seeking assistance). The second factor, Internal Strengths, explained 11% of the variance and comprised four of the 11 instrument items (all related to emotional well being). The remaining third factor or Attachment to the Relationship, explained 9% of the variance and only one item loaded on this factor. The three factors will be discussed in relationship to the transtheoretical model of change and theories of domestic violence. The deletion of one item and addition of a new item will also be discussed.

Discussion: These findings suggest that the DVSA is a promising instrument in assessing women who are experiencing domestic violence. The DVSA measures a high percentage of variance of domestic violence issues related to change and is a reliable instrument. Larger sample sizes and further testing of the instrument in different settings is needed to determine how effective the instrument will be in other settings or in detecting change over time.