Abstract

Intimate partner violence is an issue that crosses cultural, economic, international, educational, and social delineations (World Health Organization, 2005). Given the ubiquitous nature of intimate partner violence (IPV), ongoing research in this area is essential to understand ways to best promote healing for women who have experienced abuse. This study focuses on women who have experienced intimate partner violence and who have attended counselling regarding the impact of this abuse. The main question in the study explores what counselling experiences helped or hindered women in the process of healing from an IPV situation. Key findings show the relationship between participants’ feeling of empowerment and shame within a counselling relationship. Safety was a primary foundational need, as participants’ counselling experiences can parallel those of the IPV relationship.

Keywords: intimate partner violence; domestic violence; counselling and abuse; trauma; helpful and hindering counselling interventions; counselling psychology