

Handout 10.6: Causes Contributing to Staying with an Abusive Partner

Client Initials: _____ Date: _____

Below is a list of factors that battered women have identified as contributing to their decision to stay with an abusive partner. Place a check mark next to each factor that contributed to your staying with an abusive partner. For all checked items, indicate the percentage of contribution of that item. At the end of the list there are several blank lines where you can add additional factors that contributed to your decision to stay.

 %

- My history of good times with my partner
- Socialization or learning history that taught me to believe that marriage is forever
- A minister or other religious authority who encouraged me to stay
- The fact that my mother was abused by my father and didn't leave him
- Socialization history that taught me "if you make your bed, you have to lie in it"
- My partner saying that I promised I'd never leave him
- Friends and relatives who encouraged me to stay
- Socialization history that taught me to believe that children need their father
- Socialization history that taught me to be prone to guilt, allowing others to influence me with guilt trips
- Socialization history that taught me to believe that if my relationship doesn't work, I failed
- Socialization history that taught me to believe that if someone apologizes to me, I am obligated to accept the apology and go back to the way things were
- Abuse by my partner that resulted in my self-esteem going down so much I didn't think I deserved better
- My partner telling me I'd never find another man who would accept me for who I am
- My partner's guilt trips that the children need him

- ___ ___ My partner's guilt trips that he would fall apart or commit suicide if I left him
- ___ ___ Social isolation
- ___ ___ Lack of financial resources
- ___ ___ Developing PTSD as a result of my partner's abuse
- ___ ___ PTSD, which impaired my ability to concentrate and make rational decisions
- ___ ___ My partner's threats that he would physically harm me and/or the children if I left
- ___ ___ Naivete or lack of knowledge about domestic violence; not even realizing I was a battered woman
- ___ ___ Socialization history that taught me to believe that all relationships are like mine
- ___ ___ Socialization history that taught me to believe that if I left the relationship, the next one wouldn't be any better—and might be worse
- ___ ___ Lack of knowledge about domestic violence resources, such as support groups or shelters
- ___ ___ Socialization history that taught me to believe that the violence was my fault
- ___ ___ Low self-esteem due to my trauma history
- ___ ___ Socialization history that taught me to be so ashamed about the violence that I couldn't tell anyone
- ___ ___ Continued physical and emotional abuse that caused me to believe it would be impossible to get out of the relationship
- ___ ___ My partner's threats that he would sue for custody of the children
- ___ ___ My partner's threats that he would harm my parents or other family members if I left him
- ___ ___ Socialization history that taught me to believe that my partner would eventually change and stop abusing me
- ___ ___ Memories of how charming and wonderful my partner was at the beginning of our relationship
- ___ ___ Drugs or alcohol clouding my judgment and ability to make logical decisions

- ___ ___ My partner's pressure on me to use drugs or alcohol
- ___ ___ My partner's repeated apologies and assurances that he would change
- ___ ___ My child or children, who "needed" me to stay so they could be with their father
- ___ ___ Dissociation or emotion-focused coping that prevented me from even thinking about how to get out of the relationship
- ___ ___ Socialization history that taught me to believe that I had to keep my promises
- ___ ___ Romance novels and movies depicting heroines changing despicable men
- ___ ___ The social stigma of being divorced and a single parent
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____
- _____ Grand Total Percent