



Why do they Batter?

There are three major theoretical approaches to explain why men/ women batter.

1. The first is the feminist perspective, which explains violence using the concepts of power and control. This perspective takes the position that battering arises out of a need and desire for power and control with their partners. This need or desire stems from deficiencies or problems inherent within the abuser such as deficits in assertiveness, verbal expressiveness, problem-solving skill, conflict resolution skills, ability to develop intimacy, and status.
2. The second theory is a sociological model, which explains people are violent because they can be. As there traditionally have been little or no consequences to battering, men and women have been able to choose to batter their partners, as the choice is there to make. Thus, if a negative community response were brought to bear on abusers for their battering behavior, they would not be likely to choose this behavior in the future.
3. The last theory states that there are distinguishing or identifying factors that raise the risk of battering among some people and not others. Researchers have identified the risk factors associated with violent behavior (past abusive behavior, he/she witnessed abuse between parents). The risk factor model will not predict accurately who will batter, but it does identify individuals that are at greater risk to batter.

Each model in and of itself does not fully explain why men or women batter. However, in combination, the three theories do allow one to gain a better understanding of battering behavior. Future research, especially in the area of identifying risk factors, will greatly add to our understanding and thus help us develop better intervention to battering.