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## **Coping Mechanism, Inspiration, and Aspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse**

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### **Abstract:**

*This study explored how women survivors of abuse cope with their perpetrator and the source of their inspirations and aspirations. A semi-structured interview guide was conducted to eight (8) women survivors of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at Haven National Center for Women. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to extract the participants' subjective realities through personal interpretations and the meanings they created out of these experiences. The results showed that the participants were able to cope with the trauma brought about by abuse and to their perpetrator through spiritual guidance, social support, displacement, resilience, and acceptance. Meanwhile, their inspirations are their family, the Supreme Being, the challenges, the purpose-driven life and their vision which played an important meaning in their lives. Furthermore, their aspirations lead to acquire economic security, success in the future, dream of finish education, justice, and freedom.*

### **1. Introduction**

Every person passed through a certain dilemma in his/her life. Some may have given up easily and commit suicide, but some are brave enough to continue and move on with their lives. A person's capacity to take the problem may vary from time to time and may have the same situations but with different responses on how to react or cope.

Furthermore, it is important to note the process of their recovery which may help in improving the lives of women who have undergone different circumstances. This is where inspiration and aspiration play their vital role.

Inspiration awakens people to new possibilities by allowing them to transcend their ordinary experiences and limitations. Inspiration propels persons from apathy to possibility and transforms the way they perceive their own capabilities. Inspiration may sometimes be overlooked because of its elusive nature. Its history of being treated as supernatural or divine has not helped the situation, but as recent research shows, inspiration can be activated, captured, and manipulated, and it has a major effect on important life outcomes (Kaufman, 2011).

According to Copeland (2011) people can spend their life running up and down the field and never score. Aspiration provides a sense of direction towards a person's life. Through setting goals, a person or an individual can define his or her own destiny and build for the future by focusing and directing his or her own energy. Aspirations are important because they influence outcomes (Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Task Force, 2008).

Violence against women, a phenomenon which was previously regarded as rare or non-existent, was given focal attention as its incidence all over the world became very alarming. In the US, more than three women and one man were murdered by their intimate partners on average (Babbich, 2015). In the Philippines, the Philippine National Police documented a total of 1,100 to 7,383 cases of violence against women from 1996 to 2004. It also reached its peak during 2001 at 10,343 cases and further increases and reached 23,865 cases in 2013. This involves physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence (Annan, 2000).

One in five Filipino women aged 15-49 experienced physical violence since age 15; 14.4 percent of married women experienced physical abuse from their husbands; and more than 1/3 (37%) of separated or widowed women experienced physical violence implying that domestic violence could be the reason for separation or annulment (DSWD, 2012). On the other hand, 1 in 10 women experienced sexual violence (Dela Pena, 2015). More than 10 percent suffered from eye injuries, sprains, dislocations, or burns, and about the same proportion reported that they attempted to commit suicide while 3 in 5 women who experienced physical and sexual violence reported having experienced psychological depression, anxiety, and anger.

However, despite having abusive perpetrator, some women prefer to stay on their situation. To them, it is normal to get hurt by the people they love (Veilleux, 2014). In addition, there are some emotional factors from women that their partner will change over time. Leading to use of unhealthy coping strategies include substance abuse, eating disorders, troubled relationship with others and suicidal attempts.

What is more alarming is that 85 percent of women who leave an abusive relationship return (Salamone, 2010). According to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence, a significant proportion of women who return to the relationship attribute their inability to deal with their finances as a major contributing factor which is often enhanced by the fact that the abuser often has all of the economic and social standing and complete control over the family finances. In addition, there were only limited researches available about this study.

Given the circumstances, the researchers pursued in identifying the inspiration, aspiration, and coping mechanism of women survivors of abuse in Haven-National Center for Women in Alabang.

### *1.1. Objectives of the Study*

The focus of the study was generally to explore the coping mechanism, inspiration, and aspiration of abused women in Haven-National Center for Women.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### *2.1. Coping Mechanism*

Physically abused wives are never responsible for the battering perpetrated against them, but just as people cope and respond to other negative events, they must also cope and respond to physical abuse. Few people recognize that women are often attempting to cope with numerous threats posed by abusing not just the threat of bodily harm. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to protect oneself from all of these harms simultaneously, or even to spread the risks more or less equally across these domains. Rather, these are acts that protect against one form of harm often exacerbate other harms. In particular, the unintended consequences of leaving for abused women and their children especially leaving abruptly in an emergency context are under-acknowledged by many scholars and advocates (Davies, 2009). It is perhaps natural to assume that escaping violence as quickly as possible is an obvious choice for any victim. The reality, however, can be much bleaker. Some women are so destitute, both financially and socially, that leaving, especially in a short time frame, may be worse than staying. According to Hamby and Gray-Little (2007), the dangers of staying with a violent partner may be less than the dangers of living on the streets. The pain of an occasional beating may be less than the pain of losing custody of one's children to a violent parent.

It is said that when the wives suffered from physical abuse caused by their partners, their initial reaction is to stick with their relationship hoping that their partners will change for good.

According to Larson (2011), abused women first need to find their own identities, learn to smile again, feel human again, and not think of themselves as someone who deserved to be battered. They also need to restore relationships with their families. More importantly, they need to seek God's guidance, not only regarding their future, but to see if there was a deep-seated reason why they were attracted to an abusive partner in the first place.

According to Melinda, quoted in Davis (2002), physically abused women are the strongest women whose holistic perspectives and awareness of the many obstacles that they confront should be understood. Hamby (2008) organized these constraints into five categories: batterer's behaviour, financial obstacles, institutional obstacles, social obstacles, and personal values that complicate women's choices. Batterer's behaviour attempts to maintain power and control over their wives to manifest themselves in many ways such as threats to kill the victim if she leaves or attempts to make other changes in their relationship (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Contrary to the widespread assumption that leaving is the best way to increase safety, there is ample evidence that much violence is initiated or worsens after separation as the batterer redoubles efforts to maintain control (Mahoney, 1991; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998, 2000).

There are many obstacles once the physically abused wives decided to get separated from their partner. They need to consider all the aspects that directly concern them including how they would provide the necessary needs of their family if they decided to get separated from their partner in life. Physically abused wives also need to consider the opinion of the society and how would they handle the things that may affect their relationship with their partner.

Park (2007) regards religion and spirituality as meaning systems. In contrast, Frankl considers meaning seeking as stemming from one's spiritual nature. According to Frankl, meaning, compassion and other positive psychological resources belong to the spiritual dimension. This hypothesis has important research and application implications. For example, this hypothesis suggests that the best way to bring out these spiritual qualities and facilitate personal transformation is through spiritual lessons or meaning-oriented therapies rather than simple positive activities (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013) or strength-enhancing activities (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). According to this hypothesis, people can also predict that those who are spiritually oriented or attuned will score high in positive psychological resources compared to those who are spiritually disinterested.

Magen, Conroy, Hess, Panciera, and Simon (2001), a few studies have looked at protective responses in the immediate context of a physical or sexual assault. The first coping responses often occur during or just after an assault leaving the house or escaping the scene of the assault. Women also try to avoid potentially violent situations as studied by Yoshihama (2002). Although some authors consider avoidance a passive, poor coping strategy, women's own ratings showed that avoiding violent situations was often an effective protective strategy.

Hitting back is another immediate situational strategy. Although virtually any response can lead to an escalation of the batterer's violence, hitting back may be riskier than most. It may also create legal problems for women including leading to assault charges against them or damaging their positions in a custody contest. Although the severity of the violence perpetrated against them and the physical environment can constrain victims' ability to flee or engage in other immediate responses, it is clear that many women respond protectively in the moment that violence occurs.

Hirschel and Buzawa (2002) and Ritchie (2006) stated that substantial numbers of women call the police in order to obtain protection from their batterer especially women who are victims of the most severe battering. As with any single strategy, calling the police may have limited effectiveness in preventing future violence and may create other problems. When victims call the police, they may expose the batterer to violence from the police as well as face retaliatory violence from the batterer or the possibility that they themselves may be arrested. Law enforcement involvement can also be risky for women who may be worried about involvement from child protective services or immigration enforcement.

In one nationally representative community survey, 4 percent of women left their partners went to a safe house or homeless shelter (author's analysis of archived data from Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Another study found that 10 percent of domestic violence victims sought help from a shelter (Cattaneo & DeLoveh, 2008). A recent study of 3,410 shelter residents in eight states found out that after time in shelter, 92 percent felt more hopeful about the future, 91 percent knew more about their options and ways to plan for their safety, and 85 percent knew more about community resources and outcomes associated with longer-term safety and well-being (Lyon, Lane, & Menard, 2008). Although not used by all victims, emergency shelters serve as an important protective strategy especially for the most severely abused women and those with the fewest financial and social resources.

Most women seek social support by disclosing their experiences of abuse to family members, friends, neighbors, and/or co-workers. Social support may provide women with needed validation, another perspective on the situation, support around safety planning, assistance with holding the abusive partner accountable, and a counterbalance to the batterer's minimization, denial, and blame. Social support may also result in tangible offers of help including places to stay, financial assistance, or places to store belongings in case of emergency. Like most protective strategies, though, seeking social support does entail risks, as women might instead encounter fear, rejection, and stigma.

Despite these risks, most battered women do seek social support. Three studies found the rate of confiding in a friend or family member to be over 90 percent (Goodkind, Gillum, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2003; Levendosky *et al.*, 2004; Rounsaville, 1978). Another study found out that 74 percent sought help from at least one friend, and 47 percent sought help from family (Yoshihama, 2002). In another study, approximately two-thirds sought support from their own family while over 40 percent sought help from friends (Strube & Barbour, 1984). In a sample of Vietnamese immigrants, 62 percent talked with relatives, friends, or religious leaders (Bui, 2003). Although the total number of people confided in is not often measured, Goodkind *et al.* (2003) reported that more than half of their sample (56 percent) talked to both family and friends. Social support can be emotional support and also more direct support. According to one nationally representative survey, 68 percent of women who left their partners stayed with family members or friends (author's analysis of archived data from Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

## 2.2. Inspiration

Meeting women's basic needs may be a necessary precursor to fostering an effective criminal justice response. For example, Goodman, Bennett, and Dutton (1999) found out that having adequate tangible support (e.g., child care, transportation) was positively related to survivors' decisions to participate in the prosecution of their batterers. Given the difficulty that prosecutor's face when they pursue a case without the survivor as a witness underscores the importance of ensuring a comprehensive response to domestic violence.

Celine (2009) stated that she looked into countless resources and eventually found Battered Women Support Services. Their legal advocacy services were probably the most important support she had. They put her in touch with appropriate representation and helped her acquire knowledge on how to navigate the legal system. This gave her some control over her situation and began a snowball effect. She started to regain her confidence. She began to feel empowered and knew her voice had to be heard. As her self-esteem grew, she became motivated to make positive changes in her life including pursuing my education. All of these things have been important not only because they have help her improve her life, but they also gave her creditability in court. She gained the strength to stand up to her abuser in court.

Recovery from emotional abuse happens when one learns to (1) understand that change is inevitable, (2) start to reprogram her mind, (3) get support, (4) get information, and (5) start to count blessings (Kazina, 2006).

Inspiration is accompanied by positive thinking. People do not believe in its power because they are scared to face the facts of their own life and the results upon their actions, but believing so would mean that they cannot blame their lack of education, their parents, teachers, and the like. It is much easier to think there is some force out there called "destiny" that is just against an individual and takes pleasure in seeing another suffer. If only this did not happen or that had happened, one would be so much better off. One must take every opportunity to read inspiring, uplifting and motivational books that will slowly but surely help create a "beautiful garden" in their mind and weed out the suffocating thoughts that easily control their lives. Lastly, stay away from any form of negativity. This includes "good" friends that are a danger to one's thinking. It is not necessary to read everything in the paper about murder, death, and suffering. Do not join the pity party about how "the economy is tough, and one is just barely managing" (Simuyemba, 2012).

### 2.3. Aspiration

Though home is supposed to be a safety sanctuary, sometimes it becomes the most dangerous place because crime happened inside a home. Every year in the United States, somewhere between two million and four million women are assaulted by their spouse or partner according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (Karam, 2002).

Karam (2002) also mentioned that there is an economic need. Almost 50 percent of the women who receive temporary assistance to needy families, the government's primary aid program, cite domestic violence as a factor in the need for assistance according to a study of Chicago welfare recipients conducted by Northwestern University. The situation is most acute for single-parent women with children who have poverty rates five times that of two-parent families.

Women trying to make a new home after escaping abuse often have special needs beyond a roof over their heads. Foremost can be a need for security including keeping their identity and whereabouts closely held secrets.

Wives who experienced abuse from their husband suffer from traumas, and according to Mcgee (2009), these women needed 15 things in order to get better. These are (1) validation, (2) support, comfort, and respite, (3) to be asked, (4) not to be evaluated, blamed, and patronized, (5) to be given hope, (6) a sea in which she can swim freely, (7) to be surrounded by people "who get it", (8) her children, (9) to be able to participate in her community, (10) to be given accurate, updated, energetic, and concrete information, (11) to be offered information, (12) access to high quality, affordable, and legal representation, (13) to access to advocacy, (14) to be able to call for help and get it, (15) and a chance for economic survival.

Recovering from being abused by someone who was close is a long process, and the damage may stay for years (Emler & Nicholas 2001).

There is a huge tendency that wives may suffer from grief, pain, and a deep sense of loss brought by betrayal and shattered confidence. According to NiCarthy (1990), abused wives must look after themselves by treating themselves gently, gain confidence, move on and help their children. She also mentioned several things that might help like rewarding one's self, do something enjoyable, exercise, learning new skills such as yoga, meditation and self-defense.

Wives who suffered from abuse require different responses. For instance, women who experienced emotional abused may look for someone to listen and asks what she needs, reassurance for her confidence and confidentiality, to believe in her stories, to see her strengths and survival skills, plans for change, a better understanding on the impact of events for her children, legal advisers, and respect (Springtide, 2000).

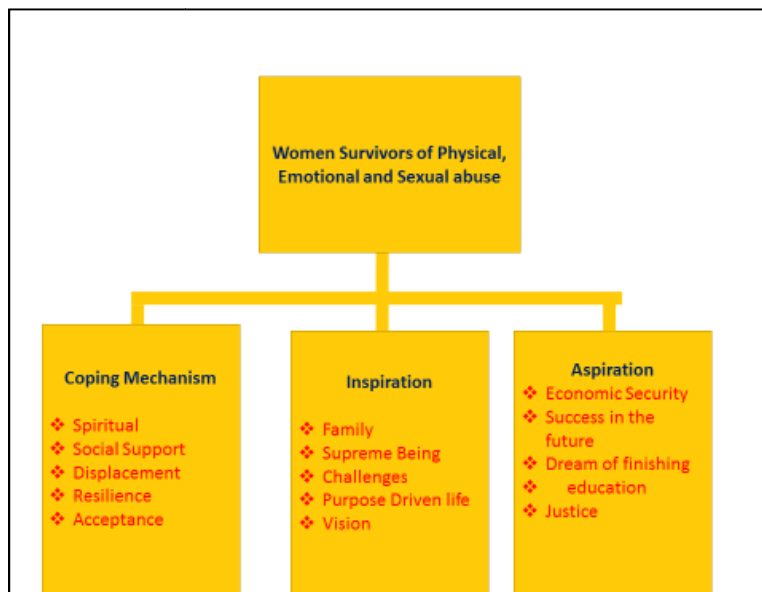


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Women who suffered from different forms of abuse seek different helps. This also led on different aspirations depending on their case. Women who experienced abused commonly aspire of shelter far away from the abuser. These women aspire for security including their whereabouts and keeping their identity as secret. They are seeking plans that could change their future and assistance for their children (Karaim, 2002).

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1. Materials

Interview Guide Questionnaire, Personal Data Sheet and Field Notes were used to guide the researchers in the conduct of the study.

### 3.2. Methods

The study utilized a qualitative study using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) used to understand participants' subjective realities through personal interpretations of their lived experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences (Smith, 2011). The process of research involved emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who are engaged in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation. Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives to arrive at consistency across data sources or approaches. In fact, such inconsistencies should not be seen as weakening the evidence but should be viewed as an opportunity to uncover deeper meaning in the data.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results gathered during the interview from eight participants of the study together with the analysis and the interpretation of the data gathered. The data were grouped and analyzed according to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis which created super ordinate themes, subthemes, and illustrative text which best explained the theme in which coping mechanism, inspirations, and aspirations of Women Survivors of Abuse in Haven-National Center for Women in Alabang were observed. The Haven-National Center for Women provides temporary shelter and protective custody to women whose ages ranged from 18-59 and were victims of involuntary or forced prostitution, illegal recruitment, battered/abused women, victims of sexual abuse, women in detention, and women victims of armed conflicts.

Each name stated in the presentation of the data was in pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

**“Yolanda”** was a 30-year old woman, married, and had 2 kids. She suffered from physical abuse of her husband. She was a victim of arranged marriage and married a guy who was addicted to drugs and alcohol. She suffered physical injuries and had suicidal thoughts. The abuse has been repetitive which forced her to take actions and blotter her husband in the barangay. Then, she was taken into the custody of DSWD in Legarda, but due to the Muslim organization which threatened her life, she was moved into an institution. At present, she is living in the custody of Haven-National Center for Women in Alabang for seven months. Despite the tragic experience of being hopeless and battered, she sees life now as a mother with confidence that she would be able to face the future with her kids alone.

**“Egay”** was a 30-year old woman from Samar who suffered from physical and sexual abuse of her father-in-law. She lived with her partner for 7 years and was raped by her father-in-law and eventually got pregnant. Her adopted child was also raped by the same abuser. The time she noticed that she was pregnant was the time she left their home because of a job offered in Manila. Her landlord was forced to put her in the custody of Haven-National Center for Women in Alabang because of her current condition. She is suffering from distress and regrets being admitted in the institution. In addition, she had suicidal thoughts and thought of killing the child in her womb. Despite all the things that happened to her, she seems glad since she found new reason to live.

**“Chedeng”** was an 18-year old woman and had one kid who suffered from sexual abuse of her father. She was the only daughter by her mother, but on his father's side, she had three siblings; the eldest was 14, the middle was 13, and the youngest was two years old. The abuse started when she was 12. Her father was a side car driver, holdaper, drug pusher and user that led to her to think that it was the reason why her father did the abuse. Because of this, she told the story to her fellow worker in the gasoline store, and they said it to the owner. They helped her to go the Station 2 in Manila and the women desk asked her several questions and helped her to get into the institution. She stayed there for almost two months, but the institution decided to transfer her in Haven for Women because every now and then, there was a man who always visited her saying that he was her uncle but she knew that it was her father that might be the reason for her life to be in danger. After what happened “Chedeng” said that she was angry towards her father. She said, *“Na parang ano po galit tsaka parang di ko narin po siya tinuturing na ama parang ano nalang po sa akin parang move on na po parang wala po akong magulang ganun tsaka ang iniisip ko nalang po ay anak ko.* [Somehow, I am mad, and I don't treat him as my father. I just moved on and think that I don't have parents and just focus on my child]. Consequently, she could describe herself as *“Sa ngayon po nailalarawan ko po siya sa painting kasi diba nga po kapag may problema hindi mo siya matapos tapos, tapos ngayon parang perfect na po siya tapos na po siya. So, mas maganda na po siya tsaka hindi na po siya nabubura kasi talagang ano tapos na po.* [Now, I can describe it as a painting because when we had problem, it was not done yet. Right now, it is more beautiful and cannot be erased because it is already done.] At present, she is in the custody of Haven for Women, and she is still studying in Marilac as fourth year student.

**“Hannah”** was a 31-year old woman and had four children with her first live-in partner; the eldest was eight years old, second was seven years old, followed by a five-year old, and the youngest was three years old. With second live-in partner, she had a one-year old son. She suffered from emotional abuse because of what her second live-in partner did on his seven and three year old daughters who suffered from sexual abuse. She had different works, *“Nagtinda-tinda, nagnenegosyo ko, load nagtitinda ano ng mga ano- anong mga raket lang ba, kalan, kalan de uling, uling, tinda yung mga nilalako, langis, ganun,* [I do many businesses. I sell cellphone loads, charcoals, stoves, oils, and many more] just to have an income while his second live-in partner is a jeepney driver and a drug user and according to her, it is the reason why his partner did the abuse to her daughters. Three months after she gave birth to his one year old son, she found out what her live-in partner did to his daughters that was why she decided to seek help from the DSWD and also to file a case against him. After what happened, there was regret. She said, *“halo-halo, halo-halo siyempre nanghihinayang ako kasi nga siyempre ang ganda ng buhay namin nun kaso lang hindi niya kayang pantayan, hindi niya maeerase yung ginawa niyang kasalanan. Mas importante sakin yung maipaglaban ko yung mga anak ko.”* [Of course, there was regret because we had a good life before, and

he could not provide our needs now. He could not erase what he had done. The important now for me is to protect and secure my children.] Currently, she could describe herself as *“Ngayon kasi nakikita ko sa sarili ko sa mga bago natatawa nalang ako. Kasi ganun din ako sa kanila nung una, una kaso lang meron talaga yung sinasabi nilang two kinds of anger inclusive tsaka explosive. Siguro ako inclusive so sila yung explosive nakatapat ako ng explosive, nagawawala talaga siya ako hindi. Binubuhos ko yung galit ko sa trabaho.* [Now, if I see new people in the institution, I saw myself in them because I was like them before. There are two kinds of anger: inclusive and exclusive. Maybe, I am an inclusive person because I put my anger to work, and he is an explosive person because he was very hysterical.]

**“Milenyia”** was a 30-year old woman who suffered from sexual abuse of her grandfather. She is suffering from polio which is a highly infectious viral disease that affects the motor neurons. The abused started when she was three years old. She was under the supervision of the priest, but the priest could not send her in the institution because she had her family that could take good care of her. The priest sent her to Bataan to her relatives where the abuse started. Her grandfather pointed a dagger on her and gradually stripped her clothes off. She could not fight because of the threat and due to her condition. After what happened, she accepted everything. She said, *“Ano syempre sumama, sumama yung loob ko tapos parang ang tingin ko sa mga lalaki masasama, noon yun. Ngayon kasi, ang narealize ko sa sarili ko natanggap ko na siya hindi naman sila lahat ganun may mga tao lang talagang nadadala sa ano nila nakakalimutan na nila kadugo nila yun.* [I felt bad, and I saw guys as a bad person before. Now, I realized that I should accept that not all of them are bad. There are just people who got carried away and forgot to recognize their own family.] Now, she could describe herself as *“Sa ngayon? Ano na ako eh kumbaga naise-share ko na kasi lahat di tulad dati takot ako na sabihin sa tao ngayon kasi kaya ko na, kaya ko na ikwento lahat ng buong-buo kumbaga sarili ko paglabas ko ng Haven kaya ko, kaya ko harapin kung ano ang buhay.* (As of now, I can share my experiences unlike before I was afraid to open up to people but now I can tell the whole story. If I get to leave this institution, I can handle myself and continue my life.)

**“Glenda”** was 59 years old with 19 year-old son. She was legally married with her first husband, and they were childless for 13 years. That time, they had all their wealth to support her luxurious needs and wants, but then she became addicted to drugs (shabu), and she did not go home to her husband for so long. Until her husband found another girl and had 3 kids with that woman, and she was out of the picture. “Glenda” pursued using drugs until she found her live-in partner for 3 years when she was 40 years old. She admitted that her live-in partner that time was alcoholic, and she was drug addict. Until they had a child, “Glenda” stopped using drugs while she was carrying her child but right after she gave birth, she continued her bad habits, and she was left by her live-in partner. Nonetheless, that time, she also found her second live-in partner where she was abused physically. They lived together for a year; her live-in partner was always under the influence of drugs (marijuana) and alcohol. After “Glenda” was beaten by her live-in partner, she had fracture in the right leg and was rushed to the hospital by her live-in partner and just ran away. After that incident, “Glenda” was angry towards her live-in partner. She said, *“Galit ako sa kanya, hindi ako magkakaganito kung hindi niya ginawa ito. In fact, sabi ko nga sakanya sa ospital sana pinalayas mo na lang ako. Bakit kailangan humantong pa sa ganito.”* [I was so furious. I could not be like this if it was not because of him. In fact, I told him while in the hospital that I wish he just kicked me out of the house, and did not end up like this.] Hence, right now, she could describe herself as *“Eh ngayon parang matino na ako. Bumalik ako sa normal. Really, bumalik na ako sa normal na pag-iisip tapos ayoko nang gumawa ng mga wrong things gusto ko nasa righteous na ako. Ganun, tsaka gusto kong magserve kay Lord kasi nga matanda na ako so kailangan talagang sa kanya na lang ako. Not like before na parang hindi ko siya kilala.”* [Right now, I am back to my normal life. I am really back to my normal thinking, and I don’t want to do wrong things, I just want to become righteous. I want to serve the Lord because I am old and I want to be with Him unlike before that I don’t know Him.]

**“Reming”**, an 18-year old woman, was originally from Abra. Due to poverty, their parents and her sister who were TNT with pending case in abroad could not sustain their education together with her other siblings in their province. “Reming” asked her father to be with her relatives in Batangas, so she could study there. However, they have a family friend in Pandacan, Manila whom they called “Tatang” with his wife who was a retired public servant and who also supported her sister’s education offered them to support “Reming’s” education since their children were already grown up and finished with their studies. When “Reming” was already in Pandacan, Manila, she lived with “Tatang, his wife and his 2 sons. They sustained “Reming’s” education in high school and in return, she would help in household chores and take care of “Tatang’s” grandchild with “Erik” his second son, a single father. On New Year’s evening last 2014, “Tatang” and his wife were on their vacation in Bicol. Their eldest son with his girlfriend and “Erik” celebrated New Year’s Eve and despedida for the eldest son’s girlfriend together with “Reming” at home. “Reming” drank 2 glasses of alcohol mixed with coca-cola. Since “Reming” was not used to drinking alcohol, she quickly felt dizzy and went to her room in the second floor. Later on, she was sexually abused by drunk “Erik”. She did everything to stop him, but she was not heard by anyone. Later on, she got pregnant and the family said that they would take care of her and the baby, and they would be the one who would inform her father, but they did not do anything. After that incident, “Reming’s” father knew about her situation and then she was rescued by DSWD and filed a case against “Erik”. Right now, “Reming’s” baby was 3 month-old, and they were still in the custody of Haven National Center for Women. “Reming” felt bad towards her abuser. She said, *“Syempre po masama ang loob, kasi hindi niya po inamin. Hindi daw po niya ginawa sa akin.”* [Of course, I felt bad because he did not admit his fault, and he denied what he did to me]. Despite this incident in her life, she sees herself as *“Parang naging malakas yung loob ko. Dati, hindi ako mahilig sumagot sa mga nagtatanong-tanong about sa buhay. Parang dati mahiyain pa ako noong una, ngayon po mas naging malakas na ang loob ko sumagot. Natatakot ako dati kung sasagutin ko ba o hindi. Pero ngayon nasasagot ko na po ang mga tanong.”* [Somehow, it strengthens my confidence. Before I was not fond of answering questions about life because I was shy, at but now, I am confident enough to answer. Before, I was afraid if I’ll answer it or not but now I can answer all their questions]. In fact, she is looking forward to a brighter future.

“Onday” came from Camarines Sur. She ran away from her husband together with her son. She suffered physical abuse from her husband whenever he was drunk which happened almost every day and also whenever their baby cried. She ran away from their province to Cubao, and she was not in good terms with her parents and siblings living around Manila. She was sheltered in the Haven-National Center for Women for 10 months and could not go out in the institution unless her immediate family would claim them. “Onday” views life right now as “*Ako ay isang matatag tapos hindi po mawawalan ng pag-asa. Dahil masipag at marunog magdala sa sarili at magaling magdisposisyon*”, “*Makakaiwas na po ako sa mga ginagawa niyang pang-aabuso sa akin. Tapos makakahanap na po ako ng magmamalasakit sa akin*”. [I am a strong person who never loses hope because I am hardworking and can stand and decide on my own. I can avoid his abusive actions towards me, and I can find someone who could take good care of me].

Pseudonym	Perpetrator	Types of Abuse	Age	Number of Children
“Yolanda”	Husband	Physical Abuse	30 years old	2
“Egay”	Father-in-Law	Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse	30 years old	2
“Chedeng”	Father	Sexual Abuse	18 years old	1
“Hannah”	Live-in-partner	Emotional Abuse	31 years old	5
“Milenya”	Grandfather	Sexual Abuse	30 years old	0
“Glenda”	Second live-in partner	Physical Abuse	59 years old	1
“Reming”	Son of Family friend	Sexual Abuse	18 years old	1
“Onday”	Live-in-partner	Physical Abuse	23 years old	1

Table 1: Background of the participants

• **Theme 1: Spiritual as a Coping Mechanism of Women Survivors of Abuse**

“Yolanda”, “Glenda” and “Reming” used spiritual as their coping mechanism. This statement provided by “Yolanda”, “*Nagpepray po, God will know pa rin kasi nandiyan siya lagi niya akong parang tinutulungan na para ituwid ang buhay ko, lakasan ang loob ko.*” (I pray, God knows because He always helps me to survive my life.) This solidifies that the experience meant something different other than a painful and unwanted one. In addition, she believed that it was a part of God’s will. “Glenda” stated that “*Ngayon talagang sabi ko I’m getting old kailangan kong sa kanya ko na i-devote ang isip at oras ko. Tapos nagbabasa-basa na ako ng Bible. In fact, nagwovorship ako ng forgiveness.*” [Now that I’m getting old, I need to devote my mind and my time to Him. I read Bible. In fact, I worship for forgiveness]. She believed that God guides her and leads her to righteousness. Lastly, “Reming” believed that God gave that experience, for it serves a purpose in her life.

According to Bammet (2004) women will have the strength to walk with the help of God. Hence, Larson (2011) stated that women need to seek God’s guidance, not only regarding their future, but to see if there was a deep-seated reason why they were attracted to an abusive partner in the first place.

This was supported by the theory of Victor Frankl’s existential analysis. To Frankl “life is never without meaning. It is a matter of refocusing and coming to a new understanding of the source and shapes of those meanings (Kimble, 2011).

• **Theme 2: Social Support as a Coping Mechanism of Women Survivors of Abuse**

“Yolanda”, “Reming”, “Hannah” and “Egay” showed that their family, the workers in the institution such as the social worker and the psychologist, and their fellow survivors of abuse help them to recover from their traumatic experience. It proves that the people inside the institution specifically the psychologist had a huge impact on them. The advice given was proven helpful for them to move on from the painful experiences that they had same with the other women. It is just that the person behind why they were able to cope was their family members or their fellow survivors.

According to Larson (2011), they also need to restore relationships with their families. In addition, Goodkind *et al.* (2003) concluded that battered women seek help from family and friend for advice, inspiration, and encouragement but also for tangible support. This was supported by the theory of Lazarus’ stress coping theory. Whereas the appraisal stage happens where the pain is identified as a threat that causes stress, and people turn into someone that could help them and eliminate the problem. According to Bamett (2004), having experienced and overcoming the horrific circumstances, they can now move to another level of hope to the point where they are able to offer themselves to other abused women even as Jesus did. Women helping women are profound as they speak the same language and have the same type of rhythm.

• **Theme 3: Displacement as a Coping Mechanism of Women Survivors of Abuse**

“Hannah” used displacement as her strategy to cope with the painful experiences that she had. Displacement happens when a negative thought, feeling, or behaviour is turned into something positive and fruitful wherein she put her anger into work where she sold cellphone loads, charcoals, stoves, oils, and many more.

According to the resident psychologist of the institution, “*Katulad ng mga client niyo, they have difficulties managing their emotions. Let’s say anger, may mga coping na tinatawag nating maladaptive coping: suicidal tendencies or self-injurious behaviour. Kahit naiintindihan nila na hindi iyon tama. Sa session niyo malalaman mo, may mga comprehension naman pero ginagawa pa din nila paulit-ulit.*” (Same with your clients, they have difficulties managing their emotions. Let’s say anger, there is coping mechanism that we call maladaptive coping where suicidal tendencies or self-injurious behaviour includes. Even though they know it is not the right thing to do, they still do it. In your session with them, there are comprehensions but they still do it over and over again.)

This maybe is a result of existential frustration which occurred from prolonged periods of boredom and apathy (Zaiser, 2005).

Frankl believed that common maladaptive behaviours were caused by a misdirected sense of meaning (Thorne & Henley 2005).

The two statements of the participants showed how displacement affected them. “Chedeng” stated that “*Sa anak ko po lahat po tinuon ko po sa anak ko para po mawala po lahat ng ano lahat ng galit ng ano ala-ala po ng masasama na nangyari yun po sa anak ko lang po lahat tinuon ko lahat ng happiness lahat ng ano pag- aalaga sa kanya ginawa ko po lahat para makalimutan ko po yung mga bad memories.*” (I just focus on my child to get away with my anger due to my bad experience and focus on my child’s happiness. I just pay attention to the needs of my child to forget all the bad memories.) While “Hannah” stated “*Gusto ko talaga manuntok gusto ko magwala kaso lang sa galit ko binubuhos ko yung sarili ko sa mga trabaho.* (I wanted to punch and be hysterical but I put my anger into work.) These are both examples of displacement though the outcomes may differ since “Chedeng’s” feeling of anger is directed to something that is positive and harmless to her health. On the other hand, “Hannah” used displacement as well though she turned her anger into something useful and positive; in the long run, there is no assurance that it may not cause harm to herself overworking or too much exertion of force may lead to self-injuries.

• **Theme 4: Resilience as a Coping Mechanism of Women Survivors of Abuse**

“Chedeng” and “Reming” considered resilience as an effective way to deal with the abuse that they encountered. Forgetting about the awful things that they encountered seemed to be their way to recover. This was supported by Freud’s motivated theory of forgetting. In Freud’s Motivated Forgetting Theory, strong motive arises or desire to forget, usually because the experience is too disturbing or upsetting to remember (Saji, 2014).

The two participants were so upset about their past that they needed to forget all the painful experiences they had.

• **Theme 5: Acceptance as a Coping Mechanism of Women Survivors of Abuse**

“Glenda”, “Reming”, and “Mileny” used acceptance as a coping mechanism to recover from abuse. “Glenda” accepted her fate and now lives with a new mission: to be a good servant of the Lord especially now that she already aged. Now, she sees life full of hope and that one day, her family will get her out. “Reming” accepted her situation when she saw her baby came out. For “Mileny”, she acknowledged that even part of the family could cause harm on her. It seemed that “Glenda”, “Reming”, and “Mileny” were able to accept their fate because of their past experiences.

This was supported by Telfer (2011). He learned through Frankl that suffering needs not be negative; that in the acceptance of suffering with a goal in sight, all hurdles in life will be overcome.

CODE	THEME	STATEMENT
Yolanda	Spiritual	<p>“<i>Nagpepray po, God Will knows parin kasi nandyan siya lagi niya akong parang tinutulungan na para ituwid ang buhay ko, lakasan ang loob ko.</i>” [I pray because God knows. He is always there for me to help me and lead me to a life of righteousness and strengthen myself.]</p> <p>“<i>Eto kaya din pala mag-isa akala ko hindi kaya so kaya ko din pala mag-isa sabi ko nga God will knows laging andyan siya sakin para sa mga anak ko rin baka pagsubok lang sakin sa ngayon maliliit pa sila babangon din ako paglalaki na sila</i>” [Here, I can do it on my own like what I say, God knows He’s always there for me also for my child. I know it is just a... for me even]</p> <p>“<i>It’s God. God, only God talaga. Ngayon talagang sabi ko I’m getting old kailangan kong sa kanya ko na i-devote ang isip at oras ko. Tapos nagbabasa-basa na ako ng bible. In fact, nagwovorship ako ng forgiveness.</i>” [It’s God, only God. Now that I’m getting old, I need to devote my mind and my time to Him. I read Bible. In fact, I worship for forgiveness.]</p>
Glenda		<p>“<i>Eh ngayon talagang parang matino na ako. Bumalik ako sa normal. Really, bumalik ako sa normal na pag-iisip tapos ayoko nang gumawa ng mga wrong things. Gusto ko nasa righteous na ako. Ganun, tsaka gusto kong mag serve kay Lord kasi nga matanda na ako, so kailanagan talagang sa kanya na lang ako. Not like before parang hindi ko siya kilala, parang hindi ko siya winoworship. Ngayon hindi, talagang I need God, I need Jesus hahaha! Kaya ngayon talaga gusto ko maging kahit simple servant of Lord. In fact, kahit pag church diyan nagcho-choir ako tapos gumagamit ako ngtambourine, pag may nagpi-piano sinasabayan ko yan. Tapos din yung anak ko, yung prayer ko yung kung anuman yung nagawa ko huwag mamana ng anak ko. Kasi merong verse sa bible na byung hindi mo daw pagsisihan parang sumpa yun eh sa salinlahi. Gagawin din nila yung ginawa mong masama. Kaya kailanagn may prayer talaga.</i>” [Now, I am back to normal, I don’t want to do wrong things anymore. I wanted to be righteous, and I also want to serve God because I am getting older, so I really need to be with Him, unlike before I don’t even know Him, and I don’t worship His Name, but now, I need God. I need Jesus. All I want now is to become His servant. In fact, I am part of the church as a choir. Then, I am praying for my son that</p>



Reming		<p>whatever I did in the past should not be inherited by him because there is verse in the Bible that the sins that you didn't repent will be a curse to your blood line. They will do things the same with what you did. Prayer is very powerful.]</p> <p><i>“Harapin nila iyon ng Diyos tsaka kung ano mang problema ang dumating sa buhay nila mas maging matatag sila kasi walang ibibigay ang Diyos na hindi natin kaya.”</i></p> <p>[Face their problems in their life together with the Lord, for it will make them stronger and the Lord would not give anything that we cannot handle.]</p>
. Yolanda	<b>Social Support</b>	<p><i>“So totally yung asawa ko talamak na sa bisyo yung asawa ko tapos nagtatago siya ng pera na gugutumin kami tapos pag hindi siya makahits ahm mananakit magsasalita sya ng ano. Tapos pagkatapos nun pumunta ako sa barangay nanghingi ng saklolo para ipablatte ko yung asawa ko tas after ipa-blatte ko yung asawa ko dinala ako ng DSWD sa Legarda after sa DSWD ng Legarda kay ano din sila sa Quiapo kay involve din ang mga muslim so dinala naman ako dito para i-save.”</i></p> <p>[So totally, my husband was a drug addict, and he used to hide money from us and let us starve. Whenever he can't use illegal drug, he tends to become violent in terms of physical and verbal. Then, after that, I went to barangay and seeked for help. They led me to DSWD in Legarda. Since, my husband has many connections in Quiapo near Legarda, I was brought here in the institution.]</p> <p><i>“Andito yung mga social worker para mag advice sayo rin tutulong. So advice po ng mga tao sa paligid”</i></p> <p>[Social workers are always here to give me an advice, so, with the people around me.]</p> <p><i>“Andyan yung mga kasama mo dumadamay din sayo”</i></p> <p>[Fellow survivors are always there to show empathy]</p> <p><i>“Siguro kung baga tinulungan rin ako ng DSWD maka move on. Tsaka yung kinausap din ako ng psych yun pinayuhan niya ko ng ganito nakatulong naman, nakatulong siya”.</i></p> <p>[The social workers are here to help you and give advice, and the fellow survivors of abuse that show empathy.]</p> <p><i>“Ito lang yung aking (anak) laging, siya yung aking para ako mabuhay. Siya na yung lakas ko”.</i></p> <p>[It was only my (child) who gives me reason to live. She is my strength as well as the people that helped me like my landlord and my fellow survivors.]</p> <p><i>“Dati po hindi ako palaban. Ngayon po yung nagyari sa akin, naging palaban na ako. Nagiging mas matatag na ako, yung marunong na akong lumaban. Kumbaga parang mahiyain ako, ngayon po natuto akong lumaban noong nakapasok ako dito. About sa kaso ko, sinabihan ako ng social worker ko na huwag kang magpapaapi. Kumbaga sa kaso aapi-apihin yung pagkatao mo, lumaban ka. Ganun po”.</i></p> <p>[Before I am not a fighter, But now that it happened to me, I'm now a fighter. I am stronger and I can fight for myself. Before I went here. I was a shy type person, but now, I am confident with myself. About my case, I was advised by my social worker that I should not let other people degrade and look down on me. I should fight.]</p>
Hannah	<b>Displacement</b>	<p><i>“Yung totoo lang dito gusto ko talaga manuntok gusto ko magwala kaso lang sa galit ko binubuhos ko yung sarili ko sa mga trabaho tapos yun, the more na yung kahoy diyan binubuhat namin yan yung mga kasama ko mga TIP yung iba siyempre feeling sexy sila ako hindi yung mabibigat pinipili ko dalawa yan yung isang ganun tsaka isang ganun. Sabi nila ang lakas mo hindi nila alam kung nasasaloob ko,</i></p>

		<p><i>dinadala ko BOGAGGGGG!!!! BUSSHHHH!!! BUGOGGGGG!!!! IKAW NA!!! babalik ulit ako ..dun ko binuhos sa mga anak ko humuhugot ako ng lakas sa anak ko”.</i></p> <p>[I would like to punch and rage to release my anger, but instead, I pushed myself to work. People around me thought that I am tough, but they do not know what I really feel.]</p>
Chedeng	<b>Resilience</b>	<p><i>“Kaya ayun po masasabi ko sa kanila na wag isipin ng isipin yun mag move on sila.”</i></p> <p>[I could tell them to stop thinking about it and move on.]</p>
Reming		<p><i>“Kung anuman ang nakaraan nila kalimutan na nila iyon. Harapin nila iyong panibagong hamon na ibibigay ng Diyos tsaka kung ano man ang problema ang dumating sa buhay nila mas magiging matatag sila. Kasi walang ibibigay ang Diyos na hindi natin kaya”.</i></p> <p>[Whatever happened in their past, they should forget about it and face their new life and obstacles given by the Lord. Think that problems given by God will make them stronger because God won't give problems that we cannot surpass it.]</p> <p><i>“Hindi ko na lang po iniisip yung mga bagay na nangyari sa akin na masama. Mas iniisip ko pa po iyong mas maganda pang darating na mangyayari.”</i></p> <p>[I don't even think the bad things that happened to me. I'm just thinking about the good things that could possibly happen.]</p>
Glenda	<b>Acceptance</b>	<p><i>“Una, hindi ko talaga matanggap. So sabi ko kailangan tanggapin ko na, andiyan na yan eh. Nagkaroon na ako ng acceptance, kasi before wala ako. Hindi ko talaga matanggap. Kahit dito, naiinis sa akin yung mga house parent kasi yun nga parang praning-praning na ko.”</i></p> <p>[At first, it is hard to accept, so I said that I needed to accept because it's already there. I had accepted it because before I don't accept it. House parents here in the institution were irritated by me because I was paranoid.]</p>
Reming		<p><i>“Matagal din, magwa-one year din bago ako talagang nanahimik ng konti hahaha! Pero may time na kapag may parang flashback bigla akong nagagalit.”</i></p> <p>[It lasted long for almost one year before I went a little bit silent hahaha, but there are times that I got angry if there was flashback about my past.]</p> <p><i>“So sabi ko kailangan tanggapin ko na, andiyan na yan eh.”</i></p> <p>[So I told myself I needed to accept it since it's already there.]</p>
Milenya		<p><i>“Kasi po noong una pong buntis ako parang hindi ko po tanggap. Noong nalaman ko nga pong buntis (ako) gusto ko nga pong ipalaglag eh. Ayaw ko pong ituloy. Minsan po sa hagdang nagpapahulog po ako para malaglag at duugin ako ganun hanggang sa parang walang epek. Natanggap ko na po iyon noong nilabas ko na yung baby ko. Nakita ko na po siya.”</i></p> <p>[When I first knew that I was pregnant, I cannot accept it. I want to abort the baby, and sometimes I want to drop myself in the stairs to get bleed but there's no effect. When the baby went out and saw her, I just accepted it.]</p> <p><i>“Ngayon kasi ang narealize ko sa sarili ko natanggap ko na siya hindi naman sila lahat ganun may mga tao lang talagang nadadala sa ano nila nakakalimutan na nila kadugo nila yun.”</i></p> <p>[Now, I realized that I already accepted it. Not all people were the same as my perpetrator. There are just people who got carried away and forgot that we have the same blood line.]</p>

Table 2: Coping mechanism of women survivors of abuse

4.1. Family as Inspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse

“Egay”, “Glenda”, “Reming”, and “Chedeng” considered their family as their inspiration to start a new life. They see them as the source of their happiness, strength, and hope to move forward and continue life. Frankl cites Nietzsche’s words and go on state “He who has a way to live for can almost bear with almost anyhow” (Telfer, 2011). This implies that women who have a reason to live could face any struggle they would encounter.

4.2. Supreme Being as an Inspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse

“Reming”, “Yolanda”, and “Glenda” have a strong faith in God believing that the Ultimate Being would guide them to righteousness. They believe that God gives them strength, hope and carries their problems as well. He is the source of their strength and hope which could help them carry their problems. Spirituality is expressed in the human propensity towards self-transcendence and seeking understanding of the big questions. In other words, humans are by nature meaning focused—motivated by the desire to understand the world in which people live and to search for something out there that demands devotion (Wong, 2013). This implies that the painful experiences that the women survivors developed a need for God which inspires them and demands their devotion.

4.3. Challenges as an Inspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse

“Yolanda” and “Chedeng” believed that the obstacles that they are facing right now were just challenges that they needed to overcome. They are starting a new life and visualizing a brighter future up ahead of them and their family. In order to do, so a change in their attitude was needed.

According to Larson (2011), abused women first need to find their own identities, learn to smile again, feel human again, and not think of themselves as someone who deserved to be battered. Attitudinal values speak of the potential to make meaningful choices in situations of suffering and adversity (Gelman & Gallo, 2009). This implies that the women survivors found their role in life and started it within themselves.

4.4. Purpose Driven Life as an Inspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse

Despite all the terrible things that happened to “Egay”, she still found a reason to be happy and live her life. Bamett (2004) believed that women are like caterpillar which changes through metamorphosis and becomes a beautiful butterfly that would fly all over the world likewise for abused women to change and fly. It is like crawling, struggling, pressure, and turbulence, but all of these would develop changes and emergence of a new character “a whole person”.

In Frankl’s existential analysis, a sense of calling endows one’s life with a sense of meaning, responsibility, and dignity. Calling necessarily needs to entail some sense of societal contribution above and beyond personal happiness and success. There is near-consensus that calling is linked to meaning and purpose as well as the betterment of society (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Dik, Byrne, & Steger, 2013; Dik & Duffy, 2009; Hardy, 1990).

4.5. Vision as an Inspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse

“Reming” considered life before as a huge struggle since she was very young, but because of her positive and strong attitude, she was able to overcome the challenges in her life. According to Simuyemba (2012), changing negative thoughts into positive ones could be helpful like the gardener who takes tender care of his garden, slowly weeding out the unwanted plants and giving care and nurturing the desired plants, one must get rid of the negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones. Moreover, *tragic optimism* means that people are capable of optimism in spite of the tragic triad. Frankl believes that all humans will be subjected to the *tragic triad* which consists of guilt, death, and unavoidable suffering (Ponsaran, 2007).

Frankl insists that humanity’s primary concern is not to search for enjoyment or supremacy but to discover the meaning of existence (Ponsaran, 2007). This implies that women have a better chance for survival if they think positive about their future and develop a strong character.

PSEUDONYMS	THEME	STATEMENT
Egay	Family	“Ito lang yung aking laging, siya yung aking para ako mabuhay. Siya na yung lakas ko.” [My daughter is my strength.]
Glenda		“Ngayon, masaya na ako kasi yung mga kapatid ko nadadalaw na ako. So it’s a one way of healing. Ngayon medyo naheal ako kasi nakikita ko na sila, dati yung anak ko tinatago nila.” [Now, I am happy that my siblings were able to visit me because it’s one way of healing. Before they used to hide my son, but right now, I am half-healed because I get to see them.]  “Syempre po yung pamilya at yung anak ko po...lagi po silang tumatawag, kinakamusta po nila ako kahit minsan po hindi ko sila tinatawagan o kinakamusta. Kahit pambili na lang po nila ng kakainin nila pinapamasaha po nila para pumunta dito.”

Reming		[Of course, my family and my child. They always call me and ask if I'm okay even if I do not call them or even say hi. They even sacrificed the money for their food just to visit me here. Even though the baby came from the way I did not expect it to come from; I just looked at her and still think that she was from my flesh. Although his father was not a nice guy, she still has my blood, so I still care for her. I no longer think of my past. I just look at her and feel inspired.]
Chedeng		<p><i>“Yung anak ko lang po. Nakakatulong po siya kasi pag kunyari malungkot po ako kasi minsan pag alam nya pong umiyyak ako, niyayakap niya po ako pag kunyari naman po pagod ako kinikiss nya po ako kaya parang siya nalang po ang ano ko sa buhay ngayon po”</i></p> <p>[My child. For instance, I am sad and she sees me crying; she hugs me and when I am tired, she will kiss me. It's like she is my only reason to live.]</p>
Yolanda	<b>Challenges</b>	<p><i>“Nakikita ko na nanay na talaga ako. Ako na to may hinaharap na may bubuhayin na kaya lumalakas ang loob ko dahil sa kanila. Ito kaya din pala mag-isa akala ko hindi kaya so kaya ko din pala mag-isa sabi ko nga God will know laging andyan siya sakin para sa mga anak ko rin baka pagsubok lang sakin sa ngayon maliliit pa sila babangon din ako paglalaki na sila” .</i></p> <p>[I can see that I am already a mom. This is me facing new challenges raising my children which strengthen me. I realized I can be on my own like what I said “God knows” He is always there for me and my kids. Maybe, this is just a trial since they are still young and once they grew up, our life will get better.]</p> <p><i>“Sa ngayon po nakita ko po sa buhay na marami palang challenge. Marami palang enjoy na challenge katulad nga po nung sa home life kasi dun nga po sa nangyari sakin oo nga po naransan ko yung maghugas ng mga pinggan pero dito po naranasan ko po dito yung parang may family Nakaranas po ako ng kaibigan ganun po nakaranas po ako ng may mga parang tumatayang magulang parang yun lang po nakita ko sa ngayon.”</i></p> <p>[Right now, I can see that there are lots of challenges in life. I realize there are challenges that will make you feel glad such as home life because I experience new things like washing dishes and having a family, friends and felt like I have parents.]</p>
Egay	<b>Purpose driven life</b>	<p><i>“Masaya naman ako na. Masaya na mahirap masaya na may kasamang ano pero kung may magandang nangyari sa buhay ko nagkaroon pa rin ako ng dahilan.”</i></p> <p>[I feel glad at the same time having a hard time, but if there is good thing that happened to my life is that I found reasons.]</p>
Reming	<b>Vision</b>	<p><i>“Hindi ko na lang po iniisip yung mga bagay na nangyari sa akin na masama. Mas iniisip ko pa po iyong mas maganda pang darating na mangyayari pa.”</i></p> <p>[I no longer think of the bad things that happened in the past. I just think and look forward to better things that are yet to come.]</p>

Table 3: Inspiration of women survivors of abuse

#### 4.6. Economic Security as an Aspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse

The survivors' life after their tragic experience gave them ideas on how they should live. Some of them wanted to acquire a job, establish her own business, gain savings, and acquire properties.

“Chedeng” wanted to work for a call center company, and she mentioned *“Pero may plano naman po pag kunyari nakapatapos ng college magtatrabaho po ako sa call center kasi yun po pangarap ko”*. (I have plans if got the chance to finish college. I will work in a call center because that's my dream). “Hannah” says *“After five years siguro meron na akong sariling lupa't bahay meron na akong*

*sariling negosyo na akin talaga.*" (After five years maybe I have my own house and lot and my own business). Most of the survivors aspired this for their family and their children.

According to Karam (2002), almost 50 percent of the women who received temporary assistance to needy families, the government's primary aid program, cite domestic violence as a factor in the need for assistance that there is an economic need. According to a study of Chicago welfare recipients conducted by Northwestern University, they are seeking plans that could change their future and assistance for their children. On the other hand, Mcgee (2009) said that this woman needs 15 things in order to get a better (15) chance for economic survival.

This was supported by Pytell (2003). Originally, logotherapy was called *height* psychology which promotes the idea that people could transcend these natural processes. It was clearly shown that these women wanted to transcend as some sort of goal. Instead of living in shadows and complaining about what happened to them, the women survivors learned the essence of re-establishing themselves especially in terms of making a living. This implies how important their family and their children in their life. In addition, it also shows that these women are getting ready as they go out of the institution. They have plans to change their world and turn it all around.

#### 4.7. *Success in the Future as an Aspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse*

The participants believed that they would be successful in the future. Some of them wanted to establish their own business, to get a job, and leave the institution to start a new life together with their family. "Reming" aspired to have a better life, raise her child and not to let her child experience what she suffered. This implies how they value their future especially for the sake of their family and kids.

- According to Karaim (2012), they are seeking plans that could change their future and assistance for their children.
- This implies how they value their future especially for the sake of their family and kids.

#### 4.8. *Dream of Finishing Education as an Aspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse*

"Chedeng" considered education as one her their dreams, her aspiration, and her stepping stone to reach the job she wanted. This implies how education greatly affects her future. She values education so much for her future especially for her kids who would be depending on her.

According to Celine (2009), she became motivated to make positive changes in her life including pursuing her education. All of these things have been important not only because they have helped her improve my life, but they also gave her creditability in court. Meanwhile, according to Sager (2005), the river will always be wet, so stop complaining and learn to pack a towel. Just like what Frankl teaches, people choose their actions, and their actions determine their experiences. This implies how education greatly affects their future. They value education so much for their future especially for their kids who will be depending on them.

#### 4.9. *Justice for the Survivor of Abuse*

Three of the participants still seeked for justice. Although "Egay" seemed to have forgiven her abuser, it seems that she was just waiting for the time that God would do the rest believing that his perpetrator would die anyway. According to Eastman (2007), amazingly, some women used a myriad of survival strategies to cope and wait patiently for the perpetrator to die. Meanwhile "Milenya" wanted justice though she already forgave her perpetrator. According to Scott (2014), abused women must not waste effort in revenge or retribution against their aggressor. Focus on their responsibility to do what is in their power to correct. Leave the handling of the offender to civil and Church authorities. "Hannah" wanted to pursue case towards her perpetrator even though she just gave birth, but she did not because of her situation. This implies that giving justice to what has happened to the participants would help them recover to reduce the pain that they are experiencing.

According to Celine (2009), she looked into countless resources and eventually found battered women support services. Their legal advocacy services were probably the most important support she had. They put her in touch with appropriate representation and helped her acquire knowledge on how to navigate the legal system. This gave her some control over my situation and began a snowball effect. She started to regain her confidence. She began to feel empowered and knew her voice had to be heard. As for her self-esteem grew, she became motivated to make positive changes in her life including pursuing her education. All of these things have been important not only because they have helped her improve her life, but they also gave her creditability in court. She gained the strength to stand up to her abuser in court.

#### 4.10. *Freedom as an Inspiration of Women Survivors of Abuse*

Two of the participants showed that they seeked for freedom. "Egay" showed that she wanted freedom to go far away to forget the awful experiences that she encountered. Meanwhile, "Reming" wanted freedom to keep distance to do all the things that she wanted, but her views changed as her stay prolonged in the institution. Instead of going somewhere, she wanted to help her family as she goes out the institution. According to Winterstein and Eisikovits (2005) older women who experienced abuse may become isolated in their homes and become disconnected with community resources and agencies that could help with domestic violence resulting in isolation. According to Kimble (2000), the human dimension is the dimension of freedom not the freedom of anything, but freedom to something is the freedom to take a stand towards conditions. This implies that these women wanted freedom to forget the experiences which caused emotional problems. Thus, it helps on finding a new direction on life bringing them closer to their family.

CODE	THEME	STATEMENT
Egay	<b>Economic Security</b>	<p><i>“Magtatrabaho ako, magtatrabaho nalang ako para mabigyan ko ng magandang buhay ang anak ko. Yung magkaroon kami ng halimbawa makapag ipon ako ng ano, ng konting pera na magkaroon kami ng maliit na negosyo.”</i></p> <p>[I will work to give my child a good life. To have something like savings to start a business together with my child that I no longer need to entrust her to anyone. That is what I want to be with her and guide her, be there when she wakes up.]</p>
Chedeng	<b>Education</b>	<p><i>“Ngayon po, ang pag-asa ko po ung pag aaral ko yung makapagtapos po ng pag- aaral. Parang yun narin po ang nagbibigay sakin ng pag asa.”</i></p> <p>[To pursue my dream and to finish my studies.]</p>
Hannah	<b>Justice</b>	<p><i>“Gusto ko makapag sampa kasi bagong panganak ako nun eh 3 months palang andun yung nanginginig talaga ako diko kaya dapat didiretso ako ng Krame talaga.”</i></p> <p>[I wanted to file a case, but I am not fully recovered from giving birth. It was only 3 months since then. I was still trembling, and I still, cannot move according to my will where I was supposed to go to Krame.]</p>
Milenya		<p><i>“Ano, halimbawa diba may mga taong na aabuse na tinatago nalang nila kasi natatakot kasi ganito ano naman e kahit kadugo mo siya ayaw mo kasuhan kasi nakakahiya pero natural yun nakakahiya pero iisipin mo yung dignidad yung karangalan na iniingat-ingatan mo na siya lang, siya lang makakasira kumbaga kailangan din niya matikman ung batas yung pagpapatawad anjan na pero yung batas, may batas naman para sa kanila.”</i></p> <p>[Some people who were abused chose to conceal the truth because they were afraid for the feedback of other people that they were abused by their own family. You can't get the justice that you deserve because you cannot file a case due to shame that your dignity and pride were ruined. He must face the consequences of what he did.]</p>
Reming	<b>Freedom</b>	<p><i>“Siguro po dati gusto kong pumunta sa ibang lugar, nag-aadventure. Gusto ko yung malayo sa pamilya, yung nagagawa ko yung gusto ko.”</i></p> <p>[Before, I wanted to go somewhere on an adventure. Far away from my family where I could do everything I wanted.]</p>
Egay		<p><i>“Gusto ko lang pag nakalabas na kami dito yung mag bagong buhay na. Yung magpapakalayo-layo kami ng anak ko. Ayaw ko na maalala lahat ng pangyayari”.</i></p> <p>[Once I get out of here, I wanted to be so far away with my child. I don't want to remember everthing.]</p>

Table 4: Aspiration of women survivors of abuse

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

### 5.1. Summary

The women survivors of abuse considered spiritual connection with God as an effective way to deal with their experience. They believed that God would lead and guide them to righteousness. Hence, they also believed that it serves a purpose. They showed that social support played an important role towards their recovery. The institution had the psychologist and social worker who gave important advice to them the fellow survivors showed empathy and shared experiences on how they were able to move on. Some women survivors of abuse used displacement to recover whereas they turned their negative thoughts and feelings into positive ones. Some used resilience and forget about the awful experiences they had. Furthermore, one of them showed that the experiences they had should be accepted and were part of God's plan. Moving forward to the experiences that they had, the survivors of abuse cited several things that inspired them to keep moving forward.

The family of the abuse serves as one of the primary sources of their inspirations. They said that it was the source of their happiness, strength, and hope. The troublesome experience that they had helped developing a connection with God and strengthening their faith. They believed that God would help them carry their problems.

The challenges in life also serve as one of their inspirations. The participants believed that the obstacles that they had were part of God's plan that they needed to overcome. This led them to start a new life and visualize a bright future. The participants developed reasons to live. One of them found herself as a new person and a good servant of the Lord. Moreover, their views in life became positive, and they were able to develop a good value in life.

The women survivors learned several things inside the institution. Provided with the knowledge and trainings they had these women aspired changes in their lives.

Most of the women survivors wanted to have a better life. Having part of the economy and aspired to have economic stability, these women would like to seek jobs, acquire properties, and establish business. They also wanted to finish their education as their stepping stone to achieve their dreams.

Though most of them recovered from the abuse, some still aspire to get justice from their perpetrator. Two of the participants had different views; one wanted his perpetrator to be in jail while the other one wished that her perpetrator be dead.

Lastly, they sought for freedom from the bondage of abuse.

## 5.2. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Women survivors discover a new meaning in their lives through the painful experiences that they encountered.
2. Only one of them developed a maladaptive coping strategy. Meanwhile the other seven use positive coping strategies. This happened with the help of the people that surround them, their family, the social worker, the psychologist, and the Lord.
3. Their painful experiences drove them to develop strong faith to God who inspires them to move on. Their attitudes are changed and are motivated by those awful experiences. These women believe that the experiences they have serve a better purpose. Believing that there is a purpose behind it, the women survivors aspire changes in their lives.
4. They are longing to have access in education, jobs, business, properties, justice, and freedom. These create a new vision of a brighter future for them.

## 6. Recommendations

The abused women who are currently living with their perpetrator may take this as a challenge and a learning experience in life and the best thing to resolve their dilemmas to see the brighter side of life. Consider that every learning is for one's own advantage and by developing strong faith in God, they could start to move on and keep life going.

Women who are currently inside the institution may use coping strategies such as spiritual connection with the God and inspire each other and build social support.

The government organizations and non-government organization may develop, enhance and continue to support programs in support to women's plight. Provide them professional psychologists and counsellors who are authorize to conduct intervention program and case management to directly assist the survivors of abuse and immediately respond to protect their mental well-being.

The institution can provide more occupational services or livelihood program that would match the capabilities and interest of their residents.

Students and future researchers may further continue this study by investigating the personality and cognitive ability of the women survivors of abuse to verify the common behavioural pattern that can generate a massive conclusion. To countercheck the validity of the study, the profile of the perpetrator can also be analyzed to deepen the understanding of this phenomenon.

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