Coping strategies used by women experiencing intimate partner violence in Tshwane, South Africa

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Women cope differently with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) which is a specific type of gender-based violence that occurs in intimate relationships. Whilst some women may act passively in coping with IPV, most of them use active strategies to ensure their safety and that of their offsprings. Some women fight back, escape, report to their families and police or succumb to the violence by accepting it. Acceptance of violence may be transferred from generation to generation by means of learning, mass media, schools, and witnessing and experiencing violence throughout life. Despite that, a woman's response to IPV may be influenced by options she has at her disposal. The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of women on IPV in a public hospital in Tshwane. The study employed a qualitative design. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 women who met the selection criteria. Ethical clearance was obtained. Data collection was done by means of semi-structured interviews. Content analysis was used for data analysis. The following categories on coping strategies were emerged: avoidance, acceptance, confrontation, seeking help, escape, spirituality, enhanced personal knowledge, reflection and empowerment. It is important for health professionals to realize that leaving an abusive relationship is a process which often incorporates safety measures for the women experiencing IPV and thus they should not be stigmatized.

Biography
Florah Mkhonto has graduated from MCUR in Psychiatric Nursing Science in 2016 at the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) and is currently pursuing PhD studies at the SMU. She has worked in two Psychiatric hospitals for a total of 14 years and as a Lecturer at the SMU from 2000 to date (16 years). Currently, she has published a paper on the above topic and has presented in a number of international and national conferences. She is the Chairperson of the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University Research Support Association to empower emerging researchers with scholarly skills.

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