Reviewer’s report

Title: A qualitative exploration of 'thrivership' among women who have experienced domestic violence and abuse: Development of a new model

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Reviewer: Stephanie Arteaga

Reviewer's report:

The topic of this paper is very interesting and I enjoyed reading it very much. It is very well written and offers great insight into the concept of "thrivership" for women who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. The authors do a wonderful job of identifying the gaps they are aiming to fill and the developed model is impressive. What is lacking is a detailed description about the methods and, most importantly, the sample characteristics. Additionally, the authors could work to make more meaning of their results in the discussion and provide more concrete recommendations as to the application of their model. While I understand this paper is about women who experience DVA at the hands of male partners (although not sure this is explicitly stated), authors should be careful to not minimize the experiences of men who experience DVA, as well as women who experience DVA in same-sex relationships.

Abstract: Th authors suggest that DVA is a "gendered phenomenon." This minimizes the experiences of men who have experienced DVA in intimate relationships. While this is noted in the limitations, it would be beneficial to engage this in the introduction and perhaps re-word this sentence in the abstract, as it will be the first thing readers will be exposed to. It is okay to focus on heterosexual women here, but careful language should be used to explain why and that this is not a phenomenon that applies only to heterosexual women.

Introduction: The introduction would benefit from a more detailed explanation of DVA. What is DVA? What sorts of things constitute DVA (physical and emotional abuse?) While there a bits in the first few paragraphs that can lead readers to draw a conclusion about this, it would be good to provide a clear definition for readers.

P3, Lines 44-48: This definition of thriving does not seem relevant to the paper and kind of threw me off while reading, specifically the plant's life cycle and birth and fertility bit. If authors want to use this, they should better tie it to DVA.

Methods: In general, the methods could use more detail to give us a better picture of the sample and, therefore, to the applicability of the results. I found myself often wondering about the sample as I read the paper. Who are the women we are reading about?

Recruitment: A clear statement of the eligibility requirements is crucial, even if it is not extensive. If the only eligibility requirement was they they utilize services from this specific
DVA service provider, then authors should state that and give a brief explanation of the types of services they provide or the profile of their clientele. I understand the need for privacy and anonymity, but the paper suffers from the lack of this information. Additionally, if the authors know anything about the women who were not able to participate, and if they in some way differed or didn’t from those that did participate, it should be stated that here.

Participant details: It is mentioned that one participant was still with the perpetrator but no other information is given about this participant. How was her data used? Was it included with the others? This brings up, again, the bigger question about the sample and who the women in your study are. What stages were they at in the experience of life post-DVA? Are they speaking from experience (have they all reached thrivership at some point)? Is it possible to reach thrivership when still in a relationship with the DVA perpetrator?

Data collection: The authors provide information on focus group data collection but not the interviews. More detailed info is needed here - what questions were asked, how were qual tools developed, how did FGs differs from interviews, if at all, etc.

Data Analysis: Again, more detail is needed to ensure rigor in the analysis process. Why where there three rounds of coding, and what happened in between each round? Who conducted these rounds of coding? Was there a codebook and, if so, how was it developed? No software was used but how did you organize your data? Did you use coding matrices? Additionally, more information about participant feedback is necessary here. Did they mostly agree with your findings? How was their feedback incorporated? How many times did you engage them for feedback? This section is substantially lacking. I would include as much as possible about your process.

Findings: In general, this section is organized well and good quotes are used to illustrate findings. My main comment is, again, about the sample. The findings would be better contextualized if we knew more about the women in the sample. How long had it been since they had experienced DVA. What stages were they in? Were they speaking about violent abuse, psychological abuse, both? (I understand they are not always mutually exclusive, but that can also be stated.)

P5, Line 42: Would be interesting to know what the two women who disagreed thought.

P5, Line 48: I find it interesting that women disliked the term "victim" and that it was still used and included in the model. Why?

P8, Line 10: Styles on quotes are inconsistent throughout the results (some IDs italicized, some not; dash used changes throughout). Needs editing for consistency.

P12, Line 21: The quote from participant 25 was used in a previous section of the results.
P12, Line 35: Is the statement about self-forgiveness in the early stage a direct finding from the focus groups? It is not clear.

P13, Line 25: The outlier finding here is interesting. I would suggest adding more of these throughout the results (if there are any in the data).

Discussion: The discussion would be strengthened by providing more concrete recommendations. Specifically, how can this model be used to help women thrive after DVA? What are the implications for research, for public health practice, for clinical practice? Some of these things are alluded to, but I did not walk away with a clear sense of the ways in which this new model could be implemented. Seeing as how this topic is so important for women's health, it would be good to provide more concrete recommendations. I also think it's worth bringing men into this conversation. While I agree that it is very important to support women in thriving after DVA, I think it's important to be cautious not to frame this in a way that makes it seem like helping women thrive after DVA is the ultimate goal - the ultimate goal should be to stop FVA from happening at all. I understand that is not the topic of this paper, but I do think it needs to be addressed, even not extensively so. Including some conversation around perpetrators and upstream factors that could stop DVA from happening at all would be useful here. There is some mention about education, but is that enough?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript
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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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