

AN ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES OF THE
TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES UNDER THE FAMILY VIOLENCE
OPTION

by

SOONOK AN

(Under the Direction of Larry G. Nackerud)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the three studies in this dissertation is to better understand how the victims of domestic violence experience the application and the assessment processes used in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Under the Family Violence Option, the victims of domestic violence need to be identified, assessed for their needs, and provided relevant services. The first study conceptualizes domestic violence screening in TANF as an interpersonal, micro-level type of interaction between the TANF applicant and the frontline TANF caseworker. It also illuminates the gap between the intended service outcomes regarding good cause waivers, which occur in an informed disclosure scenario, and the predicted outcomes in an uninformed disclosure scenario, using Bayesian strategic game theoretical models. Without the presence of an ethical caseworker, the processes designed to provide a universal screening of the applicant for domestic violence, as well as the outcomes of those processes, become unavailable to the victims of domestic violence. Using a sample of N=35 victims of domestic violence in Georgia, the second study explores the correlations among 1) the various barriers to complying with the TANF requirements, 2) the frontline TANF workers' responses in the screening for domestic

violence, and 3) the responses from the victims of domestic violence to disclose abuse and apply for good cause waivers. The disclosure rate (65.4%) among the participants in this sample was higher than that in other reviewed studies, as the participants in this current study were experiencing ongoing domestic violence. The screening for domestic violence and the participants' readiness to work were associated with both their disclosure of domestic violence and their application for at least one waiver, while only the barriers to applying for child support were correlated with the screening for domestic violence. The third study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how victims of domestic violence in Georgia experience the TANF application and assessment processes. It is an understanding based on semi-structured interviews with the victims of domestic violence, local domestic violence advocates, and nationally recognized experts of the Family Violence Option. The TANF requirements and the related penalty were understood as the major barriers to completing the TANF application and/or receiving TANF. The local relationship between a TANF program and a domestic violence agency was found to be the key to improving procedures of the TANF application and assessment for victims of domestic violence.

KEY WORDS: Family Violence Option, crisis intervention, domestic violence

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Academic studies, government reports, and advocates' bulletins regarding the implementation of the Family Violence Option have studied the prevalence of domestic violence screening such as rates of screening, the notification of good cause waivers, and/or referrals as well as the rates of the disclosure of domestic violence and good cause waivers, or the barriers to disclosing domestic violence for the victims of domestic violence who apply for and/or receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The focus of these materials significantly helps with understanding how domestic violence screening is implemented *per se*. These, however, neither describe nor explain the relationships between domestic violence, the barriers to complying with TANF requirements such as work, child support, and lifetime limits, and/or TANF frontline responses and the responses of victims of domestic violence to the screening for domestic violence. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks were also not included.

The purpose of study one of the three studies presented in this dissertation is to provide a theoretical framework that addresses the gap between the intended consequences of the Family Violence Option and the predicted consequences regarding good cause waivers. Study two explores the correlation between: a) the barriers to complying with the TANF requirements, b) the disclosure of abuse, and c) the application for good cause waivers among the victims of domestic violence who completed a paper and pencil survey. Study three, using a qualitative method, helps us understand how victims of domestic violence experience the TANF application and assessment processes based on a grounded theory method.

Lack of a Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

There has been no adequate way to understand domestic violence screening in the TANF program, given the scarcity of theoretical/conceptual frameworks. TANF, which replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1996, has received significant attention, for TANF was no longer what had been an entitled benefits program but instead became a program with specific requirements (Allard, 2007). The aftermath of TANF on self-sufficiency among the TANF recipients have been criticized. Indeed, for the first five years of welfare reform, 50% of the welfare caseloads were dropped (Urban Institute, 2006), and the impact of the change on self-sufficiency is in question (Aratani & Aber, 2014). Distributive justice has been commonly discussed to evaluate the impact of TANF as a means of policy analysis (Goodin, 1984; Steger, 2007). An important tenet of distributive justice is an emphasis on state responsibility to support individuals in poverty, so such tenet was applied to justify the rationale to support poor women through receipt of welfare benefits (Pyles, 2006). TANF, which has been implemented for the last two decades, represents the weak aspiration of U.S. policy regarding the welfare state by increasing the barriers to receiving the benefits from the only remaining cash assistance program.

Domestic violence screening mandated by the Family Violence Option is minimally implemented within the TANF application and assessment processes. Domestic violence screening in TANF deals with the issues of poor women who experience domestic violence in welfare. Intersectionality of the victims of domestic violence in TANF provides the rationale to support the sub-population of TANF recipients (Scott, London, & Myers, 2002; Sokoloff & Pratt, 2005). The Family Violence Option has the same ideal of helping victims of domestic violence to achieve self-sufficiency by offering them assistance to overcome potential barriers (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2005, p. 30). The ideal of the Family Violence

Option is unique, as victims of domestic violence need to be supported through the TANF application and assessment process. A relevant theoretical/conceptual framework will help 1) describe the gap between the intended outcomes and the actual outcomes of domestic violence screening, 2) explain the determinants of the outcomes of domestic violence screening, and/or therefore 3) support the rationale of the domestic violence screening in TANF on the basis of empirical findings.

The first of the three studies in this dissertation, therefore, begins with employing both a game theory and social work ethics to illuminate the gap between the intended outcomes of universal screening for domestic violence and the predicted outcomes and to identify the core variables that domestic violence screening intends to identify as well as the core elements/structure of domestic violence screening. The second study adopts the conceptual framework from the first study and attempts to further explore the relationships among the identified core variables such as domestic violence, the barriers to complying with the TANF requirements that represent the service needs, and the frontline response to screen for domestic violence and the decisional outcomes made by the victims of domestic violence. The third study applies specific social work ethics regarding social justice and self-determination as the basis of its conceptual framework and highlights the unique needs of the victims of domestic violence. Overall, all three studies help achieve a better understanding of how the victims of domestic violence experience the TANF application and assessment processes. Study one describes domestic violence screening in TANF as procedural outcomes (Chapter 2). Study two explains the determinants of such procedural outcomes relevant to domestic violence (Chapter 3). Study three employs a qualitative method and explores the complex processes and the procedural outcomes that the victims of domestic violence experience (Chapter 4).

Lack of Reliable and Valid Data

In a thorough review of literature, relevant data to examine the relationships among domestic violence, the TANF frontline responses to screening for domestic violence, and the screening outcomes were quite limited. Administrative data of state-level TANF programs are difficult to access. Such data have been only accessed by two research initiatives (Hetling & Born, 2005, 2006; Hetling, Saunders, & Born, 2006; Hetling, 2011; Meyers & Laurie, 2005). The accessibility of administrative data seems to be determined by a motivated TANF program (i.e., Maryland Department of Human Services) or collective research initiatives based on a federal level of funding and support (i.e., the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Administrative data of TANF programs across the nation were insufficient to comprehend the service needs of the victims of domestic violence and to understand the processes and the outcomes of domestic violence screening. Research using administrative data attempted to investigate the relationship between domestic violence and the prevalence of domestic violence screening (Lindhorst et al., 2008). They revealed a proportion of the victims of domestic violence who had been asked about their experience with domestic violence, and/or had been assisted in applying for good cause waivers. However, a major limitation of such research includes the gap in the prevalence of domestic violence identified in administrative data (Hetling et al., 2006; Hetling, 2011; Lindhorst et al., 2008). Instead this gap is identified through non-administrative data, mostly through outside research (Gallagher, 2011; Goodwin, Chandler, & Meisel, 2005; Meisel, Chandler, & Rienzi, 2003; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). An additional limitation is the unavailability of variables to investigate the relationships among domestic violence, the TANF frontline responses to screen for domestic violence, and the screening outcomes as a whole. Along with inadequate screening for domestic violence, the documentation

of domestic violence appears to be insufficient (Busch & Wolfer, 2002). Thus, the available administrative data of domestic violence screening may not be representative of the prevalence of domestic violence and of the service needs of the victims of domestic violence. Non-administrative data may only reflect how domestic violence is identified and how the identified victims of domestic violence are assisted to obtain certain services such as the referral to domestic violence advocates and good cause waivers.

Valid data are highly valued to examine the relationships among the vulnerability of the victims of domestic violence, the screening processes, and the outcomes of domestic violence. Data that focus on domestic violence usually do not have variables that describe and explain whether the victims of domestic violence have unique service needs, what kinds of service needs they have, and how such needs are identified, assessed, and supported within the TANF application and assessment processes. TANF is one important source of support for the victims of domestic violence with financial difficulties. Victims of domestic violence disproportionately represent the TANF recipients in comparison to those in the general population (Cheng, 2012; Tolman & Raphael, 2001). However, not all victims of domestic violence may benefit from a good cause waiver. Even identified victims of domestic violence wanted to work (Levin, 2001) or still wanted to apply for child support (Fontana, 2000). The identification of domestic violence, therefore, is not enough, and the assessment of the need for services such as good cause waivers is important. It is essential to understand what kind of vulnerability in the victims of domestic violence may need to be identified and assessed during the TANF application and assessment processes and how such vulnerability is treated differently through the current processes.

The three studies in this dissertation, therefore, pay attention to the different data sources in order to identify the victims of domestic violence with unique needs within the TANF programs and to ultimately benefit them by addressing their unique needs related to domestic violence and providing them services within the TANF programs. For example, research related to domestic violence screening did not compare the victims of domestic violence who reside in an emergency shelter or receive outreach services from domestic violence agencies along with the victims of domestic violence who do not receive any services from domestic violence agencies. The victims of domestic violence who are supported by domestic violence advocates may have an ongoing violent situation, and/or more acute safety issues when entering the TANF application processes. The victims of domestic violence who stayed in an emergency shelter did not attain financial stability when they exited the shelter (Ham-Rowbottom, 2005).

In order to represent the unique needs of the victims of domestic violence, the three studies in this dissertation target current or former TANF applicants/recipients who receive the services from the state-certified domestic violence agencies in Georgia. Based on both quantitative and qualitative data, the focus of the studies is to address the unique vulnerability and needs of the victims of domestic violence who receive services from the domestic violence agencies in Georgia and the ways in which such vulnerability and needs are identified, assessed, and supported within the TANF application and assessment processes (Chapters 3 and 4).

Lack of Epistemological Diversity

The lack of epistemological diversity to understand the TANF application and assessment processes that the victims of domestic violence undergo is also problematic. Prevalent research on domestic violence screening circumscribes understanding the broader context of the TANF application and assessment processes. Domestic violence screening cannot be carved from the entire TANF application and assessment processes.

Several reviewed studies that attempted to understand the experience of the victims of domestic violence have obtained data through interviews and observations. All the studies collected their data right after the Family Violence Option was implemented at the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s. These studies have methodological limitations as well. Of the six reviewed studies, three chose a specific qualitative design such as grounded theory (Busch & Wolfer, 2002; Postmus, 2004) or an analytic method such as thematic qualitative analysis (Lindhorst, Casey, & Meyers, 2010). Two studies did not choose a specific analytic method or design and coded the data with typologies related to behaviors (Lindhorst et al., 2005, 2008). Another study did not provide clear information about its collection procedures of interview data (Levin, 2001). None of the studies presented a theoretical/conceptual framework.

On the other hand, the participants of the reviewed studies were appropriate in terms of the sample size relevant to each specific design. The participants included 10 to 16 battered women (Busch & Wolfer, 2002; Postmus, 2004) or both battered women (n=10, 22, 78) and a frontline welfare caseworker (n=15, 22, 78) (Lindhorst et al., 2005, 2008, 2010), and their selection criteria appeared to be appropriately determined according to the purpose of the studies. Levin (2001) also delineated interview quotes from various welfare case managers, supervisors, and administrators.

The third study in this dissertation (Chapter 4) is an extension of the previous qualitative research regarding the Family Violence Option. Although the data for the second and third studies in this dissertation are not analyzed in combination nor the findings presented through the use of a mixed-methods design, the third study consistent with the qualitative paradigm aims to complement the findings of the second study by seeking “broader, deeper, and more comprehensive social understandings by using methods that tap into different facets or dimensions of the same complex phenomenon” (Greene, 2007, p. 101). Overall, the third study is distinctive in comparison to previous qualitative research in that it employs the latest data, a conceptual framework, a triangulation of interview data (gathered from victims of domestic violence, domestic violence advocates, and nationally recognized experts), a specific qualitative design, and relevant methods.

Objectives of the Current Studies

The purpose of the three current studies in this dissertation is to understand who really needs a good cause waiver on the basis of the TANF applicants’ disclosure of violence and their application of good cause waivers, and how the service needs of the victims of domestic violence are identified, assessed, and supported via the domestic violence screening during the TANF application and assessment processes. These studies empirically test the conceptual frameworks of domestic violence screening by TANF with a Bayesian strategic game model because of the relevance of the application of the game model to domestic violence screening, which is a purposeful interpersonal interaction related to good cause waivers. Such conceptual frameworks provide concepts that represent the interactions between the TANF applicant and the caseworker during the TANF application and assessment processes and that are associated with the screening outcomes for domestic violence, which pertain to quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

The first study (Chapter 2) describes the hypothetical processes and outcomes of domestic violence screening, which are predisposed by the Family Violence Option. The second study (Chapter 3) explains that the victims of domestic violence with more barriers to complying with the TANF requirements are more likely to disclose domestic violence and/or to apply for good cause waivers. The third study (Chapter 4) helps understand the complex processes and the procedural outcomes that the victims of domestic violence experience.

All three studies will discuss implications regarding how to benefit the target population of interest, namely, the TANF applicants and recipients along with their children, who experience both poverty and domestic violence in Georgia, by providing evidence of how to best assess and meet their needs. Also, implications are highlighted with an intent to enhance an evidence-based practice of domestic violence screening for policy implementation and administration in a TANF program. A major contribution of the three studies is the acknowledgement that the routine screening for domestic violence in a TANF program could be accomplished by ensuring the quality of such screenings on the basis of social work ethics. Quality service consists of identifying the victims of domestic violence and issuing good cause waivers to those identified victims, as well as ensuring that those ineligible do not receive the waivers. An additional major contribution is the light that these studies shed on the alternative screening outcomes of domestic violence to ensure both physical and financial safety for victims of domestic violence rather than only paying attention to whether a good cause waiver is granted or not.

Domestic violence is a formal term in the Family Violence Option that defines victims of domestic violence as “individuals who are battered or subjected to extreme cruelty” (Davies, 1998; Office of Family Assistance, 1998). Individuals may be victims of domestic violence if they have been subjected to “physical acts that resulted in, or threatened to result in, physical injury to the individual; sexual abuse; sexual activity involving a dependent child; being forced as the caretaker relative of a dependent child to engage in nonconsensual sexual acts or activities; threats of, or attempts at, physical or sexual abuse; mental abuse; or neglect or deprivation of medical care.” (Sec. 408(a)(7)(C)(iii), 1996). Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (GDHS, 2013) defines domestic violence as closely as the definition in the above, including “physical or sexual acts resulting in or threatening to result in physical injury; mental abuse, including threats, intimidation, acts designed to induce terror, or restraints on liberty; or deprivation of medical care, housing, food or other necessities of life.”

This dissertation research, except study one, consistently uses the term, *domestic violence*. Study one uses the term *intimate partner violence* because the term is also relevant and pointed out as more appropriate in journals such as *Advances in Social Work*, where the study was submitted. Domestic violence is a more comprehensive term that indicates “a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship” (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014) while intimate partner violence is defined within a relationship of “a current or former partner or spouse” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2015). Both terms describe various forms of abusive behaviors, including physical, sexual, psychological, and harm over another intimate partner (CDC, 2015; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Because domestic violence was commonly measured by the Conflict Tactics Scale in the literature of domestic violence and TANF (Lawrence, 2002; Lown, Schmidt, & Wiley, 2006; Meisel, Chandler, & Rienzi, 2003), it

measured violent tactics that one partner uses toward the other partner, including physical assault, psychological aggression, negotiation, sexual coercion, and injury (Straus, 2007). Thus, strictly saying, the existing literature was likely to measure intimate partner violence although they extensively used the term domestic violence or they simply considered intimate partner violence and domestic violence the same (Kogan, 2006). In the same manner, three studies in this dissertation attempt to include violence in diverse relationships within a family when they refer to domestic violence in TANF programs, but they are likely to indicate intimate partner violence.

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CHAPTER 2

USING GAME THEORY TO UNDERSTAND THE SCREENING FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE UNDER THE FAMILY VIOLENCE OPTION¹

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Abstract

Universal screening for domestic violence in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is required by most states, but compliance is questionable. By using game theory to analyze literature reviews of the implementation of the Family Violence Option, this paper conceptualizes interactions between TANF applicants and frontline eligibility caseworkers using an innovative perspective. The authors claim that the intended outcomes of universal screening for intimate partner violence are valid only if professionally ethical workers are assumed.

Waivers of TANF requirements are determined by sharing two types of information based on behaviors: 1) disclosure of abuse by victims of intimate partner violence and 2) notification of good cause waivers. Based on barriers to services, this paper illuminates that intended outcomes of universal screening for intimate partner violence are difficult to achieve. Potential solutions for implementation of screening for intimate partner violence are suggested.

INDEX WORDS: Universal screening for intimate partner violence, strategic game theory, Family Violence Option, policy analysis

Introduction

The Family Violence Option (FVO) aims to assure safety for the person who experiences intimate partner violence (IPV) and to mitigate her current barriers to receiving and maintaining the cash benefits inherent in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (Casey, Davies, Gifford, & Menard, 2010). Studies have found a higher prevalence of IPV in welfare populations compared to the general population (Lawrence, 2002; Meisel, Chandler, & Rienzi, 2003). Among TANF enrollees, the prevalence ranged from 14% to 32% for 12-month or current IPV (Gallagher, 2011; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). TANF recipients who had experienced IPV had multiple barriers to meeting TANF requirements, such as mental and physical problems, housing instability, human capital deficits, and child-related problems, with 2.3 barriers on average (Brush, 2004). Such individual barriers elevate the risk of program sanctions (Casey, 2010).

The service goals derived from the FVO are clear. The FVO may provide the following support services such as (1) waivers to TANF requirements, e.g. work responsibility, lifetime limit, and/or child support enforcement, and (2) referrals to support services to address the needs of identified TANF applicants with IPV (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2005). In order to promote an informed use of waivers and other relevant services, the implementing agencies in at least 43 states have adopted a universal screening protocol (GAO, 2005). IPV screening during the TANF application and assessment processes is designed to resemble IPV screening in health care settings that routinely assesses “current harm or risk for harm from family and IPV in asymptomatic persons” (Nelson, Nygren, McInerney, & Klein, 2013). However, the IPV screening in a TANF program differs in that it also assesses barriers to compliance with program requirements due to IPV, and ultimately it may benefit TANF clients with such barriers.

Universal screening for IPV as a protocol embraces diverse behavioral strategies for TANF eligibility caseworkers and the applicants in a respective process: routinely asking about IPV and routinely notifying a TANF applicant of good cause waivers. On the one hand, by asking every TANF applicant about her IPV experience, routine screening creates an opportunity for all applicants to disclose abuse (Davies, 2010). On the other hand, universal screening mandates TANF eligibility caseworkers to notify applicants that TANF requirements may be waived. Temporary waivers to TANF requirements for victims of IPV are referred to as “good cause” waivers (Cooke & Burke, 2003). Notification of good cause may allow applicants to make an informed decision to apply for a waiver (Pataki & Doar, 2006). Thus, universal screening exchanges key information about IPV from an applicant to a caseworker, as well as information about good cause waivers from a caseworker to an applicant through their choice of behaviors that incrementally support the outcome of waiver use. The assessment that opts out of either of the two conditions cannot be referred to as a universal screening (DeCarli, 2001; Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005).

Indeed, waivers for TANF requirements were so seldom an option for TANF applicants that a mere 2.4% of California cash assistance enrollees were waiver-holders in April 2013 (California Department of Social Services, 2013). Other studies reported even lower waiver rates (Hetling, 2011; Lindhorst, Casey, & Meyers, 2010). Low rates of waivers are inevitably linked to identification and notification rates. An interview study revealed that screening rates ranged from 2.9% to 7.5% in three states, with Georgia as an outlier at 28.8% (Lindhorst, Meyers, & Casey, 2008). Nevertheless, the identification rate in all four states that had adopted the FVO was around 2%. TANF applicants were not informed of good cause either. Fifty-six to seventy-two percent of TANF applicants in New York State in 2000 did not receive an IPV screening form

that described good cause (Hearn, 2000). One-third of the disclosed applicants were not informed of their eligibility for IPV services (Spatz, Katz, & Rees, 2005). Routine screening and notification are rarely implemented together, and only 1.2% of the eligibility caseworkers used both methods (Lindhorst et al., 2008). TANF caseworkers tended to identify applicants with IPV experience through profiling criteria, such as immediate danger, separation from an abuser, or subjective judgments (Hetling & Born, 2006).

While IPV screening is an interaction between caseworkers and applicants, only a few studies have attempted to state how caseworkers and applicants interact with one another (Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005), and none of the reviewed studies provided a theoretical framework to identify what determines the success and the failure of IPV screening. If such a theoretical framework were available, it could be used to find a solution to improve screening outcomes.

This paper conceptualizes interactions between TANF applicants and frontline eligibility caseworkers for their IPV screening processes based on game theory. By choosing the most relevant game models to describe IPV screening in TANF programs, this paper hypothesizes two game models with different scenarios of TANF applicants' informed and uninformed decisions for disclosing abuse. The scenarios represent TANF applicant-caseworker interactions under the universal screening for IPV, as well as IPV screening that is not universally applied. This paper claims that the intended outcomes of universal screening for IPV are valid only with several assumptions such as quality of IPV screening. In addition, this paper compares and contrasts game models according to the manner in which a caseworker and an applicant interact. This paper is not intended to provide empirical findings based on this game theoretical conceptualization. Instead, game theory provides concepts pertaining to both qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

Uniqueness of the Game Theory Application in Social Welfare Policies

Game theory has rarely been applied in the field of social welfare policy. However, in other fields, game theory is commonly used to model relationships, for example, between an insurance company and the insured (Agee & Gates, 2013; Dowd, 1982), a principal and an agent (Miller & Whitford, 2002; Saam, 2007), parties to international relations (Field, 2014; Polachek & Xiang, 2010), and a ruling party and the opposition party in Congress (Groseclose & Milyo, 2013). For instance, a health insurance company wants to find out if a potential insured is healthy and reveals his true state of health (Dowd, 1982). Games in human relationships take place in diverse settings for purposes (Milton, 2006), and the participants in such games strive to make the best choice, given the choice options.

A game may be observed in the interactions between service providers and recipients in welfare services. According to an example of the market of “lemons” (Akerlof, 1970), certain types of markets are characterized by substantial quality variations in goods and by uncertainty within the interactions between the sellers and the buyers. The goods in this market are considered “lemons.” In this type of market, buyers may pay increased costs because of the potential dishonesty of the sellers, so the market of lemons is unattractive to the buyers. In the analogy of the market of lemons, the market of TANF embraces variations of IPV experience among TANF applicants. Although a number of TANF applicants experience IPV (Gallagher, 2011), their need for receiving good cause waivers may not be consistent with their IPV experience (Fontana, 2000). The evidence resembles a wide variety of quality. Thus, IPV screening and subsequent granting of good cause waivers may be unattractive to the buyers, who are TANF service providers. This market of TANF appears to possess game components for at least two reasons. First, TANF service providers need to figure out hidden characteristics of

TANF applicants related to their eligibility for specific services and prevent granting waivers to applicants who may make false claims. Secondly, adverse selection, which is often a key issue with regard to contractual relationships in bureaucracy (Moe, 1984), occurs when a player makes a false claim that s/he has a specific characteristic to be eligible for a contract to the other player.

Application of game theory may be feasible where service providers need to manage resources parsimoniously and have specific eligibility criteria. This paper develops game models of IPV screening within the TANF application and assessment processes, particularly to understand how TANF applicants are granted a good cause waiver. This paper shows potential applicability of game theoretical models to social welfare policy. Other intake interviews for services provided by welfare and community service organizations could apply game theory to describe the nature of the interactions and to predict the outcomes of the interactions between service providers and helping to identify eligibility, and/or assess needs.

The major contribution of this paper is to acknowledge that universal screening for IPV in a TANF program could be accomplished by ensuring quality of the IPV screening processes. Quality service consists of identifying IPV victims and issuing good cause waivers to the identified victims, as well as ensuring that those not eligible do not receive waivers. To support this viewpoint, the following sections will introduce the relevance of application of game theory in the context of universal screening for IPV.

Relevance of Game Theory in the Context of Universal Screening

Game theory is relevant to the context of universal screening for IPV. The purpose of game theory is to theorize diverse human interactions (Tarrant, Dixon-Woods, Colman, & Stokes, 2010; Vollmer, 2013). Game theory aims to describe behaviors of rational decision-makers and to predict outcomes in a specific game (Osborne, 2004). Game theory is potentially relevant to explaining observable phenomena of interactions, like the relationships between patients and health care providers and the impact of laws, policies, and provisions that shape such interactions (Jaegher & Jegers, 2001). Games are played by two people, and/or between groups, and they are simultaneously or repeatedly played (Osborne, 2004).

A game is defined by particular components such as players, outcomes, rationality, information, and strategies. Outcome is the purpose of a game (Milton, 2006). Players are considered rational actors and strategic decision-makers as they make decisions based upon the other player's behaviors (von Neumann & Morganstein, 1953). Strategies available to each player are common knowledge to both players (Witzel, 2009). Players may rely on probabilistic belief about the expected utility of the outcome, depending on whether characteristics of the other player are hidden or known (Harsanyi, 1987). These game components specify a game. Many different forms of games may exist depending on game components.

Behavioral economic theories have questioned the descriptive and exploratory power of formal game theory (Thaler, 1991, 1992), and they have refuted a rationality assumption and replace it with the assumptions of bounded rationality, framing effects, and/or risk adversity together with empirical evidence (Simon, 2001; Tversky & Kahneman, 1982, 1986). They also argue that human beings interact with one another based upon altruism, fairness, and/or trust (Thaler, 1991, 1992). Behavioral economics may more closely explain human behaviors than

formal game theory does. This paper aims to describe the impact of the Family Violence Option on IPV screening processes, particularly regarding the interactions between TANF applicants and caseworkers and granting of good cause waivers, and it does not aim to examine the empirical effect of the Family Violence Option on IPV screening. Such modeling of the interactions helps in understanding crucial game components, and/or specific interactions to be considered for analysis of empirical data in the future. Future researchers or other stakeholders may develop valid measurement for sensitizing those influential interactions, and/or game components that determine granting of good cause waivers.

Relevance of Bayesian Strategic Game Modeling

Game conceptualization is to understand game components of universal screening for IPV, and to predict the outcome of a game based on differing game components. This section focuses on choosing a game model—a Bayesian strategic game model that best describes universal screening for IPV in TANF programs according to the Family Violence Option.

All games have a purpose (Milton, 2006). One of the purposes of universal screening for IPV is to grant a good cause waiver. Types of good cause waivers of TANF requirements include one or a combination of the following: work responsibility, child support enforcement, and lifetime limits. They can be considered non-monetary rewards. For instance, TANF recipients who are temporarily exempted from one of the TANF requirements avoid program sanctions when they do not comply with that requirement (Casey, 2010; Fontana, 2000). The recipients of good cause waivers may devote their time to other activities, such as physical, and/or emotional recovery from IPV. The waiver of lifetime limits grants a direct and possibly monetary reward to the recipients of the waiver. Waivers to lifetime limits extend cash or non-cash assistance up to 60 months in 43 states (GAO, 2005).

Potential rewards of receiving a good cause waiver are critically linked to the service need (Levin & Zeisel, 2009; Tolman & Rose, 2001). The rationale for the Family Violence Option is that IPV victims on welfare tend to have more barriers to complying with TANF requirements (Tolman & Rosen, 2001). Theoretically, IPV victims who enter the TANF program and have barriers to complying with TANF requirements would perceive good cause waivers as rewards. The same type of TANF applicants would not perceive rewards if they do not receive the waivers.

The following seven game components may define universal screening for IPV in TANF programs.

1. The IPV screening in a TANF program is a two-person interaction between a TANF applicant and an eligibility caseworker.
2. A TANF applicant is a rational actor who maximizes her expected utility of the outcome, and a TANF eligibility caseworker is a rational actor who performs her/his role based on professional ethics (Milton, 2006; Nurmi, 2005). An *expected utility* function that is defined by both a single action profile such as *disclose IPV* and a state of a player's characteristic such as a true IPV victim represents a player's preferences (Keeny & Nau, 2011). The term expected utility is interchangeably used with payoffs. A rational TANF eligibility caseworker provides a waiver to IPV victims who have difficulty complying with TANF requirements.
3. Universal screening for IPV follows specific game rules. Game rules indicate all of the game components and they represent who moves, when they move, what options players have, what they know about the information, and why they move (associated with expected utility) (Matos, Ferreira, & Andrade, 2010). For example, in relation to the

order of moves of decisions, a TANF applicant should disclose her experience with abuse prior to the caseworkers' granting of good cause waivers.

4. The TANF applicant and eligibility caseworker for IPV use strategies during screening. Strategies are an exclusive set of behaviors available to each player (Osborne, 2004). For example, in the IPV screening, an IPV victim could disclose her experience with abuse or be silent. The eligibility caseworker also could grant a waiver to the applicant or withhold the waiver.
5. A TANF applicant and an eligibility caseworker make a decision with incomplete information. Incomplete information refers to the situation in which players may not know some information about the other players, such as their characteristics, strategies, etc. (Harsanyi, 1987). At the beginning of the IPV screening, a TANF eligibility caseworker does not know about a TANF applicant's characteristic as an IPV victim. In game theory, such characteristic is called a type or a state (Osborne, 2004). Such state is denoted as " ω ." Because not all applicants experience IPV, two states of ω_1 (*applicants with IPV experience*) and ω_2 (*applicants without IPV experience*) exist. On the other hand, a TANF applicant does not know the information of good cause waivers. Due to such incomplete information, the players may need to set a belief of states or types of the other player, and/or available strategies in relation to good cause waivers.
6. A choice of a specific strategy is determined based on expected utility of the final outcome. Utility in game theory is subjective (Osborne, 2004). If a TANF applicant expects a high utility to obtaining a waiver, she would strategically disclose IPV rather than not disclose IPV.

7. Players have preferences of strategies, bounded by expected utilities (Keeny & Nau, 2011). Each player has an optimal choice, that is, the one most preferred in the strategy profiles, so that the outcomes furthest from that choice are the least preferred (Shepsle, 2010). If a caseworker prefers granting of good cause waivers to not granting of good cause waivers to an applicant, such preference can be noted as {granting of a good cause waiver > not granting of a good cause waiver}. Also, a higher number is assigned to the strategy of granting of a good cause waiver compared to the strategy of the other, for example, 2 for granting of a good cause waiver and 1 to not granting a good cause waiver, simply because 2 is greater than 1. Such order of preferences is called ordinal preferences (Barnett II, 2003).

Game conceptualization of universal screening for IPV requires adopting probability theory, due to incomplete information between a TANF applicant and a caseworker. This type of game is called “a Bayesian game model,” a strategic game under uncertainty (Osborne, 2004). Pertaining to universal screening for IPV within the TANF application and assessment processes, a TANF applicant can disclose abuse consistent with her true state of IPV experience. On the other hand, she can disclose abuse inconsistent with her true state of IPV experience. Similar situations can happen for those applicants who do not disclose abuse to their caseworkers. Therefore, the exhaustive sets of TANF applicants’ available strategies regarding IPV disclosure include: {*disclose by an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1)*, *not disclose by an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1)*, *disclose by an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2)*, *not disclose by an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2)*}. As a caseworker does not know the states of IPV among TANF applicants, the caseworker may subsequently face the following situations: a TANF applicant should signal her state of IPV to her caseworker, and the caseworker formulates a

belief which is the probability $0 \leq p \leq 1$ to each state of IPV of a TANF applicant consistent with the signal (Zamir, 2010). Therefore, a Bayesian game model combines formal game theory and probability theory to set beliefs about the states of a player's characteristic as an IPV victim. The models appear to be relevant to describing the interactions between a TANF applicant and a caseworker.

Particular Assumptions for Hypothesizing Universal Screening

Additional assumptions are required to conceptualize universal screening for IPV within TANF application and assessment processes using a Bayesian game model. What follows are the four assumptions that help us conceptualize universal screening for IPV. The first and second assumptions describe the implementing protocol of universal screening for IPV. The fourth assumption addresses the limitation that game theory could not describe the entire complexities of universal screening for IPV. The third addresses both reasons relative to the other assumptions.

First of all, this paper assumes that the Family Violence Option defines rationality respectively for a TANF applicant and a caseworker. A rational TANF applicant would maximize her expected utility regarding a good cause waiver. However, a rationality assumption for a caseworker needs clarification. A caseworker may not perceive high expected utility regarding a good cause waiver and the waiver does not provide the worker any direct benefits or harm. Indeed, the literatures consistently reveal that TANF eligibility caseworkers do not routinely screen for IPV (Lindhorst et al., 2008). Such IPV screening behaviors are potentially associated with caseworkers' beliefs about IPV and victims of IPV. Caseworkers' preconceived notions about a victim's worthiness to receive TANF benefits influenced their screening of domestic violence (Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005). The caseworkers can also stigmatize applicants based on their personal preferences or stereotypes (Carrington, 2005). Once their screening

behaviors are considered strategies, their strategies of non-routine screening for IPV may be a result of low subjective utility regarding a good cause waiver. It should be underscored again that the main interest of this paper lies in explaining the game processes toward intended outcomes of good cause waivers within universal screening for IPV as a tool of policy analysis, not toward empirical outcomes. Therefore, in the hypothetical scenario of universal screening for IPV, a TANF caseworker needs to strategically perform a high quality of IPV screening to grant a good cause waiver. A caseworker's strategy to grant a good cause waiver to a false IPV victim should have a lower expected utility than his/her same strategy resulting in a waiver to a true IPV victim. The preference order of granting of a good cause waiver may be denoted as *grant a waiver to a false IPV victim*, 1 < *grant a waiver to a true IPV victim*, 2. This assumption is linked to the argument that the quality of the game is more decisive than are the game rules (Milton, 2006).

Secondly, this paper assumes one exception from the rationality assumption of a TANF applicant. A TANF applicant who is informed of good cause waivers may not disclose IPV, if she does not perceive the waiver as a reward. TANF applicants still may prefer to pursue to work and receive child support instead of receiving temporary good cause waivers or exemptions from TANF requirements (GAO, 2005; Raphael & Haennicke, 1999). Researchers found that victims of domestic violence do not use good cause waivers for a range of reasons: they had no current danger, did not want to complete paperwork, had no evidence to prove harm, feared the abusive father, were motivated to work, and received child support from the father of their child (Fontana, 2000; Levin, 2001). This paper considers these conditions as "self-determination." Social work values appreciate clients' self-determination to utilize services (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008, 2013). Although a service provider may inform applicants of opportunities and potential resources that a client could utilize in a voluntary situation, the client

is always the decision maker. Traditionally, service providers would attempt to assist clients' self-determination and not determine the clients' choice regarding IPV victims' stay-leave decisions from their abuser (Pfouts, 1978; Rhatigan, Street, & Axsom, 2006). Although an IPV victim stays with or returns to her abuser, service providers may respect her decision and tries to support the victim under such condition. As social work presumes that persons are experts on their own lives (Yanca & Johnson, 2008, p. 59), game theory also assumes that a player perfectly knows her/his states of characteristics in making decisions (Osborne, 2004). This assumption of self-determination as an exception was added because IPV experience is a core eligibility to receive a good cause waiver, but IPV experience does not always determine the need for good cause waivers among these IPV victims (Fontana, 2000). Therefore, this paper assumes ordinal preferences regarding good cause waivers in universal screening—that a TANF applicant with IPV experience who does not disclose IPV despite being informed of good cause waivers is indifferent from receiving a good cause waiver. A full assumption of ordinal preferences for both a TANF applicant and a caseworker will be presented in the next section.

Third, this paper assumes that universal screening for IPV plays with two types of information: information of a TANF applicant's IPV characteristics and information about good cause waivers. On the one hand, universal screening for IPV starts the game based on the applicant's hidden IPV characteristics. When a game model is drawn as a figure, this characteristic is set as a starting point of the game (see Figure 2.1. Informed IPV Disclosure and Applicants' Utility of Good Cause Waivers next section). Game theory determines such information as a starting point (Matos et al., 2010). This paper relies on the perspective that the intended outcomes of universal screening for IPV can be achieved with caseworkers' knowledge of the states of applicants' IPV experience.

On the other hand, universal screening for IPV assumes that information about good cause waivers is common knowledge between players. Game theory assumes that players should have common knowledge of available strategies, so TANF applicants need to be informed that good cause waivers are available to them. Although it is not the case for all states and local agencies, universal screening for IPV entails universal notification of good cause waivers to TANF applicants (DeCarli, 2011; Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005). Principal-agent theory foresees that information asymmetry between players is a meaningful component of a game (Saam, 2007). However, through the assumption of a rational caseworker based on quality of service, information asymmetry of available strategies needs to be eliminated. Therefore, a TANF applicant's strategy to disclose IPV should be an informed decision in universal screening for IPV.

Fourth, this paper simplifies players' behavioral strategies to the informed decision to disclose IPV by a TANF applicant. As noted, players choose a strategy among the available set of strategies. For example, deconstructed processes of universal screening for IPV may consist of very complex decisional points in order:

- a. a TANF applicant applies for TANF;
- b. a caseworker screens for IPV;
- c. a TANF applicant discloses abuse;
- d. a caseworker informs a TANF applicant of good cause waivers;
- e. a TANF applicant who did not disclose IPV may disclose IPV after being informed of good cause waivers and continue to other decisional points.

In order to maintain game components and simultaneously simplify the game model, this paper defines a critical characteristic of universal screening for IPV as a TANF applicant's

informed decision to disclose IPV. Contingent upon the informed decision to disclose IPV, this paper only focuses on two key decision points: TANF applicant disclosure of IPV and TANF caseworker granting of good cause waivers.

Additionally, this paper also limits this conceptualization of universal screening for IPV with a couple of supplementary assumptions to rationalize the relevance between the theory and the phenomenon of the universal screening for IPV. This paper excludes the possibility of a third person such as a domestic violence specialist. In addition, this paper does not account for the possibility of repeated games or prior experience with the game by the players.

Summary of Game Models: Informed or Uninformed Decisions to Disclose Abuse

Based on the assumptions of universal screening for IPV in the previous section, this section will present the Bayesian game models of two hypothetical scenarios of both informed and uninformed decision to disclose abuse. The previous section noted that universal screening for IPV may be fulfilled with the three important assumptions: 1) the expected utility of granting good cause waivers for a TANF caseworker is determined by the quality of IPV screening; 2) granting of good cause waivers is determined by ensuring information about a TANF applicant's IPV experience and information about available strategies regarding good cause waivers to become common knowledge between players; and 3) a TANF applicant makes an informed decision to disclose IPV.

Informed IPV Disclosure and Applicants' Utility of Good Cause Waivers

The model of universal screening that supports the informed decision to disclose IPV is depicted in Figure 2.1. Figure 2.1 shows a Bayesian strategic game model with incomplete information. The strategy profiles are all valid: *{disclose or not disclose}* for the applicants and *{grant a waiver or not grant a waiver}* for eligibility caseworkers. "N" determines the

applicant's state of IPV, applicants with IPV experience (ω_1) with probability p or applicants without IPV experience (ω_2) with probability $1-p$. When applicants disclose IPV, caseworkers will either *grant* or *not grant a waiver* with a probability of q if they believe applicants to be victims of IPV (ω_1), and with a probability of $1-q$ if caseworkers believe applicants have not experienced IPV (ω_2). Reversely, caseworkers will take no action when the applicant chooses not to disclose, so they unnecessarily set a conditional belief about the IPV state (ω_1 or ω_2).

Figure 2.1 also presents the expected utilities for TANF applicants that this paper assigns. If a caseworker grants a waiver, then the applicant's expected utility is 1, being granted a waiver. Receiving a waiver may benefit applicants without IPV experience (ω_2) if they intentionally misinform. Their disclosure, therefore, could be based on need or fraud. Both types of applicants who do not disclose IPV may be indifferent to receiving a waiver, so they do not disclose abuse (0 represents those who do not disclose abuse). The model assumes that informed disclosure, compared with informed non-disclosure, is more likely to increase applicants' expected utility by receiving a waiver, and to decrease their expected utility by the failure to receive a waiver (-1 represents those who disclose abuse but are not granted a waiver).

Caseworkers have three types of expected utilities according to the assumption of rationality: 1 when caseworkers make the right decision regarding the state of IPV; 0 when caseworkers do not grant a waiver to an applicant either with IPV experience (ω_1) or without IPV experience (ω_2) who does not disclose; and -1 when caseworkers grant a waiver to an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) or do not grant a waiver to an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1). An expected utility of 0 for an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1) is considered a client's self-determination not to utilize a waiver.

[Insert Figure 2.1]

Uninformed IPV Non-disclosure and the Termination of a Game

On the other hand, this paper aims to illuminate disjuncture from universal screening for IPV. To compare and contrast two different scenarios of informed and uninformed decisions to disclose IPV, this section hypothesizes the situation of uninformed decision to disclose IPV by a TANF applicant. In this situation, a TANF applicant makes a decision to disclose IPV, given no information about good cause waivers. This paper compares and contrasts the game models about informed and uninformed decisions to disclose IPV. The model of IPV screening that demonstrates disjuncture from universal screening is depicted in Figure 2.2.

Displayed in Figure 2.2 are the game rules of uninformed decision to disclose IPV by TANF applicants. In such game rules, routine screening and notification of good cause do not guide TANF applicants' disclosure of IPV. Disclosure of IPV is strictly unavailable. Because caseworkers do not screen adequately, applicants cannot choose informed disclosure, which makes it impossible to grant a waiver. On the left side of Figure 2.2, applicants are given a single strategy profile, *not disclose*, due to their no-knowledge situation about good cause waivers. In the nodes, the only available strategy for the caseworker is *not grant a waiver* in response to the applicant's non-disclosure. The probabilities r and $1-r$ represent a caseworker's belief about the states of IPV, given an applicant's action, $\{not\ disclose\}$. Such uninformed non-disclosure is a distinctive feature of the uninformed decision to disclose IPV, which is inconsistent with universal screening for IPV. This uninformed non-disclosure is different from informed non-disclosure, which is based on applicants' self-determination in the left nodes in Figure 2.1. The former is caused by the IPV screening process eliminating applicants' strategies because the IPV screening process does not entail notification of good cause waivers.

[Insert Figure 2.2]

Notification of good cause waivers influences the players' expected utilities, but that effect cannot be displayed with numerical expected utilities in the model. When the players have the single strategy profile $\{not\ disclose\}$ and $\{not\ grant\ a\ waiver\}$, the interaction does not satisfy game assumptions. This type of game rule does not transfer expected rewards to the applicants who experience IPV.

Outcomes of the Game Models

This section analyzes a Bayesian strategic game model of the universal screening protocol under the Family Violence Option to find *Nash Equilibrium*, which is an outcome of making a decision (Osborne & Rubinstein, 1994), specifically the granting of a waiver as the final outcome. Nash Equilibrium is a steady state where both players have no reason to change their strategy; an example of Nash Equilibrium is found in the well-known Prisoner's Dilemma, which involves two suspects with differing penalty types of utilities (Fudenberg & Tirole, 1991; Osborne, 2004).

Universal screening as a Bayesian strategic game consists of two separate games and two pooling games (Munoz-Garcia, 2012). Decision-makers play a separating game when the first player behaves differently prior to the second player's strategy (Munoz-Garcia, 2012). Two separate games are played by a TANF applicant such as $\{disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ with\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_1),\ not\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ without\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_2)\}$ and $\{not\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ with\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_1),\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ without\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_2)\}$. An applicant is player 1 in this game model, so $disclose_1$ denotes that an applicant discloses IPV. Also, two pooling games are played when the first player consistently chooses a strategy (Munoz-Garcia, 2012): $\{disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ with\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_1),\ disclose_1\ by\ an$

applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) and *{not disclose₁ by an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1), not disclose₁ by an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2)}*. Each subgame has its own utility pair as well as a Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium, which describes both the beliefs and a strategy profile (Munoz-Garcia, 2012).

Model analyses based on subgames specify the conditional beliefs of eligibility caseworkers. In Figure 2.1, the separating subgame with *{disclose₁ by an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1), not disclose₁ by an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2)}* occurs when $q=1$. Caseworkers, therefore, do not need to worry about the other situations of *{not disclose₁ by an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1), disclose₁ by an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2)}*. Likewise, the other separating subgame sets conditional beliefs, $q=0$. Such specification keeps the focus on the game nodes of *{not disclose₁ by an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1), disclose₁ by an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2)}*. The pooling game with *{disclose₁ by an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1), disclose₁ by an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2)}* assumes a situation in which the conditional belief of a TANF caseworker requires $q=p$. Thus, a caseworker only cares if $q \geq 1-q$ (i.e., the ratio of applicants with IPV experience (ω_1) who made a true disclosure is equal to or greater than that of applicants without IPV experience (ω_2) who made a false disclosure) or $q < 1-q$ (i.e., the ratio of applicants with IPV experience (ω_1) who made a true disclosure is less than that of applicants without IPV experience (ω_2) with a false disclosure). In contrast, in the subgame of *{not disclose₁ by an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1), not disclose₁ by an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2)}*, the Bayesian rule does not determine q .

Screening Outcomes of Informed Decision to Disclose IPV in Universal Screening

Based on the discussion of Figure 2.1 above, the game has four types of subgames and two Perfect Bayesian equilibriums. In the first separating game with $\{disclose_1 \text{ by an applicant with IPV experience } (\omega_1), \text{ not disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant without IPV experience } (\omega_2)\}$, it must be that $q=1$, which is a strategy for the TANF applicant, meaning that a caseworker thinks that an applicant behaves inconsistently but has behaved consistently with the states of IPV. A caseworker expects an applicant who experiences IPV to disclose, and an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) not to disclose. In this type of game, granting a waiver is an optimal strategy for caseworkers because they think an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1) would disclose. An applicant with IPV experience (ω_1) would be better off by disclosing (expected utility, 1) than by not disclosing (expected utility, 0). Because a caseworker would grant a waiver if an applicant disclosed regardless of the state of IPV ($q=1$), an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) would also be better off by disclosing than by not disclosing. An applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) would also prefer to alter her strategy from *not disclose* to *disclose*. Therefore, Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium cannot exist for this separating game.

In the second separating game with $\{not\ disclose_1 \text{ by an applicant with IPV experience } (\omega_1), \text{ disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant without IPV experience } (\omega_2)\}$, it must be that $q=0$, which is a strategy for an applicant, meaning that caseworkers think that an applicant behaves inconsistently with the state of IPV. Caseworkers' optimal strategy is *not granting a waiver* if they think that an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) discloses. In that case, an applicant with the state of ω_2 would not disclose IPV because they are not granted a waiver. Hence, an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) would not prefer *disclose* because her strategy of *not disclose* has a

higher expected utility than that of *disclose* (expected utility, $0 > \text{expected utility}, -1$). Therefore, there is no Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium. Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium does not exist in which a strategy set, $\{\text{not disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant with IPV experience } (\omega_1), \text{disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant without IPV experience } (\omega_2)\}$, is played.

In the first pooling game with $\{\text{disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant with IPV experience } (\omega_1), \text{disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant without IPV experience } (\omega_2)\}$, Bayes' rule requires $q=p$. A caseworker has an accurate belief about an applicant's state of IPV. When $q < 1-q$, caseworkers must select *not granting a waiver* because they think that the applicants are more likely to be an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) than an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1). If a caseworker prefers *not granting a waiver*, the expected utility of an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) would be -1 . Consequently, this applicant would prefer *not disclose* IPV (expected utility, 0), which entails a higher expected utility, rather than *disclose* (expected utility, -1). Equilibrium is not found if and only if a caseworker's belief is $q < 1/2$.

On the other hand, a caseworker optimally selects granting a waiver if and only if $q \geq 1-q$ ($q \geq 1/2$). Given a caseworker's strategy, *granting a waiver*, applicants may also perceive the higher expected utility 1 compared to -1 if they are not granted a waiver. Thus, there is an Equilibrium, in which a strategy set, $\{\text{disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant with IPV experience } (\omega_1); \text{disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant without IPV experience } (\omega_2), \text{granting a waiver}_2\}$, is played and $q=p$.

In the second pooling game with $\{\text{not disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant with IPV experience } (\omega_1), \text{not disclose}_1 \text{ by an applicant without IPV experience } (\omega_2)\}$, Bayes' rule does not determine q . However, notice that both types of applicants prefer *not disclose* (payoff 0) only if caseworkers select *not granting a waiver*. The strategy, *not disclose*, contains a higher payoff compared to the

situation where an applicant discloses but is not granted a waiver (expected utility -1; see the right nodes in Figure 2.1). In order for *not granting a waiver* to be chosen, a caseworker must have a sufficiently pessimistic belief about the types of applicants despite their strategy for IPV disclosure. Regardless of the states of IPV, a caseworker's belief within $q < 1/2$ assumes that an applicant without IPV experience (ω_2) is more likely to disclose than an applicant with IPV experience (ω_1) is. Within such belief systems, an applicant would prefer *not disclose* as this sub-game predisposes. Thus, a caseworker's strategy, *not granting a waiver*, is optimal as long as $q < 1/2$. For every $q < 1/2$, there is a Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium in which a caseworker's belief is q , and the strategy profile $\{not\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ with\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_1); not\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ without\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_2), not\ granting\ a\ waiver_2\}$ is played.

In short, universal screening for IPV has two equilibriums: they exist with a pooling game of $\{disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ with\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_1); disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ without\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_2), granting\ a\ waiver_2\}$ if caseworkers think $q \geq 1-q$ and the other pooling game of $\{not\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ with\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_1); not\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ without\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_2), not\ granting\ a\ waiver_2\}$ if caseworkers think $q < 1/2$.

Screening Outcomes of Uninformed Decision to Disclose IPV

As depicted in Figure 2.2, the model of the no knowledge situation of good cause waivers cannot assign expected utilities to the players' strategy profiles. Allowing both an applicant and a caseworker to play a single strategy set $\{not\ disclose\}$ and $\{not\ grant\ a\ waiver\}$ clarifies that disjuncture from universal screening for IPV always results from playing with $\{not\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ with\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_1), not\ grant\ a\ waiver_2\}$ and $\{not\ disclose_1\ by\ an\ applicant\ without\ IPV\ experience\ (\omega_2), not\ grant\ a\ waiver_2\}$.

Discussion and Limitations

This paper claims that the intended outcomes of universal screening for IPV are valid only with several assumptions about the quality of IPV screening. To support this claim, this paper defined two conditions of universal screening for IPV under the current implementation of the Family Violence Option—routine screening for IPV and universal notification for good cause waivers, depicted a Bayesian game model based on additional assumptions that ensure quality of IPV screening, and found perfect Bayesian equilibriums to predict intended outcomes of universal screening for IPV regarding good cause waivers. In addition, this paper compares and contrasts the game models in the way of the interactions between the caseworkers and applicants with two different hypothetical scenarios. The scenarios represented TANF applicants' informed and uninformed decisions to disclose IPV. Based on the understanding of relevant game components of IPV screening relative to the Family Violence Option, this paper highlighted that the universal screening protocol for IPV ensures informed decisions to disclose IPV, and disjuncture from the implementation of universal screening for IPV might result in uninformed decisions to disclose IPV for TANF applicants.

Based on the comparison between the Bayesian game models of informed and uninformed decisional scenarios of IPV disclosure, this paper first underscored that universal screening for IPV without any disjuncture from informed decision to disclose IPV may result in granting of good cause waivers with specific decisional processes and conditions. The analyses of the Bayesian strategic game model of universal screening for IPV showed that good cause waivers are only given to TANF applicants when a TANF applicant discloses IPV experience to TANF caseworkers who tend not to worry about potential fraud from TANF applicants. When a TANF caseworker expects that eligible victims of IPV will disclose IPV, they would grant good

cause waivers. On the other hand, a TANF caseworker would not grant a good cause waiver to a TANF applicant who does not disclose IPV if they believe that only a small portion of TANF applicants are victims of IPV. These predicted outcomes based on the Bayesian strategic game model of universal screening for IPV correspond to the intended outcomes of the Family Violence Option.

By depicting the model of an uninformed decision to disclose IPV under the disjuncture from universal screening, two essential aspects could be emphasized. First, universal screening for IPV relies on applicants' disclosure. Second, an uninformed decision about disclosing IPV may always be non-disclosure as long as a TANF applicant is not informed of good cause waivers. In practice, a TANF applicant may disclose IPV when she is asked (screened) for IPV. However, such disclosure is not a response to her expected utility of receiving good cause waivers. Any disjuncture that dissatisfies both IPV screening and notification of good cause waivers predicts uninformed non-disclosure by TANF applicants, according to the model description of uninformed decision to disclose IPV.

Historically, policy makers and researchers are interested in prevalence of IPV screening behaviors in TANF programs (Casey et al., 2010; Lindhorst et al., 2008) and barriers to screening for IPV (Carrington, 2005, Sanders, Holter, Pahl, Tolman, & Kenna, 2005). Based on this model comparison, especially between informed and uninformed decisions to disclose IPV, this paper identifies the need for empirical studies of whether both routine screening for IPV experience and universal notification of good cause waivers bring changes in rates of disclosure, identification, and granting of good cause waivers.

Another potential set of research questions for empirical testing based on this model would investigate how beliefs of TANF caseworkers regarding the hidden characteristics of TANF applicants as IPV victims are formulated, and how such beliefs influence the outcome of the game. The game components of beliefs in the theoretical models are a stringent condition related to probabilities. However, TANF caseworkers' attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge of IPV and victims of IPV could provide alternative explanations to predict the interactions between TANF caseworkers and applicants. In health care settings, frontline workers' attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge are influential variables to screen for IPV (Boursnell & Prosser, 2010; McColgan, 2010). Using game theory, research could illuminate which game components are important to prompt the desired outcomes of the Family Violence Option. Then, social scientists, especially social workers, could better understand this phenomenon in a more complex and practical way. Human beings calculate their benefit, but they may do so within a complex matrix.

With the model depicted in Figure 2.1 regarding informed decision to disclose IPV in universal screening, this paper described when universal screening for IPV could occur. This paper relayed that universal screening for IPV may be only available with certain assumptions. TANF caseworkers need to be rational actors to maximize their utility based on the quality of IPV screening. That is, their expected utility increases with the practice of universal screening for IPV (making sure a TANF applicant makes an informed decision to disclose IPV) and with right or wrong decisions to grant a good cause waiver (making sure a true victim receives a good cause waiver while not granting a good cause waiver to a false victim). This assumption is actually the key concept of the policy assumptions behind the Family Violence Option. TANF caseworkers could satisfy the remaining assumptions described in this paper by ensuring informed decisions for TANF applicants related to good cause waivers and by actually granting

good cause waivers based on appropriate assessment. Quality of practice only ensures TANF applicants' decision-making based on their expectation of real benefits by receiving good cause waivers. Otherwise, this paper addresses that TANF caseworkers inevitably limit the ability of self-determination to disclose IPV for TANF applicants.

This paper finally emphasizes that the game interactions that universal screening for IPV assumes, as depicted in the model in Figure 2.1, are not realistic in TANF programs. What is happening in welfare offices is not consistent with universal screening. Universal screening appears to be difficult to achieve due to the lack of training and lack of motivation or rewards for workers (Saunders et al., 2005). Also, screening for domestic violence may not be a priority for workers (Empire Justice Center [EJC], 2001). The perspectives of game theoretical models of this paper would accentuate the importance of the caseworkers' priority to conduct universal screening for IPV. It may be important to increase TANF caseworkers' expected utilities for granting of good cause waivers. Direct rewards to TANF caseworkers for universal screening for IPV may motivate the caseworkers to perform their role. Methods of such reward may include reducing caseloads, consideration of caseworkers as IPV experts, increased salary, and even emotional rewards through internal awards of the TANF institutions.

Finally, this paper attempts to turn our attention from the evidence of IPV disclosure to that of the quality of TANF screening practices by caseworkers. A review of the literature shows that the attention toward disclosure rates and barriers to disclosure appears to outweigh the attention toward screening behaviors, especially notification of good cause waivers. These are barriers to facilitating informed decisions to disclose IPV. In order to obtain evidence of real preferences for universal screening among TANF caseworkers, the barriers to universal screening should be eliminated. Accordingly, real preferences of disclosing IPV and receiving good cause waivers could be obtained.

In addition, overcoming the following shortcomings may strengthen previous points of discussion in this paper. First, the applicant's experience with IPV is not identical to her need to utilize a waiver. The paper considers them equal. Future study can make this distinction and investigate who among applicants with IPV experience actually needs a waiver. Second, the model of universal screening does not undergo all the possible steps related to game rules that could actually establish applicants' expected utilities differentially. The rationales for determining expected utilities need to be set clearly. Third, this paper separately examined games, with or without universal screening; however, if a model combining both with and without universal screening is developed, the model may explain more complexity of the interactions between caseworkers and applicants in the real world. Finally, the paper does not test the models, so future studies need to investigate whether good cause notification determines use of a waiver by analyzing empirical data.

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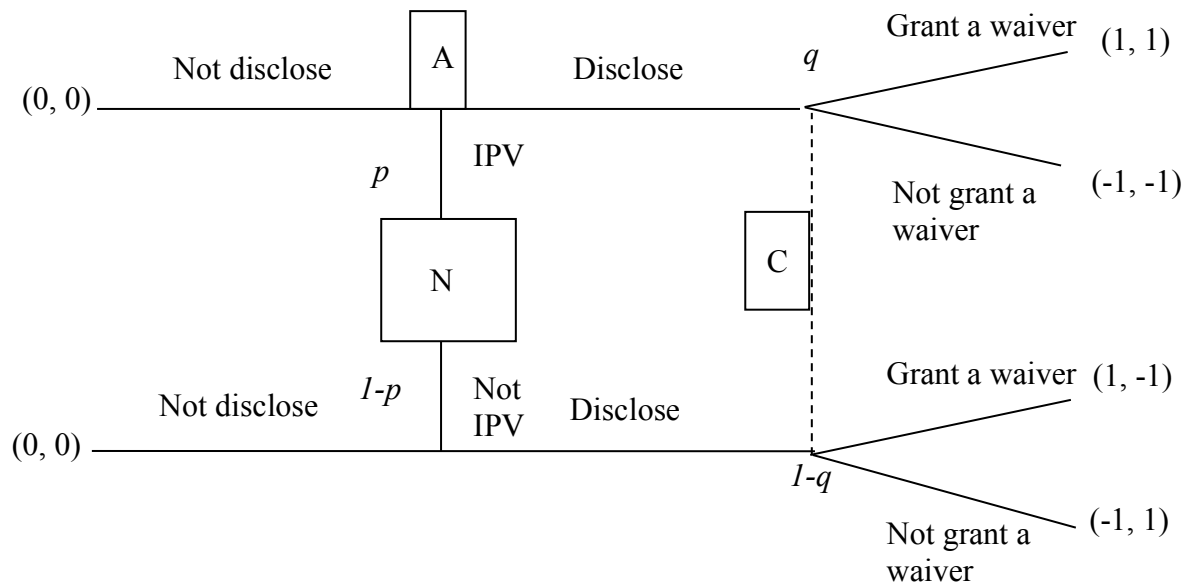


Figure 2.1

Informed IPV Disclosure and Applicants' Utility of Good Cause Waivers

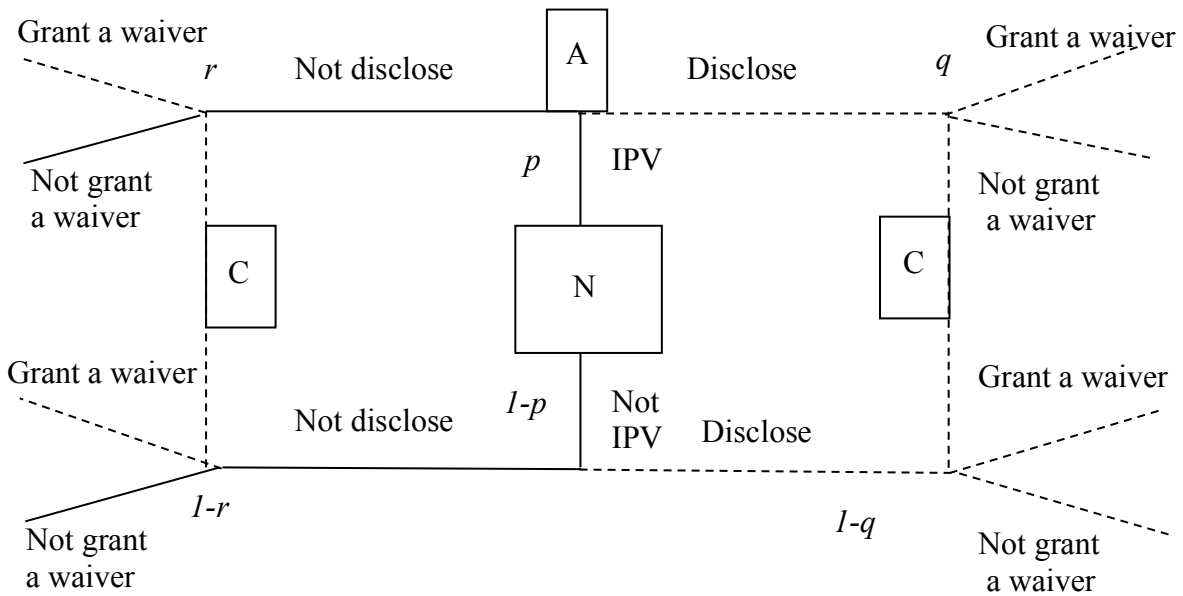


Figure 2.2

Uninformed IPV Non-disclosure and the Termination of a Game

CHAPTER 3

SCREENING PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM: A PILOT STUDY²

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Abstract

This study explores how female victims of domestic violence decide to disclose and apply for good cause waivers within application and assessment processes in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs. Using retrospective survey data on N=35 victims of domestic violence regarding their experience with TANF application and assessment processes in the Division of Families and Children Services (DFCS) in Georgia, findings revealed that barriers to working as well as being asked about domestic violence were positively correlated with disclosure of domestic violence and application for at least one waiver option. Barriers to complying with TANF requirements were not correlated with notification of good cause waivers. Social work implications are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Family Violence Option, domestic/family violence, disclosure, good cause

Introduction

The Clinton Administration transformed Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in 1996 through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). TANF is no longer an entitled benefits program due to concerns about welfare dependency and out-of-wedlock birth. TANF is a temporary program with lifetime limits, and requires recipients to work and join work-related activities and to apply for child support by establishing paternity of the biological father of the child. These changes are often referred to as TANF requirements (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2005).

Responses to such reforms nationally impacted domestic violence advocates and researchers especially for the first several years of such changes (Davies, n.d.; Davies, 1998; Davies, 2010). Their primary concern was the high prevalence of domestic violence among AFDC and TANF recipients. Current victims of domestic violence among TANF recipients has ranged from 14% to 32% (Gallagher, 2011) and “up to 80% of TANF recipients report lifetime domestic violence victimization” (Administration for Children & Families [ACF], 2014; Goodwin, Chandler, & Meisel, 2005). Another concern was the consequences of TANF requirements toward victims of domestic violence (Carrington, 2005). For instance, several barriers to complying with work, child support enforcement, and/or lifetime limits were identified such as the potential safety issue at work and by revealing the victim’s address to the abuser due to child support enforcement. Resources regarding readiness for work were also discussed as a barrier (Hetling, 2000).

In response to the welfare reform as well as the concerns regarding domestic violence, senators Wellston and Murray proposed the *Family Violence Option* as a sub-provision of TANF (Kogan, 2006; Spatz, Katz, & Rees, 2005). This Option can temporarily waive some or all TANF requirement(s) for victims of domestic violence and such benefits are called good cause waivers (Cooke & Burke, 2003). The purpose of the Family Violence Option was to eliminate safety issues and potential barriers caused by compliance with TANF requirements for victims of domestic violence (Legal Momentum, 2005). Forty-three states adopted the Family Violence Option and mandated routine screening protocols for domestic violence within TANF programs (GAO, 2005). Despite evidence to the contrary, only small proportions of TANF recipients were identified with domestic violence and received good cause waivers (Schott, 2007; Senterfitt, 2006; Spatz, Katz, & Rees, 2005). Conversely, TANF recipients were not asked about domestic violence and were referred to domestic violence specialists (i.e., domestic violence specialists, experts, liaisons) (Hetling, 2011; Lindhorst, Meyers, & Casey, 2008; Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005).

Such implementation processes were interpreted in different ways. Routine screening at frontline levels apparently failed, as frontline TANF workers did not screen for domestic violence, and/or grant good cause waivers (Kogan, 2006). Second, barriers at interpersonal, organizational, and structural levels made routine screening difficult to practice (Lindhorst et al., 2008; Saunders, Holter, Pahl, Tolman, & Kenna, 2005). Third, victims of domestic violence might not need special consideration in services as only low proportions of TANF applicants disclosed abuse and applied for good cause waivers. Overall, policy-makers, researchers, and advocates attempted to reason insignificant routine screening outcomes from victims' individual choice, individual need, or failure of routine screening, and/or policy administration.

None of the above studies, however, allowed for an understanding of: 1) if actual needs exist for victims of domestic violence regarding good cause waivers; and 2) if such needs can be both identified and assessed through routine screening for domestic violence as the Family Violence Option expected. This understanding of victims' needs related to domestic violence and effectiveness of routine screening together can better guide more accurate interpretations of whether the routine screening procedures in place for domestic violence in TANF programs potentially benefit victims.

The purpose of this study is to explore how victims of domestic violence decide to disclose and apply for good cause waivers within the TANF application and assessment processes. Specifically, this study seeks to determine if both barriers to complying with TANF requirements and frontline responses to the victims of domestic violence influence the choice of disclosure of abuse, and consideration for good cause waivers. For this purpose, this study surveyed 35 females who were receiving services from community-based victim support agencies and also (have) applied and received TANF in Georgia. The main assumption is that victims of domestic violence who are asked about domestic violence and informed about good cause waivers are more likely to disclose abuse and apply for good cause waivers.

Welfare Reform and Screening for Domestic Violence in Georgia

Georgia signed the PRWORA and State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) contract in 1996 (S. 104, 2013). Since then, the TANF program in Georgia included the Family Violence Option and basically required routine screening for domestic violence for local TANF programs and consideration to waive TANF requirements for identified victims of domestic violence (Georgia Department of Human Services [GDHS], 2013). Over the years, Georgia Division of Families and Children's Services (GDFCS) has gone through several business models for TANF programs

along with the changes in federal regulation and re-authorizations (S. 104, 2013). Throughout these changes, the Department of Human Services funded state certified domestic violence agencies to hire a *TANF assessor* at each local TANF office, to conduct family violence assessments with 100% of her/his time (S. Dow, personal communication, February 10, 2015). TANF assessors had on-site office space in local DFCS offices (S. Dow, personal communication, February 10, 2015). One significant change occurred in the model of such collaborative work with TANF assessors after the mid-2000s. In 2008, with the priority goal of “healthy marriage promotion and responsible fatherhood” (S. 104, 2013, p. v), TANF programs told family violence shelters and outreach programs that there were unnecessary dedicated TANF assessors in each DFCS office (S. Dow, personal communication, February 10, 2015; anonymous DHS officer, personal communication, February 17, 2015). The job title of TANF assessors no longer exists in Georgia. Domestic violence advocates including some former TANF assessors from community-based agencies continue to have relationships with their local frontline TANF workers. However, such relationships may not apply to other counties.

At the same time, TANF tends to be restrictive for families in Georgia. Between 2003 and 2013 fiscal years, the number of TANF caseloads was reduced 70.4% (S. 104, 2013). With emphasis on work participation, TANF cases that included adults in Georgia declined more than 80% between January 2004 and December 2006 (Schott, 2007). In the 2014 fiscal year, 16,204 caseloads statewide received TANF, and adult cases consisted of 22.7% of the total caseloads and the remaining were child-only cases (Cagle, Ballard, & Christopher, 2014). In the 2013 fiscal year, none of these families received exemptions from lifetime limits and 12.3% of the total applications in 2013 were sanctioned in the same year (S. 104, 2013). The outcomes of domestic violence screenings are not publically reported or limitedly published in research

articles. In 2006, the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence surveyed 36 shelters and 33% reported difficulty getting work waivers (GCADV, 2006 as cited in Senterfitt, 2006, p. 7). Screening rates in Fulton County, Georgia, between 1999 and 2000 was 28.8% (Lindhorst et al., 2008).

Regional/local TANF and individual TANF applicants may go through different types of TANF application and assessment processes including screening for domestic violence. One of the regional TANF offices conducted “a face to face interview for TANF eligibility for about 5% of the cases, while 100% of all ‘*work mandatory (eligible) adults*’ are seen in person for the Employment Services assessment, which would also include additional assessments for the Americans with Disabilities Act and domestic violence due to the impact of both disability and domestic violence on the work requirements” (Anonymous TANF supervisor, email communication, July 29, 2013). Other regional TANF offices do not have a TANF orientation (Anonymous domestic violence advocate, in-person interview, December 11, 2014), and 19% of 36 shelters reported no orientations or individual orientations in their local TANF offices (GCADV, 2006 as cited in Senterfitt, 2006, p. 7).

Based on this researcher’s observation and in-person interviews of the TANF application and assessment processes at one of the 15 regional TANF offices for TANF applicants during 2014, the current TANF application and assessment processes make both online and on-site paper applications available (An, 2015). After filing the initial application form, TANF applicants receive an information letter with their case number within a couple of weeks (Anonymous, personal observation of a TANF orientation meeting, February 24, 2014), and the letter informs that every *work eligible* individual is required to attend a TANF orientation meeting within several days to a few weeks. The initial application has no screening question for

domestic violence. In the orientation, applicants receive information of TANF requirements and related appointments such as a job search orientation with the Department of Labor. They may be informed about good cause waivers due to domestic violence and one of the forms called “Employment Services Family Assessment (form 491), which includes a screening question for domestic violence -- “Do you or does anyone in your household have a past or present domestic violence issue?” (GDHS, 2006). Applicants who disclose their experience with abuse may be referred to a domestic violence advocate in their community and asked to complete a family violence assessment form and receive a professional recommendation for hardship/good cause waivers from the advocate. Filling out this form is a pre-requisite to be considered for hardship/good cause waivers. The domestic violence assessment form should be returned in two weeks, and the applicant must then have a phone interview to complete the TANF application (Anonymous TANF applicant, in-person interview, December 16, 2014). Until this interview is processed, TANF applicants are not yet completely eligible for TANF, and/or good cause waivers (personal observation of a TANF orientation meeting, February 24, 2014).

Screening Behaviors and Outcomes for Domestic Violence

Screening Behaviors

Although there is no clear boundary demarking the domestic violence identification and the related assessment, this distinction is important in order to define and understand screening behaviors for domestic violence in such programs. Domestic violence identification involves frontline responses about the client experiences with domestic violence to all applicants in written and/or verbal communication forms. Identifying domestic violence is an essential response to the high prevalence rates of domestic violence in welfare programs. Another response is about the potential barriers to complying with TANF requirements among victims of

domestic violence. Assessing special circumstances of either identified or non-identified victims of domestic violence involves sensitive and specialized frontline responses to further ask about domestic violence, refer identified victims of domestic violence to community resources including a domestic violence advocate, and/or provide information on good cause waivers. The role of this assessment part may be tied to social work values to enrich human dignity and worth and self-determination (NASW, 2008). Needs assessment for victims of domestic violence may enhance “clients’ capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs” (NASW, 2008). Thus, screening behaviors may consist of multiple behaviors and can be utilized based on victims’ different, individualistic needs.

Domestic violence screening includes a set of screening questions when clients initially apply for TANF (Ganow, 2001; New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence [NYS OPDV], n.d.a). In addition, the screening processes also notify victims of domestic violence about good cause waivers as well as other supportive service opportunities (NYS OPDV, n.d., b). Such good cause notification is often mentioned amidst general information about victim support services (GDHS, 2013). It is recommended that good cause notification be included in further assessment processes regardless of whether it is inserted as a pre- or a post-response to an applicant’s disclosure (Davies, 2010; Hetling & Born, 2005).

Published information of screening rates for domestic violence was obtained mostly from local and state administrative records. This evidence continued to confirm that TANF applicants are not routinely asked about their experience with domestic violence. In six different local offices throughout four different states including Georgia, Michigan, New York, and Texas between November 1999 and August 2000, screening rates in three states remained under 8%, with Georgia being the exception (Lindhorst et al., 2008). About 2% of TANF recipients were

identified as victims of domestic violence in Texas and Georgia (Lindhorst et al., 2008). New York State requires filling out a domestic violence screening form in the initial TANF application process, and more than half of the applicants did not receive the form. Referrals are rarely made to a domestic violence specialist (Lein, Jacquet, Lewis, Cole, & William, 2001). Almost none of the identified adults for domestic violence were further assessed for their service needs and connected to relevant supports in California (Spatz, et al., 2005). Approximately one third of 559 female welfare recipients and half of 552 female welfare recipients were notified about good cause waivers at two different observation points, respectively, between May 2000 and December 2002 in two California counties (An, 2014). Despite variations in such statistics, discrepancies appear to be found in screening behaviors of domestic violence at implementing and policy levels.

Screening Outcomes

Screening outcomes of domestic violence are tied to the aforementioned screening behaviors. Disclosure of domestic violence is a common indicator of domestic violence screening (Busch, 2002; Lindhorst et al., 2008; Lindhorst, Casey, & Meyers, 2010; Saunders, Holter, Pahl, Tolman, & Kenna, 2005). Disclosure rates are far less than the percentage of potential victims. Hetling, Saunders, and Born (2006) reported that only 22% of the potential victims disclosed although about 20% of approximately 800 welfare enrollees were identified as potential victims. Postmus (2004) also found that 9 of 29 (31%) women did not disclose. The reasons for non-disclosure included a woman's perception of the caseworkers as having predisposed skeptical and judgmental attitudes, the increased responsibilities of participation to receive referred support services, or the risk of losing their children (Postmus, 2004). These disclosers were more likely to be less educated; younger women rather than educated, older

women; White rather than African American; and separated, single adult cases rather than cases with only two adults or a child (Hetling & Born, 2006; Hetling et al., 2006). There was contradictory findings as well. An (2014) found that the number of children under 18, having a child under 12 months, drug/alcohol use, and PTSD were not associated with female welfare recipients' disclosure of abuse.

Whether victims of domestic violence are offered opportunities to consider applying for good cause waivers and/or to receive good cause waivers are outcomes of effective domestic violence screening. How these women consider applying for domestic violence was uncertain. More than half of the disclosed women considered applying for good cause waivers but they were only 1.7% and 2.8% of the participants at two different observation points, respectively, between May 2000 and December 2002 in two California counties (An, 2014). In April 2013, holders of good cause waivers included 2.4% of the California cash assistance enrollees (California Department of Social Services, 2013). Hetling (2011) also revealed that 5.36% of the identified victims of domestic violence held at least one type of good cause waivers—the work waiver (60.9%) and exemptions from time limit (28.0%), or child support enforcement (24.5%).

Relationship between Screening Behaviors and Outcomes

Methods of screening behaviors are positively associated with the disclosure of domestic violence. Of the disclosed cases in TANF programs across four states such as Georgia, Michigan, New York, and Texas, approximately 80% were screened by using at least one screening strategy, such as a direct screening question, a direct question plus one other strategy, or notification without screening (Lindhorst et al., 2008). The same relationship but with a stronger correlation was found in health care settings (Feder et al., 2011; McFarlane, Groff, O'Brien, & Watson, 2006). The use of direct questioning was more effective to identify domestic

violence than obtaining information about good cause waivers (Lyon, 2000). However, the use of a routine screening question itself was not associated with disclosure. Rather it was significantly related to disclosure together with other screening methods (Lindhorst et al., 2008).

The impact of follow-up assessment in response to disclosure has been rarely described in the literature, and studies on the impact of domestic violence specialists (advocates) presented questionable findings. The in-house domestic violence specialists did not increase the disclosure and the receipt of good cause waivers (Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005). Also, slightly more than 50% of the victims referred to specialists in Chicago were placed in work activities, specifically 36% in paid employment, 9% in vocational training, and 11% in educational activities (Levin, 2001). Lindhorst and Padgett (2005) interpreted such outcomes as a positive and sensitive assessment of the referred victims' strengths and special hardships relevant to compliance with TANF requirements.

Lindhorst et al. (2008) was the only study that thoroughly described the elements of various routine screening behaviors. Among N=78 identified cases of domestic violence, 8 helpful screening practices (13.9%) were identified together with routine screening for domestic violence (only direct question, 43.8%) and informing without screening (42.3%). The lack of evidence about routine screening implies a noted disconnection between the support service need and the screening outcomes for victims of domestic violence (Davies, 1998). A screening behavior to "identify" victims of domestic violence may be as important as the self-determination to "disclose" or to be more decisive (Hagan & Owens-Manley, 2002), and victims of domestic violence may not "choose to apply for" good cause waivers while frontline TANF caseworkers just "do not assess" their needs.

Domestic Violence and Screening Outcomes

Empirical studies of prevalence of domestic violence in welfare programs varied depending on measurements, i.e., Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and Work Abuse Scale (Meisel, Chandler, & Rienzi, 2003; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). Studies that employed CTS reported a prevalence around 50% or higher (Lawrence, 2002). Administrative data (Hetling et al., 2011; Lindhorst et al., 2008) rather than primary data (Gallagher, 2011; Meisel et al., 2003) tended to report a much lower prevalence of domestic violence. Researchers contend that the need for good cause waivers was linked to the timing of the abuse, the current abuse more so than the past abuse, and the severity of the abuse (Levin & Zeisel, 2009; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). Conversely, findings revealed that current abuse decreased the use of a good cause waiver (Hetling & Born, 2006).

Good cause waivers may depend on individual needs and choices. Domestic violence cannot be identified without such disclosure because of the parsimonious nature of identifying domestic violence in welfare programs (Lindhorst et al., 2008). As indicated, a significant portion of potential victims decided not to disclose because they perceived negative results or potential risks and uncertainty of the consequences of their disclosure (Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005). On the other hand, the relationship between the disclosure of abuse and the preference for good cause waivers appeared to be not that significant, as approximately 97% of disclosed victims of domestic violence did not seek good cause waivers (Fontana, 2000). Although victims of domestic violence were considered to experience greater hardships to comply with TANF requirements, no study has investigated the association or the extent to which those with greater hardships are more likely to disclose, and/or consider good cause waivers as their service option.

Disclosure of Abuse and Application for Good Cause Waivers

This study borrows the theoretical framework of “routine screening for intimate partner violence” under the Family Violence Option that conceptualized both informed decision and uninformed decision-making to disclose intimate partner violence in TANF (An, Yoo, & Nackerud, 2015). According to An et al. (2015), informed decisions to disclose domestic violence are a distinctive feature of routine screening for domestic violence. Informed decisions to disclose domestic violence are defined as a condition in which “information about good cause waivers is common knowledge” between a frontline TANF caseworker (in this study, the term frontline TANF caseworkers include any frontline workers in DFCS) and a TANF applicant. Uninformed decisions to disclose domestic violence are decisions that a TANF applicant makes to disclose without information about good cause waivers. This study extends the concept of informed decision related to disclosure to that of informed decision to apply for good cause waivers. As long as a TANF applicant is informed of the service option regarding good cause waivers and made aware of why victims of domestic violence necessarily disclose their abuse in general, their decision to disclose and/or apply for good cause waivers may be considered an informed decision.

The informed and uninformed decision models regarding good cause waivers (An et al., 2015) were conceptualized by Bayesian strategic game theory, which describes *a strategic game under uncertainty* (Osborne, 2004 as cited on An et al., 2015). Hypothetical outcomes of the decision models appeared to vary depending on whether a TANF applicant is asked about domestic violence and informed about good cause waivers—features of routine screening protocol. Applicants who disclose abuse through the routine screening approach may have a chance to receive good cause waivers, but disclosure may be unavailable if applicants are not

asked about domestic violence and not informed about good cause waivers (An et al., 2015). An (2014) tested whether information regarding good cause waivers was associated with the recipients' actual and potential choice of other behaviors, using secondary data including 1125 California female welfare recipients who completed interviews between May 2000 and December 2002. Recipients who were informed about good cause waivers were more likely to consider applying for waivers. However, notification of good cause waivers was not associated with disclosure of abuse. While no other studies tested how frontline TANF caseworkers' screening behaviors for domestic violence are associated with applicants' behaviors, this study attempts to explore how applicants' disclosure of abuse and application for good cause waivers are associated with frontline TANF caseworkers' screening behaviors. This study assumed that core decisional outcomes made by victims of domestic violence include disclosure of abuse and applying for good cause waivers, based on the perspective of Bayesian strategic game theory.

As this study accounts for more than the game components, it also conceptualizes “*who needs good cause waivers among victims of domestic violence*” more explicitly and regards it as a core independent variable. In the informed and uninformed game models, women's experience with domestic violence was considered their need for good cause waivers due to barriers to complying with TANF requirements. Although not all victims of domestic violence have barriers to complying with TANF requirements (Fontana, 2000; Levin, 2001), the applicants' states or types as a victim or non-victim of domestic violence could be only assumed (An et al., 2015). This study posits that (1) victims of domestic violence with more barriers to complying with TANF requirements are more likely to perceive more need for good cause waivers compared to those with fewer barriers to complying with TANF requirements, and (2) the former are more likely to disclose abuse when they are informed about good cause waivers.

Conceptualizing disclosure of abuse and consideration of applying for good cause waivers related to frontline TANF caseworkers' screening behaviors, as well as the individual needs of victims of domestic violence, helped test the following research questions: 1) How prevalent are TANF frontline caseworkers' screening behaviors and screening outcomes?; 2) What are the barriers to complying with TANF requirements that victims of domestic violence experience?; 3) Are barriers to complying with TANF requirements, screening behaviors, and screening outcomes correlated?; and 4) Are there changes in preference in screening outcomes associated with screening behaviors?

Method

Participants

Participants were N=35 women who were former and current TANF applicants, and/or recipients who received services from one of the 46 local state certified family violence shelters and outreach programs between August 2014 and February 2015. Participants included African Americans (45.7%), Whites (31.4%), Latino/Hispanics (5.7%), and 'others' (17.1%). The majority of the participants (88.2%) were in their 20s (38.2%) and 30s (50%), and the average age for the sample was 32 years old. Approximately 80% of the survey participants currently (at the time of data collection) experienced domestic violence and resided in an emergency shelter or transitional housing due to domestic violence; 51.7% reported no income at all, with an average income of \$322.10. Many had no job (68.6%), had at least one child under 18 years old (91.4%); had a child under 12 months (14.3%), and received an average of 2.29 formal community and public services among a total of 16 examples such as child care, housing, and cash assistance.

Regarding TANF application, and/or receipt, a majority of the participants (72.7%) applied and/or ever received TANF between 2011 and 2015. Twenty-two women (62.9%) applied for, and/or received TANF, before they received services from a family violence program and 13 women (37.1%) applied for, and/or received TANF, through the assistance of a family violence program. The on-site application process was the usual method used for 23 participants (65.7%) while 9 participants applied initially on-line (25.7%). Two participants could apply for TANF with a third person's help (5.7%). Interview types that the participants experienced at least once included in-person only (21.2%), orientation only (9.1%), phone only (6.1%), and both in-person and orientation (12.1%); both in-person and phone (3.0%); both phone and observation (12.1%); and phone, in-person, and observation together (12.1%). Conversely, 11 (68.6%) participants had a phone-interview; 16 (54.3%), an in-person interview; 15 (57.1%), orientation; and 9 (25.7%), no interview. About 90% of the participants had such interview(s) without their male partner's presence. Eleven participants never received TANF after their application (34.4%); 17 (53.1%) received TANF between 1 month to 12 months after their application; 3 (9.4%), between 13 months to 47 months; and one (3.1%) reached 48 months of the lifetime limit. About 30 % of the respondents claimed child support, 11.8% were receiving child support, and about 60% of the women said that they were not required to work (N=34).

Procedures and Materials

Sampling criteria for this survey study included female victims of intimate partner violence who applied for and received TANF among the clients who received services from state certified family violence programs in Georgia. Participants were recruited and surveyed between August 2014 and February 2015 based on approval by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher recruited survey sites among the Georgia

Coalition Against Domestic Violence members between August and October 2014. Five to 30 pencil and paper surveys were handed out in person to each executive director of the recruited sites at the August 21st meeting of the GCADV members in 2014 or (e)mailed if recruited sites were determined within the three months following the meeting. Each agency was given return envelopes. The line worker at recruited sites provided an enveloped survey to the recruited survey participants, and the survey took about 15 minutes to complete. Once survey participants completed their responses, they were asked to place the completed instrument into the survey envelope and seal their envelope, and then give it to the line worker to collect any completed survey instrument until s/he sent the aggregated survey instruments to the researcher. The frequency of receiving completed surveys from each agency differed.

Data measures included five predictor variables and two outcome variables. Predictor variables included a TANF applicant's/recipient's experience with domestic violence, two types of barriers to complying with TANF requirements (barriers to complying with child support enforcement and readiness to work, and their self-reported experience with caseworkers' screening behaviors such as screening for domestic violence and notification for good cause waivers. Outcome variables included screening outcomes of domestic violence such as applicants' disclosure as well as their application for good cause waivers.

Demographic and TANF-related characteristics.

The survey collected information about applicants' non-identifiable demographic variables, such as age, ethnicity, level of education, current relationship status, their number of children under the age of 18, the number of their children whom the applicant supports, employment status, weekly working hours, TANF application methods, duration of the receipt of TANF, housing information, and formal support services that they receive.

Current experiences with domestic violence.

Domestic violence was defined as any ongoing physical, emotional, sexual, and controlling violence against female partners committed by a former or current spouse, or by intimate partners (Davies, 1998). The survey used the Hurt, Insult, Threaten, Scream (HITS) scale that demonstrates the highest levels of sensitivity and specificity to detect current intimate partner violence compared to other instruments of intimate partner violence screening, especially those used in primary health care settings (Sherin, Sinacore, Zitter, & Shakil, 1998). Each item was scored from 1-5, and total scores ranged from 4-20. An optimal cut score of greater than 10.5 was considered positive. Using this cut score, 91% of the patients and 96% of the abuse victims were accurately classified. The reported Cronbach's α was .80 for the HITS scale and the correlation of HITS and Conflict Tactics Scale scores was .85. The mean HITS scores for patients and abuse victims were 6.13 and 15.15, respectively (Sherin et al., 1998). In this study, Cronbach's α was $\alpha=.94$.

Barriers to complying with TANF requirements.

Barriers to complying with TANF requirements, such as work responsibility, child support enforcement, and lifetime limits in order to inflate the need for good cause waivers, were measured. All barriers to each type of a good cause waiver were conceptualized to influence safety and have a negative impact on participants' ability and capacity to attain self-sufficiency. Barriers to child support enforcement (BCSE) were operationalized as the level of perceived risk in safety by following paternity establishment and enforcement of child support. The items were mainly developed based on "behaviors and reactions reported by victims interested in applying for good cause" regarding child support (Pearson, Thoennes, & Griswold, 1999, p. 442). Meanwhile, other barriers to being ready for work and self-sufficiency (called readiness to

work—RTW) were measured and assessed through the degree to which the applicants and recipients were influenced by each item that they experienced. The indicators of barriers included work, employment readiness, mental/physical health problems, and available resources for childcare. As a result, this study developed instruments regarding barriers to child support enforcement that consisted of 7 items and barriers to readiness to work that consisted of 13 items. BCSE and RTW were 4-point and 5-point Likert scales, respectively. Higher scores indicate higher threats to safety and higher barriers to complying with TANF requirements as well as a greater need for a good cause waiver of one or more of the TANF requirements. Three domestic violence specialists in Georgia reviewed face and content validity. Cronbach alpha for BCSE was $\alpha = .85$ and for RTW, $\alpha = .76$.

Screening behaviors.

Screening behaviors were assessed by a question about whether applicants were asked if they were victims of domestic violence verbally and/or in written format, and another question about whether they were informed of good cause waivers. Both questions were dichotomous with yes/no responses. Twelve additional follow-up screening behaviors after disclosure of abuse were also measured with ‘yes’/‘no’ responses.

Screening outcomes.

Several dichotomous, ‘yes’/‘no’ questions measured screening outcomes, including whether a respondent did or did not disclose abuse to TANF caseworkers and whether they applied or did not apply for good cause waivers.

Preference changes regarding disclosure and application for good cause waivers.

Participants were also asked “if you did not disclose that you were/are a victim of domestic violence, would you reconsider this and tell your TANF caseworker about it during the re-assessment processes?” and “are you considering applying for a waiver from any of the TANF requirements?” Responses were ‘yes’ and ‘no’.

Results

Prevalence of Screening Behaviors and Outcomes

According to the respondents’ reporting on their experience with frontline TANF caseworkers’ responses, only about one-third (30.8%) were asked about domestic violence during the TANF application and assessment processes. Only six (24.0%) were informed about at least one of the three types of waiver options related to work, child support enforcement, and lifetime limits. Among these six respondents, only one heard about all three types of waivers. The proportions of respondents who were informed about the waiver or the exemption from work, child support enforcement, or lifetime limits were 17.2%, 6.9%, 3.4%, respectively.

Among the 26 respondents, 17 women (65.4%) disclosed to the frontline TANF caseworkers that they had experienced domestic violence. A few of them were actually interested in applying for waiver options: 4 out of 7 (57.1%) respondents were interested in the waiver option regarding child support enforcement; 2 out of 6 respondents (33.3%) were interested in the waiver option regarding the work requirement; and 3 out of 8 respondents (37.5%) were interested in the waiver option regarding the lifetime limit. Five out of 8 respondents were interested in applying for at least one type of waiver options.

For those who disclosed abuse during the TANF application and assessment processes, the most frequent responses from their TANF caseworkers included: “I was given an information card for domestic violence advocates” (62.5%), “I was helped to develop a safety plan” (50.0%), “I was given a brochure, “*What Every Woman Needs to Know*” (43.8%), and “I was asked if I have supporting documents, such as a police report or a medical record” (43.8%). Regarding the information related to “Good Cause”, 4 women (25.0%) were given written information about “Good Cause”, and 5 (31.3%) were told how she could benefit from receiving “Good Cause.” Among 15 disclosed women, only one woman actually “met with a domestic violence specialist to complete an in-depth assessment form with the domestic violence specialist based on the TANF caseworker’s referral.” Among these 26 respondents, 4 women applied for at least one of the good cause waiver options.

Intimate Partner Violence, Barriers to Complying with Child Support Enforcement and Readiness to Work

Table 3.1 shows descriptive statistics of current IPV experience using Hurt, Insult, Threaten, Scream Scale (HITS), barriers to complying with child support enforcement (BCSE), and readiness to work (RTW). Higher scores in all three instruments indicate higher prevalence. As this study targeted victims of domestic violence that received services from statewide emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or outreach programs, most participants were identified as current victims based on their HITS scores. The average scores on the four items of HITS were high, ranging between 3.12 ($SD = 1.49$) and 4.00 ($SD = 1.28$). In addition, this study deemed BCSE and RTW as essential factors related to the service needs of good cause waivers. Analyses showed that the respondents’ perceived BCSE had an average score on 7 items that ranged from 1.46 ($SD = .84$) for “child support enforcement may cause disruption of the process

of adoption of my child” and 2.50 ($SD = 1.20$) for “child enforcement may cause no benefit for me.” Mean scores of the 13 items that measured RTW ranged from 1.48 ($SD = 1.12$) and 3.44 ($SD = 1.72$). Items that had an average score above 3.0 included “I receive counseling due to partner violence,” “I receive mental health services,” “I do not have resources for child care,” “I want to leave my abusive partner,” and “I reside in a shelter.”

[Insert Table 3.1]

Barriers to Complying with TANF Requirements, and Screening Behaviors and Outcomes

As presented in Table 3.2, barriers to complying with TANF requirements such as BCSE and RTW were associated with some of the screening behaviors and outcomes. Whether the respondent was asked about domestic violence was strongly correlated with disclosure of abuse $r(18) = .42, p < .10$ as well as application for at least one waiver option, $r(18) = .41, p < .10$. In addition, those that were asked about domestic violence were also informed about at least one waiver option, $r(17) = .51, p < .05$. Moreover, whether a respondent was asked about domestic violence was associated with her barriers to complying with child support enforcement, $r(24) = .36, p < .10$. Readiness to work was not associated with the routine screening question by the frontline TANF caseworker, $r(24) = .15, p = .45$. On the other hand, whether a respondent was informed about at least one waiver option was not correlated with any of the barrier- and screening outcome-related variables, except “being asked about domestic violence.” Readiness to work, however, was associated with both screening outcome variables. Barriers to working was positively associated with disclosure of domestic violence, $r(23) = .44, p < .05$ and application for at least one waiver option, $r(23) = .62, p < .01$. By contrast, barriers to complying with child support enforcement were not associated with the screening outcomes. In addition, disclosure of abuse was not associated with application for good cause waivers.

[Insert Table 3.2]

Changes Regarding Screening Outcomes based on Information

This study offered several theoretical assumptions about the role of information processing regarding good cause waivers. Although these respondents were not given any details about good cause waivers in the survey, they had indirectly learned about the waiver options based on the survey participation. Thus, this study tested whether respondents would like to have more information about the waiver options, reconsider disclosing domestic violence, or reconsider applying for a waiver option based on crosstab analyses. Whether a respondent was informed about at least one of the good cause waiver options was not associated with any of the variables such as wanting to have more information about waiver options, re-considering disclosure of domestic violence, and reconsidering application for a waiver option at a statistically significant level. However, changes were observed after completing the survey at statistically non-significant levels. For example, among 18 uninformed respondents about good cause waivers, 14 of them (77.8%) were willing to have more information about the waiver options. Ten out of 16 (62.5%) uninformed respondents reported that they would also reconsider disclosure of abuse to the TANF caseworker. In addition, 13 out of 18 (72.2%) uninformed respondents reported that they might consider application for good cause waivers. On the other hand, among non-disclosed respondents about domestic violence, 4 out of 7 (57.1%) respondents said they might reconsider disclosure.

Discussion

This study attempted to provide a more holistic description of how victims of domestic violence experienced TANF application and assessment processes through evidence, including screening behaviors and outcomes as well as the participants' experience with domestic violence and barriers to complying with TANF requirements. Several features of the prevalence of screening behaviors and outcomes that the women reported were consistent or inconsistent with previous literature. Rates of screening (30.8%) as well as notification about good cause waivers (24.0%) were higher than most of the previous statistics, but they were not routinely practiced. On the other side, disclosure rates were 65.4% and the disclosure rate was more than twofold the screening rate. That is, some respondents disclosed domestic violence to their frontline TANF caseworkers although they were not asked about it. This finding may be interpreted based on where the data came from. Participants in this study were rather unique in that one-third applied for TANF after they received services from a family violence program. Although it was uncertain if they received direct, professional assistance, the majority of participants were residing in an emergency shelter. As TANF applicants require documentation of residency, a proof of residency at the shelter must be a prerequisite when meeting with a TANF caseworker. Such women might honestly not have had any choice about not disclosing abuse. The application rate for a good cause waiver among the respondents was 15.4%, and among disclosed victims of domestic violence, the rate was 23.5%. These findings are much higher than those found in previous studies. Also, good cause waivers might be a viable option to consider for the respondents in this particular population, compared to victims of domestic violence who might not be in an emergency shelter.

This study hypothesized that anyone who was asked about domestic violence and informed about good cause waivers was more likely to disclose and/or apply for good cause waivers. Unfortunately, due to the small sample size, this study could not test such informed decision model. However, separate relationships between one of the screening behaviors and the screening outcomes could be obtained, and they partially confirmed this working hypothesis. Both screening outcomes including disclosure of abuse and application for good cause waivers were positively correlated with “being asked about domestic violence,” while both screening outcomes were not correlated with “being informed about good cause waivers.” In addition, such two screening behaviors were positively correlated with one another, while screening outcomes were not correlated. Such finding can be interpreted a couple of ways. Direct screening might be more relevant than notification about good cause waivers to encourage disclosure and/or good cause waiver application. The use of direct questions was more effective in identifying domestic violence than obtaining information about good cause waivers (Lyon, 2000).

On the other hand, notification about good cause waivers targets a specific group of victims of domestic violence with specific needs and thus may not be relevant to encouraging disclosure and good cause waiver application for a majority of TANF applicants as well as victims of domestic violence. Thus, the other interpretation may allow one to see that the success of notification of good cause waivers may not always result in disclosure of abuse and/or good cause waiver application, as they may be normative outcomes. More meaningful outcomes could be related to offering information of one potential service option to victims of domestic violence.

Preferential changes about disclosing abuse, and/or considering application for good cause waivers after being exposed to this survey seems a contradictory finding that notification of good cause waivers was not correlated with disclosure of abuse and application for good cause waivers. Approximately 80% of respondents who were uninformed about good cause waivers at the time of TANF application and/or receipt wanted to have more information about waiver options, and 72% of them said they might consider application for good cause waivers. Over 60% of 16 uninformed respondents would re-consider disclosure. Such preferential changes imply that providing sufficient information for understanding good cause waivers could encourage disclosure and/or good cause waiver application.

Victims of domestic violence who have more barriers to complying with work requirement and child support enforcement are more likely to perceive more need for good cause waivers. This study attempted to measure service needs regarding good cause waivers through their expressed need that refers to the demands for a support service (Axford, Green, Kalsbeek, Morpeth, & Palmer, 2009). Also, this study described the participants' experience with domestic violence and barriers to complying with TANF requirements and identified the relationships between such needs and screening behaviors and outcomes. While barriers to complying with child support enforcement were correlated with "being asked about domestic violence," barriers related to readiness to work were correlated with both disclosure and application. Frontline TANF caseworkers may be more sensitive in identifying victims of domestic violence about the applicants' safety issues to apply for child support. By contrast, applicants with a lack of readiness to work are supposed to disclose abuse and/or apply for good cause waivers in order to be exempted from work requirements. So, these barriers may be considered as less important to be assessed by the TANF caseworkers and more important to be appealed by the applicants.

Implications for Social Work

This study may benefit the target population of interest, TANF applicants and recipients with children who experience both poverty and domestic violence in Georgia, by providing evidence of how to best assess and meet their needs. As discussed, routinely asking about domestic violence can facilitate those women's disclosure of abuse and actual application for good cause waivers. Although notification of good cause waivers did not have a direct relationship with the disclosure of abuse and application for good cause waivers, it would be presumptuous to conclude that such notification is ineffective compared to routine screening questions. Furthermore, such notification may not facilitate disclosure, but it may facilitate good cause waiver applications for the women in need. This in turn may facilitate disclosure but may not be related to good cause waiver applications. Future research, therefore, should gather data from larger samples to determine if the finding that 23.5% of the disclosed women's need to apply for good cause waivers is valid. Such application rates for good cause waivers among victims of domestic violence mostly residing in emergency shelters should be considered seriously, as was noted in this sample.

In addition, it appears that the best approach to assess the women's need may not be understood through comparison between screening and notification rates for at least two more reasons. The first is related to our social work ethics. Informed decisions may be of great importance among domestic violence screenings within the TANF application and assessment processes to enhance clients' self-determination. Self-determination was viable to clients when they were provided sufficient information about available options and explanation about why such options may or may not be beneficial for them. This study found information based on the preference changes regarding the respondents' interests in obtaining additional information about

good cause waivers and their intention to apply for them. As Lipsky (1969) and Watkins-Hayes (2009) noted, we may not be able to expect street-level bureaucrats to do people-oriented work, i.e., enhancing clients' self-determination. But as a social worker, we need to think about how we can penetrate social work values and ethics to this particular field. Women in situations such as living in shelters with pressing needs expressing their situations related to domestic violence need to know about what service options may be available.

The second reason is linked to social work advocacy against mainstream discourse on normative outcomes. Prevalence of problems matters; however, not only does social work practice identify problems but it also assesses the clients' individualistic needs (NASW, 2005). Social workers really need to think about how this need assessment element is as important as the problem identification. Routine notification of good cause waivers may be relevant to this assessment phase and it needs to be taken seriously. Such notification should be considered alternative outcomes of the success of domestic violence screening in TANF programs.

Finally, social work practice and policy-makers should consider readiness to work as an important matter for these women. Barriers to readiness to work were associated with their disclosure and application behaviors. This evidence supports the assumption of the TANF program that victims of domestic violence may have unique barriers or situations to address to comply with the work requirement. Frontline TANF caseworkers, therefore, need to pay attention to TANF applicants who disclose domestic violence and assess what barriers these women might have for compliance with the work requirement. Quality service consists of identifying victims of domestic violence and issuing relevant services to these identified victims, as well as ensuring that those ineligible do not receive waivers.

Limitations of this study are primarily related to the small sample size. This did not permit this study to make a valid test about the systemic relationships among barriers, screening behaviors, and screening outcomes based on multivariate analyses. This study also did not target victims of domestic violence at the time of TANF application, so some of the respondents were not victims of domestic violence when they applied for and received TANF. Due to the small sample size, this study could not eliminate those cases from the analyses, but such cases should be considered in any future research. Lastly, this study did not ask how well the respondents understood the good cause waiver options when they made their decision to disclose and/or apply for good cause waivers. These limitations need to be addressed in future work, as this will add more knowledge about how we ethically assess and process such clients in the various systems of care where we practice our altruistic work.

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Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics: HITS, Barriers to Applying for Child Support Enforcement and Readiness to Work (N=35)

		N	Range	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean (SE)	SD	Variance	Skew- ness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
HITS	Physically hurt you	34	4	1	5	106	3.12 (.26)	1.49	2.23	-.21 (.40)	-1.32 (.79)
	Insult or talk down to you	35	4	1	5	140	4.00 (.22)	1.28	1.65	-1.15 (.40)	.39 (.79)
	Threaten you with harm	34	4	1	5	124	3.65 (.26)	1.54	2.36	-.65 (.40)	-1.14 (.79)
	Scream or curse at you	34	4	1	5	133	3.91 (.23)	1.31	1.72	-1.03 (.40)	.01 (.79)
	Total	35	27	3	30	526	15.03 (1.04)	6.16	37.91	-.31 (.40)	.03 (.79)
Child Enforcement may cause	Serious physical or emotional harm to me	32	3	1	4	76	2.37 (.21)	1.16	1.34	-.01 (.41)	-1.50 (.81)
	Serious physical or emotional harm to my child	32	3	1	4	67	2.09 (.19)	1.09	1.18	.44 (.41)	-1.17 (.81)

	An abusive father to know where I live	29	3	1	4	72	2.48 (.24)	1.27	1.62	-.13 (.43)	-1.72 (.85)
	An abusive father to visit the child	30	3	1	4	69	2.30 (.21)	1.15	1.32	.09 (.43)	-1.50 (.83)
	Me to confront the abusive father of my child	31	3	1	4	73	2.35 (.21)	1.17	1.37	.04 (.42)	-1.53 (.82)
	No benefit for me	30	3	1	4	75	2.50 (.22)	1.20	1.43	-.07 (.43)	-1.54 (.83)
	No benefit for my child	31	3	1	4	70	2.26 (.22)	1.24	1.53	.26 (.42)	-1.60 (.82)
	Disruption of the process of adoption of my child	28	3	1	4	41	1.46 (.16)	.84	.70	1.75 (.44)	2.20 (.86)
	Total	35	55	0	55	590	16.86 (1.73)	10.24	104.89	1.28 (.40)	4.61 (.79)
Work-related Questions	Be injured by my partner	33	4	1	5	97	2.94 (.27)	1.54	2.37	-.06 (.41)	-1.45 (.80)
	Require acute medical	34	4	1	5	56	1.65 (.21)	1.23	1.51	1.78 (.40)	1.96 (.79)

conditions

Receive counseling due to partner violence	32	4	1	5	110	3.44 (.30)	1.72	2.96	-.54 (.41)	-1.50 (.81)
Receive mental health services	33	4	1	5	108	3.27 (.31)	1.79	3.21	-.33 (.41)	-1.75 (.80)
Need to meet legal appointments for my safety	34	4	1	5	60	1.76 (.20)	1.16	1.34	1.49 (.40)	1.64 (.79)
Need to meet legal appointments for child safety	34	4	1	5	56	1.65 (.19)	1.13	1.27	1.85 (.40)	2.92 (.79)
Interfered with working or going to school	34	4	1	5	93	2.74 (.29)	1.68	2.81	.24 (.40)	-1.59 (.79)
Be harassed on the job or at school	34	4	1	5	91	2.68 (.27)	1.55	2.41	.32 (.40)	-1.36 (.79)
Not ready to work	34	4	1	5	69	2.03 (.27)	1.55	2.39	1.20 (.40)	-.15 (.79)

Do not have resources for child care	34	4	1	5	108	3.18 (.30)	1.75	3.06	-.21 (.40)	-1.75 (.79)
Want to leave my abusive partner	31	4	1	5	113	3.65 (.32)	1.80	3.24	-.75 (.42)	-1.38 (.82)
Reside in a shelter	34	4	1	5	146	4.29 (.25)	1.47	2.15	-1.77 (.40)	1.42 (.79)
About to reach 48-month lifetime limit	31	4	1	5	46	1.48 (.20)	1.12	1.26	2.39 (.42)	4.99 (.82)
Total	34	45	12	57	1153	33.91 (1.64)	9.57	91.66	.35 (.40)	1.18 (.79)

Table 3.2

Correlation Matrix, Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, and Kurtosis:

Barriers to Complying with TANF Requirements, Screening Behaviors, and Screening Outcomes
(*N*=35)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Being asked about domestic violence	—					
2. Being informed about at least one waiver option	.51*	—				
3. Readiness to work	.15	1.13	—			
4. Barriers to applying for child support enforcement	.36+	.16	-.07	—		
5. Disclosed domestic violence	.42+	.35	.44*	.11	—	
6. Applied for at least one waiver option	.41+	.22	.62**	-.31	.29	—
M	.31	.24	33.91	16.86	.65	.15
SD	.47	.44	1.64	1.73	.10	.07
Skewness	.89	1.30	.35	1.28	-.69	2.04
Kurtosis	-1.32	-.35	1.18	4.61	-1.66	2.33

Note. + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

CHAPTER 4

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES OF THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE
FOR NEEDY FAMILIES WHO ARE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE³

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how victims of domestic violence who applied for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) experienced the application and assessment processes in Georgia, including the conditions related to their disclosure of abuse and post-experience of such disclosure. N₁,=5 victims of domestic violence, N₂,=4, local advocates for domestic violence, and N₃,=3 nationally recognized experts regarding screening for domestic violence in TANF programs were interviewed using semi-structured interview protocols. Grounded theory techniques were utilized to analyze these data. Two emergent major themes about participants' understanding of TANF application and assessment processes noted across all three cohorts were i) required procedures and ii) an understanding of TANF as a beneficial option. Four major themes about conditions related to disclosure of abuse included i) safety concerns, ii) working relationships, iii) taking time, and iv) removing barriers all together; and two additional major themes found for post-disclosure experiences included: i) access to service opportunities and ii) making decisions. These findings expressed as major themes and their related sub-themes can help us better understand how victims of domestic violence are actually supported, and how they can be best assisted in local TANF offices in Georgia. Social work implications for practice and policy are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: thematic analysis, TANF, domestic violence, Family Violence Option

Introduction

This study explores how domestic violence screening within the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is implemented in Georgia and experienced by victims of domestic violence who have applied for, and/or are receiving TANF, as well as key informants who assist victims of domestic violence at the community, research, and policy levels. The Georgia Department of Human Services (GDHS, 2013) mandated routine screening for domestic violence in accordance with the Family Violence Option, which is a federal law in accordance with the welfare reform of 1996. As such, local TANF offices in Georgia shall “(1) Screen and identify recipients of TANF assistance with a history of being victims of domestic violence, while protecting the confidentiality of any such recipients; (2) Refer any such recipients to counseling and supportive services; and (3) Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements for any such recipients of TANF assistance, such as time limits, for so long as necessary, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements...in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving TANF assistance to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such recipients who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence” (O.C.G.A. § 49-4-191).

Screening for domestic violence was mandated due to the high prevalence of victims of domestic violence across the nation. Approximately, 75% of TANF recipients were current victims of domestic violence and such prevalence is much higher than the 31% in the general population (Cheng, 2012). Victims of domestic violence were an unexpected sub-population in TANF. TANF attempts to be a primary prevention avenue by routinely identifying victims of domestic violence (Administration for Children and Families [ACF], 2014).

The Family Violence Option also requires appropriate responses toward potential victims of domestic violence to ensure their physical and financial safety. In accordance with the welfare reforms of 1996, TANF requires work or work equivalent activities, enforces child support from the biological father of a child, and sets lifetime limits for their recipients (Legal Momentum, 2005). Compliance with TANF requirements may make it difficult for some victims of domestic violence to maintain and/or achieve safety (Davies, 1998, 2010). Physical safety issues may arise from revealing the residency of the victim of domestic violence to the abuser through paternity establishment (Fontana, 2000). Abusers have sometimes harassed victims of domestic violence in their workplace or otherwise interfered with their work (Meisel, Chandler, & Rienzi, 2003). Domestic violence was also associated with deficits in readiness to work due to injuries, physical mental health issues, and/or lack of work experience (Coulter, 2004). As experience with both domestic violence and poverty requires longer recovery times, they may be considered for extension on lifetime limits. The relevant service needs to be explored due to both domestic violence and the impact of domestic violence on their capacity to regain self-sufficiency by complying with TANF requirements (Davies, 1998, 2010). Thus, mandatory screening protocols for domestic violence support victims of domestic violence for their physical and financial safety.

This study entails a policy analysis framework to better understand how victims of domestic violence experience TANF application and assessment processes and includes interviews of three different groups of participants: 1) victims of domestic violence who had ever applied for and/or received TANF; 2) domestic violence advocates who assist with TANF applications as well as domestic violence assessment for TANF; and 3) national experts of the Family Violence Option implementation.

Problems Assessing Domestic Violence

The reality of implementation of domestic violence screening in TANF is quite different from the policy expectations. Only 1-2 out of 100 welfare recipients disclosed experiences with domestic violence at screening among thousands of credible claims of domestic violence, according to 2000-2004 statewide data (Empire Justice Center [EJC], 2005). Among those credible claims, the waiver rate was .8% to 1.1% (EJC, 2005). Domestic violence in TANF administrative record data is consistently absent (Hetling, Saunders, & Born, 2006). Conversely, TANF programs inadequately and selectively screen for domestic violence and respond to disclosure. Furthermore, more than 70% of the TANF applicants were not asked about domestic violence (Lindhorst, Meyers, & Casey, 2008) and did not receive supportive services such as referral to domestic violence advocates (i.e., domestic violence specialists, experts, liaisons) (Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005)

There is a lack of evidence to understand the applicability and/or helpfulness of routine screening protocols for domestic violence in TANF. Rates of screening/identification for domestic violence, disclosure, referrals, and/or waivers provide quantitative data about how prevalent those behaviors are. However, such data do not imply anything about how such behaviors or decisions were guided. Process-based outcomes, such as safety, confidentiality, privacy-ensured screening for domestic violence, sufficient information of relevant services such as a domestic violence advocate or good cause waivers, and/or individual need-based assessment, are also important alternative outcomes (Hetling & Born, 2006). Prevalence-based outcomes, especially without such process-based outcomes, may distort the understanding of service needs of victims of domestic violence and overlook the question of whether victims of domestic violence chose to disclose abuse and/or needed special services.

It appears that meeting the policy expectations of the implementation of routine screening for domestic violence is difficult at local levels. Domestic violence may not be routinely screened at local levels despite federal policy mandated-routine screening protocols adopted by states. Organizational culture and relevant resources to screen for domestic violence as well as training and re-training of frontline workers available in local TANF offices are prerequisites (Lindhorst & Padgett, 2005). Thus, such understanding of local policy and practice of domestic violence screening is essential.

Rationale for Study

No previous studies allowed for an understanding of: 1) how different groups of people, including TANF applicants who experience domestic violence and victim advocates at frontline and research and policy levels together perceive and experience current TANF application and assessment processes, especially regarding the circumstances of disclosure of domestic violence; and 2) how victims of domestic violence are assessed and assisted throughout the TANF application and assessment processes. Thus, understanding how these groups of people consistently and/or inconsistently experience the TANF application and assessment processes will better guide implications of how victims of domestic violence are actually supported and how they can be best assisted in local TANF offices in Georgia.

This study also attempts to address several limitations regarding the routine screening for domestic violence in TANF and past empirical findings by using integrated data rather than disparate data and updated data rather than outdated data. Furthermore, this study questions the policy assumption that local TANF agencies will identify domestic violence and assist victims of domestic violence and that the victims will benefit from such approaches, rather than unconditionally accepting such anecdotal assumptions.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the TANF application and assessment processes from the perspective of different groups of people. These groups include TANF applicants who experienced domestic violence, domestic violence advocates, and national experts at research and policy levels. The following research questions guided this study: 1) How are the TANF application and assessment processes understood by victims of domestic violence and key informants?; 2) What are the conditions surrounding disclosure of domestic violence?; and 3) What are the experiences of victims of domestic violence who choose to disclose?

Conceptualizing a Social Work Perspective on Domestic Violence Screening in TANF

This study conceptualizes domestic violence screening in TANF through social work ethics such as social justice and promoting self-determination (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008). These core ethics provide assumptions for both TANF and the Family Violence Option. Social work ethics for social justice and self-determination guide the following principles (NASW, 2008):

- Social workers “pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people” regarding “issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice.”
- Social workers also need to “ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.”
- “Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals.”

TANF is a minimal safety net for financially vulnerable families with children. Routine screening for domestic violence aims to provide a safety net for the same but specifically for the sub-population of TANF recipients who have greater vulnerability due to domestic violence. Both TANF and the Family Violence Option together serve vulnerable societal members and support social justice. Routine screening for domestic violence also promotes self-determination that allows victims of domestic violence to choose their services within all available options. Self-determination appears to be a pre-condition for procedural justice that “refers to appraisals of how people are treated in the course of decision-making” according to Lind and Taylor (1988) (as cited in Fondacaro, Jackson, & Luescher, 2002, p. 342). A condition of publicity is considered an element of a fair procedure because it ensures information symmetry about opportunistic outcomes (Rawls, 1999), and it seems to anchor the value of self-determination for TANF applicants. Self-determination based on information of available services is a core tenet of a fair procedure and can help TANF applicants choose services. Victims of domestic violence may apply for good cause waivers if they know about them, so they may receive TANF in a safe environment and not be penalized through potential program sanctions. Ensuring self-determination based on a fair procedure seems to be related to promoting distributive justice regarding the receipt of TANF and any other supportive services due to the experience with domestic violence.

Conceptualizing those deemed ‘vulnerable’ and ‘more vulnerable’ clients within TANF is essential in order to make the distinction about the program goals between TANF and the Family Violence Option and to provide better understanding of vulnerability as the rationale for welfare services and collective responsibilities. Sen (2009) and Goodin (1984) are political philosophers who argued for an ethical response to the vulnerable through collective responsibilities. For

Goodin (1984), vulnerability refers to “the situation: A is vulnerable to B if and only if B’s actions and choices have a great impact on A’s interests, which is equated to welfare.” He also argued “it might be even better to try to eliminate the conditions making them vulnerable” (p. 783). “Saying that A is vulnerable to B” provides specific responsibility rather than saying “A is in need” (p.779); thus, the “strong special responsibilities toward families, friends, clients, and compatriots” (p. 775) was argued. On the other hand, vulnerability is not always defined by such moral reasoning. Vulnerability is also conceptualized through a mismatch between the focus of mainstream domestic violence policies and “the experiences and needs of vulnerable abused women at the intersection of race, class, and/or ethnicity” (Purvin, 2007, p. 190). Not only does this notion conceptualize multiple barriers as vulnerability, but it also conceptualizes vulnerability of the women within social welfare policy based on their available resources. Although the relative degrees of vulnerability such as ‘more vulnerable clients among TANF recipients due to domestic violence’ is hardly conceptualized and operationalized, one can still assess how TANF deals with their vulnerability and if TANF application and assessment processes could be a factor that may aggravate or mitigate the vulnerability of victims of domestic violence. A feminist standpoint contends we can explore the experiences and needs of “some extremely disadvantaged and vulnerable women” at the intersection of welfare reform and domestic violence (Scott, London, & Myers, 2002, p. 878).

In response to vulnerable and/or extremely vulnerable women, this study conceptualizes ‘just procedure’ as a means to enhance social justice that ensures self-determination of victims of domestic violence. Informed decisions to disclose and/or informed decisions to apply for good cause waivers are considered a ‘just’ model. This study does not conceptualize informed decision-making opportunity as the best model. Assisting TANF applicants to disclose their

experience with domestic violence by providing all relevant information is difficult to perform; however, informed decision-making to disclose and apply for relevant services may be possible based on the assumption of ethical quality of TANF caseworkers (An, Yoo, & Nackerud, 2015). An et al. (2015) defined social work ethics to enhance social justice and self-determination as core elements of the just model of domestic violence screening in TANF at interpersonal, organizational, and policy levels. Hence, this present study illuminates 1) the experiences and needs of the abused women who went through TANF application and assessment processes and 2) the conditions to promote the women's informed decision-making processes and outcomes as a 'just procedure' (in other words, what constitutes informed decision-making processes and outcomes). The present study explores women's experience with TANF application and assessment processes, and examines how such processes guide their decision to disclose.

Method

In order to explore how victims of domestic violence experienced TANF application and assessment processes, this study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). This renders an interpretive definition of theory that reflects multiple realities and "depends on the researcher's view" (Charmaz 2006, p. 239). As this study did not utilize theoretical sampling, rather than develop a theory grounded by the data, findings will be displayed using thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analyses can be incorporated with various theoretical frameworks and be tied to "a particular theoretical or epistemological position such as grounded theory" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Thick text description presents the findings through the interpretation of "circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations... that characterize a particular episode" (Schwandt, 2007 as cited in Freeman, 2014, p. 1).

Recruitment of Subjects

Several recruitment approaches were used to determine sampling criteria and recruit the participants. In order to provide a holistic understanding of the perspectives and experiences of the TANF application and assessment processes (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002), this study triangulated interviews with participants from three different groups: 1) current and former TANF applicants/recipients who were a victim of domestic violence at the time of TANF application and currently receive services from victim support agencies; 2) domestic violence advocates (formally called 'TANF assessor' in Georgia) who currently conduct family violence assessment for TANF programs; and 3) nationally recognized experts that are noted in peer-reviewed journal articles and/or for activism in the field of TANF and particularly the Family Violence Option. The purposeful sampling technique was employed to embrace variations in the interviewee's experiences with TANF programs and domestic violence screening during collecting and analyzing the data. This study interviewed recently hired domestic violence advocates ($N=2$ out of $N_2=4$), as there were organizational changes regarding the position of domestic violence advocates and their roles to assess family violence in local TANF programs.

This study also recruited both TANF applicant- and recipient-participants ($N_1=5$) as well as domestic violence advocates ($N_2=4$) among the clients and service providers within the members of the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV). In Georgia, there are 46 local state certified family violence shelters and outreach programs. Recruitment sites were established and procedures performed following several considerations and procedures. First, a gatekeeper who was an executive director of one of the GCADV members helped the researcher communicate with the Director of Training and Membership at GCADV. Second, the researcher was invited to present the research project to the agency representatives who attended a quarterly

GCADV meeting in Fall 2014. Twelve agency representatives agreed to provide an invitation letter about the interview to their clients who recently applied for and/or receive TANF and 5 of them also provided contact information of domestic violence advocates in their agency. Third, the potential participants received an invitation letter, and/or an information letter via emails before the interview. Regarding the nationally recognized experts, before proposing the study, the researcher had previous contacts and communicated with each individual through a phone conversation, an email, and/or an in-person contact as an interest group with the topic of the Family Violence Option. The researcher recruited the experts by sending an email invitation letter.

Participants

This study employed purposive sampling of ($N_1=5$) TANF applicants and recipients, ($N_2=4$) domestic violence advocates, and ($N_3=3$) nationally recognized experts. The interviewer did not collect any personal information, other than the information related to sampling criteria. Pseudonyms were used, except the names of nationally recognized experts were identified based on their consent agreement. Three of five TANF applicants/recipients (Esther, Kelly, Jessica) applied for TANF twice and four of them disclosed abuse to their TANF caseworker (Jane, Mariel, Esther, Jessica). Esther was the only TANF applicant who was considered for a good cause waiver related to her experience with abuse. Kelly and Jessica were exempted from work due to having a newborn baby. Jane would be in danger due to her past abuse experience if she complied with child support enforcement. Without any exemption or waiver, Jane, Mariel, Kelly, and Jessica withdrew from the TANF application process.

All domestic violence advocates worked at state-certified family violence shelters/outreach offices, and they routinely assisted their clients to apply for TANF, and/or received referrals from their local TANF office(s) to conduct family violence assessment. Two advocates (Debra, Emily) were former TANF assessors. TANF assessors used to be full-time domestic violence advocates who conducted family violence assessment in a local TANF office in Georgia (S. Dow, personal communication, February 10, 2015). Since 2008, TANF assessor positions are no longer available in Georgia. The other two (Devours and Kim) started employment after 2008. Devours used to attend TANF orientations that provided general information about TANF and the requirements and responsibilities of TANF recipients as a domestic violence advocate. Kim was still attending TANF orientation at the time of data collection.

Nationally recognized experts included Dr. Hetling and Dr. Lindhorst, university professors, and Ms. Menard, the Chief Executive Officer at the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. They advocate for victims of domestic violence in TANF programs across the nation. While Dr. Hetling's and Dr. Lindhorst's advocacy focuses on research, Ms. Menard's advocacy focuses on practice. They are perceived as policy advocates at local, state, and federal levels.

Data Collection

All interviews were conducted between September 2014 and February 2015. In-depth phone, Skype, and in-person interviews were conducted in the researcher's office, a private room at a GCADV member's agency facility, and/or the participants' house. This study employed semi-structured interview protocols that were structurally flexible compared with structured interviews (Mason, 2004). Participants received an information letter prior to the interview.

Additional consents were received from each nationally recognized expert to use his or her name for direct quotes taken from the interview. The study was approved by the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board in August 2014.

Common questions asked of all participants were related to how victims of domestic violence experience TANF application and assessment processes, how they are asked about domestic violence and informed about good cause waivers, what is difficult and easy about the TANF application and assessment processes for victims of domestic violence, and how they particularly benefit from both domestic violence screening and good cause waivers. The data collection was continued to “the point at which gathering more data about theoretical category reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 345). The researcher recorded field notes on the same day of the interviews after the interviews.

Data Analysis

This study used the constant comparative approach where the researcher constantly compares initial coding and categories so as to “establish analytic distinctions and thus make comparisons at each level of analytic work” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 132). First, initial coding of the interview transcripts, field notes, and Georgia TANF application and assessment forms was open; line-by-line coding including ‘*In Vivo Code*’ allowed the researcher to get familiar with the data and define a specific interview phrase(s) with relevant terms (i.e., receiving information of TANF requirements, withdrawing TANF application). After inductive, open-ended coding, the coding was more focused based on the same research questions. Then, theoretical coding at more abstract levels followed, after selecting codes during focused coding (Charmaz, 2006, p.150). For example, *taking extended time* was one of the themes regarding the conditions related to disclosure of domestic violence. Codes for taking extended time included “taking time to figure

out ability to comply with TANF requirements,” “further assessing domestic violence by multiple workers,” “further assessing it through co-located advocates,” “further assessing it through referrals to domestic violence programs,” “further assessing it at the point of making decisions about sanctions or service plan review,” “assessing delays in complying with service plan as a sign,” and “valuing time.” Contradictory codes that describe not taking time included “bureaucratic sense/response” and “drive through like response.” At each level of coding, the researcher wrote a theoretical memo and codes were interpreted at a more abstract level and categories and/or themes were developed based on this process. Two major themes emerged about participants’ understanding of TANF application and assessment processes noted across all three cohorts: i) required procedures and ii) an understanding of TANF as a beneficial option. Four major themes about conditions related to disclosure of abuse included i) safety concerns, ii) working relationships, iii) taking extended time, and iv) removing barriers all together. In addition, two major themes were found for post-disclosure experiences: i) access to service opportunities and ii) making decisions. The findings of major themes and sub-themes will be presented in the findings section.

Table 4.1 displays analytic processes based on open and focused coding methods and themes related to three research questions.

[Insert Table 4.1]

Researcher’s Positioning and Experience

I was first interested in application and assessment processes for public welfare services six years ago as a caseworker at a homeless shelter in New York City. At that time, I had a client who was dealing with multiple hardships. She found the homeless shelter because of her husband’s violence against her. She applied for TANF and received the work exemption, and

tried to apply for child care. As she spoke limited English, I went to a childcare office to get an application form for her. The frontline worker at the reception of the childcare office was extremely rude and did not provide the information that I stood there for. However, that was not the end of all the roadblocks. Although my client could apply for several public assistance programs successfully, her TANF and child care were sanctioned while she moved out from the shelter and moved around to different locations. This experience made me aware that public assistance programs are full of processes, hassles, and risks of discontinuation.

I had both insider and outsider perspectives of the participants' experiences, and I also positioned myself as a learner of their experiences and expertise. Over the six years through intensive readings and numerous discussions with teachers, research academics, and peer graduate students from social work and other social science domains, I have refined and repositioned my position regarding access to TANF issues for victims of domestic violence. I perceived my role as an ethical social worker and researcher who should advocate for clients, having aligned with critical theory and intersectionality like a critical ethnographer (Madison, 2012). However, I limited my advocacy only through evidence, not just through the advocating lens itself for data analysis. Not only did my advocacy target TANF applicants or recipients, but I also attempted to account for complications within TANF application and assessment processes by assuming multiple reality and meaning-making processes about the same experience by a different person like a constructivist (Bryant, 2007). Keeping my subjective biases in mind, I positioned myself to focus on the data and closely look at what was going on, rather than criticizing TANF caseworkers and/or TANF systems related to application and assessment processes. I tried to avoid any personal and professional judgments and carefully employed the social justice concept that I presented in the conceptual/theoretical framework.

TANF Application and Assessment Processes

All participant groups (N=12) understood the TANF application and assessment processes at different experiential knowledge levels and/or perspectives. However, they tended to consistently perceive the TANF application and assessment processes as complex procedures for victims of domestic violence. Also, they presented how they understood TANF in general. Two specific major themes identified were named *required procedures* and *understanding of TANF as a beneficial option*.

Required Procedures

Identifying their experiences with domestic violence among TANF applicants and assisting the identified victims of domestic violence are only a small part of the entire TANF application and assessment processes. Victims of domestic violence experienced common TANF application and assessment procedures like other TANF applicants. Such common TANF application and assessment procedures included initial application and individual or group interviews with an assigned caseworker. Victims of domestic violence may experience additional processes such as meeting with domestic violence advocates in the community-based domestic violence agencies. Such multi-faceted processes may be perceived as easy or difficult depending on the participant's varying life circumstances and the assistance that they could gain throughout the processes. Three sub-themes of required procedures were recognized by the participants: i) multi-faceted procedures; ii) variations; and iii) easy and/or difficult procedures.

Multi-faceted procedures.

The TANF application and assessment is indeed a multi-faceted process. There are multiple decisional points prior to approval for TANF such as blind eligibility screening through initial application and individual interviews or TANF orientation meetings. Additional decisional

points also exist for other supportive services regarding domestic violence such as screening for domestic violence, disclosure, good cause notification, follow up with disclosure, referral to a local domestic violence advocate, safety assessment, domestic violence advocate's recommendation for good cause waivers, etc. Key decision-makers are also various—frontline TANF caseworkers, applicants, and TANF supervisors as well as invisible administrative procedures, delays, or channels for communication with the applicants. With numerous decisional points as such, it is difficult to navigate and assess the whole process for following reasons: 1) any procedure can clog the opportunity for the next step in the process, and 2) any of the decision-makers mentioned previously and/or arising conditions can stop the procedures.

Variations.

Participants' experience with TANF application and assessment processes was varied. Variations occurred based on the circumstances that victims of domestic violence brought to the processes. Self-referred applicants for TANF by a victim of domestic violence appeared to face more difficulties in communicating with a TANF caseworker regarding their needs and in asking for relevant support, compared to applying for TANF as one of the services that a domestic violence advocate recommended. The latter were emergency shelter residents of domestic violence. They entered the application process with a proof of residency in which their shelter advocate explained their situation related to domestic violence, potential safety issues, and need for financial support. Self-applicants [Jessica, Jane, Kelly] decided to terminate the TANF application process, as they considered the TANF requirements ridiculously unreasonable. An applicant who received support from a domestic violence advocate also terminated TANF application. However, her decisions were rather voluntary although the potential support in contrast to the self-applicants might be available. Self-applicants also had serious safety issues.

Although a TANF applicant in Georgia normally participated in an interview with a TANF caseworker and received general information on TANF, the form of the interview might be different depending on the county/region and the time of application. TANF programs in Georgia tend to facilitate a TANF orientation that is a group-based orientation about TANF and TANF requirements. TANF orientations also function as a critical decisional point for both an applicant and a TANF caseworker based on their assessment for the fit between the TANF program and/or the program eligibility and the capacity of the applicants to comply with TANF requirements. A TANF orientation was available for all of the applicants except one. With recent changes in TANF programs, TANF orientations are no longer an option for some counties. An applicant who had applied for TANF twice (in 2001 and 2009) reported that in 2001, she was approved on the same day of the TANF application based on an individual, in-person interview with a caseworker. Such approach is no longer available in Georgia as an updated screening process does not allow an individual caseworker to determine TANF eligibility (GDHS, 2013).

Easy and difficult procedures.

Participants, especially the TANF applicants and the national expert cohort, perceived that the initial TANF application was easy to follow. Conditions of the TANF application and assessment processes perceived as easy to follow included friendly and supportive attitudes by the frontline TANF workers and availability of “a model program” in the service area. A model program indicates a collaborative, working relationship between TANF, a child support agency, and an in-house domestic violence specialist. One applicant and an expert expressed their opinions:

I feel like a lot of the DFCS workers are burnt out. I can't say that specifically, because that was one set of DFCS workers. I have DFCS workers in ... County that are amazing people, that if I need help I can go to them. There are some agencies still that will bend over backwards for you. (Jessica, TANF applicant)

...we see that some of the model programs that I was talking about 10 years ago don't exist now. The partnerships, the relationships don't exist now because of the dynamics I was just describing. A couple of places where those do continue reflect where a concern for domestic violence has been fully integrated and institutionalized. Responding to domestic violence was seen as not “extra” consideration, but seen as really central to the mission and goal of the welfare agency. The mission and goal of the agency is to create a safety net for survivors and also for people who are struggling economically. You either see domestic violence as a core part of that work or as an extra issue and when your funding gets tight or you lose leadership, or whatever, and you see domestic violence as extra, then it drops away. (Menard, national expert)

Georgia actually mandatorily maintained a model program until 2008, although such model program may barely exist now. Former TANF assessors reported that they used to grant waivers for more people, be more available to victims of domestic violence, and know more about how domestic violence is screened and assessed in their local TANF programs.

Conversely, such easy procedures were barely mentioned by the participants. The factors that they experienced or observed and deemed as difficult, regarding the TANF application and assessment processes, included dealing with a person and dealing with procedures. Victims of domestic violence felt shamed, mistrusted, judged, or misunderstood by the caseworker. Dealing

with the caseworker was “the worst part” for some. Another applicant stated, “So, I was like ‘whatever’. I felt like I already wasted my time...her attitude wasn't good enough, and I'm just like I don't want to deal with anything. So I just left” (Mariel, TANF applicant).

Such perceptions appeared linked to the gap between expectations for the caseworkers’ role and the reality that they experience. In reality, caseworkers were rather cold and treated them like a “drive-through customer.” Such interactions seem to characterize the interactions between the applicant and the caseworker as impersonal. These interactions were also one-way in that the applicant was the listener, while the caseworker directed the relationship.

In addition, dealing with procedures overall was perceived as difficult. Victims of domestic violence usually have multiple needs and relevant supports in a time-sensitive manner through crisis intervention (Lindhorst et al., 2008). Applicant-participants perceived there were “too many procedures and forms to fill out” and if they applied for good cause waivers, they needed to fill out additional forms. An administrative mistake to file the submitted form also resulted in the one previously mentioned application denial, and the applicant had to spend time appealing and re-doing the entire application process. Indeed, such waiting times can exacerbate the victims’ situation. Such experiences in dealing with a person(s) and procedures were rather convoluted, and created differences in the procedures that one experienced.

Victims of domestic violence and key informants perceived the TANF application and assessment processes differently. Victims of domestic violence tended to express stronger negative feelings of the processes, so they felt very annoyed by them. Conversely, domestic violence advocates, especially those who had personal relationships with the local TANF caseworkers, did not have any negative feelings toward their caseworkers. Rather, they explained that applicant fears were generated by the traditional image of welfare services related to child

protective services. The national experts also considered the difficulties in building trusting relationships between the applicants and the caseworkers as inevitable. Domestic violence advocates tended to be emotionally detached from their clients' experiences with TANF programs, and expressed no emotions based on their expectations for TANF caseworkers. The national experts did not expect such personal and supportive attitudes or approaches by the TANF caseworkers because of comprehensive, system-level barriers regarding domestic violence screening in TANF.

Understanding TANF as a Beneficial Option

The TANF application and assessment processes were understood, according to a participant's understanding of TANF, as a beneficial option. The participants believed that TANF was helpful based on three sub-themes: i) their need for TANF, ii) TANF requirements/responsibilities, and/or iii) available options.

Needs for TANF.

Participants evaluated helpfulness of TANF based on needs of the victims of domestic violence. In general, participants perceived TANF as a "potential resource," "last resort," and "valuable" money that temporarily supported their life. Victims of domestic violence apply for TANF with the need for temporary financial support, but they have differing resources to be successful in a TANF program and obtain self-sufficiency (Lyon, 2002). Victims of domestic violence who do not have current safety issues but have resources, such as transportation and informal child care would have the least problem to comply with the work requirement. Indeed, while domestic violence advocates found that most clients could comply with TANF requirements, there are victims of domestic violence categorized as "too needy," like these study participants. All five participants reported they had no transportation or child care. Women who

are “too needy,” appeared to be the least successful group in TANF and they could not navigate the application processes. They are vulnerable due to the impact of domestic violence such as physical and mental health issues and life changes such as leaving the abuser so as to deal with the changes by being “on my own” and moving to a new location. Sometimes, an issue is big and at other times multiple issues are convoluted related to their vulnerability. It should be noted that due to such vulnerability, the participants valued TANF money as beneficial and also valued work as a potential resource. Mariel, an applicant, echoed this sentiment.

They [domestic violence advocate] write the letters because it helps people get the resources faster than most people will get because we are homeless technically, and we are victims of mental illness or violence, abuse. So the money will be more necessary for us because we need it... I need it, I really did, I have two months left here [emergency domestic violence shelter] until I have to leave, and be on my own, and having money in my pocket is great. And I couldn't find a job, and they saw that I was searching for jobs; I had interviews, and they had records of me going to interviews and I just didn't get the job for whatever reason. But I needed money. (Mariel, TANF applicant)

Responsibilities/requirements.

Participants also understood TANF based on their appraisal of costs and benefits, between TANF requirements/responsibilities and potential benefits from receiving TANF. Victims of domestic violence are also vulnerable if they have the lack of resources to comply with TANF requirements. By attending the TANF orientations and getting information about the requirements, applicants transformed their concept of TANF as a conditional benefit and/or little help compared to responsibilities. TANF seemed unattractive, the more applicants knew more

about it. Another reason that TANF was an unattractive option was the ‘paying back policy’, and the relationship between non-compliance with TANF requirements and the potential penalty and multiple program sanctions on other public benefits. TANF applicants were recipients of multiple public benefits such as Food Stamps and Medicaid. Once an applicant obtained a job, they had to pay back monies by receiving less money for Food Stamps. If they do not get a job, Food Stamp benefits will be deducted and sanctioned as well. If receiving child support, the child support money will be paid back to TANF. Also, if an applicant gets a job, she has to pay the childcare cost. Applicant-participants perceived this paying back and/or penalty-based relationship among public benefits as a heavy cost. Such behavioral tendency is defined as loss adverse behaviors in which one chooses an option with less loss (Kahneman, 2003; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

Available options.

Unless victims of domestic violence are exempted from relevant TANF requirements and thus exempted from paying for child care, Food Stamps, and/or Medicaid, they were likely to feel TANF was not beneficial. In fact, without exemption, they decided not to continue the application processes.

The first time I was like, “I’m a single mom. I have a three-month old. There’s no way I can look for a job 40 hours a week.” It has to be like 30 hours of walking around looking for a job and actually job searching and then 10 hours on the computer or something like that. It might be vice-versa. You have to put in so many applications and you have to be referred to a job practically. Add to the mix that you have to find a job. It got me discouraged, so I walked out really along with a bunch of other people. (Kelly, TANF applicant)

The TANF program is “for nobody” except those eligible for exemption, or those who are able to find a real job. TANF was perceived as a welfare benefit with the highest entry barriers, when compared to other benefits. As TANF seems not available for all women who have financial need, exemptions or waivers for TANF requirements were not available or not an option for victims of domestic violence who had safety issues. Such availability to have their needs regarding safety assessed and to receive relevant services made the victim of domestic violence perceive TANF as being beneficial.

Conditions surrounding Disclosure of Domestic Violence

Four main themes were found for conditions surrounding disclosure of domestic violence based on the perspectives of all three groups (N=12) of participants. *Safety issues* caused by domestic violence were the key condition that made the victims of domestic violence disclose abuse to the TANF caseworker. *Working relationships between the local TANF program and domestic violence agency* made disclosure of abuse easy during TANF application and assessment processes. *Taking extended time* was a prominent factor that all three groups of participants mentioned. However, *removing all barriers together* was the condition to disclose domestic violence.

Safety Issues

Safety issues appeared to include two sub-themes: i) abuse-caused vulnerability and ii) financial vulnerability. Abuse-caused vulnerability is related to an ongoing safety issue, especially with complying with TANF requirements. Financial vulnerability is related to resources and circumstances that threaten financial safety of the victims of domestic violence.

Abuse-caused vulnerability.

TANF applicants disclosed abuse to the TANF caseworker when they had ongoing safety issues. Without no ongoing abuse, she disclosed her abuse history to the caseworker if she perceived the risk that claiming for child support was likely to reveal her location to the former abuser, the father of her child.

They [Two TANF officers] said they would do a DNA test. They said that when I take the TANF, the father of my child has to pay back through child support.

They said that they would do the DNA test... They said there is a way that we didn't have to go, like we will be harmed or something like that, but I wasn't eligible for that. They said that I am not eligible to not have him [the father of my child] involved. I try not to do that because it gonna cause some problem. But they told me I have to... He is angry and violent. I didn't want to deal with it because he would be mad and violent; he hit me long enough and I don't want to be hit by him anymore... She told me that if I did, there is a way to protect me, but if I didn't, then I cannot receive TANF. That's why I got it for one month.

They kept pushing me to go after my abuser. (Jane, TANF applicant)

Financial vulnerability.

Pregnancy and having a newborn baby appeared to be the primary factors to disclose abuse to the caseworker, as such conditions really circumscribed the victim's capacity to deal with financial needs and increased the need for financial support. That is, domestic violence seemed to increase one's financial vulnerability, especially when victims were pregnant or a single mom had to raise a newborn alone. As a result, they desperately needed substantial help from TANF.

Working Relationships

TANF is “one of the avenues of identifying domestic violence” in public sectors like many other areas [A. Hetling, nationally recognized expert interview, September 26, 2014]. Indeed, victims of domestic violence who disclose abuse to a TANF caseworker are already receiving services from a domestic violence agency in the same community. Four sub-themes of working relationships between local TANF offices and local domestic violence agencies included: i) bi-directional referral relationships, ii) relationship strengths, iii) relationship changes, and iv) self-referred victims.

Bi-directional referral relationships.

Participants identified the relationship between the local TANF program and local domestic violence agency as important for victims of domestic violence to disclose abuse to a TANF caseworker. From all four interviews with domestic violence advocates, the following bi-directional referral directions were identified: 1) a local domestic violence advocate referred a client with financial need to apply for TANF sometimes with the completed form of family violence assessment; and 2) a local TANF caseworker referred an identified victim to the domestic violence advocate for family violence assessment. Interestingly, the strengths of such two-way referral relationships were different. The referral relationship from an advocate to a caseworker was stronger than the referral relationship in the opposite direction. Basically, victims of domestic violence referred by a domestic violence advocate disclosed domestic violence to a TANF caseworker based on a sense of urgency and understanding. They presented that they were staying in an emergency domestic violence shelter or showed a letter from an advocate that described their situation.

Strengths of the relationships.

The strength of these relationships also partially describes the quality of these relationships. The quality of the relationship seemed very important, as an individual professional considered the conditions that determined the quality of domestic violence screening and influenced the applicant's disclosure decision to a caseworker. The quality of the relationship with a local TANF program allowed for a domestic violence advocate to attend a TANF orientation meeting and interact directly with the applicants. Such relationships provided another opportunity for a victim of domestic violence to disclose abuse, based on the information of domestic violence and of the advocate and her agency as a potential resource.

Relationship changes.

Working relationships between an advocate and a caseworker fluctuated somewhat, so similar conditions for disclosure of abuse were available at specific times and settings, but they were not available on other occasions. The TANF programs had experienced numerous changes in staffing and in their local policies regarding the (referral) relationship with a local domestic violence agency. Regarding such influences, national experts and local domestic violence advocates talked about federal and state policy regarding domestic violence as not being that powerful. The local policy of performing domestic violence screening at the implementing level seemed most influential. TANF applicants'/recipients' experiences with TANF application and assessment processes also revealed that both local implementing policy and entering such processes based on assistance from domestic violence advocates made the processes rather easy. Thus, conditions for disclosure of abuse appeared to be not solely an individual decision; instead, they encompassed the local, state, and federal policy influences that facilitate the advocate-TANF caseworker relationships.

Self-referred victims.

Such working relationships were missing for self-referred TANF applicants. Such missing conditions seem to deprive one of opportunities to disclose and/or undermine the credibility of their disclosure. Self-referred victims of domestic violence who applied for TANF did not disclose abuse to their caseworker, until the point that they perceived barriers to comply with a required responsibility with the TANF application and assessment processes. In addition, they tended to disclose abuse without any understanding of what that meant, and talked about abuse while explaining their general need regarding TANF. Their disclosure was also perceived as ignorable by the caseworker and not seriously taken. Although a working relationship does not always help in understanding and gaining information about why they (are better off to) disclose in relation to potential services, self-referred clients tend to lose such arbitrary opportunities.

Taking Extended Time

Taking extended time included two sub-themes: i) providing multiple opportunities to disclose and ii) active listening.

Providing multiple opportunities to disclose.

Taking extended and monitored time illustrates that victims of domestic violence need to be provided multiple opportunities to disclose throughout the initial intake, orientations, ongoing monitoring, referral to a domestic violence advocate, and the time of sanction. The victims also needed to be provided with such opportunities by the TANF frontline workers. Taking extended time means continuous screening for domestic violence and the needs of victims of domestic violence. Such approach can increase awareness of their experience with domestic violence as well as their own needs over time.

The best way to understand the needs of the other person in front of you is to take the time to listen and have them tell their story, and have enough time to say, “you mentioned this and how do you think that impacts your ability to purchase a vehicle to get to work, and your ability to meet work requirements, or child support requirements, how will the time limits affect you?”. And “are you interested in talking about domestic violence?...” In other words, having a conversation with somebody to understand how the disclosure of domestic violence will impact their receipt of domestic violence, and then once there is a disclosure or even if there's not a disclosure to then provide information that will be helpful to somebody who is also dealing with domestic violence in the context of the economic support issues. How to understand and move forward on both of those issues requires time. [Menard, national expert]

Taking extended time allows victims of domestic violence to disclose the changing reality of the impact of domestic violence on their ability to comply with TANF requirements. For instance, one interview screening for domestic violence cannot identify changing safety issues.

We had a woman who was working. While she was working, she decided to apply for child support because she hadn't seen her abuser for a while so she thought this was the right timing to apply for child support. Somehow, when applying for child support, he was able to find out where she was working and he actually came to her work place and started harassing her. After going to the work place, he was able to get into her facebook and started stalking her or harassing her on facebook. Of course, her and her employer decided it wasn't safe for her to

continue working there so she came here and it was decided that she should leave the job at that time and take a period until she applies for TANF and works on a TPO [Temporary Protective Order] and try to overcome those barriers and get him accountable for his behaviors. So she did then applied for TANF. At that time we helped her to apply for TANF, we did not send her with waiver. But DFCS sent her with a waiver form back to us and we did the assessment and filled out that with a waiver. She actually received TANF for a period of time while she was able to file a TPO. (Debra, domestic violence advocate)

We had a client that I worked with. She was actually moving out of our [emergency shelter]. She was taking part of the TANF program. She was not on a waiver. And they even didn't send her for an assessment. But, about two weeks maybe a week into her work experience with TANF, she ran into her abuser's sister while they were in a TANF work experience. So, they referred her to us and she came to see me and I did waivers for her to waive the work experience because it was not safe for her to be there and to make sure that he didn't know whether she is in our county. So we did a waiver. So she was able to do a job search on her own and she found a job within three weeks. But in that time, she was not ... which was a really good thing. (Emily, domestic violence advocate)

Active listening.

Active listening to victims of domestic violence requires taking extended time. Not taking time seems to be related to perpetuating the mistrust between caseworker and applicants. TANF applicants perceived impersonal and "drive through" responses from their TANF caseworkers. Listening to their stories is contradictory with typical "bureaucratic response" [T.

Lindhorst, nationally recognized expert, October 15, 2014]. However, such interpretation of the communication style with a TANF caseworker appears to represent reality that is in contrast to the “taking time” phenomenon. “Here’s your form, fill out this form, sign this form that I gave you before, you know, that is not a meaningful response.” There is no space to listen to other peripheral stories.

Removing All Barriers Together

Removing all barriers also seems to be important and is not overlapped with other major or sub-themes. Victims of domestic violence appear ‘not to disclose’ abuse when a single barrier that interferes with disclosure is removed. They seem to disclose when every barrier for each individual was removed all together. Removing all barriers together represents a safe environment to disclose. Removing all barriers together includes two additional sub-themes as important approaches, especially for disclosure of abuse—quality work and local/federal policy influence.

Quality work.

Quality work based on professional ethics seems to be important to support a safer environment to disclose abuse. Ethical workers indicated “exceptional workers,” who sensitively deal with confidentiality and privacy issues, maintain non-judgmental attitudes, and/or enrich human dignity and social justice throughout the screening processes for domestic violence. In addition, “exceptional workers” should have interpersonal skills as well as practice knowledge. They should use an empathetic approach and screening to prompts/checklist to ask about domestic violence.

I usually will have them [referred clients from a local TANF office] to fill out a very short preliminary document that had their name, address, phone number, a

case manager's name, and a very brief description of ... county office... Then, I meet them in person and talk to them about their needs as far as complying with the TANF program. "So do you understand what it is they ask you to do?" and "do you feel like you have any barriers?" So I try to make it very ... empathetic in the safety-planning piece, which is a next step. I usually talk to them in more details of any safety risks to participate in any part of TANF program. Then, they usually prompt me to ask them, "Do you feel like that's going to keep you from being able to do this in TANF?" So, really it's a conversation about this is what DFCS expects and do you feel like that you can do all of that given what's going on as far as domestic violence is concerned. (Emily, domestic violence advocate)

Quality workers may facilitate information-based decisions for victims of domestic violence. Facilitating information-based decisions indicate that victims of domestic violence would benefit from having relevant information. Also, sufficient information guides their decisions for disclosure of abuse within the TANF application and assessment processes. They need to be informed about why they need to disclose, what services/support would be relevant to their situation, and/or what consequences they can expect from the action of disclosure. Such approaches seem to alleviate fear and uncertainty at the individual level.

...what supports disclosure in that incident ... There's knowledge of, okay, so if this is a barrier, how can you put that and have that be a support? The support there would be privacy confidentiality assurances that anything that you're sharing about domestic violence will be confidential, that your privacy is going to be respected, and that you're going to get information. (Menard, national expert)

Local/federal policy influence.

However, especially the national experts pointed out such “exceptional workers” as being unrealistic, unless conditions for quality work are expected by the organizational level and trickled down from the top, the real mandatory policy. Cultural perspectives toward the “deservingness” of TANF and other supportive approaches for women in a domestic violence situation are the key [T. Lindhorst, nationally recognized expert, October 15, 2014]. Thus, facilitating a safe environment to disclose abuse requires collaboration from all different levels. Removing a single barrier is insufficient. Applicant-participants were somewhat blind about the conditions regarding the information-based decision, but they actively interpreted the caseworkers’ quality. They also mentioned barriers at the systems level and made a distinction between the workers’ fault and the systems’ fault. Participants, especially the key informants, perceived removing all barriers together a difficult to achieve. They suggested removing key barriers that appear to be plausible.

Experiences of Victims of Domestic Violence who Chose to Disclose

Two major themes were found for the post-disclosure experience among victims of domestic violence, according to victims of domestic violence who disclosed abuse to their TANF caseworker (N=4 out of N₁=5): *Access to service opportunities* and *making final decisions*. Findings from four interviewees who disclosed abuse to TANF caseworkers were interpreted for this section.

Access to Service Opportunities

Access to service opportunities indicates alternative procedural outcomes for domestic violence screening. Key informant-participants de-valued the normative outcomes for getting a good cause waiver, for example, and underscored that there are alternative outcomes and benefits of domestic violence screening. Thus, post-disclosure experiences, including both the normative and alternative outcomes, were interpreted as meaningful. Alternative evaluation would be valuable for learning how disclosed victims of domestic violence were treated particularly through access to available opportunities. Such opportunities included three sub-themes: i) additional procedures for further assessment, ii) access to relevant information, and iii) receiving support for domestic violence or non-domestic violence-related issues.

Additional procedures.

One of the four disclosed victims of domestic violence went through additional assessment procedures. Otherwise, they were not further asked about their disclosure and their disclosure was not integrated with their service needs. Additional procedures that are ideally supposed to be present for victims of domestic violence appeared to be unavailable for the other three victims of domestic violence. Additional procedures seemed to be blocked by the caseworker's discretion. Otherwise, the disclosed victims of domestic violence were expecting to meet a domestic violence advocate to fill out a family violence assessment form. Such additional procedures seem to be working, based on the working relationships between the TANF caseworker and the domestic violence advocate. In addition, there was a cyclic relationship among the victim, the caseworker, and the advocate. The victim initiated the TANF application based on the help from the same advocate, and the caseworker sent the victim to the advocate for further assessment. Such relationship enabled the disclosed victim to experience such additional

procedure without difficulty. Additional procedures required time-sensitive management for the respective individual. The victims of domestic violence had to deal with deadlines to submit the paperwork. Any procedural delays will postpone the receipt of TANF paycheck, as noted below.

She [TANF caseworker] said that if I can get this paperwork filled out I won't have to worry about going to do job searches, but that's just if it's a medical reason. I don't know what doctor I'm going to see to get this filled out yet, if I'm going to go to my primary doctor or my family doctor, but I got to get one of them to fill it out before the 29th ... This is a whole different county for me, because I'm from ... County about an hour or so away. (Esther, TANF applicant)

Access to information.

Additional procedures are distinguished from access to information although the former is the critical means to increase the latter. As information-based decisions are perceived as important conditions to disclose abuse, information during the post-disclosure experiences appeared to be equally important. The essential information discussed prior to or post-disclosure processes is about good cause waivers from various types of TANF requirements. TANF requirements and the TANF recipients are profoundly accentuated but their rights for service options are unequally visible and notified.

TANF programs in Georgia have a routine notification policy of good cause waivers in a written format. This was mentioned by one applicant-participant who recently applied for TANF. The other participant knew about it, as she was actually in the process of applying for good cause waivers due to domestic violence. The other two self-referred TANF applicants did not know about the waiver options and were not informed about them.

National experts also valued explanations of the information. Rather than just notification through a paper and a verbal format, it is really about a clear explanation to help the victim of domestic violence foresee what they expect from a different option. Victims of domestic violence might be routinely informed about good cause waivers, but they might hardly recall it if the information was not clearly explained.

There is another access issues regarding other types of services issues. The information of a domestic violence agency in the community, brochures, and/or the contact information also seem to be important to be provided to TANF applicants. The key informants, in relation to ensuring disclosed and non-disclosed victims of domestic violence and opening the gateway to receive alternative support and benefits, emphasized the function of these types of information. If a TANF client cannot follow up with the disclosure and identify relevant needs, s/he may refer the identified victim to a domestic violence advocate to substitute such roles. The TANF application and assessment processes that disclosed victims of domestic violence experienced might or might not process such concerns.

Receiving support for (non-) domestic violence-related issues.

Access to service opportunities also included actual support that the victims of domestic violence received or did not received. While procedural outcomes as well as good cause waivers were also considered the outcomes to access service opportunities, available outcomes seemed to be binary and random. Victims of domestic violence perceived that very limited information and support was provided that they could consider a service option. Thus, to them, they received almost no support following their disclosure. Although an applicant-participant was about to complete the application or good cause waiver due to the situation related to domestic violence, she seemed to perceive difficulties in going through these procedures.

Experience with procedural outcomes, and/or applying for/receiving good cause waivers seems to be random, depending on many factors such as presence of a domestic violence advocate in a TANF orientation, a staff member from the division of child support in TANF orientation sessions, the number of orientation attendees, the issues that TANF attendees bring to these meetings, treating domestic violence as a topic, etc.

Sensitivity to respond to the disclosure appears to be truly important. Victims of domestic violence perceived that sensitivity or insensitivity was a large concern in the interactions with frontline TANF workers, as well as TANF systems at organizational and policy levels. They did not perceive or perceive sensitive responses following their disclosure.

Receiving support for their work was another prominent property of support. Work is an important resource for victims of domestic violence to gain safety and self-sufficiency (Davies, 1998; McKean, 2004). Victims of domestic violence are motivated to work when they applied for TANF. However, applicant-participants perceived no relevant support to participate in their voluntary work activities or to get a job. Child care was the largest barrier as indicated below.

I wanted to pay for daycare. I couldn't get daycare assistance. I don't have child support. I'm a real single mom. I don't have child care. I don't get any income. I'm trying to find a job. I apply to jobs, and I was a current victim of domestic violence... I thought that when you go to TANF you just apply, and if you meet the requirements, then they'll approve or deny you. Then a certain time, like food stamps, they just get you a card and you start receiving the stuff. But, the activities kind of threw me off track because I was like "Hmm, I have my son and that's the main thing." If I didn't have [her son's name], I would be able to go out and do those things. But I had him, and it was depressing, because I already had

called some of the places ahead of time that say you can't bring your child when you go, you know? (Mariel, TANF applicant)

The only time that the woman is not gonna benefit from a waiver is if there is nothing actively happening at that time she is applying for TANF. She is able to go to work and she can find child care. One of the barriers is transportation. It is really different to work through the work requirement, but we don't recommend a waiver if there is no safety issue. (Debra, domestic violence advocate)

Making Final Decisions

Making final decisions for TANF was an interesting major theme in the post-disclosure experiences of a victim of domestic violence. Depending on how their disclosure was treated by the following procedures, victims of domestic violence decided to withdraw or continue the TANF application. Somehow, one non-disclosed victim of domestic violence also made a final decision, so the final decision can be made at different decisional nodes. However, a majority of the victims of domestic violence in this study disclosed experiences of abuse to the TANF caseworker and they were either voluntarily or non-voluntarily dropped out from the remaining TANF application and assessment processes. Such experiences include two sub-themes: i) evaluating helpfulness of TANF with or without its requirements and ii) continuing or discontinuing the TANF application.

Evaluating helpfulness of TANF with or without its requirements.

Both types of victims of domestic violence with or without actual exemption or waivers perceived that good cause waivers were quite helpful. Not only was TANF with requirements not beneficial for victims of domestic violence, it was difficult to meet said requirements. Helpfulness of TANF is a similar sub-theme to responsibilities/requirements under the major

theme of understanding TANF as a helpful option. However, disclosing their experience with domestic violence to a TANF caseworker can be perceived as their best try. For a victim of domestic violence, telling the caseworker that she is living in a domestic violence shelter was asking for help that depreciated her pride as an independent single mother. After the victims disclosed abuse and explained how it would be difficult to comply with child support enforcement and/or work, they were frustrated, annoyed, or shamed by the responses that they received. At that point, the helpfulness of TANF with TANF requirements becomes clearer and their evaluation would get more credibility. Such evaluation may be the outcomes of making efforts to advocate for themselves and having confidence about their evaluation. Exemptions or waivers from relevant TANF requirements appeared to be a serious matter for all the applicants for different reasons.

TANF is an essential support to offer resources for the necessities of child rearing, but complying with TANF requirements or complying with TANF requirements without relevant support was not deemed helpful. Recipients would jeopardize their situations by taking on other priorities or tasks: spending time with a child, delaying schooling, negligence with emotional/mental health issues, and/or health issues.

Continuing or discontinuing the TANF application.

Except for one of the applicants who was in the process of applying for good cause waivers for both child support enforcement and work, the others discontinued their TANF application. For example, one closed her application because she did not comply with child support enforcement. She did not want to deal with the former abuser by complying with child support enforcement because he had severely abused her and exerted fatal abuse toward their child. The other participant discontinued the application because she found “no way” of

complying with the 40-hour work requirement in the domestic violence situation. She had just moved out from the abuser with two children and had no informal support systems. Another participant also discontinued the TANF application, as her situation was not sensitively assessed after her disclosure of abuse. She was living in an emergency domestic violence shelter and experiencing severe depression. She perceived that she was not quite ready to work. Thus, the post-disclosure experience appeared to produce an additional decisional point to continue or discontinue the TANF application for victims of domestic violence.

Concluding Remarks

Regarding question #1--how are the TANF application and assessment processes understood by victims of domestic violence and key informants?, TANF application and assessment processes facilitate the understanding of the fit between the program and the applicants' need based on multifaceted procedures. Participants, including victims of domestic violence, domestic violence advocates, and national experts, perceived TANF application and assessment processes to be difficult to go through for the victims of domestic violence. TANF was perceived as merely beneficial especially when applicants learn more about the program requirements and program penalty and potential sanction. Regarding question #2—what are the conditions surrounding disclosure of domestic violence?, the prominent conditions surrounding disclosure of domestic violence were not just about safety issues; rather, the working relationship between the local TANF office and the domestic violence agency, and taking extended time were considered crucial conditions. Regarding question #3—what are the experiences of victims of domestic violence who choose to disclose?, that access to service opportunities was difficult but it should be something that is ensured. Domestic violence screening in TANF is not about good cause waivers; instead, it is about safety, information, and opportunities.

A comprehensive discussion point based on these findings is that domestic violence screening in TANF is about navigating processes. These processes need to be considered as outcomes. It is not the goal of domestic violence screening in TANF to identify every victim of domestic violence among the applicants and recipients or to grant waivers or exemptions to every identified victim of domestic violence. The findings of this study illuminate the processes as outcomes regarding safety-ensured processes: safety from domestic violence and safety from potential penalty, and/or program sanction. The participants implied that the processes need improvement to help victims of domestic violence access given opportunities such as relevant procedures and information related to their need.

Another discussion point is that any generalizable assumption that all victims of domestic violence need certain service should be considered an obsolete idea. Victims of domestic violence possess individual needs. Their needs can be supported differently, not just based on identification of domestic violence and/or granting good cause waivers. They want to work based on relevant support such as child care, and/or transportation or they want to work after recovering from the impact of domestic violence. That is, such individual needs should be well identified and supported.

The findings of this study also underscore the comprehensive discussion point that the policy ideal of domestic violence screening that TANF applicants are routinely screened for domestic violence and assisted within the TANF application and assessment processes is no longer relevant. More realistic and alternative expectations for screening domestic violence and supporting victims of domestic violence are to regain or build the local relationship between TANF programs and domestic violence agencies. Such local relationships are reasonable and practical for at least three reasons. First, needs assessment, especially individual needs, takes

time. Second, needs assessment requires quality work including empathy, listening, and skill-based support. Third, TANF programs unrealistically allocate the expectation for TANF caseworkers to do such work, but domestic violence advocates can do such work.

Finally, this study underscored the needs of victims of domestic violence regarding waivers/exemptions from TANF requirements. During the first several years following the Family Violence Option, the focus of policy advocacy appeared to convey that unified rules regarding TANF requirements are irrelevant for victims of domestic violence. Then, the other discourse was, based on the evidence of the number of people who disclosed abuse and applied for good cause waivers, that there is only a limited amount of demand for services related to domestic violence. Both perspectives are partially correct. The findings of this study showed that TANF requirements were actually understood as difficult processes to receive TANF for victims of domestic violence. In order to make TANF helpful for victims of domestic violence with financial difficulties, TANF requirements should be seriously reconsidered as an obstacle to achieve safety from abuse, as well as financial safety. Victims of domestic violence who experience great need could walk out of the current TANF application and assessment processes while having only learned disproportionately about information of TANF requirements compared to information of alternative options. It seems essential to make TANF helpful for victims of domestic violence, as much as those with resources to be able to comply with TANF requirements.

Limitations

This study did not use theoretical sampling, so a model/theory based on the themes could not be generated. Listening to TANF applicants in various locations will help generate a model/theory grounded on data by embracing variations in the experiences of victims of domestic violence. All of the applicant-participants were not recent TANF applicants, although they had commonality as victims of domestic violence at the time of their application. More rigorous purposive sampling may reflect the latest experiences of these women. The findings of this study could be more valid and credible by including the perspectives of frontline TANF workers and state-level domestic violence advocates in Georgia. It is a limitation of this study that TANF workers and/or administrative-side voices and experiences were missing in the data. Incorporating the worker voices is a difficult task for the researcher facing barriers to get a state TANF official's support and a separate IRB from the Department of Public Health in Georgia.

Implications for Social Work Practice

This study attempted to determine how TANF application and assessment processes respond to the vulnerability of victims of domestic violence based on the conceptual framework. Based on themes around three general-to-specific phenomena of TANF application and assessment processes, this study concludes that domestic violence screening is interrelated to a victim's personal needs and multiple resources within TANF such as qualified workers, time, organizational readiness, and non-punitive culture. For those who have much vulnerability and receive a lack of support, TANF requirements caused TANF to be perceived as being unhelpful for the victims of domestic violence. Any motivated victim of domestic violence also perceived TANF as unhelpful without relevant support to work. This study also noted the importance of the processes rather than numerical outcomes related to domestic violence screening.

Based on these findings, this study has implications for social work practice, research, and policy. Social workers should advocate for social justice within the TANF application and assessment processes for victims of domestic violence. Women in poverty are some of the most disadvantaged social members in the United States. Social work should pay attention to their lived experiences and enrich their voices to meet their needs through just procedures, to afford them opportunities to make their decisions. Social workers also need to conduct further research on how victims of domestic violence are assisted within the TANF application and assessment processes. Rather than normative outcomes of domestic violence screening, social workers should gain evidence of alternative, procedural outcomes regarding safety, safety from penalty and sanctions, fair procedures through given information and opportunities among victims of domestic violence in TANF. Social workers also need to advocate for effective policies at the federal and state levels. If such policies are impossible due to budget issues, domestic violence advocates should always be available to victims of domestic violence on a regular basis. The findings of this study advocate that victims of domestic violence need someone who can pay attention to them and spend time listening to them, and help them receive TANF in proper ways.

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Table 4.1

Major Themes and Sub-themes

Research Questions	Major Themes	Sub-themes
Question #1. How are the TANF application and assessment processes understood by victims of domestic violence and key informants?	1) Required procedures 2) Understanding of TANF as a beneficial option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-faceted procedures • Variations • Easy/difficult procedures • Needs for TANF • Responsibilities/ requirements • Available options
Questions #2. What are the conditions surrounding disclosure of domestic violence?	1) Safety 2) Working relationship 3) Taking extended time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse caused vulnerability • Financial vulnerability • Bi-directional referral relationship • Relationship strengths • Relationship changes • Self-referred victims • Providing multiple opportunities to disclose

	4) Removing all barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening • Quality work • Local/federal policy influence
Question #3.		
What are the experiences of victims of domestic violence who choose to disclose?	1) Access to service opportunities 2) Making final decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional procedures • Access to information • Receiving support • Evaluating helpfulness of TANF with or without its requirements • Continuing or discontinuing the TANF application

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The three studies in this dissertation conceptualized the interaction between the TANF applicants and the frontline eligibility caseworker related to the disclosure of domestic violence and/or good cause waivers. Studies 2 and 3, in chapters three and four, also explored how female victims of domestic violence experienced the TANF application and assessment processes in Georgia.

By using Bayesian strategic game models, the first study analyzed the intended processes and outcomes of domestic violence (specifically referred to as intimate partner violence) screening bounded by the federal and state laws of the Family Violence Option. The study developed informed and uninformed decision-making processes of domestic violence screening and hypothesized two different scenarios that TANF applicants use to disclose abuse to the caseworker, with or without receiving information about good cause waivers. The first study also claimed that the quality of the service providers fulfills the policy ideal of universal screening for domestic violence in terms of both the processes and the outcomes. In order to support that claim, this study particularly defined two major components of universal screening (the disclosure of partner violence and the notification of good cause waivers), described how game theory is applied to analyze social welfare policies and is relevant to conceptualize the universal screening for domestic violence in TANF, established key assumptions to hypothesize universal screening, developed Bayesian strategic game models of informed and uninformed disclosure of partner violence and the applicants' perceived utility of good cause waivers, and presented

hypothetical outcomes of the two models by finding equilibriums. The first study discussed both the policy ideal of using an informed decision to disclose abuse to the frontline TANF eligibility caseworker and the unrealistic granting of good cause waivers to the victims of domestic violence unless the quality of the caseworker's frontline interaction with the applicant is based on professional ethics. Both the intended processes of a universal screening for domestic violence and the outcome of good cause waivers appeared difficult to achieve.

The second and third studies explored how female victims of domestic violence who receive services from domestic violence agencies in Georgia experience the TANF application and assessment processes. The second study particularly explored how female victims of domestic violence decided to disclose domestic violence and/or to apply for good cause waivers. Thirty-five victims of domestic violence who had applied for and/or had received TANF completed the surveys between September 2014 and February 2015. The survey variables included the TANF applicants' demographic and TANF-related characteristics, their current experience with domestic violence, their barriers to comply with the TANF requirements, their screening behaviors, screening outcomes, preference changes regarding their disclosure of domestic violence, and their application for good cause waivers. This study conceptualized both the disclosure of domestic violence and the application of good cause waivers as the screening outcomes in relation to the barriers in order to comply with the TANF requirements and the frontline screening behaviors of domestic violence by modifying and applying the theoretical framework of the first study.

The surveys produced four findings. First, less than one-third of the respondents were asked about domestic violence and informed about the good cause waivers (a screening rate of 30.8%, n=25), and the notification rate of at least one of the three types of good cause waivers regarding work, child support, lifetime limits was even lower (24.0%, n=25). More than half of the respondents disclosed domestic violence (a disclosure rate of 65.4%, n=26), and a few of them applied for at least one type of good cause waivers (an application rate of 15.4%, n=26). Second, the average of the current intimate partner violence was high, but there were variations in the respondents' perceived barriers to apply for child support, and/or in their readiness to work. Third, the screening for domestic violence and their readiness to work were associated with both their disclosure of domestic violence and their application for at least one waiver while only the barriers to apply for child support were correlated with the screening for domestic violence, which was correlated only with the notification of good cause waivers. Fourth, because they knew about the good cause waiver, the respondents were more likely to have more information about the waiver options, reconsider disclosing domestic violence, and/or reconsider applying for a waiver option. This study discussed the relationships between the barriers to complying with the TANF requirements and screening behaviors and outcomes, and the social work implications of what kinds of barriers to complying with the TANF requirements are associated with screening behaviors and outcomes of domestic violence in TANF. Thus, this study provided evidence of how to serve the victims of domestic violence, especially so that their service needs could be identified, assessed, and assisted.

The third study, using a qualitative method, further explored how the victims of domestic violence who receive services from domestic violence agencies in Georgia experience the TANF application and assessment processes, based on a different epistemological stance and a different conceptual framework. This third study employed grounded theory methods to explore the holistic experiences of the female victims of domestic violence during the TANF application and assessment processes. The conceptual framework of the study makes assumptions found in the Family Violence Option explicit: (1) the vulnerability of the victims of domestic violence with safety and financial difficulties and (2) fair procedures based on particular social work ethics such as those promoting social justice and self-determination. Three different perspectives of five victims of domestic violence, four domestic violence advocates in Georgia, and three national experts of the Family Violence Option were triangulated, based on the in-depth interviews. Major themes were found through the continued use of a comparative method and thematic analysis.

The findings were expressed as major themes for the experience of victims of domestic violence regarding general TANF application and assessment processes, (1) required procedures and (2) understanding of TANF as a beneficial option; for conditions for disclosure of abuse, (1) safety issues, (2) working relationships, (3) taking extended time, and (4) removing all barriers; and for post-disclosure experience, (1) access to service opportunities and (2) making final decisions. Post-disclosure experience depended only on the interviews with the four victims of domestic violence who disclosed domestic violence to their TANF caseworker. This study discussed that TANF is understood by the participants as an unhelpful option because of its lack of consideration of the differing vulnerability of the victims of domestic violence. Although the victims of domestic violence disclosed abuse to the caseworker and expressed their safety issues,

and/or their barriers to comply with the TANF requirements, the fair procedures to facilitate information-based disclosure concerning their safety and service options seemed difficult to be launched. Ensuring the core conditions to help the victims of domestic violence is far beyond the reality of the domestic violence screening that the participants actually experienced, and/or observed. This study also discussed that the goal of domestic violence screening should ensure access to service opportunities and prevent the program sanction, due to the failure of the access to service opportunities rather than to the disclosure and waiver rates. This study helped value such alternative, procedural outcomes instead of the normative outcomes. The policy ideal of routine/universal domestic violence screening should find a realistic expectation or condition so that the victims of domestic violence are guided to make an informed decision and provided access to service opportunities, based on the support of domestic violence advocates. Thus, frontline TANF caseworkers should no longer be blamed for the disjuncture of the policy ideal from the reality in screening for domestic violence.

Chapter 1 addressed the rationales of the three studies in this dissertation to understand how the victims of domestic violence experience the application and assessment processes used in TANF. The rationales included 1) the lack of conceptual/theoretical frameworks, 2) the lack of reliable and valid data, and 3) the lack of epistemological diversity in previous research studies, government reports, and advocates' bulletins. All three studies in this dissertation are directly linked to at least one of the rationales and attempted to fill in the gaps relevant to the rationales. The three studies in this dissertation developed and/or employed a conceptual/theoretical framework based on the purpose of each study. Study one, Using Game Theory to Understand the Screening for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), developed a Bayesian game theoretical model that describes assumptions of universal screening protocol for IPV based on the Family Violence

Option. The features of universal IPV screening protocol were defined as the informed IPV disclosure situation in which every TANF applicant is routinely asked about IPV and is universally notified about good cause waivers. Then, study one developed another game theoretical model that describes the uninformed non-disclosure of IPV situation in which TANF applicants are not routinely asked about IPV and/or are not universally notified about good cause waivers. Such development of models in Figure 2-1 and 2-2 and comparison of the models helped in understanding the conditions for the intended outcomes of the Family Violence Option, which grants a good cause waiver to an IPV victim.

Study two, Screening Processes and Outcomes for Domestic Violence in TANF: Pilot Study, employed properties of the game theoretical models that study one developed in order to explore the determinants of the outcomes of domestic violence screening. Such properties included applicants' experience with domestic violence, frontline TANF caseworkers' IPV screening and good cause waiver notification behaviors, and TANF applicants' IPV disclosure. Study two modified the previous game theoretical models presented in study one, and added such variables as TANF applicants' service needs for good cause waivers and application for good cause waivers in order to strengthen the original models. Study two explored how variables related to applicants' barriers to complying with TANF requirements and frontline TANF caseworkers' screening behaviors for domestic violence, were associated with one another and with TANF applicants' disclosure of domestic violence and application for good cause waivers.

Study three, TANF Application and Assessment Processes that Victims of Domestic Violence Experience, also developed a conceptual framework that defines fair procedures of domestic violence screening in TANF for victims of domestic violence. Such a conceptual framework functioned as a backbone of discussion of the study participants' experience

regarding the TANF application and assessment processes. The conceptual frameworks that studies two and three employed helped support the rationale of domestic violence screening in TANF on the basis of empirical findings. For example, study two revealed that victims of domestic violence had barriers to complying with TANF requirements and such barriers were associated with the applicants' disclosure of domestic violence and application for good cause waivers. In addition, study three presented themes and sub-themes in contrast to fair procedures of domestic violence in TANF. Those themes and sub-themes illustrated potential properties to enhance TANF application and assessment processes in order to promote a safe environment to disclose domestic violence by TANF applicants and to assess the service needs of the disclosed victims of domestic violence and/or assist the victims accordingly.

Studies two and three contributed to providing reliable and valid data to understand how the victims of domestic violence experience the TANF application and the assessment processes. Study two only sampled 35 former and current victims of domestic violence and evaluated their vulnerability in complying with TANF requirements. Study two was particularly meaningful because it was beyond a descriptive study of prevalence of screening behaviors related to domestic violence. Study two was the first empirical study to explore the relationships among TANF applicants' barriers to complying with TANF requirements, frontline TANF caseworkers' screening behaviors, and TANF applicants' disclosure of domestic violence and application for good cause waivers. Study three complemented the findings of study two in that study three did not specify the definitions of the variables and did not assume the variable relationships within certain directions. Victims of domestic violence and key informants who advocated for the victims in different settings addressed what they thought about vulnerability in complying with TANF requirements and factors related to disclosure of domestic violence and post-disclosure

experience. The empirical findings of studies two and three appeared to be reliable and valid based on the use of reliable measurements, purposeful sampling techniques, and/or data triangulation. More valid findings of studies two and three may be achieved through a bigger sample size and stricter purposive sampling in study two (i.e., current victims of domestic violence only) or theoretical sampling technique in study three.

Study three incorporated thematic analysis into exploring how victims of domestic violence experience TANF application and assessment processes and how such study design contributed to epistemological diversity in the study subject. Study three attempted to overcome limitations of existing qualitative studies regarding designs, participants, and theoretical/conceptual frameworks. The major contribution of study three was to be aligned with study two, attempting to explore the actual experience of study participants with the TANF application and assessment processes in Georgia and to interpret their perspectives based on the conceptual framework of fair procedures of domestic violence screening and vulnerability of victims of domestic violence. Study three held the design together and generated informative findings specific to three individual research questions.

Limitations

The first theoretical study, based on normative, decision-making theory, has limitations in conceptualizing an experience with intimate partner violence differently from a service need to utilize a waiver and to grant a good cause waiver as the final outcome of the screening for intimate partner violence. The second empirical study, which includes 35 surveys of the victims of domestic violence in Georgia, could not reveal the relationships among the barriers to complying with the TANF requirements, the screening behaviors—routine screening, the notification of good cause waivers, and screening outcomes—the disclosure of domestic violence,

and the application for good cause waivers, due to the small sample size. The third empirical study conducted its set of interviews of victims of domestic violence, triangulated by domestic violence advocates in Georgia as well as by national experts of the Family Violence Option. However, it could not generate a model/theory grounded on the data, as a theoretical sampling was unavailable.

The three studies in this dissertation have complemented their respective limitations. In particular, the second study explored the differences between the victims' experiences with domestic violence and their barriers to complying with the TANF requirements, and tested how the victims of domestic violence accounted for these differences in order to disclose abuse and apply for good cause waivers. Furthermore, the third study addressed the simplicity of the domestic violence screening that the first study conceptualized by embracing the complexity of the TANF application and assessment processes as a whole, and also supplemented the reductionist view of the screening outcomes of domestic violence by understanding how real people in real contexts experience the processes.

The two empirical studies were limited in their endeavors to understand the relationships among the variables and/or the themes, due to the difficulties in recruiting the planned sample size. A larger sample size could help provide more valid and credible evidence to understand the TANF application and assessment processes that the victims of domestic violence experience in Georgia. The difficulty in understanding the targeted phenomenon is linked to the profound feasibility issue that the state level of TANF administrative data is inaccessible to both experienced and in-experienced researchers.

Overall, the inconsistency in using the terms “domestic violence” and “intimate partner violence” is bothersome. Domestic violence or family violence is an appropriate term since the Family Violence Option includes diverse types of abuse that occur in family relations. However, regarding the purpose of the two empirical studies, the use of the term “intimate partner violence” may be more specific and more relevant since the study participants had been abused by their intimate partner. *Advances in Social Work* is the target journal from which the first study has drawn its particular standard use and preference for the term, so the first study of this dissertation has consistently used the term “intimate partner violence.” In contrast, the other two studies in this dissertation have used the term domestic violence for at least two reasons: (1) the previous literature has adopted the perspective to refer to this experience as family violence or domestic violence; and (2) the term will enable the readers and the audiences to have a clear understanding that the meaning of domestic violence refers to intimate partner violence. The second and third studies have attempted to eliminate the distorted impression that intimate partner violence is the only issue with which the Family Violence Option is concerned.

Implications for Social Work

Research.

The first theoretical study in this dissertation particularly helps with understanding domestic violence screening in the TANF programs as an interpersonal decision-making process regarding the granting of good cause waivers and provides an analytical model that describes the gap between the intended outcomes of the Family Violence Option and the prevalent outcomes in the real world of the policy implementation and potentially compares this gap on the basis of empirical data. The second study understands the barriers to complying with the TANF requirements among the victims of domestic violence as important variables that are associated

with frontline caseworkers' screening behaviors as well as with screening outcomes. The third study has illuminated alternative outcomes of domestic violence screening, which are procedural outcomes such as safety from domestic violence and safety from complying with the TANF requirements. Research that sheds light on the needs of the victims of domestic violence, such as those needs related to services and the relationships between such needs, the service providers' responses, and both normative and alternative outcomes of domestic violence would be valued.

Theory.

The first and second studies provide an innovative perspective of domestic violence screening based on interpersonal decision-making processes. The interpersonal decision-making processes value exchanges of information—the disclosure of domestic violence from the perspective of the victim of domestic violence and the granting of good cause waivers so as to make an information-based decision to disclose and/or to apply for good cause waivers. The development of this decision-making model, however, was based on reductionist and positivist-based perspectives regarding how a decision is made. The third study provides an alternate, constructivist perspective that propounds individual reality at an ontological level and way of knowing. How a researcher interprets the participants' perceived reality of the TANF application and assessment processes is unfolded. Although the third study did not develop a theory or a model grounded on the interview data, the themes presented in the study could provide essential independent and/or dependent variables related to the TANF application and assessment processes that the victims of domestic violence experience in Georgia.

Policy.

The first and the third studies have particularly accentuated that the policy of providing routine/universal screening for domestic violence is an ideal and an unattainable goal without the assumption of quality work that is based on social work ethics and/or has the actual support at cultural, policy, organizational, and local administrative levels to implement such quality work. Routine/universal screening is evidently not the goal with the highest priority in the TANF programs in Georgia, for the second and third studies have shown the presence of the service need among the victims of domestic violence. The goal of domestic violence screening was redirected and illuminated by the perspective and the evidence of all three studies. Realistic policy with an appropriate goal is guided and suggested. Appropriate goals will target procedural outcomes that ensure safety from domestic violence and safety while complying with the TANF requirements. Realistic policy touches on the assumption of quality work. If the federal and the state policies were stronger, and the funding relevant for ensuring quality work among the TANF caseworkers were available, the TANF programs, particularly those in Georgia, might regain and/or strengthen their relationship with the local domestic violence agencies and fill in the gap of quality work. All three studies actually advocate that domestic violence screening does not pertain to the identification of domestic violence; instead, it aims to address how the victims' needs related to the services are assessed and assisted. Federal and state policies should transfer the knowledge that imports the assessment-based screening for domestic violence instead of the identification-based screening, and should promote this new culture in the local TANF programs.

Practice.

Based on research-, theory-, and policy-related social work implications, the third study urges for positive changes to occur in local TANF programs. Bottom-up changes seem to be powerful when the reverse changes and expectations do not exert any control over the local administration of domestic violence screening. In order to support the victims of domestic violence and to empower them to fight against their vulnerability, local TANF programs and local domestic violence advocates should develop equally powerful, bi-directional working relationships. The use of local domestic violence advocates to facilitate such relationships is highly recommended rather than using local TANF officers. Domestic violence advocates belong to the service profession that is specialized to advocate for the victims of domestic violence and to respond to them by assessing and supporting their needs.

Social work education.

The Family Violence Option in TANF is a policy that upholds specific expressions of the social work ethics such as advocating for social justice regarding the vulnerable population at the intersection of poverty and domestic violence and their individual rights to exercise self-determination by being given the information, the resources, and the services to obtain a better quality of life among the victims of domestic violence in poverty. Indeed, this vulnerable population can be reinterpreted as a group of women with children in poverty or a culturally and/or ethnically marginalized group of women in poverty. Social work departments and schools need to teach their BSW, MSW, and PhD students and to remind their faculty members about the following topics: (1) poverty as a core topic in which social workers must maintain an interest and for which they must develop the skills to assess and advocate for the needs of the poor, based on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of social work practice; (2) social justice and self-

determination as core values of the profession, which enable social workers to advocate for procedural justice within the TANF programs; (3) policy as a core knowledge that social workers possess; (4) a distinctive philosophical stance in practice, research, and theory that conceptualizes poverty and social justice; and (5) research skills as competency skills that enable social workers to advocate for women in poverty, especially those women who provide evidence of experiencing domestic violence.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research include, but are not limited to, confirming and/or disconfirming the policy ideal of the Family Violence Option and the suggested goal of routine/universal screening for domestic violence. Future study should ensure that the sampling size has enough statistical power to predict the impact of both the barriers to complying with the TANF requirements and the frontline response regarding domestic violence screening, in particular the impact on the disclosure of abuse and on the application of the good cause waivers among the victims of domestic violence. Administrative data collected at the state and/or the local TANF offices, regarding domestic violence screening, can fill the gap in our understanding of what is going on as well as help us compare the differences between research evidence and administrative evidence. Measurement of the barriers preventing the applicants from meeting the TANF requirements needs to be further validated. Because of the absence of a model that presently explains the various outcomes of domestic violence screening within the TANF program, future research may build a grounded theory and, furthermore, may test the relationships among the constructs of that theory based on a structured equation with a valid and sufficient sample size. Such a rigorous approach may explain the complexity of the TANF application and assessment processes that the victims of domestic violence in Georgia

experience. In addition, future study could also consider participatory research. Such research may empower the victims of domestic violence, the advocates for victims of domestic violence, and the TANF caseworkers all together, and would explore how bottom-up empowerment influences their experiences with domestic violence screening and assessment.