





all of them faced huge financial challenges. Only two of the six participants who were separated from their partners seemed adamant never to return. The main concern of those who were determined not to return was that they would have to look for other work in order to survive financially and they had difficulty in finding affordable accommodation. This echoes findings by researchers such as Artz (1999:3), Ferrato (2000:10), Danis and Lockheart (2004:15) and Vincent and Jouriles (2002:78), who state that women who plan to leave their partners face several serious challenges, such as accommodation, raising of children, making it on your own and other practical matters. According to the literature, no significant associations were found between domestic violence and **marital status** (Jewkes *et al.*, 2002:1603-1617).

All the participants still had **children** in the home, except for one whose children had grown up. Women who still have children to care for are in a much more difficult position when it comes to leaving a partner than those whose children are not around any more. A significant number of women who are abused have children, who therefore are also exposed to violent behaviour that has a devastating effect on them. Suspicion and fear are common among children who have lived in violent homes (Ferrato, 2000:53). What makes domestic violence a distinct type of trauma, is that the perpetrator lives in the same house as the child and often is the child's father. Children exposed to this type of violence often have feelings of betrayal. Their perceptions of home and safety are seriously marred. Children exposed to domestic violence are at increased risk of multiple behavioural and emotional difficulties that manifest in low self-esteem, anxiety attacks, displaying aggressive behaviour, withdrawal and thoughts of suicide (Danis & Lockheart, 2004:34).

The **educational level** of the participants was also noted. It is significant that none of the participants had post-matric education. Only four participants (20%) completed Grade 12. Six participants had an educational level of Grade 9 or 10. Two of the participants (10%) had completed Grade 8. Six participants (30%) had a primary school education varying from Grade 4 to Grade 7. Two participants (10%) were illiterate. This correlates with research conducted by Parenzee and Smythe (2003:48, 49), who found that the relationship between income and low education levels is significant. Abused low-income women usually have low levels of education, reducing the possibility of alternative employment and reinforcing the poverty.

### **The types of domestic violence**

The criteria for inclusion in the study required that participants in this study had to be in a physically abusive relationship or had to have been in such a relationship during the six months prior to the study, as mentioned earlier. The range of abuses that women may suffer is wide and can include physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse, as well as stalking, forced isolation in the home and other controlling behaviours (Bollen, Artz, Vetten & Louw, 1999:7; Domestic Violence Act, No. 116 of 1998). According to several authors, such as Bassuk, Dawson and Huntington (2005:33), Danis and Lee (2003:28) and Riger, Bennet, Wasco, Schewe, Frohmann, Camacho and Campbell























