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An Exploration of Social Work Theories and Models in Addressing Domestic Violence and Women's Mental Health

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Abstract

The occurrence of domestic violence presents itself as a worldwide problem that damages women's mental health immensely. Given the pervasive nature of domestic violence, its psychological consequences, and the central role social work plays in supporting survivors, the paper evaluates various theoretical approaches and models utilized by social workers. Social work theories together with models represent essential tools for analysing domestic violence complexities as well as mental well-being consequences for women. This article examines how social work ideas and models intersect with women's mental health and domestic abuse, emphasizing the vital role social workers play in helping victims develop resilience. Assessing how these ideas can be used to enhance women's mental health outcomes in the context of domestic abuse is the main goal of this study. This study analysed case studies, current literature, and theoretical applications in social work using a qualitative design and a thorough desktop research technique. Data collection is focused on peer-reviewed journals, books, and credible online resources that address both domestic violence and women's mental health. Ethical considerations are prioritised by ensuring confidentiality, recognizing the sensitivity of the subject matter, and prioritizing the autonomy and agency of participants in the reviewed studies. The findings of the study reveal a clearer understanding of effective social work interventions tailored to address the complexities of domestic violence, ultimately aiming to inform best practices and policy development and challenges that social workers face in applying the theories.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence (DV) remains a global public health epidemic, with far-reaching consequences, particularly for women's mental health. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), roughly one in every three women globally may experience physical or sexual assault from an intimate relationship during their lifetime (World Health Organisation, 2021). The psychological repercussions of DV are severe and long-lasting, with many survivors developing chronic mental health issues including anxiety, depression, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts. Social workers have a vital role in helping survivors by offering advocacy, therapy, and support in response to these difficulties. Social workers are guided by a variety of social work theories and models when treating the short-term and long-term effects of domestic violence on women's mental health.

Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby (2020) explain that domestic violence spreads worldwide as a significant social issue which strangles women's mental health while damaging their overall well-being. Social workers serve as essential components of addressing this problem because they trail victims while offering empowering measures that encourage long-term recovery (Dutton & Goodman, 2017). Multiple social work ideas and interventions developed

throughout history aim to understand domestic abuse in addition to tackling and intervening regarding women's mental health (Green & Polaschek, 2021). Social workers improve their ability to help violence victims and their psychological outcomes by employing the framework and perspective structures from different theories and models according to Corcoran and Pillai (2016).

The relationship between mental health issues in women and domestic violence includes multiple layers of social, psychological, physical and emotional effects (Black, Basile, Breiding, Smith, Walters, Merrick, & Stevens, 2017). Kim & Lee (2020) shows that victims of domestic violence develop higher chances of experiencing mental health conditions including anxiety along with depression and PTSD and multiple forms of emotional trauma. A thorough solution demands multiple strategies because domestic violence interacts with mental health issues and network support frameworks in society. Through social work theories professionals gain understanding about behavioural patterns and intervention strategies that help women experiencing suffering in these situations (Fairbairn & Shepherd, 2018).

Social work as a profession serves to support people and communities through various life challenges which affect their lives (Barnett & LaViolette 2019). The physical trauma inflicted by domestic violence generates enduring psychological damages which usually lack proper treatment because of insufficient intervention (Collins & Arcelus, 2020). The field of social work developed various theories that recognize complex abusive situations and establish better intervention approaches for abused women. Substance abuse survivors need to understand trauma because trauma stands as a vital aspect of explaining domestic abuse effects on mental health (McManus & Stokes, 2021). Continuous abuse tends to create numerous emotional and mental health issues in victims. Haviland & Teitelman (2015) identify psychological issues that abused women face which includes severe psychiatric conditions and depression alongside lower self-esteem and feelings of guilt. Although aimed at recognizing trauma indicators and creating recovery tools social work models prove useful in helping domestic abuse survivors (Larkin & Watson, 2019).

Multiple theories within social work have been employed to study domestic violence throughout successive years. According to the system framework domestic violence emerges as a numerous problem which integrates societal behavioral patterns with household structures and community influences (Johnson, 2017). According to this model the root causes of abuse exist at a systemic level including gender power disparities (Baird & McPherson, 2020). Through feminist analysis women experience structural oppression which allows domestic violence to emerge as patriarchal dominance. The viewpoints drive social work practice by encouraging professionals to analyze how violence affects women within social structures (Curry & Castaneda, 2022). The social work profession can access different theories and models which help them understand and address the mental health effects of domestic violence on women (Abrams & Crea, 2015).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Using a thorough desktop research methodology and secondary sources, this study investigated how social work theories and models might be used in the treatment of women's mental health and domestic abuse. By combining current research, theories, and models from many academic sources, the goal is to better understand how social workers can address domestic violence and the mental health issues that frequently accompany it. The following methods were employed to carry out the study:

Data Collection

The research conducted an extensive investigation of scholarly publications alongside books and government reports and policy documents for gathering authoritative secondary information about social work theories and models. Research included published peer-reviewed articles which discussed women's mental health needs together with social work interventions used in domestic violence cases and analytical frameworks behind such practice implementations. The research retrieved data using established academic search engines involving JSTOR alongside Google Scholar and ProQuest followed by PubMed to investigate empirical research and theoretical works. The research utilized "social work theories" and "models for domestic violence" as well as "women's mental health" and "domestic violence intervention" and "mental health theory for women" keywords.

Inclusion Criteria

Authors selected only literature published between 2015–2025 since this timeframe ensured contemporary relevance of the researched information. The selection of studies for analysis focused on various geographical areas because these papers related directly to social work practices through ecological systems theory and feminist social work and trauma-informed care theories.

Data Analysis

Researchers conducted thematic analysis of gathered literature to extract significant themes that relate both to mental health interventions for women and domestic violence strategies. Evaluation of significant social work theories including ecological systems theory alongside feminist theory and trauma-informed care concentrated on their implementation within genuine domestic violence and mental health cases.

The article analysed how different intervention approaches described in research literature support the specific needs of domestic abuse victims. The research evaluated models which integrated trauma understanding and empowerment approaches together with resilience principles for treating mental health needs.

Ethical Considerations
Since this study relied on secondary sources, there were no ethical issues with human subjects. Nonetheless, great care was taken to choose reliable and morally decent information sources. All references were appropriately cited to ensure academic integrity.

Limitations
The desktop research method is limited to current literature, which may not completely capture recent advancements or unpublished data. Additionally, the diverse cultural and regional contexts of the studies reviewed may influence the generalizability of the findings. The study's breadth of analysis may also be impacted by the quality and accessibility of published   research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The findings of the study are based on four main themes.

Table 1 Summary of themes and subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Understanding of theory	
Applicable Social Work theories	Feminist Theory
	Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner)
	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
	Social Learning Theory (Bandura)
	Attachment Theory (Bowlby)
Social Work Models	Crisis Intervention Model
	Strengths-Based Model
Challenges and Gaps in Applying Social Work Theories	

Theme 1: Understating of Social Work theories
White & Morgan (2023) explain that social work theories function as fundamental guides for directing practical work which helps professionals understand complex human needs among both individuals and families and communities. Social theories create both practical methods for successful interventions and intellectual approaches to resolve social issues. Researchers in social work draw concepts from multiple academic domains such as psychology and sociology to function as evaluation tools for social workers studying human actions and community behaviours (Gray & Webb, 2019). Social workers can develop effective intervention plans that aid clients and advance social justice through social change by using applicable theoretical frameworks (Howe, 2018).

The theoretical frameworks of social work provide useful knowledge, yet they present certain shortcomings. Social work relies on theories that were developed for cultural or historical backgrounds, yet they might not properly address contemporary population diversity requirements (Reamer, 2016). When applying social work theories practitioners need to adjust them according to the different situations encountered by each client. Specific critics emphasize that individualistic and pathology-based theories tend to skip over systemic factors related to social issues because they do not acknowledge structural inequality or institutional discrimination (Turner, 2019). Social work theories need persistent evaluation and development to maintain their significance and adaptiveness in addressing present-day social problems according to Hepworth Rooney and Larsen (2017).

Social work theories continue to be crucial in directing moral behaviour and forming the ideals of the profession, notwithstanding the difficulties that arise in their application (Dziegielewski, 2021). For social workers to interact with coworkers, clients, and legislators, they offer a common language and structure (Banks & Gallagher, 2017). Social work theories also serve an important role in professional growth, enabling social workers to reflect on their approaches, enhance their practices, and remain updated about new research and advancements in the field. Accordingly, social work theories are dynamic resources rather than static tools that aid practitioners in navigating the constantly changing social issues landscape, encouraging both systemic and individual change in the fight for social justice (Abramson & Hoh, 2018).

Theme 2: Applicable Social Work Theories
There are various social work theories that aid practitioners in understanding and resolving the needs of individuals, families, and communities. Nonetheless, the study identified five theories that can be used in social work practice when addressing women's mental health and domestic violence. The theories offer a variety of perspectives on social dynamics and human behaviour, as well as a framework for creating interventions.

Feminist Theory

Social work relying on feminist theory studies the effects of gender discrimination on women as well as the systematic structural disadvantages that women experience in societies (Evans, 2020). This theory which stems from broad feminist activism demonstrates how people construct gender while fighting against traditional patriarchal systems that restrict female agency (Fawcett & Hearn, 2019). Social work theory with feminist roots criticizes imbalanced power structures in society to advocate for essential changes that will establish gender equity. The search for understanding multiple forms of oppression faces women through both gender-related and racial, economic, and sexual oppression intersections stands at the core of feminist theory analysis (West & Zimmerman, 2021).

Feminist theory is significant because it can draw attention to the systemic injustices that support women's oppression (Walby, 2016). It highlights agency and empowerment while giving voice to underrepresented women. Feminist theory in social work offers a critical perspective for analysing the ways in which gender norms, institutional injustice, and societal expectations affect women's lives, especially in relation to mental health and domestic violence (Tong, 2018). Feminist theory, which emphasizes empowerment, self-determination, and questioning conventional gender roles, provides the means to push for change at the individual and social levels, advancing gender equality in practice and policy (Maynard & Purvis, 2019).

Social work specialists needing to support women's mental health and stop domestic violence must use feminist theory because it explains how patriarchal systems keep violence against women alive (Lorber, 2017). The understanding of abusive relationship control mechanisms that feminist theory provides enables social workers to recognize broader violent gender patterns in their practice. The feminist theory suggests that women need empowering interventions which combat dominant power structures so they can exercise self-determination according to Collins (2019). Ackerly and True (2016) point out that social workers can deliver superior and successful services to victims of violence and mental health issues through comprehensive safety and empowerment-based advocacy when they examine intersectional oppression.

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner)

The Ecological Systems Theory explained by Bronfenbrenner (1979) establishes a structure which describes how people advance relative to their environment. The theory applies environmental systems at varying levels starting with family and school environments up to broad societal elements such as culture and laws which affect human development (Begley & Glacken, 2018). The theory points to the significance of external systemic and societal elements in growth because Bronfenbrenner establishes that people interact dynamically with their environments.

Bronfenbrenner (1986) introduces ecological systems theory built upon five essential interlocked systems including microsystem, mesosystem, exosystemic and macrosystem, chronosystem. The microsystem defines the closest environment that surrounds individuals made up of their family and friends and school characteristics. These in-person encounters in the social and educational environment of personal relationships hold essential value for personal growth since they serve as the main platforms for learning and socialization (Vasquez & Larkin, 2019). The connections between multiple microsystems form part of what we call the mesosystem. These relationships between microsystems determine how development progresses because of their interaction quality (Gergen, McNamee & Barrett, 2017).

The exosystemic encompasses the larger social structures, such a parent's place of employment or the local government, that have an impact on an individual but do not directly involve them. Changes in these systems might affect a person's everyday life even if they are not directly involved in them (Hart, 2019). The beliefs, regulations, and ideologies that influence people's experiences are all part of the macrosystem, which is the overall cultural, economic, and sociological backdrop (Hill & Reddy, 2019). Lastly, the chronosystem incorporates a temporal dimension, considering how life transitions and time impact development, including social changes that take place during a lifetime or modifications in family relations (O'Connor, 2021).

Understanding that development is a complex process impacted by both proximal and distal influences has been made easier thanks in large part to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Payne, 2016). This theory's thorough understanding of development as influenced by numerous interrelated systems is one of its main advantages (Hart, 2019). It acknowledges that people don't grow in a vacuum; rather, their relationships with others and the broader social circumstances they live in shape who they become. The theory also challenges the idea that development can be applied universally without taking into account the cultural and environmental aspects that create it, highlighting the significance of context in understanding human growth.

The analysis of ecological systems holds significance because it delivers a detailed structure to study all the environmental elements influencing human life (Phelan & Link, 2017). Behavior and well-being are influenced by individual pathology together with social and cultural factors and environmental elements (Shinn & Toohey, 2020). Community resources and family dynamics as well as financial status and social networks become assessable through this theory which makes it vital for social work practice. The ecologic approach provides an extensive evaluation solution together with interventional methods for female clients facing mental health issues or domestic abuse by integrating societal structures with cultural aspects in addition to family relationships and individual components (Vasquez & Larkin, 2019). The larger environmental factors that create mental health issues or domestic abuse against women in social work clients can be assessed by utilizing ecological systems theory. A social worker explores potential resources or barriers through assessment of existing systems which surround the woman including her family background and social services and healthcare and community settings (Hart, 2019). As per ecological systems theory practitioners advocate for systemic

changes when needed and tackle individual and familial and community levels to construct detailed support plans. Social workers use this theory as a framework to understand how institutional systems affecting women's vulnerability to violence and mental health difficulties (Bronfenbrenner, 2016).

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Butler, Chapman, Forman, & Beck (2016) explain that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) stands as a well-known therapeutic method which helps clients identify and transform destructive thinking processes along with problematic behaviors patterns causing emotional distress. KTPT stands on the theoretical foundation that human emotions and thoughts connect to their behaviors and offers therapeutic approaches through modifications in counterproductive mental perceptions and actions (Kuehner, 2019). The practical application of CBT helps clients break through incorrect thinking while developing better cognitive patterns alongside alternative coping strategies. The mental health expert Leahy (2017) has confirmed that CBT shows noteworthy benefits when assisting women who survived trauma or domestic violence with symptoms such as anxiety and depression as well as PTSD.
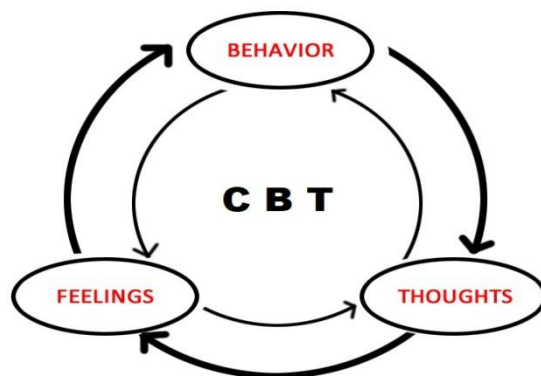

Fig. 1 What is cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) - Source: Yoho, 2019

CBT is significant because it is goal-oriented and structured, giving the client and social worker explicit tools for intervention that consider behaviour, thoughts, and feelings (McLeod, 2017). It is a very successful approach to treating mental health concerns associated with domestic abuse because of its emphasis on giving clients the tools they need to question and alter their own thought patterns (Mohl & DeMott, 2016). CBT fosters long-term emotional and psychological resilience by offering practical techniques for handling discomfort, controlling emotions, and enhancing self-efficacy. Because of this, it is a crucial tool for assisting women who have experienced abuse in regaining control over their lives and their feeling of self-worth (Seligman, 2020).

CBT is a useful foundation for resolving the cognitive distortions that frequently accompany abuse for women who are victims of domestic violence or who are dealing with mental health issues (Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer, & Fang, 2017). Survivors of domestic violence, for instance, could internalize self-defeating ideas or feel pessimistic about their future, which can exacerbate anxiety or depression. According to Fairburn & Cooper (2019), cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) assists social workers in addressing mistaken thoughts, including self-blame, by empowering women to acknowledge their value and confront detrimental beliefs. Social workers can assist women in reframing their experiences and creating healthy coping strategies by integrating cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) into treatment regimens. This promotes emotional healing and empowers women (Beck & Weishaar, 2020).

Social Learning Theory (SLT) (Bandura)

The Social Learning Theory developed into Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura teaches that people learn behaviours and values through observation of social surroundings as they imitate direct or indirect models (Bandura, 2016). Germane cognitive procedures function as essential behavioural determinants that contrasts conventional understanding about learning through direct reinforcement and punishment (Bandura, 2018). According to the Social Learning Theory people observe behaviours from others through watching and learning and repeating those behaviours (Ligon & Martin, 2018). The Social Learning Theory includes four key concepts such as motivation, attention, retention and reproduction.

The delivery of behaviours through social frameworks according to Social Learning Theory positions the approach as vital for social work practice (Luyten & Fonagy, 2015). Social context alongside role models functions as primary behavioural influencers thus remaining essential for working with clients who have faced domestic abuse according to Watson & Boudah (2021). Social workers assist clients by recognizing how domestic abuse habits developed from observing their parents or prior partners during their childhood years. Workers then propose more constructive behaviour choices. According to social learning theory (Wilson & Donovan, 2017) positive role models together with social reinforcement help people modify their conduct while creating optimistic change prospects.

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Attachment Theory (Bowlby)

According to the attachment theory proposed by John Bowlby the early caregiver relationships of a person determine the emotional and relational patterns they will experience throughout their lifetime (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 2019). The theory demonstrates that insecure attachment creates difficulties with emotional control alongside relationships as well as stress regulation, but secure attachment builds trust that enables safe personal connections (Hesse 2016). A person's capacity to navigate future challenges including those found in romantic relationships is directly affected by early formed attachment bonds between them and their caregivers. Main & Solomon (2017) state that social workers utilize this theory to examine how early bond experiences affect adult partnerships particularly between people who have faced abusive or traumatic experiences.

Social work professionals find attachment theory important because its explanations about early childhood experiences influencing emotional distress management and relationship development (Park & Kim, 2020). Through Attachment Theory researchers understand how early neglect or trauma causes women to struggle with trust building alongside emotional control and protective relationship formation especially for those who experience attacks at home and mental health problems (Rutter, 2018). Social workers assess their clients' need for emotional stability along with support through identifying attachment styles which helps patients overcome violence and mental health-related issues.

Social workers use Attachment Theory to better understand the profound emotional and relational effects of trauma when working with women who have experienced domestic abuse or mental health problems (Gergen, McNamee, & Barrett, 2017). Because of their insecure attachment styles, women who have been in abusive relationships, for instance, may find it difficult to build trustworthy, healthy relationships in the future. The attachment theory can be used by social workers to evaluate how early attachment experiences influenced a client's present relationships and behaviours (Crittenden, 2017). According to Cassidy & Shaver (2018), interventions grounded in this theory concentrate on creating safe, nurturing settings that support women in developing healthy relationship patterns and stable attachments, which are critical for long-term recovery from abuse as well as emotional healing.

Theme 3: Social Work Models
Crisis Intervention Model (CIM)

The Crisis Intervention Model functions as a targeted brief intervention approach which helps distressed people regain composure while they return to their normal activities. According to Roberts (2019), crisis defines such periods when psychological instability occurs due to problems or events surpassing a person's ability to manage their situation. The primary goal of crisis intervention procedures is to stabilize the person and restore their sense of control while diluting any need to solve their entire array of problems (Golan & Wheeler, 2017). The crisis intervention model requires a standardized method beginning with assessment followed by planning and intervention functions and finishing with follow-up activities.

Furthermore, it is advised to do an initial evaluation of the person's health at the time of first contact in cases involving domestic abuse. With this knowledge, social workers may quickly build a working connection with the client and use Roberts' second stage of crisis intervention (Hensley & Ward, 2019). All it takes to do this is to show that you genuinely care about the issues the customer brings to the session.

The crisis intervention paradigm is very helpful in social work practice since it emphasizes solving problems right away and giving people in distress useful support. CIM assists people in managing and lessening the emotional and psychological effects of a crisis, which might include domestic violence, mental health problems, or personal trauma, as described by Golan & Wheeler (2017). In places like hospitals, emergency shelters, and family support programs, where the social worker's job is to provide a safe environment for clients to process their feelings, create coping mechanisms, and start positive change, the model is frequently used (James & Gilliland, 2016). It is based on the idea that crises can be transformed into chances for personal development, particularly when people are assisted in utilizing their networks of support and resources when they are at their most vulnerable (Rutan & Stone, 2018).

Although crisis intervention is essential for short-term acute needs, clients who are experiencing complicated, continuous distress can benefit from its incorporation into long-term social work practice (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2016). In high-stress situations, the model's capacity to offer instant relief gives clients the time and space they need to evaluate and
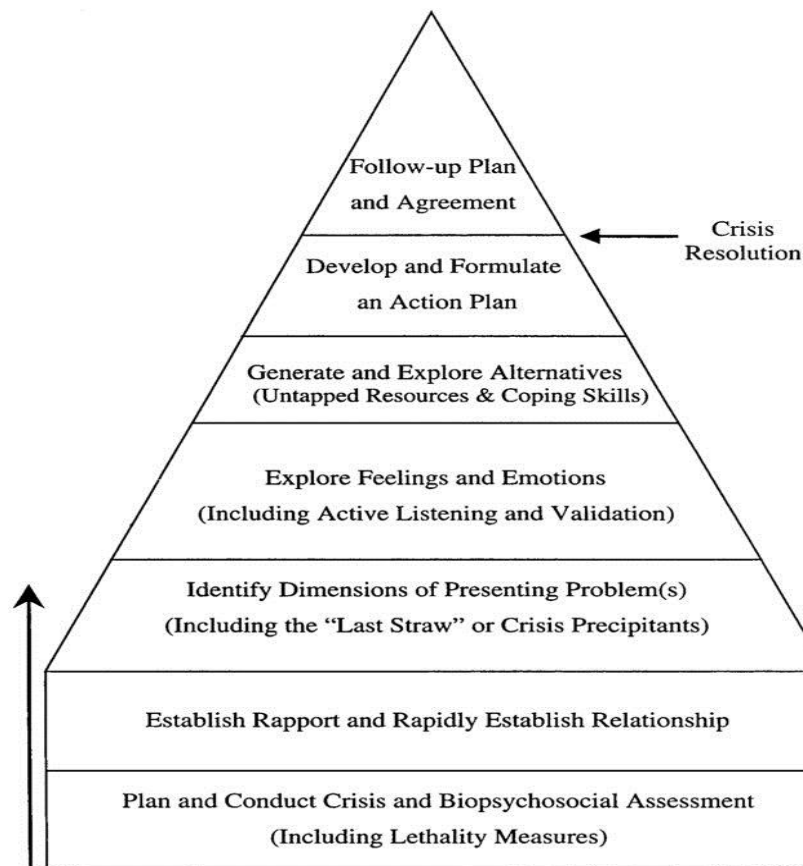
Fig. 2 Roberts's Seven-Stage Crisis Intervention Model. 1991 Albert R. Roberts.
Reprinted by permission of the author – Source Roberts, 1991

deal with more complex issues later (Roberts, 2019). In the social work environment, crisis intervention promotes early intervention and stabilization, especially for those who are victims of domestic violence, natural disasters, or substance misuse (Cederbaum & Purtell, 2017). When CIM is used, social workers are better equipped to determine the severity of crises, offer clients urgent emotional support, and connect them to ongoing social and therapeutic support services for long-term rehabilitation (Golan & Wheeler, 2017).

The Crisis Intervention Model (CIM), offers quick, short-term assistance to people experiencing severe distress, is especially pertinent to treating domestic abuse and women's mental health. Because they are frequently in a crisis, women who are victims of domestic abuse need prompt, focused assistance. The goal of CIM is to help people regain control over their emotions, stabilize them in the present, and connect them to resources for more support, according to Roberts (2019). For social workers who work with women who are escaping violent relationships, this paradigm is particularly crucial (DeLoach & Tatum, 2017). In order to stabilize patients before long-term mental health, interventions are implemented, it assists them in addressing acute physical and psychological suffering, such as trauma, worry, and fear (Greenstone & Leviton, 2017). This approach is used by social workers to evaluate the urgent requirements of women who are victims of abuse, such as housing, safety planning, or getting medical attention, and to offer them immediate emotional support (James & Gilliland, 2016).

Strengths-Based Model (SBM) in Social Work

The primary objective of Strengths-Based Model (SBM) is for clients to bypass barriers and elevate their complete wellbeing utilizing the examination of their already existing skills and abilities (Strean, 2017). Under this model social work explanations emphasize the power of client agency combined with resilience and empowerment rather than diseases or shortages. The therapeutic process shifts direction toward client resilience and natural abilities through the strength-based approach according to Saleebey (2019). The client gains alternative perspectives about their environment while creating optimistic personal stories while working together with their social worker. People together with families and communities possess multiple resources to address issues while boosting mental health by generating positive results across diverse life situations thus creating this model (Dennis & O'Neill, 2018).

Social work professionals recognize the Strengths-Based Model as an effective approach because it focuses on self-determination and empowerment specifically needed during work with vulnerable or marginalized clients as Rapp (2017) explains. Through the SBM social workers develop collegial relationships with their clients by assisting them to discover their capabilities instead of diagnosing or fixing problems (Strean, 2017). This method proves useful particularly for ongoing problems including addiction substance abuse and mental illness and trauma. Through the strengths-based paradigm the treatment experience becomes more positive as social workers focus on life successes to build upon them. Strean (2017) reported that such practice leads to enhanced mental health results and stronger coping skills alongside improved self-confidence for patients.

Fig. 3 A strength-based approach for social and emotional wellbeing services
Source: Chontel, Crockett, Pat, Bernoth, & Lincoln, 2020

Implementation of the Strengths-Based Model in social work practice enables clients to address challenges by recognizing their capabilities and resistance strengths instead of their weaknesses (Rapp, 2017). Social workers engaged in domestic violence cases can use the Strengths-Based Model to help clients identify their ability to reach for help while understanding how to escape abusive conditions and maintain their personal care. Dodder and Miller (2020) observe that empowerment elements in the model allow abused women to build self-assurance about their choice-making ability and better relationship options. According to Saleebey (2019) the strength-based approach leads to better interventions participation because it helps practitioners build positive working alliances with their clients. Social workers equipped with the Strengths-Based Model receive a beneficial intervention framework to help clients resolve pressing and extended concerns while enhancing their recovery process when matched with complementary therapeutic approaches (McCashen, 2020).

In contrast, the Strengths-Based Model (SBM), which focuses on women's inherent strengths and capacities, stresses resilience and empowerment (Bender & Miller, 2020). In addressing women's mental health and domestic abuse, this model assists social workers in helping clients find their personal strengths, social resources, and coping strategies. Women are encouraged to actively participate in their rehabilitation through the SBM, which emphasizes self-determination and personal development by cultivating a collaborative connection between the social worker and the client (Fook & Gardner, 2017). Because of the model's emphasis on resilience, social workers may support women in their recovery by highlighting their independence and capacity for overcoming obstacles, a crucial skill for women who have experienced violence (Saleebey, 2019).

Within the domain of domestic abuse women can discover their personal strength for resilience and change through the application of the Strengths-Based Model (Green, 2016). Long-term mental health treatments together with this strategy enable women to develop their lives through using their skills and abilities. The model diverts attention from victimization to help women discover positive aspects including employment and personal abilities and familial support that led to better recovery and psychological well-being (Dennis & O'Neill, 2018). SBM offers a transformative approach for social work practice through building self-confidence and autonomy which facilitates recovery for abused women (Gray & Webb, 2019).

Theme 4: Challenges and Gaps in Applying Social Work Theories

The theoretical implementation of feminism faces hurdles because sustained bias in institutions and patriarchy and legal structures enabling gender inequality (Gergen, McNamee & Barrett, 2017). Social transformation encounters resistance from institutional institutions which creates structural barriers when implementing social transformation (Crisp, 2019). Gender-centered approaches in feminist theory face both institutional and client-driven challenges when practitioners encounter clients who reject feminism and clients who feel issues prioritized for women overshadow men and marginal groups (López & Jha, 2019). According to Ferguson (2017) social workers must deal with diverse oppression factors including race and class and gender because these dimensions may challenge the individual needs of their clients. A

practical approach to adopting intersectionality proves challenging because of its importance as an essential concept in feminist theory.

Multiple obstacles exist when implementing the Ecological Systems Theory. According to Garrett and Larkins (2019) social workers experience challenges in managing every environmental element because Bronfenbrenner's model is detailed but social workers typically lack adequate time and resources to work simultaneously on multiple aspects. Professional social workers face challenges when working with oppressed clients because they must balance statewide policy changes with immediate therapeutic support according to theory but not practice (Friedrichs & Fischer, 2020). The theory of Ecological Systems Theory intensifies focus on external environmental factors but overlooks internal emotional and psychological aspects of people according to MacDonald & Solis (2018). Such approach creates significant issues when applying trauma care or mental health solutions.

Due to its dependence on clients' emotional and cognitive readiness for change, social workers have difficulties when applying Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) (McManus & Clark, 2017). Clients undergoing CBT must be able to identify and question their thought patterns, which may be impossible for persons experiencing severe mental illness or a serious crisis (Beck & Weishaar, 2020). For example, in cases of domestic violence, women can lack the emotional capacity to participate in the cognitive restructuring required for CBT to be successful (Dobson, 2018). Furthermore, the structured form of CBT can be resource- and time-intensive, making it challenging to continue in social work contexts where funds and therapy availability are restricted (Foa & McLean, 2018). Furthermore, CBT may be less effective if it is not modified to meet the client's cultural setting due to cultural disparities in mental health knowledge and practice (Hofmann et al., 2017).

The importance of observation and reinforcement in learning behaviours is emphasized by Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. Applying this theory is difficult, though, as it calls for determining and changing the social networks and immediate surroundings of clients, which can be difficult and resource-intensive (Kohn, 2018). Clients who have become ingrained in poor social patterns from abusive contexts or unfavourable role models frequently resist social workers' attempts to help them change their behaviour (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, the Social Learning Theory frequently concentrates on individual behaviour without sufficiently addressing more significant structural problems like oppression, poverty, and inequality that fuel negative behaviours (Grusec & Davidov, 2017). Interventions may only provide modest short-term changes if these more general structural problems are not addressed, leaving clients at risk of relapse or continuing abusive behaviour patterns.

Lastly, because it is difficult to evaluate and change clients' attachment styles, especially those who have been abused or neglected during their early years, Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) is difficult to implement. It can take a lot of time and effort to treat attachment problems, and social workers may not have the tools or expertise necessary to provide effective interventions (Bowlby, 1969). Furthermore, the importance of early caregiving in Attachment Theory ignores the effects of trauma experienced later in life as well as other contextual factors. Furthermore, non-Western or culturally diverse cultures may not completely benefit from attachment theory since it is mostly centred on Western forms of caring, which have different conceptions of family and attachment (Bretherton & Munholland, 2017). Cultural contexts are not adequately incorporated into attachment-based therapies, which results in a gap in social work practice (Cassidy & Shaver, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Social work concepts put together to provide basic principles to analyze and solve women's mental health issues and domestic violence issues. Implementation of these social work ideas involves multiple operational difficulties. Social workers encounter challenges when handling intricate cases involving multiple categories of concern while also dealing with institutional barriers to change and striving to determine appropriate approaches between advancing comprehensive transformation and treating individual cases. These concepts face problems which include being insensitive to culture and needing extensive resources and disregarding vital components of mental health care. Social workers need to transform these theories for different client needs while combining strategies and advocating for community-level change that serves underprivileged groups as their primary approach to addressing these matters.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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