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# Female aggression - factors related to the seeking of help among young women

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## Female aggression - factors related to the seeking of help among young women

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Degree Programme in social services  
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The purpose of the research was to gather knowledge on the factors that could influence the seeking of help among young women for their issues of aggression. Aims of this research were to help Keijun varjo project develop more efficient ways of reaching and helping young women with issues of aggression, and to produce information in English on the issue of female aggression from the context of Maria Akatemia.

The working life partner was Maria Akatemia, which is an organization that helps women who use or are afraid to use violence. The thesis was done in Keijun varjo (eng. A shadow of a fairy) project, which services are allocated for young women.

Maria Akatemia's own theoretical concept "inner script" is the key theoretical concept of this thesis. In brief, it means that a person who has been mistreated in their early life might have created a harmful inner script to survive, which might cause abusive behaviour later in life. The theoretical part also discusses the diversity of violence and its causes, womanhood, and the process of seeking help.

The research questions for this thesis were: 1) What kind of factors could promote the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression? 2) What kind of factors could prevent the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression? and 3) What common themes can be identified from the factors related to the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression?

The data was gathered by using a narrative method of empathy based stories. Two of Maria Akatemia's workers and five of Keijun varjo project's instructors were respondents in the research. The data was analysed by using inductive content analysis.

The findings showed, that factors related to the seeking of help are partly processual in Keijun varjo project. The first needed factor in the process of seeking help is to recognize own problem and the need of external help. Other factors related to the seeking of help include: information and knowledge about the help service and the problem, hope in help, timing and location of the help service, and attitudes and feelings about a peer support group.

As a conclusion of the findings, Keijun varjo should make themselves a lower threshold service. They should provide detailed information about their services and be easily contactable, provide information about the problem, make known that many others have the same problems, and use client feedbacks as incentives if possible.

Keywords: female aggression, violence, women, seeking of help

Iris Katero

### Naisen aggressio - nuorten naisten avun hakemiseen liittyviä tekijöitä

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Sivumäärä

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Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tuoda esille tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat nuorten naisten avun hakemiseen heidän aggressiiviseen käyttäytymiseensä liittyen. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli auttaa Keijun varjo hanketta kehittämään tehokkaampia tapoja tavoittaa sekä auttaa nuoria naisia heidän aggressioon liittyvien ongelmiansa kanssa, sekä tuottaa englanninkielistä tietoa naisten aggressiivisuudesta Maria Akatemian kontekstista.

Työelämäkumppanina oli Maria Akademia, joka on järjestö jossa autetaan naisia ketkä käyttävät tai pelkäävät käyttävänsä väkivaltaa. Opinnäytetyö toteutettiin Keijun varjo hankkeeseen, jonka palvelut on kohdennettu nuorille naisille.

Maria Akatemian oma teoreettinen käsite ”sisäinen käsikirjoitus” toimii tämän opinnäytetyön teoreettisena avainkäsitteenä. Se tarkoittaa lyhyesti sitä, että huonoa kohtelua varhaiselämässään kokenut henkilö on saattanut luoda itselleen haitallisen selviytymisen käsikirjoituksen, joka aiheuttaa väkivaltaisen käyttäytymisen myöhemmässä elämässä. Teoriassa käsitellään myös väkivallan eri muotoja ja sen syitä, nais erityisyyttä sekä avun hakemisen prosessia.

Tutkimuskysymykset olivat: 1) Mitkä tekijät voivat edistää nuorten naisten avun hakemista heidän aggressionsa liittyen? 2) Mitkä tekijät voivat estää nuorten naisten avun hakemista heidän aggressionsa liittyen? ja 3) Mitä yhteisiä teemoja voidaan löytää tekijöistä jotka voivat vaikuttaa nuorten naisten avun hakemiseen heidän aggressionsa liittyen?

Aineisto kerättiin käyttämällä narratiivista eläytymismenetelmää kahden Maria Akatemian työntekijän sekä viiden Keijun varjo hankkeen työntekijöiden kanssa. Aineisto analysoitiin käyttämällä induktiivista sisällön analyysia.

Tutkimustulokset osoittivat, että avun hakemiseen liittyvät tekijät ovat osittain prosessuaalisia Keijun varjo hankkeessa. Ensimmäinen tarvittava tekijä avun hakemiseen on oman ongelman sekä ulkoisen avun tarpeen tiedostaminen. Avun hakemiseen vaikuttavat myös tukipalvelusta ja ongelmasta saatava tieto, toivo siitä että voi tulla autetuksi, tukipalvelun aika ja paikka sekä vertaistukiryhmään liittyvät asenteet ja tuntemukset.

Johtopäätökseksi tutkimustuloksista tuli se, että Keijun varjo hankkeen tulisi tehdä itsestään matalamman kynnyksen palvelu. Heidän tulisi kertoa omasta palvelustaan mahdollisimman tarkasti ja olla hyvin tavoitettavissa, tarjota tietoa ongelmasta, tuoda esille että monilla muillakin on samoja ongelmia sekä mahdollisuuksien mukaisesti käyttää asiakkaiden palautetta tukipalvelun toimivuudesta.

Avainsanat: naisen aggressio, väkivalta, naiset, avun hakeminen

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## 1 Introduction

This thesis discusses and digs deep into the subject of female aggression and dynamics of violence. Kommeri (2016) has discussed that the idea of a woman using violence is in high contrast with the model woman and the model mother of today; one who is kind, gentle and loving. However, the women who use violence are all normal women, who are triggered by varying factors to use violence. It cannot be claimed that women use violence only for their self-protection, as there are many women who abuse others without a threat on the women's physical wellbeing (Flinck & Paavilainen 2010, 312; Gjerstad & Lesojeff 2011, 48, 60). It is also highly relevant to discuss the violence that is directed inwards by the women. It is a far too common phenomenon.

The thesis will be constructed on the viewpoint and theoretical framework of Maria Akatemia, the working life partner of this thesis. They are experts in the area of female aggression. This thesis will explore the root causes of aggressive behaviour by introducing the concept of inner script and the importance of self-knowledge and emotion awareness. Inner script is the theory developed in Maria Akatemia to explain and illustrate the root causes of women's violence. It briefly means the person's story of life, which includes both positive and negative experiences. Perheentupa (2010, 54) mentions, that experiences of abuse and neglect can create destructive inner scripts, which may result in abusive behaviour later in life. Positive experiences are the ones that keep a person going and give resources to live a happy life. By exploring own inner script, one can become aware of own hurtful experiences that cause unexplained irritation and aggression.

We must bear in mind that there are positive and destructive types of aggression. Positive aggression is a need and a means of growing as a person, as well as as a society (Reenkola 2008, 30-32). It is needed to survive and to become responsible, independent, and caring individual human beings. It pushes people forward to stand up for injustice and to defend wellbeing. Destructive type of aggression on the other hand is something that hurts its user and or others around her. It is a mix of emotions as well as locked up emotions. (Kommeri 2016) Even though dynamics of violence and the reasons for it can be similar among men and women, it is important to discuss female aggression on its own. The taboo nature of it makes it harder for the women to seek and receive help (Kommeri 2016).

The topic of female aggression will be discussed by giving consideration to the female gender, and by discussing the diversity of violence and the root causes behind destructive aggression. In multiple studies and discussions with professionals and laymen, it seems that there is too little understanding and no courage to face women's violence. It is important to research and

discuss this issue more to raise understanding and awareness. Without undermining the problem of violence towards women, the genderized view on violence should be challenged. By providing adequate understanding and raising discussion about the diversity of violence and its perpetrators, the cross generational cycle of violence can be tackled.

Purpose of the research is to gather knowledge on the factors that could affect young women's decision to seek help for their issues of aggression in the context of Keijun varjo (eng. A shadow of a fairy) project. Maria Akatemia's recent project Keijun varjo is a developmental project allocated to reach women at a younger age and help them with their issues of aggression. The research contributes to the development of Keijun varjo by exploring the factors related to the seeking of help. By discussing the relative factors, it is possible to develop more efficient ways to reach young women with issues of aggression.

The research was a qualitative research, and data was gathered using a narrative approach, the method of empathy based stories. The respondents of the research were Keijun varjo project instructors and two workers of Maria Akatemia. The respondents were given two varying stories, frame narratives, to which they answered by immersing into the narratives. This type of methodological approach allowed for the respondents to answer freely, either by using their creativity and empathetic skills, or just by using bullet points.

The responses to the narratives were analysed with inductive content analysis, and main categories were raised from the data. The findings of the two different narratives were analysed separately, and finally analysed for similarities between the two.

The gathering of knowledge for the research was happened processually. I did a ten week practice placement at Maria Akatemia while working on the thesis. I was given a chance to participate in various training sessions concerning women's violence and child maltreatment even half a year before the practice placement started. This allowed to gain in depth knowledge and understanding of the issue of female aggression and Maria Akatemia's viewpoint. In my opinion, to gain deep understanding about female aggression requires a long thought process. To truly understand the underlying causes and the depth of the issue of violence, it takes time and reflection. It requires an open attitude, and allowing one self to ponder over the knowledge received. I feel privileged to have been able to take this journey at Maria Akatemia.

The reason behind the title "Female aggression" is that the term aggression is much deeper than violence. "Violence" would have given a certain imagery in the readers head. Using the

term “aggression” instead of “violence” emphasizes that not all aggressive actions are targeted outwards to other people. It can be something that turns inwards, towards the person herself.

The thesis has been written in neutral or with female pronoun to emphasize the feminine viewpoint on the topic of aggression. The key terms of this thesis are female aggression, violence, women and seeking of help.

## 2 Background

As background information, the organization and its preventative violence work are presented. These are essential to introduce, in order to understand the context in which this research was produced. By introducing these, one will gain a good understanding of what type of services Maria Akatemia offers for women who use or are afraid to use violence.

### 2.1 Maria Akatemia

Maria Akatemia is an organization dedicated to promote responsible humanity and to advance the wellbeing and ethical growth of individuals and society. Its core competences are gender sensitivity, preventative violence work for women and community competence work. Maria Akatemia offers trainings for professionals to enhance their competences in these areas and to deepen their professional self-knowledge in the process. Maria Akatemia also holds open theme discussion nights, to which everyone can participate. Theme nights offer ground to reflect on various humanistic topics while deepening self-knowledge of the participants. Maria Akatemia is officially a two-language organization; Finnish and Swedish.

Maria Akatemia’s violence work has two main parts concerning this thesis. Original main working model is Demeter work, which has been funded and running since 2003. It consists of Avoin Linja - hotline for women who use or afraid to use violence, individual discussions and processual peer group work. Alternatively, depending on the situation, a woman can begin psychotherapy sessions instead of group work. Psychotherapy can be an option for those, who are not suited to work in a group, or if they want to continue their work after participation in the group. Demeter work has given Maria Akatemia the opportunity to study and form a theory about women’s aggression and its dynamics. The theory will be discussed later in detail in this thesis.



The second part is Keijun varjo project, which started in 2016. It is an offspring of Demeter work, as there was a need for more allocated services work younger clients. The age-group of clients is 15-28 years old. The aim is to start the preventative violence work earlier than in Demeter work, by reaching the potential clients earlier. The project is based on the knowledge and experience from Demeter work. Keijun Varjo is in cooperation with Tyttöjen Talot (Houses for Girls) in Helsinki, Espoo and Tampere. Closed groups for young women have been established in the Houses for Girls and more are scheduled to start later. These groups are aimed to prevent violence by increasing the participants' self-knowledge and emotion control. In addition to direct client work, the purpose of the project is to increase awareness about female aggression among youth, to educate professionals about the issue, and to study further the special issues of women's violence.

In addition to direct preventative violence work, Maria Akatemia is active in promoting well-being by other means. Maria Akatemia offers various wellbeing groups to people. The object is to increase self-knowledge, work on emotions and promote responsible humanity. Some of these groups to mention are mother groups and vitality dance. Maria Akatemia also has a senior sector, which emphasizes the importance and influence of generational awareness.

Perheentupa has illustrated Maria Akatemia's humanistic psychodynamic viewpoint of relations of actions in a graph as seen in Figure 1. Psychodynamic viewpoint means that there are unconscious emotions, behavioural patterns and thoughts that influence how the person acts. Psychodynamically viewing these affect how different people and units act with each other and situations in life. (Navigen 2017) It is seen that everything is interconnected together. The actions of an individual affect her family, her community, her society and the world globally. This also happens vice versa and the sectors are in constant movement in process of change. (Perheentupa 2010, 20-21) This way of thinking gives motivation for responsible thinking over own actions and working towards the wellbeing of oneself as well as others'.

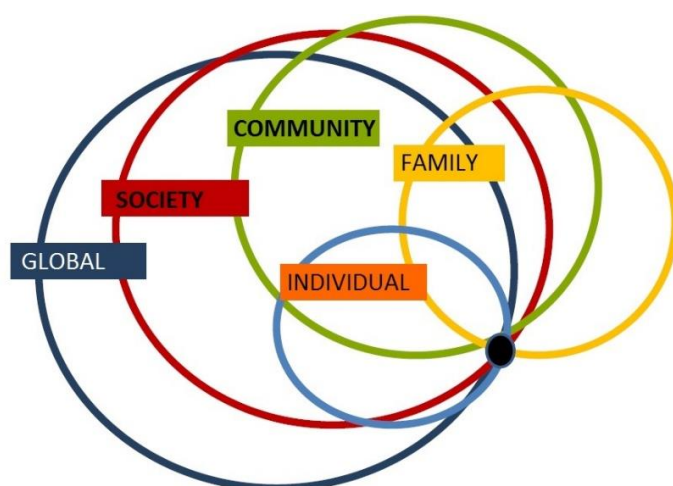


Figure 1: Maria Akatemia's psychodynamic viewpoint (Perheentupa)

## 2.2 Demeter work

Because Keijun varjo project is an offspring of Demeter work, it is called for to describe what Demeter work is. Demeter working model is the main preventative violence work for women in Maria Akatemia. It has been funded by the Slot Machine Association (now "STEA") since 2003. It consists of Avoin Linja hotline for women who use or are afraid to use violence, individual discussions and peer group work. The workers meet the clients without judging, are respectful, and open and receiving to the clients' need to be heard with the issue.

Avoin Linja is the first step of helping and waking responsibility in the clients. The caller's revelation of their problem and need for support are taken seriously and met with empathy. It is important that the caller gets the feeling of being seen and heard. It is evident from many client cases that their previous attempts of talking about their aggression issues in for example child health services or even child protection services have not been taken seriously and have been disregarded. Avoin Linja will support and encourage the caller to proceed to further services in Maria Akatemia.

From Avoin Linja, a client is offered individual discussions, which will map out what the client's situation is, and offer further support to aggression issues. The client is discussed with about her history; her family and its dynamics where she grew up, supportive and safe adults in her life, and experiences about violence. The method is deepening self-knowledge by opening and discovering the client's inner script of her life. Discussions will waken and enhance the sense of responsibility over own actions in the client. The worker will support the client in finding strength and ways to act non-violently. The individual sessions prepare the clients for group work as well as determine whether the client is suitable to work in a group. (Kommeri 2017a)

The group work takes place 15 times and lasts around three months. It is a professionally directed peer group. The goals of Demeter groups are increasing self-knowledge and -awareness, and strengthening the feeling of responsibility over own actions and other people. The inner scripts of the clients will be examined deeper by finding the hurtful wounds and the positive resources in one's history. Little girl stories are used as a working method. By exploring the experiences of the little girls inside the clients, they will feel that the hurt little girl finally gets the value, attention and care that she has deserved all along. In the groups they also discuss and strengthen own emotional competence and control over emotions. A strong combining quality factor in the groups is gender sensitivity and exploration of own feminine gender. Gender can be used as resource by understanding the speciality of own gender and the experiences that come from it. The group work offers the clients repairing experiences

and a sense of similarity and an open environment to talk about the hurtful and shameful experiences and actions. (Mäki-Fränti 2017)

The name Demeter comes from Greek mythology. In the mythology she was a goddess of harvest. Everything on earth began to die after her daughter was kidnapped to the underworld. Only after Demeter could reach her daughter, the crops began to grow again. The name symbolises how a woman needs to establish connection with her inner herself, including the little girl inside her. The name also symbolises that the support of other women will help this journey to inner self. (Perheentupa 2010, 42)

The statistics compiled every year from the contacts and clients of Demeter work show the need for the service and the distribution of certain factors. In 2016 there were 114 contacts to Avoin Linja hotline. Even though the number had decreased significantly, it is still a big number considering the seriousness of the subject. Out of the 114 callers of 2016 slightly under 100 were directed to the individual discussion. Out of those who had the individual conversations, approximately 70 continued to the professionally instructed Demeter peer groups. (Maria Akatemia statistics 2016)

The Avoin Linja hotline statistics from 2016 show that 72% of the women seeking help with their aggression were mothers of under school-age children. Maria Akatemia's theoretical framework emphasizes that becoming a mother is often a triggering factor for aggression. Becoming a mother requires a lot of resources and energy, which in turn increases the fatigue of a person. There are also many new things and surprises, to which the new mother might not know how to respond and deal with. Tiredness and cluelessness lowers the verge to use violence as a coping strategy. It might be a surprise to one self to behave aggressively. It might as well be calculated, which could be the case when using violence as a disciplinary action. (Maria Akatemia statistics 2016)

The Avoin Linja statistics of 2016 show that 38% of the aggression is directed at a partner and 36% to a child. Throughout the years, the statistics show approximately the same distribution in this category and in the statistics discussed previously. (Maria Akatemia statistics 2016)

Most of the clients in Maria Akatemia have described peer support groups as the most important aspect of Demeter work. They have said that it is very important to recognise that they are not alone with their issues of aggression. By sharing and hearing stories and experiences with others in the same situation is deeply empowering and relieving. (Maria Akatemia statistics 2016)

Demeter work is constantly mentored in order to develop the work and to maintain the quality of it. All the Demeter workers take part in mentoring sessions, in which phenomena risen from the groups are discussed and explored. Mentoring is the place for workers to get support for their own work as group leaders and client workers. Maria Akatemia emphasizes professional self-knowledge in order to have enough strength and capability to work. Mentoring in Maria Akatemia acknowledges that the work with clients affects the workers, the workers affect the working community and that the working community affects the management of the organization. In order for quality work, all of these segments need to be healthy, as they are in constant motion with each other and affect each other both ways. Mentoring offers a place for the workers to unwind and understand the experiences and emotions. It is in its own way a peer support group. (Lindroos 2017)

### 2.3 Keijun varjo project

Keijun varjo (eng. A shadow of a fairy) provides help for girls and young women aged 15-28 years with issues of aggression. It was born out of the need to allocate services for younger Demeter clients and to intervene at an even more preventative stage. It is in cooperation with Tyttöjen Talot of Helsinki, Espoo and Tampere. The main goal of the project is to ground the work to all Tyttöjen Talot in the form that has been developed based on the experience and knowledge gained throughout the project. The girls' and young women's emotion management skills will be strengthened and the transition to adulthood supported. Keijun varjo is based on the same theoretical framework as Demeter work, which is the idea that behind a woman who uses violence is a maltreated and emotionally unmet little girl.

The main difference between Keijun varjo and Demeter work is the path of clients come to the service. In Keijun varjo, the participating young women have been directed to the service mainly through a contact in Tyttöjen Talot. The young women might have not been self-imposed to search help for their negative aggression, but the issue might have been brought up by a worker. In comparison, the clients of Demeter work seek help through Avoin Linja (hotline for women who use or are afraid to use violence) by their own initiative and are already aware of their negative aggression.

Tyttöjen Talot are the working partner in the project Keijun varjo. Tyttöjen Talot are a place for girls and young women aged 10-28 to hang out in female company with professional workers ready to be talked to. There are different actions hosted regularly, such as cooking, dancing, boxing or crafting. Tyttöjen Talot hold theme groups, some of which are open, and some of which are closed. An example of a closed group is a Keijun varjo group. The values of Tyttöjen Talot are gender and culture sensitivity. Girls and young women from many different

cultures and life situations come to the place and all are equally welcome. Tyttöjen Talot are places where everyone can come just as they are and the places are declared discrimination free zones. The workers discuss growing up, womanhood, identity and all sorts of things with the girls, offering support and positively challenging the girls on the path to self-knowledge. (Tyttöjen Talo Helsinki 2017)

### 3 Purpose and aim of the research

Purpose of the research is to gather knowledge on the factors that could affect young women's decision to seek help for their issues of aggression. The factors relating to it will be researched by exploring Keijun varjo project's instructors' and two of Maria Akatemia's workers' perception on the issue. The respondents have vast experience and knowledge on the topic of female aggression and the difficulties and successes of reaching clients.

The aims of this thesis were to help Keijun varjo project to develop more efficient ways of reaching and helping young women with issues of aggression, and to provide information in English in the perspective of Maria Akatemia on the issue of female aggression.

The research questions are as follows:

- 1) What kind of factors could promote the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression?
- 2) What kind of factors could prevent the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression?
- 3) What common themes can be identified from the factors related to the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression?

Maria Akatemia has made use of this English thesis material already before the thesis was published. Providing information on the topic in English advances Maria Akatemia's international and multicultural opportunities. The efforts of this thesis have been gratefully welcomed by Maria Akatemia.

#### 4 Previous studies and projects

Previous studies on female aggression are highly relevant. The Finnish studies and projects on the topic are what have moulded the current climate of helping women with issues of aggression in Finland. Most of the research that has been done on the topic are based on projects and their end comings. Many of the projects have been developmental in nature to find out ways to address the problem.

In many projects and research it has been discovered that professionals are somewhat afraid to speak about the issue or do not take the issue seriously. Some clients of Maria Akatemia have also described that they have tried to reach for help from other service providers before, but their issue was not taken seriously.

Levottomat tuhkimot was a project by Non-Fighting Generation. The clients were girls aged 13-16 with issues of aggression. In their project, they discovered that girls who use violence do not necessarily recognize their own behaviour as violence, even if they attributed the same type of action as violence when someone else did it (Gjerstad & Lesojeff 2011, 49). In addition, it was discussed in the project handbook, that the girls were just normal girls who used violence, whereas in previous working projects the clients had been somewhat marginalized (Gjerstad & Lesojeff 2011, 24)

Vaiettu Naiseus was a project by Ensi-ja Turvakotien liitto. In their project they did client work with women who use violence. The project also aimed to raise awareness about the issue of women's violence. During the project, they discovered the taboo attitudes towards women who use violence, how the women are not taken seriously for their issues and not confronted about the problem. The project initially experienced resistance about discussing the issue of violence perpetrated by women (Puisto 2009, 8). This was due to the general idea that men have much higher statistics as abusers, and that violence against women is a huge problem and a sad fact.

There have been various bachelor's theses so far made by social and health care students on the topic. A doctoral thesis by Katriina Rinkinen was done ethnographically by participating in one of Maria Akatemia's Demeter peer groups. In year 2016 a doctoral thesis by Emmi Lattu was published by the name of Naisten tekemä väkivalta (Women's violence), but it was not associated with Maria Akatemia. She discusses the justifications of the women who use physical violence and their emotions related to theirs violence. She also discusses the women's de-sistance of their violent behaviour. (Lattu 2016, Abstract)

According to Nurminen (2017), 16% of men in Finland have been victims of abuse by their spouse and over a fifth have experienced abuse in their earlier relationships with women.

Statistics from Lapsiuhritutkimus (Eng. Child victim survey) (Fagerlund, Peltola, Kääriäinen, Ellonen & Sariola 2013) show that girls in their 6<sup>th</sup> grade have experienced abuse from other females in 43% of the cases, and in their 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 44% of the cases (Fagerlund et al 2013, 41). Usually the abuser had been some friends or siblings (Fagerlund et al 2013, 43). Furthermore the study states that abuse done by mothers is more reported than abuse done by fathers (Fagerlund et al 2013, 49).

Flinck has done a few studies with other researchers, such as Keiski and Paavilainen, on the topic of women's violence. They have discussed how the women who use violence experience it and what things could affect them receiving help.

## 5 Understanding female aggression

Violence happens all over the world, unbound by country, culture or religion. Violence does not happen out of nothing, but it is a reaction to other violent experiences. It happens in the wealthiest of houses and in the poorest of families. It happens between husband and wife, parents and offspring, a friend and a friend, and a stranger and a stranger. The current situation in the world has increased the feelings of fear and aggression, and these feelings have started to bubble out as actions throughout the world. New channels of technology have made it easier to express own aggression regardless of the target. It is not extraordinary in today's world that people are abused and shamed in the internet by electronic means. Hate speech is increasing. It is important to remember, that while there are destructive actions of aggression, there can also be many positive outcomes through actions fueled by aggression. The positive actions can promote rights and justice, and serve as a power to grow better as societies, families, and as individuals.

### 5.1 Womanhood

Womanhood is an universal concept of being a woman. In some cultures it means something, whereas in others it might mean something else. In Maria Akatemia, it is emphasized that womanhood should be given more consideration. Exploring womanhood and its meaning to an individual, one can become more conscious of oneself.

Perheentupa (2010, 22) writes about gender specificity. Gender specific thinking recognizes the differences between the two genders. The difference comes from the fundamental psychophysical differences of male and female. Typically a male and a female have different physiological and psychological attributes. Perheentupa writes that both genders go through their own specific process of early life. This should be recognized, because the difference is significant. Figure 2 illustrates the gender specific thinking of Maria Akatemia.

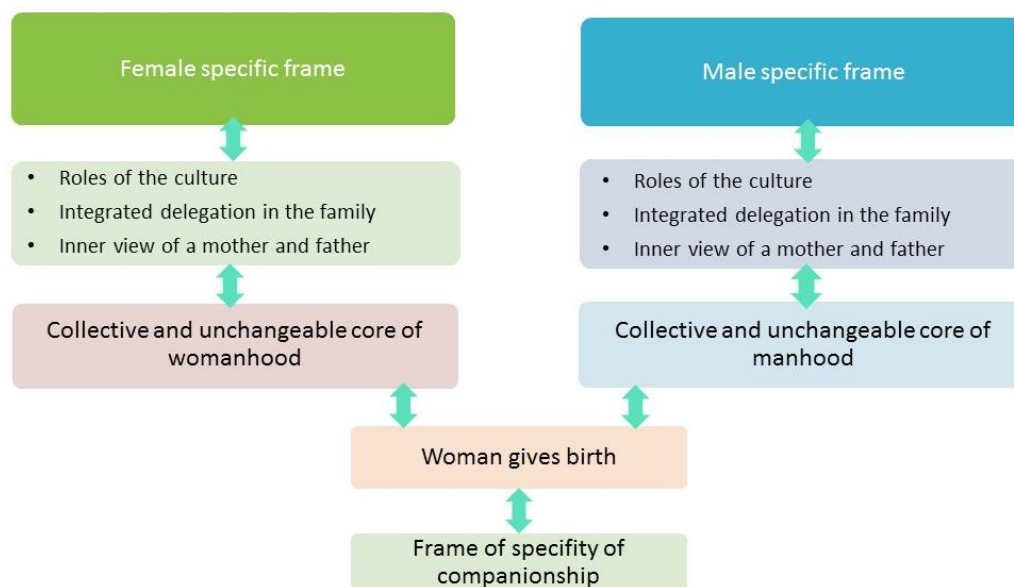


Figure 2: Maria Akatemia's gender specific frame (Perheentupa 2010, 25)

Perheentupa discusses that gender sensitivity includes the recognition of the speciality of companionship between the two genders. It means that two different types work together, building the societies around them. If this companionship is constructive and appreciative of the differences the both genders have, this can work resourcefully. Both male and female have their own perspective of life and carry their own specific knowledge from their perspective. (Perheentupa 2010, 28-29)

The difference in the early lives of both genders is that typically children are born into boys or girls. Perheentupa discusses that the girl is born into the same gender as the mother who gives birth, and the boy is born into a different gender. This means that as the girl grows up, she needs to grow separate from the one who she is similar with, and at the same time balance it with the identification of similarity with her mother. This balancing in between separation and identification makes the relationship between a mother and a daughter extremely sensitive. (Perheentupa 2010, 22) Difficulties will occur, if this balance is disrupted, either by the separation happening too rapidly or extremely, or by the separation happening insufficiently (Perheentupa 2010, 22-23).



Siltala writes that a girl needs to have healthy aggression in order to separate from her primary caretakers (2006, 37). She writes that it is normal and essential for a girl to feel aggression towards her mother. However, this needs to happen constructively. When a mother and daughter relationship does not allow the natural separation process to happen, Siltala says that the hate and aggression the girl feels will turn inwards. She might feel guilt over the hate she has towards her mother, who cannot take it, and so she acts destructively towards her own self. This might explain self-harming behaviour which is common among young women (see chapter 5.3). (Siltala 2006, 40-41)

The boy does not need to go through a similar process as the girl, as he is already different fundamentally than the one who gave birth to him. He does not need to balance the similarity and separation, because he is already different. He on the other hand needs to find his similarity and identification with the male gender. (Perheentupa 2010, 22) He needs to have a male figure, from whom he can reflect on his masculinity.

Perheentupa describes that womanhood consists of certain things throughout the process of growing from a child to adult. Everyone has their own individual process depending on their culture and situations, but there are steps every one of them needs to go through. These are the following, which form the collective core of womanhood (Perheentupa 2010, 26):

1. Relationship between the mother and daughter and the relationship between the father and daughter
2. The history of women, culture, chain of generations, and family structure
3. Inner little girl
4. Growth from a little girl to a woman and the growing as a woman
5. Conscious woman

Perheentupa (2010, 26) writes that these factors are part of every female's process of growing up. She describes that the first three factors influence a woman's individual identity and behaviour. By pondering over these three factors, one can become aware of why she acts in certain ways. The inner little girl mentioned here means the experience of being a little girl in one's childhood and how she was treated by others. The second factor mentioned means all the social influences that have an effect on the notion of being a woman.

The norms and expectations of the society pressure women to act or withhold from acting in certain ways. Women are abused and used in many ways, but it is expected that a woman endures it passively. These experiences raise ill feelings in a woman, but it is not deemed of importance to express these feelings. (Smith, Cox & Saradijan 2002, 16). The cultural norms are

highly sexualised in today's world, and many times women experience harassment and over importance of the outside looks. These can result in feelings of worthlessness and shame.

Mothers are expected to be loving and caring and to take care of others. In today's society women also work as much as men. Sinkkonen discusses the women still need to take care of their home, but the long work hours are not reduced even when the women are going through their busy years of being mothers of young children. These circumstances can lead a woman to feel insufficient, as her energy and time might not be enough to take care of everything "well enough" (Sinkkonen 2013, 97).

Lankinen describes that by channelling own anger and aggression constructively, women have been able to break free from unjust cultural roles for women or norms that have gone over generations. This channelling of aggression allows a young woman to become an actor of their own life, someone who is able to set healthy limits for herself, and not someone who stays in unjust situations without working their way out of it. (Lankinen 2011, 14).

The fourth factor of growing up from a girl to a woman is the time when the girl becomes an actor of her own life. She becomes a teenager and has to go through her developmental task of separating from her primary caretakers (Röning 2013, 152). She starts to think and act in her individual ways. She wants to find her own way of doing things, finding out what she can and cannot do. (Siltala 2006, 36)

As a girl grows into a young woman, her body and hormones change. Other people start to react to her in different ways than before, and she herself needs to relate to her own changes. (Kaltiala-Heino 2013, 52-53) Her sexuality starts to develop, and she needs to cope with the new desires, thoughts and moodiness. She also needs to cope with how the other gender starts to see and treat her differently due to the changes of teenage years.

The relationship between the father and daughter becomes an important aspect in the process of growing up. The girl should be able to reflect on her womanhood in a safe relationship with her father, even though her body has changed into a more womanly figure. (Siltala 2006, 39)

Paulo (2006, 59) writes that relations with other young people are extremely important among youth. She describes that especially for girls it is very important to have a best friend. Among girls it is also common to have very tight friendships and to experience jealousy over their friends who spend time with others than them. (Paulo 2006, 61) Lankinen writes that girls are extremely aware of their surroundings and of the feedback they get from it in their youth (2011, 44).

## 5.2 Diversity of violence

To emphasize the amount of manifestations of violence, they will be briefly described. Self-harm is separated as its own subcategory, because it is somewhat different comparing to other forms of violence. To understand the extent of violence perpetrated and experienced, it is beneficial to read descriptions of its forms. Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (eng. National Institute for Health And Welfare), like many other sources, provide an overview on the different types of violence, which will be presented next.

Physical violence is anything that is directed at the person physically. It is important to bear in mind, that physical violence is almost always also emotionally abusive (Väestöliitto 2016). It hurts the perpetrator, the victim and possible witnesses internally on an emotional level. Physical violence can be for example hitting or kicking, biting, scratching, strangling, pulling hair, grapping or slapping. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2015) Corporal punishment is also physical violence.

Emotional abuse can be verbal abuse, such as insulting. Emotional abuse does however take many different forms. It can be the most destructive form of violence. Emotional abuse includes for example demeaning, controlling, threatening with violence or suicide, breaking objects, pressuring or blackmailing. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2015) Among young women gossiping, backbiting and slander are typical forms of violence (Gjerstad & Lesoeff 2011, 41) Also grumping and silent treatment can be considered emotional abuse (Kommeri 2016).

Maltreatment and neglect are also forms of violence. These mean ignoring or withholding care of other people in need of it, such as children or the sick. These can be extremely hurtful things to experience. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2015) Serious and constant maltreatment and neglect can affect a person deeply on an emotional level and lead to serious consequences on the victim's psyche.

Religious or cultural abuse is abuse made under the excuse of the culture or religion. Culture or religion can be used as a tool to manipulate, pressure and force. These can be used as tools to abuse a person morally, and leading them to believe they are not worth much. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2015)

Financial abuse is about restricting and controlling other's finances. It can also be restriction of involvement in decisions concerning financial decision making. It can be blackmailing or using other's wealth for own purposes without permission. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2015)

Sexual abuse can be pressuring to or forceful sexual actions, forcing someone to watch pornography or demeaning one's sexuality. It also includes forbidding the use of contraceptives, forcing to make an abortion or controlling one's sexuality. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2015) Sexual abuse is more thought of as something directed at women. However, a woman can also attack a man's sexuality in various ways, be it verbal or physical. There are also known cases where a woman has sexually abused a child.

One form of violence is stalking. It is described by Varjo-hanke (2016) as the following. It is continuous contacting, following or observing which is not wanted by the victim. It includes threatening and or violent actions towards the one being stalked. Furthermore it can include slander, and usage of the victim's personal information for negative purposes. This can also happen digitally, by sending constant messages on social media platforms and spreading hurtful information.

Institutional violence means that certain laws, norms, people and groups use power over others without regarding their rights, needs and feelings (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2016). Examples of these are institutional power over children without taking to account children's rights (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2016) or discriminatory practises enforced by laws or norms towards or minorities. Kommeri (2017b Personal communication.) mentions that a form of institutional violence is that in many child care centers, only the violence towards women is screened. There are official forms about the women's experience of abuse, but there are no official forms for the abuse that women might perpetrate.

Chemical violence is misuse of substances towards children, such as using medicine or alcohol to make a child sleep. It can also mean to neglect a child's need for certain medicines or special diet. Furthermore, the usage of substances during pregnancy is also chemical violence. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2016)

Violence done by women's towards their partners is usually emotional, such as demeaning, silent treatment and yelling. Still approximately a fifth of men in Finland have experienced physical abuse from their female partners. Women might use abuse as a means to get attentions from their partners. (Nurminen 2017) The abuse towards the woman's children can be for example verbal abuse, strong shaking, hitting, pulling hair, threatening and threatening behaviour, pushing or spanking. The abuse made by mother towards their children has been more reported than the abuse made by fathers. (Fagerlund et al., 2013, 49-50).

Violence in its many forms is an act of destructive aggression. However, aggression in itself is essential. Reenkola describes in her book it as a positive power needed to grow as individuals,

and to make a change in life. Of the most important reasons for aggression is the natural mission to separate from the primary caretakers and to become a separate individual. Aggression is needed to set limits and to defend oneself and others. It is a defending and a driving power for change. (Reenkola 2008, 30-32)

### 5.3 Self harm

Self-harm has a section of its own, because the issue should be highlighted when talking about women, and it requires more information to understand it than just merely describing the forms it can take. Women seem to be more prone to self-harm than men, as will be seen in for example Figure 3 and to be discussed by Smith et al. (2002, 16).

Self-harm is aggression directed inwards by the person herself. It is an attempt to manage anxiety and bad feelings because the person does not have alternative abilities of emotion control. Bad feelings could be for example feelings of worthlessness and not being good enough. The action done to self-harm, for example cutting, brings instant pleasure by relieving anxiety through aggression towards oneself (Marttunen 2013, 116). Self-harm can be triggered and influenced by a variety of factors, but the underlying cause is trauma, experiences of abandonment and unsafety earlier in life (Nurmi 2013, 122). However, the individual might be prone to inwards aggression due to her personality, as not all who have had difficult lives resort to harm themselves. Other triggers and factors are such that increase the stress to an unbearable level to the person. (Marttunen 2013, 112) Self-harm can also be a demanding call for help to let others know that the bad feelings the individual is feeling are serious (Marttunen 2013, 109-110).

Marttunen (2013, 109) discusses that self-harm is caused by hate. Initially, the hate is directed at someone other than the person herself. The hate might turn inside, towards the person herself. Marttunen categorizes self-harm as direct or indirect. Direct self-harm means serious suicidal ideas with true intentions of harming or even causing death to oneself to end the bad feelings (Marttunen 2013, 110).

Marttunen (2013, 110) describes indirect self-harm as an attempt to control anxiety without the intention to die. It can involve danger, but there is no plan for suicide. It is risk-taking which can be for example reckless alcohol use or sexual relations. Indirect self-harm is done in order to avoid unpleasant emotions and reality. Also eating disorders can be a form of indirect self-harm (Nurmi 2013, 121).

In Figure 3 is a statistic from Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos, used by Marttunen and Partonen, showing the hospital patients due to deliberate self-harm by gender and age. The numbers on the left are persons treated per 100 000 persons. The orange line shows young women aged 20-24 and the green line shows 15-19 years old girls. Purple line are boys aged 15-19 and blue line is young men aged 20-24. (Marttunen & Partonen 2015) Statistics around the world show that females are more prone to hurt themselves non-lethally than males. Statistics are most likely just a tip of the iceberg, as many of those who self-harm do not presumably seek medical assistance. Medical assistance will most likely only be received in the most lethal cases. (Smith et al. 2002, 10-11).

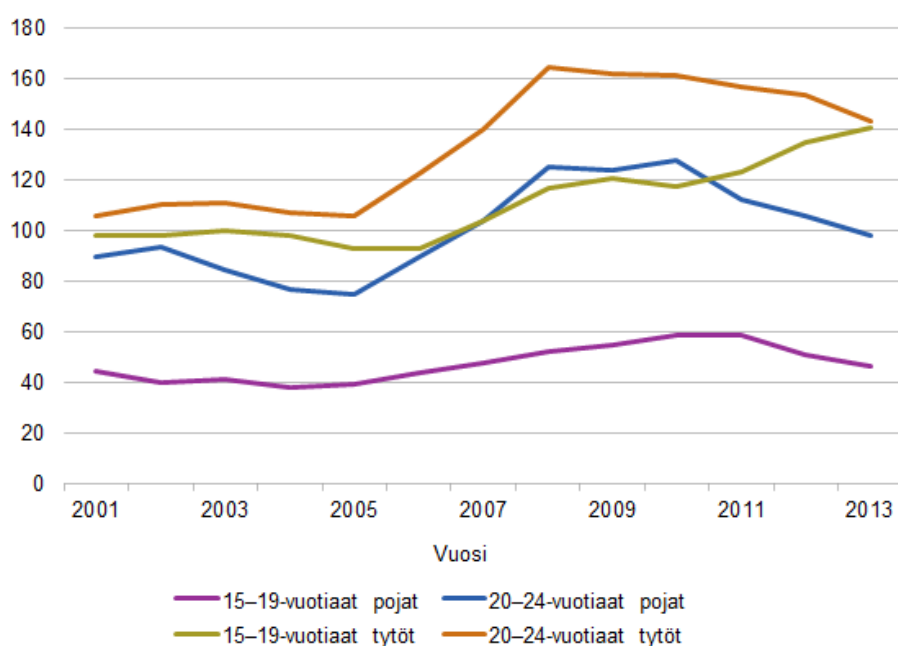


Figure 3: Patients due to self-harm by gender and age (Marttunen & Partonen 2015)

Females seem to be more prone to direct their aggression destructively inwards. It is discussed by Smith et. al (2002, 16). They talk about the social expectations of culture for women, and how it is not suitable for females to express their anger outwardly. Furthermore, women are expected to be caring and gentle, and to take care of others selflessly. Something that has numerously been brought up in various sources, such as Smith et al., is that women are not allowed to or taken seriously when they voice their opinion. These expectations can bring the emotions of worthlessness and anger, which can become destructive if not allowed to be expressed in the first place.

## 5.4 Roots of violence

Violence is not born on its own, but rather it is always a consequence of something. The root causes of destructive aggression are the feelings of shame and anger. (Reenkola 2008, 27)

Soisalo (2012, 57) explains that personality of a person can be considered as part of the reason a person might be aggressive. The experiences of the person throughout her life have influenced her personality, so the traumatic experiences are also in connection to her personality. As will be discussed later, the experiences in life, the inner script, mold the person into who they are and how they act.

Soisalo writes that stress can make a person resort to aggression if they have experienced abuse in their life. A stressful situation beyond a person's coping abilities can launch a crisis that makes the person feel that they cannot control the situation. A crisis reaction might continue for a long period of time and cause problems, if the person does not have the resources to manage it. It might cause fear, anxiety or anger. The stressors can be apparently negative or apparently positive. Such situations can be for example a birth of a child, marriage, loss of a person or wealth or experience of abuse. (Soisalo 2012, 157-158)

In Demeter work it is emphasized and seen on client statistics that especially being a mother of young children can be a stressing factor for a woman. The lack of resources reducing the mother's energy, the pressure from the society to be a model woman, and the possible projection of own childhood experiences through own child are all factors that can make the life situation extremely burdensome.

### 5.4.1 Inner script

Inner script is the key concept of this thesis. Perheentupa (2010, 54) writes that inner script means an individual's story of life that has been altered by all the events they have experienced. Experiences of abuse and neglect sometimes force a child to develop their own survival strategy by "writing" a destructive inner script. Exploration of a person's inner script is the key to understanding abuse perpetrated by women. By exploring own inner script one can begin the process to heal. One can find the things that have made them the way they are and process the feelings that lead to aggression. Also, by exploring what womanhood, as described in chapter 5.1, means in that person's inner script, helps to understand own behavior.

Parsons (2014, 109) discusses that abuse in childhood can stop a person from learning to manage their emotions constructively. The feelings of fear, shame and anger, can be locked up, denied their existence or become disoriented. Due to this, the skills to manage these feelings lack. By understanding the roots of these feelings by exploring the inner script, one becomes able to channel these constructively without violence. In the process of carefully exploring the hidden and suppressed negative emotions and experiences, the person can begin to understand and control those feelings better.

Perheentupa describes that a little girl who has experienced abuse and neglect, has had to develop her own kind of survival strategy. Many times, the hurtful experiences, especially in childhood, stay hidden in the dark and start to bubble out unexpectedly and unconsciously later in life. Those hurtful experiences, when left unattended and unfound, can affect the person in a negative way and mold their personality and actions. According to Perheentupa, these kinds of experiences can lead to unhealthy types of inner script and lead to destructive aggression. (Perheentupa 2010, 53-54)

Perheentupa discusses that all humans feel the need for love and care in their childhood. The primary caretakers should be able to provide a little child with these as well as take care of their natural needs. A little child needs to feel connection and affection with her parents. As the developmental goal in everyone's youth is to grow separate from the primary caretakers, complications occur when the separation does not go optimally. When the separation from the primary caretakers happens too early, is enforced or does not happen at all, it becomes a problem. (Perheentupa 2010, 53-54)

The experiences of neglect and maltreatment, emotional and physical abuse, cause unbearable feelings in a young girl. Perheentupa (2010, 53-54) has described various types of inner scripts that could be produced by the maltreated and abused young girls. Perheentupa emphasizes the meaning and importance of the way a little girl receives looks. A look from the primary care takers should be loving and caring, ready to attend. However, in a violated script of life, the look as been cold, needy or missing, which creates the feeling of not being met, loved and cared for.

Perheentupa discusses that a child who does not experience the positive look and caring actions, feels such agony that she makes herself neglect the need for the positive feelings (2010, 54). She denies herself the right to feel those feelings and becomes the "good girl", one who does not do anything that might irritate. Perheentupa describes this as sterilization of emotions. Rajaniemi (2017 Personal communication) adds that a child also has the need to show her love towards others. Rajaniemi says that the parent who has developed an inner



script of emotional sterilization, cannot receive the child's show of love, leaving the child without an affectionate interaction.

Another close description by Perheentupa is capsule of emotions. It means that a little girl has had to lock feelings of need and love inside herself, because her caretakers have not been in a position to give her those. Feelings of disappointment, sadness, fear, shame, anger and hatred are bottled up. When she grows up and gets into a stressful situation beyond her resources, the suppressed feelings might burst out uncontrollably. In both of these categories the little girl might have had to bear responsibility over the family beyond the capabilities of her age. (Perheentupa 2010, 56-61)

Perheentupa (2010, 63-64) describes inner burning as another category of understanding the cause of women's destructive aggression. The woman has experienced something so painful, that she protects herself from those painful memories and emotions by blaming herself for what happened with extreme feelings of shame and guilt. She cannot deal with the trauma and continuously does deeds that bring more shame and guilt to avoid the pain deep inside. Her actions of aggression hurt herself and others and feed her fire. She puts herself into situations that continue to keep her identity of blamed and unworthy. By not being able to face the unbearable trauma, she cannot grow past her self-blame and -shaming.

Another survival strategy described by Perheentupa is a body of suffering in which the woman somaticizes her agony. The unbearable experiences are transformed as symptoms and sicknesses of the body, so that the feelings caused by trauma do not have to be faced. Furthermore, Perheentupa describes a woman who seals her agony of extreme abandonment and neglect in a glass tomb and carries it inside her. She needs to empty it regularly and does so by abusing others. The glass tomb is for the mother who never loved and cared for the little girl. (Perheentupa 2010, 67-71)

By understanding the inner scripts of destructive aggression, the concept of "cycle of violence" can be easier to understand. The abuse might go over generations when none of the abused are able to face and manage their traumatic experiences, and when the abusers refuse to take responsibility over their actions. Experiences of abuse create inner scripts that influence the way the individuals perceive the world and act on their feelings. Cross generational violence and negligence are overcomeable, but require acceptance of own imperfection, responsibility, willpower and work over oneself.

#### 5.4.2 Rejection of responsibility and justification

Sometimes it is difficult to understand to variety of violence. Some people only consider physical abuse as actual violence, while neglecting the consequences of verbal and other non-physical abuse. Flinck and Paavilainen (2010) discuss in their research article rejection and justification of violent behavior.

Flinck and Paavilainen discuss the rejection of violence and the responsibility over it. Some of the women in their research denied using violence, because the women's violence was not physical. The women did not realize that their non-physical behavior was still emotionally abusive. (Flinck & Paavilainen 2010, 310-311) Some of the women who were abusive, physically and or emotionally, normalized their violent behavior. These women thought that "violence is a normal part of relationships". (Flinck & Paavilainen 2010, 312)

As justifications for violence, Flinck and Paavilainen (2010) discuss defense, bad feelings and acting in order to help the family. Self-defensive violence in response to a partner's abusive behavior were thought to be justified by the women. The women also resorted to violence in order to defend their own dignity and personal space. (Flinck & Paavilainen 2010, 312) Some of the women abused their partners in order to protect the family and children, attempting to make the man understand his fault and change his bad behavior (Flinck & Paavilainen 2010, 313). Also, some of the women had suppressed or were overburdened with negative feelings and stress. They felt they had the right to abuse their partner if the partner made things even harder for them. Also, they felt that they were not accountable for their abusive actions due to their emotional burden. (Flinck & Paavilainen 2010, 312)

It has been discussed by Gjerstad and Lesojeff that girls from their study, aged 13-16, might justify their abuse towards boys by saying that "boys don't hurt as much" (Gjerstad & Lesojeff 2011, 60). A girl might also justify their abusive behavior by the fact that the other person had acted wrongly, unjustly or abusively towards her or her close ones (Gjerstad & Lesojeff 2011, 40, 44). Furthermore, Gjerstad and Lesojeff discuss that violence could be used as a tool to gain social power and appreciation or to solve problems (Gjerstad & Lesojeff 2011, 48).

#### 5.5 Process of seeking help

Keiski, Flinck, Kaunonen and Paavilainen (2016) discuss in their article their study about female perpetrated violence and the process of seeking help. In the process of seeking help,

the first step is to acknowledge the harming behavior. The female participants in the study described their acknowledgement of their demanding nature and desire to control towards themselves and their children, which led to abuse (Keiski et al. 2016, 7). The women felt distressed about their inability to control their feelings and about the capability in itself to behave violently. They recognized they needed external help. It is difficult to admit to oneself the violent behavior and the need for help, because it requires one to face own incompleteness. (Keiski et al. 2016, 8)

Keiski et. al (2016, 8-9) state in their article that in the process of seeking help, the women face challenges in obtaining help. The article discusses the cycle of secrecy, which needs to be broken in order to get help. The cycle of secrecy means that the women felt the need to hide their abuse from other people and did so in various means, such as by exclusion and isolation of themselves and their family. When the women decided to seek help, in many places they were not understood, taken seriously and heard properly. For example in basic health care systems the nurses did not understand the issue or they did not have the courage to discuss the violence with the client. Other issue was that the women did not easily find a service specifically to help women who have issues with their own violence. Even when authorities, such as the police or child protection, got involved with the violence, they did not offer such help that would help the women overcome their aggression. The authorities did not intervene with the underlying causes of the aggression.

Smith et. al (2002, 13-14) say that women who self-harm and become suicidal know they need to reach out to someone to talk to and get help. The problem is that they think they do not know how to describe their extremely desperate feelings, or that they do not feel they have the ability to do it. The fear is that no person would understand or be able to share the feelings even if they were to reach out for help.

Rickwood, Deane, Wilson and Ciarrochi (2005) discuss young people's help-seeking for mental health problems in their study. They describe different factors related to the seeking of help: barriers and facilitators. Firstly, they describe "lack of emotional competence" as a factor that could prevent the seeking of help. This means that the person has difficulties recognizing own negative feelings and in expressing or describing those feelings (Rickwood et al. 2005, 14). Furthermore, they list "help-negation" as a preventative factor. "Help-negation" means that those who need help do not seek to use the available services. The reasons why young people might not seek help even when it is available are: feeling of hopelessness, negative attitude towards using help services and negative past experiences in services. (Rickwood et al. 2005, 14-16)

Rickwood et al. (2005) discuss different reasons for negative attitude towards help services. Of which is that youth are not assured about the confidentiality of the services. Confidentiality could be undermined by the fact that some of the services are in well seen public places. Also, there is a fear that in a school environment, school counselors would disclose the student's problems to other members of the school staff. Moreover, there is a fear of stigma, if others were to know about using help services. Additionally, many seem to think that it is better to work out your problems on your own, or within close family. (Rickwood et al. 2005, 17)

As positive influences on seeking help Rickwood et. al. (2005) discuss emotional competence, social influences, established and trusted relationships, positive attitudes, past experience and mental health literacy. Social influences mean encouragement from other people (Rickwood et al. 2005, 18). Established and trusted relationships point out that it is easier to talk to someone who is already an acquaintance and is felt to be trustworthy (Rickwood et al. 2005, 19). Past experiences and mental health literacy refer to the knowledge the help seeker already has about the services. The more knowledge there is, the more likely it is that the help seeker has a positive attitude, and does not need to fear the unknown. (Rickwood et al. 2005, 18)

## 6 Study design

According to Janesick (2000, 393) the core of qualitative research is to describe the participants, the places and the situations well. A qualitative study needs to be described in detail, so that possible disturbances can be pinpointed and the study can be evaluated for validity. (Hirsjärvi et. al. 2013, 232) The more precisely a study is described, the better it is possible to reproduce the study. The reproducibility of the study is the essence of it being reliable.

The data gathering was done on 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. The respondents had been informed about this and a time and place had been reserved for the session. The respondents were already familiar with the method of empathy based stories. The respondents received an acceptance form, including an explanatory introduction to the thesis and the purpose of the data gathering on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April (see Appendix 2).

In total there were seven respondents. The data was gathered on 7<sup>th</sup> of April from five instructors of Keijun varjo project. Four of them were workers of Tyttöjen Talo, and the instructor in charge was from Maria Akatemia. Instructor in charge does the individual discussions with the clients before their possible participation in the Keijun varjo groups. In addition, two of Maria Akatemia's workers were also respondents. They had responded and given

consent to the study beforehand, in the testing phase of the research method. Their answers were decided to be included in the study, because the testing phase was a success and more answers give more insight to the research. The testing phase is discussed in section 6.2.

By the date of data gathering situation, all of the instructors were in the process of finishing their training of Maria Akatemia's *Väkivalta on ehkäistävässä* (eng. Violence is preventable), which deals with the dynamics and layers of female aggression. All of the instructors work gender sensitively and they all want to support girls and young women to grow up as confident and responsible women. The two Maria Akatemia workers are also experts in women's violence, so their perspective qualifies them as respondents to the same study.

Due to the sensitivity of the subject and the developmental nature of Keijun varjo project, it was decided that the clients should not be included in the research. More about this will be discussed in section 10: Ethical considerations. The method of data gathering was the method of empathy based stories, which will be described in section 6.1. The analysis method was inductive content analysis, which will be discussed in section 6.3.

The data gathering was held at Maria Akatemia. It was held before a regular project meeting of Keijun varjo. Reserved time for the data gathering was one hour. The time was estimated beforehand. The estimated time for explaining the research and participating in data gathering was around thirty minutes. The extra time left was scheduled for complications, additional questions, discussion and feedback. The estimations were approximately correct.

Participants took varying time to answer to the frame narratives. In the end there was enough time to get feedback from the respondents. Important to notice was that while others told to have enjoyed the method of empathy based stories a lot, others were not as deeply immersed in the narratives. Those who did not deeply immerse, still felt that they were able to bring out the essential factors searched for in the frame narratives. Those who did enjoy writing their narratives, said that it was nice to immerse in to the stories. Based on the feedback, it can be also said that answering to the method of empathy based stories is a personal experience, which varies from person to person.

### 6.1 Method of empathy based stories

The method of empathy based stories (suom. eläytymismenetelmä) is a qualitative and narrative research method. Eskola and Wallin explain the method in an article (2015, 56-57). The researcher prepares short stories called frame narratives, which the participants will continue

to write. The frame narratives will provide an opportunity to explore possibilities and meanings of the researched topic. The method requires to use at least two different frame narratives to create variation and extend the data. The variable frame narratives should differ only in one thing, because otherwise the participants' narratives would become too large and far stretched for comparison and for the sake of the research. From the written narratives of the participants, the researcher will analyze the data by deriving themes and connections between the variables. According to Hänninen (2000, 16) "the core and basis of narrative research is its analysis."

The method of empathy based stories was chosen because of its sensitive approach to study the subjects. The method of empathy based stories intrigued me personally as it is creative in nature. The method is suitable to find out opinions and to deepen the understanding of a certain topic. It allows the researcher to gain new ideas on the topic.

According to Eskola and Wallin (2015, 60-62) the most important factor when using the method of empathy based stories as a research method, is to prepare the frame narratives well enough. It has been emphasized in the recommendations of method of empathy based stories that the researcher should make test frame narratives to see whether the respondents answer in the wanted topics and whether there is enough variation in the answers (Eskola & Wallin 2015, 60-62). The test frame narratives ensure that the respondents will understand the questions as was meant. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 231-232)

The method and the frame narratives were tested by two of Maria Akatemia's workers. They were equally qualified to answer as the instructors of Keijun varjo, based on their experience and knowledge about the project and theme. Because the test was a success, these answers were decided to be included in the research too.

This method was suitable for the purpose of the thesis and Keijun varjo project, because the purpose of this research is to develop the project further. The frame narratives allow a moment to ponder the knowledge gathered so far from the experience of the instructors. After analyzing the instructors' stories, the hidden knowledge from the experience of the workers will concretize. Despite the small number of people taking part in the research, the answers are valued and used for further development of the project. The respondents are qualified and specialized professionals in this topic and their answers hold much knowledge and value. It is important to harvest and analyze the little pieces of knowledge that have been gained during the project, to make the hidden knowledge visible. It is even more important because in this stage of Keijun varjo project, it is not possible to directly research the clients. The project is in development, so everything that could bring the project forward helps it toward its goal.

The method of empathy based stories was considered through the working life partner and the instructing teacher of this thesis. The instructor in charge who has experience on the field of research verified that narrative methods usually work well in themes that are sensitive in nature.

In order to help those who are more interested in the method, it is worth to mention that it has many different names. Other names are for example: non-active roleplay, passive roleplay and narrative roleplaying. The name chosen for this thesis seems to describe the method the best.

## 6.2 Frame narratives

The frame narratives are presented to the participants in Finnish. Finnish is the mother tongue of the instructors so it is easier to participate in Finnish. Following are the frame narratives:

You are a young woman. You have behaved aggressively towards others and you do various things that hurt yourself. It feels like there is a lot of evil inside you which bursts out. You cannot control your aggression and you are worried about your own feelings and actions. You have heard about Keijun varjo project which offers help for girls and young women with own aggression issues. You have heard that the project is launching a group in Tyttöjen Talo. What leads you to contact an instructor of the project and makes you want to participate in the group?

*Olet nuori nainen. Olet käyttäytynyt aggressiivisesti muita kohtaan ja vahingoitat itseäsi erilaisilla teoilla. Tuntuu kuin sisällä olisi paljon pahaä joka purskahtaa ulos. Et pysty hallitsemaan aggressiotasi ja olet huolissasi omista tunteista ja teoista. Olet kuullut Keijun varjo hankkeesta, jossa autetaan tyttöjä ja nuoria naisia omista väkivaltakysymyksissä. Olet kuullut, että Tyttöjen Talolla on alkamassa hankkeen ryhmä. Mitkä asiat vaikuttavat siihen, että päätät ottaa yhteyttä hankkeen ohjaajaan ja haluat osallistua ryhmään?*

You are a young woman. You have behaved aggressively towards others and you do various things that hurt yourself. It feels like there is a lot of evil inside you which bursts out. You cannot control your aggression and you are worried about your own feelings and actions. You have heard about Keijun varjo project

which offers help for girls and young women with own aggression issues. You have heard that the project is launching a group in Tyttöjen Talo. What stops you from contacting an instructor of the project?

*Olet nuori nainen. Olet käyttäytynyt aggressiivisesti muita kohtaan ja tehnyt tekoja jotka vahingoittavat itseäsi. Tuntuu kuin sisällä olisi paljon pahaa joka vain purskahtaa ulos. Et pysty hallitsemaan aggressiotasi ja olet huolissasi omista tunteista ja teoista. Olet kuullut Keijun varjo hankkeesta, jossa autetaan tyttöjä ja nuoria naisia omissa väkivaltakysymyksissä. Olet kuullut, että Tyttöjen Talolla on alkamassa hankkeen ryhmä. Mitkä asiat vaikuttavat siihen, että et ota yhteyttä hankkeen ohjaajaan?*

These frame narratives were created with the theoretical and experiential knowledge of young women's aggression as their basis. A mock test was established with two workers from Maria Akatemia before the real research day. They can be compared to the instructors of Keijun varjo in relation with their knowledge about the dynamics and roots of female aggression, as well as with their understanding of the female gender and its specificity. Eskola and Wallin emphasize that a mock test is necessary to ensure that the created frame narratives stay on topic and do not leave room for unrelative discussions. Another important reason for a mock test was to see whether or not the frame narratives differed on only one factor and if the factor was significant enough to bring comparable variation to the answers. (2015, 60-62)

### 6.3 Inductive content analysis

The data will be analysed by inductive content analysis. The content will be analysed to find recurring themes from the answer narratives. Analysis will proceed step by step, from more detailed categories to main themes. While using the method of empathy based stories, it is important to compare the found themes raised from the content of the two different frame narratives. The themes between the first and second frame narratives will be compared to enhance and deepen the ideas and understanding on the research subject.

An example of the inductive content analysis in this thesis from section "factors that could promote the seeking of help":

*"I got to know about this thing called Keijun varjo. I just checked its website and I felt that maybe some day... But I didn't have the courage to contact them straight away. I've also heard about Tyttöjen Talo, but I have always thought that it's somekind of a hobby place. But when I saw that it has something to*



*do with that violence thing I searched things a bit deeper. I noticed that there's loads of stuff, everything for everyone."*

*"Sain kuulla tollasesta Keijun varjo jutusta. Ihan vaan kurkkasin nettisivuja ja jäi sellainen olo, että ehkä joskus. En kuitenkaan heti uskaltanut ottaa yhteyttä. Tyttöjen Talostakin oon kuullut, mutta oon ajatellut, että se on joku harrastuspaikka. Sitten kun näin, että se jotenkin liittyy tohon väkivaltahommaan niin tutkin vähän tarkemmin. Huomasin, että siellä on vaikka mitä, jokaiselle jotakin."*

- Got to know that there is a service called Keijun varjo (reduced expression)
- Tyttöjen Talo becomes familiar through related information (reduced expression)
- Help is available (subcategory) and sufficient information/knowledge (subcategory)
- Service information (main category)

## 7 Findings

The data was gathered by using the method of empathy based stories on April 7<sup>th</sup>. In method of empathy based stories the researcher creates at least two different frame narratives on the desired topic. The respondents will continue with their own thoughts in writing, with a narrative, bullet points, or whatever they feel most suitable for them. The frame narratives for this thesis consisted of two stories including a young woman who has acted violently and has heard of Keijun varjo project. These narratives varied on whether the young woman decides to contact the instructor of Keijun varjo or not.

There were seven respondents for the research in total. One of them was the instructor in charge and four were other instructors of Keijun varjo who do client work. Two of the seven were Maria Akatemia's workers related to the project. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the research and all of them gave their consent to participate in the study. Even though the respondents were not clients themselves, their answers to the research give good pointers on the factors that could affect the seeking of help for the issues of aggression among young women. The respondents are professionals who have vast experience and knowledge on the researched topic, which makes their answers valuable. The findings provide pointers to develop better ways of reaching the young women with issues of aggression.

In this section, findings of the two different frame narratives will be presented. In section 7.3 both of the frame narratives' responses will be compared to see similarities. Method of empathy based stories gives the most information on the researched topic by comparing the different narratives' findings together.

### 7.1 Factors that could promote the seeking of help

Factors that could promote the seeking of help among young women can be divided into four main categories. These are color-coded and illustrated in Figure 4. Both the main categories and more detailed subcategories are seen in the figure. This gives more insight to the results as an illustration. The categories are:

- 1) Initial requirements (grey)
- 2) Service information (blue)
- 3) Emotional factors (green)
- 4) Suitable conditions (yellow)

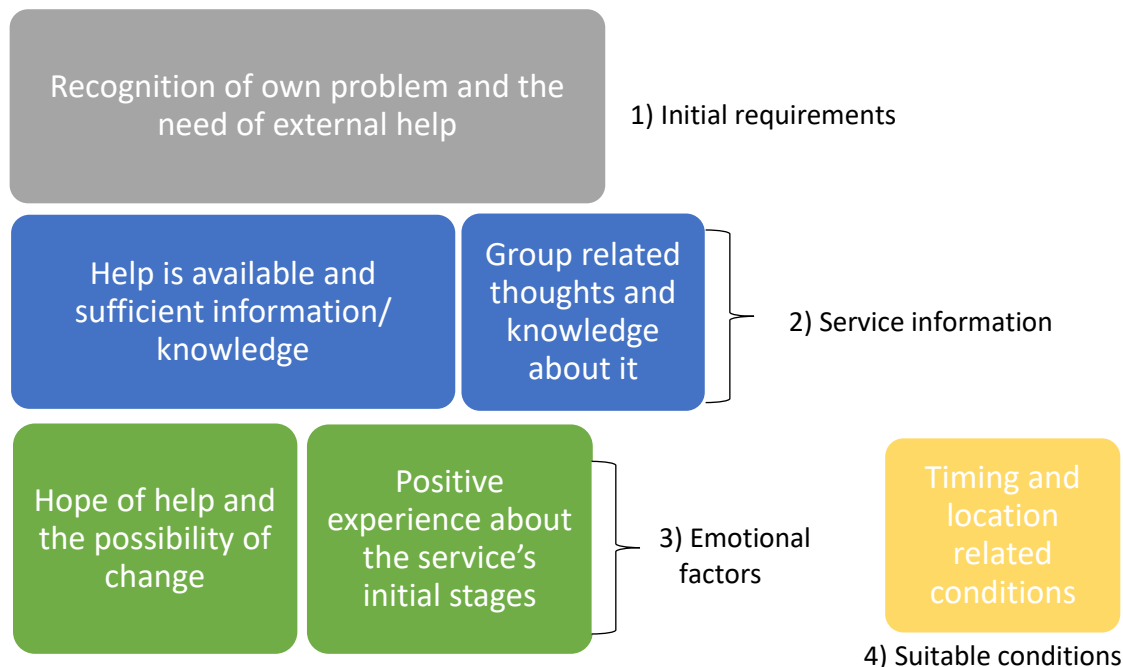


Figure 4: Categories of factors that could promote the seeking of help

“Initial requirements” (grey) category means the initial requirements that need to be in order for a person to consider using a help-service. Without being aware of own issues, there can be

no recognition on the need of help. This category also means that the person needs to recognize that they cannot handle their problem on their own.

In the second category “service information” (blue) it can be seen that the clients need enough information in order to proceed to contact the services. Sufficient knowledge lowers the threshold to use the services. Regarding the subcategory of group related thoughts and knowledge about it, it seemed clear in the answer narratives that as the person begun to know more about the group, the more willing they were to continue with the help service. The one-on-one discussions or other available contact measure with the client allowed the opportunity for the person to know what the group is about and what is done there.

*“In the initial one-on-one discussion I learned about the themes that would be discussed in the groups, and it felt like I would benefit from working these.”*

*“Sain kuulla alkuhaastattelussa teemoista, joita ryhmässä käsitellään ja ne tuntuivat siltä, että minä hyötyisin niiden työstämisestä.”*

Third category “emotional factors” (green) means that the person is already emotionally open to the service provider and has hopes of being helped. In the data, it seems that the instructors of Keijun varjo service are the key to giving the client a safe and positive experience. The initial meetings with the instructor instil hope and feeling of being wanted and accepted in the client. This stage can be referred to as “emotional catching” (suom. emotionaalinen kiinniotto), which is a term used in Maria Akatemia in the beginning of client’s service process. The client is tried to “emotionally catch”, encourage and engage into the service. The following quote shows the core if this category:

*“Already on the first meeting with the instructor I feel welcomed into the group and that I would be an important part of it.”*

*“Minulle tulee olo jo heti ensimmäisellä kerralla ohjaajan tavattuani oli, että olen tervetullut ryhmään ja olen tärkeä osa sitä.”*

Categories “initial requirements”, “service information” and “emotional factors” can be considered to be processual. As illustrated in Figure 4, the categories are closely linked together. They can be thought to proceed from top to bottom. Without the first category, a client cannot proceed further in the process of seeking help. The second category is essential, because without available services and knowledge about it, clients would not know where to contact or what the services are about. The third category comes after the first two categories have been cleared.

The fourth category “suitable conditions” (yellow) can be considered an outside factor. It means, that in order for the person to get help from a particular service, conditions of timing and location need to be met. In this section of factors that could promote the seeking of help, suitable conditions can be considered as a final requisite or as a positive push towards the help-service.

## 7.2 Factors that could prevent the seeking of help

Likewise in the previous section, factors that could prevent the seeking of help among young women can be divided into four main categories. These are color-coded and illustrated in Figure 5. Both the main categories and more detailed subcategories are seen in the figure. This gives more insight to the results as an illustration. The categories are:

- 1) Inside factors (grey)
- 2) Emotional barriers (green)
- 3) Group as a method (blue)
- 4) Restricting conditions (yellow)

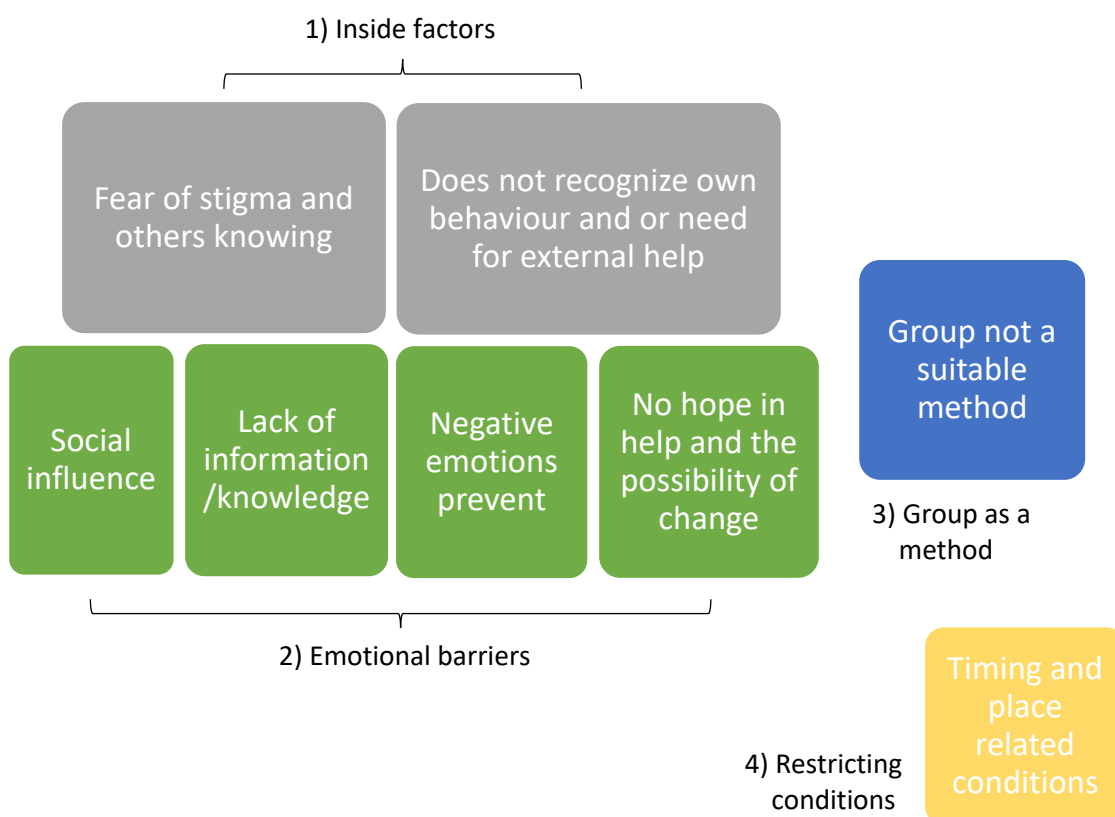


Figure 5: Categories of factors that could prevent the seeking of help

As well as in section 7.1, some of these categories can be thought to be processual. If a person can overcome or lack the categories of the first category “inside factors”, she proceeds in her process of seeking help to the other factors.

First category “inside factors” (grey) illustrate the initial inside factors that block the person from seeking help. This could mean excessive fear about the problem of aggression being revealed to other people. Also, the person might not realise that they are doing something wrong. They would try to justify their actions. Furthermore, the person could think that her problems would go away on their own and that she would not need any external help.

Second category “emotional barriers” (green) come from a variety of things, but are all linked to an emotional reaction. Social influence can mean that a close one is not being supportive of the idea of seeking help in Keijun varjo. A person who is considering help for their issues of aggression, is in a vulnerable state. She needs to feel heard and seen with her problem, empathically and non-judgingly, in order for her to be encouraged to proceed in her help-seeking process.

The second category’s subcategory “lack of knowledge/information” plays a big part in the process of seeking help. The data shows that when the place (Tyttöjen Talo) and workers of the service are unknown, it reduces the will for seeking help. Also, this subcategory includes insufficient contact information and poor promotion of the service.

*“I don’t know the instructor and I’m afraid to go to Tyttöjen Talo.”*

*“En tunne ohjaajaa, enkä uskalla mennä Tyttöjen talolle.”*

Furthermore, in the second category, “negative feelings prevent” and “no hope in help and the possibility of change”, are barriers that prevent the seeking of help. Negative feelings refer to shame and guilt, which feel too huge for the person to overcome. Also, the person might fear that if they expose their problem, they will be rejected and judged. The person might also feel sceptical of the possibility that their situation is changeable and think that they are beyond anyone’s capability to help.

*“I don’t think that anyone or anything can help, until now nothing has.”*

*“En usko, että kukaan tai mikään pystyy minua auttamaan, ei tähänkään asti ole pystynyt.”*

*“I’m afraid that I won’t be accepted in to the group, I’m not good enough.”*

*“Pelkään, ettei minua huolita ryhmään, en kelpaa.”*

Third category “group is not a suitable method” (blue) is somewhat separate from the first two categories. However, in some responses, this category of “group is not a suitable method” was due to extensive fear. Hence, it is still illustrated close to the first two categories, as fear is present in both of the first two and a little bit in the third. A person might fear to expose oneself to other people, as well as just be afraid that she cannot talk in a group setting. A group not being a suitable method can also be a matter of personal preference. In this section there seemed to be no clear connection on the level of information about the group work with it being a suitable method.

*“Do I have to go to the group? Can’t I just go and talk to someone?”*

*“Onkohan pakko mennä ryhmään? Voisko vaan käydä jonkun kanssa juttele-  
massa?”*

In the data it was also mentioned that one might not yet be ready for group work, even though they do not necessarily feel negativity towards working in a group. This could mean that the person is already in some help service, such as psychotherapy, and they do not wish/are not recommended to start another help service at the same time. Furthermore, in peer groups, it is necessary to evaluate if a potential participant is suitable to work in a group or not. Therefore, group not being a suitable method might not be the person’s own choice, but rather decreed by a service worker.

*“I’m shy and I don’t want to talk about my stuff in a group.”*

*“Olen sisimmiltäni ujo enkä halua puhua asioistani ryhmässä.”*

Fourth category “restricting conditions” (yellow) means that the timing of the services and or the location and travelling are problematical for the client. This category is separate from the others. However, it could be a decisive factor for a person whether to even contact the service or not.

### 7.3 Conclusions of the findings

Clear connections can be seen from the findings of “factors that could promote the seeking of help” and “factors that could prevent the seeking of help”. The findings of the two previous sections were analysed to find recurring themes. The common themes that are evident from the previous sections are illustrated in Figure 6.

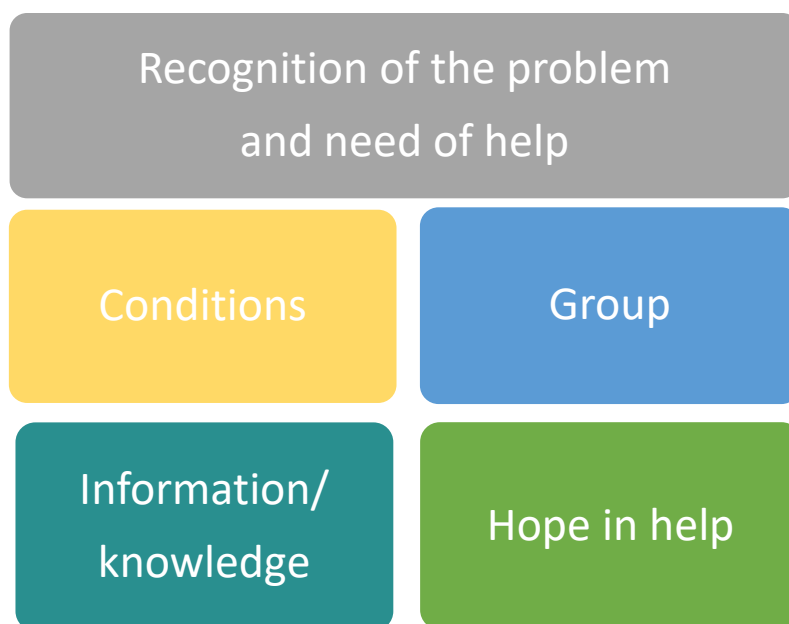


Figure 6: Common factors related to the seeking of help

In both sections, 7.1 and 7.2, the recognition of one’s problem and the need of external help is in the first category (grey). It is the initial stage in the process of seeking help. If one recognizes their problem and need, they are one step closer to proceeding to help services. If one does not see her fault and need, they will not even consider any help service.

*“I feel like I need help. I need someone beside me so I can change.”*

*“Koen, että tarvitsen apua. Tarvitsen jonkun rinnalleni jotta voin muuttua.”*

*”Really, when some people irritate me then I can show it to them”*

*”Kun jotkut tyypit mua ärsyttää niin mä todella saan näyttää sen niille.”*

Fourth categories (conditions, yellow) in both sections are also solidly correlational. A person’s life situation can dictate their ability to participate in a help service that is regular. Also, the location of the service affects the persons possibility of participation. This category

is not directly related to any emotional level, but it can be a decisive factor in the decision if the person will seek help from this particular help service.

A highly influential factor in both sections was group related category (blue). Thoughts about group working can influence the client's decision to seek help from this particular service. Working in a group can be a positive method for many because it offers peer support. For others, it might be the turn off, due to shyness or dislike of exposing own problems to many people.

Information/knowledge (sea green) came up in both sections. Information and knowledge about the service include the familiarity level of Keijun varjo service, the instructors and Tyttöjen Talo. It also includes available contact information and the level of promotion of the service. It can also link to the category of "group" as the level of knowledge about peer group work influences the way the person thinks about it. The following thoughts regarding this were seen in the answer narratives:

*"My friend has visited Tyttöjen talo and says that it is a nice place."*

*"Ystäväni on käynyt Tyttöjen talolla ja kertonut, että se on kiva paikka."*

*"How terrible to go into some group! What does it even mean?"*

*"Kauhee kynnys kumminkin mennä johonkin ryhmään! Mitä se edes tarkoittaa?"*

Hope in help (green) was relevant in both sections. However, in the sections of factors that could prevent the seeking of help, it came before contacting the help service. As a factor that could promote help seeking, it came after the connection with Keijun varjo. This emphasizes the value of one-on-one discussion with an instructor of Keijun varjo. In one-on-one discussions the instructor can give a positive experience and instil hope in the client.

## 8 Reliability and validity

The data was small, but it was sufficient. The data provided enough information to derive main categories based on lesser categories. The findings suggested that no new main categories would have come up with more respondents. The research questions were answered by the chosen data gathering and analysis methods. (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017b)



The process of the thesis has been described truthfully and in detail. The methods and study design have been described clearly and in detail. The research could be duplicated due to the detailed descriptions, however the answers depend on a person's personality, knowledge and attitude on the issue. The suitability of the frame narratives was tested before the main data gathering to see, if the answer narratives provided on topic responses to the research questions. The test results showed that the frame narratives provided answers to the researched topic. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 231-232)

My personal interest and indulgence in Maria Akatemia due to my practise placement period have made this thesis important for me. My acquaintance with the respondents probably made the data gathering situation more comfortable, and allowed for an open atmosphere to ask questions. I doubt that my acquaintance with the respondents affected the way they answered to the frame narratives. However, their personal feelings at that moment (for example how their day had been, did they have worries, what type of clients they were thinking about) most possibly influenced their answers. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 232)

I analysed the findings as objectively as possible. The theoretical framework of inner script and self-harm, and the knowledge I had internalized during my time with Maria Akatemia influenced the way I perceived the narratives. I think it made it easier for me to read the answer narratives. The layout of the research questions made me look for specific things relating to the seeking of help and clarified for me what to look for. I concentrated on the obvious meanings of the answer narratives that influenced the seeking of help, and did not look for hidden meanings from the answer narratives. Looking for hidden meanings would have been guessing, and would not have been scientifically correct for the purpose of this thesis.

The findings of this thesis have been derived straight from the answer data. All the relevant things to the research questions were taken to account in the findings. The transparency of the findings was illustrated by direct quotations. To support the findings and its analysis, various sources were used to link the findings to theory. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 232-233)

The key concepts have been explained thoroughly and in such a manner, that those are easily understandable to the readers, even without prior knowledge on the topic.

The research processed in dialogue with the working life partner, who monitored the quality and the contextual issues of the thesis.

## 9 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations have been guided by Kajaani University of applied sciences' article on ethics and more specifically "Ethical "points" of thesis" (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017a).

The original plan of this thesis was to gather data from the clients of Keijun varjo in relation with some Keijun varjo peergroup meeting in presence of instructors. I attended a Keijun varjo project meeting, and the original plan was discussed with Keijun varjo working group, and it was given good response and green lights. Also the working life partner's thesis coordinator approved of the original plan. (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017a)

However, after a short while the direction of the thesis had to be changed. This was due to careful and further consideration from the working life partner, with the clients' best interest in mind. It was decided that the clients should not be included in the study. In a project meeting of Keijun varjo's working group, with the manager of Maria Akatemia attending the meeting, the thesis and its benefit to the clients was discussed. In the meeting it was concluded that the clients would not receive benefit from participating in the research. The clients have their right to benefit the most from the help-service, and participation in a research would not further their process of being helped. (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017a)

After I received the information that the plan had to be changed, I began to consider other options for the data gathering. I asked for the opinion of the working life partner's thesis coordinator, as well as my thesis tutor teacher, whether information gathered from the workers of Keijun varjo would be valuable and suitable for a thesis. Both approved of the idea, and I decided to proceed with the study design that has been described in this thesis. This change of plans was a great learning opportunity for me on ethical considerations. There would have been no benefit to selfishly think that "For the sake of this research, the data from the clients is more important than their right to receive the help they want without extra intervention!". Rather, it made me think more about the clients' best interest, and sharpened my thoughts on that this thesis could benefit the readers by providing information on the issue of aggression even without the inclusion of the clients. The data gathered in this thesis provides Keijun varjo with developmental ideas to better their help service. It also provides information to students and professionals on things to consider for help seeking on any issue that is difficult to talk about.

During the phase of writing the theoretical background, I gave great consideration on the use of references. I used sources as recent as possible as references, and paid attention to the reliability of the sources. Many of my sources were recommended by or from Maria Akatemia, which ensured that the intended viewpoint stayed precise. In discussions with the working life partner concerning my thesis, they approved of my choices of sources. (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017a)

The respondents of the thesis were informed about the thesis process and topic from very early on. They participated voluntarily in the research. All relevant information was given to the respondents and they were given opportunity for questions. (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017a)

In addition to the thesis presentation at school, the thesis will be presented at Maria Akatemia after its online publication due to being asked to do so. The respondents and Maria Akatemia's staff wanted to hear the fruits of this thesis straight from me, and not merely be notified when the thesis is published online. Workers of Keijun varjo and others from Maria Akatemia will attend the presentation. (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017a)

The data gathering settings made sure that the answer narratives of the respondents remained anonymous. The data gathered in the research has been kept only in my personal care and no one else had access to the original materials of the respondents. The data gathered will be destroyed when the thesis is published. (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017a)

The study design has been described in detail for transparency in the research. (Kajaani University of applied sciences 2017a)

## 10 Discussion

The purpose of the research was to gather knowledge on the factors that could influence the seeking of help among young women for their issues of aggression. Aims of this research were to help Keijun varjo project develop more efficient ways of reaching and helping young women with issues of aggression, and to produce information in English on the issue of female aggression from the context of Maria Akatemia.

The purpose and the aims of this thesis were fulfilled. Knowledge on the factors that could influence the seeking of help among young women for their issues of aggression was gathered. These findings provide helpful information to Keijun varjo to develop their project further.

This thesis concentrated on the viewpoint of Maria Akatemia on the topic of female aggression and was conducted in English, so it produced information in English from their viewpoint.

The study was conducted in Maria Akatemia's project Keijun varjo. The issue of female aggression is a relevant topic and it should be discussed about more. Violence is a cross generational phenomenon and it should be taken seriously whoever the perpetrator or victim may be. Many professionals do not have enough knowledge and or courage to ask and tackle the issue of aggression with their female clients. The aggressive behaviour of many mothers has been explained away by tiredness and has not been taken seriously. The abuse that the children and other victims experience is potential ground for their aggressive behaviour in the future.

The core of the theory in this thesis was the idea of inner script (Perheentupa 2010). Inner script describes the story of life which has been altered by all the events of one's life. If a person has experienced abuse, maltreatment and neglect, they might have developed destructive inner scripts. These destructive inner scripts include bottling up negative emotions, giving up the want and feeling of deserving for good, continuous self-destruction by actions that will turn against one self and bursts of anger to relief some of the anxiety one feels inside. All these can make a person find herself acting out abusively in a stressful situation beyond resources. The inner scripts of individuals are survival strategies that have been developed in difficult life situations, to prevent the person from falling apart when going through agonizing experiences. These experiences and situations have prevented the person from developing healthy and productive reactions to their emotions, which makes them difficult to control or even recognize.

The data was gathered using the method of empathy based stories from instructors of Keijun varjo and two of Maria Akatemia's workers. In this method the researcher creates at least two different frame narratives, to which the respondents will answer. By creating various frame narratives, the ideas extracted on the topic can be compared and deepened. The method allows for the respondents to write freely, either narratively or by bullet points. Some of the respondents of this study were excited about this method, and truly immersed into the stories and enjoyed the narrative approach. Others were not excited as much and wrote bullet points on the topic. When using the method of empathy based stories, notion should be given that the frame narratives should be precise, as to avoid making the research question imbedded in them too wide. Also, if a frame narrative gives too much room for assumptions, the researched topic might get lost and hence not find the desired answers in the responses.

The research questions were answered by analysing the data to find relevant subjects to the questions. The data was divided into two different materials: "Factors that could promote the seeking of help" and "Factors that could prevent the seeking of help". These were divided from the beginning by making two different frame narratives, one including a young woman contacting Keijun varjo, and one including a young woman not contacting Keijun varjo. The answers between the different frame narratives were kept separate and were analysed separately.

The findings to the first two research questions "Factors that could promote the seeking of help" and "Factors that could prevent the seeking of help" were compared to find the answer to the third research question. "Common factors related to the seeking of help" were found by analysing the findings the first two research questions for similarities of the findings. Similar subcategories and main categories formed the categories illustrated in the "Common factors related to the seeking of help".

As answers to the first research question "What kind of factors could promote the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression?", four main categories were found: Initial requirements, service information, emotional factors and suitable conditions.

The answers to the second research question "What kind of factors could prevent the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression?" were as follows: Inside factors, emotional barriers, group as a method and restricting conditions.

The third research question "What common themes can be identified from the factors related to the seeking of help among young women for the issues of aggression?" summed up what similar factors could be found from the first two research questions. The common factors found were: Recognition of the problem and need of help, conditions, group, information/knowledge and hope in help.

The findings were divided into three sections: factors that could promote, factors that could prevent and conclusions of the findings. All of the sections consisted of four main categories derived from the data. The four main categories in all sections were given more depth by including subcategories in the illustrations.

The findings show that the first step in the process of seeking help is to recognize own problem and need for external help. Keiski et al. (2016, 8) also mention this. They also discuss that the recognition of own problems means that the person needs to accept their own incompleteness. The aggressive actions done by women cause shame and fear. These negative

emotions are the next thing to overcome. The second category “emotional barriers” (green) shows that these emotions can become a preventing factor in seeking help.

Flinck and Paavilainen discuss that some women deny their usage of violence, because they do not recognize that what they are doing is violence (2010, 310-311). They also discuss that some other women think that abuse is a normal way of behaving (2010, 312). Furthermore, some women find other justifications for their abuse, such as an irritating partner when they themselves felt overburdened with stress (Flinck & Paavilainen 2010, 312). These types of thoughts are included in the “inside factors” (grey) category of factors that could prevent seeking help.

Keiski et al. (2016, 8-9) mention that women in their study feared that other people would know about their problem. Rickwood et al. (2005, 17) also discuss that a person might fear to be stigmatized if other people were to know of their problem and their using of help services. Furthermore, Rickwood et al. (2005, 17) point out that a person might think that they can manage their problems on their own without help. All these things mentioned are seen as “inside factors” (grey).

In Keiski’s et al. study the women also had negative experiences of previous help seeking attempts, because they were not taken seriously with their issue and hence were not helped (2016, 8-9). This is also included in the factors that could prevent the seeking of help. Negative previous experiences of help are included in the subcategory “social influence” under “emotional barriers (grey).

In the factors that could promote the seeking of help, the subcategory of hope in help and the possibility of change consists of various things. It includes receiving support from close ones, when bringing up the possibility of seeking help from Keijun varjo. It also includes the feeling of being wanted and not being alone with own problem. In addition, it came up in answer narratives, that a person was personally convoyed to the service by another trusted service provider with whom they were in client hood. The young women convoyed in this way did not contact Keijun varjo themselves, because of lack of knowledge about Tyttöjen Talo, or felt that they were not good in seeking help for themselves. Furthermore, in some other answer narrative, it felt to be important that an instructor of Keijun varjo kept contacting her. It seems that young women might need a friendly push and pull, because they themselves might not be secure to take the steps alone in the process.

In the section of factors that could prevent the seeking of help, one subcategory was “no hope in help and the possibility of change”. This category can block a person from engaging in the help service all together. As was discussed previously, the one-on-one discussions were

important in instilling hope in the client. The young women who feel that they are beyond help and do not believe that they can change, need to be reached by even lower threshold services. They are the ones who already recognize their own problem and might even be over their fear of others knowing. They might think that the aggressiveness is an inseparable part of them and something beyond their control, hence, no one could help them with the issue.

The instructor's receptive and empathetic attitude were very important in the answer narratives. The one-on-one meetings able the instructor to instil hope in the client and make the client feel welcomed and wanted into the service. Lankinen writes that young women on average have lower self-esteem comparing to boys (2011, 44). The instructor has a chance in the one-on-one discussion to encourage the client to proceed in the services, as encouragement is very important for a person with low self-esteem (Lankinen 2011, 11-12).

Rickwood et al. (2005) discuss that knowledge about the help service increases the willingness to seek help from the service. They also mention that past experiences of help services increase the knowledge and positive attitude towards the help service. (Rickwood et al. 2005, 18) In the case of Keijun varjo, a positive past experience about a peer group could be a decisive factor when considering Keijun varjo services.

Even though some of the findings show that group might not be a suitable method for some clients, it is an efficient method to work with. For possibly more potential clients, the information about the service process could emphasize the opportunity of one-on-one discussions. It should be emphasized that the clients should not restrict themselves from contacting, even if they think a group is not their thing. The instructor might change their mind by the instilment of hope and giving the feeling of being welcomed and wanted, especially to the group.

Due to the layout of the research questions, the findings were oriented differently than what I had expected. The initial thought at the beginning of the study was that emotions, especially shame, guilt and fear, would have been more highlighted in the findings. These emotions are very present in many of those who act destructively. However, based on the findings these emotions are just factors among others that affect the seeking of help. Nonetheless, for some these emotions can be the factor that barriers the seeking of help totally. In the thesis process, the orientation of the research questions and data changed my viewpoint from only understanding female aggression, to considering concretion steps to improve the issue of seeking help.

The findings provide solid data for consideration and developmental purposes. The main finding of all the sections and categories can be described as the need for as low threshold service as possible. Based on the data a lower threshold service for issues of aggression can be established by various things. These things include:

- ✓ Making the place and the workers more known for and more easily contactable to the potential clients
- ✓ Providing sufficient information of the service process and purpose
- ✓ Giving knowledge on the issue aggression and its varieties
- ✓ Making it known that many struggle with the same problems
- ✓ Using former client feedbacks as incentives if possible

All of these pointers can be used to develop Keijun varjo project and any other service further with a lower threshold. Keijun varjo has already started a chat service, which should lower the threshold to the services. A chat service is easily available to young women, as most of the young women in this age use mobile phones or have other ways of accessing the internet. However, the limitations of timing of the chat service might become a barrier for some. It is related to the “conditions” category of the findings.

Keijun varjo has also launched their own website, which should provide information on the subject. The website also provides contact information of the project’s workers.

In many answer narratives there seemed to be insufficient knowledge about Tyttöjen Talo, which could prevent the seeking of help. The known visitors of Tyttöjen Talo could also affect the ideas and feelings about it in the potential clients. Even more knowledge and varying viewpoints should be provided about the place where the service is held. Even though Tyttöjen Talot have social media coverage, they should be more visible in relation to Keijun varjo. This would make it easier for the clients to see and make themselves familiar with Tyttöjen Talo services.

Although there were not many respondents in the study, the data collected was enough to form conclusions and to respond to the research questions. Every answer narrative gave something new to the data, and deepened the ideas to form the categories. The theoretical foundation supported the conclusions. I doubt that more answers would have given any new main categories on this topic. There were no contradictions between the answer narratives, but all of them supported and deepened the ideas.

As a limitation of this study, it could be said that only professionals were included in the data. The method of empathy based stories allowed the respondents to imagine themselves in



the shoes of young women with issues of aggression, but this also means that they served as a filter from real clients. Especially those young women who have not come to the services, remain a questionmark. This study's results can serve as a pointer, but further research should be done regarding them. However, the knowledge of the respondents in this research, comes from long experience in client work and knowledge base of the issues of aggression. Therefore, the data gathered from them provides valuable information.

In the future it would be beneficial if the data was gathered from the clients and potential clients themselves. The findings of this research can well serve as a ground to use different kinds of methods to find out what the young women think. A simple method could be a questionnaire. As an example, "How much would your life situation (school, home, hobbies etc.) affect your decision to seek help from xx service? Answer from scale 1 to 10." Perhaps Keijun varjo project can make an open and anonymous questionnaire in the internet (such as using [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com)) in the future.

Another study could be formed after receiving possible answers from clients or potential clients. These answers could be compared with the results of this study and see how professionals' and potential clients' thoughts differ on the issue, if they differ.

I hope that this thesis will benefit all of those who read it. I hope that for those who have read it, it has opened understanding and interest on the topic of female aggression, and makes it easier to face the clients with such problems. I also hope that it encourages the reader to reflect on their own self and to face the troubling issues one might have inside.

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Appendix 2: Letter of approval

**Tutkijan  
yhteystiedot**

xxx

**Suostumus tutkimukseen osallistumisesta**

Olen Iris Katero ja opiskelen sosionomiksi Laurea Ammattikorkeakoulussa. Teen opinnäytetyötäni englanninkielellä aiheena naisten käyttämä väkivalta. Teen tutkimukseni Maria Akatemian Keijun varjo hankkeeseen. Haluan tutkimuksellani selvittää, minkälaiset asiat voivat vaikuttaa nuorten naisten avun etsimiseen omaan väkivaltaisuuteen liittyen.

Käsittelen naisten käyttämää väkivaltaa pohjautuen Maria Akatemian sisäisen käsikirjoituksen viitekehykseen. Teoriaosuuteen kuuluvat myös naiseus ja väkivallan erilaiset muodot, huomioiden myös itsen kohdistuva väkivalta.

Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytän eläytymismenetelmää. Eläytymismenetelmässä tutkija laatii kehyskertomuksia, joihin tutkittava voi eläytyä. Vastata voi esimerkiksi tarinallisesti tai ranskalaisilla viivoilla. Tässä tutkimuksessa on kaksi erilaista kehyskertomusta, joihin jokainen tutkittava vastaa. Kehyskertomukset eroavat vain yhdellä merkittävällä asialla. Tutkittavien vastauksien pohjalta nostan esiin teemoja ja vertailen sekä yhdistän kahden eri kehyskertomuksen vastauksista nousseita teemoja. Pyydän, että kirjoitatte vastauksenne kehyskertomuksiin selvällä käsialalla.

Tutkimus tehdään nimettömänä, eikä vastausten perusteella voi saada selville tutkittavan henkilöllisyyttä.

Opinnäytetyö julkaistaan valmistuttuaan opinnäytetyötietokannassa Theseuksessa sekä Maria Akatemian internet sivuilla.

Pyydän teitä merkitsemään ruutuun, että suostutte osallistumaan tutkimukseen sekä allekirjoitatte tämän lomakkeen. Näitä lomakkeita ja vastauksia kehyskertomuksiin ei tulla yhdistämään.

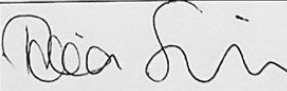
Suostun osallistumaan tutkimukseen

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Allekirjoitus ja päivämäärä

## Appendix 3: Research permit

## Tutkimuslupahakemus

Tutkimuksen tekijä: Iris Katero			
Osoite: _____			
Puhelinnumero: _____			
Sähköposti: _____			
Koulutusohjelma: Degree programme of social services			
Korkeakoulu ja toimipiste: Laurea Ammattikorkeakoulu, Otaniemi			
Opinnäytetyön organisaatio:	Maria Akatemia		
Opinnäytetyön ohjaajat:	Työelämän ohjaaja: Hanna Kommeri, _____  Koulun ohjaaja: Katja Tikkanen, _____		
Tutkimuksen nimi:	Female aggression		
Opinnäytetyön aihe ja tarkoitus:	Aiheena naisten käyttämä väkivalta ja missä sen juuret ovat. Tarkoituksena on selvittää Keijun varjo - hankkeeseen ennaltaehkäisevän väkivalta-työn ryhmien ohjaajien kokemuksen kautta sitä, miten nuoria naisia voisi helpommin tavoittaa väkivaltakysymyksissä. Tavoitteena on myös tuottaa englanniksi tietoa aiheesta Maria Akatemian viitekehystä lähtien.		
Päätöksentekijä täyttää	Tutkimuslupa myönnetään	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tutkimuslupaa ei myönnetä
Päätöksentekijän nimi ja päivämäärä	 14.3.2017 TINA SIMONS tutkimuslupapäällikö		