



## Primary Vs. Secondary Sources: Social Work

**Primary sources** are original materials that provide firsthand records of events, experiments, creative works, or statistics. They form the basis for subsequent interpretations, analyses, and explanations. Some examples of primary sources are quantitative, qualitative and empirical research studies.

**Secondary sources** are materials that provide interpretations, explanations, and descriptions of primary sources. Some examples of secondary sources are editorial and review articles, media, and other reports that review events, experiments, and creative works.

Academic discipline	Primary source	Secondary source
Art	An original painting	Critique of the painting
Health Sciences	Medicare data	Analysis of the data
History	A slave's diary	Description of the slave diary
Literature	A novel	Criticism of the novel
Performing Arts	Video of King Lear	Review of the performance
Political Science	Treaty	Interpretation of the treaty
Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.)	A research study that contains a materials, methods, and results section describing an experiment or observation performed by the authors.	An editorial or review article that summarizes what is known about a particular topic.
Social Sciences (Education, Nursing, Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, etc.)	A quantitative or qualitative research study that describes an intervention and its outcome on a specific population.	An editorial or review article that summarizes what is known about a particular topic.

### Original research articles (primary sources)

Coohey, C. (2008). Mothers' protection of their children after discovering they have been sexually abused: An information-processing perspective. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32, 245-259.

The purpose of this study was to understand why some non-offending mothers did not protect their children consistently after they knew they were sexually abused. The sample included 85 mothers who were involved with child protective services: 48 mothers who protected their children consistently were compared to 37 mothers who did not. Several variables explained 47% of the variance in the multivariate analysis. If the mother did not ask the abuser whether the abuse occurred, attributed responsibility to the abuser, believed consistently that the abuse occurred, and was not a victim of *domestic violence*, then she was more likely to protect her child consistently. Some maternal characteristics believed to affect protectiveness, such as mothers' mental health and substance abuse, were not related to whether they protected their children consistently, whereas other variables, such as *domestic violence*, were. Researchers need to continue to

examine these and other variables simultaneously, so that practitioners can better understand which children are most likely to receive inadequate protection. Practitioners should ask mothers whether they believe the abusers' behavior was sexual and abusive. If mothers do not perceive sexual abuse, then they will not believe abuse occurred or attribute responsibility to the abusers. Helping mothers understand the nature of sexual abuse may change their beliefs and attributions. If the abuser is the mother's partner and he has physically assaulted her, practitioners need to assess her willingness and ability, with adequate services and support, to restrict his access to her child.

Bennett, L.W. (2007). Program completion and re-arrest in a batterer intervention system. *Research on Social Work Practice, 17*, 42-54.

The authors examine the effects of batterer intervention program (BIP) completion on *domestic violence* re-arrest in an urban system of 30 BIPs with a common set of state standards, common program completion criteria, and centralized criminal justice supervision. 899 men arrested for *domestic violence* were assessed and completed 1 of 30 BIPs. At 2.4 years after intake, the authors reviewed arrest records and modeled *domestic violence* re-arrest using instrumental variable estimation and logistic regression. There were 14.3% of completers and 34.7% of non-completers re-arrested for *domestic violence*. Completing a BIP reduces the odds of re-arrest 39% to 61%. This study supports efforts to engage and retain men in gender-specific BIPs, as well as the value of examining larger systems of BIPs.

### **Non-research article (secondary source)**

Macy, R. J. (2007). Sexual re-victimization: Implications for social work practice. *Families in Society, 88*, 627-636.

Substantial *research* demonstrates the existence of the sexual re-victimization phenomenon; however, the problem of sexual re-victimization is largely unattended and unexamined in the social work literature. Because of the pervasiveness of sexually violent victimization, social workers are frequently working with victim-survivors among their clients in child welfare, *domestic violence*, and sexual assault as well as physical health, mental health, and substance abuse settings. Social workers lacking a thorough knowledge about sexual re-victimization and the strategies to prevent its occurrence may be missing important intervention opportunities. This paper helps to increase social workers' awareness of the re-victimization phenomenon and builds on the literature and *research* to provide recommendations for social work practice and *research* for re-victimization prevention.

Sanders, C. K. (2007). Organizing for economic empowerment of battered women: Women's savings accounts. *Journal of Community Practice, 14*, 47-68.

When describing reasons for remaining with or returning to an abusive partner, many women mention economic dependence on their abuser. Few battered women, especially those who are poor, have the economic resources necessary to live independently. Additionally, battered women are commonly isolated from financial resources lacking ready access to cash, checking accounts, or charge accounts. Creating strategies that address financial well-being is essential to addressing the issue of *domestic violence*. This article discusses collaboration among *domestic violence* service providers in the St. Louis, Missouri, region created to promote the economic development of low-income battered women. The collaboration has culminated in formalized economic service provisions including economic education and credit counseling; women's matched savings accounts; and economic advocacy and support services.