

Tyranny of Hurt Feelings:

Elusive Definitions Shortchange True Victims

A group called “Survivors in Action” (no connection to SAVE) has been circulating a petition demanding an audit of state domestic violence coalitions. Why?

Because the state coalitions need to be held accountable for “refusing victims the resources and services they desperately need,” the petition reads. To date over 11,500 persons have signed:

<http://apps.facebook.com/causes/petitions/201?m=a4681d42>

‘No proof of abuse necessary’

Over the last 25 years, the domestic violence industry has steadily expanded definitions. Now, state civil laws say that merely feeling *distressed* or *fearful* is sufficient grounds to get a restraining order – no proof of violence required!

The restraining order then entitles the “victim” to a broad range of welfare services, subsidized housing, and free legal help. The *Village Voice* calls persons who exaggerate or make up claims of violence “DV Fakers.”

Some abuse shelters advertise on their websites, “No proof of abuse necessary.” As a result, shelters are overflowing and the true victims are forced to sit and wait their turn.

It Gets Worse

Go to the website of the DoJ Office of Violence Against Women, and you’ll find this sweeping definition of domestic violence:

“a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to *gain or maintain power and control* over another intimate partner.”

And exactly what is “power and control”? This is how the U.S. Centers for Disease Control explains it:¹

- “getting annoyed if the victim disagrees”
- “withholding information from the victim”
- “disregarding what the victim wants”

Getting annoyed and disregarding the victim’s wants...*that’s domestic violence?*

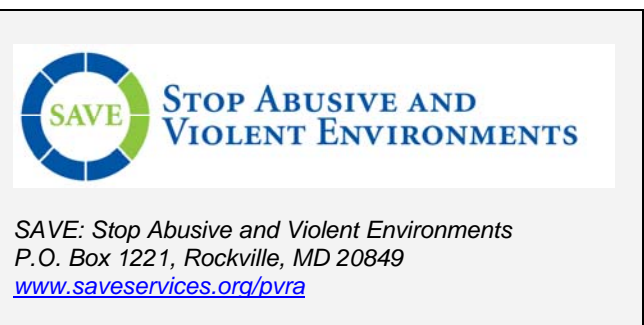
11% Falsely Accused

These unconstitutionally-broad definitions have also had the effect of unleashing a torrent of false allegations. According to a recent SAVE telephone survey, 11% of persons have been falsely accused of domestic violence, child abuse, or sexual assault.²

Restoring Due Process

Our current domestic violence system has become so removed from the notion of objective evidence and refutable allegations that critics now describe the system as a “tyranny of hurt feelings.”

The Partner Violence Reduction Act emphasizes the need for clearly defined offenses in order that civil rights are protected, the falsely accused can be exonerated, and true victims get the services they desperately need.



¹ http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_surveillance/00_Preliminary_Matter.htm

² <http://www.saveservices.org/false-allegations-awareness-month/survey-results/>