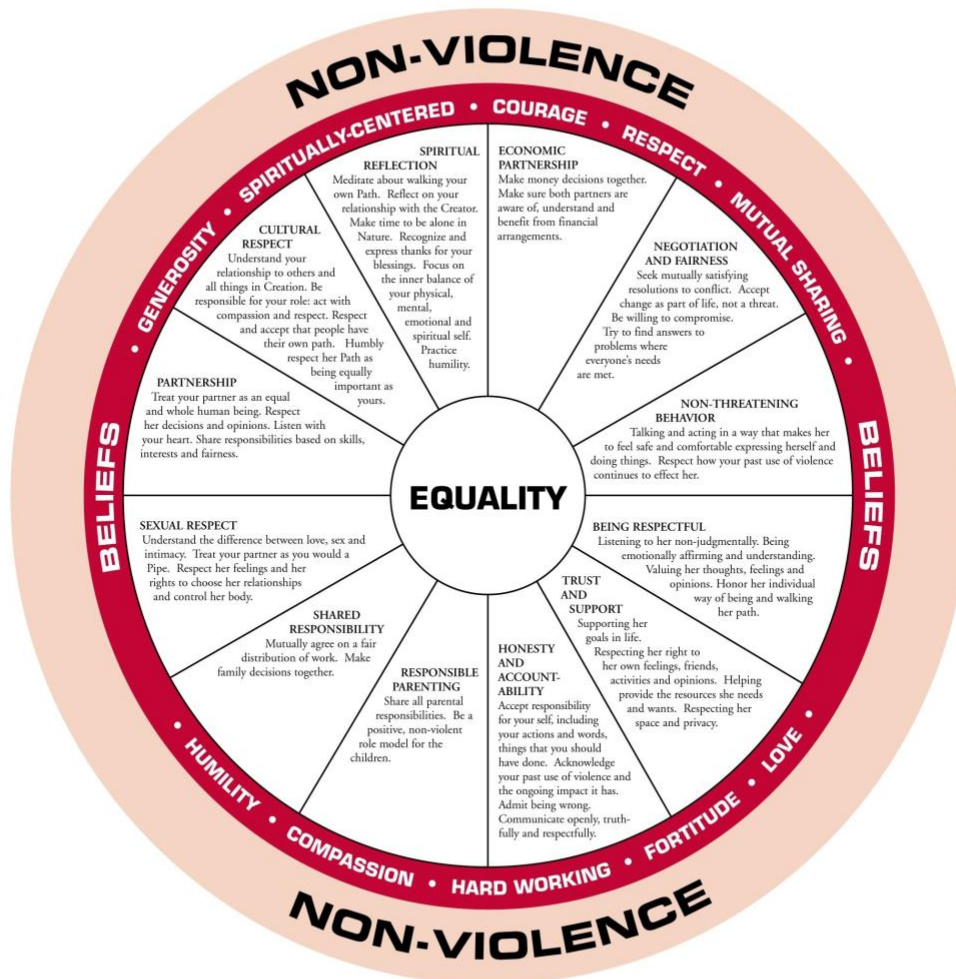


NATURAL LIFE SUPPORTING POWER



EQUALITY
is natural life-supporting power
that is grounded in spirituality, requires
non-violence and is based on character.

Produced by Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women.
Adapted from materials created by Domestic Abuse Intervention Project of Duluth model.

Intimate Partner Violence:

Gender-based
institutionalized
system
of over-lapping
continuous
violent tactics
used to maintain
power & control

PUNCH - KICK - STRANGLE - PUSH - SLAP - PULL HAIR

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

MALE PRIVILEGE

Treats her like
a servant.
Makes all the big
decisions. Acts like
the "king of the castle."
Defines men's and
women's roles.

ISOLATION

Controls what she does,
who she sees and talks to,
what she reads. Limits her outside
involvement. Uses jealousy
to justify actions.

INTIMIDATION

Makes her afraid by using looks, actions,
gestures. Smashes things. Destroys her property.
Abuses pets. Displays weapons.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Puts her down. Makes her feel bad about herself. Calls
her names. Makes her think she's crazy. Plays mind games.
Humiliates her. Makes her feel guilty.

MINIMIZE, LIE AND BLAME

Makes light of the abuse and doesn't take her concerns
seriously. Says the abuse didn't happen. Shifts responsibility
for abusive behavior. Says she caused it.

USING CHILDREN

Makes her feel guilty about the children. Uses the children to relay
messages. Uses visitation to harass her. Threatens to take away the children.

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Prevents her from working. Makes her ask for money. Gives her an allowance.
Takes her money. Doesn't let her know about or access family income.

COERCION AND THREATS

Makes and/or carries out threats to do something to hurt her.
Threatens to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare.
Makes her drop charges. Makes her do illegal things.

CULTURAL ABUSE

Competes over "Indianness." Misinterprets culture to prove male superiority/female submission.
Uses relatives to beat her up. Buys into "blood quantum" competitions.

RITUAL ABUSE

Prays against her. Defines spirituality as masculine. Stops her from practicing her ways. Uses religion as a
threat. "God doesn't allow divorce." Says her period makes her "dirty."

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PHYSICALLY ATTACKING THE SEXUAL PARTS OF HER BODY - TREATING HER LIKE A SEX OBJECT

Except for male privilege, tactics are not listed in order of use or power.

UNNATURAL POWER & CONTROL

Battering = the purposeful use of a system of multiple, continuous tactics to maintain power and control over another. This intentional violence results from, and is supported by an unnatural, misogynistic, sexist societal and cultural belief systems. Battering is a crime against individuals, families, and communities.

**VIOLENCE:
UNNATURAL LIFEWAY**

Destruction
Racism
Materialism
Rape
Murder
Sexism
Ageism
Fear
Battering
Incest
Isolation
Homophobia
Classism
Ritual Abuse
Child Abuse
Cultural Abuse

**NON-VIOLENCE:
NATURAL LIFEWAY**

Compassion
Peace
Honoring of Relationships
Laughter
Freedom
Understanding
Love
Humility
Wisdom
Hope
Life
Generosity
Respect
Courage
Sovereignty
Health

**BRANCHES:
OUTGROWTH**

**TRUNK:
CONTRIBUTORS**

VIOLENCE:

- ◆ Chemical abuse
- ◆ Boarding schools
- ◆ Witnessing violence
- ◆ Stereotypes
- ◆ Confusing anger with violence

NON-VIOLENCE:

- ◆ Prayer, ceremony
- ◆ Honor the gift in others
- ◆ Ways of non-violence and respect modeled
- ◆ Mental self-discipline
- ◆ Seek advice of Women and Elders

**ROOT:
CAUSE OF**

**VIOLENCE:
IS THE BELIEF SYSTEM**

- ◆ Values might over right
- ◆ Power defined as violence
- ◆ Colonization
- ◆ View reality as a male dominated hierarchy
- ◆ Justifies violence and oppression
- ◆ Promotes myths of white male superiority
- ◆ Treats women and children as property of men

**NON-VIOLENCE:
IS THE BELIEF SYSTEM**

- ◆ Understand that all things have spirits and are related
- ◆ Respect is the foundation of all relationships
- ◆ People are spirits in physical bodies on individual lifepaths
- ◆ Women are sacred
- ◆ All people and things of creation are part of the sacred circle of life

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN FROM THE ROOTS UP

Produced by Sacred Circle - National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women

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Choosing Our Words and Understanding Our Roles

Words are powerful. Words describe our understanding of the world, our relationships and our work. Advocates work for social change to *end* violence against women in addition to responding to the overwhelming needs of individual women who have been battered /raped. The words we choose to describe our work is important. A clear understanding of the cause and dynamics of violence against women is necessary to create change to end that violence and to provide respectful, effective advocacy to women and their children.

How does our language, our words reflect our understanding of our work as advocates? Consider some of the words we commonly use. Most advocates choose the word “woman” in reference to those they work with as opposed to “client” or even “victim.” Using the word “woman” points to the reality that battering and rape are highly gendered crimes. Using the word “woman” helps us connect as equals and see each other as whole individuals. Many people are educated to use “client;” certain jobs may even require use of that label. But that language can objectify, separates us and deny our relationship to each other on a fundamental level. Making relationships with each other is key to ending violence.

Many years before the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, programs operated out of women’s homes, church basements etc. and lunch sales were a major source of funding. At that time, saying you were an advocate usually meant you had been battered/raped. Our expertise came from personal experience. We often referred to each other as *sisters*, talked about the voices of women and grassroots, women’s leadership. The current national attention to violence against women and funding has been a blessing in many ways. However, there is a downside. For example, it’s become commonplace to go to conferences about ending violence against women, and rarely hear the word “woman” used. That makes it difficult to focus on the root cause of violence against women and to reclaim the status of women in society. It’s no accident that there is less and less talk about proactive social change and the expertise and leadership of women who have been battered/raped.

It’s also common to hear people talk about “violent homes” and “violent relationships.” It may seem like splitting hairs to some, but homes aren’t violent and neither are relationships. People are violent. When it comes to battering, one person in particular is violent – the batterer. The batterer’s change begins with his own accountability for his choices and behaviors. Naming the home or relationship as the focus of the violence equalizes the violence, implying everyone has an equal role in the violence and denies accountability. Denying accountability ends the possibility for change.

Terms like “domestic violence,” “abuse” and “battering,” are frequently used interchangeably by advocates, law enforcement, child protection workers and others. However, the meaning of these words can vary greatly depending upon the speaker’s role. The differences in meaning can lead to miscommunication, unnecessary frustration and discord. More to the point, not being clear can create inappropriate and dangerous responses.

Many years ago a new advocate requested statistics from the local police department on domestic violence calls. The number given seemed staggering for the small community until she figured out that law enforcement didn’t actually have a category of statistics specifically for “domestic violence.”

The statistic she was given was for “domestic calls” defined as *any* call to a private residence. Huge difference. There was no clear picture of rates of domestic violence or police response. This huge category, containing everything from complaints about dogs, loud parties, property disputes to violence between any people within the home, made the term “domestics” basically meaningless. It meant domestic violence was not prioritized over non-violent calls and responses were often negative. It raised questions about policy, protocol and training. This was a “teachable moment” for everyone involved. This incident became a step toward understanding each other’s roles and common ground for an effective working relationship and response.

The term “domestic violence” lends itself to confusion. Child protection workers will often define domestic violence as involving child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, abuse between siblings or other relatives, *and* battering or intimate partner violence. That’s logical given their role working with all family members including the father/husband and their goal of reuniting families. An advocate’s definition is usually specific to battering as a gender-based, ongoing system of tactics aimed at power and control over an intimate partner. The advocates’ goal is safety of the woman and her children in every aspect of their lives.

Advocates are aware that (and do respond to) men battered by women. Men who are battered comprise approximately 3- 6% of those battered. Sometimes distinctions are not made between battering, self-defense, retaliation, isolated incidents of violence and abusive behavior. That results in inaccurate statistics that make it look like women batter at the same rates as men. It also results in inappropriate, revictimizing responses. A prime example is women who are battered being arrested and convicted for domestic violence when they actually were defending themselves, because no one looked at the whole picture and history. As a consequence, women will not come forward for fear of arrest or losing their children, and batterers continue their violence.

It would be ideal if advocates, police officers, judges, social and child protection workers and lawyers would use the same language, in the same way. That’s not going to happen. Each profession has it’s own role, responsibilities and culture. Officers will use “victim” and “suspect;” lawyers will use “client,” “defendant” and “respondent;” child protection workers will use “client” etc. Everyone will use the words “domestic violence,” “abuse” and “violence” differently. The point is to have conversations about each others’ roles, expertise and challenges and how they use these key words. The goal is to use this opportunity as a teachable moment and make working relationships based upon mutual understanding and the shared goal of making women and their children safe.

The following mini-glossary is offered as a starting place. These definitions are from the advocates’ perspective. Law enforcement, the legal system, human services will have different definitions. The goal is not to choose the “right” definition. The goal is to understand each other and the impact the different definitions has on our work and on the lives of women who are battered and their children.

ABUSE occurs when one person’s behavior or words are intentionally aimed at hurting another. Abuse is painful, but does not necessarily stop someone from doing what s/he wants to do. A combination of abusive behaviors can turn the abuse to violence if those behaviors stop someone from having control over their body or life. Abuse is *not* the same as “not having your way,” not doing what someone wants you to do or making decisions about things you are responsible for without others’ approval. Intervention by human services, maybe law enforcement and counseling may be appropriate responses. Note: *There are important differences between disrespect, inappropriate behavior and abuse. Making those distinctions can lead to a different set of responses.*

VIOLENCE is behavior that causes you to fear for your life. Violence impacts us physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. Violence takes power and control over our lives and bodies away from us, at least for a few moments. Violent behavior is a choice, and, except for self-defense, it is a crime. Note: *Law enforcement and the legal system can only respond to physical violence. Battering involves all forms of violence that threaten women and their children in every aspect of their lives. That indicates the importance of the expertise and role of advocates.*

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE takes many forms, i.e., single incidents, long-term behavioral patterns, verbal, emotional etc. It happens between parents and children, against elders, between siblings, partners, husbands and wives, and between other relatives. Physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, economic abuse and/or violence may occur. Victims are relatives of the abuser; the betrayal of trust and breaking of that relationship intensifies the pain and impact. Because the term “domestic violence” is kind of a catch-all term, it’s important to talk about the specific relationships, specific behaviors and the history and patterns of behaviors, to create an appropriate response by appropriate responders, i.e., law enforcement, mental health workers, advocates etc.

BATTERING is a *system* or pattern of *ongoing tactics* aimed at maintaining *power and control* over an intimate partner – 95% of the time the victim is a woman and the offender is male. The tactics of battering include all forms of abuse and violence: physical, sexual, emotional/ mental, economic, abuse/using children, ritual and cultural abuse, threats, intimidation, coercion. The element of *fear for one's life is very real and constant*. Battering is more than a mental health issue. Battering is a series of violent crimes that is the leading cause of death and injury to one of four women (one of three Native women) in America.

The expertise and leadership of advocates is a necessity, because of the inability of law enforcement, the legal system or social services to respond to all the continual tactics batterers use, and the complex societal and cultural nature of battering. Unlike police officers, prosecutors and others, advocates are focused on the safety and integrity of women 100% of the time. Unlike allies in other fields, advocates have the privilege and responsibility of being the *biased* supporter of women who have been battered/raped. Law enforcement is expected to be objective; prosecutors are expected to get convictions. Their roles, goals and interactions with “victims” is limited and framed by law. The role and relationships of advocates with women who have been battered /raped can be much more involved. Advocates operate whenever, where ever women are. The extent of advocates’ relationships with women is determined by the woman who has been battered/ raped.

A key difference between advocates and other professionals, is that advocates are agents of social change. Social change means confronting the root cause of violence against women including connections to all forms of oppression. Social change requires advocates to inspire critical thinking, provide accurate information and act on personal, political, institutional and societal levels. The role of advocates is challenging to say the least. However, how we, as advocates, name our relationships and describe our work to end violence against women are all acts of social change that begin with the language we use.

**Definitions adapted from Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women materials, 2002
Written by Brenda Hill**

What Is It? Conflict, Abuse, Domestic Violence, Violence, Battering or Intimate Partner Violence?

Words are powerful. Words describe our understanding of our experiences, relationships and sometimes our work. Understanding these differences is very important for people who have experienced battering and other forms of violence. How we define our experiences as survivors determines how we respond and heal. This is important because part of victimization is being brainwashed to believe that we are responsible for the violence done to us, and sometimes see our efforts to defend ourselves as unjustified and/or the same as the violence of our offender or batterer.

Terms like “**domestic violence**,” “**abuse**” and “**battering**,” are frequently used interchangeably by advocates, law enforcement, child protection workers and survivors. All of them have something to do with power and control, but the meaning of these words varies greatly. Not being clear can lead to miscommunication and frustration; can create inappropriate and dangerous responses, and cause self-blame and re-victimization.

Every person has the right to define their experiences the way they choose. The following definitions are offered as food for thought. These definitions are from the advocates’ perspective. Law enforcement, the legal system, human services will have different definitions. The goal is not to choose the “right” definition. The goal is to understand our experiences, be clear with each other and understand the impact the different definitions has on the lives of women who are battered and their children.

CONFLICT can be scary for those raised in families where there was a lot of violence and abuse – conflict may become the same as violence to them. In fact, conflict happens when two people disagree, or when our thoughts and behaviors are different. Conflict can be good and it can be bad. It is good when conflict motivates us to think, grow or do things another way. In healthy relationships, there is *no fear* when conflicts happen. Support groups, accurate information and possibly counseling can help, and offer guidance to better deal with conflict. Note, if a person is out to “win,” rather than resolve differences so everyone’s needs are met through talk and compromise, the conflict can move to abuse or violence.

ABUSE is a difficult term to define because it is used in so many different ways. Sometimes rather than “abuse,” the behaviors are *disrespectful* and/or *inappropriate*. Making those distinctions leads to different responses. Disrespectful and inappropriate behaviors take less energy to respond to – you have the choice to set boundaries or not respond at all. The individual gets to define what they are experiencing. Generally, abuse occurs when one person’s behavior or words are *intentionally* aimed at hurting another. Abuse is painful and can be scary, but does not necessarily stop someone from doing what s/he wants to do. A combination of abusive behaviors can turn the abuse to violence if those behaviors stop someone from having control over their body or life. Conversations with friends, relatives or advocates, support groups or counseling can be helpful in figuring it out and identifying what your alternatives are.

“Child abuse” is an exception because it can involve violence and forms of battering. Children are vulnerable, so the involvement of child protection services and/or law enforcement is often necessary. Depending upon the situation, intervention by relatives and friends can be extremely helpful.

Note: Abuse is not the same as “not having your way,” not doing what someone wants you to do or making decisions about things you are responsible for without others' approval. It is a tactic of battering and abuse to convince someone their attempts to make their own choices rather than meet other’s demands, is abuse. Making your own choices, and saying “No” are basic rights.

VIOLENCE is behavior that causes ***fear for your life***. It impacts us physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. Violence takes power and control over our lives and bodies away from us, at least for a few moments. Violent behavior is a choice. Except for self-defense, it is a crime. Note: *Law enforcement and the legal system can only respond to physical violence or threats of physical violence. Battering involves all forms of violence that threaten women and their children in every aspect of their lives. This explains why the role of advocates is so important and why their expertise is critical.*

Experiencing violence can have severe, long-term effects. Effects may include: hyper-alertness, nightmares, anxiety/panic attacks, shutting down/disassociating, sleep & memory problems, and “flashbacks.” These are normal reactions to the horror of violence. Healing is possible overtime, if a person is safe, has accurate information and appropriate support. Sometimes the effects of brain injury are mistaken for emotional or mental problems. In these cases, informed medical care is necessary. Please keep in mind that many survivors persevere, do great work and reclaim their lives. Their strengths and expertise matter.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE takes many forms, i.e., single incidents, long-term behavioral patterns, physical, verbal, emotional etc. It happens between parents and children, against elders, between siblings, partners, husbands and wives, and between other relatives. Physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, economic abuse and/or violence may occur. Victims are relatives of the abuser; the betrayal of trust and breaking of that relationship intensifies the pain and impact. The term “domestic violence” lends itself to confusion. Child protection workers will often define domestic violence as involving child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, abuse between siblings or other relatives, *and* battering or intimate partner violence. That’s logical given their role working with all family members including the father/husband and their goal of reuniting families. Advocates usually mean battering as a gender-based, ongoing system of tactics aimed at power and control over an intimate partner.

Because the term “domestic violence” is kind of a catch-all term, it’s important to talk about the specific relationships, specific behaviors and the history and patterns of behaviors, to create an appropriate response by appropriate responders, i.e., law enforcement, mental health workers, advocates etc.

People often talk about “violent homes” and “violent relationships.” Problem is, homes aren’t violent and neither are relationships. People are violent. When it comes to battering, one person in particular is violent – the batterer. The batterer’s change begins with his own accountability for his choices and behaviors. Naming the home or relationship as the focus of the violence equalizes the violence, implying everyone has an equal role in the violence and denies accountability. Denying accountability ends the possibility for change.

BATTERING is a ***system*** or pattern of ***ongoing tactics*** aimed at maintaining ***power and control*** over an intimate partner 99% of the time the victim is a woman and the offender is male (US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008; The National Crime Victim Survey 1998, says 85%). The tactics of battering include all forms of abuse and violence: physical, sexual, emotional/ mental, economic, abuse/using children, ritual and cultural abuse, threats, intimidation, coercion. The element of ***fear for one’s life is very real and constant***. Battering is more than a mental health issue. Battering is a series of violent crimes that is the leading cause of death and injury to one of four women in America (one of three Native women: Nat’l Crime Survey). This is not natural and can be stopped.

Battering happens to lesbians, gays, bi-sexual and transgendered people. There are also men who are battered by women – they comprise approximately 3- 13.9% of those battered (*National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey 2010*). Sometimes distinctions are not made between battering, self-defense, retaliation or isolated incidents of violence and abusive behavior. Not making these distinctions can make it look like women batter at the same rates as men. It results in inappropriate responses and re-victimization,

i.e., women blame themselves for the violence, or are arrested for domestic violence when they were defending themselves, because no one looked at the whole picture and history. As a consequence, many women will not come forward for fear of arrest or losing their children. Many batterers will get to continue their violence...

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV), according to the Center for Disease Control, is physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression (including coercive acts) by a current or former intimate partner. An intimate partner is a person with whom one has a close personal relationship that can be characterized by the following: emotional connectedness, regular contact, ongoing physical contact and/or sexual behavior, identity as a couple and familiarity and knowledge about each other's lives. IPV is often used interchangeably with battering, or replaces the word battering.

A Word About Advocates:

The expertise and leadership of advocates is a necessity, because of the inability of law enforcement, the legal system or social services to respond to all the continual tactics batterers' use, and the complex societal and cultural nature of battering. Unlike other professionals, advocates are focused on the safety and integrity of women 100% of the time. Unlike allies in other fields, advocates are not neutral. Advocates have the privilege and responsibility of being the *biased* supporter of women who have been battered/raped. Law enforcement is expected to be objective; prosecutors are expected to get convictions. Their roles, goals and interactions with "victims" are limited and framed by law. The role and relationships of advocates can be much more involved. Advocates operate whenever, wherever women are. The extent of advocates' relationships with women is determined by the woman who has been battered/raped.

A key difference between advocates and other professionals stems from advocates serving as agents of social change. Social change means confronting the root cause of violence against women including connections to all forms of oppression. Social change requires critical thinking, accurate information and action on personal, political, institutional & societal levels. The role of advocates is challenging. Social change begins with the language we use.