



BCS Thinking and Learning Exercises

What to Call a Person who Batters Exercise

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Overview:

This exercise provides an opportunity to explore how the language we use about a victim's partner impacts our work.

Time needed:

- Thirty minutes to an hour to discuss and frame the purpose of the activity.
- One week to try using different language when referring to a victim's partner.
- Thirty minutes to an hour to debrief advocates experience.

Leader preparation/instructions:

- Be prepared to talk with staff about the purpose of the exercise.

Activity:

- Ask everyone for the entire week to only refer to a victim's partner:
 - By his/her first name,
 - As partner/ex- partner, and/or,
 - The word each victim uses to describe her partner/ex-partner

Words to avoid using include: batterer, your batterer, abuser, your abuser, perpetrator, or offender.

- During your follow up meeting ask everyone to reflect on and respond to the following questions:
 - How did it feel to use these terms? Was it different from your usual practice?
 - Was it challenging? If so, why?
 - If you work with individual victims, how did victims respond to that use of language? If this language was a change for you, how did it change your advocacy with victims?