

Advocacy Model Language	Criminal Legal System Language
<p>A person who experiences a pattern of power and control by another. Survivor</p> <p>A person who establishes a pattern of power and control over another. Abuser/Batterer</p>	<p>Victim A person against whom a crime of battery has been committed.</p> <p>Perpetrator A person who has been convicted of committing a crime of battery.</p>
<p>The advocacy model understands that people who abuse their partners may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a pattern of control that occurs 24-7, • Control/exploit their partner over time, • use a number of tactics—some of which are illegal, most of which are legal, • rely on systems of oppression and social inequalities to maintain their control over their partner. 	<p>Meanwhile, the criminal legal system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is designed to address specific incidents and determine if they are legal or illegal, • evaluates “moments in time”, not patterns of abusive control, • ignores bias and posits everyone as agents under the law—regardless of institutional inequalities.

This handout is offered to outline the difference between these two approaches/ understandings of domestic violence. We are encouraging people to become clear about when they use each of these words because **the definitions of these words, as they are applied in these two contexts, are VERY different.**

In this handout, we are not attempting to offer a critique of the words based on the *connotations* of “survivor” and the connotations of “victim”, or the connotations of the words “abuser”, “batterer” or “perpetrator”. We offer this handout because the *denotations* of these words are different and describe different things.

Because these two approaches clearly describe different things, it is critical that we do not use these words interchangeably. For example: many times the domestic violence movement definition of “survivor” and the criminal legal system definition of “victim” apply to the same person—but often they do not.

When this language is used interchangeably, programs can find themselves obligated to provide survivor advocacy services, information and support to a person who is *legally* a victim and who is clearly the abuser—the person who is using a pattern of power, control and exploitation to hurt their partner. When this happens, the survivor (even a survivor who has been legally identified as a perpetrator) is put at greater risk.