<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocacy Model Language</th>
<th>Criminal Legal System Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A person who experiences a pattern of power and control by another.</td>
<td>Survivor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who establishes a pattern of power and control over another.</td>
<td>Abuser/Batterer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The advocacy model understands that people who abuse their partners may:**
- 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.

**Meanwhile, the criminal legal system:**
- 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.**

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