

Family Shelter Service

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✱ **VICTIMS ARE REALLY SURVIVORS** ✱

Adapted from the work of Edward Gondolf

- ◆ Severe abuse prompts innovative coping strategies from battered adults and efforts to seek help. Previous abuse and neglect by help sources lead these adults to try other help sources and strategies to lessen the abuse. The battered adult, in this light, is a “survivor”.
- ◆ The survivor may experience anxiety or uncertainty over the prospects of leaving the batterer. The lack of options, child care, skills and/or finances raise fears about trying to escape the batterer. She/he may conclude that their only option is to remain in the home and change their behavior to accommodate and pacify the batterer.
- ◆ The survivor actively seeks help from a variety of formal and informal help sources. There is most often inadequate or piecemeal helpgiving that leaves the survivor little alternative but to return to the batterer. The helpseeking continues, however.
- ◆ The failure of help sources to intervene in a comprehensive and decisive fashion allows abuse to continue and escalate. The inadequacy of help sources may be attributed to a kind of learned helplessness experienced in many community services. Service providers feel too overwhelmed and limited in their resources to be effective and therefore do not try as hard as they might.
- ◆ Survivors of abuse need, most of all, access to resources that enable them to escape the batterer. Community services need to be coordinated in order to provide the needed allocation of resources to assure long-term, comprehensive intervention.