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Researcher: What Happens When Abused Men Call Domestic Violence Hotlines And Shelters?

<http://www.springerpub.com/pa/> recently attended the excellent Los Angeles domestic violence conference "*From Ideology to Inclusion 2009: New Directions in Domestic Violence Research and Intervention.*" (<http://www.cafcusa.org/2009-conference-registration/Brochure.pdf>). The conference featured many domestic violence dissidents--researchers and clinicians who do not believe that the mainstream domestic violence establishment and its "men as perpetrators/women as victims" conceptual framework is properly serving those involved in family violence. Denise Hines, Ph.D. is a research assistant psychology professor at Clark University and a research associate at the Family Research Laboratory and Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire. At the conference, Dr. Hines detailed her findings on what happens when abused men call domestic violence hotlines or shelters seeking help. About a third of all domestic violence injuries are suffered by men. Hines' study included 302 heterosexual men, ages 18 to 59, who had been in a relationship lasting at least one month within the previous year, had been physically assaulted by their female partners within the previous year, and had sought outside assistance/support. The median age of the abused men was 40, and the median age of their abusive female partners was 38. The relationships had lasted on average a little over eight years, and 73% of them had minor children. About two-thirds were married, separated, or divorced. Of the abused men who called domestic violence hotlines, 64% were told that they "only helped women." In 32% of the cases, the abused men were referred to batterers' programs. Another 25% were given a phone number to call that turned out to be a batterers' program. A little over a quarter of them were given a reference to a local program that helped. Overall, only 8% of the men who called hotlines classified them as "very helpful," whereas 69% found them to be "not at all helpful." Sixteen percent said the people at the hot line "dismissed or made fun of them." One abused man said:

They laughed at me and told me I must have done something to deserve it if it happened at all.

Another said:

They asked how much I weighed and how much she weighed and then hung up on me...I was told by this agency that I was full of BS.

Twelve percent of the hotlines accused the man of being the batterer or responsible for the abuse. One abused man said:

They told me women don't commit domestic violence -
- it must have been my fault.

Another said:

They accused me of trying to hide my "abuse" of her by claiming to be a victim, and they said that I was nothing more than a wimp.

Of the men who sought help by contacting local domestic violence programs, only 10% found them to be "very helpful," whereas 65% found them to be "not at all helpful." One abused man said:

They just laughed and hung up the phone.

Another said:

They didn't really listen to what I said. They assumed that all abusers are men and said that I must accept that I was the abuser. They ridiculed me for not leaving my wife, ignoring the issues about what I would need to do to protect my six children and care for them.

I'm not surprised by these men's experiences but my research on this issue gives a somewhat more positive picture of the domestic violence shelters. While preparing for a newspaper column I was doing in 2002 about men being denied services by domestic violence shelters, I decided to check for myself if men were really denied services. I posed as a male victim of domestic violence and called every domestic violence shelter in all of Los Angeles and San Diego counties. Not a single one would accept me or offer assistance, with the exception of Valley Oasis. Most flatly refused any assistance at all, but a couple did offer me space in a homeless shelter. When I asked, "Am I supposed to take my children to a homeless shelter?", they replied, "That's all we can do." To their credit, however, several of the shelter directors and workers did sympathize, telling me that we need shelters and services for men, and spending considerable time on the phone with me. While the domestic violence establishment is in general controlled by adherents to the feminist Duluth/'Man-as-Perp/Woman-as-Victim' model, it's not a monolith, and there are many unbigoted, well-meaning people within it who would like to see *all* domestic violence victims served. **To read all reports from the Conference, please click [here](http://www.fathersandfamilies.org/?cat=127)** (<http://www.fathersandfamilies.org/?cat=127>). *From Ideology to Inclusion 2009* (<http://www.cafcusa.org/2009-conference-registration/Brochure.pdf>) featured some of the world's leading experts on domestic violence, many of whom serve on the Editorial Board of the new peer-reviewed academic journal, *Partner Abuse* (<http://www.springerpub.com/journal.aspx?jid=1946-6560>), published by Springer Publishing Company. The conference was presented by the *California Alliance for Families & Children* (<http://www.cafcusa.org/2009-conference-registration/Brochure.pdf>) and co-sponsored by *The Family Violence Treatment & Education Association*. (<http://www.favtea.com>) Some of you may remember that I also wrote extensively about the 2008 conference--to learn more, click [here](http://qlennsacks.com/blog/index.php?tag=gender-inclusive-treatment-of-intimate-partner-abuse) (<http://qlennsacks.com/blog/index.php?tag=gender-inclusive-treatment-of-intimate-partner-abuse>).

after-child-wanders-from-babysitter)

Judge slams Child, Youth and Family for misleading information - Minister launches review (/component/weblinks/?task=weblink.go&catid=60:daily-links&id=894:judge-slams-child-youth-and-family-for-misleading-information-minister-launches-review)

Mesa Father holds vigil for missing son's first birthday, mom wanted for taking him (/component/weblinks/?task=weblink.go&catid=60:daily-links&id=893:mesa-father-holds-vigil-for-missing-son-s-first-birthday-mom-wanted-for-taking-him)

Low caseworker pay hampers child protection in PA (/component/weblinks/?task=weblink.go&catid=60:daily-links&id=892:low-caseworker-pay-hampers-child-protection-in-pa)

Home Bargains DNA paternity test reveals this result more often in our region than any other (/component/weblinks/?task=weblink.go&catid=60:daily-links&id=891:home-bargains-dna-paternity-test-reveals-this-result-more-often-in-our-region-than-any-other)

Despite DNA evidence, dad cleared in attempted rape of daughter (/component/weblinks/?task=weblink.go&catid=60:daily-links&id=890:despite-dna-evidence-dad-cleared-in-attempted-rape-of-daughter)

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