

COUPLES COUNSELLING HAS NO PLACE IN DOMESTIC ABUSE

Couples counselling is NOT a solution to domestic abuse.

Couples counselling is counter-productive in an abusive relationship. This type of intervention assumes the concept of mutuality in the relationship and that the problems are based on a systemic problem between the two parties. Couples counselling helps people with conflict resolution, communication problems, childhood issues brought to the relationship and struggles with intimacy.

In an abusive relationship, mutual goals cannot be attained because the perpetrator is not motivated by equality, but instead is motivated by power and control.

Couples counselling conveys the message to the perpetrator and the victim-survivor that the problem is mutual and that somehow the victim-survivor is responsible, at least in part, for the perpetrator's behaviours – which is not accurate.

Additionally, this approach focuses on their feelings, however in an abusive relationship dynamic, the perpetrator spends too much time focusing on their feelings and desire for control and not enough time focusing on the victim-survivor's feelings.

Therefore, couples counselling shifts the accountability from the perpetrator to the victim-survivor, resolving them of any acceptance and responsibility and gives the perpetrator a platform to further control, manipulate and collude against the victim-survivor.

This intervention is more harmful than helpful in an abusive relationship dynamic because it prevents the victim-survivor from speaking out and being able to talk safely, openly and honestly, and causes distrust in professionals as they have facilitated this to happen. This can instill fear and intimidation for the victim-survivor and further deter them from help-seeking in the present and in the future.

Enrolling onto couples counselling will simply risk escalating behaviours and create barriers for engagement in safe and appropriate interventions. This will also invalidate and trivialise the victim-survivor's experiences leaving them with a sense of powerlessness.

Domestic abuse is not caused by bad relationship dynamics and the victim-survivor cannot ever change a perpetrator's behaviour by changing themselves.



#CHOOSE TO CHALLENGE

THEN. NOW. ALWAYS.

