

Feminist Advocacy in Community Based Responses to Domestic Violence: Gendered Identity, Ideology and Practices

Ph.D. Dissertation

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Abstract

The anti-domestic violence movement began as a feminist grassroots effort. Early feminist advocates relied on survivor-defined and social change practices rooted in feminist identity and ideology. Advocacy has evolved over time, moving from grassroots efforts into professionalized organizations, and now includes collaboration with the justice system in community based responses to domestic violence (CBR). Through inductive analysis of interviews with 26 domestic violence victim advocates and drawing from a gendered organizations framework, I examine how advocates' feminist identity and ideology shape their practices in CBR. Findings indicate that advocates both resist and reproduce various gendered practices within traditionally feminist anti-domestic violence organizations and in traditionally masculine organizations within the criminal justice system. Gender "neutral" or patriarchal practices are resisted through feminist survivor-defined and intersectional approaches to advocacy, as well as through social change activism. They are reproduced when advocates use and support controlling or "neutral" practices within anti-domestic violence organizations. From these findings, I draw implications for gendered organizations theory as well as best practices for advocacy in community based responses to domestic violence.