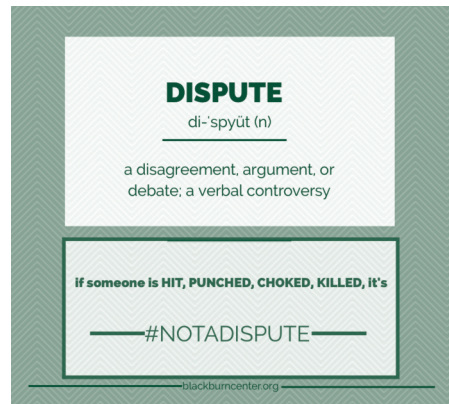


What's so bad about "domestic dispute"?

If you're on Twitter, you may have noticed that we are on a mission. Each day, we tweet at various news organizations who use the term "domestic dispute" to describe various acts of violence. We have engaged with several media outlets, and will keep plugging away, news story by news story, to raise awareness and to perhaps shed some light about why we find this phrase so offensive. We believe that social media can be used for good, and that our #notadispute campaign will help to change the way that domestic violence is described in news stories.

"Domestic dispute" is used by the media as a descriptor for any number of crimes – anything from stalking to assault to property destruction to murder. We believe that labeling an act of violence a "dispute" minimizes the true harm of the crime in a way that is not done with any



other type of crime. If a man is beaten by a complete stranger, it isn't labeled a dispute – it's an assault. If a woman is harassed by someone she has never met, it isn't a dispute – it's stalking or harassment. If a child is threatened with a gun by a stranger, it isn't a dispute – it's assault. So why are these same crimes described as

"disputes" when the victim and perpetrator have a romantic or familial relationship?

The word dispute has certain connotations; it's typically used to describe a *nonviolent* argument or disagreement. For example, you might dispute your credit card bill if you think that there has been a mistake, or dispute a conclusion reached by a co-worker. In the common usage of the word "dispute," there is no act of violence involved. No one suffers a broken bone or stab wound when a bill is disputed.

But when a news item calls something a "dispute," it too often means that someone or something was hurt: that a woman was killed by a husband who has been systematically terrorizing her or a man was stabbed by a partner who has shown a pattern of controlling behaviors. And *this* is why we find this term so offensive – a word meant to describe a nonviolent disagreement is being used to describe incredibly violent crimes. It diminishes the impact of that violence and puts domestic violence into a separate category from other violent crimes.

Clearly, there is some value in describing a given crime as domestic in nature, to differentiate it from a random attack or other type of crime. Our issue is not with that word, but with using "dispute" to replace the word that actually describes the crime committed. The situations described above are domestic murder and domestic assault – not a dispute. Let's encourage the news media to use the more accurate word that is specific to the crime committed, and not rely on a shorthand phrase that minimizes the violence.

We are committed to calling out news organizations for their use of the phrase, and we ask you to join us. Search for #notadispute on Twitter, or comment on the Facebook pages of news outlets when they publish stories using this terminology. With your support, we can help to change the way that crimes of domestic violence are described in the media!

Sexual Assault in the Military

"When any single victim of sexual assault is forced to salute her attacker, clearly our system is broken."

The topic of military sexual assault has been a hot button issue over the past year, and it continues to spark much debate in Washington and around the country. A comprehensive bill proposed by Senator Kristen Gillibrand, the Military Justice Improvement Act, was defeated in early March by a narrow margin. This bill would have taken the decision on whether to prosecute sexual assaults out of the chain of command, so that independent military prosecutors made the determination rather than individual commanders. Senator Gillibrand's bill had widespread support from survivors of military sexual assault, including the non-profit group Protect Our Defenders. Yet the Pentagon opposed the proposal to take the prosecution decision out of the chain of command, and the bill failed to garner widespread support. Instead, the Victims Protection Act – championed by Senator Clare McCaskill – is expected to pass easily when it comes to a vote in the Senate. This Act is designed to make it easier for victims of sexual assault to report their assault, but will not remove the prosecution decision from the chain of command. Regardless of which bill is ultimately successful, the need to change is clear. As Senator Gillibrand memorably noted, "When any single victim of sexual assault is forced to salute her attacker, clearly our system is broken."

Photographs as a Tool to End Gender Violence

PhotoVoice is a participatory action research strategy that offers a unique contribution to the study of root causes of a variety of societal issues. The PhotoVoice process provides people with cameras to photograph images that reflect the greater social structures in their environment. These documentary photographs are then studied and discussed with the aim of promoting critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community issues through group discussions. Participants are asked to represent their community or point of view by taking photographs, discussing them together, developing narratives to go with their photos and conducting outreach in the form of an exhibit to spur further dialogue, critical examination of the social issue being studied and policy change.

PhotoVoice is considered part of the research process in that it allows visuals to capture individual perspectives which can then be examined rather than relying on the use of strictly verbal or linguistic surveys or interviews. Dr. Caroline Wang, a professor and researcher with the University of Michigan, School of Public Health, developed PhotoVoice as a creative approach to participatory action research (Wang 1999). As a PhotoVoice participant, individuals share ideas and concerns about their experiences and their community. They also take on the role of photographer with the responsibility of capturing photographic evidence. Additionally, participants assume the role of co-researcher with responsibilities around setting research goals, data collection, data analysis and sharing research findings.

In spring 2013, Seton Hill University's *Arts for Community Change* class launched its first PhotoVoice project, with a second round occurring this spring semester. The particular community issue this PhotoVoice study has been addressing is the examination of student perceptions of the root causes of domestic and sexual violence. Seton Hill has partnered with Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence to study and effect student understanding of gender violence through the STAR project, which stands for Social Transformation through Awareness and Resolve. Students

of the *Arts for Community Change* class utilize the PhotoVoice process to assist the STAR team and Blackburn Center with generating an understanding of social structures in the environment and community that contribute to the occurrence of gender violence as well as encouraging student dialogue around perceptions of root causes. The data collected as a result of group discussions will inform future projects of the STAR team and Blackburn Center.

Students are provided with cameras or are asked to utilize their iPad/iPhone photo app to take pictures of objects, environments and people (adults 18 years of age or older) in their daily life which are significant to defining concerns and priorities about the ways women are viewed in the wider culture. The photographs explore the following research questions: "What do you consider to be the root causes of gender violence? What do you feel best counteracts the root causes?" These photographs provide a

window into the assessment of community strengths, assets and concerns regarding views and perceptions of women and gender roles. The photographs are considered data which is studied and analyzed through class discussion. Study findings are then shared via the production of on-line and actual art exhibits in order to host a forum that spurs further discussion with the greater community and to develop action plans to enhance STAR team programming efforts.

While pictures of objects and environments are generally without risk, taking photographs of people does expose the subject to some measure of vulnerability. Student researchers participate in training as to ethical guidelines of photographing people and are offered training on the informed consent process and the notion of individual privacy. Photographs depicting violence or which could potentially be perceived as insulting to the subject are prohibited.

If you have the opportunity to see a PhotoVoice exhibit, this is the guide to those photographs.

PhotoVoice: Changing the VIEW

SNAP: When a person takes a photograph, they decide what to focus on, what to include and leave out, what to make clear or fuzzy. Students at Seton Hill University were given cameras and asked to take pictures of objects, environments and people in their everyday life which seem to relate to the root causes of domestic and sexual violence. The photos show student views about the causes of violence against women and girls.

SHARE: You have likely heard the term, "A picture is worth a thousand words." The process you are seeing here is known as PhotoVoice, and we think the visual images have the capacity to speak to your heart and mind. We are excited you have taken the time to see our pictures and are interested in hearing how they impacted you.

STIR: We hope the photos start thinking and conversation about what we need to do, as a society, to create a world where women and girls can live safely and free of violence in their everyday lives. What needs to change so that the problem never even starts? What do you think?

Please fill out a feedback card after you view the pictures, and thank you for taking time to participate!

— The Seton Hill University *Arts for Community Change* class

The Special Occasion Card: A Greeting with a Purpose

In 1853, Esther Howland brought young girls into her Massachusetts home to hand-color valentines. She provided them with shelter and an opportunity to earn a livelihood. In that tradition, this specially created collector's card was designed by a Blackburn Center client.

For 15 years, Blackburn Center has offered a meaningful way for you to mark important occasions and celebrate special people in your life through our *Special Occasion Card*. This year's card, designed by a Blackburn Center client, features a poem from Longfellow:

*I hear the wind among the trees
Playing the celestial symphonies;
I see the branches downward bent,
Like keys of some great instrument.*

For each \$25 gift to Blackburn Center, we will send a card to the person you specify and will include your personal message inside the card. For any level of giving, your

name and the name of the person or occasion you honor will be included in the fall edition of our newsletter, and your name will appear in Blackburn Center's Annual Report. (If you prefer, we will list you as "anonymous.") We have enclosed a remittance envelope in this newsletter for your convenience.

Please consider this way to touch the lives of thousands of people in our community as you touch the lives of those you honor. On behalf of those we serve, thank you for sharing in our mission.

Planting the seeds of promise to nurture a bouquet of hope.



VOLUNTEERS

Are the HEART – and FUTURE – of Blackburn Center

Volunteers started the agency that is now known as Blackburn Center, and volunteers have continued to be a vital part of our work. Our volunteers come from all walks of life: they may be teachers, bankers, nurses, students, IT professionals, doctors, homemakers, business owners or retirees. And they all come with a deep commitment to making a difference in their community.

Would you like to join us? There are several ways you can do that:

You can train to be a counselor. Each year, Blackburn Center volunteers provide valuable service by answering hotline calls, lending a listening ear to residents of our shelter for victims of domestic violence, and working with children in our support group for the youngest victims of domestic violence. For more information about this type of volunteer work, call Beth at 724-837-9540, x114.

You can join our newly formed group, Future Advocates of Blackburn (FAB). We are inviting individuals in their 20s and 30s to work with us to shape a Blackburn Center that will work for coming generations. If you want to learn more about this, call Ann at 724-837-9540, x115.

You can support the committees that guide Blackburn Center's growth and development, and special events. For more information about this opportunity, call Ann at 724-837-9540, x115.

We look forward to hearing from YOU!

Blackburn's E-Newsletter Option

We are moving towards paperless communication with our newsletter. This has multiple benefits: (1) we will reduce costs for Blackburn Center (allowing more of our resources to be invested in services to clients and the community); (2) we will lessen our impact on the environment; and (3) you will get important information about Blackburn Center's services and projects faster.

Please consider taking advantage of this opportunity! To subscribe to our e-newsletter and other news and alerts from Blackburn Center e-mail Laura at laura@blackburncenter.org. Include your regular mailing address so that we can remove you from the newsletter mailing list. You may still occasionally receive other paper mail from Blackburn Center, but our goal is to move towards entirely paperless communication. As always, your privacy is important to us; Blackburn Center will never sell your information to a third party.

Day of Giving

Watch for information about Day of Giving 2014 on Blackburn Center's Facebook page.

It's early this year:

Tuesday, May 6, 2014!

Day of Giving
May 6, 2014
WESTMORELAND
GIVES.ORG

FOLLOW BLACKBURN CENTER ON



Pinterest

NEEDS LIST

Items Needed throughout the Year for the Emergency Shelter for Battered Women and Former Residents

KITCHEN

Baking pans – 9" x 13" aluminum
Can openers (hand-held)
Coffee (regular)
Coffee creamer
Cooking oil
Dish drainers
Dishpans
Dishwasher detergent
Drink boxes

Food items: any canned food, other non-perishables, etc.*

Clear plastic storage boxes with lids

Tall kitchen garbage bags
Packaged snacks for lunches
Paper products: paper towels
Paper towel holders
Skillets
Small appliances: coffee maker, can opener, knife sharpener, toaster, mixer
Spices and condiments
Zip-lock bags: (1 and 2 gallon sizes)

**Food items we especially need include: all kinds of soups, condiments (mayonnaise, mustard and catsup), jelly, cake and brownie mixes, canned tuna, canned chicken and other meats, canned or bottled juices.*

BEDROOM

Alarm clocks

Bed pillows
Bed-in-a-bag sets

Nightgowns: women's one-size fits all

Pajamas: women's one-size-fits-most & extra-large sizes, infants sizes 6 to 24 months, boys and girls 2 to 8 and teen sizes.

Sheet sets: twin

Wastebaskets

BATHROOM

Bath mats
Paper products: toilet paper
Plungers
Shower curtains and rings
Soap dispensers
Toilet brushes
Bath Towels - durable
Wastebaskets

PERSONAL CARE

Hotel-size items are no longer needed.

Shampoo
Conditioner
Body wash
Hand Lotion

MISCELLANEOUS

Baby monitors

Bottled water

Brooms

Buckets

Diapers: Sizes 5, 6+

Extension cords

Flashlights

Gasoline cards

(GetGo or Sheetz)

Gift cards

(Walmart or Target)

Hair dryers

Laundry detergent

Markers - washable

Mops

Nasal aspirators

Outdoor garbage bags

Pull-up diapers:

larger sizes

Sweat suits:

all adult sizes

Telephones

Tool kits

Umbrellas

Underpants:

boy & girls all sizes; women's sizes 5, 6, 7, 8

A donation of items from the needs list throughout the year helps Blackburn Center sustain the shelter program, and helps to maintain the support groups the agency provides for women and children. In addition, some of these items are made available to women – and their children – who are establishing their own homes and need support with basic household items.

Please put the items that are in **bold italics** at the top of your shopping list, and help Blackburn Center manage donations by bringing new items. If you have used items to donate, the agency can provide a list of thrift shops in the area that make items available to Blackburn Center shelter residents at no cost to them.

For more information about donation opportunities, contact us at 724-837-9540.



PO Box 398
Greensburg, PA 15601-0398

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 648
Greensburg, PA

Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides 24-hour hotline services, counseling, advocacy and support groups to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, incest, child sexual abuse, and sexual harassment; emergency shelter is available to survivors of domestic violence and their dependent children. Blackburn Center also provides community education, school student awareness programs, and in-service professional trainings throughout Westmoreland County.

Contact Information

Office 724-837-9540

Fax 724-837-3676

Hotline 724-836-1122

Toll Free Hotline 1-888-832-2272

Website www.blackburncenter.org

Blackburn Center is funded in part by United Way of Westmoreland County, PA Department of Public Welfare funds, including Title XX and Act 44 funds, foundations and local contributions.

A copy of official registration and financial information for Blackburn Center may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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LIVE UNITED



United Way of
Westmoreland County

Donor Designation 382

PLEASE NOTE: Deliver donations to Blackburn Center's administrative offices on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 AM to 4 PM. Please call if you cannot bring your donation during regular business hours. We can make other arrangements if necessary.