

Public Advocate for the City of New York

Calling in Abuse:

How Domestic Violence Perpetrators are Using the Child Welfare System to Continue Their Abuse

A REPORT BY PUBLIC ADVOCATE BETSY GOTBAUM
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Voices of Women Organizing Project

New York City's Domestic Violence Service Providers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year, tens of thousands of New Yorkers are victims of domestic violence. Living in daily fear of their partners, they often cannot flee their relationship because of intimidation, risk of bodily harm, or financial or psychological dependence. When victims of domestic violence finally are able to escape from their batterers—often with children in tow—many find a new type of abuse and harassment perpetrated on them by their abuser: malicious false reports of child abuse and neglect against them.

Perpetrators of domestic violence often continue to control and abuse their victims after they are separated by manipulating the existing child abuse and neglect reporting system. They file false reports against their victims, often repeatedly, to the State Central Register for Child Abuse and Neglect (SCR), claiming that the survivors—their victims—are abusing their children. The motives for such malicious behavior include an attempt to gain leverage in an upcoming custody battle and punishment for leaving.

Regardless of the motivation, these false reports open up domestic violence survivors and their families to invasive child welfare investigations by New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Sadly, domestic violence advocates report that, in some cases, children have been removed from their households and placed into foster care on the basis of these false allegations.

In response to domestic violence advocates and survivors, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum conducted a survey of domestic violence service providers, in partnership with Sanctuary for Families, to determine whether false reporting by domestic violence abusers is a widespread problem and to solicit solutions to stop abusers from this practice.

Local domestic violence service providers, such as social workers, attorneys, and shelter staff, report that batterers knowingly filing false reports of child abuse or neglect against their victims is, in fact, a frequent problem in New York City. Seventy-two percent of respondents indicated that they have had cases in which a batterer filed a false report. Sixty-seven percent of respondents reported that they have had cases in which a batterer *repeatedly* filed erroneous reports. The service providers reported that at least one in every ten, or 10 percent, of their cases involved batterers falsely accusing their victims of child maltreatment.

When abusers knowingly file false reports, they not only re-victimize survivors of domestic violence and traumatize their children but also weaken the responsiveness of ACS to real child welfare emergencies by wasting personnel time and the agency's limited resources.

Even though falsely reporting child abuse and neglect is a crime in New York State, the vast majority of those who file such false reports go unprosecuted. Ninety-five percent of domestic violence service providers who participated in the Public Advocate's survey reported they have never dealt with a case in which the batterer was actually prosecuted for false reporting.

A solution to effectively identifying false reporters is made even more difficult by the fact that the reporting of child abuse and neglect must remain as open a process as possible in order to effectively identify abused and neglected children. In fact, no changes would deter legitimate reporting should be made to existing child abuse reporting laws. If the reporting system becomes too invasive for the reporter, for example requiring identifying information or requiring all reporters to submit written reports, then some reporters may decide not to report vital child abuse information, thus endangering the lives of children.

This report is a presentation of the findings drawn from the Public Advocate's Domestic Violence Service Provider Survey.

INTRODUCTION

Every year tens of thousands of New Yorkers are victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence can cause bodily harm or even death, but it also injures in less visible ways. It is responsible for severe psychological injuries to countless victims and their children, injuries that often take years to address after the abuse has ended.

Betsy Gotbaum has made the rights of domestic violence survivors a priority of her tenure as Public Advocate. Through its work with advocates and survivors, the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) discovered a largely unexplored type of domestic violence perpetrated against survivors with children: the malicious false reporting of child abuse and neglect.

While working on a domestic violence report, "Opening the Door: Looking at New York's Response to Domestic Violence 13 Years After 'Behind Closed Doors,'"¹ the OPA learned from advocates and survivors of several cases in which survivors were repeatedly reported to ACS for child abuse and neglect by their abusers. The OPA included a section in the 2006 report that highlighted this problem.

According to advocates, perpetrators continue to control and abuse their victims after they are separated by manipulating the existing child abuse and neglect reporting system. They file false reports against their victims, often repeatedly, to the State Central Register for Child Abuse and Neglect (SCR) claiming that the survivors—their victims—are abusing their children. According to advocates, the motives for such malicious behavior include an attempt to gain leverage in an upcoming custody battle to punishment for leaving.

Regardless of the motivation, these false reports open up domestic violence survivors and their families to invasive child welfare investigations by New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Advocates say that these reports and investigations can be serious barriers to survivors' efforts to regain control of their lives. They can also be barriers to employment, especially if the survivor applies for a position in which she will have close contact with children and a background check is required.

¹ New York City Public Advocate's Office, *Opening the Door: Looking at New York's Response to Domestic Violence 13 Years After "Behind Closed Doors"*, 2006, www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov/policy/documents/DVRreportJan27.pdf.

In March 2007, the OPA held a child welfare forum at the Hunter School of Social Work to discuss the progress of reforms to ACS, undertaken in the wake of several highly publicized child fatalities. At the forum, several audience members reiterated the concerns of the domestic violence community, raised the previous year: that perpetrators of domestic violence were manipulating the child welfare system, in particular child protective services, to continue to abuse their victims.

In May 2007, the OPA was invited by Sanctuary for Families, a New-York-City-based domestic violence service provider, to discuss domestic violence and child welfare issues. A number of Sanctuary for Families caseworkers and attorneys conveyed their concerns that batterers were using false reports of child abuse and neglect to continue their abuse.

In response to the growing concern from the domestic violence community, the OPA designed and implemented a survey to measure the extent of this problem and solicit practical solutions to deter future false reports by domestic violence abusers.

This report is a presentation of the findings drawn from that survey and includes a discussion by domestic violence survivors and advocates, as well as policymakers, government agencies, and child welfare experts about what can be done to combat false reporting of child abuse and neglect by perpetrators of domestic violence.

BACKGROUND

Domestic Violence

In 2006, the New York City Police Department responded to more than 220,000 incidents of domestic violence, an average of more than 600 incidents per day.² Nationally, nearly one in four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime.³ Tragically, many of these incidents end in serious injury to the victim or even death. In 2006 alone, 71 New Yorkers⁴ died as a result of family-related violence.⁵

The federal Office of Violence Against Women (OVAW) defines domestic violence as “a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner.”⁶ This abusive behavior often takes several different forms.

The most visible form, and probably the most well-known by the general public, is physical violence in which a partner injures or attempts to injure the other partner using physical force, such as hitting, slapping, or biting. Domestic violence, however, also

² New York City Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, *Domestic Violence Fact Sheet Calendar Year 2006*.

³ Domestic Violence Fact Sheet, National Coalition of Domestic Violence, 2007, available on the web at <http://www.ncadv.org/>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ 2006 data is preliminary and is subject to change by the NYPD. Family-related violence includes intimate partner violence, as well as homicides committed by other family members and the death of children as a result of family violence.

⁶ Office of Violence Against Women, United States Department of Justice, available on the web at <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/>.

manifests itself in less visible forms such as sexual abuse,⁷ emotional abuse,⁸ economic abuse,⁹ and psychological abuse.¹⁰

Domestic violence is usually one-sided with one party acting as the perpetrator and the other as the victim. Both men and women in heterosexual, homosexual, and transgender relationships can perpetrate the violence, but the vast majority of domestic violence is perpetrated by men against women.

State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment

The SCR is a centralized child abuse reporting hotline run by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The SCR was created by order of the Child Protective Services Act of 1973 to encourage more complete reporting of child abuse and neglect. The SCR enables both mandated and non-mandated reporters to report suspected child abuse and neglect 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to child welfare authorities via a single hotline for the entire state.

Reports received by SCR are forwarded to the appropriate local department of social services (LDSS) within the state—ACS in New York City—for investigation. By law, investigations by a LDSS are supposed to begin within 24 hours of receiving a report. Each year, ACS receives tens of thousands of reports of suspected child abuse and neglect that must be investigated. In fiscal year 2007 alone, ACS received 64,221 such reports involving 92,046 children.¹¹

In New York State, mandated reporters—professionals with close contact with children and families, such as teachers, social workers, and doctors¹²—are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Along with their report they must also submit identifying information. Non-mandated reporters¹³, however, such as friends, relatives, and neighbors can file anonymous reports.

Current Penalties for False Reporting

⁷ Domestic violence sexual abuse is defined as coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner. Office of Violence Against Women, United States Department of Justice, available on the web at <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/>.

⁸ Domestic violence emotional abuse is defined as undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem. This may include, but is not limited to, constant criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, or damaging one's relationship with his or her children. *Ibid.*

⁹ Domestic violence economic abuse is defined as making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one's access to money, or forbidding one's attendance at school or employment. *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Domestic violence psychological abuse is defined as causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friend, or school and/or work. *Ibid.*

¹¹ City of New York, Mayor's Office of Operations, *Mayor's Management Report, September 2007*.

¹² A full list of mandated reporters can be found on the NYS Office of Children and Families website at www.ocfs.state.ny.us or at NYS Social Service Law § 413.

¹³ Non-mandated reporters are those not required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

State law explicitly states that knowingly submitting false reports of child abuse or neglect to the SCR or the LDSS is a crime. It is a class A misdemeanor¹⁴ punishable by up to one year in prison¹⁵ and a \$1,000 fine.¹⁶

METHODOLOGY

On August 2, 2007, the OPA launched the Domestic Violence Service Provider Survey (Appendix 1). The purpose of this survey was to determine the extent to which perpetrators of domestic violence use New York's existing child welfare reporting system to falsely accuse their victims of child abuse and neglect, as well as to solicit recommendations to address this problem from domestic violence service providers.

The OPA distributed a copy of the survey to more than 300 organizations listed in the city's domestic violence service provider guide,¹⁷ as well as additional organizations suggested by domestic violence advocates.

FINDINGS

The Office of the Public Advocate received 127 completed surveys representing professionals from 80 separate organizations working with victims of domestic violence.

- The respondents had an average of nearly 10 years professional working experience with victims of domestic violence;
- 62 percent of respondents were social/case workers;
- 23 percent of respondents were lawyers or other legal services professionals;
- 12 percent of respondents were domestic violence shelter staff.

The Vast Majority of Domestic Violence Professionals Have Had at Least One Case that Involved False Reporting

- 72 percent of respondents reported that they have had at least one case during their careers in which the abuser falsely reported the survivor to SCR/ACS for child abuse or neglect;
- 67 percent of respondents indicated that they have had at least one case in which the abuser *repeatedly* reported the survivor to SCR/ACS.

Domestic Violence Professionals Report a Substantial Number of Their Cases Have Involved False Reporting

- Respondents indicated that, on average, they handle 66 cases per year;
- Respondents indicated that, on average, 7.3 of their cases each year—more than 10 percent—involve false reporting by the batterer.

Many Domestic Violence Professionals Believe False Reporting Has Become More Frequent

¹⁴ NYS Penal Law § 240.55.

¹⁵ NYS Penal Law § 70.15.

¹⁶ NYS Penal Law § 80.05.

¹⁷ City of New York, Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, *Updated 2006 Directory of Domestic Violence Services*.

- 43 percent of respondents indicated that false reporting by DV abusers has become a more common problem over time;
- 48 percent of respondents indicated that the frequency of false reporting has remained the same over time;
- Only 9 percent of respondents indicated that the problem of false reporting has improved.

False Reporters are Rarely Prosecuted

- 95 percent of respondents indicated that they have never handled a case in which an abuser was prosecuted for knowingly making false reports of child abuse or neglect against the survivor.

INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Malicious false reporting of child abuse and neglect can undermine the ability of survivors to rebuild their lives and the ability of the child welfare system to effectively identify and investigate legitimate cases of child abuse and neglect. Steps must be taken to address this complex problem; however, any policy changes must be carefully evaluated before their implementation to determine what kind of an effect they will have on the current reporting system. Changes that would help to prevent false reporting but also potentially deter the filing of legitimate reports of child abuse and neglect, thus endangering children, must be avoided.

In addition to their survey responses, domestic violence service providers submitted recommendations on how to address the problem of false reporting of child abuse and neglect by abusers. While each of the respondents had different ideas on how best to address this problem, the vast majority of the recommendations fall into five main categories. The OPA believes each approach should be evaluated for its effectiveness in addressing the problem of false reporting and its effect on the current child welfare reporting system.

1. Inform the public that falsely reporting child abuse and neglect is a crime. Ideas include:
 - Develop a public information campaign similar to other child welfare campaigns;
 - Inform all those who call SCR to file a report that knowingly filing a false report is a crime;
 - Include a statement about false reporting in all ACS materials about reporting child abuse or neglect.
2. Conduct better screening of anonymous reports of abuse and neglect through SCR. Ideas include:
 - Change existing reporting requirements to require confidential identifying information instead of allowing anonymous reporting;
 - Flag cases in which there are both domestic violence issues in the household and recent multiple reports of abuse and neglect so ACS is aware of the possibility of false reporting.

3. Create a mechanism by which individuals who believe they are the targets of malicious false reports can complain:
 - Create a reverse reporting system in which survivors can file a report with SCR and/or ACS about false reports.
4. More aggressively prosecute those who knowingly file false reports:
 - Improve coordination between ACS, SCR, and the District Attorneys to more aggressively prosecute those who knowingly file false reports.
5. Increase penalties for knowingly filing false reports:
 - Increase penalties for those who knowingly file false reports, especially perpetrators of domestic violence, by changing the classification of the offense from a misdemeanor to a felony with higher fines and a longer period of incarceration.

In addition to considering the feasibility of the above recommendations, the OPA recommends that ACS, in collaboration with OCFS and New York City's District Attorneys, develop and implement policy changes to effectively deter, identify, and prosecute individuals who knowingly file false reports.

APPENDIX 1 – DV Advocate Statement



Battered Women's Resource Center
Voices of Women Organizing Project
328 Flatbush Avenue, Suite 342, Brooklyn, NY 11238
phone: 212 696-1481 fax: 212 696-1482
www.vowbwrc.org vowbwrc@aol.com

Voices of Women Organizing Project Campaign to discourage false and malicious child abuse/neglect reports

The Voices of Women Organizing Project, known as VOW, trains and supports survivors of domestic violence so that they can organize to improve the many systems battered women and their children turn to for safety and justice. Since 2000, VOW members – a diverse group of survivors of domestic violence from all 5 boroughs of NYC - have been documenting problems with the child welfare system, family courts, shelter/housing system and other services, developing recommendations for improving these systems, testifying at hearings, meeting with elected officials and policy makers and holding press conferences, rallies and other direct actions as needed. VOW believes that policies around domestic violence must be shaped by those most affected: survivors.

It is common practice for perpetrators of domestic violence to threaten their victims with the loss of their children if they dare to leave them. The very sad reality is that many abusers use the child welfare system to make good on these threats. Batterers can call the State Central Register (SCR) child abuse hotline anonymously and with no consequences for making false and malicious statements. A call will trigger an investigation that can re-traumatize a mother and children just as they are trying to rebuild their lives after abuse. As one VOW member put it: "This is how the batterer keeps the family from moving on."

Moreover, batterers can orchestrate multiple calls to the hotline – from their friends, relatives, etc., as well as themselves – causing untold suffering to their ex-partner and children. In one case, the hotline received over 20 malicious calls on the mother. Each time an ACS worker had to investigate, pulling the child out of class, examining her physically and writing a report. This was extremely upsetting to the child and mother and demonstrated to the family that the batterer could control and punish them with impunity. The ACS worker knew the calls were malicious, but felt powerless to do anything about it. Having to make these repeat visits was demoralizing to the worker and a terrible misuse of her time – time that could have been used investigating serious cases of child abuse.

VOW member and organizer Tanya McLeod describes her own experience:

"I was a victim of domestic violence and tried to manage the abuse while protecting my three young sons. Each time I tried to escape, I was punished and my life was threatened. I knew first-hand what my abuser was capable of when he killed our pet dog."

I obtained an order of protection and he was arrested. This only angered him and once he was released, he made me pay for calling the police. The physical abuse escalated and I was placed in hiding by the District Attorney in order to safely prosecute my ex-husband. As a result, he was given jail time.

While at Riker's Island, my ex-husband called the State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) and made a false and malicious report against me. He stated that I hired him to kill my children. Policemen banged furiously at my door interrupting a wonderful Saturday afternoon with my three young sons. I was investigated over the course of four months. My home felt invaded and my children were interrogated. I felt completely re-victimized. I worked with the District Attorney's office to hold my ex-husband accountable for filing a false report but they said they couldn't prosecute due to the anonymity of the report, even though they had records from prison showing he made a call to the SCR.

This false and malicious report brought me and my children a lot of pain and anguish. As a survivor of domestic violence it is my goal to turn my pain into power. Making false reports is a crime and I want to see that perpetrators are prosecuted and that justice prevails."

VOW has met with ACS Commissioner John Mattingly and his staff to discuss this issue and develop strategies to discourage these reports. We have also begun to speak to staff of the District Attorney's office in each borough to encourage them to prosecute cases of malicious reports.

Over the next year, we will document case examples of malicious reports by batterers, and we hope to work with the Public Advocate's office and domestic violence advocates. We plan on meeting with the staff of the SCR, NYS Office for Children and Family Services and the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Specifically VOW is calling for:

I ACS (NYC Administration for Children's Services):

- Track cases of suspected malicious reports; flag cases with numerous calls that are unfounded and where domestic violence is a factor, in order to investigate if they are malicious;
- Train staff to understand that batterers use this as a tactic;
- Update the protocol around suspected malicious reports & make sure line staff and supervisors are familiar with it;
- Include a statement on all written materials, website, public service announcements, etc. that "knowingly making a false or malicious report is a crime";
- When malicious reporting is suspected have investigators (like the newly hired law enforcement officers) follow up to discourage further false reports.

II NYS Office of Children & Family Services:

- Record calls and keep on file for at least 3 months;
- Explore having calls be confidential but not anonymous (as done in other states);

- Train SCR hotline staff to understand the dynamics of domestic violence and be aware of this tactic by batterers;
- Include a statement on all written materials, website, public service announcements, etc. that “knowingly making a false or malicious report is a crime”.

III Domestic violence advocates and attorneys:

- Be on the look out for these cases. When you find them call the ACS field office supervisor, document the case for the District Attorney and let VOW know;
- Educate victims to keep a diary and to let their attorney know if they suspect malicious reports are made against them.

IV Judges:

- When granting an Order of Protection, warn abusers that they will be prosecuted for making false reports.

Case Example: R. P.

R. P. is the mother of 6 children, five with her abusive ex-husband. Married for 18 years, she resided in New Jersey and later fled with her children ages 10 – 18 to New York to escape the abuse. She states that her ex-husband sexually abused her oldest son who is now 24 and her daughter. He filed for divorce in September, 2006 without her knowledge. She lived in a shelter located in the Bronx and had an order of protection. While living in a shelter she was visited by an ACS worker who informed her of allegations of child abuse. She believes her ex-husband made an anonymous call to the State Central Register (SCR) because he threatened that if she didn't come back home with the kids he would make her life a “living hell”. The false and malicious allegations stated that she was delusional, on medication, and not taking care of the children. The ACS worker told her that she should give the children to the father who has two jobs and is better suited to raise them. Without a warrant or court order, her children were removed from school and delivered to the father. She's fighting for visitation rights and to get her children back. She hasn't seen her children since January.

Case Example: D. R.

D. R. had two children with her boyfriend and after the birth of her second child he began to verbally and physically abuse her. She resided in his house and on several occasions he called the police to try to get her out of the house. He attacked her with a knife, choked and punched her then lied to the police and said he was being battered. She fled with the children and lived in peace for 4 years until she agreed to giving him visitation with the children. Once visits began, he asked her to come back home with the children and she refused. While the children were visiting him, he called in a false and malicious report to the SCR and said that D. R. had given her 7 year old daughter a vaginal douche and was fondling her son who was 6. ACS removed the children and Family Court gave custody to the father even after the report was unfounded. She is still fighting to get her children back.

APPENDIX II – Letter from the Administration of Children’s Services



New York City Children's Services
150 William Street, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10038

John B. Mattingly
Commissioner

March 13, 2008

The Honorable Betsy Gotbaum
The Public Advocate for the City of New York
1 Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Public Advocate Gotbaum:

I am writing to respond to your letter requesting our input for your upcoming journal, *"Calling in Abuse: How Domestic Violence Perpetrators are Using the Child Welfare System to Continue Their Abuse."* The New York City Administration for Children's Services (Children's Services) takes suspected incidents of false child abuse reporting very seriously and diligently investigates such allegations. New York State Social Services Law 422 authorizes Children's Services to provide the police or district attorney's office with information from sealed State Central Register (SCR) reports where such a report is necessary to investigate and/or prosecute a suspected case of falsely reporting child abuse and maltreatment.

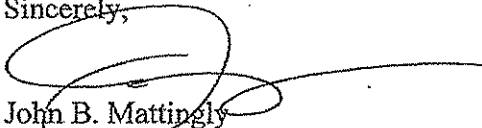
Children's Services has developed a protocol for handling cases of suspected false reporting to the SCR. When a staff member suspects that a false SCR report has knowingly been made the staff relays such information to his or her supervisor and the Child Protective Field Office District Attorney Liaison. The suspicion may be based on prior reports, other information resulting from the abuse or neglect investigation or from an actual admission of false reporting from the source. Children's Services then conducts an internal review to determine if the SCR report constitutes a false report within the meaning of section 240.50 of the penal law. If the case meets the relevant criteria it is then formally referred to the appropriate District Attorney's office for investigation and prosecution.

Under current practice, the SCR has access to the hotline's phone records for 90 days. When Children's Services receives a report we have 60 days to conduct our investigation of the report, and in situations where we suspect that the report is false Children Services must complete its investigation of the reported child abuse or neglect allegations before contacting the District Attorney's office about a suspected false report. Our investigation time, in essence, runs concurrently with the 90-day period in which the SCR phone records can be accessed. This therefore seriously limits the timeframe within which the records can be accessed by the District Attorney's office for its investigation and possible prosecution.

Children's Services believes that legislation should be enacted to authorize the SCR to maintain records of unfounded abuse reports for a longer time. In this regard, Children's Services supports Assembly Bill 4137A which requires the recording of all calls made to the SCR and also requires such recordings to be maintained for five years. Given the seriousness of a report of abuse and maltreatment of a child, it is important to record SCR calls and maintain such calls for a longer period so that there will be an audio as well as written report of the allegation. The existence of the record can provide a source of comparison for suspicious future calls and better assist the District Attorney's office in prosecuting false report cases whenever necessary. Recording calls may not in itself completely weed out false reports but would provide prior recordings against which new but "suspicious" calls may be crossed checked in order to determine the validity of a call and also for use in criminal prosecutions for false reporting. Children's Services remains committed to ensuring that allegations of child abuse are thoroughly investigated.

If you have any further questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Elysia Carnevale, Children's Services' Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at 212/442-4132. Thank you for your continued commitment to New York City's children and families.

Sincerely,



John B. Mattingly
Commissioner

APPENDIX III – Domestic Violence Provider Survey

**Public Advocate for the City of New York:
Domestic Violence Service Provider Survey**

Name (optional): _____
Name of your organization: _____
Type of services provided by your organization: (social services, shelter,
legal services) -

Position: (social worker, attorney, caseworker)

E-mail (optional) _____
Phone (optional) _____

1. Do you have professional contact with survivors of domestic violence?

Yes No

(If no, please discontinue the survey)

2. If so, in what capacity?
a. legal services b. shelter c. social work d. medical
e. other _____

3. How long have you been working with survivors of domestic violence?

_____ years (fill in the blank - i.e. 4.5 years)

4. Approximately how many survivors of domestic violence did you (as an employee) work with in the past year?

_____ (fill in the blank)

5. In your career as a domestic violence services professional, have you ever had a case in which you believed a batterer filed a false child abuse and neglect report against a survivor?

Yes No

6. If you answered yes to Question 5, how many of your cases in the past year involved occurrences of what you believed to be false reporting by a batterer?

_____ (fill in the blank)

7. In your career as a domestic violence services professional, have you ever had a case in which you believed a batterer filed multiple false reports of abuse and neglect against a survivor?

Yes No

8. Based on your experience as a domestic violence services professional, would you say over time the frequency of false reporting of child abuse and neglect by batterers has:

a. decreased dramatically b. decreased somewhat c. remained the same d. increased somewhat e. increased dramatically

9. Have you ever had a domestic violence case in which a batterer was prosecuted for filing false reports of child abuse and neglect against a survivor?

Yes No

10. Based on your experience as a domestic violence services professional, how severe a problem is the false reporting of child abuse and neglect by batterers against survivors:

(On a scale from 1 - 10, 1 = not a problem, 10 = extremely severe problem)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. As a domestic violence service professional, do you have recommendations on how to address the problem of batterers falsely reporting cases of child abuse and neglect against survivors?
