

Victim-Blaming Across Cultures

Our world is a world immersed in violence; and it is often glorified in television shows, movies, music, and video games. Violence occurs in communities, families, and relationships. Violence is inescapable and we have become desensitized to its invasive and destructive nature. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence defines domestic violence as “the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another” (NCADV, 2014, pg. 1).

Domestic violence does not discriminate. Domestic violence can also take many forms including: physical, sexual, psychological, and/or financial (NCADV, 2014). A large societal problem that perpetuates a violence-accepting culture is the action of victim-blaming. The blame can come from within the victim or the blame can come from a third party (Sheikh & McNamara, 2014).

Victim-blaming is not limited to the American Culture, however, but is a pattern that happens across all cultures. The Russian culture, as well as the American culture, perpetuate the act of victim-blaming extensively (Standpoint, 2010). Through living in the United States and visiting the Russia Federation to study domestic violence, I have examined the ways in which victim-blaming occurs in the US and Russia. This project examines the ways victim-blaming is experienced and describes the effects of victim-blaming in Russian and American cultures. Culturally relevant interventions are also presented using an international social work perspective related to US and Russian systems of care.

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