



# VICTIM BLAMING

Victim blaming is the wrongful act of placing the responsibility for a crime on an individual who has endured the violence. This includes scrutinizing and questioning those who are victims of violence about what they could have done to prevent it, or worse, invite it.

## WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE



"Why didn't they leave?"

"WHY DID THEY NOT REPORT?"

"Why did they return?"



"Why didn't they fight back?"

"WHY DID THEY LOVE THEM?"

"What were they wearing?"

## THE HARMFUL EFFECTS

- ✓ Leaves survivors in dangerous situations where they become further silenced and isolated
- ✓ Survivors might not reach out for help
- ✓ Survivors feel shame because of the devastating effect of internalizing stigma and blame
- ✓ Contributes to the underreporting of violent crimes
- ✓ Shifts accountability away from the perpetrator
- ✓ Intensifies trauma impacts and symptoms for survivors
- ✓ Prevents society from recognizing **OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY** to respond to violence
- ✓ Survivors experience secondary wounding impacts

## BE INFORMED!

There can be many reasons why an individual might stay with a violent partner—the safety of themselves and their family, economic support, or the complicated reality of **TRAUMA**. Regardless of why, there is no reason why a survivor should ever be blamed for the violence they have endured.

## HOW TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS



Start by believing



Normalize trauma symptoms



Create safe space



Listen



Repeat: "it is not your fault"



Be trauma-informed



Advocate for survivors



Educate yourself about **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**



**AVALON**  
SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE