

6-1-81

Barbara Roberts

Dear Mr. Sheridan,

I read your item about battered wives in the ASN. I am an EMT and have been working privately with battered wives for two years. There are so few services available in my area (Southwest Missouri) that my name is pretty much common knowledge among the women abused by their husbands or boyfriends. They get in touch with me; I examine them and guide them to agencies.

There is a battered wives' assistance program here which I worked with for 6 months. It is run by one woman who refuses any help and is totally untrained in counseling. (She does it as a "power trip" but no one else will take the job who has money to do it.) I talked her into letting me help her, mainly for documentation and emergency care, but she resented my interference in her way of working. The abused women in this area, by the way, have refused to go to her!

The attitude of the local doctors and ED are that battered wives deserve what they get. When I wrote to other abused spouse programs throughout the United States to information on nursing care and emergency care in shelters, the replies indicated that it was unheard of for EMT's and nurses to work with battered wives, unless they needed hospitalization.

I am frustrated! I am a CAN and an EMT who sees a definite need for nursing care for abused wives and their children, but cannot get anyone to listen. This fall I am going back to college for my bachelor's degree in social work, and plan to go on for my MSW while keeping my EMT up to date. Maybe then I will be considered qualified to work with these poor women.

Good luck to you. It seems you may have a bit of a rough time ahead. I would be interested in your work and your findings.

Sincerely,

Barbara Roberts