



Psychoanalyst victim blames - It Takes Two To Gaslight

Last month Red magazine carried an article. "Is there a sociopath in your life". Written by Louise Chunn who used to be the editor of Psychologies it is quite a good article and i did tweet them to tell them so.

However there was one paragraph within which is a quote from a psychoanalyst called Dr Robin Stern.

This is what Dr Stern says about gaslighting.

Stern believes that such situations take two to gaslight. "One person who needs to be in control to maintain a sense of self, and you, the other person, who needs the relationship to maintain YOUR sense of self and is WILLING to acquiesce. You find yourself second guessing your own reality, confused and uncertain of what you think, because you have ALLOWED another to define your reality and tell you what you think and who you are"

I find this attitude from this profession extremely worrying and its not the first time ive seen it. Ive been on discussion threads on other sites where abuse victims have discussed victim blaming that they have experienced from counsellors and there is at least one other post on this very site (EVB) from another contributor who has experienced this first hand.

It demonstrates how ingrained victim blaming in our society really is. This is a problem that badly needs addressing as soon as possible. Blaming someone and making them responsible for what happened to them is not only heartless it is dangerous. You wouldnt blame someone for being mugged on the street so why blame someone who has experienced an abusive relationship.

Something else Dr Stern has not taken into account is the societal and cultural pressure that there is on couples to stay together no matter what.

Ive seen abuse victims pressured by their OWN families into staying with the abuser. Would Dr Stern blame the victim for that too instead of the family members who have their own agenda?!

Anyone who is considering counselling who has read this article could now be put off from going. But perhaps after some of the experiences ive read that might not be a bad thing.

Im sure there are some very good counsellors out there. I know there is. I saw a very good one in 2004 and another good one in 2007.

But as a whole there really needs to be better training so that it is recognized that the fault is with the abuser, never the victim.