

I. Program Overview

A. Standards and Principles

1. Program will work to meet or exceed the voluntary Batterers Intervention Program Standards of the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. If there are any of these standards that the program is not currently meeting (especially in its early development), potential referral sources will be made aware of such deficiencies and the plan to correct them.
2. Program will be run largely according to the Duluth Model principles, which include: Education on how values and beliefs (including sexism) facilitate and lead to violence; need for accountability of offender; Commitment to coordinated community response; and accountability of program to victim and victim service providers.

B. Program Goals¹

1. Contribute to changes in community and culture that lead to an end of domestic violence.
2. Continuing collaboration with the justice system, human service providers, battered women's programs and others who are seeking to keep victims safe and end domestic violence.
3. Ensure safety for the partners of group participants in the program.
4. Teach offenders alternatives to coercive, controlling, and violent behavior in intimate relationships--and to inspire them to want to use those alternatives.

C. Program Philosophy

1. Violence is intentional.
2. Battering is a system of abusive behaviors that are used to control.
3. Many cultures have supported male dominance in families.
4. Individuals can change.
5. Except in cases of self-defense, there are always alternatives to violence.
6. All people are capable of abusive behaviors.²

¹ This & following sections adapted from Paymar, M., *Violent No More: Helping Men End Domestic Violence* (2000)

² These last three are from MSADSV, *Standards and Guidelines for Batterer Intervention Programs*, June 2006, p. 3.

D. Program Content³

1. Participants will be taught that they need to take FULL responsibility for their behavior. **They will learn about the importance of accepting responsibility for abusive/violent actions and behaviors;** as well as the **Long- and short-term effects of violence on partners and children.**
2. Participants will learn about **Attitudes, myths and excuses for abuse from the perspective that abuse is the sole responsibility and choice of the person who commits that abuse.** They will learn about **what a person gains from being abusive;** as well as **Cultural and social influences that contribute to abusive behavior—this will include methods that stress culture is not an excuse or justification for abuse.**
3. Facilitators will respectfully challenge sexist beliefs and attitudes. Facilitators will confront minimization, denial, and blame.
4. **Participants will learn about the Various forms of abuse and Tactics of power and control.**
5. Facilitators will teach men to develop relationships with women based on equality. **Identification of relationship skills shall include respect, trust, support, honesty and accountability, economic partnership, negotiation and fairness, and responsible parenting. Participants also learn Cooperative and non-abusive forms of communication.**
6. The group process will be compassionate but not colluding. Groups will support men to change controlling and violent behavior.

E. Involvement with Battered Women and Shelters

1. Input of victim advocates, executive directors and others from women's shelters and other programs will be sought in the development and continuing quality improvement process of this program.
2. Communication procedures on partner safety will be in place with the local shelter, law enforcement and other relevant agencies.
3. When safe—and in consultation with parole officers, prosecutors and other relevant entities—partners will be notified and offered detailed information about the offender program.
4. Program will not elicit information from partners of participants until they have had an opportunity to explore safety planning and contact with a shelter.

³ Those elements in bold are quoted directly from the MCADSV Standards for key curriculum elements.

F. Contract with Offenders

1. Participants must follow all conditions of probation and orders from the court. Any acts of violence and violations of court orders, probation and parole directives, etc. (or reason to suspect potential violations) will be reported to the appropriate parties.
2. Participants must sign release-of-information forms, program contract agreement, and other forms depending on circumstances.
3. Participants will pay all required fees.
4. Participants must attend all required sessions and be on time.
5. Participants must take part in group discussions and must complete all homework assignments.
6. Participants will come to group free of the influence of alcohol and drugs, will not use racist or sexist language, and otherwise will treat instructor and group with respect.

G. Consequences for Breach of Contract

1. Noncompliance with terms of the contract will result in suspension, and the participant will be reported to the court, PO, and/or other applicable referring parties. Further compliance can result in dismissal from the program. After a program violation, an offender can only be re-admitted if there is a legal or program consequence (for example, jail time, additional groups, community service or other sanctions).
2. Voluntarily involved participants will be treated no differently than mandated participants.
3. Program staff will report in writing, but also be available to testify regarding, violations of the program contract.

H. Assessment of Danger

1. All past and present threats will be explored by program staff. Threats of homicide or suicide will be thoroughly examined. Program staff will discuss red-flag issues with advocates, law enforcement personnel, PO's, etc.
2. The victim will be warned (if possible to contact her) if the offender appears to be obsessed with or has stalked his partner. The victim will be warned if the offender appears to be reacting to a protection order or divorce in a dangerous way. The victim, as well as appropriate authorities, will be informed if the offender makes threats which could in any way involve the children.

I. Program Staff

1. Facilitators and other staff, male or female, including volunteers, will be violence free in their own lives. Any past offenders must be violence free for a minimum of two years. All facilitators and staff will go through thorough background checks.
2. Facilitators, and other staff, will receive continuing education in domestic violence, as well as batterer's intervention programming, and will shadow and co-facilitate with an experienced facilitator before ever facilitating a class themselves.
3. As much as possible, the groups will be co-facilitated by a male and a female facilitator.
4. Facilitators and other program staff will be open to feedback from program monitors, and others.

J. Monitoring and Evaluation of this Programming

1. Input from staff of battered women's shelters will be sought in designing and upgrading evaluation tools.
2. Before asking for input from a partner or victim, program staff will first work with her to assess safety, and emphasize safety planning with her.
3. Evaluation will focus on safety to battered women, accountability of offenders for their actions, and changes that the offender is making (in areas including lethality, truthfulness, control, stress management, etc.)
4. All practices and policies will be periodically evaluated.
5. Evaluation tools to be used will include: Pre- and post-tests given as part of the assessment process and the process to evaluate whether the person should be allowed to complete the program; and Monitoring visits by staff from other agencies (after screenings –as appropriate- and signing of confidentiality statements) with a stake in the quality of the program, including staff of battered women shelters, parole officers, etc.

K. Accountability to Community

1. Program will work in concert with battered women's programs to reform the practices of the justice system, law enforcement, and other interveners.
2. Policies and procedures will be made available to be reviewed by communities of color, neighborhood associations, gay and lesbian groups, and other potential stakeholders. Program staff will speak out and work with organizations working to reduce violence, bias, and racism.

II. Referrals

A. Appropriate Referrals

1. Participants can be those who are mandated to participate in a batterers' intervention program, those who are voluntary referrals from other agencies, and those who are self-referred.
2. Suitability Checklist: It is recommended that those considering referral to this program consult the following checklist to assess the potential suitability for this program⁴.
 - a) *Does this client have a history of lethal violence or of causing severe injuries to self or others?*
 - b) *Does this client evidence enough control over behavior to benefit from a once-a-week group?*
 - c) *Does this person have a psychoactive substance abuse problem?*
 - d) *Does this person have a psychiatric problem placing him/her in need of medication or other treatment interventions? Is this client in a state of severe psychosocial crisis?*
 - e) *Does this client have any learning, physical or developmental disabilities that may interfere with the educational component of the program?⁵*
 - f) *Does this client have a history of treatment failures?*
 - g) *Does this client have a sexual orientation, preferred language for communication, or gender that is different from the other clients in this program?⁶*
 - h) *Does this client have transportation issues?*
 - i) *Does this person have the kind of work schedule that makes attending weekly sessions difficult?*

⁴ **Domestic Violence: Court-Mandated Perpetrator Assessment and Treatment Handbook**, © 2002 by Daniel Sonkin, Ph.D.)

⁵ **Note:** As requested by referral sources, and as deemed feasible, this program will develop specialized programming for these populations and/or work with other stakeholders to help get such programming developed. This program will also attempt to stay informed of specialized programming already in place and will make proper referrals.

⁶ **See Note above.**

III. Intake and Assessment

A. Overview of process.

1. Program staff will meet with all potential participants to do an assessment, intake and orientation for the program, generally within a week of after the individual has contacted the program. Program staff will inform the referring party of any delays in the process.
2. The program staff doing this process will do a bio/psycho/social assessment, as well as a specialized domestic violence assessment to determine not only lethality, but baselines in other areas, including: truthfulness, stress, controlling nature, and substance abuse.
3. Forms which will be reviewed with the potential participant, and which he will need to sign, include:
 - a) *Program Contract—which includes an Agreement to be Nonviolent, and an agreement to Honor Group Confidentiality*
 - b) *Release of Information to PO*
 - c) *Release of Information to Partner*
4. An orientation packet will be given and basic components reviewed, which will include:
 - a) *Handout on Time-Outs.*
 - b) *Handout on Types of Abuse. Power & Control Wheel and Equality Wheel*
 - c) *Handout on Emotional Safety Journal.*
 - d) *Copies of Forms signed, including the Program Contract, will also be provided.*
 - e) *Initial assignment to bring to first group answering a checklist about violence, etc. as well as what could have been done differently—will use Power & Control and Equality Wheel*

B. Participants will be specifically informed of:

1. Goals and Expectations for completion.
2. Confidentiality expectations and exceptions—including that if there is a reason to believe someone is in danger, the appropriate individuals or authorities will be contacted.
3. Monitoring. Program participants will be informed that the program will be subject to monitoring, including visits from representatives of referring agencies, as well as visitors from local domestic violence victim service programs.

IV. Partner/Survivor contact

A. Contact will only be made if it is determined that it can be done so safely.

B. If contact can be made safely, it will be done only for the following reasons:

1. To inform the survivor/current partner that the batterer's attendance or completion of the program does not guarantee that the batterer will not be violent or abusive;
2. To inform the survivor/current partner that she is not responsible in any way for the batterer's success or failure in the program as responsibility for change lies solely with the batterer;
3. To inform the survivor/current partner of the importance of continually assessing the options for safety, whether remaining in or leaving the relationship, and resources for assistance in developing a safety plan;
4. To provide information about local domestic violence advocacy agencies, survivor service providers and information on Orders of Protection;
5. To notify the survivor/current partner of the batterer's acceptance or non-acceptance in the program;
6. To notify the survivor/current partner of the batterer's noncompliance with program guidelines or requirements;
7. To inform the survivor/current partner of the batterer's scheduled program start date; and
8. To report when the batterer presents a danger to himself or others.⁷

C. The following are limitations regarding survivor/current partner contact:

1. No attempt should be made to encourage, persuade or coerce the survivor/current partner into disclosing information or having contact with the provider;
2. No attempt will be made to suggest that information or contact by the survivor/current partner will positively affect the batterer's work with the provider;
3. No attempt should be made to encourage, persuade or coerce the survivor/current partner into couples counseling;
4. Under no circumstances should the provider share information about or from the survivor/current partner with the batterer; and
5. Survivor/current partner contact will not be used as a method of evaluation to measure the program's success, or the participant's completion of the program.

⁷ MSADSV, Standards and Guidelines for Batterer Intervention Programs, June 2006.

V. Program Structure

A. Length

1. Minimum of 6 months or 12 months, as agreed upon with referral source and depending on results of assessment. Completion will also depend on the satisfaction of other factors—See Section on Program Completion.

B. Fees

1. Participants will be required to pay the class fee at the beginning of the session (or make arrangements to prepay). Clients will generally be expected to prepay for other services (assessment, re-evaluation interview, etc.).
2. Fees can be paid in cash, cashier's check, or personal check (no credit cards). If a personal check is returned for insufficient funds, the participant will be charged bank fees, plus an additional \$30, and may be terminated from the program.

C. Curriculum

1. Until further notice, the basic curriculum will be the Wexler STOP VIOLENCE curriculum (<http://www.davidbwexlerphd.com/>), supplemented by materials and activities from Duluth Domestic Intervention Program (<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/>) and EMERGE (<http://www.emergedv.com/>).

D. Program Rules

1. Program rules are contained in the Participant Contract. Participants and referrals sources will be made aware of revisions in program rules in writing prior to their being enforced.

VI. Early Program Termination

A. Grounds for early dismissal from the program will include:

1. Client continues to commit violence or makes a threat of violence towards partner or others, including group members and program staff;
2. Client continues to express lack of remorse and responsibility for re-offenses and/or original offense, after a month or more in the program;
3. Poor attendance and/or repeated lateness;
4. Client refuses to complete required homework;
5. Client does not participate in group sessions.
6. Abusive, threatening or disruptive behavior at group meetings.
7. Failure to follow through on other referred services;
8. Harassment or retaliation against his partner with respect to partner contact.
9. Using the program against the partner
10. Nonpayment of fees or failure to follow-through with payment contract;
11. Violation of confidentiality;
12. Client brings weapon into agency or group.
13. Unsuitable for treatment program because Client needing inpatient or primary alcohol or drug treatment, needs inpatient psychiatric Other situational factors (work schedule, learning disabilities, etc.) prevent client from participating in program.

B. Notification.

1. Client will be informed of possibility of suspension, as well as actual suspension from program.
2. Referral source will be immediately notified of possibility of suspension, actual suspension, as well as termination from program.

VII. Successful Program Completion

A. At a minimum, the participant will

1. Pay all fees in full;
2. Fulfill all program guidelines;
3. Take responsibility for personal abusive behaviors without blaming others;
4. Demonstrate to staff an understanding of alternatives to abusive behavior;
5. Demonstrate to staff the use of respectful language regarding survivor/current partner and an understanding of benefits of equal relationships; and
6. Have no known recent abusive and/or violent behavior.⁸

B. Consultation

1. Determination of successful completion will be made upon consultation with referral source and others who might be able to give input on progress.

C. Progress Assessment Test

2. Participants will also have to do at least one Progress Assessment Test. The fee for this will vary depending on whether an interview is also deemed necessary. Generally, in order to complete the program, there will be at least one “re-evaluation” or exit interview, which would include the progress assessment test. It is possible that individuals may have to take the test more than once in order to successfully complete, generally if it is determined from the first test that they need to stay in the program longer.

⁸ MSADSV, Standards and Guidelines for Batterer Intervention Programs, June 2006.

VIII. Reporting

A. Reports will be available to referral sources

1. Weekly reports on attendance, whether homework was done, whether participated, etc. These are emailed to referrals sources which request to be notified at least weekly.
2. Monthly reports to include the above, as well as more detail about progress, will be made to all referral sources (by email, fax, or by mail as requested by referral source).
3. Critical incident/issues.
4. Notification of suspension from program.
5. Recommendation for completion of program.
6. Notification of completion of program.

B. Information in reports will include:

1. Date man enrolled
2. How many times he has attended
3. How many times absent
4. Characterization of level of participation in group
5. Receptiveness to feedback and willingness to follow the rules
6. Concerns about participation, substance abuse, or ongoing control issues, based on what he has said.
7. Information based on partner information will not be shared until express permission from the partner, although the partner will be recommended to talk to the parole officer. However, if there is serious concern for the safety of the victim or others, this will be reported.