

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

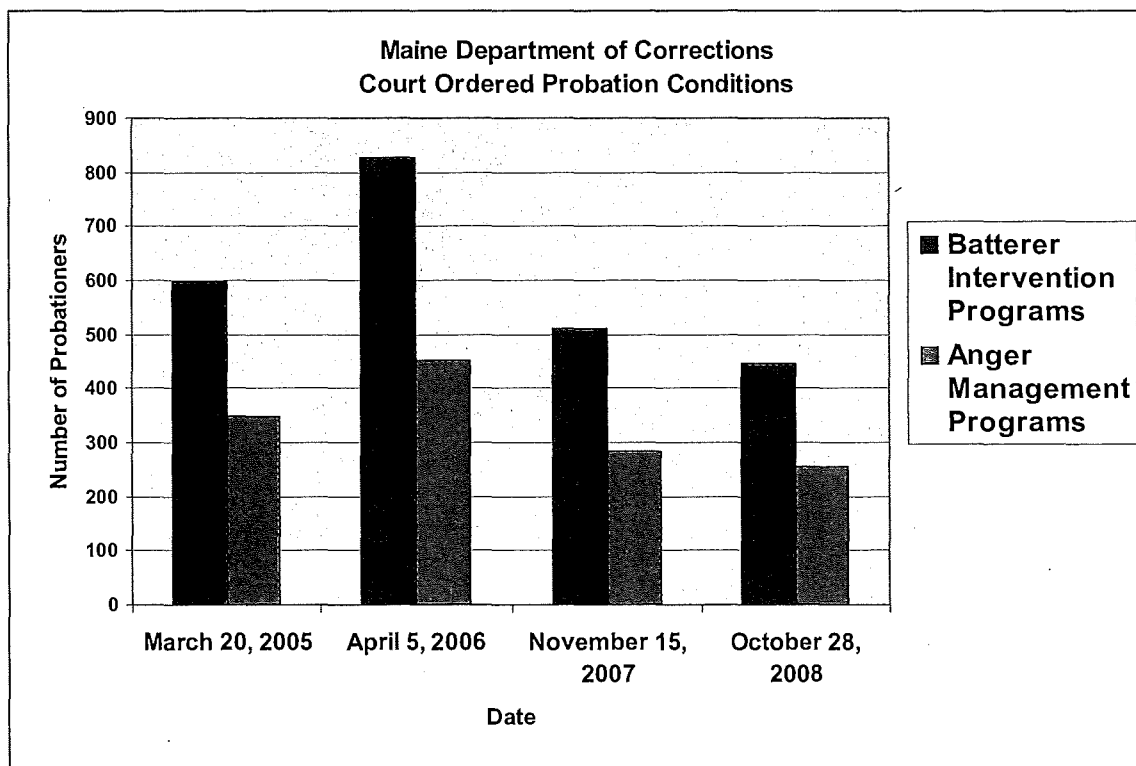
BATTERER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS (BIP)

A Report to the 124th Legislature

As a result of recommendations made by the Legislative Commission to Study Domestic Violence to the 120th Session of the Maine State Legislature, the Department of Corrections Office of Victim Services is required to report annually to the legislature on the performance of Batterer Intervention Programs in Maine.

Currently, there are twelve certified Batterers Intervention Programs (BIP), providing services to men who have committed domestic violence offenses (Attachment C). There are also pending applications for programs in Washington and Sagadahoc counties.

Since September of 2004 the Department of Corrections has maintained statistics comparing the number of offenders serving a term of probation with a condition of anger management to the number of probationers with the condition of attendance at a certified batterer intervention program. The trends are charted below.



The difference between anger management programs and batterer intervention programs is demonstrated in a side by side comparison developed by the Cumberland County Violence Intervention Partnership (Attachment A). Accountability is stated as a priority in Maine and in 81% of the standards nationwide. A report on the research of BIP effectiveness prepared by Robert Moyer PhD, a retired professor from Bates College concluded that there are two compelling reasons for requiring offenders to complete a Batterer Intervention Program; reduced reoffending and improved risk management (Attachment B).

Many questions have been raised about the effectiveness of batterer intervention programs. The most recent research compares the effectiveness of BIPs to sex offender and substance abuse treatment. Over 40 published program evaluations have attempted to address the effectiveness of “batterer programs” in preventing reassaults. Summaries and meta-analysis of these evaluations suggest little or no “program effect.” Methodological shortcomings, however, compromise most of these quasiexperimental evaluations. Three recent experimental studies appear to confirm little or no effect, but implementation problems, intention-to-treat design, and sample attrition limit these results. A longitudinal 4-year follow-up evaluation in four cities poses additional considerations and evidence of at least a moderate program effect. There is a clear de-escalation of reassault and other abuse; the vast majority of men do reach sustained nonviolence, and about 20% continuously re assault. The prevailing cognitive-behavioral approach appears appropriate for most of the men, but the following enhancements are warranted: swift and certain court response for violations, intensive programming for high-risk men, and ongoing monitoring of risk. Program effectiveness depends substantially on the Intervention system of which the program is a part.¹

In 2006, The Department of Corrections conducted a Correctional Program Assessment Inventory on the three largest programs certified in Maine, to determine program effectiveness. The report of the assessment informed the work of the program subcommittee in revising the standards.

Key recommendations from CPAI process-Progress to Date

1. Require that BIPs develop and explicitly document criteria for admission into the program. This would include exclusionary criteria which would render a client ineligible for service (e.g. limited English skills, literacy, etc.).
2. Require programs to develop a code of ethics to guide their service delivery. Request that the Maine Association of Batterer Intervention Programs develop a unified code of ethics across BIPs in Maine. They could examine ethical

¹ Evaluating batterer counseling programs: A difficult task showing some effects and implications
Edward W. Gondolf*Mid-Atlantic Addiction Training Institute (MAATI), Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP),Indiana, PA 15705, USAReceived 19 February 2003; received in revised form 6 June 2003; accepted 19 June 2003

codes in social work, education, human services and national models for guidance. Attachment D

3. Require BIPs to obtain a copy of a validated, actuarial risk assessment (ODARA, LSI-R, etc.) at referral/intake to (1) inform the brokerage that they are required to do by state standards & CPAI and (2) ensure that educational groups do not mix low and high risk offenders in the same group. Research warns against integrating low risk offenders and higher risk offenders in programs, as iatrogenic effects could occur, namely those of increasing the risk and recidivism of low risk offenders. While this may be unrealistic to ask BIPs to do, given existing resources, there may be options across the system at large (e.g. Probation, etc.) to increase the level of case management. Ontario Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment training completed in October, included many BIP directors/facilitators as well as probation officers.
4. Require BIPs to assess for and document responsivity. If the focus of BIPs is to remain primarily an educational one, the standards could require them to add a simple, cost effective learning styles assessment early on in the curriculum, in order to give teachers more tools to work with their participants for a better understanding of how they take in, retain, and retrieve information.
5. Require that all educational approaches used by BIPs include opportunities for behavioral rehearsal, practice and role play in every session, require that all staff receive training on both the theory and direct skills related to service delivery. Standards should delineate training topics (e.g. adult education methods, social learning theory, motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral techniques, etc.). DOC has offered BIP staff training in motivational interviewing and cognitive/behavioral teaching techniques. DOC has also supported MABIPS annual training conferences.
6. Require that programs evaluate the impact (e.g. pre and post tests, etc.) of the knowledge, skills and awareness that they are seeking to develop through their respective curricula. Work with counterparts from Adult Community Corrections to gather recidivism data on program participants. Given the state of the research on BIPs, MDOC should reach out to a consultant for BIP evaluation. BIPs should be invited to participate in the design. Lack of financial resources, unsuccessful applications to obtain grant funding for evaluation.

The Maine Association of Batterer Intervention Programs held its third annual conference on November 7, 2008. The focus was assessing and monitoring batterers. Lundy Bancroft, a nationally recognized presenter was the featured speaker. According to Mr. Bancroft "It is becoming increasingly important for battered women's programs and coalitions to be able to assess and monitor the quality of programs for abusive men (usually called "Batterer Intervention Programs"), in order to avoid supporting a destructive program and to be able to put pressure on courts not to refer men to it."² The Maine standards require that batterer programs be monitored on a monthly basis (each

² Assessing and Monitoring Programs for Men Who Abuse Women, Lundy Bancroft, March 2007

facilitator pair) by the domestic violence project with which they have a working relationship. One area of the state utilizes third party monitors as outlined in the standards as the domestic violence project has declined to provide monitoring. All other areas are being monitored by staff of the local domestic violence project.

A question frequently posed to the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse relates to the treatment women who use violence in their intimate relationships. Research indicates that men and women who use violence in their intimate relationships do so for very different reasons. Until recently in Maine, when a woman was arrested for domestic abuse, she was usually referred to an anger management group. Men who are arrested for domestic abuse may be referred to a Batterers Intervention Program. This remains consistent with the literature, which indicates men and women use violence in their intimate relationships for different reasons.

However, it has become advisable to develop a program for women who use force. Prosecutors and others in the criminal justice system are concerned about equal protection issues with the lack of certified programs for women convicted of domestic violence. Preliminary recommendations reflect the need for appropriate screening and assessment prior to ordering a specific program. The Family Violence Project in Kennebec and Somerset counties is working with Youth and Family Services to ensure that there is equitable programming available to women who have been convicted of domestic violence offenses. The goal is to pilot a program for women. It is anticipated that the basic structure will be the same, i.e. 48 weeks but the content will be gender specific. There is concern among some domestic violence advocates that women who are victims are being arrested and convicted and therefore are reluctant to support this initiative. There is a realization that there have been 82 women ordered to attend judicial monitoring, but there is no oversight of the programs they may or may not be attending. It is a safety issue as some of those women may actually be the victim rather than the aggressor.

Domestic violence is a significant factor in approximately half of the homicides committed in Maine. A coordinated community response is the most effective way to attempt to change this statistic. Appropriate batterer intervention programs with oversight and monitoring is an essential component of the coordinated community response, and is a requirement of the judicial monitoring project. There are not batterer intervention programs available in every county in Maine. There is neither criminal justice system nor community support for batterer programs in some counties. However, the reason for batterer intervention programs still exists in every county in Maine, it is what battered women tell us they want.

ATTACHMENT A

	ANGER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS	STATE CERTIFIED BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM
ARE PROGRAMS STATE CERTIFIED?	No	Yes. Certification is administered by Maine Department of Corrections.
WHO IS SERVED BY THE PROGRAMS?	Perpetrators of stranger or non-intimate violence.	Specifically designed to work with domestic violence offenders.
HOW LONG ARE THE PROGRAMS?	Usually 8-15 weekly sessions.	48 weeks.
ARE PROGRAMS MONITORED BY A STATE AGENCY?	No	Yes. Each program must have a working relationship with the local domestic violence project, probation and the courts.
DO PROGRAMS CONTACT VICTIMS?	No	Yes. Programs are required to contact victims in writing. They are made aware of enrollment of perpetrators and how to access services through the local DV projects.
ARE PROGRAMS LINKED WITH LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROJECTS?	No	Yes. Each program must attend regular supervision provided by the local DV project to discuss class content.
WHAT IS THE EMPHASIS OF THE INTERVENTION?	Violence is seen as a momentary outburst of anger. Perpetrators are taught techniques like "time outs", relaxation methods, and coping skills.	Physical violence is seen as one of many forms of abusive behaviors chosen by batterers to control their partners, including physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse. Men are taught that stress, a life crisis, and chemical dependency are not causes of DV, and that abuse is a choice a batterer makes to gain and maintain an imbalance of power and control within the relationship.

ARE GROUP FACILITATORS TRAINED ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?	Subject to agency discretion.	State standards require that all facilitators receive training in at least 1 of 3 nationally recognized models.
--	-------------------------------	---

Adapted by the Violence Intervention Partnership of Cumberland County from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

ATTACHMENT B

To BIP, or not to BIP?

Paper prepared at the request of Hon. Joyce A. Wheeler

By Robert Moyer, Ph.D.¹

Presented to York/Springvale (ME) DV case coordination project advisory board, June 8, 2004;
presented to Cumberland County (ME) Violence Intervention Partnership advisory board,
September 8, 2004

To BIP, or not to BIP—That is the question

	page
Research results I: True experiments	4
Critique of the true experiments	
Palmer experiment	
Davis experiment	
Dunford experiment	
Feder experiment	
Research results II: BIP completers vs. BIP dropouts	7
Completers reoffend less than dropouts do	
Can BIP attendance be improved?	
Judicial monitoring & sanctioning	
Motivational enhancement by BIP providers	
Will improving attendance reduce reoffending?	
Conclusion: Reasons to BIP	10
1. REDUCED REOFFENDING: <u>When more offenders complete batterer education programs there will probably be fewer victims of domestic violence.</u>	
2. IMPROVED RISK MANAGEMENT: <u>Monitoring BIP attendance</u>	

will improve risk management of DV offenders.

3. PROOF OF CHANGE: By completing BIPs, offenders can demonstrate their commitment to change.

References	12
Data tables	15
Endnotes	18

To BIP, or not to BIP--That is the question

The most obvious reason To BIP—To assign Domestic Violence offenders to Batterer Intervention Programs--is because the programs work. That is, because men who complete a BIP will reoffend less often than men who don't. But do the programs work? What does research tell us? Let's begin with some conflicting answers to this question:

1. The director of grants at a regional foundation recently stated:

"I've been advised not to provide any further funding to batterer programs because they don't work. I've been told that program evaluations show "no effect" over just putting a man on probation." (Cited in Gondolf, 2002, p. 28)

2. But in 2000 the author of the book Changing Violent Men concluded:

"The men who completed the abuser programs were significantly more likely to reduce these [violent] acts than men sanctioned in other ways. This strongly suggests that abuser programs are much more successful than other forms of criminal justice interventions." (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 2000, pp. 118, 123)

3. In the same year, though, the author of an experimental study of 861 Navy men in San Diego summarized his findings:

"All of the assessments made...point to the same conclusion: The batterer interventions of the cognitive-behavioral model failed to produce meaningful changes in the behavior they were designed to impact." (Dunford, 2000, p. 475)

4. But in 2002, the author of a multi-site study of more than 800 batterers reported, in the book Batterer Intervention Systems:

"We found a consistent and substantial program effect using three different analyses....Moreover, the moderate effect size was higher than in most previous batterer program evaluations, especially the recent experimental evaluations." (Gondolf, 2002, p. 144)

5. Last summer, however, a National Institute of Justice report concluded:

“The methodological limitations of virtually all these evaluations make it impossible to say how effective BIPs are.” (Jackson et al., 2003, p. 1)

6. And this year a review of all studies that include a control condition concluded:

“In general, the effect size due to group battering intervention on recidivism of domestic violence is in the ‘small’ range.” (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004, p. 1043)

So...research on BIPs shows: That BIPs are effective, that BIPs are not effective, and that it is impossible to say whether BIPs are effective or not!

Now let's examine some of this research for ourselves. First, what kind of study could tell us whether batterer education is effective?

Part I: True experiments

The gold standard for determining whether any kind of intervention works is called a randomized experiment. With this methodology a sample of people is drawn from a known population and randomly assigned to either an experimental group that gets a treatment, like BIPs, or to a control group, that doesn't get the treatment.

If the BIP group later recidivates less, we can say that exposure to the BIP caused the difference—because the random assignment should ensure that there are no other consistent differences between the groups. And we can generalize this causal inference to the larger population from which the sample was drawn—but trying to generalize beyond that sample can be problematic.

Four such randomized experiments have tried to test the effectiveness of BIPs. I have briefly summarized them in Table 1.

Reading across the columns, from left to right, Table 1 lists:

1. The author, date & location of each experiment.
2. The Experimental group: These are offenders who were (randomly) assigned to a BIP (usually along with probation)
3. The Control (no BIP) group. These are offenders who were (randomly) assigned to receive only Probation or some other non-BIP experience.
4. The Type of data examined to see if assignment to a BIP caused a difference in reoffending.
5. The last column on the right tells us whether, in each case, the data showed that the experimental group recidivated less than the control group did.

Results & critiques of the true experiments

There is a "Yes" in the first two rows of Table 1--evidence that Bips worked there, and a "No" in the remaining six rows --indicating no evidence that Bips worked. So the results of these experiments seem mixed, with the preponderance of the evidence not showing that Bips are effective.

When we take a closer look at these experiments, however, we will see that methodological problems and offender sampling limitations prevent us from drawing any meaningful conclusions--YES or NO--about BIPs effectiveness from their results.

Let's consider these experiments row by row: Due to time limitations I'm going to identify only one problem with each of these experiments. (The reader who wishes a more detailed critique is referred to the endnotes in this section.)

The Palmer experiment

Looking at the far right column entry for the Palmer experiment, we see that the BIP group did reoffend less than the control group did. The difference was statistically significant--and sizeable: In a 1-2 yr follow-up, offenders in the control group were three times as likely to reoffend as offenders who were assigned to the BIP.ⁱⁱ

Critique: Methodologically, this experiment was conducted pretty well. The major problem is the very small size of the sample—a total of only 59 offenders. It is unlikely that results from such a small sample would be representative enough to support any broad generalizations about BIPs effectiveness.

The Davis experiment

Police data for the 26 week BIP group also indicate that the education was effective in the Davis experiment. And, as in Palmer's study, this effect was statistically significant and sizeable: One year later 26% of the men in the control group had reoffended compared to only 10% in the BIP group.ⁱⁱⁱ But none of the other Brooklyn comparisons found any support for the effectiveness of a BIP.

Critique: In the Brooklyn experiment, offenders who failed to attend the BIP, as required, were rarely sanctioned for their noncompliance. (As the authors explained it, by the time a pattern of nonattendance had been noted and the information was passed along from the provider to probation to the prosecutors, the defendant was often nearing the end of his probation and the D.A.s didn't bother to pursue the case.) In contrast, however, when men in the community service (control) group didn't show up for work a warrant was issued for their arrest! Thus at least some offenders in the experimental group were essentially learning that they could violate court orders with impunity while offenders in the control group were learning just the opposite lesson. Other things being equal, then, we might expect these lessons to cause the control group to reoffend less often than the BIP group.^{iv} In any event, we obviously don't have a level playing field for comparing the BIP groups to the control group—a serious violation of the requirements of a true experiment.

The Dunford experiment

Dunford's study has fewer methodological problems than the Brooklyn experiment, and Table 1 shows that he found no evidence at all that a BIP was effective.

Critique: The problem here is that serious questions must be raised about whether we can generalize from Dunford's sample of offenders to offenders in any criminal justice jurisdictions in this country. Let me profile the offenders in his study and you can tell me whether you recognize these men:

- 1.--Few if any had criminal histories--especially felonies (since the Navy usually attempts to screen them out at enlistment).
- 2.--None had substance abuse problems (they had been screened out or treated before being admitted to the experiment).
- 3.--None had identifiable mental health issues, including "pathological jealousy".
- 4.--All of them were employed (by the U.S. Navy).
- 5.--All of them lived in a structured community provided by their employer.
- 6 --100% were married (this was set up as a couples study).
- 7.--None had divorce proceedings in progress.

Does anybody recognize this group of offenders? In research conducted in many different jurisdictions across the country that I have read for this presentation I certainly never encountered a sample of offenders that matched more than one of the characteristics in this profile.

So I think it's safe to say that these offenders do not remotely resemble the usual suspects. Therefore, we can't really draw any conclusions from the Dunford experiment about the effectiveness of batterer education programs in criminal justice jurisdictions in this country.^v

The Feder experiment

The last experiment listed in Table 1 also found no difference in reoffending between the group that received the batterer education and the group that did not. In an improvement over Dunford's study the offenders in Feder's experiment do appear to at least resemble offenders in many urban criminal justice jurisdictions in the U.S.

Critique: The men who got randomly assigned to the control group were not allowed to enroll in a BIP program, so many criminal justice players in Broward Co. saw the random assignment, the experiment, and the researchers themselves, as compromising victim safety. As a consequence, victim advocates, probation, and prosecutors alike were openly hostile to the researchers. This compromised the experiment:

Feder & Forde (2000, p. 125) state: "...We had to deal with actions taken by various courthouse personnel aimed at thwarting the study. So, for instance, we would begin speaking with a victim about the interview when one of the assistant prosecutors would come over to the woman and explain that we were the reason that the judge was not placing her partner into counseling. That it was our study that was responsible for placing her in danger." As a result of what Feder called this "hostile environment" it's not surprising the researchers ended up with only about a 25% response rate from their victims—far too low to draw meaningful comparisons between the experimental and control groups in their study.^{vi}

So despite the considerable lengths all these investigators went to in meticulously planning these experiments (Dunford spent four years just selecting the sample for his study!), they all ran into trouble either in executing their designs or generalizing from their results.

Furthermore, in my opinion it's going to be a very long time before we get usable results from any true experiments in this field for the following reason: When we can control events and players well enough to do a methodologically sound experiment we probably aren't working in

the real world, but when we are working in the real world then we probably can't control events and players well enough to do a methodologically sound experiment. This Catch-22 has implications for victim safety, which I'll touch on in my conclusion.

It is my impression that it is these experiments that people most commonly cite when they conclude that "BIPs don't work". In fact, because these experiments are all fatally flawed they cannot provide evidence, one way or the other, about BIPs effectiveness. But results from a different methodology do strongly suggest that BIPs are effective. I turn now to these results.

Part II: BIP Completers vs. BIP Dropouts

This research compares recidivism of men who complete (or nearly complete) a batterers' program to offenders who drop out of (or never show up at) the program. The logic of this design is that if BIPs work then completers, who get more batterer education than dropouts, ought to reoffend less than dropouts do.^{vii} First, let's see if that's true.

In Table 2 I have listed every study I could find that appeared in the last decade that compared reoffense rates of BIP completers to reoffense rates of BIP dropouts.

Reading from left to right: the first column lists the study, date, and location; then the type of data (Police or Victim interviews, or sometimes both); then, in the next two columns, the percentage of dropouts reoffending (after some specified time period) and the percentage of completers reoffending (in the same time period). In the last column, a "Yes" indicates that completers did reoffend less than dropouts did.

Table 2 assembles a large and extremely diverse set of data. There are results from many parts of the country: East, West, South, and Midwest. A variety of offender samples are also represented here: Some are predominantly white, some predominantly black; and one is mostly Hispanic. In some samples most offenders have a criminal history, only a minority of men in other samples has previously offended. In some samples most of the offenders were charged with DV felonies, in other samples they were nearly all misdemeanor DV charges. In one sample nearly all the offenders were employed, in another sample only half of them were. Police data as well as reports from victims are represented here. Furthermore, the sample is huge: Over 6,000 offenders were observed in these studies. And a dozen different investigators conducted the research.

Completers reoffend less often than dropouts do

Yet despite this tremendous diversity, one thing doesn't vary: In every single case completers reoffend less often than dropouts do. I have read more than 300 studies in the field of domestic violence and this is the most consistent set of data I have ever seen. And it is not a small effect. Averaging over all the studies assembled in Table 2, dropouts are more than twice as likely to reoffend as completers are.

This completion effect is large, but a BIP is not a magic bullet. Roughly 20% of the BIP completers represented in Table 2 did reoffend. Nevertheless, completers reoffend much less often than dropouts do—and statistically controlling for other observed differences between completers and dropouts (e.g., in employment, criminal history) does not eliminate the difference in reoffending^{viii}. This evidence raises the distinct possibility that a strategy of moving men from the dropout column to the completion column will reduce reoffending overall. And mandating

even more men to a BIP, and getting them to complete it should help even more. But can we really get more men to complete a BIP?

Can BIP attendance be improved?

Well, there is certainly plenty of room for improvement in attendance: Only a little more than half of the offenders reported in Table 1 and Table 2 actually completed the programs they were mandated to attend and this is very much in line with other published surveys (Daly & Pelowski, 2000; Pirog-Good & Stets, 1986). Even so, maybe everybody in this recalcitrant population who is going to complete a BIP is already completing it. But research shows otherwise. It turns out that it is actually not very difficult—or expensive—to substantially improve BIP completion rates.

Judicial monitoring and sanctioning

For example, judicial monitoring and sanctioning can improve BIP completion rates: As some of you probably already know, a study conducted at the Pittsburgh DV court found that completion rates shot up from one-half to two-thirds soon after a policy of judicial monitoring coupled with swift sanctions for non-compliance was instituted (Gondolf, 2000). And this is our own anecdotal experience here in Maine in the Portland and York DV case coordination projects.

Motivational enhancement by BIP providers

Researchers in Howard Co., MD (the Taft study in Table 2) took a different approach to improving BIP attendance. They adopted “motivational enhancement” techniques that have brought about big increases in attendance at substance abuse programs.

In their study a BIP leader did immediate and personal follow-up with clients who missed sessions. These follow-ups included handwritten notes, phone calls, expressions of concern about the client not being there, telling him that others in the group had missed him, reminding him of the possible penalties for not completing, etc.

Regardless of what you think of this approach, it did seem to work: Even though the dropout rates in this jurisdiction were quite low to begin with, instituting this motivational enhancement technique cut the existing dropout rates in half (from 30% to 15%). So this approach did get more offenders to complete the program. And the completers were still much less likely to reoffend than the dropouts were (as you can see in Table 2).

So research shows that we can increase BIP completion rates. And given the very strong connection (documented in Table 2) between completing a BIP and being less likely to reoffend, it's at least a good bet that getting more men to complete the programs will reduce the overall tendency to reoffend.

Will improving attendance reduce reoffending?

Can I cite any research showing that this will happen? Yes.

A study published late last year, in the journal Criminology & Public Policy, compared recidivism before and after a DV court went operational in Lexington Co., SC (Gover, MacDonald, & Alpert, 2003). This report included some very nice controls that make it much stronger than the usual before and after study.

This DV court, which was part of a coordinated community response team, handled all non-felony DV battery cases in the county and placed a strong emphasis on mandating offenders to a 26 wk BIP, combined with strict weekly follow-ups on the offenders' progress, and it included sanctions (imposing a suspended jail sentence) if they failed to comply.

The researchers compared cases that were processed before the DV court started to cases that were processed through the DV court. They didn't report BIP completion rates, but based on the Pittsburgh study and on our experience here, I think we can pretty safely assume that more men completed the BIP program after the DV court was in place than before it started. The researchers did compare these offenders--on demographics, criminal history, etc., but the only reliable difference between them was that offenders who were processed through the DV court had significantly lower DV recidivism during an 18 month post-arrest window. This drop in recidivism did not just reflect a drop in DV in that jurisdiction, because DV arrests, overall, actually increased during this period.^{ix}

Here is what that drop in reoffending meant to victims in Lexington County: Over the three year period when the court was supported by a VAWA grant, they processed 2500 cases. Based on the before and after recidivism rates they reported I calculated that during this period more than 200 women avoided the assaults and in some cases serious injuries that they would have suffered without the DV court.^x

And that's in only one county in one state. Even a much smaller effect, nationally, could benefit many more victims. For example, using Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates of nearly a million DV crime victims annually, Babcock et al. (2004) calculated that even a 5% drop in reoffending would mean that 42,000 women would avoid being criminally abused every year.

Reasons to BIP

In conclusion, although experiments on BIPs effectiveness are inconclusive, the research I have reviewed in the second part of this presentation provides two compelling reasons for making offenders complete a BIP.

1. REDUCED REOFFENDING: When more offenders complete batterer education programs there will probably be fewer victims of domestic violence.

All the non-experimental research conducted in this decade shows that offenders who complete a batterers' program are less likely to reoffend than are offenders who drop out. Controlling for all other differences between completers and dropouts that researchers have been able to think of so far does not make this effect go away. The obvious implication of this research is that if more offenders completed batterer education there would be fewer victims of domestic violence.

Although this kind of research does not definitively prove that BIPs work, victims are at risk right now. Many women will be punched in the face, thrown down the stairs, kicked in the

stomach when they are pregnant--and even beaten to death, as Lisa Deprez was while I was preparing this report—if we postpone action until we have definitive proof.

Because there is good presumptive evidence that BIPs work, I believe that the Precautionary Principle (Raffensperger & Tickner, 1999), borrowed from environmental law, should guide our actions. This principle states:

“When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, [as DV surely does] precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.”^{xi}

2. IMPROVED RISK MANAGEMENT: Monitoring BIP attendance will improve risk management of DV offenders.

Quite apart from the issue of whether BIPs truly reduce reoffending is the fact that dropping out of a BIP is a red flag for reoffending. In fact, dropping out predicts reoffending more consistently than any other risk factor that research has yet identified.^{xii} The only way we can obtain this particular information is to assign an offender to a BIP and monitor his attendance. Then, if this red flag is raised, swift criminal justice responses such as heightened scrutiny and incarceration may prevent reoffending. At the same time victims can be alerted so that they can review their safety planning in light of the increased danger.

3. PROOF OF CHANGE: Completing a BIP demonstrates an offender's commitment to change.

Now I want to go beyond these two evidence-based reasons and offer you a third, somewhat different justification for mandating BIPs. A senior member of the Maine Judiciary recently remarked: “We need to make DV offenders accountable on many levels, and assigning them to BIPs is something we can do to make them prove that they have changed.” Mandating men to BIPs provides them with “An Opportunity for Change”, to borrow the name of a Cumberland County program. A man who completes a BIP demonstrates a willingness to change. He can be encouraged and rewarded for his commitment and perhaps this will put him on track for a violence-free life. If mandating men to BIPs can even sometimes achieve this result, then it is an option much to be recommended.

References

Baba, Y., Galaka, S., Turk-Bicakci, L., & Asquith, D. (1999). Variables associated with success or failure in a court-ordered domestic violence treatment program. Downloaded Oct. 15, 2003 from: <http://www.growing.com/nonviolent/research/dvprog>.

Babcock, J. C., Green, C. E., & Robie, C. (2004). Does batterers' treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23, 1023-1053.

Babcock, J. C. & Steiner, R. (1999). The relationship between treatment, incarceration, and recidivism of battering: A program evaluation of Seattle's coordinated community response to domestic violence. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 13, 46-59.

Coulter, M., Byers, R., Menezes, L., & Jayakumar, A. (2001). An evaluation of the Hillsborough County domestic violence intervention program of the 13th judicial court. Technical Report. Contact: mcoulter@hsc.usf.edu

Daly, J. E., & Pelowski, S. (2000). Predictors of dropout among men who batter: A review of studies with implications for research and practice. *Violence and Victims*, 15, 137-160.

Davis, R. C., Taylor, B. G., & Maxwell, D. D. (2000). Does batterer treatment reduce violence? A randomized experiment in Brooklyn. Final report for National Institute of Justice, grant 94-IJ-CX-0047. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. NCJRS. NCJ 180772.

Dobash, R. E., Dobash, R. P., Cavanagh, K., & Lewis, R. (2000). *Changing violent men*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dunford, F. W. (2000). The San Diego Navy experiment: An assessment of interventions for men who assault their wives. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68, 468-476.

Feder, L., & Forde, D. R. (2000). A test of the efficacy of court-mandated counseling for domestic violence offenders: The Broward experiment. Final report for National Institute of Justice, grant number 96-WT-NX-0008, Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. NCJRS. NCJ 184752.

Gondolf, E. W. (1997). Patterns of reassault in batterer programs. *Violence and Victims*, 12, 373-387.

Gondolf, E. W. (2000). Mandatory court review and batterer program compliance. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15, 428-437.

Gondolf, E. W. (2001). Limitations of experimental evaluation of batterer programs. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 2, 79-88.

Gondolf, E. W. (2002). *Batterer intervention systems: Issues, outcomes, recommendations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gordon, J. A. & Moriarty, L. J. (2003). The effects of domestic violence batterer treatment on domestic violence recidivism: The Chesterfield county experience. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 30, 118-134.

Gover, A. R., MacDonald, J. M., & Alpert, G. P. (2003). Combating domestic violence: Findings from an evaluation of a local domestic violence court. Criminology and Public Policy, 3, 109-132.

Jackson, S., Feder, L., Forde, D. R., Davis, R. C., Maxwell, C. D., & Taylor, B. G. (2003, June). Batterer intervention programs: Where do we go from here? NIJ Special Report. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. NCJRS. NCJ 195079. May be downloaded from: <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/195079.pdf>.

Murphy, C. M., Musser, P. H., & Maton, K. I. (1998). Coordinated community intervention for domestic abusers: Intervention system involvement and criminal recidivism. Journal of Family Violence, 13, 263-284.

National Institute of Justice (2003, September). Do batterer intervention programs work? Two studies. NIJ Research for Practice. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. NCJRS. NCJ 200331. May be downloaded from: <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/200331.pdf>

Palmer, S. E., Brown, R. A., & Barrera, M. E. (1992). Group treatment program for abusive husbands: Long-term evaluation. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 62, 276-283.

Pirog-Good, M. A., & Stets, J. (1986). Programs for abusers: Who drops out and what can be done. Response to the Victimization of Women & Children, 9, 17-19.

Puffett, N. K. & Gavin, C. (2004, April). Predictors of program outcome & recidivism at the Bronx misdemeanor domestic violence court. New York: Center for Court Innovation. Downloaded April 29, 2004 from: http://www.courtinnovation.org/pdf/predictors_bronx_dv.pdf

Raffensperger, C., & Tickner, J. (1999). Protecting public health & the environment: Implementing the precautionary principle. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Rosenbaum, A., Gearan, P. J., & Ondovic, C. (2001). Completion and recidivism among court- and self-referred batterers in a psychoeducational group treatment program: Implications for intervention and public policy. Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 5, 199-220.

Shepard, M. F., Falk, D. R., & Elliott, B. A. (2002). Enhancing coordinated community responses to reduce recidivism in cases of domestic violence. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17, 551-569.

Taft, C. T., Murphy, C. M., Elliott, J. D., & Morrel, T. M. (2001). Attendance-enhancing procedures in group counseling for domestic abusers. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48, 51-60.

Table 1: Does batterer education work? The four true (at least in conception) experiments

In a properly conducted true experiment, offenders would be randomly assigned to either a batterers' education group, all of whom would get batterers' education, or to a control group who would not receive any batterers' education. Any resulting differences between the groups (a "Yes" in the last column) could then be attributed to the batterers' education, since there should be no other consistent differences between the groups that could explain the result. The absence of an effect (a "No" in the last column) would suggest, but could not prove (because the non-existence of an effect cannot be proven), that the batterers' education did not work.

Unfortunately, practical and ethical considerations can prevent a true experiment from being conducted properly, or sampling limitations may prevent us from generalizing its results. When this occurs, as it did to some degree in all of the studies listed below, cause and effect inferences can no longer be made with confidence, and the absence of a difference does not imply the absence of a treatment effect.

Experiment / location	Experimental group	Control group	Type of data	Did BIP educ. reduce reoffending?
Palmer (1992) / Ontario, CANADA	Probation + 10 wk BIP	Probation only	Police	Yes
Davis (2000) / Brooklyn, NY	40 hrs of BIP (in 8 weeks or 26 weeks)	40 hrs of community service	Police	Yes (for 26 wks group)
			Police	No (for 8 wks group)
			Victim reports	No (both groups)
Dunford (2000) / San Diego, CA	30 wk BIP	Safety planning for victims	Police	No
			Victim reports	No
Feder (2000) / Broward Co. FL	Prob. + 26 wk BIP	Prob. only	Police	No
			Victim reports	No

Notes for Table 1:

a. BIP completion rates per study:

Palmer = 70% Davis = 40% Dunford = 71% Feder = 66%

b. Number of offenders per study:

Palmer = 59 Davis = 376 Dunford = 318 Feder = 404

Table 2 (next page): Does batterer education work? Non-experimental studies that compare dropouts to completers

Table 2 shows that BIP completers are much less likely to reoffend than are BIP dropouts. This means that dropping out of a batterers' program is a clear risk factor for reoffending. The studies cited in Table 2 conclusively establish this fact. But they do not necessarily prove that batterers' education works.

Maybe completers do reoffend less often because they are exposed to more batterers' education than dropouts are. That is, they reoffend less often because batterers' education works. This explanation seems likely but, because the studies cited in Table 2 are not true experiments, alternative explanations are also possible. For example, some other differences between completers and dropouts may explain the differences in reoffending. Yet some of the studies cited in Table 2 found no discernable differences (e.g., no differences in criminal history, age, employment, substance abuse), between completers and dropouts. Some other studies did find such differences between completers and dropouts--but even after these differences were statistically controlled for completers still reoffended less than dropouts did. Thus, observed differences between completers and offenders cannot adequately explain the "Yes" entries in Table 2.

Of course completers and dropouts may differ in unknown ways and it could be these unknown, pre-existing, differences, rather than exposure to different amounts of batterers' education, that explain the different reoffense rates. Until these unknown differences are documented, however, the best currently available explanation for the differences in reoffense rates documented in Table 2 is that batterers' education works. Therefore assigning more batterers to Bips and ensuring that they attend seems to be a promising strategy for reducing domestic violence.

Notes for Table 2:

a. Table 2 lists every study reported in the last decade (published as well as unpublished)--that could be located after a diligent search--that compared the reoffense rate for BIP completers to the reoffense rate for BIP dropouts.

b. For most of the studies reoffending refers to DV reoffending, but a few studies reported any new offenses.

c. "Completers" was defined by the authors of each study and usually meant attending most, but not all, BIP sessions. Completion rates ranged from 16% (Murphy, 1998) to 85% (Taft, 2001).

d. BIPs were usually Duluth or Cognitive Behavioral or hybrid. (The few Anger Management programs that were located are not included in this table, but all of them found the same effect that is reported here.)

e. Average reoffense rates:	<u>Dropouts</u>	<u>Completers</u>
By Police report:	32%	12%
By Victim report:	51%	33%

Table 2: Reoffending for BIP dropouts vs. BIP completers

Study location	Type of data	% of dropouts who reoffended	% of completers who reoffended	Did BIP completers reoffend less than dropouts?
Murphy (1998) Baltimore, MD	Police	16%	0%	Yes
Baba (1999) Santa Clara Co., CA	Police	8%	1%	Yes
Babcock (1999) Seattle, WA	Police	23%	8%	Yes
Dunford (2000) San Diego, CA	Police / Victim	(% reoffending not reported)		Yes (but "very small" effect)
Feder (2000) Broward Co., FL	Police	30%	13%	Yes
Coulter (2001) Hillsborough Co., FL	Police	12%	6%	Yes
Rosenbaum (2001) Central MA	Police	14%	3%	Yes
Taft (2001) Howard Co., MD	Police	54%	10%	Yes
	Victim	33%	15%	Yes
Gondolf (1997, 2002) Dallas, TX	Police	19%	12%	Yes
	Victim	58%	33%	Yes
Denver, CO	Police	51%	26%	Yes
	Victim	55%	35%	Yes
Houston, TX	Victim	59%	35%	Yes
Pittsburgh, PA	Police	41%	17%	Yes
	Victim	50%	40%	Yes
Shepard (2002) Duluth, MN	Police	51%	40%	Yes
Gordon (2003) Chesterfield Co., VA	Police	(% reoffending not reported)		Yes
Puffett (2004) Bronx, NY				
BIP only group	Police	47%	14%	Yes
BIP & S.A. group	Police	48%	9%	Yes

Endnotes

ⁱ Robert Moyer, Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Bates College, is a member of the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse and the advisory boards of: the Cumberland County Violence Intervention Partnership, the Portland DV case coordination project, the York/Springvale DV case coordination project, and the Bail Commissioners DV Training Project. Please send comments on this ms. to: rmoyer@bates.edu

ⁱⁱ Because there was substantial attrition in the Palmer study (i.e., many offenders who were mandated to complete the batterer program did not comply), comparisons of the experimental to the control group very likely underestimate the size of the true effect. This is because the logic of experimental design requires that the BIP dropouts be treated as if they completed the program. Naturally, this should diminish the observed impact of the BIP. (It's like measuring how much a daily dose of aspirin reduces heart attacks when participants in your study actually take their aspirin only 4 days a week.). This is a problem for every experiment listed in Table 1, and it means that, in part, all the data analyses are asking how much people benefited from the batterers' education they didn't get!

ⁱⁱⁱ It is puzzling that a recent National Institute of Justice assessment (2003, September, p. 1) calls this improvement—a nearly 2/3 reduction in recidivism—“only minor”. If Congress proposed cutting the DOJ budget by nearly 2/3 I do not think the folks at the NIJ would regard the reductions as “only minor”.

^{iv} Another problem with the Davis experiment was caused by judicial overrides: 14% of the offenders who were supposed to be assigned to the control group instead were assigned by judges to the BIPs group. As the authors note: “Substantial concessions had to be made to court officials to gain their cooperation.” But the data analysis treated these overrides as if they had had no BIPs exposure. This means that if the BIPs truly did have an effect, it would harder to detect it, because some of the Controls who had been misassigned to a BIP would, as a result, be reoffending less often too.

^v Some may argue that the fact that batterer education didn't work for Dunford's offender sample, which had such a high “stake in conformity”, is conclusive evidence that it also certainly won't work for a more representative sample of offenders (who have much less of a stake in conformity). But this argument cuts both ways: This high stake in conformity may have so effectively reduced reoffending in the control group, as well as in the experimental group, that it became difficult to see any differences between the groups. Consistent with this response, Dunford did document large reductions in DV reoffending in all groups (for simplicity I have reported only the results of his two crucial groups here) after the interventions; it's just that the magnitude of these reductions didn't vary by group. But only repeating his study on a more representative sample of offenders can resolve this debate.

^{vi} But the Broward Co. experiment also failed to find an effect based on Police data. Yet they must have underestimated any effect of BIPs that could have been present. First, because half of the observation period for measuring reoffending had ended before any offender could have completed the 6 month BIP. So, many of the recorded offenses most likely occurred before many offenders got much of a dose of BIPs. This problem, coupled with their 29% attrition rate, would be expected to dilute potential effects of batterer education. Another problem is that some of the police data they report are arrests that were based on probation violations; but the BIPs group

could (and often was) violated for failure to attend BIPs sessions—something the Control group could not be violated for. The authors do some analyses to try to blunt the impact of this problem but I don't believe they entirely succeed. Gondolf (2001, p. 83) also calls attention to this difficulty.

^{vii} To say that men who get more batterer education should reoffend less than men who get less does not mean that we must also expect longer programs to be more effective than shorter ones: Driver re-education courses might be very effective at reducing accidents, but a 12-week course might be no more effective than a 6-week course. To date, research has not shown that longer BIP courses are more effective than shorter ones, though clean comparisons are difficult because the programs, and the criminal justice contexts in which they are offered, usually differ in many ways.

^{viii} Eight of the studies reported in Table 2 did measure a variety of offender characteristics that could be related to reoffending—employment, criminal history, etc.—but in only one study (Feder & Forde, 2000) were they able to eliminate the BIP completion effect when they statistically controlled for these differences. On balance, then, the data are quite consistent with the claim that it is the BIP—and not some other difference between completers and dropouts—that is responsible for the big difference in reoffending.

^{ix} Furthermore, the drop in reoffending was specific to DV recidivism. That is, men processed through the DV court were just as likely to be subsequently arrested for non-dv assault as were the men who had not been through the dv court. So the mandated BIP with sanctions (and probably the Coordinated Community Response it was part of) had a focused effect on DV recidivism.

^x I made this calculation as follows: In the 3 years the DV court was supported by a VAWA grant they processed about 2500 cases. Before the DV court was formed, we may estimate (since the sampled cases were a random sample of all cases processed) that 450 of those offenders (18% of 2500 pre-DV court cases) would have recidivated, but only 250 would have done so after the court was in operation (10% of 2500 post-DV court cases). So over this 3-year period we might expect that at least 200 women avoided abuse. And this calculation pertains only to cases that were severe enough to make it to court.

^{xi} I am grateful to Cathy Lee for bringing the Precautionary Principle to my attention.

^{xii} Although dropping out appears to be the most consistent risk factor for reoffending, other risk factors may, in some studies, be larger. For example, Gondolf (2002) found that men in BIPs who were “drunk every night” were about 16 times as likely to re-assault their partners as were men in the programs who seldom or never drank—none of the BIP completion effects listed in Table 2 even approach that magnitude. Yet Puffett & Gavin (2004) found that substance abuse did not significantly predict recidivism in their study. Nevertheless, both these studies did find that dropping out of a BIP significantly predicted recidivism. Some of the inconsistent findings from risk factors such as criminal history, employment, and substance abuse, that often do show substantial effects may reflect differences in how these risk factors are measured, including whether the measures are contemporaneously made, as well as differences in offender samples and criminal justice context. The BIP completion effect that I have documented in Table 2, however, seems to be so robust that it transcends all these influences.

ATTACHMENT C

COUNTY	PROGRAM	ADDRESS/PHONE/CONTACTS
ANDROSCOGGIN FRANKLIN OXFORD	Alternatives to Abuse (AWAP) Coordinator: Rosemary Word Facilitators: Wayland Linscott wflin@pivot.net Tom Morrison, Barbara Hester Steve Sasserville (Wed.Nights) Lilly Dyer, Mary O'Leary	P.O. Box 713 Auburn, ME 04212 Tel. (207)795-6744*8 x46 Tuesday Rosemarie Home Tel: 784-3264 dsjte@cs.com or rword@awap.org bhester1@maine.RR.com
AROOSTOOK	Northern New England Community Resource Center Program Manager: Chuck Moody	27 Highland Ave. Houlton, Me. 04730 Tel. 532-2405
CUMBERLAND	Abuse Education Program Greater Portland Counseling Center Director: Jerry Grodin Facilitator: Betsy Grodin	430 Gray Road Falmouth, ME 04105 Tel. (207)878-8781
CUMBERLAND	A Different Choice Director: Shawn Lagrega Facilitator: Elizabeth Simoni	175 Lancaster Street – Suite 305 Portland, ME 04101 Tel. (207)818-4960 Maine Pretrial Service (207)774-1501, Page 818-4960
CUMBERLAND SAGadahoc	Beyond Abuse Sweetser Family Institute Director: Jennifer Berube Facilitators: Randy Scheid Lilly Dyer Chris Van Doren Laura Plunkett David Corbett	76 Pleasant Street Brunswick, ME 04011 VM – 373-4300 BIP VM – 373-4337
CUMBERLAND	Opportunity for Change Director: Mary Campbell Facilitators: Ellen Ridley-Hooper Wells Staley-Mays Ann Brushwein Elizabeth Burt	98 Chestnut Street Portland, ME 04101 Tel. (207)774-4603

FRANKLIN OXFORD	Domestic Abuse Prevention Education Program Maine Abuse Prevention (MAP) Directors: Bob McLaughlin And Jean Black Eagle	13 Fairview Avenue – Suite #1 Skowhegan, ME 04976 Tel. (207)474-2654 (w) Tel. (207)474-2658 (h) (currently suspended)
HANCOCK PENOBSCOT	Choice V OP Chemical Dependency Agency Director: Warren Curtis Facilitators: Astor Gillis Ardis White Sylvia Page	P.O. Box 6330 Hermon, ME 04402 Tel. (207) 990-1941 Fax (207)990-2601 Tel. (207)667-2730 Ellsworth Office
KENNEBEC SOMERSET	Menswork Director: Cathleen Dunlap Facilitators: Dolores Benn, Rick Karges, David Lawrence, , James Moses, Amy Curtis, Kathy Trask	283 Water Street Augusta, ME 04330 Tel. (207)623-7252 cathleend@FamilyViolenceProject.org
KNOX LINCOLN WALDO	Time for Change Director: Richard Robbins Facilitators: Elida (Lilly) Dyer, Randy Scheid Ann Giggey, Rebecca Gracie Alan Kaplan, John Purinton	P.O. Box 1465 Rockland, ME 04841-1465 Tel. (207)594-0270 rrobbins@midcoast.com
OXFORD	Another Way Tri-County Mental Health Director: Joyce Perry Facilitators: Eric King	143 Pottle Road Oxford, ME 04270 Tel. (207)743-7911 (TCMH Office) 998-4223 (Pat Fogg)
PENOBSCOT	Batterers' Intervention Program Acadia Hospital Director: Kathryn Maietta Facilitators: Matthew Nutt, Mark Nutt, Diane Watts, Stephanie Partridge	P.O. Box 422 Bangor, ME 04402 (207)973-6199

PISCATAQUIS	DV Classes for Men Charlotte White Counseling Center Directors: Dick Brown, CNC Facilitators: David Goolsby LCSW Katie Waitt, LMSW-CL Joanna Condon LCSW	P.O. Box 380 Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426 (207)564-7106, (207)564-2464 (Admin.) 1-800-260-9765
WASHINGTON		
YORK	Violence No More Facilitators: Martin Burgess, Christine Burgess, Vicky Edgerly, Dawn Shain	26 South Street Biddeford, ME 04005 Tel. (207)283-8574



MABIP

Maine Association of
Batterer Intervention Programs

MABIP Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide a forum for information sharing and interaction among agencies and individuals concerned with providing of and advocacy for batterer intervention programs in Maine

Proposed MABIP Ethics Statement:

Mindful of the safety of victims and the need for accountability, MABIP members will model respectful behavior, present educational programs about the impact of domestic violence and the benefits of healthy relationships, and work only with the perpetrators of domestic violence. We recognize that this is one component of a collaborative community response to domestic violence.

MABIP Goal:

*Working toward the safety of victims
Holding batterers accountable for their actions*

Report from Maine Batterer Intervention Programs: January- December 2007

Participation:

1. Total number of men who attended program in the year. (966)
2. Number of men who completed the program (238)*
3. Number of men who left without completing the program. (57)
4. Number of men who re-offended and went to jail while attending the program. (57)
5. Number of men who completed but were required to attend the program again. (18)

Referrals:

6. Number of referrals from Probation. (574)
7. Number of referrals resulting from filings or conditions of release. (59)
8. Number of referrals from DHS. (60)
9. Number of PFA referrals. (39)
10. Number of self-referrals. (74)

Number of other referrals (please specify)

11. Mental Health (1), District Attorney (14)
12. Transfers from other BIP (2)

Special Needs:

13. Number of men with special needs. (22)

(For example, English was a second language, from a different culture, hard of hearing, difficulty being in a group)

What accommodations, if any, were made within the program for these men?

Literacy, Hearing Impairment, Mental Illness

14. Number of men referred for mental health services. (35)

15. Number of men referred for substance abuse services. (22)

16. Number of men referred for literacy services. (32)

Number of men referred for other services (please specify)

17. Parenting. (1)

18. Vocational. (53)

19. Employment. (18)

20. Financial. (2)

* Rolling Enrollment

ASSESSING AND MONITORING PROGRAMS FOR MEN WHO ABUSE WOMEN

By Lundy Bancroft
March 2007

(* Note: I intend this article to be an evolving draft. Please send comments, suggestions, and criticisms to me at P.O. Box 253, Northampton MA 01061.)

Battered women's advocates and other community members who are part of the movement to end the domestic abuse of women struggle with a mixed outlook on intervention programs for abusive men. A well-run program can contribute in many ways to the movement, while a poorly-run program can actively endanger abused women, shelter batterers from accountability, and be tools of a batterer's manipulations. It is becoming increasingly important for battered women's programs and coalitions to be able to assess and monitor the quality of programs for abusive men (usually called "Batterer Intervention Programs"), in order to avoid supporting a destructive program and to be able to put pressure on courts not to refer men to it. It is unfortunate that advocates need to take this monitoring function on, given how overworked and underfunded victims' programs already are; however, given the huge growth in the past 10-15 years in the number of batterer programs, and the serious harm that is growing out of the actions of some of those programs, I believe that it is essential to allocate some resources in that direction.

In order to get an in-depth view of the program's work, I recommend that the following monitoring and assessment take place:

- Each group be visited by monitors at least once a year, who sit in on at least two consecutive meetings of the group
- That the monitors observe a number of intake sessions to see how they are carried out
- That the monitors examine a number of case files to see the quality of record-keeping that is taking place, particularly with respect to acts of abuse that clients admit to.
- If the program contacts victims, that the monitors listen to a number of those contacts.

The sections below will guide the monitors in knowing some important elements to be watching for and evaluating while going through the above steps.

OPENING ASSESSMENT

Before agreeing to form any kind of working relationship with a batterer intervention program (BIP), the women's program needs to collect basic information about the BIP including:

How does the program understand the nature of domestic violence perpetration and where it comes from? As 30 years of clinical experience and a huge collection of research studies have demonstrated, battering is primarily a cultural problem, not a psychological one; that is to say, battering is a learned and socially reinforced behavior used to exert power and control in an intimate relationship, tightly linked to the history of male domination. A BIP needs to understand from the outset that battering behavior is mostly chosen, goal-oriented behavior, used to enforce the abuser's will and intimidate the victim. If program personnel take the view that battering is largely a product of stress, low self-esteem, substance abuse, mental health problems, or bad relationships dynamics, the program will end up contributing more to the problem than to the solution.

Does the program plan to do "therapy" with men who batter? A properly run batterer program does not devote more than a small percentage of its time to psychotherapeutic work. The lion's share of group session time has to be focused on the subject of abuse itself, and not on peripheral problems; self-actualization, sensitivity training, or any other theme not directly related to abuse. (I will discuss below what the bulk of counseling time should be addressing.)

Who is going to be leading the groups? What is those people's training in domestic violence? Does the program make the mistake of requiring counselors to have a mental health credential or a Master's Degree? A person with a mental health credential, with or without a Master's Degree, is neither more nor less prepared than anyone else to lead groups for men who batter. Meaningful measures of preparedness would include:

- Does the person have any course work on domestic violence?
- Has s/he done research on domestic violence?
- Has s/he received training specifically on working with men who batter through the Emerge model, the Duluth model, or other nationally-respected pro-victim approaches to working with perpetrators?
- Is s/he sympathetic to the plight of battered women and their children, free from victim-blaming tendencies? Does s/he stay away from overidentifying with men who batter (through such statements as "the batterer is a victim too," for example)?
- Do personnel in the women's program find that s/he listens well, is always interested in learning more about trauma and about battered women's experiences, and is respectful in conflicts? Do program personnel feel confident that this person's own ego issues, arrogance, or problems with women are not cause for concern?

What appears to be motivating the people who are creating the BIP? The best results come when the people creating the batterer program wish above all to contribute to stopping violence against women. Less helpful contributions come from programs that

are created to try to bring extra income to a clinic, or to try to better meet the needs of men.

What services will the program provide? Batterer intervention needs to be kept separate from other services. Specifically: 1) If the program reports that it will also be providing couples or family counseling for men in the program, the program is not appropriate, even if personnel say they will only do so “if the man is making good progress”. Huge safety concerns exist regarding conjoint counseling work with batterers; moreover, a batterer program that also offers couples counseling is sending the message to the battered woman that she can share responsibility for the batterer’s change, which is false. 2) Groups should not attempt to address substance abuse and domestic violence in depth in the same program; batterers who have substance abuse issues need to be in recovery and to be receiving separate services for their addiction. 3) The program should not claim to decide which men need batterer intervention and which need “anger management”; if the man is in the program because of any degree of violence, threats, sexual assault, or chronic verbal abuse toward an intimate partner, he is not appropriate for anger management.

How does the program intend to make itself part of the movement to end the domestic abuse of women? A wide array of research studies examining the effectiveness of programs for men who batter have found, at best, a limited impact on changing the behavior of clients. Studies also indicate that the impact of batterer programs on the victims is very mixed. Therefore, if program personnel believe that they are doing enough by simply providing counseling groups, they are mistaken. The program should be planning to: 1) Participate in community task forces on domestic violence, 2) Support the efforts of its local battered women’s program through attending events, helping with fundraisers, and participating in community campaigns (e.g. purple ribbon campaigns); 3) Offer public speaking to educate the community on men’s abuse of women; 4) Support efforts to improve state laws to increase accountability for men who batter and increase rights and services for victims and their children.

Will the program allow advocates from the women’s program to sit in on groups periodically to monitor the BIP? If the program won’t permit monitoring, don’t support it. The program should welcome monitoring and be eager to hear your feedback. Additionally, it should view monitoring as a valuable service, and be prepared to pay the women’s program a fee for the monitoring service.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

A number of structural questions are central to assessing a batterer program, including:

- Group size
- Intake process

- How the program intends to address client confidentiality
- How the program will arrange for advocacy for partners and former partners of its clients (“partner contacts”)
- How the program intends to hold clients accountable for unacceptable behavior or attendance, inadequate progress, and reoffending, including how the program will inform victims and courts about these kinds of problems.
- What the program’s curriculum will cover
- Whether the program makes the mistake of advocating for its clients

I examine each of these areas in depth below.

Group Size

Managing a batterer program is a delicate business. Groups that are too large create the potential for dangerous oversights on the part of program personnel, while also allowing clients to complete the program with minimal evaluation and confrontation. I recommend that groups that are 90 minutes long not have more than eight clients enrolled, and groups that are 120 minutes long not have more than 14 clients enrolled. (The number attending on a given evening will usually be a little lower, as one or two clients will be absent on a typical evening.) Groups that are led by only one counselor (as opposed to two counselors, which is more typical and is better for a number of reasons) should have even smaller numbers.

Intake Process

It is essential that the program obtain each client’s criminal record at intake. The simplest way to do so is to require the client to provide a copy himself. If the client has been arrested, he needs also to provide the arrest report from his most recent incident, and from the incident that led to his participation in the program if that is a different one.

At intake, the program should get a complete history of the violence, sexual assaults, and psychological abuse that the client admits to toward his current partner, toward the woman he assaulted in the arrest incident (where applicable), and toward any past partners. These admissions need to be carefully documented.

The program needs to collect name, age, and latest contact information for the man’s current partner, the woman he assaulted in the arrest incident, and any past partners with whom he has children. Names, ages, and addresses of all his minor children should be obtained.

The program should collect a complete substance abuse history from the client, and a history of any mental health problems he has had. The program should also collect information relevant to evaluating the client’s dangerousness (for more information on this assessment, see my guide “Assessing Dangerousness in Men Who Abuse Women” at lundybancroft.com).

Confidentiality

When a man wishes to join a program for men who batter, he should be required to sign a contract prior to participating. This contract should explain to him that he is joining an *educational* program, not a *therapeutic* program, and that therefore he will not have the same level of confidentiality that he would be guaranteed in mental health services. The program WILL NOT promise him confidentiality with respect to:

- his current partner
- the woman toward whom he was violent in the incident he was prosecuted for (who may not be his current partner)
- any past partner with whom he has children
- his court's probation department
- his state's child protective service, if his participation in the BIP is mandated or requested by that service
- his local police department
- the program for battered women serving the area where he lives or where his current or ex-partner lives
- any individual to whom we believe he is an imminent danger of serious harm

The contract should inform him that with respect to the above individuals or institutions, the program will release information as it considers it necessary to do so to promote victim safety and abuser accountability, and to avoid any harm coming to the victim or her children.

The program WILL promise him confidentiality with respect to:

- the general public
- news media
- anyone else not covered in the exceptions in the previous list

Within these limitations, we will take his confidentiality very seriously in order to protect his privacy, the privacy of his current or past partners, and the privacy of any children who are involved.

Some batterer programs require clients to sign releases of information. However, such releases can, by law, be rescinded any time the client chooses to do so. Therefore a contract should be used instead of releases.

The above guidelines present a problem for mental health centers that offer batterer programs, because a service that is under the aegis of the mental health center may be required to be confidential or even privileged (meaning that even a judicial order cannot require a break in the confidentiality). For this reason it is best that a BIP not be formally linked to a counseling center, and be considered an independent educational program.

Guarantees of confidentiality end up at various times putting the interests of the abuser ahead of the interests of the abused woman. I have, for example, been in situations where a former client sued the battered woman for custody a year after he left my program, and denied to the court that he has ever hit her. I had records of important violence toward her that he had admitted to me, but he was insisting on his legal right to

keep me from providing that information to the court, and saying that I shouldn't have even been talking to the abused woman, since his release had expired months earlier. A batterer could potentially succeed in taking a woman's children away from her (as many do) while the BIP stood helplessly by, unable to tell the court what it knew. This kind of manipulation cannot be permitted to occur.

Advocacy for Current and Past Partners ("Partner Contacts")

A batterer program has a responsibility to make every possible effort to contact the current partner of a client, his former partner (if he is in the program because of violence toward her), and any past partners with whom he has children, and ensure that those women receive accurate, empowering information about the batterer program and appropriate referrals to battered women's services. These partner contacts should include the following elements:

- The woman should be informed of any limitations of confidentiality that apply to the program's contacts with her – in particular that the program may be obligated to report child abuse to authorities if she discloses such abuse during partner contacts. She should be assured that nothing she says in a partner contact will be disclosed to the abuser except at her request, *and this commitment must be very strictly adhered to by the program.*
- The woman should be informed of the full range of services offered by her nearest program for abused women, and be given the contact information for that program. She should be told which of those services are free (usually they all are). She should be encouraged to use the hotline whenever she feels the need to do so, and should be encouraged to consider participating in a support group for abused women. *Perhaps most importantly of all, she should be encouraged to work with an advocate, in person or by phone, on creating a safety plan for herself and for her children.* All batterer program personnel should read the book *Safety Planning With Battered Women* (cited at the end of this article) so that they fully understand this process, even though they should generally not be the ones to do that work with the woman.
- She should be informed of her legal rights, including her right to seek a protective order, her right to seek restitution, and her right to seek criminal charges against the abuser. If the abuser is on probation, she should be informed of her right to speak to his probation officer.
- If she has children, she should be asked if there are any pending legal proceedings regarding custody or visitation. If so, she should be offered assistance in locating a lawyer to represent her in those proceedings. She also should be asked about any ways in which the abuser may be using those proceedings as a way to continue abusing her or harming the children.
- She should be informed of the limitations of what a batterer intervention program can be expected to accomplish. Specifically, she needs to know that multiple research studies have demonstrated that a majority of participants in a BIP will not make large lasting changes in their behavior. Many participants actually increase their level of psychological abusiveness during the time they

are in the program. She should be asked to contact the program if his treatment of her is getting worse, or if he appears to be responding in any other dangerous ways to group meetings.

- She should be informed of the rules for the man's participation in the program. Specifically, she should be told: 1) That the program does not impose any rules upon *her*, and that if the abuser tells her that the program has certain expectations of her, that is false; 2) That he is expected by the program to stop all verbal, mental, economic, and sexual abuse of her, not just physical violence; 3) That he is not to use any program techniques as a way to harm her – for example, he is not to apply any concepts he learns in group to *her* behavior, and he is not to use a "Time Out" as a way to avoid listening to her; 4) Any restrictions that the program is placing on his use of drugs or alcohol, or other individually-specific rules that the program is establishing for his conduct. It is not her responsibility to monitor the abuser's compliance with program's rules, but it is important for her safety and empowerment that she be aware of any ways that he is not in compliance.
- She should be informed of the location, times, and cost of his group. (Program participants sometimes lie to women about these facts.)
- If she is the man's current partner, she should be told that the program would like to call her any time he is absent from a meeting, and ask if she feels safe to have the program do so. Ask her what telephone number the program should use to give her that information.
- The program should ask her permission to call her if: 1) He leaves a meeting seeming especially agitated or inflamed; 2) He expresses his intention to do her harm, such as by emptying joint bank accounts; 3) He reveals other information that the program believes is important to her safety or well-being; 4) He quits or is kicked out of the program.
- The program should inform her of any specific concerns it has about the conduct, attitudes, or escalation of this particular abuser, based on the program's experience with him so far. (Such concerns should continue to be shared with the woman throughout the man's participation in the program, if she is open to receiving this information.)
- She should be offered a meaningful and detailed checklist to use to help her in assessing whether or not the abuser is making real changes (such as the one offered in the article "Guidelines for Assessing Change in Abusive Men" available at LundyBancroft.com).
- She should be encouraged to call the program any time she has concerns about the man's behavior during the week, and any time she is uncomfortable or unsure about things he tells her about what the program is telling him.
- The woman *should not* be told that the client is making changes or is serious about trying to change, or that she should consider remaining in or return to the relationship. She *should* be told that her own observations of whether or not he is changing are the only ones that matter, and that the program fully supports any decision she chooses to make about that relationship, whether to continue it, separate, or end it permanently.

After these essential points are covered, the woman should be asked if she would like information about how the program works, what topics are covered, what assignments are given to the abuser, and so forth.

Next, the woman should be asked if she is comfortable giving the program a brief history of the man's violence (including violent or coerced sexual contact), threats, and psychological abuse. This history is helpful to the program in assessing the abuser's dangerousness.

Last, she should be asked what particular issues she would most like the program to focus on in addressing the abuser's behavior and attitudes. She should be asked whether she wants the program to reveal to the man that these issues are being addressed at her request; if she answers yes, the potential risks to her involved in having the program do so should be explored with her.¹

After the partner contact is completed, the person performing the partner contact should debrief the man's BIP counselors in detail, except in cases where sharing certain information would not be safe (such as in cases where it is not known whether the BIP counselors have entirely trustworthy judgment, and thus might reveal the information to the batterer). Although the partner contact information should never be revealed to the batterer except in the specific and limited cases discussed above (where the partner is specifically requesting that he be confronted about a particular issue, and she feels the risks involved are worth taking), the content of that contact should nevertheless guide the counselors' work with that man. This includes that the counselors should strive to focus on the woman's primary concerns, even where those do not match the primary concerns the counselors may feel about the case.

Who should do the partner advocacy?

It is best that partner contacts be carried out by trained battered women's advocates rather than by the batterer intervention counselors themselves. Women whose partners are in batterer programs tend to be in crisis, and it is easy for people without adequate experience and sensitivity to give a woman advice that can interfere with her progress toward healing and self-determination, or that can even place her in severe danger. Her traumatic experiences can also make her vulnerable to subtle forms of pressure from the batterer program; she may, for example, get the message from program personnel that they believe the man is going to change and that she should give him another chance.

However, the local battered women's program should not be expected to take on performing partner advocacy for the batterer program without compensation, on top of everything else the women's program is already doing. Therefore the batterer program should contract to pay for the advocacy services, or should hire experienced battered women's advocates onto the BIP staff.

There are some BIP counselors who have been in the field for years, who are wholehearted advocates for battered women, and who have good personal skills in speaking respectfully and sensitively with battered women, and in these cases I think there are actually some advantages to having these people conduct their own partner advocacy; direct communication with the counselors can sometimes be very helpful to the abused woman, while simultaneously educating the BIP counselor and guiding his or

her work with that particular man. However, given the extremely rapid rate of creation of new batterer programs over the past 10-15 years, some of them with minimal training and little connection to the battered women's movement, the ideal case that I have just described appears to be more the exception than the rule.

Communications with Clients Regarding Partner Contacts

It is best that clients not be informed that partner contacts are routine, as they will then be on the lookout for those contacts and may try to monitor, prevent, or interfere with the conversation. I recommend using wording that the program "reserves the right to contact current or former partners should it decide to do so."

Men should be informed that they will be terminated for any effort to interfere with a partner contact that does take place, and that they are not to discuss the contact with their partner in any way, including asking her whether a contact has occurred.

Clients should be informed that if the program discovers that a client is concealing the existence of a current partner, a past partner toward whom he was violent, or a past partner with whom he has children, he will be terminated from the program. The program should give a specific definition of current partner to him, which would mean any women with whom he is having even occasional sex and is seeing on a regular basis.

Accountability for Clients

The program should have clear written policies about how the man's partner, past partners, and referring agency (such as the court or the child protective service) will be informed if he

- commits new offenses, including any new physical or sexual assaults against his partner or threats of harm
- misses a meeting
- has repeated poor attendance leading to his termination
- behaves inappropriately in meetings
- expresses an intention to do harm to his partner, or program staff have other reasons to believe that he is an impending risk to harm her (not just through assault, but through other means such as child abduction, court actions for custody, underhanded economic maneuvers, or exposing her to risk of sexually transmitted diseases)

There is occasionally some controversy among BIP counselors about reporting new offenses to the court. I have heard it said, "What incentive is there for him to tell us about new incidents of violence if he knows he may be jailed for it? We can't help him if he can't tell us the truth about what is happening." I have several responses to this view. First, we cannot afford the impact on the other group members of seeing that a man can report new acts of violence without experiencing legal consequences. Second, the stopping of all physical and sexual violence has to be a given for men in batterer programs. The clients are supposed to be working on eliminating their verbally, economically, and mentally abusive behaviors, and they certainly won't make progress

on those if they haven't even stopped the outright assaults. I consider the situation parallel to a detox that kicks someone out because it has been revealed that he or she is continuing to use. Third, batterers only change when they accept the consequences of their actions; in other words, a batterer who is concealing his new assault to escape the consequences is a batterer who is not changing anyhow.

A program that expresses any reluctance to hold clients accountable for their actions is a program that is going to slip into collusion of various kinds, even if doing so is not its intention.

Both verbal and written notice should be given of program termination, and this notice should include a description of any new offenses.

Documenting the Client's Admitted History of Abuse

Upon the man's termination or completion, or earlier if she requests it, the abused woman should be provided written documentation of the range of abusive behaviors toward her that the man admitted to while he was in the program, including specific history of physical and sexual assaults, child abuse, and patterns of psychological abuse. This report could be crucial to her in the future if she needs to seek a protective order, or if she ends up in custody and visitation litigation with the abuser.

Program Curriculum

The program's curriculum should be laid out in detail in writing. It should include the following elements in some form:

- Many weeks of material on abuse and violence as a form of *control*, and an explanation of the need to give up all forms of controlling behavior.
- The above weeks should include detailed explanation of the range of behaviors that are abusive and coercive, including verbal abuse, economic abuse, sexual mistreatment (of the partner), psychological/mental abuse, physical abuse, and use of the children as weapons.
- The effects of abuse on men's partners
- The effects of partner abuse on children in the home
- Respectful, appropriate behaviors in a relationship, including sharing of household and childcare responsibilities, being economically fair and open, sexual fidelity, respectful conduct in conflict, and non-abusive ways to deal with a relationship that comes to an end
- Many weeks of material on the abusive attitudes and values that drive abusive behavior. The discussion should include examinations of such attitudes as: entitlement to service and to deference; lack of respect for the partner and for women in general; double standards; sexual ownership and possessiveness; refusal to recognize the female partner's right to freedom of movement, freedom of expression, and other basic human rights; viewing the partner as inferior to him; and many others.

- Examination of male socialization and positive and negative social messages about what it means to be a man, with primary emphasis on how men are socialized to view and treat women in relationships.
- Explanation of the fact that in adults, feelings do not directly cause behavior, and that therefore feelings are not an acceptable excuse for inappropriate actions. Explanation that in adults, behaviors are determined primarily by values, attitudes, and habits, and that these are the key elements that will need to change in order for his treatment of female partners to improve. Explanation that his partner's behavior does not justify his own.
- The process of accepting responsibility for one's actions and what that involves, including the need to make reparations and pay damages
- Overcoming denial, minimization, and shifting of responsibility

Many programs have interesting or creative additions to the above elements. Some, for example, include explorations of men's childhoods, to help them gain empathy for their children's feelings. For those men who had fathers or stepfathers who were abusive, discussions about how that paternal behavior affected them as children can help motivate men to make changes in their own conduct. However, these discussions need to be carefully structured to avoid being used by abusers as an excuse for their own abusive behavior.

In considering a curriculum piece that is novel or unfamiliar, the monitor should reflect carefully on the question of how the proposed discussion could negatively backfire against partners or children of men in the program, particularly of those clients who are the most dangerous or manipulative, and who may be skilled at covering up how they are intending to use the material that has been discussed. For example, it is common for men in abuser programs to use material learned from curriculum presentations to become more slick and sophisticated abusers, to find more reasons to criticize the woman's behavior rather than his own, or to identify strategies to strengthen his hand in attempting to take custody of the children away from her.

Inappropriate or Questionable Curriculum Items

Curriculum items should be avoided that place extensive focus on the men's own feelings, particularly where the program is describing the man's violence as being a reaction to his uncomfortable or angry feelings. He should not be taught that managing his own emotions differently would make any significant changes in his abusive behavior, and he should be firmly discouraged from using his feelings as an excuse at all.

Some programs have clients identify what their "triggers" are, meaning situations or feelings that tend to be the most likely to send them into acts of violence or abuse. These discussions are risky, because they lend themselves easily to strengthening an abuser's excuses, and to keeping him focused on his view that his partner needs to change the things that *she* does that "set me off". If the program is going to discuss "triggers", the monitors should pay particularly careful attention to how this discussion is carried out, and be alert for any way than the issue is framed that will appear to feed excuses in this way, or that take too much focus off the men's attitudes as being the underlying problem in their behavior patterns. I'm not sure these "trigger" discussions are a good

idea at all. Perhaps similar discussions could be carried out by dropping the term “trigger,” which appears to relieve the man of responsibility, and replace it with something like, “areas about which you tend to be particularly abusive, bullying, or unfair.” If the goal is to get the man to be aware of the aspects of life where he needs to watch his own behavior the most closely, this frame seems like a better way to do it.

Any curriculum time that is not directly related to abusive behaviors, abusive attitudes, and changing those behaviors and attitudes to respectful ones, needs to be kept brief in batterer programs. Long discussions of other topics let abusers off the hook, send them the message (however unintentionally) that their battering behavior is not that serious, and waste precious time that the program needs to spend on the central issues in abuse. Until we have courts willing to require men to be in batterer programs for 18-24 months, we need every minute of every meeting to zero in on each man’s behaviors and attitudes, and to help him understand how his behavior has harmed his partner, former partners, and children, and what his responsibilities are currently to address the harm he has done.

Parenting Curriculum

Most batterer programs need to greatly expand the amount of time they devote to parenting issues. Three sessions on this issue per six months are a minimum. These presentations/discussions should include

1) Child abuse prevention

Topics under this part include: what physical abuse is and why it’s harmful to children, including reference to the research; alternate approaches to gaining children’s cooperation; what sexual abuse is and why it’s harmful to children; what proper respect for children’s boundaries looks like (the opposite of sexual abuse); what psychological abuse is and why it’s harmful to children; what respectful communication with children looks like.

A certain amount of education on children’s developmental stages can be helpful under this heading, because abusers often have behavioral expectations for children that are completely unrealistic for the children’s ages, and these unfair expectations can contribute to their abusiveness toward children.

2) Education on the effects on children of exposure to a man who abuses their mother

This section needs to include a detailed presentation on what the research shows on how children are affected by living in homes with a batterer. Clients need to be pressed to admit to and identify specific effects that they have observed in their own children or step-children. Clients need to be reminded that they are 100% responsible for how their own behavior has affected their children, and cannot blame the mother “because she pushed my buttons” or similar ways of shifting responsibility to her for the children’s distress.

3) Education on their proper role as co-parents

This section should include: behaviors that undermine the mother's authority and the psychological harm that this causes to children; how to respect her as a parent; how to properly make parenting decisions with her instead of bullying or controlling her parenting; proper post-separation parenting behaviors.

Men who abuse women tend to be manipulative and psychologically destructive as parents, and have much higher rates than other men of overtly abusing children (approximately seven times the rate of physical abuse and six times the rate of sexual abuse). Therefore a number of subjects typically addressed in parenting courses should be avoided when working with men who batter. These include strategies for earning children's trust, strategies for getting children to open up emotionally, and discussion of the importance of fathers in children's lives. Abusive men have too much potential to use these insights for purposes opposite to the ones for which they were intended. In particular, they are a risk to use their insights about children's psychology to turn children against their mother or against each other. This type of divisiveness and deliberate alienation is the most common and serious problem in the parenting of men who batter. Similarly, emphasizing to batterers the importance of fathers in children's lives will be used by many clients to justify seeking custody, to vilify the mother for her efforts to protect her children from him, or to criticize her for her supposed failure to recognize his importance.

It is impossible to distinguish in any reliable way between clients who will appropriately apply program concepts and those who will twist material to their own purposes. There is also no reliable way to distinguish clients who are psychologically, sexually, or physically dangerous to their children except by extensive investigation, which is beyond the capacity of a batterer program. Therefore, batterers should not be given general parenting education, or pressed to develop close relationships with their children, until they have 18 months or more violence-free, show dramatic progress in the concrete measures of change discussed below, *and the children's mother concurs that it would be beneficial for him to receive this type of training.*

In the mean time, the focus of parenting work with batterers should stay focused on making them aware that their abusive behavior as partners is harming their children, challenging them to stop mistreating children, and pressing them to support and assist the parenting work of their partners.

The program should specifically address post-separation parenting issues, including the importance of not speaking badly to children about their mother, not undermining their closeness to their mother, and not using a lack of discipline at his home as a way to undermine her parental authority in her home.

Clients should not be encouraged to go to court to seek visitation, and in fact should not be informed by program personnel that they have the option to do so, as this could be against the children's interests. Clients who are seeking custody, or who are seeking a visitation plan that the mother opposes, should be confronted by the group for this behavior, and the program's advocate should keep in touch with the victim about these legal proceedings.

Additional Issues Related to Children

At check-in each week, men should report the names and ages of all children that they have, and the names of those children's mothers (without last names, to protect confidentiality). This exercise brings the children symbolically into the room each week.

Every time an incident of violence is described by a client, whether the incident is recent or not, he should be required to describe where any children were during the incident, how they reacted, and any later effects that they manifested. If he denies that the children were affected, the group should remind him that they were indeed affected, whether he noticed the impact or not.

Programs should not, as a general rule, make a child abuse report against a victim of a client based on statements that he makes. These statements are inherently unreliable, and in some cases the abuser is actually looking to get the program to make a report against her. If the program is concerned, it should arrange for the advocate to contact the woman, and the advocate can make a child abuse report after talking to the woman if she feels it is warranted. I do not believe that mandated reporting laws require professionals to report allegations that they do not believe or find likely to be maliciously motivated.

Advocating for Clients

The program should be advocating for victims and children, not for the abusers. It should not assist the abuser to escape criminal consequences, nor should it assist him with custody or visitation matters. *The program should never write any letter on behalf of its client.* If the client states, "I need a letter for my attorney," the program should inform him that it does not provide such letters. If he needs a letter for a court, child protective service, or other referring agency, the program will provide a report directly to that agency, where the client does not get the opportunity to review the letter first to decide whether it serves his interests or not. (I find that when I explain this to clients, they generally change their minds and decide they don't want the letter after all.) Attorneys who call asking for the program to report verbally on the man's progress should be refused, with the explanation that the program only provides direct reports which are intended to be used in their entirety, and not to have selected pieces taken out of context.

The only appropriate advocacy for clients is to help them to seek services to overcome their additional problems, such as mental health or substance abuse issues, and to assist them in finding job training or placement assistance if they are unemployed. (Unemployment can contribute to a batterer's dangerousness, and also leaves him with too much time on his hands, which he may spend monitoring and controlling his partner, or abusing substances.)

THE NATURE OF GROUP SESSIONS

In monitoring group sessions, monitors should evaluate the following concerns:

- How well the time is used
- The tone of meetings

- How well leadership is shared between male and female co-leaders
- Whether men's behavior and attitudes is being appropriately challenged

How Well Time is Used

The group session should be used entirely for the group process, not for handling payment or other logistics, which need to be taken care of before or after the scheduled time of the group meeting. Meeting time is too short and valuable to let any of it get frittered away. Men should not report on "what kind of week they had," which eats up time on their discussions of their experiences, turning the session into a men's support group. They should report on any abusive or controlling behavior or attitude that they exhibited toward their partner, ex-partner, or children during the week, and any complaints or criticisms about the man that were raised by the woman or by their children. He should not describe at length the content of conflicts between him and his partner. He needs to keep it succinct, with the focus on *his* behavior and *her* concerns.

Men should not spend time reporting on their conflicts with other individuals outside of the family, except where those conflicts have a bearing on the family (e.g. where he is in conflict with his partner's friend or relative, or where his public behavior has an impact on his family, such as an incident of violent or inappropriate behavior at work that could cause him to lose his job and jeopardize the family economically, or where family members witnessed his abusive or intimidating behavior toward another individual).

Any time that is not needed for the curriculum discussion should be focused on "turns" for individual men, where they describe recent or past incidents of violent or abusive behavior on their part, and receive critical feedback from group members and counselors about those incidents. During those turns, attitudes should be identified that the man needs to change, and goals should be set for his future behavior. Men's counseling turns can also be used to give critical feedback about inappropriate or abusive attitudes that have been revealed by statements they have made during group meetings.

Each participant should get a counseling turn every few weeks, receiving 15 or 20 minutes of critical feedback. If the group is too large for this to occur, the size of the group needs to be reduced. Many abusers can be stellar participants in curriculum discussions, but nonetheless fail to apply any of the insights to their own issues, and thus can coast almost meaninglessly through an abuser program if they are not periodically given focused counseling time for the group to confront the man's own abusiveness and denial.

The Tone of Meetings

Counselors should be respectful at all times toward clients, and clients should be required to speak respectfully to one another. It is fine for debates to become heated or vociferous at times, but statements or actions should not be tolerated that are insulting, demeaning, ridiculing, or in any way could re-create (and therefore reinforce) behaviors that the abusers use with their partners at home.

The atmosphere in the room should be serious, but a certain amount of humor should be permitted, as long as it doesn't involve joking that puts women down or that

makes light of abusive behavior. Constructive statements that men make in the meeting should be acknowledged and validated; when clients find that they are criticized for the destructive statements they make (as they should be), but never acknowledged for their helpful statements, they begin to lose motivation to try to head the discussion in a positive direction. Many participants in abuser programs have histories (as any group of people would) of having been made to feel stupid and inferior when they were in school during their childhood, and I have seen some of those dynamics re-created in some batterer groups, where clients end up struggling to “get the right answer” and to try to win the teacher’s approval. Counselor should avoid quibbling with clients over minor issues in word choice, for example, and keep focused on the far more important issues at stake.

Clients should receive normal human sympathy for the injured legs and bad colds that they may come to group with, but should never receive sympathy for any of the complaints they make against their partners or former partners. At times these complaints may appear justified (or may truly be justified, for all we know), but it is counterproductive for an abuser to be able to use his abuser program to maintain or reinforce his focus on his partner’s shortcomings. He needs to be consistently reminded that he is there to work on his issues, not to focus on hers. Programs should not believe men’s reports about their partners’ behaviors or personalities anyway, because abusers are so very unreliable in their characterizations of their victims.

Counselors are most effective when they can accomplish the tricky task of making clients feel liked and cared about, yet not colluding with the client in any way or sending him a message that minimizes the destructiveness or cruelty of his actions in relationships. This requires counselors who can blend a firm, tough tone with a tone that is at the same time caring and humane. Counselors should not express sympathy for a client’s excuses or appear to be drawn in by his manipulations, but at the same time need to communicate to the client that the counselors believe that he has a human side, and that that side could ultimately triumph over his abusive aspects if he shows enough commitment to facing what he has done and addressing his issues.

How Well Leadership is Shared Between Male and Female Co-Leaders

Whenever possible, batterer groups should be run by male-female teams. This is valuable in many ways. The presence of the female counselor brings an awareness into group meetings of issues and perspectives that male co-leaders, however sensitive or aware, will not notice. Group members benefit from being required to interact with the female leader in a respectful way, and to learn to accept criticism from a female. Relationship between the co-leaders gives the group members a model of respectful male-female interaction, decision-making, and sharing of leadership.

However, these benefits can disappear if the female co-leader is relegated to an “assistant” status, or if there are other unequal or worrisome dynamics between the male and female co-leader. We do not want clients’ sexist beliefs to be reinforced by seeing an unhealthy power relationship between their group leaders.

Whether Men’s Behavior and Attitudes Are Being Appropriately Challenged

Any time a client reports an abusive behavior, exhibits an abusive attitude, or makes an anti-woman or pro-abuse statement in the group, it is essential that his statement be confronted. Similarly, men need to be called on all excuses, victim-blaming, and minimizing that they do. If it is not challenged, men in the group could interpret that silence as accepting the man's action or minimizing the seriousness of it, and thus could have the effect of colluding with their issues. This has an important practical application for group meetings: A client should not be allowed to say more than can reasonably be challenged in the time available in that session. Once a man has made three or four objectionable statements, for example, he should be stopped from talking further until the group has had time to unpack the things he has already said.

Where time simply runs out before counselors have been able to address all of the necessary issues, the remaining themes need to be noted, and counselors should follow-up on those themes at the next meeting, so that inappropriate behaviors do not fall through the cracks unchallenged. This is one of the reasons why it is important for monitors to observe at least two consecutive meetings of the same group; monitors need to observe how well issues are followed up on the next week, and how well counselors maintain the thread from meeting to meeting.

One problem that arises in this area is that some clients come to enjoy being criticized by the group, because they like to create a stir, make the counselors angry, and keep themselves at the center of attention. Such a client will sometimes deliberately make provocative statements that counselors will object to, in order to derail the curriculum piece that was scheduled for that session and to keep the focus on him. How can counselors meet their curriculum goals, but still not leave this client's behaviors unchallenged? The solution is to simply name his behavior as seriously inappropriate, declare that it will be addressed later, and then require that client to listen quietly without participating in the remainder of the meeting. The client should then be asked to remain after the meeting is over and challenged privately, at which time he should be informed that if this kind of disruptive behavior does not cease, he will have to be terminated from the program.

When time comes to give a man a "turn" for critical feedback, some group members will bolster the man's excuses, criticize his partner, or in other ways make colluding, pro-abuse statements. This should not be permitted. Clients may become irate when they are informed that they are not allowed to make colluding statements, but this rule needs to be enforced. Again, such problems are often best addressed outside of the session, where the client can be told privately that he will not only have to stop making enabling comments, but will actually have to replace those comments with critical feedback or be dismissed from the group.

Some clients never make critical comments to other group members and do not participate in holding others accountable. This should not be permitted. Some clients will say, "Well, I'm just a quiet guy," or "I'm not the kind to speak up in a group." This client needs to be informed that giving appropriate feedback to other group members, challenging abusive behaviors and attitudes and holding one another accountable, is a requirement of group participation, and that if he continues to go week after week without offering critical feedback, he will have to leave the program.

This last requirement will involve a dramatic change in how some programs operate, but I believe it is as essential as any other rule to making abuser groups be places

where participants actually feel that the other group members, not just the counselors, are demanding that they change. I do not believe that batterer groups can be effective in the absence of the creation of this sort of group dynamic. Giving appropriate critical feedback to other men will not come easily to many clients, especially in geographical areas where the overall culture is highly supportive of abuse towards women. Counselors will often have to act as trainers for their own clients, guiding them in how to give helpful critical comments to other batterers in their group. But this training, however difficult, is an essential aspect of the counselors' role. And in fact, it is precisely in those geographical areas where this sort of dynamic is the most difficult to create in a group – where guys really start to challenge each other to change – that it may be the most important to do so, because outside of group men will receive such heavy enabling from most or all of the other males in their lives (and perhaps from the females as well).

Criticism of clients should be direct, respectful, and as non-inflammatory as possible. *Abusers who are unduly inflamed by the criticism they receive at a batterer program may be an increased danger to their partners and children in the aftermath of the group.* When a client shows signs of becoming overheated by feedback that he is receiving, the group should back off somewhat and give him time to relax, continuing the counseling at a later time or even waiting until a later meeting. *Any current or past partners of the man who may be in danger from his reaction should be contacted immediately or as soon thereafter as possible to discuss his escalation at group and the state of mind that he appeared to leave the group in.* Counselors should also be aware that some clients do a “slow boil” to hide their intentions to retaliate at home, and therefore the program needs to be vigilant for subtler signs that a man may have vengeful intentions when he is angry about his experience in the group.

As you can probably see from a collection of points that I have made so far, the safety of women and children can be compromised when we *underconfront* abusers or when we *overconfront* abusers. Counseling work therefore requires a balancing act that needs to be carried out with great awareness.

Counselors have a responsibility to explain concepts and criticisms to clients in terms that the clients can understand. Sometimes a client who appears quite defensive turns out to be misunderstanding the discussion or is having trouble following what is being said.

Finally, monitors should be alert for times when counselors are accepting at face value the client's description of what his partner is like or how she behaves. For example, if a client reports that his partner is abusing alcohol, the program should not launch into telling him that her alcohol abuse could be a reaction to his abuse of her; this is a well-meaning but mistaken intervention, because he may be inventing or greatly exaggerating her alcohol problem, as abusers commonly do. (So, for example, I would begin my comments to the man by saying, “I don't know if your descriptions of her drinking are true, but if they are...” and continue from there.)

It is easy for even the best counselors to slip unawares into colluding with clients. Monitors can play a valuable roll in making program personnel aware of this kind of error.

PROGRAM COMPLETION

At this point in time, we do not have reliable measures of which abusers have made the kinds of changes that will make them unlikely to abuse women psychologically, physically, or sexually in the future. Outcome studies of abuser programs, almost without exception, have found very high rates of repeat offending by program completers. Therefore no client should be said to have “successfully” completed the program – it will take years to know if his completion was a successful one or not – and completers should not be given certificates to use as they please.

Clients should be armed only with a closing evaluation, which needs to discuss *in detail*: the full history of violence, psychological abuse, and other abusive behavior that he admitted to while in the program; the specific pieces of work that he did (following the “Guidelines for Assessing Change in Abusive Men”, posted at LundyBancroft.com); and the specific pieces of work that he did not do. The letter should specify that even if he took *all* of the expected steps, this is not a guarantee that he will not reoffend.

I believe that the proper length of an abuser program is probably in the range of 18-36 months, with structured “aftercare” for years afterwards. I hope that final reports from programs will start to use wording along the lines of, “John Doe has completed the 40 weeks in the abuser program required by the court, out of the 100 weeks that is recommended for participants.”

TERMINATION AND RE-ENROLLMENT

Court-ordered clients who are terminated from the program for inappropriate behavior in group, lack of progress, or reoffending, should not be readmitted to the program unless they have experienced additional legal consequences and/or have had additional conditions placed on their probation. Allowing a client to simply have another try ends up leaving him with no consequence for his previous action, and thus enables him. Programs should not accept clients who were terminated by other programs for any of the above reasons without discussing the case with that program, and meeting the condition that the client have additional legal consequences.

Clients who are terminated for poor attendance or for failure to pay should in most cases also be subject to the above requirement, but in some cases the program may want to make exceptions if it finds that poverty was a major obstacle to the man’s participation.

Programs can perhaps be somewhat more flexible with clients who are voluntary or who are sent by child protective services regarding the granting of second chances, but should always be on the alert that the abuser not be using the program in a manipulative way.

SERVING DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Monitors should examine the question of whether men of color and men who are low income are receiving services from the program that show race and class sensitivity.

Where possible, men should have the option of attending groups that are specific to their racial background (African-American, Latino, tribal), with counselors from their group. Programs outside of urban areas often will not have resources to provide this service, but should be pressed to do so as soon as they reasonably can. Program personnel should be trained on racist attitudes and how those could be exhibited, even unwaveringly, in their interactions with their clients and with victims. Further, program personnel should be trained on class attitudes, and monitors should observe whether blue-collar, unemployed, and poor men are being treated with respect and with sensitivity to the realities of their lives.

Same sex batterers; gay male or lesbian, should not have to participate in groups together with heterosexual male batterers, as it may not be safe for them to do so. Same-sex batterers may have to be served in individual counseling in many geographical areas, although this should be avoided whenever possible. Counselors should be from the same group (gay male or lesbian) whenever possible. Programs need to be sensitive to the fact that victims of same-sex battering are sometimes mistakenly identified as the perpetrators, and proper assessment needs to be made.

Women who are court-mandated to batterer programs as perpetrators of heterosexual domestic violence should not participate in a group with male batterers, nor should they be expected to follow the same curriculum. Eight to ninety percent of these women are incorrectly prosecuted, and should be receiving victim services only. The remaining percentage who truly are perpetrators of violence do not entirely fit the profile of the domestic batterer, and tend to have trauma histories that are playing an important role in their offending. Most practitioners believe that these women therefore need a hybrid service, where they are treated as perpetrators to some extent, with their attitudes and behaviors being confronted by the group, but that they simultaneously need attention to their own victimization and trauma issues, in a way that is not generally considered appropriate for men who batter.

There are an increasing number of men seeking abuser counseling who claim to have no history of violence, and who assert that their abuse is purely psychological. Many of these men have used lower levels of violence that they are denying, or have threatened violence, or have committed sexual assaults, and therefore properly belong in the regular abuser program. There is a remaining percentage, however, that appears to use only psychological abuse. These men will generally refuse to participate in the batterer program. Even if they agree to do the regular program, it may be counterproductive, as they may focus on how much worse the other men are, and actually use that awareness to minimize or justify their own destructiveness. Therefore, program should consider creating separate groups for psychologically abusive men who are not mandated to attend by the courts. These men should be switched to the batterer program any time violence, threats, or sexual assaults are revealed, whether recent or not.

Safety Planning With Battered Women, by Eleanor Lyons, Jill Davies, and Diane Monti-Catania. Sage Publications

and, if I do say so myself:

Why Does He Do That? by Lundy Bancroft, Berklee Books
and

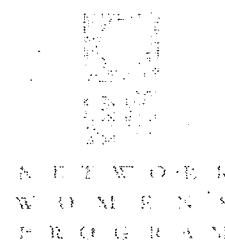
The Batterer as Parent by Lundy Bancroft and Jay Silverman, Sage Publications

¹ Standards in some states prohibit programs from revealing any information to the abuser from the partner contact. While I essentially agree with this safety precaution, I believe exceptions should be made where the woman specifically *wants* the man to be talked to about certain issues or behaviors. I have found that this process can be an empowering one for the woman, where she is able to advocate for herself by having the program challenge the man about issues that she feels unable to push him on, or that he refuses to allow her to talk about. Certainly there is a risk that the abuser will retaliate against her, and this risk should be reviewed with her. But if, after this safety discussion, she still wants the issue brought up with the man, she should have the right to this. I believe that to deny her that voice is ultimately patronizing; abused women have to make decisions every day about which risks are worth taking and which are not, and I would not choose to take that decision out of her hands. (I would make exceptions, however, in cases where I believed the man was particularly dangerous and I believed the woman was severely underestimating that danger.)



Stop Violence Against Women

A project by The Advocates for Human Rights



[Feedback](#) | [The VAW Monitor](#) | [Russian Site](#) | [About the Site](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Make A Donation](#)

search

[Home](#) > [Domestic Violence](#) > [Explore the Issue](#) > [Batterers' Intervention Programs](#) > [Effectiveness of Batterers' Intervention Programs](#)

[Print View](#)

[Home](#)

[What's New](#)

[National VAW Monitor Program](#)

[Trafficking in Women](#)

[Domestic Violence](#)

[Sexual Assault](#)

[Sexual Harassment](#)

[Global Gender Issues](#)

[International Law](#)

[Country Pages](#)

[Advocacy Tools](#)

[NGO Resources](#)

[Research Gateways](#)

[Expert's Corner](#)

[Calendar](#)

Effectiveness of Batterers' Intervention Programs

last updated October 17, 2008

In general, research has shown that Batterers Intervention Programs are most effective when combined with a coordinated community response that includes accountability to judicial systems. *From: Adams, David, "Treatment Programs for Batterers," Clinics in Family Practice, Vol. 5 No. 1, March 2003.*

Experts have conducted a variety of studies to determine the effectiveness of BIPs. Most agree that "effectiveness" means the cessation of abuse. This outcome has been measured in different ways, among them: no further complaints or arrests; the batterer's representations during treatment programs; the victim's reports to program officials. The studies concluded that BIPs have a "modest but positive" effect upon violence prevention. However, across all programs, men of color had a lower rate of program completion than white men, and thus experts agree that cultural competency is very important to program success. *From: Sullivan, Cris M., and Adams, Adrienne E., "A National Review of Outcomes and Indicators Used to Evaluate Domestic Violence Programs," prepared for United Way of Greater Milwaukee, February 2007.*

In a recent study, the Council of Europe agreed that "...the extent of behavioural change brought about by such programmes is modest. At best they control and reduce the danger of physical violence, but rarely eliminate the pattern of dominance behind it." *From: Hagemann-White, Carol, and Bohn, Sabine, Protecting Women against Violence: Analytical study on the effective implementation of Recommendation Rec (2002)5 on the protection of women against violence in Council of Europe member states, Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Strasbourg, 2007.*

A 2003 report by the World Health Organization, entitled *Intervening with Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: A Global Perspective*, confirmed a moderate success rate, stating that reviews of BIPs in the US and UK found that about two-thirds of people who complete BIPs remain non-violent for up to three years. However, from 22-42% of abusers studied in the US and in Canada failed to complete a program.

Other research indicates that BIPs have little effect on recidivism or attitudes of violent offenders. However, at least one study found that men who were required to attend longer programs had significantly fewer complaints lodged against them than those who completed an 8-week program. *From: National Institute of Justice, Special Report: Batterers Intervention Programs: Where Do We Go From Here? June 2003 at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij.*

Additionally, shorter programs, with less time to change batterer

Related Subjects

[Counseling and Treatment](#)

[Starting a Batterers' Intervention Program](#)

[Influential US Batterers' Intervention Programs](#)

[History and Theories of Batterers' Intervention Programs in the USA](#)

[Batterers' Intervention Programs in CEE/FSU Countries](#)

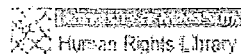
[Best Practices for Batterers' Intervention Programs](#)

[United States Standards for Batterers' Intervention Programs](#)

attitude, may create more sophisticated batterers who learn to control their partner's behavior through methods of intimidation other than physical violence. For indicators of reliable changes in batterer's attitudes see Guidelines for Assessing Change in Attitude [at www.LundyBaneroff.com](http://www.LundyBaneroff.com).

Copyright 2003 Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

Permission is granted to use this material for non-commercial purposes. Please use proper attribution.



The Official Website of the Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)

Mass.Gov

Health and Human Services

[Home](#) > [Consumer](#) > [Family Services](#) > [Violence / Abuse or Neglect](#) > [Offender Services](#) > [Batterer Intervention](#) >

Does Batterer Intervention Work?

Certified Batterer Intervention Programs have two central goals: victim safety and batterer accountability.

- **Victim Safety:** We know that many victims simply want the violence to stop. BIPs can provide important information to victims to assist them in making informed decisions about their safety. BIPs can provide victims with referral information for support services in their own communities. In addition, BIPs can answer victims' questions about domestic violence and can keep victims informed about their partners' ongoing participation in the program.
- **Batterer Accountability:** BIPs work with batterers to help them identify and take responsibility for their abusive behaviors and the effects of their abuse on their intimate partners and children. These are important first steps in the transition to a non-abusive lifestyle. BIPs also work closely with others in their communities as part of the coordinated community response to domestic violence.

Given these goals, the answer to the question, "Does batterer intervention work?" is a resounding, "Yes!"

Beyond these central goals of BIPs, when people ask, "Does batterer intervention work?" they often want to know if batterer intervention can stop domestic violence. The best research on the effectiveness of BIPs looks at recidivism (whether or not a batterer is charged by the criminal justice system with a new domestic violence offense after attending a BIP), the community's commitment to batterer accountability, and victim reports. This research tells us that batterer intervention programs can help batterers make positive changes. Batterers who complete batterer intervention programs are less likely to commit new acts of violence or to violate restraining orders. Several studies show that batterer intervention programs reduce recidivism by 36-85% (Dutton, 1986; Edleson & Grusznski, 1988; Tolman & Bennett, 1990; Gondolf, 1997; Gondolf, 1999).

The reality is, however, that batterer intervention programs alone cannot stop domestic violence and cannot guarantee victim safety. Certified batterer intervention programs can give batterers a reason to change and ways for doing so, but it is up to the individual batterer to decide whether or not he/she will continue to be abusive. **Only batterers can change their behavior.** Certified BIPs play an important role in the coordinated community response to domestic violence, along with the courts, police, health care providers, educators, government agencies, families, friends, and neighbors. Certified BIPs are most effective when their central goals of victim safety and batterer accountability are reinforced throughout the community. Domestic violence will end when we all work together to bring about change.

This information is provided by the [Violence Prevention and Intervention Services](#) within the [Department of Public Health](#).

© 2008 Commonwealth of Massachusetts