

Domestic Violence Offender Program Standards

Developed by:
**Nebraska Domestic Violence
Sexual Assault Coalition**

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Introduction

The Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition (Coalition) provides these revised standards to individuals and programs throughout the state who are committed to providing quality intervention programs for men who batter. The development and support of intervention programs, in conjunction with adequate services to victims and their children, are a critical part of the community effort to reduce domestic violence. The revised standards will go into effect on June 1, 2008.

The revised standards were developed by the Domestic Violence Offender Standards Review Committee (DVOSRC). The primary responsibility of this committee is to review and recommend approval of program applications and to support the development of services for offenders. Members as of June, 2008 include:

- Toni Ahrendt, Nebraska State Probation, Lincoln
- Stacey Bacon, Crisis Center, Fremont
- Kerry Beldin, University of Nebraska at Omaha
- Sheri DeJonge, Crisis Center, Kearney
- Tonya Folk, Community Domestic Violence Intervention Project, North Platte
- Pam Moore, Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition, Lincoln
- Bob Moyer, Family Violence Council, Lincoln, chairman
- Judy Priess, SASA Crisis Center, Hastings
- Robert Sanford, Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition, Lincoln
- Judy Seeman, YWCA, Omaha
- Mary Visek, Nebraska State Probation, Omaha

For more information about these standards and the DVOSRC, please contact Pam Moore, at the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition.

Note on Language

Because the majority of domestic violence victims are women and the offenders are men, we refer to the victim as a woman and the offender as a man throughout this document. Men can be victims of domestic violence and both men and women can be victims in same sex relationships. However, the primary focus of these standards is on men who batter women.

Fundamentals

Definition of Domestic Abuse

For the purpose of these standards, and as a reference for those who provide intervention services to perpetrators of domestic abuse, the definition of domestic abuse shall be understood as follows:

Abuse is behavior that physically harms, arouses fear or prevents a victim from doing what he/she wishes. Relationships in which one partner uses assault and coercion can be found among married and unmarried heterosexuals, lesbians and gay males.

Not all forms of domestic abuse are criminal. Domestic abuse is an attempt to control the behavior, emotional, and/or intellectual life of another person and to diminish or prevent that person's free choice.

It is a myth that batterers resort to violence when they lose control. In fact, abuse is deliberate. Offenders are responsible for their behaviors. The most prevalent cause of domestic violence is the abuser's belief that the abuser is entitled to use abusive behaviors against an intimate partner. Commonly, abusers learn this belief system by living in a patriarchal hierarchy, however there are other causes. Abuse may consist of one, or a combination of two or more of the following behavioral elements:

- Physical assault
- Threats, including threats:
 - Of bodily harm or to well-being,
 - To privacy such as regarding sexual orientation or immigration status, or
 - To children, pets, or other people close to the victim
- Verbal and emotional abuse such as intimidation, coercion, isolation or degradation.
- Economic forms of control such as withholding or denying access to money or other basic resources, sabotaging employment, housing or educational opportunities.
- Sexual assault or coercion
- Social isolation such as possessiveness, jealousy, denying communication with friends, inhibiting access to transportation and telephone.
- Stalking, harassing and ongoing monitoring and pursuing of the victim
- Acts of abuse against children

Statutory definitions of Domestic Violence

Nebraska law now defines domestic violence in three places.

Domestic assault is defined as a crime in Nebraska Statue 28-323, which states:

- (1) A person commits the offense of domestic assault in the third degree if he or she:
 - (a) Intentionally and knowingly causes bodily injury to his or her intimate partner; or
 - (b) Places, by physical menace, his or her intimate partner in fear of imminent bodily injury.
- (2) A person commits the offense of domestic assault in the second degree if he or she intentionally and knowingly causes bodily injury to his or her intimate partner with a dangerous instrument.
- (3) A person commits the offense of domestic assault in the first degree if he or she intentionally and knowingly causes serious bodily injury to his or her intimate partner.

For purposes of this section, intimate partner means a spouse; a former spouse; persons who have a child in common whether or not they have been married or lived together at any time; and persons who are or were involved in a dating relationship. For purposes of this subsection, dating relationship means frequent, intimate associations primarily characterized by the expectation of affectional or sexual involvement, but

does not include a casual relationship or an ordinary association between persons in a business or social context.

In the Nebraska civil code, domestic abuse is defined. Nebraska Revised Statutes section 42-903, the Protection From Domestic Abuse Act, defines abuse as the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between household members:

- a) attempting to cause or intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury with or without a deadly weapon; or
- b) placing by physical menace, another in fear of imminent bodily injury; or
- c) engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration without consent as defined in section 28-318.

“Family or household member” includes spouses or former spouses, children, persons who are presently residing together or who have resided together in the past, persons who have a child in common whether or not they have been married or have lived together at any time, and other persons related by consanguinity or affinity, and persons who are presently involved in a dating relationship with each other or who have been involved in a dating relationship with each other. For purposes of this subsection, dating relationship means frequent, intimate associations primarily characterized by the expectation of affectional or sexual involvement, but does not include a casual relationship or an ordinary association between persons in a business or social context.

During the 2007 Legislative, LB554 was passed and signed into law making changes to the Parenting Act. 43-2922 (8) defines domestic intimate partner abuse as:

(a) An act of abuse, as defined in section 42-903, and the existence of a pattern or history of such an act without any recency or frequency requirement, including, but not limited to, one or more of the following: Physical assault or sexual assault, threats of physical assault or sexual assault, stalking, harassment, mental cruelty, emotional abuse, intimidation, isolation, economic abuse, or coercion against any current or past intimate partner or an abuser using a child to establish or maintain power and control over any current or past intimate partner. The following acts shall be included within the definition of domestic intimate partner abuse if the acts contributed to coercion or intimidation of the intimate partner: (i) An act of child abuse or neglect or a threat of such act. A finding by a child protection agency shall not be considered res judicata or collateral estoppel regarding such issue and shall not be considered by the court unless each parent is afforded the opportunity to challenge any such determination; (ii) Cruel mistreatment or cruel neglect of an animal, as defined in section 28-1008, or a threat of such act; or (iii) Other acts of abuse, assault, or harassment, or threats of such acts, against other family or household members; or (b) One act of physical violence resulting in serious bodily injury against any current or past intimate partner, excluding any act of self-defense.

In addition, LB554 also established definitions for economic and emotional abuse. Here are the definitions in 43-2922:

(9) Economic abuse means causing or attempting to cause an individual to be financially dependent by maintaining total control over the individual's financial resources, including, but not limited to, withholding access to money or credit cards, forbidding attendance at school or employment, stealing from or defrauding of money or assets, exploiting the victim's resources for personal gain of the abuser, or withholding physical resources such as food, clothing, necessary medications, or shelter;

(10) Emotional abuse means a pattern of acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics, including, but not limited to, threatening or intimidating to gain compliance, destruction of the victim's personal property or threats to do so, violence to an animal or object in the presence of the victim as a way to instill fear, yelling, screaming, name-calling, shaming, mocking, or criticizing the victim, possessiveness, or isolation from friends and family. Emotional abuse can be verbal or nonverbal.

Philosophy Statement

Intervention programs are founded in the recognition that men who batter achieve and maintain power. Battering is instrumental behavior that may be the most effective method to gain power and control over intimate partners. Historically, society has sanctioned men's use of abusive tactics, including violence to maintain dominance in relationships. Men's use of these abusive tactics, including violence, within the context of the family has been tolerated and protected as appropriate male prerogative.

Intervention programs for men who abuse maintain that the offenders of domestic violence are solely responsible for their actions. They reject notions of provocation or loss of control and assert that offenders carefully select the targets of their abuse and choose the circumstances of their violence, including the amount of injury inflicted by their assaults.

Because men who abuse choose violence, they can also choose to stop abusive behaviors, including use of violence, in their intimate relationships. Intervention programs are charged with educating men to consider the options for ceasing abusive behavior and embracing belief systems respectful of women. Intervention programs also must recognize that the decision to not use abusive behaviors, including violence, rests exclusively with the offender.

The safety of the victim(s) supersedes the interests of the offender and offender intervention program. The offender intervention program will clearly state that the programs are targeted at changing offenders' abusive behaviors, not salvaging marriages or relationships.

Purpose of Standards

The purposes of creating these standards are to:

- promote consistency of services statewide and to provide a process to evaluate those services;
- provide a model for intervention which identifies and remediates tactics of power and control;
- challenge beliefs of offenders so they can see they are accountable for their behavior and can change that behavior, especially when given appropriate alternatives;
- establish a minimum level of responsibility, service and accountability expected from providers;
- enhance the public's awareness of domestic violence and encourage a community context that does not tolerate abuse and use of violence; and
- remind providers that intervention services are a small, but important, part of community strategies to end violence against women and children.

Purpose of Intervention Programs

The purposes of the programs are to:

- hold offenders accountable, challenge their beliefs, and teach new skills to help offenders change their behavior;
- provide role models while educating offenders about non-controlling behaviors;
- collect data to assist with evaluations of program effectiveness and recidivism;
- confront collusion and victim-blaming by offenders and others;
- challenge myths about domestic violence;
- coordinate services including referrals to other agencies for needed services;
- heighten public awareness by making information available to the community; and
- report compliance and noncompliance to the courts or other referral sources.

Principles of Practice

Programs must recognize and state that:

- Domestic abuse cuts across all lines of race, ethnicity, education, social class, sexual preference, age, religion, geography and physical and mental ability.
- Domestic abuse is rooted in institutionalized imbalance of power between men and women.
- Abuse is not tolerated under any circumstance. All behavior, whether intentional or unintentional, has consequences and is the sole responsibility of the actor. Offenders must learn that engaging in abusive behavior has serious consequences.
- Domestic abuse is a learned and chosen behavior and therefore can be unlearned. New ways of participating in intimate relationships can be implemented. Domestic abuse is rarely caused by disease, diminished intellect, addiction, mental illness or any external person or event.
- Each individual is totally responsible for his own acts, no matter what the circumstances. The person who chooses to abuse is responsible for the abuse, not the person who is the target of abuse.
- Intervention with men who abuse may give the victim a false sense of security and may serve as a substantial disincentive to separation and other safety planning. Therefore, intervention must be undertaken with particular care to safeguard victims.
- No intervention program for offenders should be initiated in a community unless there is a program for battered women that provides safe housing, advocacy and support services.
- It is in the best interest of the victim to expand her network of support through involvement at a domestic violence/sexual assault program or other agency offering information, advocacy and support. Therefore, offender intervention services should make timely, informed referrals for victims.
- Victim contact is a valuable support for intervention, but it may endanger the victim's safety. The safety of the battered woman always supersedes the interests of the offender in an offender program.
- Victims are entitled to access information from programs for men who abuse on program philosophy and curriculum content, as well as on the attendance, and termination from the program.
- In intervention with men who abuse, service providers have a special duty to warn victims of threats.
- Offenders should pay all or part of their own program costs to indicate accountability.
- Program plans should allow for individual needs of participants such as physical disabilities or functional illiteracy.
- Providers will maintain individual standards that reflect professionalism. They will maintain a personal demeanor that is consistent with a professional appearance and attitude. Providers will be violent-free in their professional and personal lives.
- Providers must cooperate with other interrelated agencies, including service providers for victims and the criminal justice system. Continued interagency communication and cooperation is essential to assess the lethality of the offender, the potential for harm to the victim, and the effectiveness of the programs.
- The standards may undergo review and revision. The review and revision process will be consistent with experiences of new knowledge, skills and methods.

Collaboration Standards

Safety for victims of domestic violence must always be the primary goal of an intervention program. So, intervention programs must establish cooperative, accountable relationships with local domestic violence/sexual assault programs, the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition (Coalition) and the courts, including probation. The program must also responsibly participate in the local coordinated community response efforts to stop domestic abuse. Aspects of collaborations could include referral protocols with courts, client reporting procedures, participation in coordinated response coalitions and victim safety procedure protocols with domestic violence/sexual assault programs.

Offender intervention programs shall not exist in isolation. Intervention programs must develop within a community approach.

Offender intervention programs must establish procedures for safeguarding battered women and understand laws on domestic violence and the operation of the justice system.

Contact with Probation/Courts

To work toward an increased level of accountability, programs must communicate with Probation/Courts regarding participants who are court directed/mandated to attend. At a minimum, programs should provide the following information:

Monthly Contact:

- Each program must complete an individual monthly report on all program participants who are on probation. This report must be submitted to the identified probation officer by a date decided upon by both the program and probation.
- Monthly Reports must be completed using the Standardized form (see appendix D)

Change in Status or Non-Compliance Contact:

- Programs must inform probation/court if the participant is discharged from the program within 48 hours of discharge.
- Each program must contact the individual probation officer within 24 hours of discovery of any new violence on behalf of the participant.

Transfer Policy

- Any individual transferring from one Nebraska program to another Nebraska program as a result of a non-compliant discharge must start over with the second program.
- Any individual in good standing in a Nebraska program who seeks to transfer to another Nebraska program as a result of a lifestyle change that makes it impossible for the offender to continue in the program may do so without losing time in the program.
- Any individual in good standing in a Nebraska program who seeks to transfer as a matter of preference to another Nebraska program may do so, but the offender must start over.
- Any individual transferring into a Nebraska program from outside of Nebraska must start over unless the offender is in good standing in a program that appears to conform to these standards. Program verification must be made by the staff of a Nebraska program contacting staff with the out-of-state program.
- An offender is considered in good standing if:

- all homework assignments have been completed;
- group fees are current;
- group attendance policies have been met; and
- all group rules are followed.

Advertising/Public Information Policy

Programs will establish a media policy addressing advertising and public information. Elements of this policy will include:

- Advertising for offender programs should indicate they are a part of a community response to domestic abuse and not the sole means for ending domestic abuse.
- Offender programs will clearly state the programs are targeted at changing batterers' violent behaviors, not salvaging marriages or relationships.

Structural Components

Program Content

Length of Program

The length of the intervention program should not be less than 24 weekly group sessions lasting for 90 minutes per session. This does not include intake and orientation sessions.

Appropriate Intervention Approaches

- The preferred model for offender intervention programs are group sessions co-facilitated by one male and one female for the purpose of modeling healthy egalitarian relationships.
- The model is educational. It addresses abuse in both a personal and social context through gender-based expectations, beliefs and attitudes. The model acknowledges that violence is a learned behavior and can be unlearned.
- Intervention may also be provided on an individual basis under certain circumstances. Individual intervention must be documented by the provider in the individual's case file and must be limited to domestic violence issues.
- Providers may decide whether groups are open (accepting new members on an ongoing basis) or closed.
- Groups must be of same gender.

Inappropriate Intervention Approaches

- Any intervention approach that blames or intimidates the victim or places the victim in any danger is not allowed. (There is no behavior on the part of the victim which causes or excuses abuse. Offenders bear sole responsibility for their actions.)
- Any approach that coerces, mandates or otherwise requires victim participation is inappropriate. (Couples, marriage or family therapy is not recommended during the offender intervention program.)
- Psychodynamic interventions which link causes of the violence to past experiences.
- Communication enhancement or anger management techniques which lay primary causality of violent behavior on anger are prohibited.
- Systems theory approaches which treat the violence as a mutually circular process, (i.e. blaming the victim) are inappropriate.
- Counseling models that identify the victim and children as enabling or codependent in the violence are not allowed.
- Any approach that encourages gradual containment and de-escalation of violence is prohibited.
- Theories or techniques that identify addiction or poor impulse control as the primary cause of the violence are inappropriate.
- Methods that identify psychopathology on the part of either party as a primary excuse of violence are not allowed.
- Teaching fair fighting techniques as a method of reducing violence is prohibited.
- Couple counseling, couple groups, mediation, marriage enhancement weekends or family therapy are inappropriate interventions with offenders. These interventions shall not be considered a component

of batterer intervention. Victims shall not be compelled to participate in any aspect of the batterer intervention.

- Concurrent treatment for mental or substance abuse problems may take place during the intervention program.
- Treatment for mental or substance abuse problems shall not be substituted for an intervention program.
- Individual concurrent counseling is acceptable.
- Same-sex offenders should not be placed in the same group as heterosexual offenders. The intervention program must have discretion to deal with a same-sex victim.

Program Fees

- A fee for services, no matter how minimal, will be assessed and paid by the offender. It is recommended that the offenders pay in a regular, consistent basis.
- Participant fees may be based on a sliding scale and based on the program's determination of the offender's ability to pay. Programs must accept indigent participants.

Program Attendance Policy

- The offender must complete the 24 sessions of the intervention program. However, the offender cannot begin that program until intake and orientation are completed; and
- Notice of this policy must be signed by the offender and in his file.

Program Curriculum Content

- Program topics must follow a model that depicts an overall system of physical and sexual abuse where the offender uses methods of power and control over a victim. Those tactics include:
 - Using intimidation;
 - Using emotional abuse;
 - Using isolation;
 - Minimizing, denying and blaming;
 - Using children;
 - Using male privilege;
 - Using economic abuse; and
 - Using coercion and threats.
- Offender intervention providers must provide information on each of the following content areas in the intervention sessions:
 - The offender's responsibility for the violent and abusive behavior;
 - The definition of domestic abuse;
 - The myths and beliefs about domestic abuse, including myths about provocation;
 - Listening and communication skills and listening with empathy;
 - Problem solving skills;
 - Stereotypical gender role and societal expectations, including male privilege;
 - The effects of domestic abuse on victim, children, self, and others;
 - The relationship of alcohol and drug use/abuse with domestic abuse; and
 - The role of ethnicity and culture in domestic abuse.
- Intervention programs will make no differentiation between forms and levels of intensity of violent behaviors.

Intake and Orientation Procedures

The program has authority to accept or reject referrals and therefore, the program will develop and use criteria for acceptance or rejection for intervention services. Some offenders are not ready or are not appropriate for an intervention program. If a program does not have the capacity to make an adequate assessment for compounding problems, such as substance abuse or mental illness, assessments should be done by the appropriate agency with follow up to the intervention program. The criteria for accepting/rejecting clients should be included in the program's policies and procedures.

Intake

The following intake standards should be implemented:

- During intake, the program should obtain a thorough history of the following:
 - Abuse, battering and control of the current victim and previous partners;
 - Violence involving non-intimate other;
 - History of substance abuse
 - History of mental illness and related treatment
 - Past suicide threats or attempts
 - Reports/investigations of child abuse or neglect
- During intake and periodically thereafter, the program will assess for potential lethality. Domestic violence offenders have the potential to greatly injure or kill others. While an offender's behavior cannot be predicted or accounted for by program staff, because primary program objectives seek to provide for the safety of the victims and contribute to efforts to hold offenders accountable, lethality assessments are an important part of the program structure. Changes that may occur in the offender's life during the time he is involved in the program, such as increased alcohol use or a breakup with a partner, can increase his potential for lethality. So, lethality assessments throughout his involvement in the program are required. See Appendix B for lethality assessment
- The program shall review with the offender the contract for services that clearly spells out obligations in the program and the nature of an intervention program.
- The program has a policy and procedures on victim contact during intake that is consistent with the Victim Contacts section.
- If the program rejects a court-mandated applicant for intervention services, it must advise the court of the bases for rejection.
- The program does not discriminate against any applicant based on race, class, age, physical handicap, religion, educational attainment, ethnicity, national origin or sexual preference.

Orientation

All clients should receive an orientation prior to beginning the program. An orientation outline and a statement acknowledging the need to attend must be in each offender's file. Orientation should include:

- The definition of domestic abuse;
- An introduction of the power and control wheel;
- An introduction of the equality wheel;
- An overview of rules and regulations;
- An overview of effects of domestic abuse on children; and
- An outline of program content showing the dynamics of power and control, the effects of abuse on the victim, children and others, gender roles, socialization and the nature of the abuse.

Victim and Partner Notification and Contact

Victim and partner safety is of the utmost importance and is the first priority of any batterer intervention program (BIP). Victim and Partner Notification is required for the purpose of enhancing the safety of battered women and children and providing information about the intervention services, the importance of safety planning and the availability of services from local domestic violence and sexual assault programs.

For these reasons, BIP's shall have written policies and procedures that govern victim and partner notification and contact. These written policies and procedures must effectively address the safety of victims and current partners. Victim and partner contact is not for purpose of promoting rehabilitation of men who batter. Victim and current partner contact initiated by a Batterer Intervention Program shall consist of the following:

- 1) Initial victim and partner notification**
- 2) Notification of Completion**
- 3) Notification of Termination**
- 4) Notification of Imminent Threats to Health or Safety (duty to warn)**

Programs are required to notify participant that they will make these victim and current partner contacts.

1) Initial Victim and Partner Notification:

- The program shall notify, in writing, the victim and current partner of the offender being accepted into the program. Notification shall be made within four (4) days after the participant has signed the program contract. Programs are required to make reasonable efforts to determine a correct address to send the written information. This would include seeking a correct address from at least 2 sources which might have this knowledge, such as the program participant, law enforcement or adult probation. Programs will document in the victim/current partner file efforts to determine a correct address to send information to the victim. Batterer Intervention Programs may conduct initial notification by telephone, however, the letters and accompanying information are still required.
- Victim and current partner notification must include the following information:
 - Information about the Batterer Intervention Program including program structure, program content and program philosophy
 - The limitations of the program, including a statement the batterer's participation in a BIP does not ensure the participant will stop any or all battering behaviors*
 - Contact information for the local domestic violence and sexual assault program
 - Name and contact information for probation office
 - A clear statement that the victim and current partner is not expected in any way to help the participant complete any BIP requirements and that the participant's eligibility for the BIP's services is not contingent in any way on victim or current partner participation or victim or current partner contact with the BIP
 - Provision for further contacts with the victim, such as after 12 weeks.
 - Copy of "A Partner's Guide to Batterer Intervention Programs for Men"***

** Victims and the public at large generally believe in the efficacy of intervention programs, therefore; all information disseminated to battered women and the public must clearly set forth the limitations of offender intervention programs. Communications should not represent programs as achieving more than*

they can actually accomplish. Victim and public information should specifically state that intervention services provide a minor role in the community plan to reduce domestic violence.

***Sample letters for initial contact and a Copy of “A Partner’s Guide to Batterers’ Intervention Programs for Men” are included in attachment F.*

- The BIP shall document in writing initial victim and current partner notification. If written notification is returned, the unopened mail shall be placed in the victim and current partner’s file. If phone contact is initiated, the BIP must also document this for the file. **No victim or current partner contact information shall be kept in the offender’s file.**

2) Notification of Participant Completion

- The BIP shall notify the victim and current partner, in writing, within four (4) days of the participant’s contractual discharge from the program. Notification shall include:
 - Notification that the offender has completed the program
 - Contact information for the local domestic violence and sexual assault program
 - Name and contact information for adult probation office
 - A clear statement that the batterer’s completion of the program does not ensure the participant will stop any or all battering behaviors
- The BIP shall document in writing victim and current partner notification. If written notification is returned, the unopened mail shall be placed in the victim and current partner’s file. **No victim and current partner contact information shall be kept in the offender’s file.**

3) Notification of Termination

- The BIP will **immediately** attempt to notify the victim and current partner of the offender’s termination from the program. The BIP must notify the victim and current partner within the first 24 hours after termination from the program.
- All efforts to notify the victim and current partner by phone or in person shall be documented in writing. **No victim and partner contact information shall be kept in the offender’s file.**

4) Notification of Imminent Threat to Health or Safety (Duty to Warn)

- The BIP must attempt to immediately notify the victim and current partner of any real or perceived threats to the victim’s or current partner’s health or safety. Attempts at immediate notification must be made by phone or in person. The BIP must disclose participant information when the BIP, in good faith, believes such disclosure is needed to prevent or lessen an imminent threat to the health and/or safety of the victim and current partner. No authorization to release information is required under these circumstances.
- This duty to notify victims/current partners of imminent threat is not limited to situations where the participant has been hostile or made threats. The program has a duty whenever it reasonably believes, for whatever the reason including simply intuition, that the victim/current partner health and safety may be threatened.

- The BIP shall immediately contact law enforcement when the BIP, in good faith, believes there is a real or perceived threat to another person or the public. No authorization to release information is required under these circumstances.
- The BIP shall immediately contact the supervising adult probation officer of the participant when the BIP, in good faith, believes there is a real or perceived threat to another person or the public. No authorization to release information is required under these circumstances.
- All efforts, whether successful or not, to notify a victim and current partner, another person or the public shall be documented in writing. **No victim and current partner contact information shall be kept in the offender's file.**
- Any real or perceived threats to the health or safety of a victim and current partner, another person or the public issued by the offender shall be documented in writing in offender's file.

5) Victim-Initiated or Partner-Initiated Contact

Batterer Intervention Programs should not be the primary resource to victims and current partners of program participants. It is essential that services to victims/partners be provided separately for victims and not as a part of the BIP. Staff providing services to batterers should not engage in direct or on-going advocacy with a victim or current partner.

Though victim advocacy is considered an integral aspect of offender programs, the victim and current are best served by referrals to a local domestic violence and sexual assault program. Such referrals are essential to avoid conflict of interest and because of the expertise of the victim's program in safety planning and victim issues.

If a victim or current partner initiates contact with any BIP staff, **BIP staff shall not inform the program participant about the victim and current partner contact.**

In response to victim and current partner initiated contact, BIP programs must clearly state that the victim or partner is under no obligation to provide any information, that refusal to do so won't affect the status of the participant and that any information shared with the BIP will be kept confidential unless the victim and current partner expressly authorize disclosure of the information or unless release of information is required by law or court order.

In considering whether to receive information from the victim and current partner, the BIP shall prioritize victim or partner safety over any other concern. When a program concludes that contact with the victim is unsafe, such as when the safety and lethality risks related to victim contacts supersede no contact with the victim at all, the program will end all contact with the victim except to warn the victim about immediate threats, dangers, and risks posed by the program participant. This guideline is true even though use of the information may help improve the intervention with the program participant.

Confidentiality

Victim Confidentiality

- Intervention programs shall maintain the confidentiality of victims, unless confidential communications are specifically waived by the victim in writing.
- Intervention programs shall not persuade or coerce victims to waive confidentiality and shall inform victims of the limits to confidentiality.
- The program has a duty to report child abuse or vulnerable adult abuse according to state law.

- The program has a duty to warn the intended victim if the client makes an explicit threat to harm someone else. The program also has a duty to warn when the client exhibits characteristics that suggest dangerousness.
- Intervention programs must keep separate records for the offender and victim. Separate record keeping reduces the risk of inadvertent disclosure. Information about victims, even in separate case records, should be kept to a minimum.

Offender Confidentiality

Offenders in intervention programs are accorded and notified in writing the limits to confidentiality. (See Offender Contract Components)

Other Persons Attending Offender Intervention Groups

No person may observe an intervention program session who does not have a valid purpose to be there. Appropriate notice should be given to the coordinator or facilitator of the intervention program before an outside person attends the group.

Offender Contract Components

To ensure informed consent, the following issues must be addressed in offender contracts for intervention programs:

- Statement of philosophy consistent with these Standards;
- Length of program;
- Criteria for discharge, including a clause noting that failure to comply with terms of the contract could lead to being discharged;
- A clause noting that failure to follow participant rules or guidelines could lead to being discharged;
- Attendance policies and consequences of inadequate attendance;
- The expectation of active participation, including sharing personal experiences, values and attitudes and completing group activities and assignments;
- An agreement to stop violent and threatening behaviors, to be non-abusive and non-controlling in relationships, to comply with all court orders, and to cooperate with the rules for group participation;
- Other program expectations, such as written exams, concurrent treatment requirements, rules regarding possession of weapons, and any other conditions on participation in the intervention program;
- Fees/methods of payment;
- Drug and alcohol policy, including the requirement that the offender attend sessions free of drugs or alcohol;
- Note that groups may have visitors from time to time who have an appropriate purpose for attending, such as Adult Probation officers; and
- Each offender must execute written waivers of confidentiality upon entering the program. These waivers are related to:
 - Contact with any victim of the offender for information sharing about acceptance, rejection, change of program participation or discharge of the offender;
 - Duty to warn and protect victims, law enforcement and third parties related to any risk of serious harm posed by the offender;

- When the offender is mandated to intervention services by the court, the waiver specifies that all information regarding the offender's participation will be revealed to the probation office and the court; and that the appropriate office within the justice system must be apprised of a mandated offender's failure to participate, further acts of violence and discharge. Reports required by the court and probation regarding participation in intervention services;
- The right to confidentiality within the specified limits, and the requirement that participants safeguard the confidentiality of other group members;
- When the confidentiality waivers expires. The program should provide a specific date when the waiver expires.
- Requirement that the offender provide important, relevant documents such as documents related to prior violence, prior or concurrent treatment services, or execute appropriate releases of information to obtain the privileged information.

Offender Rules

Every intervention program shall have written participant rules and guidelines. These rules should be distributed to offenders upon completion of intake. The rules shall include specific guidelines about:

- attendance,
- fees,
- assignments,
- smoking/food or drink consumption,
- alcohol/drug use,
- group structure and rules,
- discharge,
- re-admission, and
- confidentiality.

Discharge

Administrative Discharge

The program shall develop guidelines for administrative discharge so that discharge decisions are uniform and predictable, and to prevent discrimination against any participant based on race, class, age, physical handicap, religion, educational attainment, ethnicity, national origin or sexual preference, except as the program is not able to provide adequate intervention services based on the state of its current development, personnel or resources.

Programs shall administratively discharge participants who commit a violent crime or violate a protection order.

Evaluation for administrative discharge may be undertaken in other circumstances, including but not limited to:

- Continued abuse, particularly physical violence;
- Failure to maintain regular attendance;
- Failure to actively participate;
- Repeated lateness to group meetings;
- Failure to admit any abusive behavior;
- Disruptive behavior in group;

- Failure to make appropriate use of the intervention program;
- Failure to comply with other intervention conditions which are part of the offender's contract;
- Failure to pay fees;
- Violation of any provisions of a court order, particularly when the offender is court-mandated to the program;
- Violation of any of the group rules;
- An inability to function in a group;
- When the offender leaves the state; and
- When the offender is court-mandated to leave the program.

Noncompliance with the contract, with a court order or with group rules shall be documented in writing in the participant's file.

The program shall have an established procedure for notification in writing about administrative discharges. This procedure should include notification in writing of participants, victims and others when needed, such as the court and/or adult probation for court-mandated participants.

Contractual Discharge

The program shall have established criteria for contractual discharge that may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Consistent attendance;
- Fees paid;
- Cooperation with group rules throughout the intervention program;
- Desistance from other abusive and controlling conduct while a member of the program;
- Compliance with court orders; and
- Compliance with other conditions and provisions of the contract for intervention services.

Some of the above measures require verification from the victim. If she is unwilling to communicate with the intervention program, contractual discharge shall reflect that the evaluation is based on information that has not or cannot be verified.

Before the discharge of the offender, a safety check shall, when possible, be completed with the victim.

Communications with the offender, the victim and the court specify only that the offender has been given a contractual discharge that is based on adequate compliance with the contract and any court order. It is advised that contractual discharge is not predictive of recidivism.

The program shall have an established procedure for notification of victims about contractual discharges.

The program shall have an established procedure that notifies the court of contractual discharges of court-mandated offenders.

The program shall have an established procedure for notifying the local agency overseeing the intervention program of contractual discharges.

The intervention program will not refer to completion of the program as "graduation" or "successfully completing the program."

The program will not express to anyone the prediction of future behaviors of any of the offenders.

Staff/Program Ethics & Accountability

Program

Intervention programs and the paid and volunteer staff of these agencies will meet standards promulgated by the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition as well as those outlined by professional groups with which they are affiliated, for example:

- American Psychological Association,
- National Association of Social Workers,
- American Association of Pastoral Counselors, or
- American Medical Association.

Intervention programs must establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with local domestic violence/sexual assault programs, battered women, the local community response team and the Coalition.

Intervention programs shall acknowledge in all of their services and professional endeavors that the safety of battered women is the foremost goal of intervention.

Staff and facilitators of intervention programs shall not offer any opinions predicting behaviors.

Intervention programs shall not provide services to men who batter if advocacy, safe housing and support services are not available for victims in the local community. Offender programs shall not exist in isolation but shall collaborate with other service providers in the community.

All program providers shall develop a written policy regarding confidentiality consistent with these guidelines.

All programs will provide reports to Adult Probation and the Courts as required and in a timely fashion.

Failure to meet these standards will result in the program not being recommended for use court-referred offenders.

Program Personnel

All program personnel, including staff, facilitators, co-facilitators, supervisors and any other paid or unpaid personnel shall maintain the consistent attitude that the offender is solely accountable for his violence.

Weekly group sessions with five or more enrolled clients should be co-facilitated on a regular basis.

Programs shall develop written employment policies and codes for personnel conduct that reflects the preceding elements and ethical considerations:

- Be violence free in their own lives for two years. Programs must complete a criminal background check and a Nebraska child abuse central registry check prior to hiring personnel. Also, prior to hiring programs will ask applicants about abusive and controlling behaviors they have used in their relationships. It is recommended in making this inquiry that applicants are asked to review a comprehensive list of abusive behaviors.
- Not engage in problematic consumption of legal drugs, alcohol or other substances.
- Not use illegal drugs.
- Not communicate or act in ways that perpetuate attitudes of victim-blaming, sexism or misogyny.

- Continually engage in a process of education and self-reflection on violence against women, particularly in intimate relationships.
- Exhibit behaviors that are consistent with the offender intervention programs.
- Seek divestiture of gender-based institutional privilege both personally and in the intervention program.
- Immediately warn victims of any imminent violence or danger that the provider believes may be inflicted by the offender on the victim or members of her family.
- Immediately report suspected child abuse by an offender pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. section 28-711 (Reissue 1998).
- Maintain open communication and seek conflict resolution with personnel in domestic violence/sexual assault programs, other human services agencies and the justice system.
- Will not harass or exploit offenders including the avoidance of any type of sexual intimacies with any offender in the intervention program.

Programs shall have written policies regarding retention and termination of personnel.

Conflicts of Interest

People working for batterer intervention programs – either paid or volunteer – should not have conflicts of interest with the program. Among other things, conflicts of interest are:

- Receiving gifts, compensation or other consideration of value from any participant. Or, receiving gifts, compensation or other consideration of value from any other party that might give the appearance of being designed to influence assessment of a participant.
- Being employed by another agency/organization in a manner that is deemed to be a conflict of interest by the Domestic Violence Offender Standards Review Committee.
- Being employed by another agency/organization where disclosure by the BIP participant of his actions might create confidentiality breaches.
- A facilitator, who is in private practice as a counselor or therapist, shall refrain from recruiting potential clients who are or have been in the batterer’s program for which they also work. If a participant requests a referral, facilitators working for the program can provide a list of potential providers or refer the participant to probation, parole or other such court-related monitor of the participant.
- The program shall not receive any financial consideration from a referral organization for making a referral to a participant.

Research

In undertaking research, providers and researchers accept responsibility for the selection of research topics and methods used in investigation, analysis and reporting that will enhance the safety and integrity of battered women and advance the elimination of domestic abuse. Research personnel should work in collaboration with domestic violence/sexual assault programs, local community response teams and advocates. Researchers must protect the confidentiality of victims who are the subjects--or victims whose offenders are subjects--of any research.

Violations

Violations of these ethical/accountability standards should be reported to the local domestic violence/sexual assault program, the local community response team and to the Coalition.

Personnel Qualifications and Training

Staff Training

Program staff, paid or unpaid, who work for a program and have no direct contact with the program participants, must receive domestic abuse training as approved by the Coalition.

Facilitators/Co-Facilitators/Intake Worker Training

Facilitators, Co-Facilitators and Intake Workers must have the following qualifications and training:

- Bachelors degree in a human service-related area OR an equivalent combination of college courses and/or applied experience.
- Completed structured training on the basics of domestic abuse and attend an offenders' education curriculum as approved by the Coalition. One facilitator must have had the approved training before the program begins and the other facilitator must have the approved training within six (6) months of the program beginning. This shall include training on how to conduct a class, the process, what forms are used and group dynamic issues.
- Continuing education is required. All offender program providers must annually complete 12 hours of continuing education training. A variety of topics relevant to improving skills and enhancing the development of the program through workshops, seminars, videos and reading will also be accepted as part of the requirement. The provider must document attendance and relevance of the training to receive certification renewal by the Coalition.

Supervisor Training

Supervisors must have the following qualifications and training:

- Bachelors degree in a human service-related area OR an equivalent combination of college courses and/or applied experience.
- Completed structured training on the basics of domestic abuse.

Supervision

Each program will establish a supervision program to insure that standards are continuously being met.

Program Review

Application Process

Programs wishing to receive approval must:

- Complete the application form;
- Supply needed information as requested;
- Demonstrate the ability to meet these Standards; and
- Supply letters of approval from the local community response team, local probation department, and the local domestic violence/sexual assault program.

Program Monitoring

- Programs receiving approval must agree to periodic monitoring. Monitoring will only be for the purpose of insuring the program is continuing to meet guidelines identified in these standards.
- The Coalition, through the DVOSRC, will annually monitor and review offender intervention programs. The Offender Standard Review Committee will include one member of the Coalition (chosen by the executive director of the Coalition), plus representatives from the three coordinating programs (Family Violence Council of Lincoln, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council of Omaha and Domestic Violence Intervention Program of North Platte), representatives from domestic violence/sexual assault programs that are members of the NDVSAC, representatives from approved men's domestic violence intervention programs, representatives from Adult Probation and members knowledgeable in the field of offender intervention programs and/or behavioral health. Except the Coalition representative, DVOSRC members will determine replacements when individuals leave the committee for any reason. Duties of the DVOSRC will include: to approve initial applications of offender intervention programs, to annually monitor and review the offender intervention programs, to annually review the offender intervention program statewide guidelines, and to promulgate a list of approved offender education trainings.
- The DVOSRC will include at least one member of the Coalition, two members of the Consortium, two representatives from local domestic violence/sexual assault programs, and two other members knowledgeable in the field of offender intervention programs.
- Programs will allow representatives of the Coalition and the DVOSRC to periodically observe group sessions.
- Programs will allow the sessions to be videotaped periodically as part of the monitoring process.

Approval Renewal

Programs receiving approval must annually reapply for approval with the Coalition.

In the "renewal" years, programs must complete an evaluation form and return it to the DVOSRC to be kept on file. Programs must also return updated staff information and evidence of staff's compliance with continuing education requirements. The "renewal" review will also include checks with local victim services program and local Adult Probation office to insure a good working relationship is continuing. Completion of the renewal process and evaluation does not preclude the DVOSRC from conducting on-site inspection of any batterer intervention program at any time, with or without prior notice to the program, or requiring the BIP to provide additional information to insure ongoing compliance with the standards.

Appendices

Appendix A

Definitions

ACCOUNTABILITY—Accountability is a process whereby men who batter or abuse make themselves available for scrutiny and feedback on their efforts to achieve lives free of violence, acts of domination and coercion and of fear-inducing conduct. This process requires periodic examination of the offender’s conduct, particularly as it relates to any victim and his children.

BATTERING—Battering is characterized by a pattern of intentional coercive behaviors that include repeated physical abuse, emotional psychological abuse, sexual assault, destruction of pets and property, financial abuse, progressive social isolation, deprivation, and intimidation.

CONSORTIUM—The Consortium is comprised of representatives from each community response team in the state of Nebraska. The Consortium meets several times a year to discuss and share issues regarding community response teams.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENDER STANDARDS REVIEW COMMITTEE (DVOsrc)—The DVOsrc operates through the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition and will annually monitor and review offender intervention programs. DVOsrc will include one member of the Coalition (chosen by the executive director of the Coalition), plus representatives from the three coordinating programs (Family Violence Council of Lincoln, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council of Omaha and Domestic Violence Intervention Program of North Platte), representatives from domestic violence/sexual assault programs that are members of the NDVSAC, representatives from approved men’s domestic violence intervention programs, representatives from Adult Probation and members knowledgeable in the field of offender intervention programs and/or behavioral health. Except the Coalition representative, DVOsrc members will determine replacements when individuals leave the committee for any reason. Duties of the DVOsrc will include: to approve initial applications of offender intervention programs, to annually monitor and review the offender intervention programs, to annually review the offender intervention program statewide guidelines, and to promulgate a list of approved offender education trainings.

FACILITATOR/CO-FACILITATOR—A facilitator/co-facilitator is one who instructs offenders in the group setting by helping them learn and one who leads by example. The facilitator/co-facilitator also has the authority to determine progress of an offender and the authority to recommend continued participation or termination from the program.

FAMILY OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBER—Family or household member is defined in Nebraska Revised Stat. section 42-903 (Reissue 1998, as amended 2004) as including spouses or former spouses, children, persons who are presently residing together or who have resided together in the past, persons who have a child in common whether or not they have been married or have lived together at any time,

and other persons related by consanguinity or affinity, and persons who are presently involved in a dating relationship with each other or who have been involved in a dating relationship with each other. For purposes of this subdivision, dating relationship means frequent, intimate associations primarily characterized by the expectation of affectional or sexual involvement, but does not include a casual relationship or an ordinary association between persons in a business or social context.

GOOD STANDING—An offender is considered in good standing if the offender has met the following four requirements: a) has completed all homework assignments; b) is current on group fees; c) has met group attendance policies; and d) is compliant with all group rules.

INTAKE WORKER—An intake worker determines the eligibility for participation in the intervention program.

INTERVENTION—Intervention refers to the array of activities undertaken to stop men from using domestic violence, to persuade them to stop engaging in coercive conduct and to encourage them to develop skills and strategies for achieving violence-free lives.

NEBRASKA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SEXUAL ASSAULT COALITION (Coalition)—The Coalition is a statewide advocacy organization committed to reducing violence against women and children in Nebraska. The primary goal of the Coalition is to provide training and technical assistance to the community based domestic violence and sexual assault programs across the state.

OFFENDER—Offender is a person who commits an act of domestic abuse.

OFFENDER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS—Offender intervention programs include the various methodologies of education with men who batter that are aimed at safeguarding the victim and changing the perpetrator.

STAFF—Staff includes agency personnel, such as receptionists, office managers, etc. who have no direct contact with offenders and have no authority in decision making regarding their participation.

SUPERVISOR—A supervisor is one who directs the agency programming and observes the work and performance of the rest of the agency personnel. The supervisor may have the ability to hire and fire agency personnel and may also assist in any decision making regarding offender participation.

VICTIM—A victim is a person against whom the offender directs his abuse or battering. This may include partners, children and other family or household members.

Appendix B

Starting a Men's Domestic Violence program

Here are some guidelines when considering starting a men's domestic violence intervention program:

1. Is there a coordinated, criminal justice system response team (CRT) effort? If not, it may be highly dangerous to victims to start an intervention program that doesn't have the support of all the key players including the local domestic violence program, law enforcement, prosecution, probation and the courts.
2. If there is a CRT effort in place, has it successfully agreed upon policies and procedures that consider victim safety and offender accountability? If not, it would be better to wait until after the policy, procedure writing is complete before starting the men's domestic violence program.
3. If the community appears ready, the men's domestic violence program must then make sure it fits within this coordinated response structure. To meet the state standards the men's domestic violence program will have to show that it is cooperating with the CRT and has victim safety procedures that are satisfactory to the local domestic program that is a member of the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition.
4. You will need to meet the state standards developed by Coalition and monitored by the Domestic Violence Offenders Standards Review Committee. You can contact the Coalition at 402-476-6256 or help@ndvsac.org to get copies. The standards are also available on the Internet at www.ndvsac.org.
5. Some key points relating to the standards:
 - Group facilitators and the program supervisor must have proper training. According to the state standards, this means that one of the facilitators must have had approved training before the group begins and the other must do so within six months. The favored training is the "Duluth Model" training. You can contact Bob Moyer, Standards Review Committee Chairman, at bmoyerfvc@windstream.net to determine when Duluth model trainings are available and whether an alternative training is acceptable.
 - Facilitators must also have a Bachelors degree in a human service-related area OR an equivalent combination of college courses and/or applied experience.
 - You will also need to demonstrate you have the policies, procedures, forms and other materials in place that will meet state standards. The Coalition can provide sample materials that meet the state standards.
 - You will want to contact your local domestic violence program that is a member of the Coalition to make sure your victim safety plan is adequate.

Appendix C

Lethality Assessment

Documentation of lethality assessment should include the following:

- History of threats of homicide or suicide;
- History of ideation of homicide or suicide;
- Violence outside the home, to others, or in front of others;
- Increased severity and frequency of violence;
- Possession of, access to, or a history of weapon use;
- Degree of obsessiveness and dependency on his victim;
- History of episodes of rage;
- History of depression;
- History of use of drugs, alcohol or other substances;
- History of sexual abuse of the victim and others; and
- Access to the victim.

Appendix D

Probation Report forms

[PROGRAM NAME]

[PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION]

Client Name: _____

Number of weeks completed: _____

Probation Officer's Name: _____

Facilitator's Evaluation of Client's Overall Participation

A: Acceptable. Client can continue in program

NI: Needs Improvement. Client must improve behavior or face administrative discharge (termination) from program

Items Evaluated (check appropriate column at right)

	A	NI
Cooperation	_____	_____
Attentiveness	_____	_____
Not being argumentative	_____	_____
Not being disruptive	_____	_____
Participation in group discussion	_____	_____
Completes homework assignments	_____	_____
Has taken responsibility for his history of physical and psychological abuse	_____	_____
Has recognized that abusive behavior is unacceptable	_____	_____
Has recognized that abusive behavior is a choice	_____	_____
Shows empathy for the effects of his actions on his partner and children	_____	_____
Can identify his pattern of controlling behaviors and entitled attitudes	_____	_____
Accepts the consequences of his actions	_____	_____

Comments: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Evaluator/Facilitator/Coordinator)

Facilitator Names: _____

[PROGRAM NAME]
[PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION]

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Client:

Program Compliance:

_____ Individual is in compliance with program requirements
_____ Individual is not in compliance with program requirements

Attendance:

_____ Satisfactory	Classes Attended:	#
_____ Unsatisfactory	Classes Missed:	#
_____ # of Weeks Required		

Payment of Fees:

_____ Satisfactory
_____ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Signed: _____
Program Coordinator/Director

Date: _____

Appendix E

Guidelines for Victim Contact

Providers will routinely contact all victims within four working days of the offender's enrollment. The provider will make at least three documented attempts by telephone. If telephone contact is unsuccessful, the provider shall use first class mail to send a letter, retaining a copy for the victim file. The letter will express concern for the victim and the children and will provide general information about the intervention program, the local domestic violence center and other related advocacy services. If the letter is returned unopened, the letter and envelope will be retained in the victim file.

When making telephone contact, the providers will identify themselves and ask if this is a good time to talk. If it is not, ask for a convenient time to call back and the best number to use. Always remember that victim participation is completely voluntary. If the victim refuses, it should be recorded.

When speaking with the victim, advise her that the call is out of concern for the victim and children's safety. Inform the victim that the offender is aware that you are making this contact and that any information shared will not be disclosed to the offender. Give the victim the name and telephone number of the nearest domestic violence/sexual assault program. Validate the perception that the victim is not responsible for the offender's violence and control.

Follow-up contacts may be made monthly. The provider will notify the victim by telephone within four working days after the offender is involuntarily terminated from the program. All attempts at victim notification will be documented in the file. If after three attempts contact is not made, a letter of notification may be sent by first class mail and a copy retained in the file. If the letter is returned unopened, both the letter and envelope will be kept in the file.

The provider must immediately report any threat of violence from an offender to a prior victim or potential victim. If unable to reach the victim, the provider must immediately contact local law enforcement. These actions must be documented in both the offender's file and the victim's file.

All information obtained from the victim shall be deemed confidential and will not be disclosed to any third party without specific written authorization from the victim or upon order of the court. Signed authorization will be maintained in the victim contact file.

Appendix F

Steps in the review process of the Domestic Violence Offenders Standards Review Committee

1. You will receive notice of the review that includes information about materials you will need to get ready and a copy of the review form.
2. A date will be set up for the review. The program director must be available. At least some of the program facilitators should attend, too.
3. The review process takes about 3 hours. A team of 4 reviewers will complete the review. Normally, if possible, 2 reviewers will discuss administrative aspects with the program director and 2 other reviewers will interview the facilitators. Someone will need to be able to provide information on how victim contacts are completed.
4. After the review is completed, the reviewers will complete the review form and a letter summarizing the review will be drafted.
5. Normally, about 2-4 weeks after the review, you will receive the letter and the review. In the interim the program remains in good standing unless noted otherwise by the review team.
6. The review letter will identify whether the program has been found to meet the guidelines or not.
7. If there are deficiencies which appear to be correctable, the letter will spell out steps and actions to take to overcome the deficiencies. The letter will suggest a timeline for overcoming the deficiencies. As long as the program is working toward overcoming these deficiencies within agreed upon timelines, it will remain in good standing.
8. On-site inspections will be required upon application for initial certification and every two years thereafter. In the “renewal” years, programs must complete an evaluation form and return it to the DVOSRC to be kept on file. Programs must also return updated staff information and evidence of staff’s compliance with continuing education requirements. The “renewal” review will also include checks with local victim services program and local Adult Probation office to insure a good working relationship is continuing. Completion of the renewal process and evaluation does not preclude the DVOSRC from conducting on-site inspection of any batterer intervention program at any time, with or without prior notice to the program, or requiring the BIP to provide additional information to insure ongoing compliance with the standards.

Appendix G

Letters for Victim Contact

Announcing enrollment in class

DATE

Dear (Victim or current Partner Name),

This letter is to inform you that (Participant's Name) has been court ordered to attend batterer's intervention program (BIP). (Participant's Name) gave us your name as the victim of his abusive behavior.

(Participant's Name) is required to attend classes that will provide information about all aspects of domestic violence and ways to change his behavior. The program is ?? weeks and (Participant's Name) is required to attend classes every (Wednesday?? night from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm). **However, attending these classes does not guarantee a change in his behavior either while he is attending or after completing the program.**

Your safety is important. If (Participant's Name) is abusive or if you have any concerns or would like additional information, the following resources can help you:

Name and telephone number of the local of DV Program

Name and telephone number of the BIP

Name and telephone number of adult probation officer

If you are not sure what to do, please call the local domestic violence program at 333-3333. An advocate is available 24 hours a day to assist in safety planning, discuss your concerns and options, and provide supportive services. All contact with the DV program is confidential. You won't be charged for using the services of the DV program.

Attached is additional information about the Batterer's Intervention Program. Please read this information carefully. The (Participant's Name) has been informed that you will receive this information and that the program will contact you when (Participant's Name) completes the program, is terminated from the program and if the program believes you may be in danger of imminent harm.

You are under no obligation to help (Participant's Name) complete any BIP requirements. In addition, (Participant's Name) eligibility or continued participation is **not** contingent in any way on your participation or contact with the BIP. However, we look forward to answering questions you have about the program. Please feel free to contact me at 333-3333.

Sincerely,

Announcing termination (administrative discharge) from class

DATE

Dear (Victim or Partner Name),

This letter is to inform you that (Participant's Name) was terminated on (date) from the (batterer intervention program name) which he began attending on (date). (Participant's Name) was terminated because he failed to comply with program rules that he agreed to abide by as a condition of participation in the program. The referral source (probation officer) has also been notified of his termination.

Your safety is important. The following free and confidential resources can help you:

Name and telephone number of the local DV Program

Name and telephone number of the BIP

Name and telephone number of probation officer

If you are not sure what to do, please call the local domestic violence program at 333-3333. An advocate is available 24 hours a day to assist in safety planning, discuss your concerns and options, and provide supportive services. All contact with the DV program is confidential. You won't be charged for using the services of the DV program.

Sincerely,

Announcing completion (contractual discharge) of class

DATE

Dear (Victim or Partner Name),

This letter is to inform you that (Participant's Name) completed (on date) the Batterer's Intervention Program. He has attended all required classes which provided him with information about all aspects of domestic violence and ways to change his behavior. However, the experience of people providing batterer intervention programs is that many participants who complete the program may not change their behavior or may not be able to maintain changed behaviors.

Your safety is important. If (Participant's Name) is or becomes abusive or if you have concerns or would like additional information, the following free and confidential resources can help you:

Name and telephone number of the local DV Program

Name and telephone number of the BIP

Name and telephone number of probation officer

If you are not sure what to do, please call the local domestic violence program at 333-3333. An advocate is available 24 hours a day to assist in safety planning, discuss your concerns and options, and provide supportive services. All contact with the DV program is confidential. You won't be charged for using the services of the DV program.

Sincerely



A Partner's Guide to Batterer Intervention Programs for Men

- ◆ The purpose of batterer intervention programs (BIP) is to provide an opportunity for abusive men to learn how to behave in non-abusive ways in intimate partner relationships. The programs are one resource for the courts when administering justice to men who have committed domestic violence against an intimate partner.
- ◆ Batterer Intervention Programs include orientation/intake, assessment and weekly classes for at least 24 weeks. Weekly sessions are 90 minutes (program should fill in appropriate information)
- ◆ The classes are educational in nature. They are not therapy. The classes provide a fully developed curriculum of information about men's violence toward women and how to end it in their relationships and in the community. Group participants are taught about all aspects of domestic abuse, including the impact that physical, emotional and verbal abuse has on both adult victims and children. The intent of the classes is to have the participant focus on his own behavior.
- ◆ Intimate partner violence is often about use of power and control tactics and is not caused by anger problems or communication problems in the relationship. Victims of abuse do not cause abuse. Anger management classes do not replace Batterer Intervention Programs and cannot be substituted for each other.
- ◆ Many factors are required to motivate men to want to quit being abusive. These include legal and financial sanctions, as well as making men take responsibility for their own behavior and the consequences for it. Group participants in batterer intervention programs are not allowed to blame the victim for their own violence, nor can they shift responsibility to their (or your) use of alcohol or substance abuse.
- ◆ Women who are abused often hope their partner will change. However, it is important to note that your partner's (or ex-partner's) attendance at a batterer intervention class does not guarantee that he will change his behavior toward you even if he completes the program. During the weekly classes, the group facilitators clarify that any man who chooses to stop all acts of domestic abuse is, and always has been, able to do so permanently. He has to want to stop his behavior and be willing to live his life differently. Many women report experiencing abuse after a participant has completed the program.
- ◆ Some men continue to be both emotionally and physically abusive during and after attending classes. Some men stop or diminish their physical violence while increasing emotional abuse or other threatening behaviors. For your safety, you should know that:

An advocate at the domestic violence and sexual assault program is available to discuss your options with you and support you in making your own decisions. The advocate can help you develop a safety plan for yourself and your children. Any contact with advocates at the domestic violence and sexual assault program is confidential and you won't be charged any fees.

**(Name of local domestic violence and sexual assault program and phone number(s))
(24-Hour Crisis Line)**

- ◆ Participating in couples or other family counseling with someone who has been abusive is dangerous. Participation in such counseling shouldn't take place until the abuser has completed a batterer intervention program. Even then, the situation should be re-evaluated, to determine whether couples or other family counseling will be safe. You should not be asked by the batterer intervention program to participate in any way in the program. A batterer intervention program is designed to teach men non-abusive behaviors. They are not designed to save marriages or fix relationships. The program providers won't make recommendations regarding the status of your intimate partner relationship.
- ◆ In Nebraska, a committee established by the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition reviews batterer intervention programs to determine if they meet established standards. Programs that meet these standards are then recommended for use by courts in Nebraska. Abusers who are attending programs that have not been found to meet state standards by this committee are unlikely to change their behaviors. If you have questions about the state standards, which programs meet the standards or any other questions about batterer intervention programs you can contact the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition at 402-476-6256 or the chairperson of the state committee, Bob Moyer. Moyer can be reached at the Family Violence Council in Lincoln at 402-489-9292 or at bmoyerfvc@windstream.net