

BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS

Date: August 4, 1998

Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee

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BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS

SUMMARY

Domestic violence is a crime. The consequences for the perpetrator include criminal sanctions, and require participation in and completion of a batterers intervention program. In accordance with RIGL §12-29-5 and §12-29-5.1-3, all Court mandated domestic violence offenders shall be referred to a batterers intervention program that is certified by the Batterers Intervention Programs Standards Oversight Committee as meeting identified minimum standards.

The standards are founded on certain essential principles. Certified batterers intervention programs must demonstrate a commitment to victim safety and abuser accountability. While each and every standard is considered important and necessary, key program elements are summarized as follows:

BATTERERS INTERVENTION IS CONDUCTED IN THE CONTEXT OF PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL GROUPS OF PEERS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL FACILITATORS TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED IN SUCH WORK.

*This provision is specifically required by law.

GROUP MEETINGS OF 1½ TO 2 HOURS EACH TAKE PLACE FOR A MINIMUM OF 20 WEEKS; TOTAL CONTACT TIME IS 40 HOURS OR MORE.

*This provision is specifically required by law.

ALL BATTERERS ARE REQUIRED TO PAY FEES FOR THE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, PROGRAMS ACCOMMODATE VARYING LEVELS OF ABILITY TO PAY BY MEANS OF SLIDING FEE SCALES, AND HAVE THE OPTION OF OFFERING ALTERNATIVES SUCH AS COMMUNITY SERVICE OR DEFERRED PAYMENT FOR SOME PORTION OF THE FEES.

*This provision is specifically required by law.

GROUPS OF 11-18 PARTICIPANTS HAVE TWO OR MORE CO-FACILITATORS; SMALLER GROUPS CAN HAVE ONE FACILITATOR.

PROGRAMS MUST ENSURE THAT ALL BATTERERS GROUPS HAVE SUBSTANTIAL EXPERIENCE WITH BOTH MALE AND FEMALE FACILITATORS, PREFERABLY WORKING AS A TEAM.

GROUP FACILITATORS ARE GENERALLY REQUIRED TO HAVE A MINIMUM OF A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN A RELATED FIELD OF STUDY, WITH SPECIALIZED TRAINING TO PREPARE THEM FOR THEIR WORK. SUPERVISION IS TO BE PROVIDED BY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED MASTER'S LEVEL PROFESSIONALS.

BATTERERS ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY, AND ARE TAUGHT NON-ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS. THEY ARE CONFRONTED WITH THE IMPACT OF THEIR ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR, AND ARE HELD TO BE FULLY RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR CHOICES.

BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAMS HELP BATTERERS TO RECOGNIZE THAT BEING NON-ABUSIVE REQUIRES A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT THAT GOES BEYOND COMPLETING THE PROGRAM.

BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAMS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO VICTIMS AND TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, AS WELL AS TO THE INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS. THEIR CONTRACTS WITH BATTERERS SPECIFY THAT REPORTS OF ATTENDANCE, COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION ARE REPORTED AS APPROPRIATE TO ADULT PROBATION AND/OR OTHER REFERRING AGENCY, THE COURT, AND VICTIMS. ALL DANGEROUS OR THREATENING BEHAVIOR IS REPORTED TO THE PROPER AUTHORITIES.

STANDARDS DATE: **August 4, 1998**

BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS

I. PURPOSE STATEMENT

Violence cannot be condoned under any circumstances. All abusive behavior has consequences. Violence and other forms of abuse within a family, household, or domestic relationship are especially egregious: issues of access, trust, dependency, children, and intimacy profoundly exacerbate the immediate effects of the abuse itself and often become tools in its perpetration. The home, which should be the source and expression of greatest security and comfort, instead becomes the center of conflict, fear, injury, and threat, undermining the safety, health and well-being of the individuals who experience and witness abuse. Children are especially vulnerable to victimization: child abuse often co-occurs with partner abuse, and witnessing abuse of a parent is itself abusive to children.

The perpetrator of domestic violence is solely responsible for the abusive behavior and its consequences, and the entire legal and service system must act together in order to hold the abuser accountable. An effective and coordinated response to domestic violence depends upon the courts, prosecution, law enforcement, probation, victim services, health care system, social service agencies, and batterers intervention programs working collaboratively. The foundation for such a coordinated response is the law.

In 1988, the Rhode Island State Legislature passed the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, Title 12, Chapter 29 of the Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL). Among other things, this law mandates that a police officer shall make an arrest if he/she has probable cause to believe that a crime of domestic violence has been committed. Section §12-29-5, as amended in 1997, states:

Every person convicted of or placed on probation for a crime involving domestic violence or whose case is filed pursuant to §12-10-12 where the defendant pleads nolo contendere, in addition to any other sentence imposed or counseling ordered, shall be ordered by the judge to attend, at his or her own expense, appropriate to address his or her violent behavior, a batterer's intervention program.

A further addition to this section of the law defines batterers intervention program as a program that is certified by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee to be in accordance with minimum standards. The Oversight Committee, established in 1997 by RIGL §12-29-5.1-3, is empowered to establish and promulgate minimum standards for batterers intervention programs serving mandated batterers; to monitor and review batterers intervention programs seeking certification, including periodic on-site review; to certify those programs that are in compliance with the standards; and to investigate and decide appeals, complaints, and requests for variances. (See Appendices A and B of the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Rules of Practice and Procedure for the full text of the statutes.)

Subsequent to such legal mandates, and in order to improve the coordination and effectiveness of the community response to domestic violence, the Rhode Island Department of Corrections/ Adult Probation and Parole, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence have cooperated with other community agencies to develop and implement these standards of performance for organizations providing intervention services to mandated batterers. While fields of study and practice relative to domestic violence are still new and changes are inevitable, it is nevertheless incumbent upon the community to act upon our best current understanding of the principles and dynamics of domestic violence, and to insist upon the most effective interventions possible.

These comprehensive program standards are established for the purpose of defining a batterers intervention program, as referenced in law; and for the purpose of enabling a duly constituted Oversight Committee to identify, certify, and monitor programs that shall be eligible for referrals of court mandated batterers. The intent of the standards is to encourage ethical and quality services that insist on the accountability of perpetrators; that teach and support perpetrators in learning non-abusive behavior; that make every feasible effort to stop perpetrators from committing further abuse; and that are committed to providing safety for, and accountability to, victims of domestic abuse.

II. HISTORY/ AUTHORITY/ APPLICABILITY/ SCOPE

The effort to develop standards for batterers intervention programs was initiated by the Office of the Attorney General, with substantial support from the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence and participation by other community agencies. By mutual agreement, the Rhode Island Department of Corrections / Adult Probation and Parole later assumed the primary leadership role. Statutory authority for this role was subsequently sought by means of amendments to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (RIGL §12-29-5 and §12-29-5.1-3). The law requires that domestic violence offenders (convicted, on probation, or whose cases are filed) attend a batterers intervention program certified by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee as meeting certain standards. Authority for the Oversight Committee, chaired by the Department of Corrections, became effective immediately upon passage in June, 1997. Effective January 1, 1998, court mandated domestic violence offenders shall only be referred to certified batterers intervention programs.

As defined in law, the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee is comprised of thirteen (13) representatives of various community agencies and members of the public. The Oversight Committee is responsible for development and on-going review of standards; monitoring of batterers intervention programs; certification of programs that are in compliance with the standards; and investigating complaints and appeals. The composition of the Oversight Committee, the statutory description of its duties and responsibilities, and the rules of procedure guiding these activities are detailed in the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Rules of Practice and Procedure.

Agencies and practitioners seeking certification under the terms of §12-29-5 and §12-29-5.1-3 are encouraged to request review and apply for certification through the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee. Successfully meeting the standards, or being in substantial compliance and having an accepted action plan to address discrepancies, makes a program or practitioner eligible to receive referrals of court mandated domestic violence offenders. However, certification does not constitute licensure of facilities, practitioners, or other services that may be offered by the same person(s) or agency; nor does certification guarantee or imply a guarantee of referrals or monetary support.

The Oversight Committee has no power or intention to prevent, prohibit, or enjoin practices not in conformity with the standards. Community agencies and practitioners are not obligated to conform to these standards, nor to apply to the Oversight Committee for certification; any individual, agency or program may serve non-mandated clients who are domestic violence perpetrators. In addition, the law provides that post-enrollment certification may be requested by a batterer who has, prior to adjudication, enrolled in a program not certified by the Oversight Committee.

All service providers involved with domestic violence perpetrators or victims, whether the services are directly related to domestic violence or incidental to it, and whether or not criminal charges have been filed, are strongly urged to become aware of the relevant issues, principles, dynamics, and ancillary services in recognition of the specialized nature of intervention for domestic abuse.

III. PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

Domestic violence is a crime. The consequences for perpetrators sanctioned pursuant to RIGL §12-29-5 include criminal penalties, and require participation in and completion of a certified batterers intervention program. Among the principles and goals at the core of programs certified by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee are the following:

Batterers are responsible for their own behavior, and must be held accountable for that behavior.

Violent, threatening, and abusive behavior is purposeful, serving to exercise power and control over another individual.

Abusive behavior is a choice, not an illness.

Individuals can learn alternatives to abusive behavior, and can behave non-abusively.

Batterers intervention differs from and is not replaceable by substance abuse treatment, mental health services, family/ marital/ couples or other counseling.

Becoming and remaining non-violent and non-abusive requires a sustained commitment by the abusive person.

Those who have been victimized by an abusive person, or who could be victimized, have no legal, moral, ethical, or personal responsibility for the abuser's behavior.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- A. Appeal** is a request by a program for reconsideration of a decision made by the Oversight Committee with respect to its certification as a batterers intervention program. Details regarding the appeals process can be found in the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Rules of Practice and Procedure.
- B. Batterers** are perpetrators of domestic violence (defined below). While the majority of batterers are males and the majority of victims are females, batterers as well as victims can be male or female.
- C. Batterers Intervention Program** is a program that is designed specifically to address issues of abuse, power and control, with domestic violence offenders, as defined in RIGL §12-29-2. Programs offered for mandated offenders must be certified by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee as meeting certain minimum standards. The term *intervention* connotes an interruption in the learned behavior of the batterer with an opportunity to change this behavior and the underlying values. For the purpose of these standards, such intervention will not be referred to as *treatment*, a term that can imply that a physical disease or mental illness is responsible for the batterer's behavior. Batterers intervention programs can either stand alone or be part of a larger multi-service agency.
- D. Complaints** are formal accusations, charges, or reports of problems made by a batterer, victim, staff member, referral agent, or any member of the public regarding a batterers intervention program policy, practice, staff conduct, or other substantive matter related to the standards or to other requirements under law. Details regarding the complaint process can be found in the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Rules of Practice and Procedure.
- E. Court Mandate** refers to a command, order, or direction, either written or oral, which a court is authorized to give and an individual is bound to obey. For the purposes of these standards, court mandate refers to the requirement that a batterer participate in a certified batterers intervention program, as delineated in RIGL §12-29-5. These standards shall apply only to batterers intervention programs seeking court mandated referral

- F. **Domestic Violence** as defined in RIGL §12-29-2 includes, but is not limited to, any of the following crimes when committed by one family or household member against another: simple assault, felony assault, vandalism, disorderly conduct, trespass, kidnapping, child snatching, sexual assault, homicide, violations of the provisions of a protective order, and stalking. Batterers intervention programs shall address issues related to domestic violence, including emotional, physical, sexual, verbal, or economic abuse which is used by one person to gain and/or maintain power and control over another person in an intimate relationship. Domestic violence occurs independent of marital status or sexual orientation, and crosses all age, racial, cultural, educational, religious or economic background of those involved. Related terms that may be found in this document include domestic abuse, battering, violence, and abusive relationship.
- G. **Facilitators** are trained and experienced professionals who deliver the information, curriculum, and content of the batterers program, and monitor and direct the interaction of individuals within the group format.
- H. **Family or Household Member** as defined in RIGL §12-29-2 includes spouses, former spouses, adult persons related by blood or marriage, adult persons who are presently residing together or who have resided together in the past three (3) years, persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they have been married or have lived together, and persons who are or have been in a substantive dating or engagement relationship within the past six (6) months.
- I. **Post-Enrollment Certification Application** is defined in the statute as an application made to the Oversight Committee by a batterer mandated to attend a certified batterers intervention program who has, prior to adjudication, enrolled in a program not certified by the Committee. Details regarding the post-enrollment certification process can be found in the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Rules of Practice and Procedure.
- J. **Psycho-Educational Group** is the identified model for conducting batterers intervention. This model suggests that the optimal opportunity for abusive persons to learn new behaviors, to “unlearn” abusive behaviors, and to re-examine their own underlying beliefs and values is in the context of a group of peers, led by one or more professional facilitators trained and experienced in such work. The learning that occurs is the result of the interactive and observational experiences among group members and facilitators, as well as modeling, values clarification, skill building, and other interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics, all of which

help to convey and give meaning to the didactic instruction that also takes place.

- K. Variances** are accepted deviations from general program format and established program standard(s), granted by the Oversight Committee in response to a specific request by a batterers intervention program. A variance is not intended as a means of circumventing existing standards; it is intended to address new or exceptional circumstances, and must be for a specific identified purpose. A variance must be requested, must be justified, and must be shown to have no detrimental effect on the substance of the program standards. Details regarding the variance process can be found in the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Rules of Practice and Procedure.

V. ACCOUNTABILITY: OFFENDER AND PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary goal of batterers intervention is to stop abuse in order to enhance the safety of known and potential victims. As a result, program principles, practices, and organization must incorporate awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of victims; hold batterers accountable for their own behavior; and report on offender compliance to the criminal justice system.

Batterers intervention programs shall have written policies reflective of the basic standards, program requirements, principles, and practices as set forth in this document. Programs shall maintain such written records of activities as needed to document compliance with requirements and standards.

A. Responsibilities to Victims and the Community

Principles of victim safety shall guide the conduct of batterers intervention groups and all other activities of batterers intervention programs.

1. Batterers intervention program staff are obligated to report any credible threat to harm self or others. Under the legally recognized concept of "duty to warn," such threats shall be reported to the police immediately, and reasonable efforts shall be made to notify any identified victim. If the victim cannot be located, the victim advocate and/or the Victims of Crime Helpline at (800) 494-8100 shall be contacted. Adult Probation and/or other referral source shall be notified as soon as possible. Illegal, dangerous, or threatening behavior that does not appear to pose an immediate credible risk of harm shall be reported to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities (victim, advocate, Adult Probation, police) within a reasonable time frame, according to the nature of the behavior.

2. Programs shall inform victims with whom they have contact that completion of a batterers intervention program is not a guarantee that the abuse will stop; and shall articulate to such victims that being non-abusive requires long-term commitment and continuing effort on the part of the batterer.
3. Other victim contact by the batterers intervention programs is ordinarily appropriate only for the purpose of providing information about the specific intervention program and batterers intervention in general; the enrollment and attendance or non-attendance of the batterer; and referrals for victim services from local domestic violence service programs. The Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence shall maintain and make available sample brochures for victims and updated lists of local domestic violence victim services.
4. Victims contacting batterers intervention programs with inquiries about specific batterers shall be referred to Adult Probation and/or other referral source for any information about batterers except enrollment status and attendance record. Victims shall be offered referral information for victim service programs.
5. Batterers intervention programs shall not ask a victim to support or expedite a batterer's participation in the program.
6. If an agency offers a batterers intervention program and also provides services to victims, the following safety precautions shall be in place:
 - a. Program staff providing services to batterers or victims shall not provide services to both partners.
 - b. Program staff providing services to victims shall not share information about individual victims with batterers intervention staff.
 - c. Programs for victims shall not be offered at the same, overlapping, or adjacent time periods, at the same location as those for batterers.
 - d. All reasonable efforts shall be taken to avoid having batterers and victims present at the same time, and victim safety and privacy shall not be compromised.
7. Batterers intervention programs shall work cooperatively with shelters for victims of domestic abuse, victim advocates, the

criminal justice system, and task forces formed on behalf of victims of battering.

8. Batterers intervention program staff shall maintain familiarity with state laws regarding domestic violence and protective and no-contact orders; maintain a resource library for referrals for victims to advocates, support services, shelters, and access to protective orders; and be familiar with local law enforcement, prosecution, and court policies regarding domestic violence cases.
9. Batterers intervention programs shall establish and work to maintain linkages with the criminal justice system. Programs shall be responsive and accountable to the criminal justice system, including but not limited to reporting each batterer's compliance with program and mandated requirements.

B. Confidentiality and the Limits of Confidentiality

As clients of a social service agency, batterers are entitled to reasonable privacy and confidentiality, including protections provided by law, regulation, and ethical considerations. However, public safety requirements impose limitations on confidentiality.

1. Batterers intervention programs shall develop and implement written policies which require that upon enrollment, mandated batterers shall provide written and signed authorization to release confidential information regarding program enrollment, attendance, cooperation, participation, and fee payment status for the purpose of reporting to Adult Probation, the court(s) having jurisdiction, other law enforcement entities, and victims and/or their representatives.
2. Enrolled batterers shall be informed that dangerous, threatening, or illegal behavior within the batterers intervention program or coming to the attention of program staff shall not be considered confidential; and that such information shall be communicated to appropriate individuals and authorities.
3. Batterers intervention programs shall notify identified victims and/or victim advocates, Adult Probation and/or other referral sources when court mandated batterers are terminated from the programs prior to completion.
4. If audio or video taping is done of groups for release in the public arena, consent shall be secured from the identified victims of participants, as well as from the participants themselves.

5. Batterers intervention programs that conduct research, participate in research, and/or provide data to researchers shall ensure that the research protocols disguise or eliminate identifying information related to batterers and victims.
6. Programs requesting certification shall provide reasonable access to individuals authorized by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee for the purpose of program review and certification. Such individuals shall be permitted to review client and program records, observe group sessions, conduct staff and/or client interviews, and perform other activities as part of the certification process and in accordance with duly established procedures.
7. With the indicated exceptions, client information and records shall be kept strictly confidential.

C. Batterer Responsibilities and Rights

1. Upon enrollment, batterers shall be provided with a written contract that specifies their obligations for program attendance, cooperation, participation, and responsibility for fees and/or alternative arrangements. The contract shall be reviewed and signed by the batterer and by a staff member of the intervention program. The staff member's signature shall attest to having read the contract to the client, and having provided a copy to the client.
2. At the time of intake and assessment by program staff, batterers shall be asked to provide a thorough history of their abuse in current and past relationships, as well as any and all other violence.
3. Mandated batterers shall be required to authorize release of confidential information to enable the batterers intervention program to exchange information with Adult Probation and/or other referral source, with courts having jurisdiction, and with other service providers as appropriate to the individual's situation.
4. Batterers intervention programs shall develop a mechanism for considering and responding to written complaints from batterers, victims or other individuals regarding staff conduct, program practices, or other substantive matters. Program participants shall be informed that there is such a process for filing complaints, the details of which shall be made available to any interested person.

D. Program Records

1. Individual participant records (paper and/or computer files) shall be maintained by batterers intervention programs throughout the individual's enrollment in the program. Following discharge, satisfactory or unsatisfactory, the program shall maintain at least a summary of batterer participation. All such individual records shall be maintained in a secure, confidential, and private manner, for a minimum of three (3) years until such time as they are destroyed.
2. Batterers intervention programs shall assess participant progress and shall produce monthly status reports. Status reports, termination reports, and completion reports shall address, at a minimum, the batterer's attendance, missed sessions, cooperation, participation, and payment status. Such reports shall be made a part of the individual's record; shall be provided as appropriate to Adult Probation and/or other referral sources; and/or shall be provided directly to Rhode Island courts having jurisdiction in court mandated cases.
3. Batterers intervention programs shall maintain records of written complaints from batterers, victims, staff, and other individuals, and shall note the dispositions of such complaints. Batterers intervention programs shall also maintain records of unusual incidents, as defined by program policies. Such records shall be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years.
4. Batterers intervention programs shall maintain summary or statistical data including (but not limited to) numbers of referrals, numbers of enrollments, numbers of batterers completing the program, and numbers of batterers discharged prior to completion.

E. Non-Discrimination

1. Batterers intervention programs shall maintain written policies and shall implement practices that prohibit discrimination against victims, batterers, staff, or other individuals on the basis of race, class, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, religion, ethnicity, or political affiliation.
2. All programs shall provide physical, communication and programmatic access to persons with disabilities and shall have physically accessible facilities or an alternative option for disabled batterers, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

VI. PROGRAM CONTENT AND FORMAT

Batterers intervention program goals, values, practices, curricula and policies shall reflect the basic principles enumerated in this document and summarized in Section III. Principles.

A. Curriculum

Batterers intervention programs shall implement a psycho-educational group intervention model of practice that incorporates at a minimum the following topics, concepts and skills:

1. Domestic violence shall be defined as a serious crime.
2. Domestic abuse shall be defined as part of a pattern of coercive control that may include physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse.
3. Batterers must be held fully responsible for their abuse.
4. Batterers intervention programs shall consider violent and abusive behavior to be a choice for which the abuser is responsible. Programs shall recognize that violence is a learned pattern of behavior supported by a system of beliefs and attitudes. Alternative explanations, excuses, or justifications shall be rejected, including substance abuse, psychopathology, provocation or behavior on the part of the partner, or lack of self-control.
5. A responsibility plan shall be developed with each batterer, including basic steps the batterer agrees to take in conflict situations to assure the safety of the partner(s).
6. Programs shall employ and explain a model, such as the Power and Control Wheel (see attachment), which illustrates different forms of abusive behavior and specific examples of such behaviors.
7. Batterers intervention programs shall demonstrate techniques and/or tools for choosing non-abusive behavior, including but not limited to work done outside of the group on a weekly basis.
8. Communication skills training shall be included in the curriculum.
9. The program curriculum shall inform batterers about the impact of the abuse on the partner.

10. The program curriculum shall inform batterers about the impact of the abuse on children; the incompatibility of abuse with responsible parenting; and the relationship between domestic violence and child abuse.
11. The program curriculum shall inform batterers about the impact of the abuse on other household members and witnesses.
12. The program curriculum shall inform batterers about gender role stereotypes, and how they affect the potential for abuse.
13. The program curriculum shall inform batterers about the relationship between sexual abuse and pornography, and how they affect the potential for abuse.
14. The program curriculum shall inform batterers about substance abuse and its relationship to domestic violence.
15. Programs shall inform the batterers that completion of a batterers intervention program is not a guarantee that the abuse will stop; and shall articulate to batterers that being non-abusive requires long-term commitment and continuing effort on the part of the individual batterer.
16. All materials shall be presented in a manner that maximizes comprehensibility to batterers of various levels of education, literacy, or cognitive skills.
17. All materials shall be presented in a manner that demonstrates cultural sensitivity and non-discrimination.
18. Programs that offer bilingual or non-English speaking groups shall ensure that the facilitators demonstrate awareness and understanding of participants' culture as well as language.
19. Cultural and social influences that contribute to abusive behavior shall be identified, and shall not be used to excuse or justify individual responsibility for abuse.
20. Information, attitudes, beliefs, and principles shall be conveyed by means of a variety of methods and techniques, such as confrontation, support, education, skills building, modeling behavior, role playing, rehearsal, journal keeping, homework assignments, or others appropriate to the group participants, material, and staff.

B. Identified Problem, Focus of Intervention, and Referrals for Other Services

1. Batterers intervention programs shall explicitly identify their focus as domestic abuse/ domestic violence. The client need or problem to be addressed by the batterers intervention program shall not be identified as substance abuse, mental health problems, marital or couples counseling, or other diagnostic labels, whether for insurance or other purposes.
2. Treatment for substance abuse, mental health problems, marital or couples counseling, individual counseling, or any other treatment or intervention shall not substitute for intervention specific to domestic violence, as required by statute.
3. If the intake or subsequent evaluation reveals evidence of a substance abuse problem, notification shall be provided to Adult Probation and/or other referring agency. Substance abuse treatment shall not substitute for batterers intervention.
4. If the intake or subsequent evaluation reveals evidence of a mental health problem, notification shall be provided to Adult Probation and/or other referring agency. Mental health treatment shall not substitute for batterers intervention.
5. If as a result of the intake or subsequent evaluation, a batterer is considered inappropriate for group participation based upon behavior or any condition a facilitator deems likely to interfere with the ability to participate meaningfully in group or with the group process, the individual shall be referred back to Adult Probation and/or other referral source for a determination as to how to address the domestic violence. Individual sessions covering a comparable batterers intervention curriculum may in this instance be considered as an acceptable alternative or supplement to participation in a group.
6. Batterers intervention programs shall articulate that their commitment is to stop the abuse and enhance the safety of victims, rather than to resolve other relationship or personal issues.
7. Batterers intervention programs shall not incorporate couples counseling or mediation between couples. Any program that also works with couples shall recognize the danger to the victim where there is continued violence and shall not conduct such couples work until the offender has completed a batterers intervention

program, there is no evidence of ongoing violence, and the victim is in full uncoerced agreement.

8. Batterers intervention programs shall deem unacceptable for the purposes of batterers intervention codependency or other models that attribute shared responsibility to both partners for continued victimization.
9. Batterers intervention programs shall consider to be inappropriate any modality that places blame on the victim, asks the victim to take responsibility for the batterer's violence, expects the victim to support the partner's participation in the program, intimidates the victim, or assumes equal power within an abusive relationship.
10. Batterers intervention programs shall recognize that impulse control or anger management approaches that teach ventilation techniques (such as punching pillows) can perpetuate abusive behavior and are inappropriate.

C. Referrals and Intake

1. At the time of enrollment, batterers intervention programs shall inquire whether the participant has been referred to the program as a result of court involvement. If so, the program shall promptly send (mail or fax) notice of enrollment to Adult Probation and/or other referral source.
2. No batterers intervention program shall knowingly enroll a court mandated individual who is currently enrolled in or has been referred to another program, except with the express agreement of Adult Probation and/or other referring agency.
3. Batterers intervention programs shall make every effort to admit a batterer into the program within two (2) weeks of the batterer's initial contact with the program. If admission to the program is not immediate, the program shall maintain contact with the batterer no less than once a week until the batterer begins a group. If the program projects that no group will be available within fourteen (14) calendar days, Adult Probation and/or other referral source shall be notified.
4. The intake process and ongoing assessment shall include such activities as: interviewing and gathering available information (for instance: identifying information, abuse history, social history, and arrest history); contracting with client (review of program rules and expectations, fee payment schedule, limits of confidentiality,

completion of written agreement); and initial and ongoing assessment (with particular attention to substance abuse, medical, and mental health needs and lethality risk).

D. Group Format Standards

1. Batterers intervention shall be conducted in the context of psycho-educational groups of peers under the leadership of professional facilitators trained and experienced in such work.
2. Batterers intervention program groups shall meet a minimum of twenty (20) weeks with a total of at least forty (40) contact hours. Each batterer shall be credited only for time actually in attendance, and fee collection shall not be included within the required contact hours.
3. Group sessions shall be scheduled for one and one half to two (1½ - 2) hours each in duration. Groups shall begin and end at scheduled times, with prohibitions against late arrival and early departure.
4. A group of ten (10) or fewer participants shall have one (1) or more facilitators. A group of eleven (11) to eighteen (18) participants shall have two (2) or more co-facilitators. The maximum size of groups is eighteen (18) participants.
5. All groups shall have comparable experience with both male and female facilitators working cooperatively, either at the same time (as with co-facilitators) or successively (as in small groups with a single facilitator). The preferred mode is a working team of male and female. In the event of an emergency or temporary unavailability of a particular facilitator, the program may utilize another facilitator, regardless of gender, for a limited period of time.
6. All groups shall be comprised of adults (age 18 and older) or minors (age 17 and younger); the two age groups shall not be mixed.
7. All groups shall be comprised of batterers of the same gender.
8. Any batterer who misses more than two (2) consecutive sessions, or who misses more than three (3) sessions in total, shall be considered non-compliant and shall be dismissed unsatisfactorily. A program seeking to make an exception for specific reasons shall consult with Adult Probation and/or other referral source.

9. Any batterer who is adjudicated on a new domestic violence offense while enrolled in a batterers intervention program, or after having completed a program, shall be required to re-enroll and complete an entire program, consistent with the legal mandate (RIGL §12-29-5). Adult Probation and/or other referring agency, in consultation with the batterers intervention program, shall determine whether the batterer shall be required to return to the same program or to a different program.
10. Batterers intervention programs shall report at least monthly to Adult Probation and/or other referral source regarding individual batterers' attendance, missed sessions, cooperation, participation, and payment status; and shall provide a written discharge summary upon successful or unsuccessful termination. If a court mandated batterer is dismissed from the program while enrolled in the group, the program shall notify Adult Probation and/or the Rhode Island court having jurisdiction the next business day.

E. Standards of Conduct for Group Participants

Batterers intervention programs shall develop rules and standards of conduct for all group participants. Upon enrollment, each batterer shall be informed of such rules and standards, which at a minimum shall include (but not be limited to) the following:

1. Programs shall require that batterers refrain from any and all violence and abusive behavior within the group.
2. Programs shall require that batterers attend all sessions free of nonprescription drugs or alcohol.
3. Programs shall require that batterers refrain from having any weapon in their possession while attending the group.
4. Programs shall require that batterers take full responsibility for their abusive behavior.

F. Participant Fees

1. All batterers shall pay fees for program services. This is an important part of taking responsibility for their own violent behavior and is consistent with RIGL §12-29-5, which states that each batterer is required to attend an intervention program "at his or her own expense."

2. In recognition of the genuine hardship faced by many individuals, and in an effort to reduce barriers to participation, each program shall also demonstrate a means of accommodating batterers who show that they are unable to pay full fees, if they are otherwise appropriate for services. In no case shall the amount to be paid be reduced to zero (0).
3. Fees shall be based upon a sliding scale; and/or programs may elect to offer batterers who are unable to pay full fees an opportunity to do unpaid community service for a non-profit organization designated by the batterers intervention program in exchange for some part of the fees. Community service shall not be performed for any agency providing batterers intervention programs. Programs may elect to offer batterers a deferred payment schedule.
4. Upon enrollment in the batterers intervention program, each batterer shall be provided with a written contract delineating fees and/or community service for which the batterer is obligated and specifying the time frame for payment and/or service. The contract shall include a provision for requesting reconsideration of the terms of payment in the event that the batterer's financial circumstances change substantially.
5. A batterer who fails to comply with the contract for fee payment and/or performance of designated community service and who has not renegotiated the terms of the agreement shall be considered non-compliant and may be dismissed unsatisfactorily. In all such cases, the program shall consult with Adult Probation and/or other referral source.

VII. GROUP FACILITATORS AND OTHER STAFF

A. Program Responsibilities

1. Batterers intervention programs shall recruit, hire, train, and supervise staff in accordance with policies that promote professional conduct, effective intervention, and victim and community safety.
2. All program personnel policies shall be based upon non-discrimination; and programs are encouraged to recruit staff who reflect the diversity of the community.

3. Programs shall maintain a drug free and violence free workplace. Staff shall be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal, for substance abuse, violence, or other abusive behavior.
4. Programs shall develop a mechanism for considering and responding to complaints from batterers, victims, staff, or other individuals regarding staff conduct, program practices, or other substantive matters. Programs shall maintain records of such complaints and their disposition for a minimum of three (3) years.
5. Programs shall notify batterers, victims, staff, or other individuals of the process for filing complaints with the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee.
6. Programs shall not tacitly or explicitly condone behavior that contributes to or perpetuates abuse and oppression, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the program and placing victims and potential victims at greater risk for continued abuse. Programs shall provide internal monitoring mechanisms, training, and supervision aimed at eliminating such collusion.
7. Programs shall develop policies to address violence in the professional and personal lives of program staff.
8. Programs shall provide orientation for all new staff with respect to organization goals and philosophy, policies and procedures, safety precautions, confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality. Non-facilitator staff shall be provided with basic information and training regarding domestic violence issues and dynamics.
9. Programs shall provide, or shall provide access to, a minimum of twelve (12) hours per year of relevant in-service and on-going training for all facilitator staff in areas such as: domestic violence issues and dynamics; victim services and community safety issues; facilitation and co-facilitation of psycho-educational groups; group and interpersonal dynamics; assessment and intervention skills; adult education and instruction; legal issues; counseling; etc. All required or voluntary training that helps to meet this requirement shall be documented by the programs, including subject, trainer, participants, and number of hours.
10. Programs shall conduct a written evaluation of all new staff at two (2) or more intervals during the first year of employment. On-going written evaluation shall be conducted at least yearly thereafter.

11. Programs shall provide evidence of regular and on-going professional supervision as described herein for all facilitators by one or more individuals who are on staff or available as consultants.

B. Facilitator Qualifications

1. All facilitators shall have attained a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in an appropriate field of study. Fields of study may include (but are not limited to) social work, psychology, counseling, sociology, social sciences, child and family services, education, criminal justice. Exceptional experience, skill, and knowledge may substitute for some part of the educational requirement. However, programs must be prepared to explain and justify any such exceptions.
2. All facilitators shall have a minimum of forty (40) hours of training and/or education in related areas, including courses, conferences, seminars, workshops, and training sessions for which the facilitator can provide suitable documentation. Relevant areas of training and/or education may include (but are not limited to) domestic violence issues and dynamics; victim services and community safety issues; facilitation and co-facilitation of psycho-educational groups; group and interpersonal dynamics; assessment and intervention skills; adult education and instruction; legal issues; counseling; and any other areas as may be deemed appropriate by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee. Such training and/or education shall have been completed prior to employment by the program, and/or during the initial six (6) months of employment.
3. Facilitators who are new to leading batterers intervention groups, regardless of their academic qualifications, shall work with a seasoned co-facilitator for their first 100 group hours. For these purposes, a seasoned facilitator shall mean an otherwise qualified individual who has completed a minimum of 100 hours or one (1) year experience leading batterers intervention groups, and a minimum of forty (40) hours training and/or education.
4. Facilitators shall participate in a minimum of twelve (12) hours per year of training and/or education in areas such as: domestic violence issues and dynamics; victim services and community safety issues; facilitation and co-facilitation of psycho-educational groups; group and interpersonal dynamics; assessment and intervention skills; adult education and instruction; legal issues; counseling; and any other areas as may be deemed appropriate by

the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee.

C. Supervisor Qualifications

1. All program staff or consultants who supervise facilitators shall have attained a minimum of a Master's degree in an appropriate field of study. Fields of study may include (but are not limited to) social work, psychology, counseling, sociology, social sciences, child and family services, education, criminal justice. Exceptional experience, skill, and knowledge may substitute for some part of the educational requirement. However, programs must be prepared to explain and justify any such exceptions.
2. Facilitator supervisors shall have a minimum of three (3) years substantive experience in related fields, including both victim and perpetrator issues. Relevant experience shall include work closely involved with such areas as domestic violence issues and dynamics; victim services and community safety issues; facilitation and co-facilitation of psycho-educational groups for batterers; group and interpersonal dynamics; clinical assessment, intervention, and therapeutic skills; adult education and instruction; legal issues; counseling; and any other areas as may be deemed appropriate by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee.
3. Facilitator supervisors shall participate in a minimum of twelve (12) hours per year of on-going training and/or education in issues related to domestic violence, batterers intervention services, group facilitation, staff supervision, and any other areas as may be deemed appropriate by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee.

D. Nature of Facilitator Supervision

1. Supervision shall be directed at monitoring, improving, and providing feedback on areas of competency including (but not limited to) group facilitation and co-facilitation skills; instructional methods; communication of curriculum; potential for collusion; ethics; awareness of victim and safety issues; ensuring accountability by group participants; group process issues; individual offender issues; intervention strategies; outside service needs; coordination with other service providers and monitors, such as Adult Probation, the courts, substance abuse treatment professionals, and victim service agencies; relevant laws and legal issues; and so on.

2. Supervision time, frequency, and format shall be appropriate to the level of education, training, and experience of the facilitators, and to their group contact time. Facilitators are to receive a minimum of four (4) hours supervision per month, except that supervision may be reduced to two (2) hours per month for a facilitator who leads no more than one (1) group per week.
3. Supervision modalities may include direct individual or group meetings.

E. Standards of Conduct for Group Facilitators

Batterers intervention programs shall implement policies, staff monitoring, training, and/or other mechanisms that ensure that facilitators promote non-abusive behavior among group participants. Facilitators shall be required to set a positive personal example as an important means of communicating, teaching and modeling appropriate behavior.

1. Facilitators shall be violence free in their professional and personal lives.
2. Facilitators shall attend all sessions free of alcohol and other drugs, and with no weapons in their possession.
3. Facilitators shall demonstrate respect for and cooperation with their co-facilitators; and shall share group leadership responsibilities, including confrontation and support of participants.
4. Facilitators shall conduct themselves in a manner that consistently promotes and demonstrates respectful and non-abusive language, behavior, and attitudes.
5. Facilitators shall hold batterers responsible and accountable for their abusive behavior.
6. Facilitators shall demonstrate support for the batterers' process of change.
7. Facilitators shall confront minimization and denial of abusive behavior.
8. Facilitators shall promote zero tolerance for any level of abuse.

9. Facilitators shall challenge attitudes of sexism, victim-blaming, and oppression (expressions of power and control over other individuals) in all its forms.
10. Facilitators shall prohibit participants from engaging in any form of abuse in group.

VIII. Recommended Program Features

Batterers intervention programs are encouraged to incorporate additional features which would be compatible with the basic program principles and requirements, and which could enhance the effectiveness of the program and the safety of victims. Examples of such features might include:

1. Programs provide follow-up options for batterers to maintain contact after completion of the basic program, such as crisis intervention and/or on-going work.
2. One or more programs establish a hot line for batterers in crisis.
3. Programs incorporate a contract option by which willing batterers would relinquish all weapons while in the program.
4. Programs institute use of trained peer sponsors as a support network for batterers.
5. Programs investigate potential uses of videotapes, audiotapes, and/or personal appearances to introduce group participants to real-life experiences of victims.
6. Programs conduct evaluation of program effectiveness (clearly defined) through recognized research methods.
7. Programs maintain a minimum group size of six (6) whenever feasible.

IX. APPENDICES

A. Power and Control Wheel

[See page 27]

B. Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee

[See page 28]

A. Power and Control Wheel



B. Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee

The composition of the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee as designated by law, the statutory description of its duties and responsibilities, and the rules of procedure guiding these activities are detailed in the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Rules of Practice and Procedure. As of August 8, 1998, the following individuals were members, designees, or alternates on the Oversight Committee:

CHAIR:

George A. Vose, Jr., Director, RI Department of Corrections

Designee: Sisan Smallman, Assistant Administrator, Adult Probation and Parole

Alternate (Vice Chair): Stephen King, Judicial Planning Unit, RI Supreme Court

MEMBERS:

Joseph E. Smith, Executive Director, Governor's Justice Commission

Designee: Kathy Loiselle (Interim Designee), Governor's Justice Commission

Deborah DeBare, Executive Director, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Designee: Francie Mantak, Director of Public Policy, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Law Enforcement Appointment by RI Police Chiefs Association

Designee: Col. Michael T. Brady, Chief of Police, Charlestown, RI

Jeffrey Pine, RI Attorney General

Designee: Stephen Cuomo, Director of Administration and Finance, Office of the Attorney General

Jonathon Houston, Executive Director, Justice Assistance

Designee: Inspector James Rouillier, Case Manager, Justice Assistance

Member of the Electorate Appointed by Governor of RI:

Designee: Michael DiBiase, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

Alternate: Joseph DiPina, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor

Janice Dubois, Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit

Designee: Bernadette Beatty, Administrative Aide, Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit

The Honorable Joseph R. Weisberger, Chief Justice, RI Supreme Court

Designee: Stephen King, Policy Analyst, RI Supreme Court

Dr. Patricia Nolan, Director, RI Department of Health
Designee: Ann Kelsey Thacher, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
Prevention, RI Department of Health
Alternate: Beatriz Perez, Violence Program Manager, RI Department of Health

Batterers Intervention Program Appointment by RI Coalition Against Domestic
Violence:

Designee: Claude Verdier, Executive Director, PeaceWork
Alternate: David Medeiros, Co-Director, Opportunity for Change

The Honorable Albert E. DeRobbio, Chief Justice, RI District Court
Designee: The Honorable Elaine T. Bucci, Associate Justice, RI District Court

Dennis Langley, Executive Director, Urban League of RI
Designee: Lola M. Brito, Senior Policy Analyst, Urban League of RI