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**A Self-Audit and Practical Guide**

**for Working with the**

**Batterers Intervention Standards**

Developed by

The Batterers Intervention Collaborative Board of the

Ohio Domestic Violence Network

September 2012

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**Acknowledgements**

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) would like to take this opportunity to thank the Batterers Intervention Collaborative Board members for their immeasurable support and dedication, not only to the revision of the Self-Audit and Practical Guide to Working with the Batterer Intervention Standards, but for their work around the state, commitment to ODVN, and the enormous challenge of combating the negative effects of domestic violence.

Those members are: Melinda Brooks, Franklin County Municipal Court, Columbus; Paul Castelino, My Sister’s Place, Athens; Diane Dodge, STOP, Columbus; Sondra Fronimo, Voyager, Canton; Monika Harasim-Pieper, Artemis Center, Dayton; Dean Jenkins, Cleveland Municipal Court, Cleveland; Erika King-Betts (Past) YWCA, Amend Program, Cincinnati; Melissa Knopp, Ohio Supreme Court, Columbus; Dona Pierce, ODVN, & Dayton Municipal Court, Dayton; Christine Raffaele, Ohio Supreme Court, Columbus; Carol Smith, Family Service of Northwest Ohio, Toledo and, and Celeste Waller, ODVN & Wright State University, Dayton.

The following ODVN staff also contributed to the revision of the Guide: Nancy Neylon, Executive Director; Rebecca Mason, Executive Assistant; Tonia Moultry, Training & Technical Assistance Director, and Tana Carpenter, Resource and Technology Coordinator.

**Introduction and Instructions on How to Use the Guide**

In the early 1990’s, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network’s (ODVN) Batterers Intervention Committee (now the Batterers Intervention Collaborative Board), created the *Standards for Batterers Intervention*. The Standards were revised in 1998 and then again in 2010. They were designed to provide direction in development, and enhancement for programs across the state of Ohio.

To assist batterer intervention programs with the implementation of the Standards, the Committee originally created the *Self-Evaluation Tool* which was designed to work hand in hand with the Standards. Due to the Standards revision (2010), the Self-Evaluation Tool was also revised and renamed: *A Self-Audit and Practical Guide for Working with the Batterers Intervention Standards*.

Every section of the Standard*s* addresses issues of accountability in one way or another. This Guide seeks to correlate the Standards with a “how-to” approach. Each section contains questions to be answered by the batterers program. If the question does not apply to the program, a non-applicable (NA) response can be indicated. By answering the questions, the program can get a better idea of how they are doing in proximity to the Standards. It also gives an opportunity for the program to print a copy of the form for purposes of quality assurance and/or can mail a copy to ODVN for additional technical assistance.

If the program chooses the option of sending the completed form to ODVN, a technical assistance specialist will review it, and then contact the program for further consultation. This is a confidential service and is designed to help achieve the best possible results.

Throughout the Guide, you will find references to “batterer intervention programs” and “domestic violence programs.” The term “batterer intervention program” refers to a program that serves domestic violence perpetrators (batterers). This does not include programs for women who are arrested for domestic violence, (usually primary victims that have used force) often called Women Who Resort to Violence or Women Who Use Force Programs.

In the Guide the term “domestic violence program” refers to a community-based program that serves victims/survivors of domestic violence, such as a shelter and or counseling resources. This does not include victim services in the court system, such as the Victim/Witness Assistance Programs.

Violence can occur in the form of female violence against males in heterosexual relationships as it can in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ) relationships. However, since the vast majority of domestic violence occurs in the context of male violence against females in heterosexual relationships, the batterers are referred to as “he” and victims “she” in this Guide.

This project was supported by a Sub grant number 2009-JG-B01-6553A awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs through the State of Ohio, Office of Criminal Justice Services.

The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice or the State of Ohio, Office of Criminal Justice Services.

**Glossary of Terms**

**Batterer:** An individual who uses abusive tactics toward an intimate partner in order to exercise power and control over the partner. Other terms used are program participant, perpetrator and abuser.

**Batterers Intervention Program (BIP):** A program that is designed to help perpetrators stop violence (all forms) in intimate partner relationships by challenging their belief systems and requiring accountability for their behavior. BIPs are not synonymous with anger management programs, and use a very different approach to the intervention.

**Domestic Violence:** A pattern of controlling and abusive behaviors used by an intimate partner to control the other partner. The couple may be married, divorced, living together, separated, dating, formerly dating (short-term, long-term) or formerly together. The abuse occurs in heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer relationships. Domestic violence can be criminal such as physical assault, sexual as in unwanted or forced sexual contact or innuendo, violation of protection and stay away orders, and/or stalking. Although psychological or emotional abuse may not be illegal in all circumstances, it can be just as abusive, and/or lead to criminal behavior.

**Domestic Violence Program**: A program that serves victims/survivors, and/or their children, of domestic violence. It may be a residential program (shelter) or non-residential program, which provides counseling, safety-planning and other support services.

**Ohio Standards for Batterers Intervention:** An Ohio Domestic Violence Network protocol establishing minimum standards and procedures for Batterer Intervention Programs in the state of Ohio. The Standards can be used specifically to provide:

1. Guidelines for developing new batterer intervention programs
2. A basis for evaluating and improving existing programs
3. Guidance for local communities on collaboration with programs

**Oppression:**  The historically constructed personal, cultural, and institutional manifestations of prejudice against a particular group.

**Victim/Survivor**: An individual who has been abused by an intimate partner. Despite the victimization, the individual is surviving the violence whether she remains in the relationship, is able to escape, chooses to leave, or is in the planning stages. The terms are used interchangeably in this Guide.

**I. Victim/Survivor and Community Safety**

**A**. While working with perpetrators directly, it is critical that Batterer Intervention Programs (BIPs) as referenced in the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) Batterer Intervention Standards, make a conscious effort to keep victim safety a top priority in its philosophy and work implementations. In every aspect of the BIP, including but not limited to policy development, group sessions, and communication with referral sources; safety of the victims and children shall be given the utmost consideration.

1. Please indicate what your BIP’s policy is on victim/survivor contact. Was there an agreement between your BIP and the local domestic violence program?

2. If a discussion between your BIP and the local domestic violence program did not take place originally, describe the feasibility of such a discussion occurring now, and/or an agreement being reached:

**B**. Programs with an agreement to have victim/survivor contact shall make a good faith effort to contact the victim/survivor to provide general program information, advise on the program limitations, the confidentiality terms, information on the local domestic violence programs, and other support services.

1. Please explain how your program facilitates “victim/survivor contacts”:

**C**. If the victim/survivor informs the BIP of a participant’s recent use of violence, the BIP shall provide the victim/survivor with advocacy information and with help identifying **her** **other options** (whether or not to contact police, courts, children services, etc.).

1. Please indicate the information and/or options your BIP would provide to the victim/survivor:

**D**. Duty to Warn: If the BIP participant makes direct threats to harm the victim/survivor, her children, other individuals, or escalates behaviors that may lead to violence, the BIP shall make the necessary contacts.

1. Please indicate what your BIP’s policy is regarding the Duty to Warn obligation:

**II. Monitoring:**

**A**. Monitoring is an important method by which a BIP is able to remain open and responsive to the perspective of victims of domestic violence. One very effective way monitoring can be achieved is by having an external individual from a domestic violence program (victim/survivor advocate) observe the group dynamic with some degree of consistency whether it be weekly, monthly, quarterly or so forth, in person or through video technology. Monitoring through observation and review provides a method of evaluating the program’s philosophy, goals, and practice, as it relates to the safety and dignity of victims/survivors. Collaboration between the BIP and the monitor ensures better strategies for a community-wide effort to lessen the impact of domestic violence.

The following three **(3**) questions refer to BIPs that have an external individual providing monitoring service to the BIP. If your program does not have this element, skip to B.

1. Please describe the batterer intervention training your monitor has received (this shall include any training the BIP has provided):

2. Describe how the monitoring system is designed from the perspective of victim/survivor advocacy:

3. Identify the safety procedures that are in place for the monitor:

**B**. If your program **does not** have an individual from an external domestic violence program as a monitor, there are a number of other ways this standard can be met.

1. Please indicate how your program is responsive and/or in collaboration with the local domestic violence program (holds positions on victim/survivor advocacy boards, councils, committees, participates in events, fundraisers that support victim/survivor issues, etc.):

2. Identify ways your BIP could set short and long term goals that might enhance your current monitoring system:

**III. Communication with Referral Source and Other Service Providers**

The participant’s referral source shall be known. This is important so that the program can follow-up and provides pertinent information regarding compliance and accountability.

**A**. Program participants shall sign a release of information form for the referring agency, in addition to releases for other relevant agencies that the individual is working with. It is necessary to exchange information which could have an impact on the participant’s progress in the BIP.

1. Please list examples of agencies that the participant typically signs releases for:

2. When individuals are not accepted into the BIP, please indicate the procedure for notifying the referral source:

**IV. Curriculum**

**A**. BIPs shall be based on intervention model(s) or curriculum(s) that have a theoretical foundation that reflects and affirms that domestic violence is rooted in a system of oppression and is the result of one person in an intimate relationship intentionally using tactics of abuse in order to maintain power and control in the relationship. The curriculum shall be in written form and available for review by the group participant, the domestic violence program or the referral agency.

1. List the intervention model(s) or curriculum(s) your BIP employs:

2. List the number of sessions (24, 48, 52, etc.) and the length (1.5 hours, etc.):

3. Are groups co-facilitated by male and female staff? If not, what are some of the obstacles to achieving this goal?

4. Identify how your BIP addresses the needs specific to a batterer intervention, and how that differs from other group therapies or interventions:

**B**. Couples and marriage counseling, faith-based and family therapy, or any other manner of victim/survivor duel participation **is not recommended**, and can, in fact, heighten the risk to the victim/survivor when done in lieu of, or concurrently with, a BIP.

1. Indicate your BIP’s policy if a participant would indicate a desire to be involved in one of the aforementioned programs, while attending the BIP.

**V. Intake and Other Assessments**

**A**. Programs shall establish and comply with written policies and procedures regarding participant intakes and other assessments. Even though some programs are required to comply with certain intake procedures to meet funding and other obligations, information specific to domestic violence shall be collected as necessitated by the BIP.

1. Please indicate all the categories that apply to the program’s intake assessment**:**

1. Demographic
2. Social History
3. Mental Health History
4. Physical Health History
5. Substance Abuse History (including all current and past treatments)
6. Past Criminal History
7. Police Report for current offense
8. Victim’s name, address, and phone number
9. Relationship History (including current and past partners’ living arrangements)
10. Children, including custody agreements
11. Assessment of participant’s cognitive capabilities (ability to understand conversation/concepts during intake)
12. Factors that might interfere with BIP participation
13. Assessment of risk to self or others
14. Lethality/Risk Assessment: Tool Used:
15. Program Agreements, Rules, and Releases
16. Protection Orders: Criminal and/or Civil
17. Other:

2. Of the above list, if any items **were not indicated**, please explain how your program is addressing these areas:

**VI. Participant Confidentiality**

**A**. BIPs shall establish and comply with written policies and procedures regarding the participant’s confidentiality. The BIP shall provide notice of the policies and procedures to all who provide direct services and those with access to the participant’s records.

The exception is, as noted when a waiver of confidentiality is signed by the participant, or as noted in Section I-D, Duty to Warn: if the BIP participant makes a direct threat of harm to himself, the victim/survivor, or other individuals. Otherwise, the BIP shall not disclose, without the participant’s consent, any confidential communication made by a participant in the BIP.

1. Please describe your program’s confidentiality policy:

**B**. A waiver of confidentiality shall be signed by participants at intake; this allows the BIP to communicate with the referral source and other appropriate agencies, regarding the progress of the participant in the BIP.

1. Please describe your program’s waiver of confidentially policy:

2. If the participant refuses to sign a waiver of confidentiality, please describe your program’s next step:

**C**. Group confidentiality agreements shall be maintained for participants, co- participants (fellow group members), staff, monitors, and other professionals who attend or observe groups.

1. Please describe your program’s policy regarding group confidentiality:

**VII. Program Discharge: Completion or Dismissal**

**A**. BIP participants have either completed satisfactorily all of the requirements of the program or they have not.

1. When the participant has completed the program, please indicate your BIP’s policy regarding notification to the referral source:

2. When the participant has been dismissed unsatisfactorily, please explain your BIP’s policy for notifying the referral source:

**VIII. Working with Marginalized Communities**

**A**. BIPs shall strive to be inclusive of all populations represented within the community they serve. As recommended in the Standards, BIPs shall cultivate and maintain collaborative relationships with marginalized communities through a variety of venues such as local and regional task forces, committees, outreach, prevention initiatives, cross-training, and monitoring.

1. Please list any affiliations, and indicate how your program’s involvement enhances services to the specific marginalized community:

**B**. Most BIPs have a framework in the United States of America that was developed within the mainstream of this country. Its majority culture is white, middle class, heterosexual, U.S. born, Christian, able-bodied, living in urban or suburban environments. BIPs shall provide training for staff to improve their ability to work with diverse populations and employ members of marginalized communities whenever possible, as staff and group facilitators.

1. Please **indicate** all categories of marginalized communities your BIP currently serves, or has served in the past:

1. Appalachian Communities
2. Communities of Color: They include but are not limited to people of African, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native, and Pacific Islander descent, and/or may be of multiple heritages
3. Disability Communities
4. Immigration/Refugee Communities
5. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ)
6. Religious Communities
7. Rural Communities
8. Women Who Use Force
9. Other:

2. For each category selected, please indicate how your BIP has been effective at serving this population:

3. Please provide any examples of situations where your BIP **did not** serve an individual of a marginalized community, yet provided linkages to other helpful services:

**IX. Batterer Intervention Program Staff Accountability**

**A**. Ethical Standards

* All BIP staff shall follow Ethical Standards as outlined by the professional groups with which they are affiliated, including any licensing boards
* All BIP staff shall be familiar with the Standards and strive to meet them
* All BIP staff shall be violent free, and be willing to sign a statement to that effect
* All BIP staff shall communicate in a way that is free of victim blaming; remain open to self-examination and feedback from co-facilitators and supervisors

1. Please describe your BIP’s policy regarding staff accountability:

**X. Staff Training**

**A**. Staff training specific to domestic violence and batterer intervention shall be an integral part of the BIP. It can occur in many ways. For instance: attendance at seminars, workshops, symposiums, webinars, local, state, and national collaborations/memberships, special events, fundraisers, volunteer work, reading newsletters, professional journals, books on related topics, and so forth. What is most important is that the training is **ongoing**, and has a **consistent** message related to:

* Batterer Accountability
* Victim/Survivor Safety
* And uses intervention models or curricula that recognize domestic violence is the result of one person in an intimate relationship intentionally using tactics of abuse to gain power and control

**B**. Group facilitators shall have a minimum of training in the following areas:

* The dynamics of domestic violence in general and the behaviors used by batterers as part of a pattern of power and control
* Victim/Survivor Safety
* Batterer Accountability
* Strategies for effectively confronting all excuses for violence, including substance abuse/addiction, mental illness, and or victim blaming
* The impact of battering on partners, children, and others
* The role of the BIP in a Coordinated Community Response
* Secondary Trauma

**1**. Please list the training opportunities your BIP has had in the past 24 months, or indicate plans for training in the near future:

**C**. Supervision

BIPs shall have a supervisor experienced in batterer intervention to oversee facilitators. If such a supervisor is not available, BIPs shall arrange for peer review or other forms of internal monitoring of BIP activities.

1. Please describe how your BIP provides supervision to group facilitators:

**D**. Self-Evaluation

BIPs shall engage in regular empirical self-evaluation to help measure efficacy, which may include recidivism (repeat offender) studies, or other relevant data.

1. Please list any research projects, or outcome studies your program has conducted, including those in the developmental stages. The Self-Audit and Practical Guide for Working with the Batterer Intervention Standards may be included:

Thank you for completing the Self-Audit and Practical Guide for Working with the Batterers Intervention Standards.

For further information please contact:

Ohio Domestic Violence Network

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