

**INDIANA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STANDARDS FOR  
BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

*Effective 1/01/02*

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# **STANDARDS FOR BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The intent of these Standards is to insure overall quality and consistency for service providers. A Batterers Intervention Program (BIP) is a community program that makes victim safety its first priority, establishes accountability for batterers and promotes a coordinated community response to domestic violence.

## **II. MISSION STATEMENT**

To increase safety of victims, their families and the community from continued acts of domestic violence by setting standards that increase accountability of service providers and batterers.

## **III. PURPOSE**

Intervention standards promote the elimination of domestic violence by providing guidelines for ethical and accountable intervention systems to protect victims, their families and the community while seeking to eliminate domestic violence. Intervention standards mandate that only the highest level of ethical and informed practice is acceptable and encourage provider responsibility in reaching these standards.

Intervention standards remind providers that intervention services are one of numerous important community strategies to end violence against women. Intervention standards establish the minimum level of responsibility, service and accountability expected from providers. Standards provide a measure against which program performance and efficacy can be evaluated, while providing a basis for future program development.

Intervention standards help insure that men who batter receive services that are non-abusive, that support change, and that hold program clients accountable for their behavior.

Intervention standards provide information about appropriate intervention methods so that the public has a measure with which to evaluate these services. Intervention standards foster statewide collaboration among providers.

#### **IV. PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE**

The safety of the victims, their families, and the community are the BIP's priorities. Accountable BIPs will adopt principles of practice to include:

10. The batterers' rehabilitation, confidentiality, and furtherance of legal causes are secondary to the victims' safety;
11. Ending abuse takes precedence over saving relationships, treating chemical dependency or mental illness. Intervention for chemical dependency and/or mental illness must be addressed separately. Violence cannot be effectively addressed without addressing substance abuse problems. Intervention for substance abuse may not be substituted for a BIP;
12. Measures of the BIP effectiveness must be in collaboration with Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV);
13. The BIP shall not be co-educational;
14. Group sessions must be the primary approach for the BIP;
15. Substance abuse, addictions, and/or mental illness treatment may not be substituted for the BIP;
16. Substance abuse, addictions, and/or mental illness must be treated separately from the BIP;
17. Couples counseling may not be substituted for the BIP;
18. Couples counseling is not appropriate until completion of a BIP;
19. No funding efforts will compete with victim advocate services;
20. There will be no discrimination of race, class, age, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or handicaps in hiring of employees or in providing services to batterers; and
21. A coordinated community response is essential to an effective BIP.

## **I. DEFINITION of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

1. Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behavior, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against an intimate partner. Intimate partners include spouse, former spouse, living or having lived as if a spouse, having a child in common, have a past or current sexual relationship, or a past or current dating relationship.
2. The following expanded definitions of domestic violence are included as a reference for BIP programs:
  - a. Physical violence: any unwanted touch, aggressive or assaultive behavior including but not limited to hitting, pushing, grabbing, biting, scratching, strangling, restraining, slapping, pulling, hitting with weapons or objects, shooting, stabbing, damaging or threatening to damage property or pets.
  - b. Sexual violence: use or threat of manipulation, coercion and emotional or physical force to make any adult or child perform or witness any sexual act against their will.
  - c. Psychological violence: intense and repetitive degradation, isolation, and/or controlling the actions or behavior of another person through intimidation or manipulation of that individual.
3. In addition to the above definitions, domestic violence batterers' characteristics may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Little or no concern for the consequences of their behavior;
  - b. Control over the victim;
  - c. Recurrent and escalating behavior; and
  - d. Failure to take responsibility for violent behavior and a tendency to blame the victim for the violence.

## **I. CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES**

A service provider shall not disclose, without the consent of the client, any confidential communications made by the client to the BIP during the course of services; nor shall a BIP employee or associate, whether clerical or professional, disclose any confidential information acquired through that individual's work capacity. Any person who has participated in any session conducted under the supervision of a service provider, including but not limited to group sessions, shall not disclose any knowledge gained during the course of such sessions without the consent of the person to whom the knowledge relates.

Exceptions to confidentiality include:

- a. Suspected child abuse or neglect by client pursuant to I.C. 31-33-5-1;
- b. Duty to warn the victim/survivor/partner of imminent danger if the BIP facilitator believes that the victim/survivor/partner may be at risk of harm;
- c. Certified court orders to release client information; and
- d. Signed confidentiality release by client.

## **VII. STANDARDS FOR BIP FACILITATORS**

1. Facilitators must be vigilant regarding their own power and control issues and must be violence-free in their own lives. An individual who has been violent in the past must have completed an ICADV-approved BIP and be violence-free for a minimum of 3 years.
2. Facilitators must not abuse drugs or alcohol. Before providing direct service, facilitators must be alcohol and drug-free and willing to submit to random testing. Prescription medications must be taken according to the directions of a licensed physician.
3. Facilitators must not engage in any criminal activity. Facilitators must report any arrest or criminal charge to the BIP director.
4. Facilitators must immediately report additional violence or threats of violence reported by any client involved in court-ordered BIP to the appropriate authorities in the criminal justice system.
5. Facilitators must immediately report that a child has been subjected to abuse or alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect by a client pursuant to I.C. 31-33-5-1.
6. Facilitators must not engage in a relationship with the batterer client or the victim/survivor/partner of the client.

## VIII. EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR BIP FACILITATORS

1. Individuals must meet one of the following criteria in order to be deemed as a qualified service provider by ICADV:

- **Co-Facilitator:** To qualify to co-facilitate a BIP class or group session being facilitated by a qualified BIP Supervisor and Facilitator Trainer an individual must show:
  - a. Evidence of 80 hours of formal training approved by ICADV. A minimum of 40 hours of this training must be specific to domestic violence. The remainder of the training should include group facilitation skills, cultural diversity issues, substance abuse and mental health issues, and
  - b. Evidence of observing a minimum of 26 ICADV-approved BIP sessions.
  
- **Facilitator:** To qualify to facilitate a BIP an individual must show:
  - a. 100 hours of formal training approved by ICADV. A minimum of 60 hours of this training must be specific to domestic violence. The remainder of the training should include group facilitation skills, cultural diversity issues, substance abuse and mental health issues;
  - b. Evidence of meeting all the requirements of a Co-facilitator; and
  - c. Evidence of co-facilitating a minimum of 26 additional BIP sessions with a BIP Supervisor/Trainer.
  
- **Supervisor/Trainer:** To qualify to supervise a BIP and train facilitators an individual must show:
  - a. 120 hours of formal training approved by ICADV. A minimum of 80 hours of this training must be specific to domestic violence. The remainder of the training should include group facilitation skills, cultural diversity issues, substance abuse and mental health issues;
  - b. Evidence of meeting all the requirements of a Facilitator, and
  - c. Evidence of facilitating a minimum of 26 additional BIP sessions as a Facilitator.

2. Specific domestic violence training of BIP Facilitators must include a minimum of the following:

- a. Victim safety;
- b. Dynamics of domestic violence;
- c. Sensitivity to victims;

- d. Effects on children;
  - e. Special populations;
  - f. Appropriate criminal and civil laws related to domestic violence, i.e. court orders, duty to warn, orders of protection, child abuse and neglect, confidentiality, custody;
  - g. Characteristics of batterers, victims, and children;
  - h. Crisis intervention, safety protocols, referrals, and all policy and procedures related to operation of a safe, accountable program under these standards;
  - i. Myths of cross-cultural and sex role issues as they relate to domestic violence; and
  - a. Policies and procedures in offering services to batterers as they relate to the protocols of these batterers standards
3. Non-domestic-violence-specific training of service providers must include a minimum of the following:
- a. Cultural diversity issues;
  - b. Group facilitation skills; and
  - c. Substance abuse, addictions, and mental health issues.
4. Individuals must show evidence of participating in a minimum of 18 hours of formal continuing education specific to domestic violence annually to maintain their status as a qualified service provider.

## **IX. SERVICE STANDARDS AND CONTENT**

1. Sessions will be based on ICADV-approved curriculum rather than on client's individual issues.
2. BIP will not rely on victim/survivor/partner participation. Victim/survivor/partner may contact BIP program regarding domestic violence concerns, to obtain information about BIP, and to receive victim/survivor/partner referral service.
3. Couple counseling sessions are not appropriate intervention in conjunction with a batterer's participation in a BIP.
4. BIP curriculum should reflect an awareness of cultural diversity.
5. BIP curriculum will include but is not limited to:
  - a. Definition of domestic violence;
  - b. Dynamics of power and control;
  - c. Socialization, including gender roles and equality;

- d. Batterer's responsibility for past and future abusive behaviors;
  - e. Relationship between substance abuse and acts of violence with a distinction that there is not a cause and effect relationship;
  - f. Relapse prevention plan that provides alternatives to all forms of abuse; and
  - g. Challenging the beliefs that promote abusive behavior.
6. BIP curriculum will hold batterers responsible for their beliefs and actions. It will not accept under any circumstances abusive behavior or victim blaming.
  7. BIP will be a minimum of 26 weeks and meet at least once per week for a minimum of 1.5 hours.
  8. BIP class size should not exceed 18.
  9. BIP should require that clients sign a contract that will include but not limited to the following wording:
    - a. I will not abuse anyone else or myself as long as I am in this BIP. This includes verbal, emotional and psychological abuse, threats of suicide, and threats of violence. I will inform the BIP facilitator what happened and will openly talk about the situation and accept the consequences for my behavior;
    - b. I agree that the reason I am in the BIP is to learn not to be violent or abusive. I will not be violent or abusive in this group or in my personal life;
    - c. I will participate openly, honestly and actively in group discussions and I will abide by all BIP rules. If personal problems arise (e.g. drug abuse, mental health issues), I will seek appropriate treatment as a condition of being in the BIP. I will voluntarily cooperate if my BIP facilitator requests that I obtain an assessment for any of these problems;
    - d. I will provide the correct address and phone numbers of my victim/survivor/partner and will notify my BIP facilitator of any changes. I hereby give my BIP facilitator and other individuals working with BIP facilitator permission to give out the following information to the victim/survivor/partner: when I start and stop the program, referral information to counseling and support services, safety options and any other information pertinent to safety;
    - e. I understand that I may not be informed of any communication that takes place between the victim/survivor/partner and BIP facilitator and I waive any right to have access to or be informed of the nature, content, or existence of any such communication;
    - f. I understand that safety to others and myself is priority and will be enforced by the BIP facilitator per the Code of Ethics; and
    - g. I understand that all suspected child abuse and neglect will be reported pursuant to I.C. 31-33-5-1.

## **Discharge from BIP:**

1. Evaluation for administrative discharge should be undertaken in the following circumstances:
  - a. Continued abuse, particularly physical violence;
  - b. Failure to maintain regular attendance;
  - c. Failure to make appropriate use of the BIP;
  - d. Failure to comply with other intervention conditions or provisions which are part of the client's contract, such as involvement in a substance abuse program for drugs and alcohol, involvement with mental health treatment, etc.;
  - e. Failure to pay fees;
  - f. Violation of any of the group rules; and
  - g. Violation of any provisions of a court order, particularly when the client is court-mandated to the BIP.
2. Non-compliance with the contract, with a court order or with group rules should be documented in writing.
3. The BIP should develop guidelines for administrative discharge so that discharge decisions are uniform and predictable and so that discrimination does not occur against any client based on race, class, age, physical handicap, religion, educational attainment, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation, except as the BIP is not able to provide adequate intervention services based on the stage of its current development, personnel or resources.
4. The BIP has established criteria for completion and program discharge which may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Consistent attendance;
  - b. Cooperation with group rules throughout intervention services;
  - c. Desistance from violence and threats of violence while a member of the program;
  - d. Desistance from other abusive and controlling conduct while a member of the program;
  - e. Adherence to the client's contract;
  - f. Compliance with court orders; and
  - g. Compliance without other conditions and provisions of the contract for intervention services.

It is recognized that some of the above measures require verification from the battered victim/survivor/partner. If that person is not willing to communicate with the BIP, discharge should reflect that the evaluation is based on information that has not or cannot be verified.

5. Communication with the client, victim/survivor/partner and the court specify only that the client has been given a discharge which is based on adequate

compliance with the contract and any court order. Any communication must include the following statement: **Discharge is not predictive of recidivism and that any evaluation of the success of the client's participation in the BIP can probably not be made before one year after discharge.**

6. The BIP has an established procedure for notification of victim/survivor/partner about discharge.
7. The BIP has an established procedure that notifies the court of discharge of court-mandated clients within one business day of the discharge.

## **X. MONITORING**

Monitoring will be mandatory for any BIP program seeking ICADV approval. Monitoring is a process by which intervention programs are designed, evaluated, and transformed. Evaluation is both structural and substantive. Questions paramount in the monitoring process are:

- Does the BIP promote the safety and well-being of battered women?
- Does the BIP promote the cessation of domestic violence?
- Is the BIP accountable to the battered partners of its clients?
- Is the BIP accountable to local domestic violence programs and ICADV?

### **Process:**

1. Each BIP seeks to establish a cooperative and accountable working relationship with the local domestic violence program for the purpose of inviting monitoring, networking, information-sharing, and mutual support. Initiation of the request for monitoring is an ethical imperative.
2. Monitoring may be an expensive process to both the BIP and the domestic violence program. The BIP should undertake to pay the full cost of the monitoring process.
3. Prior to the advent of monitoring, representatives from the domestic violence program and the BIP should meet to establish a cooperative agreement that forms the structure under which they work. It is probable that domestic violence programs and intervention programs across the state will have aspects that are unique to their setting and their community. The following checklist comprises issues that should be addressed in creating an agreement for monitoring:
  - The person or staff position in the domestic violence program assigned to the monitoring responsibility;

- The frequency of monitoring with a minimum of one time per quarter per facilitator;
  - The context of monitoring;
  - The role of the monitor in the intervention setting;
  - The criteria, including these Program Standards, by which a program is to be monitored;
  - Mechanisms for feedback to the intervention program;
  - Mechanisms for follow-up on feedback provided;
  - Monitor will not provide direct service in a BIP; and
  - Mechanisms for annual, formal evaluation of the BIP.
4. Prior to advent of monitoring, representatives from the domestic violence program and the BIP should establish a system of conflict resolution that can be employed whenever conflict arises that cannot be resolved informally.

## **XI. PARTNER CONTACT**

Partner contact is one of the most important pieces of keeping the victim/survivor/partner safe. Partner contact if done improperly can create unnecessary risk of revictimization; therefore, it is essential that outreach advocates are conscious of this danger and are specifically trained (meet ICADV standards) in partner outreach.

Partner contact refers to mail, phone or face-to-face contact made with a victim/survivor/partner during the batterer's participation in the BIP. Partner contact is never made with the intent of counseling or reunification, but rather to inform the victim/survivor/partner of services available and/or to gather information regarding the decrease or ongoing violence in interactions with the batterer. At the same time, the advocate can clarify any misinformation or gaps in information concerning how the BIP works.

Initial partner contact should be made in the form of a packet mailed to the victim that should include, but not be limited to:

- How to contact victim advocate;
- Batterers Intervention Program information; and
- Educational materials.

Partner contact can also take place at the specific request of a BIP Facilitator when there have been actions/comments by the batterer causing concern for ongoing victim/survivor/partner safety. All information received during partner contacts is confidential and is shared with the BIP or the batterer only when specific written consent has been given and safety issues have been discussed with the victim. The victim is never pressured to disclose or give permission for confrontation.

The person who conducts face-to-face or phone partner contact should not be BIP staff. This will avoid the problem of staff becoming mediators or family counselors. Victims need a special type of support that requires very different skills and focus from those of BIP program staff. The person who conducts partner contact should have training that includes at a minimum the understanding of the nature of victimization, gender issues, legal and ethical duties, confidentiality, and the special safety risks presented by partner outreach.

### **Reports of Contract Violations and/or Discharge:**

The BIP will have a written protocol for handling evidence of contract violations without compromising the safety and confidentiality of the victim/survivor/partner.

### **Informed Consent:**

Programs, which legally can offer confidentiality to the victim/survivor/partner regarding his/her communications, must have a protocol for advising them of the following:

1. BIP staff will not inform the client that the victim/survivor/partner talked with the staff, unless the person instructs staff to confront the batterer.
2. Victim/survivor/partner may retract consent anytime before the client is confronted regarding contract violation.
3. Whether the victim/survivor/partner gives consent to confront should be based mainly on that person's estimate of whether it is safe to do so.
4. If the victim/survivor/partner shares information today, s/he can decide not to share information in the future.
5. The program should have a written protocol to protect all victim/survivor/partner outreach notes and documents from legal discovery or other breaches of confidentiality. A separate system not filed by client name may be appropriate.

### **Confrontation of the Batterers:**

The BIP client should never be confronted about the victim/survivor/partner's disclosures of contract violation unless:

1. The victim/survivor/partner has given written documented consent.
2. The victim/survivor/partner has a safety plan related to potential retaliation addressing safety for all parties potentially targeted.
3. The BIP staff has evaluated whether confrontation will heighten the risk of retaliation abuse.
4. Reporting to the legal system is tantamount to confronting the batterer. When, by law, the BIP must report an incident, staff will allow the victim/survivor/partner time for safety planning in collaboration with court services whenever possible and will determine the reporting method least likely to result in effective retaliation.

### **Referral to separate services for victim/survivor/partner:**

Staff providing services to batterers should not engage in direct advocacy for, or therapy with, the victim/survivor/partner. Victim/survivor/partner should be referred to battered victim's programs.

### **XII. ICADV Code of Ethics for Batterers Intervention Program Facilitators**

AS A BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM FACILITATOR, I DO AFFIRM:

- That I will make victim safety my first priority in working with batterers.
- That I will practice so as to further principles of safety for the victim, accountability for the batterer, and collaboration with other professionals to create a coordinated response to domestic violence.
- That I will not discriminate against clients or professionals based on race, class, age, religion, educational attainment, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation or economic condition.
- That I will operate under the ICADV Standards for Batterers Intervention Programs.
- That I will respect the limits of present knowledge in public statements concerning domestic violence and not make any claims that are not substantiated by valid statistics or studies.
- That I will work to prevent the practice of domestic violence counseling by untrained persons.
- That I will report any unethical conduct or unprofessional modes of practice by other BIP facilitators of which I become aware to the appropriate regulatory committee.
- That I will embrace, as a primary obligation, the duty of protecting the privacy of victims or partners and will not disclose information acquired from victims or partners acquired in my practice.
- That I will advocate for changes in public policy and legislation to afford safety for all victims. I will inform the public through active civic and professional participation in community affairs of the effects of domestic violence and will act to guarantee that all persons, especially the needy and disadvantaged, have access to the necessary resources and services.
- That I will work to maintain a violence-free lifestyle including identifying and changing my own power and control issues.
- That I will not abuse alcohol or drugs.
- That I will seek to identify and change any sexist attitudes in my personal belief system.
- That I will not diagnose, treat, or advise on problems outside the recognized boundaries of my competency.
- That I will not misrepresent professional qualifications, education, experience, affiliations or memberships and will accept employment only on the basis of existing competency or explicit intent to acquire the necessary competence.

- That I will avoid personal or business relationships that conflict with the interests or safety of the client, victim or partner.
- That I will make every effort to avoid conditions or relationships with clients, victims or partners that could impair professional judgement or increase the risk of exploitation. For example, working with clients who have close relationships with members of my immediate or extended family or with significant business associates.
- That I will under no circumstances engage in sexual activities with clients, victims or partners. Sexual activity with former clients or with their partners, ex-partners or victims can be harmful to the parties involved and to the credibility of the profession and are therefore prohibited for two years following the last professional contact. It is strongly suggested the BIP facilitators consider former clients as active clients and maintain the above standard.
- That I will disclose the nature of confidentiality and possible limitations on confidentiality to clients, victims and partners as early as feasible in their professional contacts. Facilitators will review with their client circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure may be legally required.
- That I will not reveal a client's identity or confidential information without client consent unless (a) the client presents a clear and imminent danger to himself or others, and/or (b) there is a valid release or a subpoena from the court to testify.
- That I will obtain informed consent before videotaping, audio recording or permitting third-party observation of group sessions. Exceptions to third-party observations are limited to agency trainees, internships, practicums or court monitors.
- That I will store, safeguard, transfer and dispose of client records in accordance with state and federal laws, accepted professional standards, and in ways which protect the confidentiality of clients, victims and partners.
- That I will, when setting fees, ensure that they are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the service provided and consistent with client's ability to pay.
- That I will not offer or accept kickbacks, rebates, bonuses, commissions, or other forms of remuneration for referrals for batterer's services.
- That I will clearly disclose and explain to clients, prior to beginning services, (a) all costs and fees related to the provision of professional services, including any charges for cancelled or missed appointments and (b) the use of collection agencies or legal measures for nonpayment.
- That I will not give to nor receive from clients gifts of substantial value or that impair the integrity of the relationship.
- That I will not offer services to a client of another facility except with the knowledge and consent of the other facility, or following the termination of service with the other professional.
- That I will work to protect and enhance the dignity and integrity of Batterers Intervention Programs.