

**State of Rhode Island**

**BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM  
COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS**

**BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM  
STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

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## **BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS SUMMARY**

Domestic violence is abusive behavior that has personal, family and societal consequences. It is also a crime with legal consequences. Adjudication results in criminal sanctions, including a requirement for participation in and completion of a batterers intervention program. Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL) §12-29-5 and §12-29-5.1-3 mandate that all domestic violence offenders be referred to a batterers intervention program that is certified by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee as meeting identified minimum standards.

Program standards are founded on certain essential principles. In order to be certified to provide batterers intervention, programs must demonstrate a commitment to abuser accountability and awareness of victim safety issues. While each and every standard is considered important and necessary, key program elements are summarized as follows:

**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.**

\*This provision is 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 required by law.

**All batterers pay fees for the program; 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 required by law.

**Groups of no more than 10 participants may have one or more Facilitator; groups of 11-18 participants are required to have two or more Facilitators.**

**Group Facilitators generally need to have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in a related field of study, with specialized training in domestic violence; supervision must be provided by qualified and experienced Master's level professionals with specialized training.**

**Clients 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 domestic abuse offenders to recognize that being non-abusive requires a long-term commitment that goes beyond completing the program.**

**Batterers intervention programs are cognizant of victim and community concerns, and are responsible to the individual program participants; all dangerous or threatening behavior is reported to the proper authorities.**

# **BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS**

## **1. PURPOSE STATEMENT**

- 1.1.** Violence and abusiveness 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.
- 1.2.** While domestic violence may be seen as taking place within the context of personal, family and social influences, the perpetrator is solely responsible for his or her 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 law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, probation, victim services, health care systems, social service agencies, and batterers intervention programs working collaboratively. The foundation for such a coordinated response is the law.
- 1.3.** In 1988, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, Title 12, Chapter 29 of the Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL). Among other things, this law (with subsequent amendments) mandates that a police officer shall make an arrest if there is probable cause to believe that a crime of domestic violence has been committed.

Section §12-29-5 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, a batterer’s intervention program appropriate to address his or her violent behavior.”

The statute goes on to define a batterers intervention program as:

“a program which is certified by the batterers intervention program standards oversight committee according to minimum standards, pursuant to §§ 12-29-5.1, 12-29-5.2, and 12-29-5.3.”

- 1.4.** The Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee (the Committee) was established in 1997 in accordance with §§ 12-29-5.1-3. In the exercise of its authority and responsibilities, the Committee has developed and implemented these comprehensive standards for providers of intervention services to mandated batterers in a good faith effort to improve the consistency, effectiveness and quality of the services. While fields of study and practice relative to domestic violence are still new and changes are inevitable, it is incumbent upon the Committee to act upon our best current understanding of the principles and dynamics of domestic violence and to insist upon the most effective interventions possible. It is anticipated that some standards are likely to be revised over time.
- 1.5.** These comprehensive program standards are established for the purpose of guiding the design and monitoring of a batterers intervention program, as referenced in law. The standards are intended to enable individuals and agencies to become familiar with the requirements for being certified as a batterers intervention program; and to enable the duly constituted Oversight Committee to identify, certify, and monitor programs that provide services to court mandated batterers. Effective and ethical services promote the accountability of perpetrators; teach and support perpetrators in learning non-abusive behavior; make every feasible effort to stop perpetrators from committing further abuse; and are committed to participating in a system that furthers the safety of, and accountability to, victims of domestic abuse.
- 1.6.** The Oversight Committee seeks to exercise its authority in a responsible and responsive manner, providing reasonable assistance to programs that apply for certification and striving for a cooperative relationship with batterers intervention programs. Each of the standards is considered to be important and necessary, but they are the means toward achieving offender accountability, not an end in themselves. The Committee recognizes that effective programming requires some degree of flexibility to address unusual or unforeseen circumstances. An occasional, reasonable exception to a specific standard for cause is not necessarily inconsistent with faithful adherence to the principles underlying the standards.
- 1.7.** 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.

## **2. HISTORY, AUTHORITY, and SCOPE OF OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

- 2.1.** 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 provided through 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 could only be referred to certified batterers intervention programs.
- 2.2.** As defined in law, the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee is comprised of thirteen (13) representatives of various state and community agencies and members of the public. The Oversight Committee is responsible for development, promulgation and on-going review of standards; monitoring of batterers intervention programs, including periodic on-site review; certification of programs that are in compliance with the standards; and investigating and deciding appeals, complaints, and requests for variances.
- 2.3.** Agencies and practitioners seeking certification under the terms of §12-29-5 and §12-29-5.1-3 need to apply through the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee. Comprehensive certification, which entails meeting each of the Comprehensive Standards, must be renewed at regular intervals. Successfully meeting the standards 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.
- 2.4.** The Oversight Committee has no power or intention to prevent, prohibit, or enjoin practices not in conformity with the standards unless the agency or practitioner purports to provide court-mandated domestic violence programming for adults. Agencies, providers, and individuals that do not serve court-mandated adult domestic violence offenders 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.

*[See Appendices for the full text of the applicable statutes, including the responsibilities and authority of the Committee, minimum program standards, and mandated composition of the Committee; and see the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee Rules of Practice and Procedure for the specific procedures followed in conducting the business of the Committee.]*

### **3. FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES**

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:

- 3.1.** Batterers are responsible for their own behavior and must be held accountable for that behavior.
- 3.2.** Violent, threatening, and abusive behavior is purposeful, serving to exercise power and control over another individual.
- 3.3.** Abusive behavior is a choice; individuals can learn alternatives to abusive behavior and can behave non-abusively.
- 3.4.** Batterers intervention differs from and is not replaceable by substance abuse treatment, mental health services, family/marital/couples or other counseling.
- 3.5.** Becoming and remaining non-violent and non-abusive requires a sustained commitment by the abusive person.
- 3.6.** 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.

## **4. GENERAL PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1. General Mission**

- 4.1.1.** 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.
- 4.1.2.** 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, and shall provide reasonable access to representatives of the Committee to enable them to observe groups, review documents, and monitor compliance with the standards.

### **4.2. Certification Application**

Agencies or individuals interested in providing a batterers intervention program to mandated domestic violence offenders must apply to the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee to be certified for that purpose.

- 4.2.1.** Provisional certification is the process by which new programs become eligible to receive referrals of court mandated domestic violence offenders and qualify to move toward comprehensive certification.
- 4.2.2.** Comprehensive certification is available for those programs that have been determined to meet all of the Comprehensive Batterers Intervention Program Standards.
- 4.2.3.** Renewed comprehensive certification is the process by which previously certified batterers intervention programs may seek continued certification. Comprehensive certification is renewable every two (2) years, or at other intervals as determined by the Committee.
- 4.2.4.** Certification requires that a program be determined to be in compliance with each of the Comprehensive Standards, except that a program seeking to justify a planned and purposeful alternative can submit a request for a variance [*see section on Variances*].

*[See the Rules of Practice and Procedure for details about the steps in applying for various stages of certification.]*

### **4.3. Updating Programs**

- 4.3.1.** On an ongoing basis, programs shall consider that intervention with individuals who commit domestic abuse is a relatively new and evolving field. Researchers and practitioners continue to search for and implement new and more effective intervention methods. Similarly, some current approaches may be found over time to be lacking.
  - 4.3.1.1.** To the extent feasible, program managers shall strive to adopt evidence-based practice as it emerges, to update curriculum materials on an ongoing basis, to refine Facilitator techniques and methods, and to ensure that staff, materials and approaches reflect the best of current knowledge and understanding within the field.
- 4.3.2.** Many updates and modifications, while reflecting changes in the field, will nevertheless conform to existing standards and principles. Major changes that might contradict existing standards may require requesting a variance [*see Variances*].

### **4.4. Changes in Business Operations**

- 4.4.1.** The Oversight Committee recognizes that programs will sometimes be faced with the need to make changes in scheduling, group composition, staffing, billing procedures, reporting procedures, and other operational details. Many such changes amount to relatively minor adjustments, while occasionally a program may find that it needs to terminate some or all of its services.
- 4.4.2.** Consistent with good business and professional practice, program directors are requested to provide the Committee advance notice of significant changes whenever feasible, and to work with clients, referral sources, other programs and the Committee to provide as smooth a transition as possible.
  - 4.4.2.1.** For adjustments to group times and locations, programs shall notify all affected clients of changes as soon as possible, and provide alternatives (comparable groups and services) as feasible.
  - 4.4.2.2.** The Committee and all affected referral sources shall also be notified of changes as soon as possible.
  - 4.4.2.3.** Should a program anticipate terminating some or all of its services, it is requested that the program complete services with as many current clients as possible.

- 4.4.2.4.** For program closures or schedule changes that would require a client to transfer to another program, programs shall notify affected clients and referral sources; such transfers shall be the responsibility of the referral source to arrange and/or approve. Cooperation and coordination among programs is requested as a professional courtesy. The sending program is requested to provide a summary of each client's attendance, cooperation, participation, number of sessions completed/number of unexcused absences, payment contract and account status. The sending program is also requested to advise clients, referral sources and the Oversight Committee of how to access closed records, if needed.
- 4.4.2.5.** Any and all program changes that could have implications for certification status are required to be forwarded to the Oversight Committee for review. Examples of such matters to inform the Committee about (with advance notice, when possible) include but are not limited to changes in director, program affiliation, or organizational identity; changes or additions among individual staff or staffing patterns; significant modifications to curriculum; and other changes of substance. *[See the Rules of Practice and Procedure, and Comprehensive Standards sections on Facilitator Qualifications, Supervisor Qualifications, and Curriculum.]*
- 4.4.2.6.** Programs anticipating a change in business entity (including but not limited to the examples described above) should be aware that the certification status and/or certification application process shall be impacted as a result of changes in business entity *[see the Rules of Practice and Procedure for details]*.

#### **4.5. Responsibilities to Victims and the Community**

- 4.5.1.** Batterers intervention program staff are obligated to report any imminent threat to harm self or others. Such threats shall be reported to the police immediately, and reasonable efforts shall be made to notify any identified victim. Adult Probation and Parole 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 within a reasonable time frame, according to the nature of the behavior.
- 4.5.2.** Batterers intervention programs are not encouraged to seek contact with victims or family members of clients. However, response to

contact initiated by victims or family members, and all other activities of batterers intervention programs, shall be guided by principles of victim and community safety.

- 4.5.2.1.** 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.
- 4.5.2.2.** Programs that are contacted by victims may provide information about the specific intervention program and batterers intervention in general, and referrals for victim services from local domestic violence service programs. Brochures and updated lists of local domestic violence victim services are available through the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence and/or its member agencies.
- 4.5.2.3.** Victims contacting programs with inquiries about specific batterers shall be referred to Adult Probation and Parole and/or other referral source. Victims shall be offered referral information for victim service programs.
- 4.5.2.4.** Batterers intervention programs shall not ask a victim to support a batterer's participation in the program, financially or otherwise.
- 4.5.3.** If an agency offers a batterers intervention program and also provides services to victims or family members, or is knowingly located in close proximity to victim service providers, the following safety precautions shall be in place:
  - 4.5.3.1.** All reasonable efforts shall be taken to avoid having batterers and victims present in the same location in order to preserve victim safety and privacy.
  - 4.5.3.2.** Particular program staff providing services to batterers and victims or family members shall not provide services to both members of a victim/perpetrator relationship, at least until after completion by the abuser of a batterers intervention program.
  - 4.5.3.3.** Program staff providing services to victims shall not share information about individual victims with batterers intervention staff.

- 4.5.4.** 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, as feasible.
- 4.5.5.** 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.
- 4.5.6.** Programs shall establish and work to maintain linkages with the courts, probation and parole, law enforcement, and other segments of the criminal justice system; and shall, with proper releases, report each batterer's compliance with program and mandated requirements.

#### **4.6. 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 concerns result in limitations on confidentiality.

- 4.6.1.** Batterers intervention programs shall develop and implement written policies that require mandated batterers upon enrollment to provide written and signed authorization to release confidential information regarding program enrollment, attendance, cooperation, participation, and contract compliance for the purpose of reporting to Probation and Parole or other referring agency, the court having jurisdiction, and other law enforcement entities.
- 4.6.2.** 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.
- 4.6.3.** Programs shall notify Probation and Parole and/or other referral sources when court mandated batterers are terminated from the programs prior to completion.
- 4.6.4.** If audio or videotaping 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.

- 4.6.5.** 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.
- 4.6.6.** 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.
- 4.6.7.** With the indicated exceptions, client information and records shall be kept strictly confidential.

#### **4.7. Complaints**

- 4.7.1.** 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 a process for filing such a complaint with the program, the details of which shall be made available to any interested person.
- 4.7.2.** Records shall be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years for each written complaint, how it was handled, and whether there was a disposition, decision, or other outcome within the program.
- 4.7.3.** If a complaint is not resolved by the program to the satisfaction of the complainant, and if the complaint is related to the Comprehensive Standards, the complainant shall be informed that he or she can refer the matter to the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee. The program will be asked by the Committee to report what efforts were made to resolve the matter internally.

#### **4.8. Non-Discrimination/ Legal Requirements**

- 4.8.1.** 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.



- 4.8.2.** Agencies and individuals providing batterers intervention programs shall be responsible to meet their obligations under existing laws, regulations, or requirements related to facilities, personnel, clients, conduct of business, and any and all applicable rules, independent of the authority and responsibility of the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee.

## **5. PROGRAM CONTENT**

Batterers intervention program goals, values, practices, curricula and policies shall reflect the basic principles enumerated in this document and summarized in Section 3, Foundation Principles.

### **5.1. Group Format Standards**

Batterers intervention shall ordinarily be conducted in the context of psycho-educational groups of peers under the leadership of professional Facilitators trained and experienced in such work.

- 5.1.1.** Completion of a batterers intervention program requires participation in group sessions over a minimum of twenty (20) weeks with a total of at least forty (40) contact hours. Each participant shall be credited only for time actually in attendance.
- 5.1.2.** Fee collection and scheduled breaks shall not be considered contact time for the purpose of completing forty (40) contact hours. Any group time spent in pursuit of these activities must be made up by adjusting the length of the group session or adding group sessions.
- 5.1.3.** Group sessions shall be scheduled for one and one half to two (1½ to 2) hours each in duration, exclusive of fee collection and breaks. Groups shall begin and end at scheduled times, with prohibitions against late arrival and early departure.
- 5.1.4.** Programs may elect to establish varied attendance schedules to accommodate client circumstances that present significant obstacles to attending weekly group sessions. For example, out-of-state travel for periods of time, medical incapacity for some time period, probation terms of six (6) months or less, or other legitimate scheduling conflicts may lend themselves to programs enabling clients to attend more than one (1) session during given weeks and/or not attending any sessions during some weeks. In these instances, the program in consultation with the referral agency shall make every reasonable effort to maintain the duration of program participation over the course of twenty (20) weeks, as well as to ensure the continuity of program content and the accountability of the participant.
- 5.1.5.** All groups shall be led by a Seasoned Facilitator. For groups with more than ten (10) participants, a Seasoned Facilitator shall have a co-Facilitator: either another Seasoned Facilitator or a qualified Facilitator Trainee. Maximum group size with two (2) or more Facilitators shall not exceed eighteen (18) members.

**5.1.5.1.** It is recognized that the occasional illness or unanticipated absence of a co-Facilitator may occur, and/or that occasionally the group size may unexpectedly exceed the maximum. Such exceptions shall not constitute non-compliance for a program and/or group that demonstrates overall adherence to the standards and their underlying principles.

**5.1.6.** All groups shall be comprised of batterers of the same gender.

## **5.2. Curriculum Topics**

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

**5.2.1.** Domestic abuse shall be defined as part of a pattern of coercive control that may include physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse.

**5.2.2.** Domestic violence shall be defined as a crime with serious legal consequences and not as a private or family problem.

**5.2.3.** Batterers must be held fully responsible for their own abusive behaviors. Consistent with this, all program materials, models, and group content must ensure that batterers are held accountable for their own behavior and are prevented from minimizing or justifying abusiveness, or any other form of defense mechanism.

**5.2.4.** Programs shall ensure that victims are not blamed in any way for the behavior of the batterers. Consistent with this, no program materials, models, or group content shall place blame on the victim, enable the batterer to hold the victim responsible, or presume equal power within an abusive relationship.

**5.2.5.** Batterers intervention programs shall treat violent and abusive behavior as 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.

**5.2.6.** Curriculum topics shall include learning to choose and practice non-abusive behavior, effective communication, and listening skills.

**5.2.7.** A responsibility plan/safe behavior plan shall be developed with each batterer, including basic steps the batterer agrees to take in conflict situations to recognize and address individual high risk situations and to assure the safety of victim(s) and of themselves (e.g. from self-

harm). Program providers shall ensure that the individualized safety plan is current and up-to-date at the time of program completion.

- 5.2.8.** Programs may employ and explain models such as the *Power and Control Wheel* and the *Equality Wheel* that illustrate different forms of abusive and non-abusive behaviors, and specific examples of such behaviors [see *Appendices*].
- 5.2.9.** The program curriculum shall inform batterers about the impact of abuse on the victim and shall endeavor to develop empathy through the use of reading/writing tasks, role play, discussion, or other exercises.
- 5.2.10.** The program curriculum shall inform batterers about the impact of the abuse on children, the incompatibility of abuse with responsible parenting, and the frequent co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse. Exploration of parenting concerns should be recognized as offering an opportunity to engage participants positively in the change process.
- 5.2.11.** The program curriculum shall inform batterers about the impact of the abuse on the larger community, including such entities as other members of the household, extended family, neighbors, co-workers, police and courts, hospital and health services, community agencies, and/or public services. Programs may use a range of methods and sources such as magazine/newspaper articles, class exercises, discussion topics, group member experiences, and other examples to illustrate the ripple effects of domestic violence.
- 5.2.12.** The program curriculum shall inform batterers about cultural and social influences, including gender role stereotypes, which can contribute to attitudes that support and/or rationalize abusive behaviors. All member cultures, whether so-called mainstream or minority, shall be treated with respect, and no culture shall be used to excuse or justify abuse.
- 5.2.13.** The program curriculum shall inform batterers about sexual abuse (defined as coercion and/or manipulation associated with any form of sexual behavior) as one form of domestic abuse. Examples can include forced sexual acts, unprotected sex for the purpose of causing unwanted pregnancy or exposure to sexually transmitted disease, coercive use of pornography, use of pornography to “normalize” coercive sex, and any use of sex to hurt, intimidate, or manipulate another person emotionally or physically.

- 5.2.14.** The program curriculum shall inform batterers about the relationship between substance abuse and domestic violence, including how substance abuse can contribute to the frequency and severity of abuse, rationalizing abuse, and planning abuse. The curriculum shall make clear that substance abuse is not the cause of domestic abuse.
- 5.2.15.** The program curriculum shall inform 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.

### **5.3. Presentation of Curriculum**

Curriculum language, topics, and approaches must accommodate diverse clients and populations. This can be accomplished through the use of neutral language that does not specify gender, sexual orientation, culture, or the relationship between perpetrator and victim; and/or through the use of examples and materials that incorporate respectful references to a range of such attributes. All materials shall be presented in a manner that demonstrates non-discrimination and sensitivity to diversity of all kinds.

- 5.3.1.** Materials shall be presented in a manner that maximizes comprehensibility to batterers of various levels of education, literacy, or cognitive skills.
- 5.3.2.** Programs are encouraged to incorporate a variety of learning modalities such as role play, group exercises, behavior modeling, handouts, facilitated discussion, direct instruction, audio-visual media, and others in order to address diverse learning styles, stimulate member participation, and maintain the group dynamic.
- 5.3.3.** 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. Curriculum materials for such groups may be made available in the appropriate language.
- 5.3.4.** Programs may develop group tracks and/or particular sessions that are geared toward certain specialized populations (for instance, repeat offenders, female offenders, elder abuse, non-partner abuse, or others). The curriculum shall include each of the elements identified here, and may address the intended population through varying emphasis and/or inclusion of additional appropriate materials. *[Changes in fundamental approach may require applying for a variance; see section on Variances.]*

#### **5.4. Written Curriculum Format**

Each program shall submit its curriculum (or curricula) for review by the Committee. The curriculum shall consist of detailed lesson plans for each session, materials for use by Facilitators, and handouts for group members. Any substantial changes to a program's curriculum shall be submitted to the Committee for review.

- 5.4.1.** Session lesson plans shall at a minimum identify the topic(s), purpose or learning objectives, methods and materials, and member tasks or assignments. *[Refer to Sample Lesson Plan Format in Appendices.]*
- 5.4.2.** If the number of identified topics is different from the number of sessions at the program, or if the program offers both a twenty and a twenty-six week group, the curriculum should indicate the approximate number of hours expected to cover each topic, or otherwise how the curriculum is expected to be adapted to the duration of the program.
- 5.4.3.** All materials and tasks shall be presented in a manner that demonstrates their relationship to domestic abuse.
- 5.4.4.** Program methods, including practice exercises conducted during group session and/or "homework" done outside of the group, shall involve demonstrating techniques and/or tools that support choosing non-abusive behavior and developing effective communication and listening skills.
- 5.4.5.** A substantial portion of each session should include participation by members, reflection on the significance of and purpose of instructional materials, demonstration of members having achieved learning objectives, and/or group discussion. One-way didactic presentation should not predominate.
- 5.4.6.** Participant disclosure/description of events surrounding an abusive act can be allowed, if relevant to the group process and individual learning in the judgment of the Facilitator, as long as the information conveyed maintains victim confidentiality, does not minimize or justify the batterer's behavior, and does not place blame on the victim.
- 5.4.7.** Programs shall ensure through on-going supervision that all Facilitators are familiar with the curriculum and associated materials, including the focus and purpose of each session and how materials are used.

#### **5.5. Group Check-In**

As a matter of practice, batterers intervention programs generally have group participants "check in" with the group at the start of sessions. Check-in is not

required, but is recommended. Programs that do conduct a check-in may utilize the following guidelines:

- 5.5.1.** Group check-in at or near the start of a group session generally consists of members one by one responding to one or more questions or describing certain behaviors, based upon a format provided by the Facilitator(s). The Facilitator(s) and often other group members provide feedback to the speaker to reinforce learning, promote use of respectful language, support positive decisions and offer alternatives to abusiveness.
- 5.5.2.** The check-in serves multiple purposes, including the following:
  - 5.5.2.1.** Engage all members as early in each session as possible.
  - 5.5.2.2.** Engage new participants as active members of group.
  - 5.5.2.3.** Ensure that participants take responsibility for their current and past abusive behavior.
  - 5.5.2.4.** Serve as a practicum for Facilitators and members to learn and demonstrate how the group experience impacts their personal experience.
  - 5.5.2.5.** Enable participants to practice thinking and communicating with skills being learned in group.
  - 5.5.2.6.** Allow members to exercise and improve their own skills through responding to each others' resistance, denial, minimization, victim-blaming and other defense mechanisms; as well as through supporting each others' positive communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and other non-abusive behaviors.
  - 5.5.2.7.** Provide Facilitators an opportunity to gauge potential victim safety issues.
  - 5.5.2.8.** Enable Facilitators and other group members to intervene regarding current abuse and related issues.
  - 5.5.2.9.** Enable group participants to actively respond to and assist fellow members in problem-solving and skill development.
  - 5.5.2.10.** Enable group participants to recognize shared experiences and patterns of behavior and thinking.

- 5.5.2.11.** Provide opportunities for Facilitators and members to monitor relative progress through the course of the group.
- 5.5.3.** Programs are encouraged to vary the approach used in check-ins, including format, questions posed, and forms of abuse discussed. Check-in format(s) and the Facilitator responses should elicit specific descriptions, focusing on the member's own thoughts, feelings, decisions, and behaviors rather than those of other individuals involved. General check-ins (such as "no problems this week" or "I abused my partner") should be probed for specifics. **If** checking in on occasion by reporting some form of non-domestic abusiveness is compatible with the format being used, the Facilitator shall help make the connections to family/domestic abuse explicit. *[See Sample Formats – Group Check-In in Appendices].*
- 5.5.4.** Conducting Check-In.
- 5.5.4.1.** Facilitators shall ensure that all members participate and focus on their own behavior.
- 5.5.4.2.** Facilitators shall address defense mechanisms, such as minimization, denial and victim-blaming.
- 5.5.4.3.** Facilitators shall respond to all instances of current abuse and violent abuse to gauge risk of harm to self or others, and to ensure the member's responsibility plan is updated as needed.
- 5.5.4.4.** Facilitators shall reinforce and support positive, non-abusive behaviors described in check-ins.
- 5.5.4.5.** Facilitators shall prompt further discussion or more specific statements if member check-ins are overly general, if statements appear to be rote recitations, if participant reports no abuse, or if individual check-ins become repetitive week after week.
- 5.5.4.6.** Within the guidelines above, Facilitators shall use discretion in determining how involved their responses shall be to individual check-ins and how much of the group session shall be devoted to the check-in process. On occasion, Facilitators may determine that particularly compelling check-in material should take precedence over the planned curriculum.



- 5.5.4.7.** Similarly, Facilitators may also determine on occasion that the planned curriculum material or approach should take precedence over check-in, especially if the topic is expected to serve similar functions or to be particularly time-consuming.

## **5.6. Group Check-Out**

Batterers intervention programs are encouraged to have group participants “check out” with the group at the end of sessions. Check-out is not required, but is recommended. Programs that do conduct a check-out may utilize the following guidelines:

- 5.6.1.** Group check-out at or near the end of a group session generally consists of members one by one responding to one or more questions related to what the participant learned during the session or describing a reaction to something learned. The check-out format shall be provided by the Facilitator(s). While check-out is generally briefer than check-in, Facilitator(s) and/or other group members can provide feedback to the speaker when appropriate.
- 5.6.2.** The check-out serves multiple purposes, including the following:
- 5.6.2.1.** Encourage attentiveness throughout the session.
  - 5.6.2.2.** Ensure that all members have been engaged in the learning process.
  - 5.6.2.3.** Ascertain the nature of individual participants’ understanding of the subject matter.
  - 5.6.2.4.** Provide Facilitators an opportunity to gauge members’ state of mind as they prepare to leave the group.
  - 5.6.2.5.** Enable Facilitators to determine need for immediate referrals or other interventions related to offender or victim safety.
  - 5.6.2.6.** Enable participants to express themselves concerning difficult material or unusual group occurrences.
  - 5.6.2.7.** Provide an opportunity to integrate learning from the session and to anticipate how it relates to personal experience.
  - 5.6.2.8.** Plan how to incorporate the lesson into behavior during the coming week.

- 5.6.2.9.** Provide opportunities for Facilitators and members to monitor relative progress through the course of the group.
- 5.6.3.** Programs are encouraged to vary the format and questions posed in check-outs. Check-out format(s) should be designed to elicit a brief response focusing on the member's own thoughts, feelings, responses, and behaviors rather than those of other individuals involved. General check-outs (such as "this was a good session" or "I learned a lot") should be probed for specifics. *[See Sample Formats – Group Check-Out in Appendices].*
- 5.6.4. Conducting Check-Out.**
- 5.6.4.1.** Facilitators shall ensure that all members participate and focus on their own behavior.
- 5.6.4.2.** Facilitators shall address defense mechanisms, such as minimization, denial and victim-blaming.
- 5.6.4.3.** Facilitators shall gauge risk of harm to self or others, and shall address the member responsibility and safe behavior plans, contract for member safety, and/or notify police and referring source as appropriate.
- 5.6.4.4.** Facilitators shall reinforce and support positive, non-abusive behaviors, plans and attitudes described in check-outs.
- 5.6.4.5.** Facilitators shall prompt further discussion or more personal statements if member check-outs are overly general and impersonal, if statements appear to be rote recitations, or if specific check-outs become repetitive week after week.
- 5.6.4.6.** Within the policy guidelines of each program, Facilitators may determine that the planned curriculum material or resulting group interaction should take precedence over setting aside time for check-out.

## **6. CLIENT ENROLLMENT AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.1. Identified Problem and Referrals for Other Services**

- 6.1.1.** Batterers intervention programs shall explicitly identify the client need or problem to be addressed as domestic abuse, domestic violence, or similar terminology. Program presentations, descriptions, and materials shall articulate the goal of stopping abusive behavior and teaching non-abusive behavior.
- 6.1.2.** Batterers intervention is not appropriate to address marital or couples problems; relationship or personal problems; anger management or impulse control; or substance abuse, mental health or medical needs; neither is treatment or counseling for any of these problems a substitute for batterers intervention.
- 6.1.3.** Program staff members may become aware of co-occurring client problems and/or may believe that treatment is required for substance abuse, mental health problems, medical needs, or other problems beyond the scope of batterers intervention. Notice shall be provided to the referring source, if such problems and/or treatment could impact the individual's participation in batterers intervention. Clients shall be referred as needed for appropriate services, and a determination made as to how to address the co-occurring problems (for instance, successively or simultaneously). Other forms of treatment or counseling shall not substitute for batterers intervention, except for individuals who are unable to function effectively within any available batterers intervention program, as described below.
  - 6.1.3.1.** A client who is considered inappropriate for group participation based upon any pattern of behavior or any apparent medical, psychiatric, psychological, cognitive, language, communication, or physical condition or limitation deemed likely to interfere with the ability to participate meaningfully in group or interfere with the group process shall be referred to court through the referral source for a determination as to how to address the mandate for batterers intervention. The basis for considering the client inappropriate for group shall be provided to the court, along with potential alternatives, if any, such as individual sessions with a treatment provider who is familiar with domestic abuse issues instead of or in addition to participation in a group; treatment for other conditions prior to participation in a batterers group; or other services. The court shall be requested to determine whether alternative(s) might be acceptable in fulfillment of mandated batterers intervention, or whether

batterers intervention by necessity should be waived for individuals functionally unable to participate.

- 6.1.4.** Batterers intervention programs shall not incorporate couples counseling or mediation between perpetrator and victim. Any program that also works with couples, or with both perpetrator and victim, shall recognize the danger to the victim where there is continued violence; and shall not conduct such joint 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.
- 6.1.5.** For the purposes of batterers intervention, service models that attribute shared responsibility to partners, family or household members for ongoing abuse shall be deemed unacceptable. Similarly inappropriate for batterers intervention are any modalities that place blame on the victim, ask the victim to take responsibility for the batterer's violence, expect the victim to support a perpetrator's participation in the program (financially or otherwise), intimidate the victim, or presume equal power within an abusive relationship.

## **6.2. Intake and Referrals**

- 6.2.1.** Batterers intervention programs shall make every effort to admit a batterer into a group within two (2) weeks of the batterer's initial enrollment. If the program projects that no group will be available within fourteen (14) calendar days, the referral source shall be notified.
- 6.2.2.** 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 notify the referral source of enrollment (by telephone, fax, mail, or e-mail).
  - 6.2.2.1.** No batterers intervention program shall knowingly enroll a court-mandated individual who is currently enrolled in or has been referred to another program, or who has been discharged unsatisfactorily from another program, except with the express agreement of the referral agency and exchange of information with the sending program. Programs are thus discouraged from "client shopping" from other programs; and clients and referral agents are discouraged from "program shopping" for reasons such as avoiding accountability.
- 6.2.3.** The intake process shall include interviewing and gathering identifying information, history of abuse and other violence, social history, police

report, arrest history, and other information as available; informing each client of the program rules and expectations; and notifying the client of the limits of confidentiality.

- 6.2.4.** Each mandated client shall be required to authorize release of confidential information between the batterers intervention program and the referring agent and/or court having jurisdiction. Referral agents shall be authorized to release reports of criminal history and dispositions, police reports, compliance with court-ordered sanctions, and other appropriate information. Programs shall be authorized to release reports of client attendance, missed sessions, cooperation, participation and contract compliance.
- 6.2.5.** Programs shall make clear upon enrollment that the client is expected to complete forty (40) contact hours at that agency, except under unusual circumstances requiring a transfer, with explicit approval from the referral source. Discharge from the program prior to completion will result in immediate notification to the referral agent and/or the court having jurisdiction, and could result in further legal action and/or being required to start a program over and completing the full forty (40) contact hours with no credit for prior attendance. *[See section on Special Issues, Split Program Completion.]*
- 6.2.6.** Any client 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). The referral 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.

### **6.3. Client Agreement and Contract**

- 6.3.1.** Upon enrollment, each client shall be provided with a written agreement and/or contract that is discussed, explained and signed by the client and a program representative. The program representative's signature shall attest to having read and explained the agreement to the client, and having made a copy available to the client. *[See Appendices for Sample Client Agreement – Client Information/ Program Rules, and Sample Client Contract – Fees.]*
- 6.3.2.** The written agreement and/or contract shall identify the agreed-upon fee and/or compensation alternatives (such as community service, job search activities, reduced fees, and/or deferred fees, if appropriate); the required means and time frame for fee payment and/or completion

of other alternatives; and the means and responsibility for the client to notify the program immediately if unable to meet the agreed obligations.

- 6.3.3.** The client shall be notified that the terms of the compensation agreement/ contract may be made available to the referring agency and/or court having jurisdiction.
- 6.3.4.** Upon enrollment, copies of the program's rules of conduct and any other program documents and/or requirements shall be made available to the client.
- 6.3.5.** The agreement, contract and/or other documents provided at intake shall convey that in order to successfully complete the mandated batterers intervention program, the client is required to attend a minimum of forty (40) hours over the course of twenty (20) weeks or longer, and to participate meaningfully to the individual's capacity. Except under unusual circumstances, which would require approval by the referral source, all forty (40) hours must be completed at the same program. Discharge from the program prior to completion will result in immediate notification to the referral agent and/or the court having jurisdiction, and could result in further legal action and/or being required to start a program over and completing the full forty (40) hours with no credit for prior attendance.
- 6.3.6.** The agreement, contract and/or other documents provided at intake shall convey that completion of a batterers intervention program is not a guarantee that the abuse will stop, and that being non-abusive requires a long-term commitment and continuing effort on the part of the batterer.

#### **6.4. Client Compensation to Programs (Fees)**

- 6.4.1.** According to the statute (RIGL §12-29-5.2), "Batterers intervention programs shall require that all mandated batterers pay fees for the programs..." The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that the individual takes responsibility for changing his or her own abusive behavior. In addition, privately operated batterers intervention programs are entitled to seek fair compensation for their services.
- 6.4.2.** Also consistent with the statutory language, each program is required to "accommodate varying levels of ability to pay by means of sliding fee scales" in recognition of the genuine hardship faced by many individuals and in an effort to reduce barriers to participation. Programs "may elect to offer alternatives to payment in the form of

community service and/or deferred payment for a portion of the fees.” Such alternative compensation arrangements for clients who are unable to pay full fees are strongly encouraged by the Oversight Committee.

- 6.4.3.** No program or program staff member may accept or allow personal services from a client to substitute for any portion of fees or legitimate alternatives to compensation.
- 6.4.4.** Each program shall develop explicit written policies detailing client fees, potential fee adjustments and alternatives, information required from the client, the written client contract, and consequences for non-compliance with the contract. Clear and detailed policies shall include:
  - 6.4.4.1.** The fee or range of fees for intake/registration, group sessions, and any other services related to the batterers intervention program.
  - 6.4.4.2.** A clear explanation of how the actual fee is determined for each individual client, specifying the evidence, documentation or other information needed from clients for determination of any reduction of fees.
  - 6.4.4.3.** Any alternative(s) available at the option of the program for qualifying individuals, either to substitute for full fees or to supplement reduced fees, such as:
    - 6.4.4.3.1. Verifiable unpaid community service at a non-profit organization (other than at the same program).
    - 6.4.4.3.2. Documentation of other productive activity on a regular basis (if acceptable by the program), such as job skills training, job search efforts, benefits applications, educational pursuits, literacy classes, and the like.
    - 6.4.4.3.3. Deferred compensation or late payment agreement, subject to ongoing documentation of short-term lay-off, reduction in work hours, pending benefits or insurance settlement, or other time-limited circumstances.
- 6.4.5.** The program shall maintain a file record of compensation by the client: that is, all monetary payments made by or on behalf of the client, and/or a file record of each activity completed by the client as an agreed-upon alternative to a portion of fees (community service or other).

- 6.4.5.1.** The program shall make a receipt available to the client for each fee payment and/or contracted alternative activity completed and documented by the client.
- 6.4.5.2.** The program shall provide a record of client fees and/or alternatives to the referring agency and/or the court having jurisdiction, if appropriate.
- 6.4.6.** Programs shall make their fee schedules and compensation policies available as requested to the referring agency and/or the court having jurisdiction.

**6.5. Written client agreement.**

Once the form of compensation for a particular client has been established, the program shall provide a written client agreement *[see Appendices for Sample Client Agreement – Client Information/Program Rules, and Sample Client Contract – Fees]*. Any revisions to the compensation agreement shall result in a revised agreement. With respect to fees and/or alternatives, the client agreement and/or contract shall include:

- 6.5.1.** The specific fee(s) and/or alternative(s) agreed upon by the program and the individual client.
- 6.5.2.** The required means of fee payment (e.g., personal check, money order, cash) and time frame for fee payment (e.g., a maximum time period or dollar amount of arrearage tolerated); and/or required verification and time frame for completion of alternatives as delineated.
- 6.5.3.** A statement of the client’s responsibility (and notice of the means) to contact the program immediately if unable to meet the agreed obligations, whether temporarily or long-term, and to request reconsideration of the terms of compensation.
- 6.5.4.** A statement of the client’s responsibility to provide the program appropriate documentation or other evidence to demonstrate financial hardship, if an adjustment to fees and/or alternative(s) is being sought.
- 6.5.5.** Notice to the client that the terms of the initial agreement and/or contract (and any revisions) may be made available as appropriate to the referring agent and/or court having jurisdiction, along with progress reports that include the client’s compliance or non-compliance with the terms of the agreement.



- 6.5.6.** Signature of the client, after having had the terms of the contract verbally reviewed and having indicated understanding and agreement.
- 6.5.7.** Signature of a program representative, indicating that all of the terms of the agreement and/or contract have been discussed with and apparently understood by the client, that the signature of the client has been witnessed, and that the client is being provided a copy.

**6.6. Compliance with the Agreement and/or Contract.**

Once a client has been enrolled in a program (that is, the client and a program representative have agreed to and signed the terms of the client contract), the client may not ordinarily be discharged for a documented financial inability to pay full fees if the client is otherwise compliant.

- 6.6.1.** If an enrolled client provides reasonable evidence of a change in financial or other circumstances that interfere with the ability to fulfill the terms of the compensation agreement, the program shall work with the client to find mutually acceptable compensation terms. The program is ethically obligated to work actively with such enrolled clients to develop mutually agreed terms of compensation. The program is strongly encouraged to utilize reduced fees, community service, deferred or late payment agreements, or other legitimate compensation alternatives, when the client's circumstances warrant.
- 6.6.2.** If a client fails to make good faith payment or to complete other agreed-upon compensation alternatives as delineated in the agreement and fails to provide reasonable evidence of an inability to meet the terms of the agreement despite active efforts by the program to engage the client, then the program may discharge the client unsatisfactorily.
- 6.6.3.** If an enrolled client is turned away from a group session and not allowed to participate specifically because of an arrearage, the program must be prepared to demonstrate to the referral agency and/or the court that program staff have made reasonable efforts to secure cooperation from the client in meeting contract obligations.
- 6.6.4.** A program that discharges a client unsatisfactorily based in part or in whole upon non-compliance with the compensation agreement shall give timely notice to the referring agency and/or the court having jurisdiction, and shall be prepared to provide documentation of having made reasonable efforts to assist the client to become compliant.

- 6.6.5.** Programs shall make their fee schedules and compensation policies available as requested to the referring agency and/or the court having jurisdiction.

## **6.7. Attendance Requirements**

- 6.7.1.** Batterers programs shall be a minimum of forty (40) program hours over a minimum of twenty (20) weeks in duration.
- 6.7.2.** Programs shall require that batterers arrive on time for all scheduled sessions.
- 6.7.3.** Each program shall maintain written policies defining excused and unexcused absences, and practices regarding making up missed sessions. In most cases, absences for documented medical need, incapacitation, death in the family, required attendance at work, or other bona fide inability to attend may be considered excused, with verification provided to the program by the client.
- 6.7.4.** All absences, excused or unexcused, must be made up, such that the participant attends forty (40) program hours. Programs shall determine how to manage make-up time by participants (such as enabling them to attend additional sessions of the same or different groups) while maintaining group continuity.
- 6.7.5.** At the discretion of the program, clients may be permitted to attend more than one (1) group session in a given week. The forty (40) program hours must encompass a minimum of twenty (20) weeks duration, except that the forty (40) hours may be completed in fewer weeks if the court-ordered term of probation is shorter than that.
- 6.7.6.** Any client who has three (3) consecutive unexcused absences or who has four (4) unexcused absences 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 the referring agency. The program shall maintain a composite file listing all such exceptions.

## **6.8. Rules of Conduct for Group Participants**

Batterers intervention programs shall develop written rules of conduct for all group participants. Upon enrollment, each batterer shall be informed of such rules and of the potential consequences for non-compliance. Failure to comply could result in legal action, unsuccessful discharge, notification to the referral source and/or the court having jurisdiction, and/or being required to start the program over. At a minimum, program requirements for participants shall address the following:

- 6.8.1.** Participants shall refrain from any and all violence, abusiveness and disruptive behavior during group sessions and while at the program site.
- 6.8.2.** Participants shall attend all sessions free of alcohol, non-prescription drugs, prescription drugs used abusively, or any substance that could impair the ability to function or could jeopardize the safety of self or others.
- 6.8.3.** Participants shall have no weapons in their possession while attending group.
- 6.8.4.** Participants shall turn all cell phones and pagers off except in critical circumstances. Participants shall address these circumstances with the Facilitator at the beginning of the group session.
- 6.8.5.** Participants shall take full responsibility for their abusive behavior and make every effort to learn non-abusive alternatives.
- 6.8.6.** Group members shall engage in full and active participation to the best of their ability including responding to Facilitator questions, contributing to discussions, completing in-group and homework assignments, and taking part in interaction with the Facilitator(s) and/or other group members as expected by the program. Inactive or passive attendance, consistent or repeated failure to complete assignments or participate in group activities, disruption of the group's ability to function, or non-compliance with program rules can be grounds for unsuccessful termination from the program.
- 6.8.7.** Group members shall inform the Facilitator if there is another group member with whom they share a pre-existing and ongoing professional or business relationship, substantial social interaction, or family relationship. The Facilitator shall determine whether the nature of the relationship is such that transfer of one of the members to another group would be advisable.
- 6.8.8.** With the exception of the indicated Limits of Confidentiality, group members shall be instructed to maintain confidentiality regarding personal information and identity learned from or about any group member.

## **6.9. Client Records, Reports and Discharge**

- 6.9.1.** Individual participant records (paper and/or computer files) shall be maintained by batterers intervention programs throughout the individual's enrollment in the program. All such individual records shall be maintained in a secure, confidential, and private manner, for a minimum of three (3) years and until such time as they are destroyed.
- 6.9.2.** Individual participant records (paper and/or computer files) shall include a referral form (if applicable), police report (if available), signed authorization for release of confidential information, individualized contract, records of fee payment and/or compliance with other compensation alternatives, monthly progress reports, and discharge or termination summary.
- 6.9.3.** Batterers intervention programs shall evaluate participant progress and shall compile status reports at a minimum interval of once monthly. Such reports shall be made a part of the individual's record, and shall be provided as appropriate to the referral source and/or the court that has jurisdiction. Reports shall address the client's attendance, missed sessions (excused and/or unexcused), cooperation, participation, and contract compliance.
- 6.9.4.** Upon a client's completion of the required 40 hours of group, programs shall provide a written discharge summary to the referral source. In addition, the program shall provide a notice of completion to the client.
- 6.9.5.** Upon unsatisfactory or premature termination of a court-mandated batterer, the program shall notify the referral source the next business day, or as soon as feasible, and shall provide a written discharge summary. Reasons for such unsatisfactory or premature termination shall be specified.
- 6.9.6.** Programs shall maintain reports of unusual incidents involving clients. As appropriate, such reports shall be forwarded to the referring agent and/or court having jurisdiction, police, victim advocates, or other parties with a need to know.

## **7. GROUP FACILITATORS AND OTHER STAFF**

### **7.1. Program Responsibilities to Staff**

- 7.1.1.** 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.
- 7.1.2.** All program personnel policies shall be based upon non-discrimination. Programs are encouraged to make reasonable efforts to recruit staff who bring knowledge and understanding of the diversity within the community.
- 7.1.3.** Program policies shall promote a drug-free and violence-free workplace. Personnel policies shall address violence and/or abusiveness in the professional and personal lives of program staff, and shall provide for recommended treatment or intervention when appropriate, and/or potential discipline for substance abuse, violence, abusiveness, or other dangerous or unprofessional conduct by staff.
- 7.1.4.** Programs shall provide internal monitoring mechanisms, training, and supervision aimed at identifying and eliminating collusion. In the context of batterers intervention, collusion is behavior by program staff (often inadvertent) that creates the appearance of a personal alliance with the batterer, and/or has the effect of subtly supporting abusiveness, attitudes of entitlement, avoidance of accountability, minimization or other responses that reduce the effectiveness of the program and place victims at potential risk.
- 7.1.5.** 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.
- 7.1.6.** 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 and Supervisor staff in areas outlined below in sections on Facilitator and Supervisor Qualifications. 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.

- 7.1.7.** Programs shall develop and implement policy guidelines regarding staff reporting any personal and/or other business relationships with agency clients. Staff who are actively engaged in providing services to agency clients should not also have a social relationship with them, and should disclose to the supervisor and/or manager the nature of any current or past personal, business or professional relationship with clients other than the present agency services.
- 7.1.8.** 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, and shall be maintained in confidential personnel files (not subject to review by the Oversight Committee).
- 7.1.9.** Programs shall provide evidence of regular and on-going professional supervision as described herein for all Facilitators by one or more qualified individuals who are on staff or available as consultants.

## **7.2. Facilitator Qualifications**

- 7.2.1.** The quality, consistency and effectiveness of batterers intervention groups are largely a reflection of the skill and knowledge of the group Facilitators and the supervision they receive. While certain units of information and training cannot guarantee quality facilitation, it is considered an essential component of the responsibility and authority of the Oversight Committee to establish baseline standards for education, training and supervision of Facilitators and all individuals who interact substantially in group with the participants. The purpose of such standards is to promote a common foundation of understanding and skill in conducting groups that provide offenders an opportunity for positive change while effectively furthering victim safety and offender accountability.
- 7.2.2.** All individuals who actively participate in facilitating or co-facilitating groups or who interact substantially in group with the participants contribute materially to the nature of the group, and as such are subject to certain minimum standards. The standards differentiate among Seasoned Facilitators, Facilitator Trainees, Student Intern Facilitators, and Group Observers.
- 7.2.3.** All those who interact in batterers groups must meet minimum qualifications in the areas of Educational Degree Requirements, Specialized Training, and Batterers Group Facilitation Experience, as described herein. Such documentation shall be submitted for individuals prior to their participation in the group process [*see Facilitator Qualifications Form in Appendices*].

- 7.2.4.** Program managers shall be responsible to ensure that any and all Seasoned Facilitators, Facilitator Trainees, Student Intern Facilitators and Group Observers have demonstrable and substantive skill, knowledge and experience appropriate to their respective roles, and that they are able to fulfill their roles effectively within the batterers intervention program.

### **7.3. Seasoned Facilitators**

- 7.3.1.** Role. Seasoned Facilitators are qualified to lead batterers groups on their own, provided that group size does not exceed ten (10) participants, and/or to co-lead groups with another Facilitator. They are also qualified to work with and mentor Facilitator Trainees or Student Intern Facilitators, at the discretion of the program.

- 7.3.2.** Summary of Qualifications. Seasoned Facilitators must generally have achieved a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in a related field, thirty-five (35) contact hours of Specialized Training, and one hundred (100) contact hours conducting batterers groups as a Facilitator Trainee under supervision, all as detailed herein.

- 7.3.3.** Educational Degree Requirement. In order to qualify as a Seasoned Facilitator, individuals must generally possess 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, mental health, and others with demonstrable and substantial applicability to batterers intervention.

- 7.3.3.1.** Exceptional experience and training may substitute for some portion of the educational requirement in limited circumstances. Such an exception will be considered upon written request and justification provided by the program. *[Refer to Appendices for these exceptions.]*

- 7.3.4.** Specialized Training/Experience. Seasoned Facilitators must acquire a minimum of thirty-five (35) hours of training and/or education that provides specific preparation for facilitation of batterers intervention groups. The thirty-five (35) hour training requirement shall be completed prior to facilitating batterers groups. Such training and/or education shall consist of courses, conferences, seminars, workshops, training sessions, internships, and clinical work and must be suitably documented as having been completed within the preceding ten (10) years. Credits and classes that are part of the Educational Degree

requirement may also be used if such credits and classes can be shown to meet the detailed criteria for Specialized Training [*see Appendices*].

- 7.3.4.1.** Twenty-one (21) hours of training are **required** in these areas [*see Appendices for more detailed descriptions*]:
  - 7.3.4.1.1. Seven (7) hours of training in domestic abuse issues and dynamics.
  - 7.3.4.1.2. Seven (7) hours of training relative to abuse victim services and community safety issues related to domestic violence.
  - 7.3.4.1.3. Seven (7) hours of training relative to group dynamics.
- 7.3.4.2.** The remaining fourteen (14) hours may be distributed among other related areas [*see Appendices*].
- 7.3.5.** Batterers Group Facilitation Experience. In order to qualify as a Seasoned Facilitator, individuals must ALSO have completed a minimum of one hundred (100) hours of facilitation of batterers groups under the direct supervision of a Facilitator determined to have met the requirements of a Seasoned Facilitator. Initial hours may be spent primarily in observation or writing tasks in group but no fewer than eighty (80) hours shall be spent actively participating in facilitation. Active participation includes but is not limited to: conducting the check-in/check-out, participating in/conducting the lesson plan, eliciting group interaction, and/or responding to defense mechanisms, such as minimization, denial, and blaming statements. Such responsibilities shall be carried out jointly with a Seasoned Facilitator to assist in learning how to balance shared leadership of a group.
- 7.3.6.** Continuing Education. Seasoned Facilitators must participate in a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing education annually. A minimum of six (6) of the required continuing education hours must be related to domestic abuse dynamics and issues, abuse victim services, and/or community safety issues. The remaining six (6) hours may be distributed among other related areas [*see Specialized Training in Appendices*].
  - 7.3.6.1.** Program directors/administrators shall submit documentation annually for each Facilitator on-staff indicating how the continuing education requirement has been satisfied [*see Sample Ongoing Training Record in Appendices*].



- 7.3.7.** Supervision. Seasoned Facilitators must receive regular supervision from a Supervisor who is qualified in accordance with the standards [*Refer to Nature of Supervision for Facilitators*].

## **7.4. Facilitator Trainees**

- 7.4.1.** Role. Facilitator Trainees are qualified to learn and practice the skills of batterers group facilitation through participating in group leadership with one or more Seasoned Facilitators, who act as mentors. Trainees are also subject to agency supervision in accordance with standards on Nature of Supervision for Facilitators. Facilitator Trainees shall spend a minimum of one hundred (100) hours of batterers group contact time in training, as detailed below. While a Facilitator Trainee may not lead a group alone until the full one hundred (100) hours of experience have been completed satisfactorily, a qualified Facilitator Trainee who has been determined to have the needed skills, qualifications and readiness may co-facilitate a group under the direct guidance of a Seasoned Facilitator.
- 7.4.2.** Summary of Qualifications. In order to be qualified as a Facilitator Trainee, individuals must generally have achieved a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in a related field and thirty-five (35) contact hours of Specialized Training, as detailed herein.
- 7.4.3.** Educational Degree Requirement. In order to qualify as a Facilitator Trainee, individuals must generally possess 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, mental health, and others with demonstrable and substantial applicability to batterers intervention.
- 7.4.3.1.** Exceptional experience and training may substitute for some portion of the educational requirement in limited circumstances. Such an exception will be considered upon written request and justification provided by the program. [*Refer to Appendices for these exceptions.*]
- 7.4.4.** Specialized Training/Experience. Facilitator Trainees must acquire a minimum of thirty-five (35) hours of training and/or education providing specific preparation for facilitation of batterers intervention groups. The thirty-five (35) hour training requirement may be earned prior to, or while earning the one hundred (100) hours facilitating batterers groups, but must be completed prior to being considered a Seasoned Facilitator. Such training and/or education shall consist of

courses, conferences, seminars, workshops, training sessions, internships, and clinical work and must be suitably documented as having been completed within the preceding seven (7) years. Credits and classes that are part of the Educational Degree requirement may also be used if such credits and classes can be shown to meet the detailed criteria for Specialized Training *[see Appendices]*.

- 7.4.4.1.** Twenty-one (21) hours of training are **required** in these areas *[see Appendices for more detailed descriptions]*.
  - 7.4.4.1.1. Seven (7) hours of training in domestic abuse issues and dynamics.
  - 7.4.4.1.2. Seven (7) hours of training relative to abuse victim services and community safety issues related to domestic violence.
  - 7.4.4.1.3. Seven (7) hours of training relative to group dynamics.
- 7.4.4.2.** The remaining fourteen (14) hours may be distributed among other related areas *[see Appendices for more detailed descriptions]*.
- 7.4.5.** Batterers Group Facilitation Experience. In order to qualify as a Seasoned Facilitator, trainees must complete a minimum of one hundred (100) hours of facilitation of batterers groups under the direct supervision of a Seasoned Facilitator. Initial hours may be spent primarily in observation or writing tasks in group but no fewer than eighty (80) hours shall be spent actively participating in facilitating the group process. Active participation includes but is not limited to: conducting the check-in/check-out, participating in/conducting the lesson plan, eliciting group interaction, and/or responding to defense mechanisms, such as minimization, denial, and blaming statements. Such responsibilities may be carried out jointly with a Seasoned Facilitator, as learning how to balance shared leadership of a group is an important facet of training. In addition, Facilitator Trainees are expected to be able to carry increasing responsibility for leadership within the group as they gain more group experience.
- 7.4.6.** Trainees as Co-Facilitators. Once a qualified Facilitator Trainee has acquired a minimum of twenty (20) hours of observation, a program manager and/or qualified Supervisor may consider placing the Trainee with a Seasoned Facilitator as a Co-Facilitator. This decision is a matter of program discretion, based upon the individual Trainee's skills and qualifications, and a reasoned evaluation of readiness. The program is strongly encouraged to provide such a Trainee additional

formal and supplemental supervision, over and above the basic one (1) hour required, and to consider carefully how many groups the Trainee co-facilitates. If requested by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee as part of program review, programs shall be prepared to provide information to support decisions made about individual Trainees' readiness to co-facilitate groups, amount and type of supervision provided, and number of groups co-facilitated.

- 7.4.7.** Continuing Education. Facilitator Trainees must participate in a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing education on an annual basis. A minimum of six (6) of the required continuing education hours must be related to domestic abuse dynamics and issues, abuse victim services, and/or community safety issues. The remaining six (6) hours may be distributed among other related areas [see *Specialized Training in Appendices*]. Program directors/administrators shall submit documentation annually for each Facilitator on-staff indicating how the continuing education requirement has been satisfied [see *Sample Ongoing Training Record in Appendices*].
- 7.4.8.** Supervision. Facilitator Trainees must receive regular supervision from a qualified Supervisor in accordance with the standards. [Refer to *Nature of Supervision for Facilitators, above*].

## **7.5. Student Intern Facilitators**

- 7.5.1.** Role. Student Interns who meet the qualifications may participate in batterers groups under the direct and constant oversight of one or more Seasoned Facilitators. Student Intern Facilitators are also subject to agency supervision in accordance with standards on the Nature of Supervision for Facilitators, as well as supervision through the college or university placement office. Programs, site supervisors and college-based field supervisors are urged to use the utmost care and caution in selecting appropriate Student Intern Facilitators, monitoring and supervising their group participation, and assigning them to gradually increasing levels of interaction and responsibility within the groups, in accordance with each student's skills and abilities. Student Intern Facilitators shall not be considered as group Facilitators for any purpose unless determined to meet the requirements as a Facilitator Trainee. [Refer to the *Facilitator Trainee section for applicable restrictions.*]
- 7.5.2.** Summary of Qualifications. In order to be considered as a Student Intern for verbal participation/interaction in the batterers group process, the program must ensure that individuals have completed a minimum of three (3) years of study (90 credits) in a related field, AND

thirty-five (35) contact hours of Specialized Training as detailed herein. At the program's discretion, Student Interns not meeting these requirements may be involved in other aspects of the program. Examples include but are not limited to conducting the intake process under the direction of a Supervisor/Seasoned Facilitator, observing, taking group notes, and participating in staff/supervision meetings.

- 7.5.2.1.** Suitable Student Intern Facilitators can be considered for supervised internship field placement as part of a structured degree program in an appropriate field of study. In some cases, Student Intern Facilitators may meet the qualifications for Facilitator Trainees, but the decision to utilize a Student Intern as a Facilitator Trainee shall be made at the discretion of the program director.
  
- 7.5.3.** Related Fields 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, mental health, and others with demonstrable and substantial applicability to batterers intervention.
  
- 7.5.4.** Specialized Training/Experience. Student Intern Facilitators must acquire a minimum of 35 hours of training and/or education providing specific preparation for facilitation of batterers intervention groups. Such training and/or education shall consist of courses, conferences, seminars, workshops, training sessions, internships, and/or clinical work and must be suitably documented as having been completed within the preceding five (5) years. Credits and classes that have been completed as part of a relevant Educational Degree program may also be used if such credits and classes can be shown to meet the detailed criteria for Specialized Training [*see Appendices*].
  - 7.5.4.1.** Twenty-one (21) hours of training are **required** in these areas [*see Appendices for more detailed descriptions*]:
    - 7.5.4.1.1. Seven (7) hours of training in domestic abuse issues and dynamics.
    - 7.5.4.1.2. Seven (7) hours of training relative to abuse victim services and community safety issues related to domestic violence.
    - 7.5.4.1.3. Seven (7) hours of training relative to group dynamics.

- 7.5.4.2.** The remaining fourteen (14) hours may be distributed among other related areas [*see Appendices for more detailed descriptions*].

## **7.6. Group Observers**

- 7.6.1.** Role. Under certain circumstances, programs may determine it is appropriate to permit individuals to observe batterers intervention groups. In this context, observation may include note taking and observing the group process, but no direct interaction with the group. A brief introduction or explanation of the observer's presence may be made, either by the observer or Facilitator, at the program's discretion.

- 7.6.1.1.** Observers might include Student Interns who do not meet the qualifications for group interaction, Probation and Parole Officers, agency case managers, supervisors, victim services representatives, researchers, and other professionals. In addition, programs are required to provide reasonable access to representatives of the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee to observe groups.

- 7.6.1.2.** Such observers shall not participate in group interaction, play a role within the group, or be considered Facilitators for any purpose.

- 7.6.2.** General Guidelines. Program guidelines for the presence of non-participating observers shall ensure that:

- 7.6.2.1.** There is a clear purpose for the observation.

- 7.6.2.2.** The confidentiality of the group and its members is maintained.

- 7.6.2.3.** Observers are introduced to the group and/or their presence is explained.

- 7.6.2.4.** Observers agree not to play an active role within the group.

## **7.7. Supervisor Qualifications**

- 7.7.1.** Supervisors who provide supervision to Facilitators must meet minimum qualifications in the areas of Educational Degree Requirements and Specialized Training/Experience as detailed herein. Programs shall be responsible to ensure that Supervisors meet all such requirements, and shall make documentation available to the

Oversight Committee upon request [*see Supervisor Qualifications Form in Appendices*].

- 7.7.2.** Role. Supervisors are qualified to provide supervision of individuals identified as Facilitator/Supervisors, Seasoned Facilitators, Facilitator Trainees, and Student Interns [*see Nature of Supervision for Facilitators for description of supervision*].
- 7.7.3.** Summary of Qualifications. Supervisors must generally have achieved a minimum of a Master's degree in a related field and have three (3) years of substantive experience in a related field, as described below. Program managers shall be responsible to ensure that any and all Supervisors have demonstrable and substantive skill, knowledge and experience and are able to supervise batterers intervention program Facilitators effectively.
- 7.7.4.** Educational Degree Requirement. In order to qualify as a Supervisor, an individual must generally possess 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, mental health, and others with demonstrable and substantive applicability to batterers intervention.
- 7.7.4.1.** Exceptional experience and training may substitute for some portion of the educational requirement in limited circumstances if the individual has completed a Bachelor's degree in an appropriate field PLUS five (5) years experience (7500 hours) working directly with victims, batterers, offenders, and/or other mandated clients in a treatment, counseling, instructional or case management role. Such an exception will be considered upon written request to the Oversight Committee with a full explanation of the individual's qualifications.
- 7.7.5.** Specialized Training/Experience. Supervisors shall have a minimum of three (3) years substantive work 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 or other mandated treatment or counseling clients; group and interpersonal dynamics; clinical assessment, intervention, counseling and therapeutic skills; adult education and instruction; staff supervision; legal and ethical issues related to domestic abuse or intervention; and any other areas deemed appropriate by the Oversight Committee.

**7.7.6.** Batterers Group Facilitation Experience. It is strongly encouraged that every Supervisor have specific experience facilitating batterers intervention groups. In the absence of such direct batterers intervention group experience by individuals who otherwise possess the requisite skills, experience, training and education, programs shall ensure that Supervisors observe batterers intervention group facilitation. (Such observation of Facilitators, which is strongly recommended for all Supervisors, may also provide the opportunity for supplemental supervision as described elsewhere.)

**7.7.7.** Continuing Education. Supervisors must participate in a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing education annually. A minimum of six (6) of the required continuing education hours must be in the areas of domestic abuse issues and dynamics, abuse victim services, and/or community safety issues. Program managers shall submit documentation annually to the Oversight Committee indicating how the continuing education requirement has been satisfied for each Supervisor. *[Refer to Appendices for detailed examples of qualifying topics for continuing education hours, and for Sample Ongoing Training Record].*

## **7.8. Nature of Supervision for Facilitators**

Every person who facilitates or co-facilitates any batterers group shall be provided formal supervision (required) and may be provided supplemental supervision and/or other staff support (optional). All formal supervision shall be conducted by one or more individuals who meet the qualifications as a Supervisor.

**7.8.1.** Purpose of Supervision. The goal of Facilitator supervision is to cultivate a structured process by which program staff members are given the opportunity to reflect upon their practice, improve their skills, target education and training needs, exchange vital information, gain perspective on the group intervention process and ensure continued compliance with the Comprehensive Standards related to group practice.

**7.8.2.** Areas of Competency. Supervision, both formal and supplemental, shall be directed at monitoring, improving and providing feedback on areas of competency important to the conduct of batterers intervention groups. Examples of supervision topics include group dynamics, individual offender issues, intervention strategies, facilitation and co-facilitation skills, instructional methods, staff dynamics, ethical issues, agency issues, and staff-initiated topics. *[Refer to Appendices for detailed examples.]*

**7.8.3. Formal (Required) Supervision/Format.**

- 7.8.3.1.** Every person who facilitates or co-facilitates any batterers group (Supervisors who also facilitate groups, Seasoned Facilitators, Facilitator Trainees and Student Interns) shall receive a minimum of one (1) hour of formal face-to-face supervision per month.
- 7.8.3.2.** Qualified individuals who provide supervision to one or more Facilitators and who also facilitate one or more groups shall be subject to the requirement to receive formal supervision, either from an individual qualified Supervisor or as part of a peer group that includes at least one other qualified Supervisor.
- 7.8.3.3.** Formal supervision shall be conducted in blocks of time of one half (1/2) hour or longer. Shorter time segments can be used for supplemental supervision, but shall not be applicable to the minimum formal supervision requirement.
- 7.8.3.4.** Formal supervision shall be conducted in a professional setting with a minimum of distractions.

**7.8.4. Formal (Required) Supervision/Modalities.** The minimum requirement of one hour monthly formal supervision can be provided through any or all of the following modalities:

- 7.8.4.1.** One-on-one meetings between a qualified Supervisor and a Facilitator.
- 7.8.4.2.** Group meetings between a qualified Supervisor and two or more Facilitators.
- 7.8.4.3.** Peer supervision groups comprised of at least three members, two or more of whom meet the qualifications as a Supervisor.
- 7.8.4.4.** Supervisors and/or peer group members may include professionals from other batterers intervention program(s) and/or other social service/criminal justice agencies so long as the nature and content of supervision sessions meet the requirements for batterers intervention program supervision.
- 7.8.4.5.** Programs are urged to give careful consideration to ethical and professional standards in the event there is a personal relationship among Facilitators, Supervisors or peers that could adversely impact professional objectivity.



**7.8.5.** Supplemental (Optional) Supervision. Program Directors and Supervisors are strongly encouraged to provide supplemental supervision and other staff support for Facilitators who may require and benefit from additional contact. Supplemental supervision and support are particularly recommended for staff who facilitate several groups per week, Facilitator Trainees who are in the process of earning experience facilitating batterers groups, Student Interns, and individuals dealing with specific problems. Among recommended supplemental supervision modalities are the following:

- 7.8.5.1.** Observation of group sessions by Supervisor with feedback to the Facilitator(s).
- 7.8.5.2.** Face-to-face supervision in addition to the one hour minimum in one-on-one, group or peer format.
- 7.8.5.3.** Telephone consultation.
- 7.8.5.4.** Access to Supervisor(s) on an as-needed basis for emergencies, debriefing, intervention decision-making, consultation and support.

**7.8.6.** Other Staff Support. Other staff support is critical to maintaining staff morale, quality control, skill enhancement, current information, and agency focus. Such support, which is distinguished from formal supervision, includes but is not limited to the following:

- 7.8.6.1.** Staff training.
- 7.8.6.2.** Staff meetings.
- 7.8.6.3.** Curriculum review and introduction of new curriculum materials.
- 7.8.6.4.** Staff referrals to employee assistance programs as available and appropriate.

**7.8.7.** Supervision Records. Each program shall maintain a written record of formal supervision as required for every individual who facilitates any batterers group. Programs are encouraged but not required to maintain records of supplemental supervision and other staff support. Required formal supervision records shall include the following at a minimum [*see Sample Supervision Record in Appendices*].

- 7.8.7.1.** Date, location and duration of each formal supervision session.

**7.8.7.2.** The name(s) of the qualified Supervisor(s) conducting the session.

**7.8.7.3.** The name(s) of all staff in attendance.

**7.8.7.4.** A brief description of the topic(s) covered.

### **7.9. Standards of Conduct for Group Facilitators and Supervisors**

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

**7.9.1.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall be responsible to uphold the Comprehensive Standards and agency policies in conducting groups and in all other professional activities.

**7.9.2.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall be violence-free in their professional and personal lives.

**7.9.3.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall attend work functions free of alcohol, non-prescription drugs, prescription drugs used abusively, or any other substance that could impair the ability to function or could jeopardize the safety of self and others.

**7.9.4.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall attend all work functions with no weapons in their possession.

**7.9.5.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall report all dangerous, threatening or illegal behavior that comes to their attention, in accordance with the Comprehensive Standards and agency policies.

**7.9.6.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall ensure that all staff and client cell phones and pagers are turned off during group sessions except in critical circumstances.

**7.9.7.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall demonstrate respect for and cooperation with their colleagues. When co-leading groups, Facilitators shall share group leadership responsibilities, including confrontation and support of participants.

- 7.9.8.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall conduct themselves in a manner that consistently promotes and demonstrates respectful and non-abusive language, behavior and attitudes.
- 7.9.9.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall uphold professional and ethical standards of conduct, and shall report to the appropriate program authorities any instances in which their professional role could be compromised through other relationships with or knowledge of program clients. Programs shall encourage Facilitators and Supervisors to refrain from social interaction with clients who are enrolled in the program, and to seek reassignment from working with clients with whom they have other personal, social or business interaction.
- 7.9.10.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall hold batterers responsible and accountable for their abusive behavior; shall confront minimization, justification and denial of abusive behavior; shall challenge attitudes of sexism, victim-blaming and expressions of power and control over other individuals; shall promote zero tolerance for any level of abuse; and shall prohibit participants from engaging in any form of abuse in group.
- 7.9.11.** Facilitators and Supervisors shall demonstrate support for the group members' process of positive change through feedback, recognition and appropriate commendation for good-faith work, learning and exercise of respectful and non-abusive behavior.

## **8. SPECIAL ISSUES**

### **8.1. Split Program Completion**

Circumstances may arise in which an individual seeks to fulfill a court mandate for batterers intervention through attending group sessions in different venues – that is, being credited for some portion of the required attendance in one jurisdiction, location or program and some portion in another jurisdiction, location or program.

**8.1.1.** Split program crediting shall be permissible under the following circumstances:

**8.1.1.1.** Completion of the mandate at the program attended initially is not possible, for reasons including but not limited to the following:

8.1.1.1.1. Program has closed;

8.1.1.1.2. Client has moved from another jurisdiction;

8.1.1.1.3. Relocation of client has resulted in substantial accessibility obstacles; or

8.1.1.1.4. Client's initial attendance has occurred while incarcerated under sentence. *[See Special Issues related to prison-based programs, below.]*

**8.1.1.2.** Both the sending and receiving program providers have been certified in Rhode Island (or certified in the sending jurisdiction, if applicable);

**8.1.1.3.** The referring agency approves of and agrees to the transfer between certified in-state community-based programs, if applicable; and

**8.1.1.4.** The sending and receiving programs secure client releases and exchange appropriate information about offense, attendance, participation, topics covered, legal status, and other information needed to ensure a smooth transition.

**8.1.2.** Split program crediting shall ordinarily not be permissible under the following circumstances:

**8.1.2.1.** Transfer has been completed unilaterally by client without consultation with and approval of programs and referring agency;

- 8.1.2.2. Prior transfer within the same cycle of 40 credit hours has already occurred (except based on program closings); or
- 8.1.2.3. Client has started but not completed a community-based program at the time of being sentenced to incarceration (that is, short of a complete 40-hour program, sessions attended prior to incarceration may not be credited). *[See Special Issues related to prison-based programs, below.]*

## **8.2. Transfers From Prison-Based Programs**

Incarcerated offenders who are subject to a court mandate to complete a batterers intervention program, and who are afforded the opportunity to initiate attendance at such a program while incarcerated under sentence at the Rhode Island Department of Corrections Adult Correctional Institutions, may seek to transfer into a community-based program upon release and may request that their documented participation in such program be accepted in satisfaction of some portion of their obligation to attend forty (40) hours of a certified batterers intervention program, subject to the qualifications below.

***NOTE:*** The Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee shall ensure that all provisions of the Comprehensive Standards, including the standards specific to transfers from prison-based batterers programs, shall be made available to the Department of Corrections. If requested by the Department of Corrections, the Oversight Committee shall be available to consult on the development, implementation, and/or certification of a prison-based batterers program. Nothing in these provisions shall be construed in any way as a requirement or expectation that the Department of Corrections provide batterers intervention or any other form of programming.

- 8.2.1. Attendance at a batterers intervention program by offenders while incarcerated is subject to:
  - 8.2.1.1. The availability of such programming, as determined by the Department of Corrections;
  - 8.2.1.2. Terms and conditions of any such programming, whether provided by Department of Corrections staff, contracted vendor(s), or volunteers; and/or
  - 8.2.1.3. Policies and procedures as determined by the Department of Corrections, including but not limited to security requirements, discipline measures, program eligibility and access, scheduling needs, program components, contracting procedures, limitations

to confidentiality, and all other internal operations of the Department.

**8.2.2.** A creditable prison-based program must be consistent with the principles and requirements of the Comprehensive Standards, within the following guidelines:

**8.2.2.1.** Facilitator qualifications and supervision requirements shall meet all requirements of the Comprehensive Standards;

**8.2.2.2.** The curriculum content and principles shall be consistent with the requirements of the Comprehensive Standards, except that any program elements not consistent with Department of Corrections requirements may be eliminated or modified;

**8.2.2.3.** The curriculum safety plan may be modified to assist in the transition from prison to community;

**8.2.2.4.** The client contract and rules may be modified to recognize the primacy of prison security and other policy requirements, to require full release of confidential information with staff within the prison and Probation and Parole, and to reflect the absence of program fee payment by offenders during the period of incarceration;

**8.2.2.5.** All other Comprehensive Standards shall be in full force and effect, except that any standards not consistent with Department of Corrections requirements may be eliminated or modified; and

**8.2.2.6.** Within the guidelines herein enumerated, the prison-based program shall be subject to the same certification procedures as community-based batterers intervention programs.

**8.2.3.** Transfers Upon Release. Offenders who have attended a prison-based batterers program that meets the qualifications above may seek to be credited for some portion of the 40 credit hours, and to transfer into a community-based batterers program, subject to the following criteria.

**8.2.3.1.** The supervising Probation and Parole Officer has verified attendance at the prison-based program, including the certification status of the program, the number of hours satisfactorily completed, and review of any available information from the provider regarding the nature of the offender's participation;

- 8.2.3.2.** Referral to a suitable community-based certified batterers intervention program is made and/or approved by Probation and Parole;
- 8.2.3.3.** The number of hours to be credited is to be determined by the referring Probation and Parole Officer in consultation with the receiving program and the sending program;
- 8.2.3.4.** Credit is awarded at the maximum rate of fifty percent (50%) of the hours completed in the prison program, up to a maximum number of ten (10) hours credit for completion of twenty (20) hours or more. [Depending on the number of hours credited, no fewer than thirty (30) hours would need to be completed at the community-based program];
- 8.2.3.5.** Repeat offenders who have previously been credited for batterers program attendance while incarcerated are subject to close scrutiny by the Probation and Parole Officer and the community program when determining credit hours, and additional limitations may apply;
- 8.2.3.6.** No offender's obligation to attend a batterers intervention program could be completed while incarcerated, regardless of the number of hours attended while in prison or whether the offender has attended some number of hours of a community-based program prior to incarceration;
- 8.2.3.7.** No credit toward the mandate to complete a batterers intervention program would be given for attendance at any other prison-based or community-based program, such as anger management, substance abuse treatment, or other counseling or therapy; and
- 8.2.3.8.** Such provisions shall apply only to those offenders who are released from incarceration on or after the date these provisions become effective, pursuant to the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act and other applicable regulations.

## **9. VARIANCES**

Variations are accepted deviations from established standards for program content and/or format granted by the Oversight Committee in response to a specific request by a batterers intervention program to modify standards within a specific context. A batterers intervention program must request a variance in writing and receive approval prior to implementing any program feature that would not otherwise be consistent with the established Comprehensive Standards. Requests for variations shall be submitted to the Chair of the Oversight Committee. *[See Sample Variance Proposal in Appendices, and see the Rules of Practice and Procedure for procedures guiding the granting of variations.]*

### **9.1. Description**

- 9.1.1.** A variance is the means by which a batterers intervention program may request modification of one or more specific standards for a particular identified purpose and within required guidelines, as explained below. Variations are intended to be limited in scope and must be compatible with the overall intent of the Comprehensive Standards.
- 9.1.2.** The Oversight Committee does not have the authority to waive the standards required by statute (RIGL 12-29-5), specifically a minimum of 20 weeks and 40 hours contact time; a psycho-educational group format conducted by trained and experienced Facilitators; and requirements that batterers pay fees for the program and that programs accommodate varying levels of ability to pay.
- 9.1.3.** Variations are not intended to be a means of circumventing or securing a waiver from standards, as for a program that is (temporarily or long-term) unable or unwilling to meet the existing Comprehensive Standards; rather, they establish alternative or modified standards within a specific context.
- 9.1.4.** Variations offer batterers intervention programs an opportunity to propose and (if granted) to implement a modified program approach, curriculum content or format to fulfill particular needs that cannot be met within the confines of the established Comprehensive Standards, or that could be met substantially better in a different way without adverse effect.
- 9.1.5.** The Oversight Committee is under no obligation to grant any variance from the established Comprehensive Standards. A program that is denied a request for a variance by the Oversight Committee may reapply for the same variance no sooner than six (6) months after the date of denial.



## **9.2. Purpose of Variance**

**9.2.1.** The batterers intervention program must identify the particular purpose of the proposed variance to the satisfaction of the Oversight Committee, citing one or more purposes such as those described below.

**9.2.1.1.** To serve certain populations who would benefit from different content and/or format (such as repeat offenders, non-partner offenders, women, cultural or linguistic groups, veterans, developmentally disabled, gay men or women, youthful adult offenders, elders, or other groups).

**9.2.1.2.** To provide batterers intervention within the context of other chronic needs that would benefit from different content and/or format (such as co-occurring chronic mental health or substance abuse problems, significant parenting issues, developmental disabilities, illiteracy, or other).

9.2.1.2.1. Treatment or education concerning such needs cannot substitute for batterers intervention. However, the approach to batterers intervention might be modified to accommodate the special needs of members with identified issues.

**9.2.1.3.** To test/implement new or different curriculum topic, content, approach, or format that would not otherwise conform to existing standards.

**9.2.1.4.** To enable structured research requiring modification of group content and/or format.

**9.2.1.5.** To respond to new, unforeseen or exceptional circumstances within the program or community (such as changing demographics, inter-program collaboration, expansion or reduction of service areas, or other).

**9.2.1.6.** To supplement – but not supplant – the statutory requirements (such as providing a longer program for targeted offenders; integrating some individual sessions into the overall format of group sessions; or offering creative alternatives to full fees).

## **9.3. Requirements for Proposed Variance**

**9.3.1.** In requesting consideration of a variance, a program must be prepared to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Oversight Committee, that

the proposed modification(s) would continue to meet all statutory minimum standards. The variance must be compatible with the spirit of the Comprehensive Standards, and must be consistent with principles of victim safety and offender accountability. *[Refer to Appendices for a Sample Variance Proposal Form.]*

- 9.3.2.** A variance proposal is required to address each of the following to the satisfaction of the Oversight Committee:
- 9.3.2.1.** The specific standard(s) the proposal would modify, citing each of the Comprehensive Standards involved by section and brief description.
  - 9.3.2.2.** The nature of the modification(s) proposed, being as specific as possible. Provide a suggested alternative standard the program would meet; variations in curriculum, format or approach; exemption(s) being sought; or other, as appropriate.
  - 9.3.2.3.** The reason for proposing the modification(s), citing purpose, intent or need.
  - 9.3.2.4.** The desired outcome or anticipated benefit(s).
  - 9.3.2.5.** Potential obstacles, adverse effects, or diminishing of benefit(s), with plans to mitigate such problems.
  - 9.3.2.6.** Plan for tracking and reporting all program modifications and their impact.
- 9.3.3.** A program that has been granted a variance shall be required to report back to the Oversight Committee any significant effects of program modifications, anticipated or unanticipated, positive or negative. Such reports shall be due within six (6) to twelve (12) months, as established at the time the variance is granted. However, exceptional positive or negative impact shall be reported as soon as possible after becoming apparent.

## **10. Recommended Program Features**

Batterers intervention programs are encouraged to incorporate additional features that are compatible with the basic program principles and requirements, and that could enhance the effectiveness of the program and the safety of victims. Examples of such features include but are not limited to the following:

- 10.1.** 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.
- 10.2.** One or more programs establish a hot line and/or other services for batterers in crisis.
- 10.3.** Programs incorporate a contract option by which willing batterers would agree to relinquish all weapons while enrolled in the program.
- 10.4.** Programs institute use of trained peer sponsors as a support network for active participants and/or as an aftercare component.
- 10.5.** Programs explore the potential applicability of models from other fields, such as relapse prevention, models of change, behavioral reinforcement, cognitive restructuring, restorative justice, or other.
- 10.6.** Programs investigate potential uses of videotapes, audiotapes, and/or personal appearances to introduce group participants to real-life experiences of anonymous victims.
- 10.7.** Programs conduct evaluation of program effectiveness (clearly defined) through recognized research methods.
- 10.8.** Programs maintain minimum group size of five (5) whenever feasible.
- 10.9.** Programs provide co-facilitation of groups, whenever possible, particularly making use of male/ female teams; and/or provide clients with substantial experience with both male and female Facilitators.
- 10.10.** Programs focus existing curriculum and format to serve special populations, such as repeat offenders, non-partner offenders, women, cultural or linguistic groups, veterans, developmentally disabled, gay men or women, youthful adult offenders, elders, or other groups.
- 10.11.** Programs make every effort to ensure that a police report related to the referral incident is part of the record for each group participant, obtaining it from the referring agency and/or directly from the respective police department.

## **11. APPENDICES**

*NOTE: Appendices are current as of the filing date of the Batterers Intervention Program Comprehensive Standards. Application forms are available from the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee.*

- 11.1.** Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee Members
- 11.2.** RIGL §12-29-5
- 11.3.** RIGL §12-29-5.1-3
- 11.4.** Definitions of Terms
- 11.5.** Power and Control Wheel
- 11.6.** Equality Wheel
- 11.7.** Sample Format: Lesson Plan
- 11.8.** Sample Format: Group Check-In
- 11.9.** Sample Format: Group Check-Out
- 11.10.** Sample Client Agreement/Information & Rules
- 11.11.** Sample Client Contract/Fees
- 11.12.** Facilitator/Facilitator Trainee Educational Experience
- 11.13.** Specialized Training/Experience Requirements: Seasoned Facilitators, Facilitator Trainees, and Student Intern Facilitators
- 11.14.** Sample Ongoing Training Record
- 11.15.** Supervision: Topics for Facilitator Competency
- 11.16.** Sample Supervision Log
- 11.17.** Supervisor Continuing Education Hours: Qualifying Topics
- 11.18.** Sample Variance Proposal

**BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE    APPENDIX 11.1**

<b>LEGISLATIVELY NAMED MEMBER</b>	<b>DESIGNEE</b>	<b>ALTERNATE</b>
CHAIR: A.T. Wall, II, Director RI Department of Corrections	Designated Chair: Shelley Cortese, Assistant Administrator DOC/ Adult Probation and Parole 15 Fleming Road                      Cranston, RI 02920 TEL 462-1619; FAX 462-0164 <a href="mailto:scortese@doc.state.ri.us">scortese@doc.state.ri.us</a>	Vice Chair: Stephen King RI Supreme Court 250 Benefit Street, Providence, RI 02903 TEL 222-8665; FAX 222-2625 <a href="mailto:sking@courts.state.ri.us">sking@courts.state.ri.us</a>
Thomas Mongeau, Executive Director Rhode Island Justice Commission One Capitol Hill,                      Providence, RI 02908 TEL 222-5349; FAX 222-1294 <a href="mailto:tmongeau@gw.doa.state.ri.us">tmongeau@gw.doa.state.ri.us</a>	Kristen Meuse Rhode Island Justice Commission One Capitol Hill,                      Providence, RI 02908 TEL 222-5349; FAX 222-1294 <a href="mailto:kristenm@gw.doa.state.ri.us">kristenm@gw.doa.state.ri.us</a>	
Deb DeBare, Executive Director RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence 422 Post Road,                      Warwick, RI 02888 TEL 467-9940; FAX 467-9943 <a href="mailto:debare@ricadv.org">debare@ricadv.org</a>	Sage Bauer, Policy Associate RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence 422 Post Road,                      Warwick, RI 02888 TEL 467-9940; FAX 467-9943 <a href="mailto:sage@ricadv.org">sage@ricadv.org</a>	
Law Enforcement Appointment by RI Police Chiefs Association	Chief John LaCross Barrington Police Department 100 Federal Road                      Barrington, RI 02806 TEL 437-3938; FAX 437-3943 <a href="mailto:jlacross@fctvplus.net">jlacross@fctvplus.net</a>	
Patrick Lynch RI Attorney General	Maureen Keough, Chief Domestic Violence/ Sexual Assault Unit Office of the Attorney General 150 South Main Street, Providence, RI 02903 TEL 274-4400; FAX 273-8940 <a href="mailto:mkeough@riag.state.ri.us">mkeough@riag.state.ri.us</a>	
Jonathan Houston, Executive Director Justice Assistance 943 Park Avenue,                      Cranston, RI 02910 TEL 781-7000, ext. 111; FAX: 781-1062 <a href="mailto:jben@ja.necoxmail.com">jben@ja.necoxmail.com</a>	Joseph Ben Justice Assistance 943 Park Avenue,                      Cranston, RI 02910 TEL 781-7000, ext. 110; FAX 781-1062 <a href="mailto:jben@ja.necoxmail.com">jben@ja.necoxmail.com</a>	
Member of the Electorate Appointed by Governor Don Carcieri	TBA	TBA
Janice Dubois, Director Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training & Monitoring Unit 1 Hill Street,                      Pawtucket, RI 02860 TEL 729-4480; FAX 729-4485 <a href="mailto:jdubois@courts.state.ri.us">jdubois@courts.state.ri.us</a>	Elaine Dorazio Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training & Monitoring Unit 1 Hill Street,                      Pawtucket, RI 02860 TEL 729-4480; FAX 729-4485	
The Honorable Frank Williams Chief Justice RI Supreme Court	Stephen King RI Supreme Court 250 Benefit Street,                      Providence, RI 02903 TEL 222-8665; FAX 222-2625 <a href="mailto:sking@courts.state.ri.us">sking@courts.state.ri.us</a>	
Dr. David R. Gifford, Director RI Department of Health 3 Capitol Hill,                      Providence, RI 02908 TEL 222-2231; FAX 222-6548 <a href="mailto:beatrizp@doh.state.ri.us">beatrizp@doh.state.ri.us</a>	Beatriz Perez RI Department of Health 3 Capitol Hill,                      Providence, RI 02908 TEL 222-7627; FAX 222-4415 <a href="mailto:beatrizp@doh.state.ri.us">beatrizp@doh.state.ri.us</a>	
Batterers Intervention Program Appointment by RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Ed Degnan Kent House 2020 Elmwood Avenue                      Warwick, RI 02888 TEL 781-2700; FAX 781-2790	
The Honorable Albert E. DeRobbio Chief Judge RI District Court	The Hon. Elaine T. Bucci, Assoc. Justice Joseph Garrahy Judicial Complex One Dorrance Plaza,                      Providence, RI 02903 TEL 458-5216 <a href="mailto:ebucci@courts.state.ri.us">ebucci@courts.state.ri.us</a>	
Dennis Langley, Executive Director Urban League of RI 246 Prairie Avenue, Providence, RI 02905 TEL 351-5000, ext. 130; FAX 454-1946 <a href="mailto:mj@ulri.org">mj@ulri.org</a>		

**TITLE 12**  
**Criminal Procedure**  
**CHAPTER 12-29**  
**Domestic Violence Prevention Act**  
**SECTION 12-29-5**

**§ 12-29-5 Disposition of domestic violence cases.** – (a) 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, a batterer's intervention program appropriate to address his or her violent behavior. This order shall be included in the conditions of probation. Failure of the defendant to comply with the order shall be a basis for violating probation and/or the provisions of § 12-10-12. This provision shall not be suspended or waived by the court.

(b) Every person convicted of or placed on probation for a crime involving domestic violence, as enumerated in § 12-29-2 or whose case if filed pursuant to § 12-10-12 where the defendant pleads guilty or nolo contendere, in addition to other court costs or assessments imposed, shall be ordered to pay a twenty-five dollar (\$25.00) assessment. All moneys collected pursuant to this section shall be deposited as general revenue.

(c) Every person convicted of an offense punishable as a misdemeanor involving domestic violence as defined in § 12-29-2 shall:

For a second violation be imprisoned for a term of not less than ten (10) days and not more than one year.

For a third and subsequent violation be deemed guilty of a felony and be imprisoned for a term of not less than one year and not more than ten (10) years.

(2) No jail sentence provided for under this section can be suspended.

(3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as limiting the discretion of the judges to impose additional sanctions authorized in sentencing.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "batterers intervention program" means a program which is certified by the batterers intervention program standards oversight committee according to minimum standards, pursuant to §§ 12-29-5.1, 12-29-5.2, and 12-29-5.3.

**TITLE 12**  
**Criminal Procedure**  
**CHAPTER 12-29**  
**Domestic Violence Prevention Act**  
**SECTION 12-29-5.1**

**§ 12-29-5.1 Oversight committee created – Composition.** – (a) There is created a batterers intervention standards oversight committee, referred to in this chapter as the committee pursuant to the provisions of § 12-29-5.

(b) The committee shall meet no fewer than four (4) times per year at the call of the chairperson or upon petition of a majority of committee members.

(c) The committee shall consist of thirteen (13) members to be appointed as follows: The director of the department of corrections or his or her designee who shall serve as chairperson of the committee; the director of the Rhode Island justice commission or his or her designee; the executive director of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence or his or her designee; a representative from the law enforcement community appointed by the chairperson of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association; the attorney general or his or her designee; the director of Justice Assistance or his or her designee; a qualified elector of this state appointed by the governor; the director of the domestic violence training and monitoring unit or his or her designee; the chief justice of the supreme court or his or her designee; the director of the department of health or his or her designee; a representative of a batterers intervention program appointed by the director of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence; the chief judge of the district court or his or her designee; and the director of the Urban League of Rhode Island or his or her designee.

(d) Each member of the committee may appoint a permanent designee to attend committee meetings in his or her absence. A quorum of the committee shall consist of a majority of its members.

**§ 12-29-5.2 Duties and responsibilities of committee.** – (a) The committee shall have the duties and responsibilities to:

Establish and promulgate minimum standards for batterers intervention programs serving persons mandated pursuant to § 12-29-5, revise the standards as is deemed necessary, and make the standards available to the public, provided that the standards shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Batterers intervention programs shall be conducted in the context of psycho-educational groups, i.e., groups of domestic violence perpetrators led by one or

more professional group leaders trained and experienced in batterers intervention programming and conducted for the purposes of learning and enacting non-abusive behaviors through didactic instruction, interaction among participants and leaders, and teaching of skills within the groups;

The duration of batterers intervention programs shall be a minimum of forty (40) contact hours over the course of twenty (20) weeks; and

Batterers intervention programs shall require that all mandated batterers pay fees for the programs in accordance with the provisions of § 12-29-5; provided, that programs shall accommodate varying levels of ability to pay by means of sliding fee scales and may elect to offer alternatives to payment in the form of community restitution and/or deferred payment for a portion of the fees;

Monitor and review batterers intervention programs seeking certification with respect to compliance with the standards, including periodic on-site review;

Certify those batterers intervention programs which are in compliance with the standards established pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection; and

Investigate and decide appeals, complaints, requests for variances, and post-enrollment certification applications.

(b) For purposes of this chapter, "post-enrollment certification applications" means those applications made to the committee by a batterer mandated to attend a certified batterers intervention program in accordance with § 12-29-5 who has, prior to adjudication, enrolled in a program not certified by the committee. The application shall include supporting documentation from the batterers intervention program and a request that participation in the batterers intervention program be accepted in lieu of the equivalent number of hours of a certified batterers intervention program. The committee shall act upon a post-enrollment certification application within thirty (30) days of receipt of the application.

**§ 12-29-5.3 Subcommittees, task forces, focus groups and advisory**

**committees.** – (a) The committee may establish and appoint any subcommittees, task forces, focus groups and advisory committees that it deems necessary from time to time to carry out the provisions of this chapter.

(b) The committee shall promulgate its rules of procedure governing its operations in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, chapter 35 of title 42.



**DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

**Batterers** are perpetrators of domestic abuse (*see Domestic Violence, below*). Batterers as well as victims can be male or female, and the relationship can be that of partners/spouses or other family or shared-household relationships (*see Family or Household Member, below*). Throughout the Standards, batterers are also referred to variously as group participants, group members, clients, offenders, perpetrators, or abusers.

**Batterers Intervention Program** is a program that is designed specifically to work with domestic abuse offenders, as defined in RIGL §12-29-2. Programs offered for court 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. Batterers intervention programs can either stand alone or be part of a larger multi-service agency.

**Defense Mechanisms** as referenced in these Standards are psychological reactions and associated behaviors by individuals responding to perceived threats or stress from internal and/or external sources. Psychology and related disciplines generally recognize major categories of defense mechanism, including: denial, minimization, justification, blaming, and stonewalling/ story-telling. Each defense mechanism has variations, and each has specific applications to work in batterers intervention. Facilitators of batterers intervention groups are required under the Standards to deal effectively with defense mechanisms among group members, and need to have specialized training and supervision to assist in recognizing, responding to and redirecting various forms of defensive strategies commonly used by batterers.

**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 [*see definition below*] 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. Forms of domestic violence include emotional, physical, sexual, verbal, and economic abuse that are used by one person to gain and/or maintain power and control over another person in an intimate, household or family relationship. Related terms that may be found in this document include domestic abuse, battering, violence, and abusive relationship.

**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. **Seasoned**

**Facilitators** are those whose experience and training includes at least 100 hours of supervised facilitation of batterers groups.

**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.

**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.

**Variations** are accepted deviations from established standards for program content and/or format granted by the Oversight Committee in response to a request by a batterers intervention program to create alternative standards within a specific context. A batterers intervention program must request a variance in writing and receive approval prior to implementing any program feature that would not otherwise be consistent with the established Comprehensive Standards.

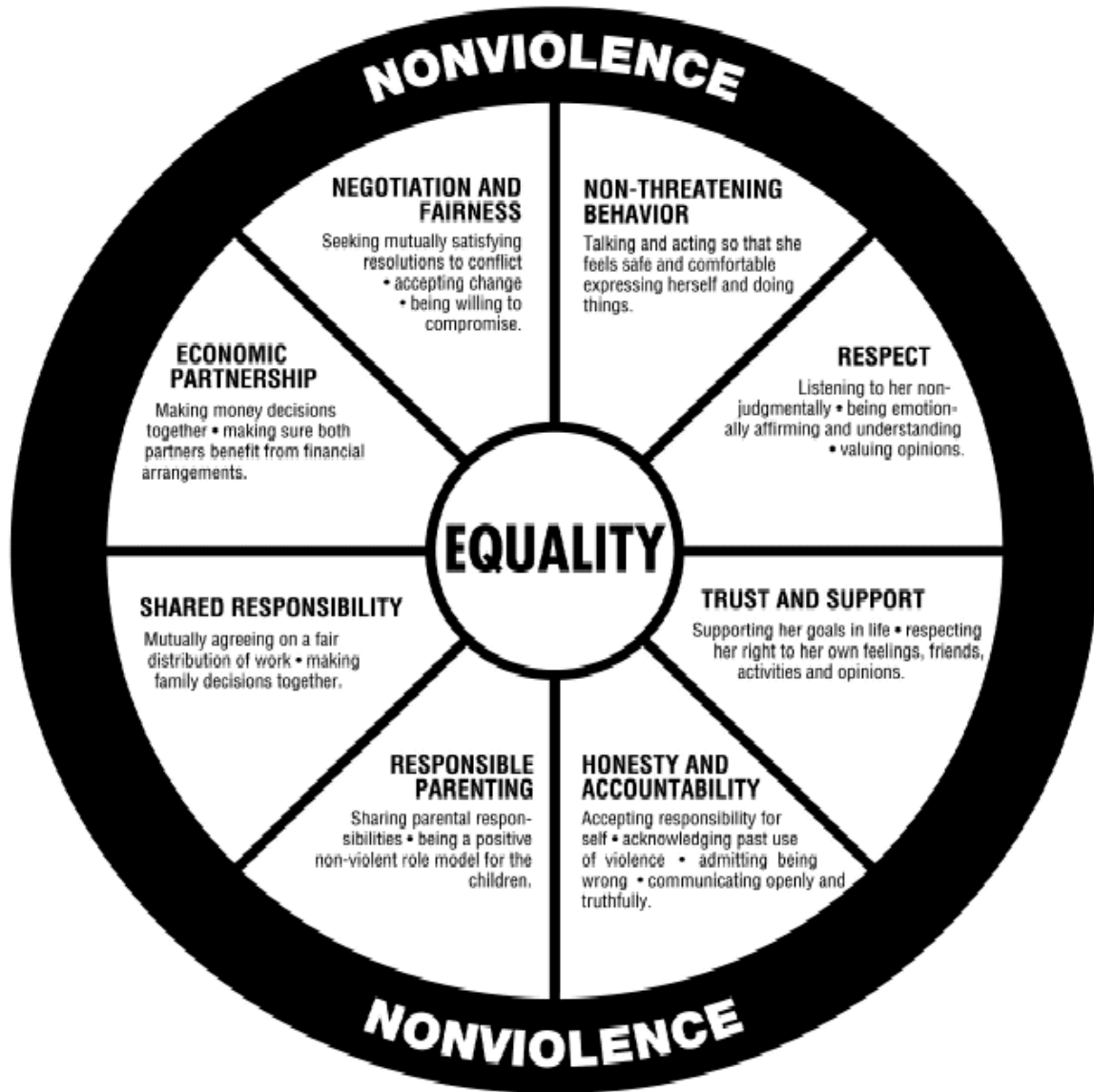
**POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL**



**DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT**

202 East Superior Street  
 Duluth, Minnesota 55802  
 218-722-2781  
[www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org)

**EQUALITY WHEEL**



**DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT**

202 East Superior Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802  
218-722-2781  
[www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org)

**Sample Format****LESSON PLAN****SAMPLE LESSON PLAN FORMAT**

- Fee collection (prior to group session start time).
- Opening. Welcoming remarks/ introduction of new members.
- Check-in. Format/ purpose.
- Review of prior topic(s).
- Review of homework if applicable.
- Session Topic.
- Purpose/ learning objective(s).
- Materials for use by Facilitators.
- Handouts for group members.
- Methods/ approaches/ exercises.
- Member tasks during class/ homework assignments.
- Outcome measures/ how members demonstrate learning.
- Preview next session topic.
- Close. Check-out. Identify format / purpose.

## Sample Formats

### **GROUP CHECK-IN**

Some suggested formats for group check-in follow.

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive, and various formats may be used separately or in combination.

Complete this sentence: When I am abusive, I \_\_\_\_\_ [Provide verbal or written examples, such as I hit, spit, slap, punch, choke, curse, etc.]

Complete this sentence: Since my last group meeting, I have been abusive by \_\_\_\_\_.

Complete this sentence: Since my last group meeting, I avoided being abusive when I was angry, upset, or hurt by \_\_\_\_\_.

(First time attendee especially): Tell the group what you did that resulted in your coming to this program.

(Completing member especially): What do you think you have learned through participation in this program? What suggestions or advice do you have for the newer members of the group?

## Sample Formats

### **GROUP CHECK-OUT**

Some suggested formats for group check-out follow.

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive, and various formats may be used separately or in combination.

Complete this sentence: I learned today that \_\_\_\_\_.

Complete this sentence: Something I learned today about myself is that \_\_\_\_\_.

Tell the group something you plan to do this week that is related to what we talked about today.

Complete this sentence: I feel \_\_\_\_\_, and what I intend to do about it is \_\_\_\_\_.

Tell us something you have learned that will help you act non-abusively.

(First time attendee especially): Tell us something you have learned about why you are here.

(Completing member especially): What parting words do you have for members of the group? What suggestions or advice do you have for the newer members of the group?

**SAMPLE CLIENT AGREEMENT**  
**CLIENT INFORMATION / PROGRAM RULES**

XYZ Batterers Intervention Program

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Referral Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Intake Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

The client identified above is hereby enrolled in the XYZ Batterers Intervention Program. The following informational items have been discussed and are part of the agreement between the client and XYZ.

**Identified Problem:**

The client is being enrolled in XYZ for a Batterers Intervention Program as a result of domestic abuse/ domestic violence (RIGL §12-29-5).

Abusiveness harms victims and is a serious crime.

The program is intended to help the client learn not to be abusive.

The client must take responsibility for his or her own behavior, and must take responsibility for changing abusive behavior.

Completion of a Batterers Intervention Program is not a guarantee that abusiveness will stop.

Being non-abusive requires long-term commitment and continuing effort on the part of the client.

**Confidentiality/ Limits of Confidentiality:**

Dangerous, threatening or illegal behavior revealed to or observed by program staff will be reported to the police or other law enforcement, referring agency, or other authorities.

Mandated clients are required to provide written authorization for the program to release confidential information (signed release form) regarding program enrollment, attendance, cooperation, participation, contract terms and contract compliance to the referring agency and/or court.

Personal information not covered by these limits of confidentiality will be kept private and confidential.

**Group Attendance:**

The client is required to arrive for each session on time (no late entry) and to stay for the full session.

The client must contact the program immediately if unable to attend a scheduled group session, and must provide a written reason for missing the session at the earliest opportunity.

Acceptable reasons to miss a session (with verification)

include: \_\_\_\_\_.

The client is required to attend and complete a total of \_\_\_\_\_ weekly sessions (40 contact hours), and is expected to complete all 40 hours at this program.



Conduct:

The client will refrain from violence, abusiveness, and disruptive behavior during group sessions  
The client will attend all sessions free of alcohol, non-prescription drugs, prescription drugs used abusively, or any other illegal substance.  
No weapons of any kind are allowed while attending group.  
All cell phones and pagers shall be turned off/set on silent mode during group sessions.

Complaints:

If the client has an unresolved problem with the program or staff, a complaint can be filed by contacting the following individual at the program: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ .

If the problem is not resolved by the program, and if it is related to the Batterers Intervention Program Comprehensive Standards, the client can file a complaint with the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee by contacting: Shelley Cortese, Committee Chair, (401) 462-1619.

Fees:

All clients are required to pay fees for program services, based on a sliding scale. XYZ Program determines the weekly fee based on:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

All payments and/or alternative forms of compensation will be recorded by the agency, and receipts will be provided to the client.

It is the client’s responsibility to notify the XYZ Program of any change in financial status or financial hardship resulting from the weekly fees if the client wants the fee to be renegotiated. XYZ may require documents or other evidence to support the client’s claim.

Failure to comply with the agreed payment schedule without renegotiation may be deemed non-compliant and will be reported to the referring agency and/or court.

Once enrolled and accepted by the XYZ Program, the client will not be dismissed for a demonstrated inability to pay full fees. However, failure to make a good-faith effort to pay agreed-upon fees and/or to provide necessary evidence to back up a request for renegotiated fees could result in unsatisfactory dismissal.

Client signature: _____	Date: _____
XYZ representative signature: _____	Date: _____

**SAMPLE CLIENT CONTRACT – FEES**

XYZ Batterers Intervention Program

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Referral Source: \_\_\_\_\_  
Intake Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fee / Alternative Compensation Agreement:

The amount due at intake is \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Based on the current situation, I am required to pay XYZ Program \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per weekly session; and/or

Alternative form of compensation, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment of fees must be in the form of personal check, money order, or cash, and must be paid within \_\_\_\_\_ days of the session for which it is due; and/or

Alternative form of compensation, if applicable, must be verified by means of \_\_\_\_\_ provided by me

to the program within \_\_\_\_\_ days of the session for which it is due.

General Agreement:

I have reviewed the client information and program rules contract with XYZ program representative.

I have signed/ will sign the required Authorization to Release Confidential Information to enable the XYZ Program to exchange information about my program enrollment, attendance, cooperation, participation, contract terms and contract compliance with the referring agency and/or court having jurisdiction.

I have had the opportunity to discuss all agency policies, as applicable, and I understand what I am required to do as a participant in this program.

I have been informed that if I have questions or problems concerning program fees, payment schedules, or program attendance I can contact the following individual at the program:

\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

I have received a copy of the signed forms containing information/ program rules, and I am being provided a copy of this contract.

Client signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

XYZ representative signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SEASONED FACILITATOR/FACILITATOR TRAINEE**

**EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Individuals who have completed three (3) years of study (90 credit hours) toward a Bachelor's degree in an appropriate field PLUS one (1) year experience (1500 hours) working directly with victims, batterers, offenders and/or other court-mandated clients in a treatment, counseling, instructional or case management role;

Individuals with an Associate's degree in an appropriate field PLUS two (2) years experience (3000 hours) working directly with victims, batterers, offenders and/or other court-mandated clients in a treatment, counseling, instructional or case management role;

Individuals with at least a High School diploma or equivalency with four (4) or more years of experience (6000 hours) working directly with victims, batterers, offenders and/or other court-mandated clients in a treatment, counseling, instructional or case management role.

**SPECIALIZED TRAINING/EXPERIENCE:**  
**SEASONED FACILITATORS**  
**FACILITATOR TRAINEES**  
**STUDENT INTERN FACILITATORS**

Seasoned Facilitators, Facilitator Trainees, and Student Intern Facilitators must acquire a minimum of thirty-five (35) hours of training and/or education providing specific preparation for facilitation of batterers intervention groups. Training and/or education must meet the criteria as outlined below:

**Twenty-one (21) hours of training are required in these areas:**

- Seven (7) hours of training in domestic abuse issues and dynamics.  
Qualifying topics can include power and control; minimization, denial, victim blaming and other defense mechanisms; accountability; collusion; types of domestic abuse; offender risk behaviors; and others, when specifically related to domestic abuse.
- Seven (7) hours of training relative to abuse victim services and community safety issues related to domestic violence.  
Qualifying topics can include the impact of abuse on victims and on children who witness; intimate partners as perpetrators; other family members as perpetrators; why victims stay; safety planning; victim services; and others, when specifically related to domestic abuse.
- Seven (7) hours of training relative to group development.  
Qualifying topics can include facilitation and co-facilitation of psycho-educational groups; group and interpersonal dynamics, particularly among batterers, offenders and other mandated clients; counseling techniques and skills; and intervention skills.

**The remaining fourteen (14) hours of training may be distributed among the following areas:**

- Coordination of programs and approaches dealing with victim safety, the criminal justice system and batterers programs as part of a coordinated community response to domestic violence;
- Legal issues related to domestic violence (e.g. statutes, duty to warn, confidentiality and limits of confidentiality, etc.);
- Assessment, and social service interviewing;
- Substance abuse and mental health issues related to domestic violence;
- Issues related to victimization and/or perpetration of other forms of abuse (e.g. child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, sexual abuse, etc.);
- Adult education, instruction, and cognitive/ behavioral approaches to learning.

***Other areas as may be deemed appropriate by the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee.***

**SAMPLE ONGOING TRAINING RECORD**

Topic:	Date:
Presenter:	

Duration (Number of hours):

**Training Content Feedback:**

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**Presenter Feedback:**

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**Suggestions for Future Trainings:**

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**Other Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **SUPERVISION: TOPICS FOR FACILITATOR COMPETENCY**

Supervision, both formal and supplemental, shall be directed at monitoring, improving and providing feedback on areas of competency important to the conduct of batterers intervention groups. Examples of supervision topics include but are not limited to the following.

### **Group dynamics:**

- Group process issues.
- Intervention strategies.
- Session anomalies.
- Particular group dynamics, identity, progress, obstacles, etc.
- Ensuring accountability by group participants.

### **Individual offender issues:**

- Basic information on new registrants and issues of concern.
- Current member issues, changes in employment/ housing status, substance abuse, new arrests or violations, general progress within group.
- Status of graduating members and issues of concern.
- Victim contact with the agency or referral source.
- Dealing with complaints.

### **Intervention strategies:**

- Active listening.
- Confrontation.
- Support.
- Criminal justice or service referrals.
- Difficult case reviews.

### **Facilitation and co-facilitation skills:**

- Managing psychodynamic interactions within groups.
- Encouraging participation.
- Handling difficult members.

### **Instructional methods:**

- Effective communication of the curriculum.
- Balancing roles and interactions between Facilitators.
- Methods and materials.

**SUPERVISION:  
TOPICS FOR FACILITATOR COMPETENCY (continued)**

**Staff dynamics:**

- Collusion, transference, counter-transference.
- Staff stress and "burnout."
- Interacting as co-Facilitators.

**Ethical issues:**

- Staff conflicts.
- Confidentiality issues.
- Safety protocols.
- Emergency procedures.
- Responding to threats of harm to self or others.
- Mandatory reporting of child abuse or elder abuse.
- Substance abuse by members, including active intoxication.
- Referrals for mental health, substance abuse, or other treatment.
- Awareness of restraining orders/ no contact orders.
- Coordination and exchange of information with referral source and other active service providers.
- Exchange of information among agency staff.

**Agency issues:**

- Relevant laws and legal issues.
- Intake procedures.
- Policies and procedures.
- Meeting sites.
- Managing staff absences.
- Managing Facilitator assignments, group size, etc.

**Staff-initiated topics.**

**SAMPLE SUPERVISION RECORD**

**Supervision Log**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participants:**

**Topics Discussed:**

**Comments:**

**Supervisor's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **SUPERVISOR CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS QUALIFYING TOPICS**

Supervisors must participate in a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing education annually. A minimum of six (6) of the required continuing education hours must be in topic areas such as:

- Domestic abuse issues and dynamics:  
Power and control; minimization, denial, victim blaming and other defense mechanisms; accountability; collusion; types of domestic abuse; offender risk behaviors; and others, when specifically related to domestic abuse; and/or
- Abuse victim services and community safety issues related to domestic violence:  
The impact of abuse on victims and on children who witness; intimate partner as perpetrator; other family members as perpetrators; why victims stay; safety planning; victim services; and others, when specifically related to domestic abuse.

The remaining six (6) hours may be distributed among topic areas such as:

- Coordination of programs and approaches dealing with victim safety, the criminal justice system and batterers programs as part of a coordinated community response to domestic violence.
- Facilitation and co-facilitation of psycho-educational groups.
- Group and interpersonal dynamics, particularly among batterers, offenders, and mandated clients.
- Assessment, social service interviewing, and intervention skills.
- Legal issues related to domestic violence (e.g. statutes, duty to warn, confidentiality and limits of confidentiality, etc.).
- Substance abuse, sexual abuse and mental health issues related to domestic violence.
- Adult education, instruction and cognitive/ behavioral approaches to learning.
- Counseling techniques and skills.

## **SAMPLE VARIANCE PROPOSAL**

### **Identifying Information**

Program Name:

Director/ Authorized Agent:

Address:

Telephone:

E-Mail:

Date:

### **Introductory Statement**

*Provide a brief statement describing the nature of the proposed modifications, their purpose, and the desired outcome.*

### **Specific Standard(s) Involved**

### **Specific Modification(s) Proposed**

### **Purpose of Proposed Modification(s)**

### **Desired Outcome or Anticipated Benefit(s)**

### **Potential Obstacles, Adverse Effects or Diminishing of Benefit(s)**

Include discussion of plans to mitigate such problems.

### **Plans for Tracking and Reporting Modifications and Impact**

Include proposed time frame for initial reporting, usually within 6-12 months. Note that exceptional positive or negative impact must be reported as soon as possible.

*This is a suggested format for programs to use in submitting a request to the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee for consideration of a Variance. Programs may modify the format as needed, and may submit additional materials if desired. Refer to the Comprehensive Batterers Intervention Standards and the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee for additional guidelines.*