

**ADOLESCENT DATING ABUSE  
INTERVENTION STANDARDS**

**WORKING WITH ADOLESCENT OFFENDERS**

**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council**

September 2010

# ADOLESCENT DATING ABUSE INTERVENTION STANDARDS

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**ADOLESCENT DATING ABUSE INTERVENTION STANDARDS  
WORKING WITH ADOLESCENT OFFENDERS  
Introduction**

**I. PURPOSE OF INTERVENTION STANDARDS**

The central purpose in establishing standards for programs working with adolescent offenders is to promote best practices for intervention services Statewide. The primary outcome is to increase victim safety by eliminating violence against dating partners. The interventions will focus on holding adolescent offenders accountable for their behavior by teaching new skills, examining beliefs about dating relationships, and monitoring their behavior while they are participating in the intervention programs.

**II. PURPOSE OF THE CURRICULUM FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

- A. Provide a model for intervention which identifies and remediates tactics of "power and control" <sup>1</sup> and other abusive behaviors;
- B. Promote best practices and consistency of intervention services statewide;
- C. Hold adolescent offenders accountable for their behavior;
- D. Provide a model of violence-free behavior among family members and in dating relationships.

**III. PURPOSE OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

- A. Hold adolescent offenders accountable, challenge the offender beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and teach new skills that will facilitate healthy changes in his/her behavior;
- B. Challenge myths about adolescent dating abuse and promote no tolerance for abusive and violent behavior;
- C. Disallow collusion and victim blaming by adolescent offenders and others;
- D. Collect data to assist with evaluations of program effectiveness and recidivism;
- E. Report compliance and non-compliance to court and/or other officially designated monitoring source.

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<sup>1</sup> Pence, E. and Paynar, M. (1986) Power and Control: Tactics of Men Who Batter. The Duluth Model, Duluth, MN Minnesota Program Development, Inc.

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **“Domestic Violence”**: any act involving physical injury or harm; the threat of physical injury or harm; any act of nonconsensual sexual contact, penetration, intercourse; or the threat of nonconsensual sexual contact, penetration, intercourse, or sexual coercion; property damage; intimidation; endangerment; unlawful restraint; or any other coercive behavior that is used to control another through physical violence, sexual violence, emotional and psychological violence, intimidation, verbal abuse, economic control or other methods within a past or present dating relationship.
- B. **“Abuse/Violence”**: actions, threats of actions, or any words that constitute a misuse of power resulting in the physical, psychological, or emotional injury, control, or disregard of another person. The terms abuse and violence are used interchangeably in the Standards.
- C. **“Dating Abuse”**: a pattern of assaultive and controlling behaviors that one person uses against another in order to gain or maintain power in the relationship. The offender/abuser intentionally behaves in ways that can cause fear, degradation, humiliation, injury or harm, or any other coercive behaviors to control the other person. Forms of abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional and psychological. (Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board)
- D. **“Adolescent Dating Abuse”**: the presence of dating violence (see C above) in relationships whereby the abuser is 13 through 17 years old. The victim can be age 13 and up.
- E. **“Dominant Adolescent Offender”**: an adolescent, 13 through 17 years old, who has engaged in a pattern of controlling behaviors, or perpetrated an act(s) of violence or abuse on a dating victim in order to gain and/or maintain power, dominance, or control.
- F. **“Adolescent Resistant Victim”**: an adolescent (13 through 17 years old) who has engaged in at least one act of dating abuse in response to previous victimization in a dating relationship. This offender is not the primary aggressor and has not engaged in a pattern of controlling behaviors, or perpetuated an act(s) of violence or abuse in their dating relationship in order to gain and/or maintain power, dominance, or control.
- G. **“Adolescent Offender NOS” (Not Otherwise Specified)**: An adolescent, 13 through 17 years old, who has engaged in at least one act of dating abuse and does not fit the criteria of either a “Dominant Adolescent Offender” or an “Adolescent Resistant Victim” or has features of a “Dominant Adolescent Offender” and/or an “Adolescent Resistant Victim” or for whom not enough information is known to classify as either a “Dominant Adolescent Offender” or an “Adolescent Resistant Victim.” Any adolescent who has engaged in at least one act of dating violence

for the purpose of retribution or in circumstances which have not represented a credible threat of physical harm may be considered an “Adolescent Offender NOS.”

- H. **“Adolescent Non-Dating Offender”**: an adolescent who has committed an act of violence with whom there has never been a dating relationship and where there is no history or significant risk factors for dating violence.
- I. **“Adolescent Victim”**: a person 13 through 17 years old who has experienced violence and/or controlling behaviors in a dating relationship.
- J. **“Adult Victim”**: a person 18 years or older who has experienced violence and/or controlling behaviors in a dating relationship.
- K. **“Provider”**: an entity or individual who provides an adolescent dating abuse intervention program.
- L. **“Psycho-educational”**: structured educational approaches to adolescent offender intervention that are based on social learning theory and cognitive behavior theory principles. It is fundamental to the understanding of this model that violence is a choice and is learned. The goal is to eliminate the adolescent offender's use of violent and abusive behaviors.
- M. **“Supervisor”**: one who meets all facilitator requirements and a supervisor criterion established by these standards and provides oversight, guidance, and evaluation to trainees and facilitators.
- N. **“Facilitator”**: an adolescent dating violence intervention group leader working with adolescent offenders.
- O. **“Trainee”**: an individual in the process of meeting the requirements of facilitator as required by these Standards.
- P. **Protection From Abuse (PFA)**: refers to a civil order of protection issued by Family Court that provides protection from family, household members, or dating partners.

## V. DECLARATION OF POLICIES

These Standards are designed to meet the needs of dating violence victims and adolescent offenders and, in doing so, the whole community. Therefore, interventions with adolescent offenders must take place in the context of the following policy goals:

## **A. Providing Safety for Victims**

The safety of all parties involved is the primary concern of a dating violence intervention program.

1. Providers shall develop procedures that assess victim safety throughout the adolescent offender's intervention. Providers shall avoid service delivery to adolescent offenders and victims at the same time and location.
2. Providers shall inform the victim of the offender's status in the intervention group. If contact with the victim or others compromises the safety of the victim, the provider should clearly document concerns or information shaping their decision not to contact the victim.

In cases in which the victim is a minor, providers shall obtain consent of at least one parent/guardian prior to contact with said victim. If parental consent is denied, providers shall offer appropriate referrals.

3. Providers shall obtain victim consent prior to disclosing any information.
4. Providers shall offer appropriate resources including referrals and direct assistance to victims in a timely fashion.
5. Providers shall keep victim contact records separate and secure from offender files.
6. Providers shall cooperate and communicate with area domestic violence programs so as to stay advised on common issues.
7. Providers shall share information in a manner consistent with legal and professional standards.

## **B. Role of Parents/Guardians**

1. Providers shall obtain the consent of at least one parent/guardian prior to evaluation or intervention services for adolescent offenders. Parents/guardians and minors will enter into formal service agreements/contract with providers.
2. In an effort to hold adolescents fully accountable for their violence, parents/guardians who pay the program fees for adolescent offender to attend the Intervention Program should be encouraged to work with their child to repay them for the Intervention fees.
3. In an effort to protect adolescent confidentiality, parents/guardians may not participate in the adolescent assessment or intervention sessions.

### **C. Being Part of a Coordinated System Response**

1. Providers must be knowledgeable about State and Federal laws and the legal system as they pertain to domestic abuse/violence offenses including, but not limited to, criminal and civil remedies for victims and local law enforcement, prosecution and local court personnel, domestic violence policies and mandates.
2. Providers must have cooperative and regular communication with area domestic violence programs.
3. Providers should be informed about and, to the extent possible, participate in local, state and national coalitions, task forces and councils that work toward the prevention and elimination of domestic abuse/violence. Providers will attend and participate in the Domestic Violence Task Force and the Treatment Subcommittee of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council.
4. Providers should educate referral sources (schools, courts, probation officers, child protection workers, etc.) regarding services with adolescent offenders and to advocate for appropriate services for all persons who are victims of dating violence.

### **D. Complying with Standards**

Providers must comply with all standards set forth herein.

## **VI. JUDICIARY, PROSECUTION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, MONITORING SOURCES AND DATING ABUSE INTERVENTION**

### **A. System Response is Critical**

Successful intervention requires an immediate, consistent, coordinated system response which will hold adolescent offenders accountable and impart swift consequences for violent behavior.

Support from the judiciary, prosecution, law enforcement, correctional authorities, schools, and social services are of paramount importance if these intervention standards are to be effective.

### **B. Warnings About Dual or Mutual Arrest**

When there has been a dual or mutual arrest, the court should evaluate whether either party acted in self-defense. These determinations are critical to appropriate sentencing of offenders to intervention programs.

### **C. Court Mandates**

Adolescent dating violence intervention is recommended as a condition of supervision and as a condition of an Order of Protection (PFA) through a finding of the Court.

The Court is strongly encouraged to engage in “best practices.” Specifically, all adolescent offenders who have engaged in dating abuse should be ordered to a certified Adolescent Dating Abuse Intervention Provider for 1. Evaluation and 2. To follow any and all provider recommendations.

### **D. Probation and Monitoring Sources**

- a. Adolescent offenders are often on probation. Absent any other condition, probationers may earn their way off probation upon completion of the program and successful discharge by the service provider. Good practice should be that probation not be terminated by the court until the adolescent offender has completed the intervention program and been successfully discharged by the service provider. Evidence of reconciliation or alternate treatment should not affect the term of probation nor the determination of the court that the adolescent offender shall complete the intervention program.
- b. The court should order a supervision level that is appropriate for the particular adolescent offender.

### **E. Non-Compliance with Court Order**

An adolescent offender who fails to attend the intervention program or who engages in behavior that is in violation of a court order should be addressed by the court in an expeditious manner. The court should determine how to modify and/or respond to the behavior.

### **F. Provider Responsibility to Courts and Monitoring Sources**

Providers are required to notify the court or other officially designated monitoring source of the failure of the adolescent offender to comply with the court order or a substantive term of the provider’s contract.

## **VII. DATING ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

### **PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL MODEL**

These dating abuse intervention standards are based upon a psycho-educational model. This model addresses abuse in both a personal and social context through

gender based expectations, beliefs, values, and attitudes. As such, this model acknowledges that violence is a learned behavior and that it is a choice. Further, violence can be unlearned and alternatives to violence can be learned.

Adolescent dating offenders must be held completely accountable for all abuse. Intervention shall include challenging belief systems and attitudes toward violence, gender stereo-typing, and examining the use of power and control tactics.

#### **A. APPROPRIATE POPULATION FOR INTERVENTION**

1. Dating abuse intervention is designed for adolescent offenders of dating abuse as defined in section IV E & G of these Standards.
2. Dating abuse intervention is intended for offending adolescents who have been court ordered to participate in dating violence intervention for adolescents, and for adolescents that self-refer. Self-referred adolescents may have been encouraged to participate in dating abuse intervention through their community, school, or family.
3. Dating abuse intervention is designed for adolescent offenders between the ages of 13 and 17 years of age. It is understood that an adolescent may turn 18 years of age during the adolescent intervention program.
4. Prior to placement in intervention, the adolescent offender shall receive a bio-psychosocial assessment, which is delineated in these Standards. The assessment will assist the provider in determining appropriateness of services and necessary accommodations.

#### **B. GROUP INTERVENTION STRUCTURE**

1. Adolescents shall participate in groups with other adolescents.
2. Group participants shall be of the same gender.
3. Separate groups shall be conducted for adolescents in same sex relationships. If such groups are not available, individual counseling is recommended.
4. All adolescent groups shall reflect sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences.
5. Adolescents who speak English as a second language or are hearing impaired may need interpreters. Attempts should be made to identify interpreters as needed.
6. The provider will document the reasons that individual counseling, rather than group intervention, is provided for any adolescent offender. The monitoring agency will be informed of this recommendation.

7. Group facilitators must recognize and be respectful of all group members. Group facilitators must hold offenders personally accountable for abusive behavior.

### **C. LENGTH OF INTERVENTION**

Assessment/evaluation and necessary administrative tasks are not components of dating abuse intervention.

The length of the program intervention, group or individual, will be at least 18 session hours over a minimum of 12 weeks with a minimum of 12 sessions. Adolescents must complete the intervention within a specified period of time determined by the provider. Programs should develop attendance policies that cover absences.

Each group session will be a minimum of one hour and a maximum of 90 minutes. Individual sessions may not exceed one hour.

### **D. GROUP SIZE**

The maximum group size will be 8 participants for one facilitator with no more than 14 group participants per two facilitators.

### **E. GROUP FACILITATION**

It is highly recommended that group intervention be co-facilitated by a male and female facilitator. This promotes modeling healthy egalitarian relationships and to monitor the group process.

### **F. DATING VIOLENCE VICTIM SERVICES**

Under no circumstances may intervention be mandated for a dating violence victim. All victim services are voluntary. Mandating a victim/survivor into services may constitute a re-victimization of the victim/survivor. It is important to note that “resistant victims” (see definitions on Page 2), fall under this purview and shall not be mandated into intervention. Although resistant victims have engaged in an act of dating abuse, they are not primary aggressors and their use of abuse has been in response to previous victimization.

Providers shall offer safety planning, support groups, and/or individual counseling for victims of dating violence. If a victim/survivor chooses to participate in a support group, separate groups should be offered for male and female victims/survivors. When groups are not available, individual counseling is recommended.

### **G. SUBSTANCE ABUSE, MENTAL HEALTH AND COGNITIVE ABILITY**

1. During the assessment/evaluation, providers will assess and screen for substance abuse, mental health, and cognitive ability.

2. Substance abuse and mental health intervention shall not be ordered or provided in lieu of adolescent dating interventions. Such interventions may be concurrent if conducted on an outpatient basis.
3. When substance abuse/chemical dependency may be indicated, a recommendation must be made for adolescent offenders to be evaluated by an appropriate substance abuse intervention provider and to follow all recommendations by that provider.
4. When mental health issues are identified, a recommendation must be made for adolescent offenders to be evaluated by a licensed mental health professional and follow all recommendations made by that professional.
5. Limitations in cognitive ability should be well documented. Appropriate referrals should be made to an appropriate provider.

## **H. ANGER MANAGEMENT INTERVENTION**

Management of emotions, including anger, may be incorporated as a subset into a dating abuse intervention program by the provider. Anger management **may not** be substituted for dating abuse intervention.

## **VIII. INAPPROPRIATE INTERVENTION**

### **A. Victim Blaming, Victim Coercion or Mandates**

Responsibility for offender abuse shall not be shifted to the victim. Service providers must avoid communicating in ways that perpetuate attitudes of sexism and victim blaming.

Any approach that coerces, mandates, or otherwise requires victim participation is inappropriate.

### **B. Couples Therapy**

Counseling involving the offender and victim cannot be substituted or occur concurrently with dating abuse intervention.

### **C. Family Therapy**

Family therapy with the adolescent offender cannot be substituted for dating abuse intervention. In addition, family therapy cannot occur concurrently with dating abuse intervention. Family therapy cannot occur prior to the completion of the adolescent dating abuse intervention program.

The presence of any factors listed below should rule out the recommendation for family therapy. Appropriate referrals should be made.

- Significant history of violence and abuse.
- Lack of credible commitment or ability to maintain safety.
- Current physical violence.
- Acute or chronic substance abuse.
- Presence of psychotic features.
- Imminent danger to self or others.
- Legal orders prohibiting contact.

It is important to note that each family member engaged in family therapy must agree to follow safety guidelines recommended by the provider.

#### **D. Other Inappropriate Approaches or Techniques**

1. Intervention which promotes stereotypical beliefs about male and female roles in violence and misuse of power; and any intervention that supports retribution and revenge;
2. Psychodynamic interventions which link experiences and unconscious motivations as the central cause of violence;
3. The misuse of systems theory approaches which treat the violence as a mutually circular process, blaming the victim;
4. Addiction counseling models which identify the violence as an addiction;
5. Communication enhancement or anger management techniques, such as fair fighting techniques, which place causality on anger;
6. Theories or techniques which identify poor impulse control as the primary cause of violence; and
7. Methods which identify psychopathology on the part of either party as a primary cause of violence and thus deny personal responsibility.

### **IX. REFERRAL PROCESS AND THE COURTS**

This section contains the suggested process for referral through intervention.

#### **A. Referral**

1. All adolescent dating abuse offenders shall be referred for assessment by a DVCC Certified Provider. Adolescent offenders shall comply with recommended intervention and all regulations set by the provider.

2. For adolescent offenders with court orders, the Court shall give the adolescent offender's parent/guardian written information which shall include:
  - a) A list of certified providers in the area who offer adolescent dating violence intervention programs. The list shall include the name, address, telephone number, and any known times that programs are held; and
  - b) A statement that the offender must complete the assessment/evaluation within 30 business days. The Court may also require that the assessment is scheduled within five (5) business days.
  - c) A statement that within forty-five (45) business days of the Court's order, the adolescent offender must deliver to the court, probation, or another designated monitoring source, written proof from the intervention program of compliance with Item b of this subsection.

### **B. Information From the Court for Assessment**

The Court plays a vital role in the intervention of offenders and for the safety of victims. The following information will be helpful to the provider in order to evaluate the needs of the offender at the time of assessment:

1. Police reports and the arrest affidavit;
2. Any outstanding or current Orders of Protection;
3. Any agreement under the First Offenders Program provision of the Delaware code;
4. Any Attorney General's probation form;
5. Court orders with case disposition and identifying case numbers; and any criminal no-contact orders that may exist;
6. Prior history of violence, including out-of-state history.

### **C. Failure to Comply**

In all cases in which the court has ordered intervention for adolescent dating abuse, the court shall be notified if the adolescent does not comply with the terms of this section.

Regarding adolescents with Protection from Abuse orders, providers shall notify the court of non-compliance through the DELJIS database (accessible by the DVCC certified providers).

If the adolescent offender has a probation officer or another monitoring source, the provider shall notify the officer/source of non-compliance in writing.

Providers shall notify parents/guardians of non-compliances.

## **X. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

It is important that both actual and apparent conflicts of interest among adolescent dating violence intervention providers and concurrent intervention providers be avoided. Therefore, the following safeguards are established:

- A.** Subsequent to assessment/evaluation, adolescent offenders and their legal guardian(s) may choose to attend a different adolescent dating abuse intervention program.
- B.** The completed assessment may include a recommendation to the referral source that the adolescent offender undergo intervention in addition to, or instead of, the adolescent dating abuse intervention program. The provider shall give the offender a list of those providers offering the intervention and may include itself on that list if it is so qualified.
- C.** In cases where the adolescent offender needs other clinical treatment or intervention, for example: substance abuse counseling or family therapy, the person(s) working in the adolescent intervention program will refer the offender to another treatment professional.

## **XI. ADOLESCENT OFFENDER ASSESSMENT**

It is highly recommended the Intervention Program engage the adolescent offender's parent(s)/guardian(s) during the assessment process. This participation will help the adolescent succeed in the Program.

### **A. Purpose and Rationale**

A biopsychosocial clinical assessment is an inherent component of the adolescent dating abuse intervention program. The assessment helps to identify adolescents appropriate for dating abuse intervention.

- 1. Identify adolescents who would benefit from concurrent mental health, substance abuse intervention, or combined programs.
- 2. Elicit important information that the adolescent dating violence intervention program may use including:
  - 1. Most recent violent episode;
  - 2. Violence in previous relationships (observed, experienced, expressed);
  - 3. Assaults on other family members;
  - 4. Protection from Abuse orders;
  - 5. Conditions of probation;
  - 6. Medical and mental health history;
  - 7. Criminal/legal history;
  - 8. Violence in family of origin (observed or experienced);
  - 9. School history;

10. Assessment of lethality to include:
    - (a) homicide risk;
    - (b) suicide risk;
    - (c) frequency/cycle of violence;
    - (d) history of violence and bullying;
    - (e) substance use/abuse;
    - (f) assaults on family members, including children;
    - (g) previous criminal history/activity;
    - (h) violence outside the home;
    - (i) proximity of victim and adolescent offender;
    - (j) attitudes toward violence;
    - (k) life stresses and/or potential triggers;
    - (l) accessibility to weapons; and
    - (m) obsession over partner (or family member).
  11. Assessment of other forms of abusive behavior (emotional, sexual, financial, etc.);
  12. Substance abuse assessment; and
  13. Mental health assessment.
3. If the initial phase of assessment is completed by an agency other than the adolescent dating violence intervention provider, an initial assessment report must be completed and forwarded to the provider upon request. The provider will be expected to review the initial assessment and to continue the assessment process. The provider may make additional recommendations as needed to provide appropriate intervention to the adolescent offender.
  4. If the adolescent dating violence intervention program is determined to be inappropriate for the adolescent offender, the provider must document the reason for the determination and make a specific recommendation to the court and/or the referring agency. The provider's determination may be due to:
    - a. Extensive psychiatric history or current psychiatric concern that would preclude successful participation in the program;
    - b. Extensive criminal record of violent crimes that shows a high level of danger to the victim or a high level of lethality;
    - c. Chronic substance abuse or chemical dependency that requires completion of an intervention program;
    - d. Sexual assault history;
    - e. Extensive developmental or mental impairment that would interfere with the offender's ability to function in a group intervention program.
  5. Adolescents presenting as resistant victims or victims who acted in self defense should be carefully assessed. It is essential that their dating

victimization be evaluated and addressed, specifically their current danger level. Their risk of lethality should be assessed using a validated lethality tool and an appropriate safety plan should be developed with the adolescent.

### **B. Assessment Fees**

Providers may employ a sliding scale in assessing the cost for the assessment.

### **C. Assessment Session**

A thorough bio-psychosocial assessment may require more than one session to complete.

## **XII. PROCEDURES AND FLOW**

### **A. Enrollment and Intervention Contract**

1. Following the assessment, a contract must be signed by the adolescent offender and his/her parent/guardian which includes:
  - a. An outline of program content (see Section XI11), including the dynamics of power and control, alternative non-violent behaviors, the effects of abuse on the victim and others, gender roles, socialization, and the nature of the violence;
  - b. Adolescent offender attendance requirement;
  - c. Substance use policy;
  - d. Commitment to non-violence;
  - e. Completion criteria;
  - f. Program rules, regulations, and fees;
  - g. Exceptions to confidentiality:
    - Any serious threats that the adolescent offender may do bodily harm to the victim or to any other person, or to commit suicide;
    - Any belief that child abuse or neglect is present or has occurred, which also will be reported pursuant to Title 16 Delaware Code Section 903;
    - Any conduct the adolescent offender willfully chooses to engage in which poses a threat to the victim, his or her property, or to third persons related to the parties.

Contracts will indicate that information will be disclosed to appropriate agencies as determined by the provider; this may include the law enforcement, DFS, schools, and monitoring sources. Further, adult victims and adolescent victim's parents/guardians will be informed. Finally, the adolescent offender's parent/guardian will be informed.

- h. Provider expectations, such as group participation, accountability for all actions, and homework;
  - i. Notice that the victim and/or adolescent victim's parents/guardians will be contacted unless otherwise documented;
  - j. Specific release of information for collateral intervention.
2. The provider may contract with the adolescent offender, with consent by the offender's parent/guardian, for video/audio recordings of group sessions for the purpose of internal instruction, education, research or program monitoring. However, agreement to such a contract provision is not mandatory for the adolescent offender.

## **B. Victim Contact and Related Services**

The provider shall make every effort to contact the victim or, if the victim is a minor, contact should be made with the minor's parent/guardian. Adolescent victim contact shall not occur without consent of at least one parent/guardian and the consent of the adolescent victim.

Program contact can be by phone or by letter. All contact with a victim, or with a parent/guardian on behalf of a minor victim, should be documented in a separate file.

If a letter is sent to a victim or to a parent/guardian on behalf of a minor victim, it should contain an overview of the adolescent dating abuse intervention program, information about community resources for victims and their families, suggestions for a safety plan, and an inventory of abusive behaviors to be filled out and returned to the intervention program.

If contact is made by phone with the victim, or with the parent/guardian on behalf of a minor victim, the same information should be covered. The victim or the parent/guardian should be encouraged to contact the provider throughout the period during which the offender is in intervention.

The provider must immediately attempt to report any threat of violence from an offender to a potential victim, to local law enforcement, and to a parent/guardian. This action must be documented in the offender's file and a separate file to show attempted contact with the victim or parent/guardian and with law enforcement.

Any information obtained from victims shall be deemed confidential and shall not be disclosed to any third party without specific, written authorization from the victim or a court order.

Efforts should be made to have the victim liaison be the same gender as the victim. This will ensure that attention is paid to gender issues and will help to foster an uninhibited open communication.

### **C. Program Attendance and Attendance Policy**

Adolescent offenders begin their intervention sessions subsequent to completing their assessment. Adolescents are required to attend the full number of sessions as specified by the provider. For example, a program may allow 15 weeks to complete a 12-week program (1.5 hours per session) or 22 weeks to complete an 18-week program (1 hour per session). If adolescents are absent more times than program policy allows, they will be required to re-enroll in the program in order to continue. Some programs may allow no absences. Referring agencies must be notified of all re-enrollments.

### **D. Suspension**

Adolescent offenders may be suspended from the intervention program upon accruing absences in excess of program policy and/or for failure to follow other program rules or policies as outlined in the written service contract with the adolescent offender and their parent/guardian.

The referring agency and parent/guardian will be notified in a timely fashion of the adolescent offender's suspension. Additionally, all attempts to notify the victim or minor victim's parent/guardian will be made in situations in which victim safety is a concern.

Following suspension, the adolescent and his/her parent should be required to meet with the provider staff within two weeks. Adolescent continuation in program is contingent upon the adolescent offender agreeing to follow provider rules and policies.

The referring agency should be notified that the adolescent offender is continuing with the intervention program or has not agreed to follow the program rules and policies. The provider will make recommendations to the referring agency if the adolescent refuses to follow the provider rules or policies.

### **E. Adolescent Offenders Inappropriate for Dating Abuse Intervention**

Providers may determine that their service is an inappropriate intervention for an adolescent offender. This decision may result from an offender's chronic substance abuse, high level of lethality, current psychiatric concern(s), history of sexual violence, and/or the adolescent's extensive cognitive or developmental challenges limiting their ability to participate in the intervention sessions.

After documenting the adolescent offender's inappropriateness for services, the provider will make recommendations to the referring agency. Additionally, the provider will attempt to notify the victim or adolescent victim's parent/guardian in situations where safety is a concern.

## **F. Completion of the Intervention Program**

Adolescent offenders will complete the intervention program when the adolescent has attended and participated in all the required sessions and engaged in violence-free actions throughout the duration of the intervention. The adolescent offender will receive a letter from the provider documenting completion and outlining future contact with the adolescent offender. This letter will be copied to the referring agency and parent/guardian.

## **G. Concurrent or Subsequent Intervention**

Provider may refer adolescent for subsequent intervention such as mental health or substance abuse.

# **XIII. ADOLESCENT DATING ABUSE - PROGRAM CONTENT**

## **A. Model**

Program topics must closely follow a model that depicts an overall pattern of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse including methods and tactics of power and control.

Those tactics include:

1. Intimidation;
2. Emotional abuse;
3. Isolation;
4. Minimizing, denying, and blaming;
5. Using Gender role, power differentiation;
6. Economic abuse;
7. Coercion and threats;
8. Using technology for any of the above; and
9. Stalking.

## **B. Content**

All Adolescent Dating Abuse Offender Intervention services will be based on the principle that successful intervention requires individuals to assume full responsibility for their abusive behavior. Services will also emphasize the successful acquisition of skills to support healthy, safe, non-abusive relationships.

Content, as listed and formatted in these Standards, is for organizational purposes only and is not intended to imply the structure or delivery of the content. To emphasize this point, providers are discouraged from making each of these content areas one-time lessons; it is strongly recommended that the following content be interwoven throughout the Intervention Program rather than delivered as distinct, separate topics:

## **Recognition of Abusive Behavior, Dynamics, Impact**

- Definition of abuse and identification of the range of abusive behaviors used to hurt or exert/maintain power and control in a dating relationship.
- Increase understanding that abusive behavior is a choice, learned and sometimes socially sanctioned; the effects of witnessing domestic abuse; learn alternatives to acting abusively.
- Acknowledge the “payoff” of using abusive behavior while emphasizing consequences of abuse for offenders and the impact on victims.
- Identify attitudes, beliefs, and motivations, including common myths that support abusive behavior.
- Understand how gender stereotypes and gender role socialization supports abusive behavior.
- Increase understanding of the escalation process: motivations and emotional, physiological, and behavioral cues that precede abusive behavior; learn de-escalation strategies.
- Recognize the range of behaviors which constitute sexual abuse within a dating relationship and the beliefs and myths that encourage such behavior.
- Understand and recognize the cyclical pattern of dating abuse in the relationship.

## **Self-Awareness and Skills Promoting Healthy Relationship**

- Increase awareness of one’s personal identity and self-esteem and the impact of acceptance and rejection.
- Increase ability to recognize, experience, label and express emotions non-abusively.
- Increase recognition of behaviors and qualities found in a healthy relationship, including the emotional & physical safety of each partner, equality, respect, and honesty.
- Understand boundaries; recognize personal boundaries; understand importance of setting and respecting boundaries for healthy relationships.
- Recognize use of different communication styles: passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive; learn and practice using assertive communication.
- Increase conflict resolution skills including the use of assertive communication, empathy, active listening, negotiation and compromise.
- Identify systems of support to maintain non-abusive relationships.

## **XIV. CREDENTIALS FOR ADOLESCENT DATING ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAM PERSONNEL**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this section is to define the personnel appropriate to work with adolescent offenders within the context of these Intervention Standards.

### **B. Personnel Standards for Adolescent Dating Violence Intervention Providers**

Intervention providers must:

1. Ensure that all program personnel are free of domestic violence in their personal lives.
2. Obtain a Criminal Background Check and review the Child Protection Registry List.
3. Ensure that program personnel are free of all criminal convictions while providing adolescent dating abuse intervention, and for at least one year prior to providing these services. Also, be free of any criminal conviction for a violent crime or for a crime involving alcohol or drugs for at least three years prior to providing these services.
4. Ensure that program personnel do not abuse substances.

### **C. Confidentiality Issues**

An intervention provider shall not disclose any confidential communications made by a client to the intervention provider during the course of intervention without the consent of the client and adolescent client's parent/guardian. Also, no intervention program employee or associate, whether clerical or professional, shall disclose any confidential information acquired through that individual's work capacity. Finally, no person who has participated in therapy conducted under the supervision of an intervention provider, including but not limited to group therapy sessions, shall disclose any knowledge gained during the course of such therapy without the consent of the person to whom the knowledge relates.

Notwithstanding the above general rules of confidentiality, providers have the duty to warn potential victims and/adolescent victim's parent(s)/guardians of imminent danger if the provider believes that the victim may be at risk from a client because of threats made or behavior exhibited. Providers are required by law to report suspected child abuse.

The rules of confidentiality will not apply when:

1. An offender acts in such a way as to indicate that he or she may be dangerous to the lives of others or self;
2. An offender or an offender's heirs, executors, or estate administrators file a law suit or a complaint against an intervention provider arising out of, or connected with, the care or intervention of such client by the provider; or,

#### **D. Prerequisite Credentials for Facilitators**

1. Education and Work Experience Requirements:

At least one facilitator in each group must have a Master's degree in social sciences or a similar field and have the equivalent of at least one full year working with adolescents in a service delivery system. Groups must have one facilitator with expertise in adolescent development.

2. Facilitators also must have:
  - a. 104 hours of direct face-to-face contact facilitating or co-facilitating domestic violence or dating abuse intervention groups using a power and control model. This requirement must be completed in not less than six months;
  - b. 40 hours of victim-centered training, which can include advocacy to battered women and their children, teen victims, conducting women's and children's groups, attending victim panels or presentations where victim issues are taught;
  - c. 40 hours of offender training on domestic violence or dating abuse intervention.

Under the guidance of a certified supervisor, personnel may work as a trainee (see Page 22).

3. Knowledge and Skills

The facilitator applicant must be able to demonstrate the following:

- a. An understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence/dating violence within the context of power and control;
- b. An understanding of the effects of adolescent dating and domestic violence on victims including children and the critical nature of safety plans;

- c. An understanding that domestic violence is deeply rooted in historical attitudes towards women and that it is often intergenerational;
- d. An ability to recognize risk factors associated with homicide, suicide, domestic violence, self-mutilation, and other violently aggressive behaviors, including displaying weapons;
- e. An understanding of the phases of intervention including self-generated crises, impasses, plateaus, resistance, and relapse;
- f. A familiarity with State and Federal laws concerning domestic violence, including the policies affecting intervention of court-ordered program participants, divorce, custody, and child abuse including Memorandums of Understanding.
- g. An ability to actively listen and process;
- h. An ability to assess participant's  comprehension and incorporation of material;
- i. An understanding of childhood trauma, physical, psychological, emotional or sexual abuse, and their correlations to domestic violence; and,
- j. An understanding of grief and loss processes and self-help fellowship resources available in the local community; and

#### 4. Principal Duties

The principal duties of the facilitator are to:

- a. Facilitate or co-facilitate weekly intervention groups utilizing the established curriculum and techniques;
- b. Model appropriate boundary setting, confrontation, reframing, paraphrasing, reflection and clarification;
- c. Identify and eliminate collusion or complicity, and intra-group conflicts for individual and group growth;
- d. Communicate non-hostility, respect, and unconditional acceptance of ethno-cultural and lifestyle differences;
- e. Teach and model problem-solving skills and non-violent behavior options;
- f. Recognize and process denial and minimization and other defense mechanisms;

- g. Establish rapport and understanding in a non-judgmental and objective manner so as to build trust, reduce resistance, and elicit the necessary feedback to gauge understanding of intervention imparted;
- h. Appropriately confront acts of domestic violence/dating violence and other counter-productive behaviors; and
- i. Elicit self-disclosure to enhance participants' self-exploration.

##### 5. Certification Renewal Requirements

An applicant for re-certification as a facilitator shall complete a minimum of twenty-four (24) clock hours of continuing education within a two-year certification period.

Approved areas of training include:

- a. Substance abuse evaluation and intervention;
- b. Domestic violence, dating abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, strangulation, legal remedies, etc;
- c. Adolescent development;
- d. Evaluation and intervention with families where domestic violence is present;
- e. Completion of a power and control model training;
- f. Child abuse;
- g. Education regarding mental health and/or mental illness;
- h. Group Intervention skills;
- i. Healthy relationships;
- j. Cultural competency;
- k. Training in any other area that the applicant can demonstrate is pertinent to providing a dating abuse intervention program.

Methods of training include: Attending seminars and/or workshops; academic course work; completing an accredited home study course; attending domestic violence related court hearings or trials; riding along with the police; working with a domestic violence service provider other than one's own intervention program; and submitting original papers related to domestic violence or dating abuse. A facilitator may also provide no more than 4 hours per year of training related to domestic violence and/or dating abuse. At least 12 of the 24 hours of training shall directly pertain to intervention or prevention with persons who are adolescent offenders and/or victims. In addition, at least 12 of the 24 required clock hours shall be obtained by attending seminars or workshops presented by others. These hours are to be documented by a certificate signed by the presenter or by a designated official of the sponsoring organization.

### **E. Trainees**

- A trainee must work under the direction of a trained facilitator and his/her supervisor, or under the direction of an adolescent dating violence intervention program to gain the field experience that is required. Experience may be paid or unpaid, or part of a university internship program.

Trainees are encouraged to:

- Spend twenty hours a week observing in an adolescent dating violence intervention program during the first ninety day period of their training, and
- Co-facilitate groups with a facilitator under the direction of a qualified supervisor, and

### **F. Prerequisite Credentials for Supervisors**

Supervisors of dating abuse intervention programs must meet all the requirements of the facilitators and remain current on the Certification and Renewal requirements.