

Your partner may be mandated to attend, or is considering attending, a Battering Intervention and Prevention Program to change his abusive behavior. This is what you should know about the program serving your partner.

What is a BIPP?

BIPP is a course for men who need to confront their abusive behaviors and rigid beliefs about traditional power and control in a relationship by participating in accountability groups focused on men taking responsibility for their abusive behavior.

Programs focus on educating your partner on the nature of family violence, changing beliefs and attitudes that lead to violence and reinforcing strategies on developing an equal and supportive relationship.

BIPPs should be accredited by the State of Texas and should abide by state accreditation guidelines. Accreditation guidelines outline requirements relating to program length, curriculum and standards for communicating with survivors, along with other requirements all BIPPs should meet.

You can locate a list
of accredited BIPPs at:
www.tdcj.state.tx.us/cjad/cjad-bipp.html
or by calling 1.800.525.1978

What is Not a BIPP?

Couples counseling is not a BIPP and is not recommended for relationships affected by abuse. Before you work together to create a healthy relationship, your partner needs to take responsibility for his abusive behaviors and demonstrate positive changes that make you feel safe to share your opinions or perspective. Couples counseling may also imply you hold responsibility for his abusive behavior when really your partner chooses to behave in an abusive manner on his own.

Anger management is not a BIPP and is not recommended for men who use abuse to control their partners. Anger management focuses on stress reduction and helps chronically angry individuals overcome rage arising in specific situations, as well as in their general anger against themselves and the world as a whole. Your partner needs to examine his use of power and control dynamic in a relationship and identify the changing underlying attitudes and beliefs that promote violence in his relationship.

Individual therapy is not a BIPP and is not the recommended referral for offenders of family violence. Individual therapy does not create a space for your partner to learn from other men's experiences. Men participating in BIPPs interact in a group format facilitated by experienced staff. Group members work on holding each other accountable and developing critical thinking skills that challenge beliefs and attitudes that lead to abusive behaviors.

Substance abuse treatment is not a BIPP and should not be used to solely address your partner's abusive behavior. Alcohol and drugs may intensify violence, but they are not the cause of your partner's abusive behaviors. If your partner abuses substances, a BIPP should recommend he complete substance abuse treatment as well as the BIP Program.

It may be possible you are not located near an accredited BIPP. This may require your partner to work with an individual therapist. While this is not a recommended alternative, it may be the only option in your community.

What is Your Role?

Your partner is the only one who can commit to working on changing his behaviors and learning the value of equal relationships. You do not have a responsibility to change his behavior.

You may need to continue to assess your safety and seek assistance from a local shelter or non-residential center. These resources often provide advocacy, therapy, safety planning and a crisis hotline at no cost to you.

You may locate your local program by contacting the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1.800.799.SAFE.

If your partner enters a BIPP and provides a mailing address for you, the program is required to send you notification of his enrollment. The program is also obligated to notify you should your partner exit or complete the program.

Please note that a BIPP will not provide you with any information your partner provides to them or the group.

Will a BIPP Really Create Change?

If your partner entered a BIPP, you're probably relieved and hopeful he is finally getting help. It's important to know that there are no quick remedies for his violence, and he is the only one who can make the decision to change.

A BIPP is a small but important part of a community response system (including police, district attorney's office, the courts and adult probation) holding your partner accountable for his abusive behavior and reinforcing the belief that family violence is unacceptable.

If your partner acknowledges his abusive behaviors, commits to change his behavior to support a relationship based on equality and mutual respect, and completes the program, change may be possible.

However, even men who complete programs can regress to abusive behaviors. Completion is not a guarantee that abuse will not occur in the future. For many men who struggle with these behaviors, staying nonviolent is a lifelong process. You should continue to assess your safety.

Warning Signs Your Partner Isn't Getting It

Your partner's abusive behavior is rooted in a need to control your relationship. That pattern isn't going to change overnight. He may no longer be physically violent, but he may still try to exert control by manipulating you into doing what he wants, guilt-tripping you into sympathizing with him or using the BIP program against you.

If you hear your partner making statements like these while he is in a program, you should be concerned that he isn't making any progress.

- *I'm not the only one who needs counseling.*
- *I'm not as bad as a lot of the other guys in there.*
- *As soon as I'm done with this program, I'll be cured.*
- *We need to stay together to work this out.*
- *Now that I'm in this program, you have to be more understanding.*
- *You're the reason I'm being forced to go to this program.*

Is He Changing?

Your partner will need to make the decision to work toward change on his own. Despite what he may claim, there is nothing you can do to create this change.

While you are the best person to determine if your partner is responding to the program, you may want to ask yourself the following questions about his behavior:

- *Can your partner listen to your opinion and respect it even when he disagrees?*
- *Does your partner respect your wishes about sex and physical contact?*
- *Is your partner supportive about your work, school or other goals?*
- *Are you comfortable with the way your partner interacts with your children?*
- *Does your partner continue to blame or minimize his behaviors?*
- *Can you negotiate compromises with him without being humiliated or belittled?*
- *Do you feel afraid when you are with him?*



Over Thirty Years of Building a Safer Texas

P.O. Box 161810 | Austin, Texas 78716 | 1.800.525.1978

www.tcfv.org