

Batterer Intervention Standards Exist to:

- 1) Establish a minimum level of respectful, consistent, and appropriate intervention provided to persons convicted of a domestic violence related criminal charge.
- 2) Assist judges and others in identifying batterer intervention programs that are reliable, predictable and responsive sources of intervention.
- 3) Provide guidelines for ethical and accountable intervention systems to better protect victims and other family members.
- 4) Provide a framework for the use of batterer intervention as a part of the continuum of the coordinated community response to this criminal behavior.
- 5) Provide the public and the court with realistic expectations of service.
- 6) Enhance public awareness of domestic violence issues and reinforce the concept that violent behavior is unacceptable.

Batterer Intervention Standards

Research over the past 20 years is the basis of Michigan's standards. Although much work remains to be done in this area, studies indicate that batterer intervention programs must focus on program structure, implementation, collaboration and context.

“Reputable batterer intervention programs are multi-layered and offer complex programming to move toward their goals. They also work closely with the local domestic violence service provider agency to achieve survivor safety and batterer accountability.”

David Garvin, director, Alternatives to Domestic Aggression and president-elect, Batterer Intervention Services Coalition of Michigan.



Critical Considerations for Judges

In order for batterers to change their behavior, they must first acknowledge their abusive behavior and that they alone are accountable for making the choice to abuse. Successful intervention requires the monitoring of individual behaviors over time and a concentrated focus on individual responsibility, choice, and accountability.

Although success ultimately depends on a batterer's willingness to change, some existing batterer intervention programs fall short of what is required for successful intervention. What follows are **important considerations** for judges in selecting credible batterer intervention programs:

- ◆ Group sessions with a recommended duration of **52 sessions** or longer. Twenty-six sessions is the acceptable minimum. Longer participation allows for more exposure to the program material and more opportunity for professional staff to observe and monitor the batterer's participation.
- ◆ It is not uncommon for batterers to test the system. To hold batterers accountable, any probation violation - no matter how small - must be addressed in immediate and meaningful ways. To do less may compromise victim safety and miss an opportunity to make an impact on the batterer, particularly regarding accountability and consequences.

Critical Considerations for Judges, (continued)

- ◆ Some intervention techniques are **inappropriate** in addressing battering behavior. These include any that:

- **Focus on anger management.**
- **Utilize couple and family counseling.**
- **Utilize Alternative Dispute Resolution.**
- **Endanger the victim(s) by disclosing confidential information or bringing victim(s) into contact with the batterer.**
- **Reinforce the batterer's denial of responsibility for his abusive behavior;**
- **Blame the victim for the batterer's abusive behavior.**
- **Otherwise support the batterer's entitlement to abuse or control of the victim.**
- **Identify psychopathology, poor impulse control, addiction, childhood experiences or skills deficits as the primary cause of battering.**

- ◆ Batterer intervention programs that do not comply with the minimum standards are not giving batterers meaningful opportunities and resources to change their abusive behaviors. Furthermore, they are not incorporating mechanisms to address victim safety issues and concerns.

NOTE: Only probation officers who are informed about domestic violence should supervise batterers.

Batterer Intervention Purpose and Philosophy

Domestic violence is an epidemic and deserves everyone's attention. A coordinated community response is the most effective intervention and Batterer Intervention Program Services are a critical component of that continuum.

As part of the coordinated community response, the batterer intervention program must participate and be accountable to the community. Batterer intervention cannot be used as punishment. It must not take the place of jail, probation, intensive monitoring, or other sanctions for criminal behavior.

Batterer intervention programs must strive to promote increased safety for victims, children, and other family members, as well as provide a meaningful opportunity for abusers to change their behavior.



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- Select Commissions and Boards from the list on the left sidebar.
- Click on Domestic Violence. This will take users to MDVPTB's homepage.

To view the *Batterer Intervention Standards for the State of Michigan*, select "Professional Resources" from the left side bar of MDVPTB's homepage.

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Batterer Intervention Services and Standards



In June of 1998, a Governor's Task Force on Batterer Intervention Standards released standards for the State of Michigan.

This brochure provides an overview of the Batterer Intervention Standards for the State of Michigan, which offer important information for judicial consideration when mandating offenders into batterer's treatment. The full document can be found using the web site location information located on the back page of this brochure.

Although there is currently no certification process for Michigan batterer intervention programs, the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention & Treatment Board (MDVPTB) is exploring the feasibility of a statewide qualification process. In the interim, all batterer intervention programs should follow the Michigan Batterer Intervention Standards in order to provide the best possible services.

*Let us all work toward a
violence-free world*