



# House of Ruth Maryland

## The Journey to Us: Reducing Resistance & Increasing Motivation

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**WIFE BEATER**

**RESPONDENT**

When people talk about those referred to abuse/batterer intervention programs, what labels do you hear?

**ABUSER**

**BULLY**

**DEFENDANT**

**BATTERER**

# Referral Sources



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Generally, participants will come to our programs in one of these ways:

- Criminal legal system
- Civil legal system
- Social Service referral
- Partner referred /“mandated”
- Attorney referral
- Other ways?



# Referral Process



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1. Criminal/Civil legal system or a conversation happens
2. Referral made
3. Phone call for appointment
4. Provide personal information to start application process
5. Set up first meeting – usually an intake or orientation

# Criminal Legal System



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- An incident happens and a case is brought against the abusive partner
  - A report is made to police or court and an arrest is made, a warrant is issued, or a summons is mailed
  - At this point they become the **Defendant**
    - State of \_\_\_\_\_ vs. Mr./Mrs. Smith

# Common Crimes Seen in IPV Cases



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- Assault and/or Battery
- Stalking
- Rape/Sexual Assault
- Harassment
- Malicious Destruction of Property
- Trespassing
- False Imprisonment
- Violation of a Protective Order
- Telephone Misuse
- Theft

In some, but not all states, “domestic violence” is a crime of its own.



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# Criminal – Representation

- Private Attorney (for defendant)
  - Pros: More attentive to the case; Can come with recommendations; Perceived as “better”
  - Cons: Expensive
- Public Defender (for defendant)
  - Pros: Free to qualifying individuals; Usually has a relationship with the sitting judge
  - Cons: Not available to all defendants; Very little individualized attention to case; Often works closely (and collaboratively) with the State’s Attorney; May have limited experience or skill
- State’s Attorney (for victim)
  - Typically drives the pace of the court room
  - Usually has an established relationship with the sitting judge

# Criminal – Common Dispositions



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## No conviction

- **Nolle Prose** – Prosecutor has decided not to prosecute or proceed further with the criminal case, usually because they do not have enough evidence to continue. The case is dismissed.
- **Acquittal/Not Guilty** – Judgment that the defendant was not found guilty of the crime with which they were charged. Defendant is free from charges brought against them.





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# Criminal – Common Dispositions

## Conviction

**Guilty** – The judge or jury has determined the defendant committed the crimes in the charges

**Probation** - An alternative to imprisonment in which the defendant is convicted, but allowed to stay in the community and ordered to follow conditions set by court and usually under the supervision of a probation agent.

## Suspended Adjudication

**Probation before judgement (PBJ)** – The defendant is placed directly on probation, without a disposition; usually accompanied by conditions

# Common Civil Cases



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- Protective/Restraining Order
- Peace Order
- Divorce
- Custody



# Civil Legal System



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- A case is brought to the court by one party, against the other party
  - At this point the person bringing the case is the “petitioner” and the person with the case against them is the “respondent”
    - *Mrs. Smith (petitioner) vs. Mr. Smith (respondent)*
- Each party is responsible for their own representation
  - Typically there is no free representation for Respondents, but may be available for the Petitioner



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# “Partner Mandated”

**Abusive Partner is told to get help or else...**

**ap pease** /ə'pēz/

Verb

1. Pacify or placate (someone) by acceding to their demands.
2. Relieve or satisfy (a demand or a feeling): "we give to charity because it appeases our guilt".

How do you think the participant may feel during the referral process?





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# How Participants May Feel

- Fear of
  - Judgement (being seen as monsters)
  - Life changes
  - Going back to jail
  - Being deported
- Angry
  - Being forced
  - Other person doesn't have any consequences
  - Feeling unheard
- In Denial
  - Minimize, deny & blame - "I don't belong here"
- Burdened
  - Money
  - Time
  - Loss of job
  - Criminal record
- Burnt out
  - From court
  - From application process to your program?

# And THEN...



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The participant is referred to an “ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAM”

- Do they also have to report to Community Supervision (P&P)?
- Do they have transportation?
- Do they work?
- What is it like contacting your organization?

**What behaviors might you observe from someone with all of this going on?**

# How participants may “Show Up”



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- Hostile/Aggressive
- Uncooperative
- Resistant/Closed off
- Aggressive
- Intimidating
  - looks, gestures, language, body language





# How participants may “Show up” – The other side



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- Apologetic
- Chivalrous
  - “Yes Ma’am, no Sir”
- Accommodating
- Cooperative (overly)
- Mr./Mrs. Perfect
  - Giving a list of positive attributes
  - “I was just too kind to her”, “I let her take advantage of me.”



# Why Should We Care?



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It is really easy to dismiss participants' feelings as resistance or meet their bad attitudes with our own, but we want them to:

- See us as a resource
- Understand we care
- Differentiate us from the court system
- Trust us enough to try our suggestions
- Be a good partner, parent, etc.
- Be successful



**\*\*We believe participants can change\*\***

# What is Resistance?



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The act of opposing or withstanding.

*“If you’re not buying what I’m selling,  
you’re resistant.”*

# Resistance has a purpose



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- Prevents us from buying every product/idea presented
- Provides stability, predictability, security, or comfort
- Provides us with a sense of right and wrong
- Wanting new alternatives to problems before giving up old ways

# Sources of Resistance



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But it's not just  
the participant



# 4 Common Participant Resistant Strategies



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1. Response quantity resistance: providing minimal feedback so as to make moving forward a challenge
  - Silence, short answers and considerable pauses in speech
2. Response content resistance: giving any kind of response other than one that is most helpful to progressing
  - Unrelated tangents, distracting questions and/or exaggerated displays of emotion

# 4 Common Participant Resistant Strategies



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3. Response style resistance: how the client relays information
  - Un/Half-truths, manipulation, forgetting and editing thoughts
4. Logistics management resistance: presenting practical obstacles to participation
  - Showing up late, missing appointments and not paying for services

# Resistance Isn't Always a Power Game



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*We are usually ready for manipulation or passive-aggressive behavior, but it could also be....*

- *Fear of failure*
- *Fear of taking risks*
- *Shame*
- *Exhaustion*
- *A personality style toward any change*

**Assuming the purpose of resistance will...**

**... create more resistance!**



# How Should We Respond?



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- Leave your biases, attitudes and beliefs at the door
- Don't be reactive
- Be respectful
- Assure them that they will have a chance to tell “their side”
- Be professional & assertive
- Validate and acknowledge their feelings & experiences



“Drop the rope!”

**Wait! That last one?**  
**Validate and**  
**acknowledge their**  
**feelings &**  
**experiences.**



**Welcome them!**



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# Resistance from Agency

- Was it designed to work with abusive partners?
  - Does the mission statement include this work?
- Does your leadership believe your participants can/will change?
- Are your services free of charge?
- How is the service funded?
  - Resistance from the community (funders)
- Can clients see images of themselves throughout the organization?
- What is the meeting space like?

# Resistance from You



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What are some ways or reasons that you can show up resistant?





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# Resistance from You

- Do you think the participant is a “bad” person?
- Do you think your group members are capable of change?
  - Really? All of them?
- Do you “like” this participant?
  - Transference/counter-transference?
  - Does that matter?
- Are you culturally different from the participant?
- Are you tired? Burned out?
- Do you show up on time and prepared?
- Do you prep & debrief appropriately for your groups?

If you aren't identifying some resistance in yourself, you aren't looking closely enough!

# Common Facilitator Signs of Resistance



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- Using a doubtful tone
- Making jokes at group members' expense
- Insisting that a participant is lying based on a "gut feeling"
  - Playing "gotcha" in the group room
- Cutting off participants in the group room
- Always having the last word
- Bending the rules for any client
- Not following your program's curriculum
- Never questioning your theory or strategies for your work
  - = not being open to change or new ideas

# Sources of Resistance



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Working  
together in a  
cycle of  
resistance





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# Reducing Resistance

- Establish goals together...Why is this important?
  - How can you do this if you work in a group setting?
- Acknowledge the presence of resistance
  - On everyone's part
  - It IS present
  - Resistance is neither good nor bad, it just is.
    - Though it can sometimes be disruptive and annoying; it has a purpose

Effective facilitators neither abandon, rescue, or attack clients because of their resistance.

# Motivational Interviewing

*(This is NOT an MI Training)*



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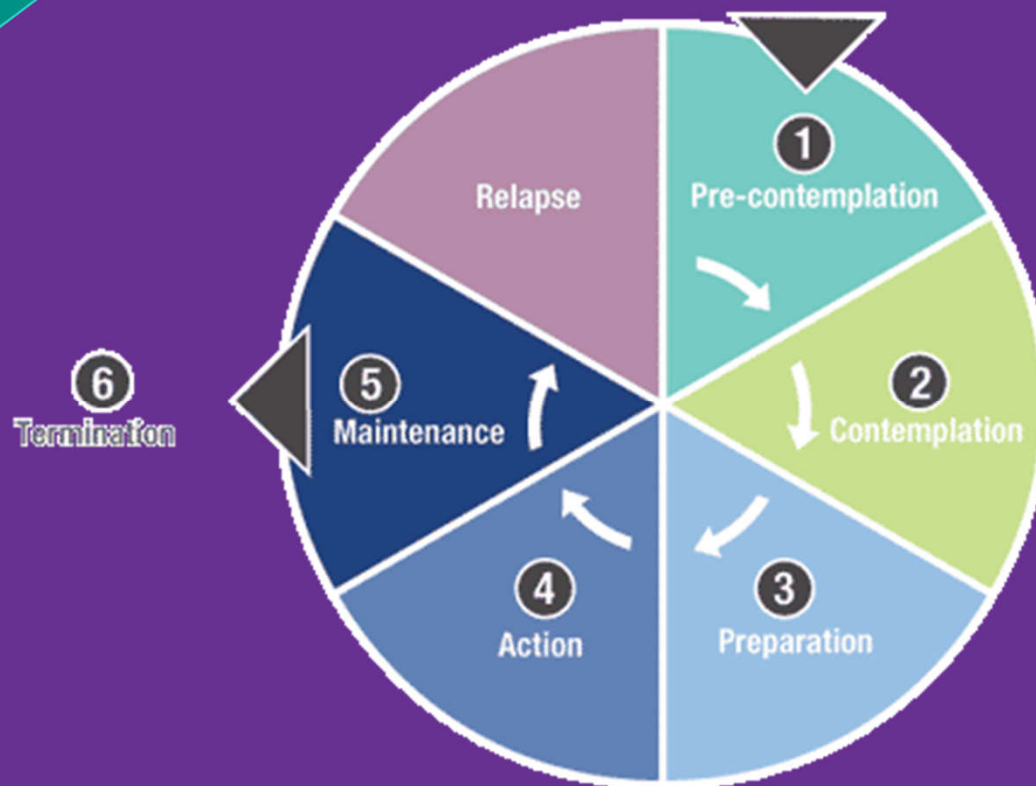
- Developed initially as a smoking cessation strategy
- An approach to overcoming client resistance and promoting self-motivation by:
  - Eliciting the client's own reasons for resisting change
  - Using a nonjudgmental empathetic therapeutic style
  - Evoking the client's own motivations for change through:
    - self-directed goals,
    - drawing upon strengths, and
    - emphasizing the client's responsibility for change.

# Transtheoretical Model

*a.k.a. Stages Of Change*



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# The Fundamentals...



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1. Help clients to explore and resolve ambivalence.
  - Focused and goal-directed
  - Ambivalence is resolved by weighing pros & cons of change
  - Clients arrive at different levels of readiness to change their behavior
2. Help clients envision a better future, and become increasingly motivated to achieve it
3. Requires warmth, genuine empathy, and unconditional positive regard
  - Non-judgmental, non-confrontational and non-adversarial

# Four Principles

Role Modeling  
what we are  
teaching!



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1. **Express empathy:** See the world through the client's eyes, share in the client's experiences.
2. **Develop discrepancy:** Help clients see the value of change by exploring the discrepancy between how clients *want* their lives to be vs. how they currently are
  - Between their stated values and their day-to-day behavior
3. **Roll with resistance:** Statements demonstrating resistance are not challenged; Invite clients to examine new perspectives, but do not impose new ways of thinking on clients.
4. **Support self-efficacy:** This guides facilitators to explicitly embrace client autonomy (even when clients choose to not change)

# Four Skills = OARS



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## Open ended questions

- Questions not easily answered with a “yes/no” or short answer. Open-ended questions invite elaboration and thinking more deeply about an issue.

## Affirmations

- Statements that recognize clients’ strengths. They build rapport and help clients feel change is possible. They often involve reframing behaviors or concerns as evidence of positive qualities. To be effective they must be genuine.

# Four Skills = OARS



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## Reflective listening

- Affirms understanding of the client's perspective and guides the client toward resolving ambivalence by a focus on the negative aspects of the status quo and the positive aspects of making change.

## Summary statements

- Reflection where all or part of the session is recapped to communicate interest and understanding. It is used to call attention to important elements of the discussion.

# Role Play



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## Remember your skills (OARS):

- Open ended questions
- Affirmations
- Reflective listening
- Summary statements



# Process the Activity



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- What was difficult about this role play?
- Did we get any “breakthroughs”?
- Did we hit any stumbling blocks?



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## In Summary...

- The referral and enrollment process may leave the participant with negative feelings.
- Though participants may show up resistant, we should not respond with resistance.
- There are many sources of resistance, not just the participant.
- Resistance is not good or bad, it just is.
- You should always be looking to reduce the resistance created by your agency and yourself
- There are strategies you can use to help reduce resistance in your participants that do not involve confrontation or threats!

# Questions



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THANK  
YOU!

