

BATTERER INTERVENTION



Doing the Work and Measuring the Progress



A Report on the
December 2009
Experts Roundtable

Prepared by Lucy Salcido Carter



**Family Violence
Prevention Fund**
www.endabuse.org



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We were extremely fortunate to have received the guidance and wisdom of our advisory committee: Barbara Hart, Etiony Aldarondo and Edward Gondolf. Their vision and thoughtful approach to the issue was invaluable in framing how to have this important discussion. We also greatly appreciate the leadership of Lucy Salcido Carter whose careful consideration and dedication to this project made it a success. Additionally, several researchers and practitioners gave their time and expertise to develop papers and presentations to add depth to the conversation—David Adams, Jeff Edleson, and Deni Carise.

Lastly, we want to thank all the roundtable’s participants, who volunteered their time and their talents and collectively helped advance the dialogue on how and why to work with abusive men so that women and children can live lives free of violence and fear.

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National Institute of Justice

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The points of view expressed in this report are those of the roundtable participants and do not necessarily represent the position or policies of the “The Woods” Charitable Foundation, the National Institute of Justice and the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first programs for men who batter were founded in the 1970s in partnership with battered women's advocates. Between fifteen and twenty-five hundred batterer intervention programs (BIPs) are currently in operation across the country. Goals, methods, and outcomes vary tremendously from program to program despite certification standards in most states. Research findings on the effectiveness of BIPs range from little or no effect¹ to substantial reductions in violent behavior by program completers.² Many BIP practitioners believe that current research does not adequately reflect the results they see in the field and does not capture the varied services BIPs provide. Yet with the prominence of evidence-based practice, some judges and policy makers are citing certain research results as a justification for discontinuing referrals to BIPs, which is forcing them to close.

In December 2009, national experts in batterer intervention and domestic violence gathered in Washington, D.C. to discuss how to improve intervention systems and design research that better informs practice. This meeting was the result of a unique partnership of nonprofit organization, the Family Violence Prevention Fund; federal agency, the National Institute of Justice; and private foundation, "The Woods" Charitable Foundation. This report describes the experts roundtable, summarizes the key themes that emerged from the discussions, and recommends next steps for the field of batterer intervention.

While perspectives varied on some issues, participants at the gathering identified common themes. Roundtable participants agreed that BIPs are successful with some men who batter, although no consensus was reached on the percentage of men who stop their violence as a result of program participation. No mechanism is in place that captures best practices. However, meeting attendees identified key elements of a model BIP. These key elements include: 1) partnering with other individuals and organizations to enhance accountability and offer a range of services; 2) working closely with court and probation to monitor court-ordered referrals; 3) creating a solid program infrastructure, which includes ongoing training and supervision of staff and implementing policies that are consistent with best practices; 4) moving beyond legal sanctions in coordinated community responses; 5) shaping interventions and programs based on input from adult survivors and children; 6) using risk assessment and risk management; and 7) engaging men early in their roles as parents and partners.

1 See infra note 4.

2 "Substantial" is used here in a colloquial way, corresponding to a "moderate effect" in statistical terms. See infra note 5.

The gathering highlighted the ongoing gap between what researchers emphasize when they evaluate BIPs and what BIP practitioners consider reflective of their program goals and accomplishments. To better reflect and inform practice, it was suggested that research must study, not just what fails, but what works to stop men's violence. Practitioners would like to see research that studies the many roles BIPs fill, in addition to running educational programs for men who batter. Researchers and practitioners alike recognized that BIP research must study the effects of batterer intervention on the adult survivors and children. Practitioners acknowledged that they must respond to the push for evidence-based practice and the need to show program effectiveness. Roundtable participants agreed that research designs must be reconceptualized to be methodologically appropriate for BIPs. Practitioners are beginning to meet to determine common measures of program success that go beyond the recidivism measure typically studied by BIP research.

Despite recent efforts to reach common ground on what constitutes BIP success, the batterer intervention field continues to struggle with definitional differences for many key program concepts. At this time, there is no consensus among practitioners on the role BIPs should play, what it means to hold men who batter accountable, or even what are the primary causes of violence against women. Without agreement by the field in these key areas, it is difficult to have any consistency in program quality across BIPs, to design evaluations that measure program effectiveness, or to effectively rebut criticism. Minimal monitoring exists in some states, but there is no national organization to bring practitioners together, define best practices, monitor program quality, offer evidence of program effectiveness, and build a constituency of allies and supporters.³

BIP practitioners need opportunities to share ideas across programs and to build common definitions of BIP concepts, such as accountability, that go to the heart of batterer intervention work. Partnerships among practitioners and researchers can encourage new studies that build best practices. Ongoing conversations among BIP practitioners, battered women's program staff, and domestic violence survivors will build stronger foundations for the work, and will improve outcomes for the women and children affected by the violence. In addition to renewing their commitment to partnering with battered women's programs, BIPs can be proactive in bringing new community partners into batterer intervention work. Because BIPs reach only a small percentage of men who batter, the field must develop other ways to reach violent men.

Most participants concluded that despite negative findings from some of the research, BIPs continue to have a significant role to play in ending violence against women. With additional opportunities for sharing and testing new research and practice ideas, BIPs and partner organizations can turn the current challenges to the field into opportunities to improve responses to domestic violence.

³ See *infra* note 10

INTRODUCTION

In December 2009, national experts in batterer intervention and domestic violence gathered in Washington, D.C. to discuss how to improve intervention systems and design research that better informs practice. This meeting was the result of a unique partnership of nonprofit organization, the Family Violence Prevention Fund; federal agency, the National Institute of Justice; and private foundation, “The Woods” Charitable Foundation.

Papers commissioned for and presented at the gathering stimulated debate on a range of batterer intervention topics. From this rich discussion among batterer intervention program (BIP) practitioners, researchers, battered women’s advocates, law enforcement officers, judges, and other important stakeholders, key themes surfaced. This report describes the roundtable, summarizes the key themes that emerged from the discussions—including common themes as well as areas in which opinions varied—and recommends next steps for the field of batterer intervention.

Background Information

Domestic violence remains a pervasive problem today despite decades of intervention work, public policy efforts, and battered women’s advocacy. However, responses to domestic violence have changed significantly in the past thirty years. The first programs for men who batter were founded in the 1970s in partnership with battered women’s advocates. In the 1980s, many states passed stricter domestic violence laws and enhanced enforcement, resulting in more men who batter being brought to the attention of the courts and other service systems. BIPs sprang up nationwide in response to the demand for court-mandated services for men who batter. Depending on the source, between fifteen and twenty-five hundred BIPs currently operate across the country. Goals, methods, and outcomes vary tremendously across BIPs despite certification standards in most states.

Research findings on the effectiveness of BIPs range from little or no effect⁴ to substantial reductions in violent behavior by participants who complete the programs.⁵ These contradictory

4 See, for example, Feder, L. and Wilson, D. (2005). A meta-analytic review of court-mandated batterer intervention programs: Can courts affect abusers’ behaviors? *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 1, 239-262. See also Babcock, J. C. et al. (2004). Does batterers’ treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment outcome research. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23, 1023-1053.

5 See Gondolf, E. (2004). Evaluating batterer counseling programs: A difficult task showing some effects and implications. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 9, 605-631. This study, a longitudinal four-year follow-up evaluation in four cities, found that “the vast majority of men referred to batterer counseling appear to stop their assaultive behavior and reduce their abuse in general. The batterer programs, in our evaluation, appear to contribute to this outcome—there is a ‘program effect.’ Referral to the gender-based, cognitive-behavioral programs, moreover, seems to be appropriate for the majority of men.”

Research findings on the effectiveness of BIPs range from little or no effect to substantial reductions in violent behavior.

research results are confusing to judges, probation officers, and other service providers who refer men who batter to BIPs. Most judges, for example, continue to make referrals to BIPs; few alternatives exist in most locales. But some judges, citing lack of evidence of BIP success, have stopped mandating that men who batter attend these programs or are sending them to untested alternatives such as anger management programs or individual or couples therapy. Some BIPs are no longer in operation because they stopped receiving court referrals. In a time when policymakers and funders strongly favor evidence-based practice, BIP practitioners cannot justify their programs by pointing to clear evidence of effectiveness.

Yet BIP practitioners often see positive changes in program participants. In fact, many BIP practitioners believe that current research does not adequately reflect the results they get and does not capture the varied services BIPs provide. They argue that BIPs contribute significantly to reducing violence, especially considering the very limited resources available to these programs. There is no federal and virtually no state funding for BIPs, and participants typically pay for the sessions they attend (which creates a big burden for the many low-income clients). As a result, most programs subsist on shoestring budgets and with only part-time staff. Some practitioners think it is unfair to hold BIPs' efficacy to very high standards when most programs have not had a chance to reach their potential as fully funded enterprises. Practitioners also point out the inequity of evaluating BIPs without taking into account the broader intervention context in which BIPs operate. For the most part, research to date has studied BIP outcomes without also evaluating the effects of other components of the intervention system, of which BIPs are just one part.

Experts Roundtable

The December meeting was convened not to reach consensus on research findings, but to think together about how to improve systemic responses to intimate partner violence and shape research to better inform these responses. This group of participants offered a unique opportunity for discussion across service systems, and among policymakers, researchers, and practitioners.⁶

In preparation for the discussions, participants were asked to read several papers commissioned for the roundtable.⁷ At the gathering, authors made short presentations of their papers. Presentations were followed by conversations about the key issues raised in the papers. In day two of the meeting, participants were asked to comment on BIP funding, share key elements of model practice, and suggest evaluation approaches.⁸ At the end of the roundtable, participants completed a short questionnaire to offer their practice, research and policy recommendations to the field.⁹

At the gathering, perspectives on some batterer intervention issues varied widely, yet common themes also emerged. These topics are summarized below, followed by divergent themes in which participant perspectives varied and further conversation is needed.

6 See Appendix 1 for lists of roundtable participants and observers.

7 See Appendix 2 for abstracts and links to the papers.

8 See Appendix 3 for elements of model practice and promising evaluation approaches.

9 See Appendix 4 for practice and policy recommendations and Appendix 5 for research recommendations.

COMMON THEMES

Despite the difficult issues facing the batterer intervention field, roundtable participants held common perspectives on many BIP practice, research and policy themes.

Practice

Meeting participants agreed that BIPs are successful with some men (although no consensus was reached on the percentage of men who stop their violence as a result of program participation). However, BIPs vary tremendously nationwide in their approaches, goals, evaluation measures, outcomes, definitions of key program concepts, and quality of services. Although certification standards do exist in most states, these standards differ from state to state and address only minimum qualifications. Program replication happens without any assurance that the integrity of the program is maintained. Certain individual practitioners have gained a great deal of field knowledge, but few vehicles exist to share that knowledge across programs.

Although no mechanism is in place that captures best practices, roundtable attendees did identify key elements of a model BIP. These key elements include:

1. Partnering with other individuals and organizations to enhance accountability and offer a range of services
2. Working closely with court and probation to monitor court-ordered referrals to BIPs
3. Creating a solid program infrastructure, which includes having ongoing training and supervision of staff and implementing policies that are consistent with best practices
4. Developing coordinated community responses that go beyond legal sanctions
5. Shaping interventions and programs based on input from adult survivors and children
6. Using risk assessment and risk management to provide more effective interventions for individual men who batter
7. Engaging men early in their role as parents and partners

Some meeting participants emphasized that successful BIPs must be part of a broad network of accountability and services beyond criminal justice system responses. Legal sanctions for noncompliance with court-mandated participation provide critical support to BIPs, but are just one part of a network of responses. Men of color and poor men who batter are more likely than other men who batter to come to the attention of the criminal justice system. True coordinated community responses could reach more men who batter and offer a wide array of resources including mental health services, substance abuse treatment, parenting and responsible fatherhood classes, post-prison reentry, and job training.

Batterer intervention must be part of a broader social movement to end violence against women.

Some BIPs collaborate with other community partners such as faith-based organizations to hold men who batter accountable for their behaviors. Several BIP practitioners at the meeting pointed out that men who are accountable to a number of people in their communities—including probation officers, religious leaders, extended family, peers, and substance abuse counselors—seem to experience greater success in changing their behavior and stopping the violence.

By being attuned to their local communities, BIPs can better coordinate their programs with other services in the community and also provide services that are more culturally appropriate. In addition, close community ties create opportunities to change social norms that condone violence against women. Meeting participants agreed that batterer intervention must be part of a broader social movement to end violence against women. BIPs can play a key role in cultivating people who can contribute to the social change work.

Newer BIPs that did not begin in partnership with battered women's programs may not have as a principle of their work the acknowledgement that patriarchy is the underlying societal cause of violence against women. Several roundtable participants expressed the belief that all BIPs should acknowledge that they are working in the context of sexism. There was widespread agreement at the meeting that BIPs must be accountable to their local battered women's organizations and must define program success in relation to the safety and wellbeing of the women and children affected by the violence.

Risk assessment and risk management can help increase safety for adult victims and their children, and allow BIPs to tailor interventions to the specific perpetrator. Although research shows that BIPs get similar results for most men who complete their programs, some men are particularly resistant to change and will need additional or different responses. These men do not care about the consequences of ignoring a court mandate to attend a BIP, so other approaches must be used. The worst offenders skew BIP research results. Practitioners pointed out that low success rates with these men can give the impression that BIPs are failing overall, when high-quality programs get good results with most men.

Research

The meeting highlighted the ongoing gap between what researchers emphasize when they evaluate BIPs and what BIP practitioners consider reflective of their program goals and accomplishments. To better reflect and inform practice, it was suggested that research must study, not just what fails, but what works to stop men's violence. The field needs to better understand the cultures in which men learn their gender-based behaviors and the environments that encourage men to change negative behaviors. Not all of the ample information researchers have already collected is useful to building knowledge-based practice. Researchers need to find successful BIPs and study what works well in those programs. However, BIP practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders do not agree on what constitutes program success or how to measure it.

Practitioners would like to see research that studies the many roles BIPs fill, in addition to running educational programs for men who batter. These other roles include sharing information with referral agencies and victims, working to change cultural norms around violence, and

collaborating with other community partners. Practitioners want a way to measure attitudinal changes in the men in their programs, for example, increases in empathy, greater respect for women and children, and more willingness to accept responsibility for the violence.

Practitioners also want BIPs to be studied in the context of the broader range of community responses to domestic violence. Several meeting participants expressed concern that research typically focuses only on the BIP without also studying the many other components of the intervention system (including law enforcement and probation, the courts, and mental health and substance abuse agencies). Thorough research on batterer intervention should take into account all the interventions that are part of that coordinated community response.

Researchers and practitioners alike recognized that BIP research must study the effects of batterer intervention on the adult survivors and children. Studies must evaluate the safety and wellbeing of the women and children, and listen to their voices to understand how BIPs affect their lives. Researchers and practitioners must also ask survivors how they would characterize BIP success.

Practitioners know that they must respond to the push for evidence-based practice and the need to show program effectiveness. Practitioners typically collect data to measure success in reaching internal program goals, and use those data to guide program improvements. Because of the conflicting research messages regarding program effectiveness, BIP practitioners are rethinking data collection goals and exploring ways to collect and present evidence of program outcomes. Many BIP practitioners want to show program success by telling the stories of men who have stopped their violence; in evidence-based research circles, such stories are dismissed as anecdotal. These stories may be useful to the field to inform practice, but would not be credible to researchers assessing program effectiveness. The field needs to provide practice-based evidence to show how BIPs work.

Roundtable participants agreed that experimental designs are only one of the ways to evaluate BIPs. A randomized controlled trial is not the only research model that can inform evidence-based practice, and standard experimental designs often do not fit the complexity of the programs. Quasi-experimental designs might be more appropriate in many instances. BIP studies that emphasize a medical treatment model are also not useful because batterer intervention is not a medical treatment. Evaluations that track only recidivism rates (based on re-arrests) do not capture data on men who may still be violent but are not caught again by the criminal justice system. In addition, current research typically does not incorporate the concept, expressed by several meeting participants, that violence against women happens in the context of institutional subordination of women.

Research designs must be reconceptualized to be methodologically appropriate for BIPs. Practitioners have a role to play in improving evaluation designs and determining outcome measures. Some researchers are partnering more closely with practitioners to increase practitioners' understanding of research approaches so that together they can develop new research designs. Practitioners are beginning to meet to determine common measures of program success.

BIP research must study the effects of batterer intervention on the adult survivors and children.

Without connections to battered women's programs, BIPs risk losing program integrity.

Policies

Meeting participants agreed that, despite recent efforts to reach common ground on what constitutes program success, the batterer intervention field continues to struggle with disparate definitions for many key program concepts. Practitioners do not agree on the role BIPs should play, what it means to hold men who batter accountable, or even on the primary causes of violence against women. Different views of the causes of violence against women lead to different ways to address the problem. Practitioners who see violence against women as primarily a social justice issue believe the field places too much emphasis on individual treatment. They want BIPs to engage a wider circle of men in changing social norms that condone this form of violence. Other practitioners use a mental health approach that emphasizes psychological causes and focuses primarily on individual treatment.

Meeting participants acknowledged that without agreement across the field in these key areas, it is difficult to have any consistency in program quality or to argue effectively against criticism directed at BIPs. Minimal monitoring exists in some states, but there is no central organization to bring programs together, define best practices, monitor program quality, build a constituency of allies and supporters, and shape arguments on behalf of BIPs.¹⁰ BIPs do not have an obvious constituency group, other than practitioners, who will argue in support of these programs. A recent study shows that the general public does not have a good sense of what BIPs do.

Agencies that refer men who batter to BIPs have a vested interest in seeing that these programs succeed. But referral agencies define BIP success quite narrowly. For example, judges want to know that men who batter are not going to be violent again and reappear in their courts. Judges do not necessarily follow the latest BIP research or state standards, but are likely to read brief explanations of research results and research limitations, and would welcome judicial strategies for supporting program success.

Battered women's programs also clearly have a vested interest in programs that help men who batter to stop their violence. Because many newer BIPs do not have strong ties with local battered women's programs, services might not coincide with what battered women need. Without connections to battered women's programs, BIPs risk losing program integrity, becoming less effective, and drifting from their underlying goals and from natural allies and partners.

Without a constituency arguing for funding for BIPs, these programs continue to struggle to provide services with very little financial resource. Opinions at the gathering differed as to how much funding BIPs should receive and from what sources. Since battered women's services are also underfunded, roundtable participants were clear that BIPs should not compete for financial support with battered women's programs.

¹⁰ Batterer Intervention Services Coalition of Michigan (BISCM) is a statewide organization that has been holding annual conferences on a variety of batterer intervention topics since 1996. These annual conferences now draw a national audience and provide a forum for information sharing among practitioners nationwide.

DIVERGENT THEMES

Roundtable participants expressed differences in their views about the roles of BIPs in the future. Some participants stated that BIPs are essentially on track, but need better information about what works, more practice-driven research, greater collaboration with community partners, and consistent implementation of best practices across the field. A few others, however, noted concerns about the continued focus on BIPs, given that these programs reach such a small percentage of men who batter and that ties to the criminal justice system result in a disproportionate number of poor men and men of color in programs. These meeting participants commented that too many resources are going into traditional BIPs and that the recent criticism of BIPs offers an opportunity for radical program change. They pointed out that strong ties to the court system make social change work difficult and emphasized culturally appropriate, community-based work to engage more men in stopping violence against women.

Roundtable discussions also reflected different opinions in the field about how to hold men who batter accountable for their behavior. Some participants pointed to the research that shows better BIP results with men who have been referred by the criminal justice system, and when courts or probation closely monitor compliance. Other participants highlighted the limits of court sanctions, particularly for men who are not deterred by jail time. Some participants emphasized that men who batter need to be held accountable beyond their participation in BIPs or their contact with the criminal justice system. To stop their violent behavior and sustain that change over time, men who batter need to be held accountable by their peers, their extended families, and community leaders they respect.

Opinions differed regarding how to respond to the challenges the field faces from the conflicting research and from the current emphasis on evidence-based practice. Some participants said that BIPs need a unified and strategic response to the current demand for evidence-based practice, better ways to get program information out to the general public, and messages about BIP effectiveness that are tailored to specific audiences. Some participants suggested using stories to chronicle how men in their programs have changed their violent behaviors, and sharing those stories with a variety of stakeholders to increase understanding of what BIPs do. Others pointed out the limits of anecdotal evidence, while some participants noted that a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence would best support BIP work. Still others expressed the need for significant changes to the field and were therefore uninterested in justifying BIPs as they exist currently.

CONCLUSION

This gathering provided a unique opportunity for practitioners, researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders to discuss challenging issues related to batterer intervention. These conversations are a critical part of the work needed to move the field forward. Practitioners and researchers need other forums to shape new research designs that will build best practices, improve program outcomes, and portray more accurately the work of BIPs.

The current criticism of BIPs points out that these programs cannot operate successfully in isolation. Practitioners should share ideas across programs and build common definitions of BIP concepts, such as accountability, that go to the heart of batterer intervention work. Conversations among BIPs and battered women's programs will build stronger foundations for the work going forward and will improve outcomes for the women and children affected by the violence. Research on program effectiveness must include information about the safety and wellbeing of these women and children.

In addition to renewing their commitment to partnering with battered women's programs, BIPs can be proactive in bringing new community partners into batterer intervention work. Legal system partners are an important component of coordinated community responses, but should only be a part of a larger network of service providers and other community resources. Rather than emphasize the difference between individual treatment and broader social change approaches, BIPs can integrate both program goals, working with other organizations to achieve them.

Because BIPs reach only a small percentage of men who batter, the field must develop other ways to reach violent men. Traditional BIPs draw in a certain population of men; most of them have been referred by the courts and other public agencies. Community-based men's groups offer a place for men to model healthy relationships and respect for women and to educate each other about the causes of violence against women and how to interrupt the violence.

Despite some negative research findings, BIPs continue to have a significant role to play in ending violence against women. Criminal justice and other agencies still need a place to refer men who batter. Few alternatives to BIPs exist and those alternatives have undergone little if any research evaluating their effectiveness. As one participant put it, the families affected by domestic violence cannot afford for BIPs and other programs to stop because of "analysis paralysis." Something has to be done. With additional opportunities for sharing and testing new research and practice ideas, BIPs and partner organizations can turn the current challenges to the field into opportunities to improve responses to domestic violence.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Roundtable Participants and Observers

List of Participants

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University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL

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Family Violence Prevention Fund, Boston, MA

Bernard Auchter, *Program Manager*
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Lonna Davis, *Director of Children's Programs*
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David Garvin, *Senior Director*
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Edward Gondolf, *Research Director*
MARTI, Indiana University of PA, Indiana, PA

Barbara Hart, *Law and Policy Director*
Muskie School of Public Service, Portland, ME

Peter Helein, *Deputy Chief*
Appleton Police Department, Appleton, WI

Jim Henderson, *Technical Assistance Provider*
Battered Women's Justice Project, Grass Lake, MI

Hon. Elizabeth Hines, *Judge*
15th Judicial District Court, Ann Arbor, MI

Andrew Klein, *Senior Research Analyst*
Advocates for Human Potential, Inc., Sudbury, MA

Scott Miller, *Project Team Leader*
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Julia Perilla, *Associate Professor*
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Michael Rempel, *Research Director*
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List of Observers

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David Lloyd, *Family Advocacy Program Director*

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AEquitas, Washington, DC

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Appendix 2: Abstracts and Links to Papers

Adams, David, Ed.D. *Certified Batterer Intervention Programs: History, Philosophies, Techniques, Collaborations, Innovations, and Challenges*. The first BIPs were established in the 1970s in partnership with battered women's programs. In the 1980s, new domestic violence laws and stronger enforcement led to an increase in arrests of men who batter and thus an increase in the demand for BIPs. At least fifteen hundred BIPs currently exist in the United States and this number is growing. Forty-five states now have certification standards for BIPs. In most states, certification means oversight by the probation or corrections department; in some states coalitions of battered women's programs oversee the BIPs. BIPs use a variety of approaches to work with program participants, including didactic education, group participation, self-evaluation, role-play, skills training, and cognitive behavioral techniques. Programs help men who batter to overcome denial about the abuse, take responsibility for it, and refrain from using it in future. Programs are constantly evolving. Recent BIP innovations include holding participants socially accountable to their peers, using stages-of-change theory, developing models based on motivational interviewing, and building self-transformation goals. Better programs are needed to serve traditionally underserved populations including rural men, gay men, and African American, Asian American, Native American, and Latino men. Although BIPs were originally designed to serve a wide range of men, the programs now primarily serve men who have been referred by the courts. Attrition rates are very high for men who are not court-mandated to attend. Men who do not complete the program are more likely to recidivate. Court responses that reinforce the goals of BIPs increase program effectiveness. BIPs that are part of coordinated community responses have lower recidivism rates for their participants.

To download a copy of this paper go to http://endabuse.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Certified%20Batterer%20Intervention%20Programs.pdf

Aldarondo, Etiony, Ph.D. *Assessing the Efficacy of Batterer Intervention Programs in Context*. Current research evaluates BIPs as if these programs were discrete medical procedures instead of social practices responding to individual, familial, and societal needs. BIPs operate in the context of the broader criminal justice system that includes coordinated community responses (CCRs), protective orders, and pro-arrest policies for domestic violence offenses. BIPs must be evaluated in relation to the effectiveness of other interventions. BIPs vary greatly in theoretical orientation, program duration, number and structure of sessions, counselors' training experiences, funding sources, and ethnic make-up of participants. Most programs use structured lessons and activities to educate men about the harms of violence and to help them change their views about relationships and learn self-control, rational problem solving, and conflict resolution skills. Individual outcome studies show that most men who complete a BIP stop their violence, but one-third of program completers reabuse. Quasi-experimental results show that program completers are less likely to reabuse than are BIP dropouts. BIPs are more effective with men who have a stake in conformity: those who are married, have children, are employed, have higher educational achievement, and do not have a prior criminal record or substance abuse problem. In fact, protective orders, arrests, and BIPs all work poorly to reduce reassault by men with weak social bonds. Studies show that CCRs reduce recidivism. But CCRs must go beyond legal strategies to include partnerships with alcohol and drug treatment services and accountability by other social structures such as church, peer networks, and family. BIPs must recommit to social change work, cross-disciplinary approaches, and culturally aware programs.

To download a copy of this paper go to http://endabuse.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Assessing%20the%20Efficacy%20of%20Batterer%20Intervention%20Programs%20in%20Context.pdf

Carise, Deni, Ph.D. *Measuring Treatment Results: Addiction Treatment as an Example (Power Point presentation).*

Comparisons between the substance abuse and domestic violence fields can inform batterer intervention research and offer strategies for responding to the current demand for evidence-based practice. Only a small proportion of people with substance abuse problems currently receive treatment. Similarly, only a small proportion of men who batter participate in BIPs. In the substance abuse field, treatment success means different things to different people. Practitioners have a picture of program effectiveness that is not necessarily shared by researchers, the community, and the public. This phenomenon is true in the batterer intervention field as well. To measure performance, research should show the results of treatment. To show outcomes, research should focus on what happens after treatment. Whether participants stay in treatment is a good proxy for how well they will do as a result of the treatment. In the substance abuse field as in batterer intervention, program staff must help motivate participants to change their behavior. BIPs should only collect program data they will use. Validated, reliable data will tell a more powerful story of program effectiveness. The batterer intervention field must agree on how and what to measure to track program effectiveness.

Carter, Lucy Salcido, M.A., J.D. *Measuring Success: A Survey of Batterer Intervention Programs.* Program directors at six BIPs were interviewed in fall 2009 to learn how they currently measure program effectiveness and how they would evaluate programs if they had unlimited resources for research. The following programs were represented in the survey: Emerge, Men Stopping Violence, VCS Community Change Project, Alternatives to Domestic Aggression, Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, and Manalive. In addition, Dr. Edward Gondolf, director of research for the Mid-Atlantic Research and Training Institute, was interviewed to provide his expertise and perspective on current evaluation issues. Current approaches to tracking program success include: 1) monitoring participants' progress through program activities, 2) holding men accountable for compliance with court-mandated BIP participation, 3) interviewing adult victims and children to assess violence levels and wellbeing indicators, 4) tracking other program goals and activities, and 5) tracking recidivism rates. If research resources were unlimited, these BIP managers would measure program effectiveness in the following ways: 1) tracking participant learning outcomes, 2) conducting longitudinal studies of quality of life for adult victims and children, 3) tracking secondary positive effects of programs, 4) researching accountability mechanisms used by courts, 5) studying what works, 6) capturing the complexities of behavior change, and 7) addressing macro and micro levels of interventions. Dr. Gondolf highlighted, among other issues, the importance of tracking over time behavioral change trajectories for BIP participants.

Edleson, Jeff, Ph.D. *Child Welfare Outcomes: Lessons for Domestic Violence Intervention and Prevention Evaluations (Power Point presentation).* The Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) of child welfare agencies nationwide includes measures of success in three areas: safety, permanency and stability, and child and family wellbeing. The Greenbook Project to address the co-occurrence in families of both domestic violence and child maltreatment adopted these same three areas to measure program success. These measures, as well as other recent innovations in child welfare, can inform batterer intervention and BIP research. For example, home visiting, a key child maltreatment prevention strategy, creates opportunities to educate new fathers about child exposure to violence and to offer additional interventions for fathers who batter. Child welfare risk assessment strategies include triaging based on perceived risk, viewing re-referral as a proxy for reabuse, and using Structured Decision Making tools. Similarly, BIPs must develop measures for program success that include safety, permanency and stability, and child and family wellbeing. Data show a higher frequency of both psychological and sexual partner violence late in pregnancy and right after the child is born. Domestic violence prevention programs can reach expectant and new fathers through points of contact with health care and other service systems.

Gondolf, Edward, Ed.D., M.P.H. *The Survival of Batterer Programs: Responding to Evidence-Based Practice and Improving Program Operation*. With the current emphasis on evidence-based practice, some policymakers and opinion leaders point to experimental studies—the studies indicating that BIPs do not work—as a justification for cutting funding for and reducing referrals to BIPs. Practitioners must find a way to respond to the push for evidence-based practice, substantiate their results, and justify BIPs going forward. Recent writings by Lisbeth B. Schorr point out that evidence-based practice does not answer why a program works or fails, and does little to help with program development. The BIP field needs knowledge-based action. With that in mind, practitioners are becoming advisors to BIP research. Practitioners must understand the research better so that they can respond to the findings and develop their own data collection approaches. Practice-driven research should seek to discover which approaches work best, what components are universal across BIPs, and how program consistency and competency can increase. Current research shows that noncompliance with court-mandated participation in BIPs is the strongest predictor of reassault. Yet little is known about how BIPs track and report noncompliance or about the effects on BIP outcomes of court responses to noncompliance. Practice-driven research would also investigate effective risk assessment and management approaches. How can BIPs assess risk without negatively affecting battered women’s safety? Research must use a broader framework to better inform BIP practice.

To download a copy of this paper go to http://endabuse.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/The%20Survival%20of%20Batterer%20Programs.pdf

Hart, Barbara, J.D. *Future Directions for BIPs: Examining the Power of Male Peer Support and Building Alternative Support Communities*. Male peer support and traditional male-bonding activities may indirectly facilitate battering, by legitimizing objectification and subordination of women. Research to date does not include the study of how male peer support affects whether men batter or not. Nor have researchers studied how men who batter can find peer support for ending their violence. Male peer support probably influences BIP outcomes, yet few BIPs include in their assessments questions about peer support. The battered women’s movement has always emphasized the importance of engaging men to end violence against women. Several early BIPs used a variety of approaches to create positive peer support for men working to end their violence. These approaches included training allies to support men who had completed the BIP, building community to transform the local culture that condoned violence, and matching men and battered women with sponsors. These efforts were labor-intensive and therefore difficult to maintain. To end domestic violence, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners must take into account the effects of male peer support.

To download a copy of this paper go to http://endabuse.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Future%20Directions%20for%20BIPs.pdf

Appendix 3: Elements of Model Programs and Evaluation Approaches

Model Program Exercise—Elements of Successful BIPs*

- Build incentives and sanctions for men to stay in BIPs.
- Partner closely with battered women’s organizations.
- Hold men accountable to clear expectations.
- Educate probation and court re: BIP philosophies.
- Use motivational techniques.
- Rethink vision and mission of BIPs.
- Model respectful, equitable relationships in BIPs.
- Educate battered women about BIPs and their limits.
- Make procedures transparent to men who batter, victims, courts.
- Co-locate with other types of services.
- Screen men and offer additional or longer programs as needed.
- Conduct annual training of all BIP personnel.
- Include law enforcement in the solution.
- Provide individualized interventions based on research.
- Provide differential response based on individual need.
- Change BIP organization to reflect knowledge already have.
- Limit the work being done by BIPs.
- Remember duty to protect adult victims and children.
- Develop ways to engage men beyond the BIP.
- Acknowledge institutional racism and how BIPs participate in it.
- Collaborate with substance abuse and mental health programs.
- Work with adult victims and children.
- Participate in coordinated community responses.
- Conduct risk assessment and risk management.
- Acknowledge that sexism underlies violence against women.
- Distribute standard program protocols to everyone.
- Remove as a BIP goal “fixing” individual men.
- Work with men in their roles as partners and parents.
- Limit BIP participants to first offenders.
- Be aware of the role of culture.
- Develop child witness programs.
- Be aware of other services happening in community.
- Offer accessible, affordable services.
- Address mental health problems affecting BIP participation.
- Have men and women co-facilitate heterosexual male groups.
- Have court or probation monitoring biweekly.
- Do not assume all men are heterosexual.
- Call social change work something else, not BIP.
- Incorporate into program victim feedback.
- Bring in new features based on work with other services.
- Build evaluation into programs.

Recommended Evaluation Approaches*

- Understand what specifically changes negative behaviors and supports positive change, and the effects of context.
- Tell stories about people who have completed the program successfully and how their families are doing.
- Look at social networks and their role in facilitating change.
- Learn more about what judges think about domestic violence and batterer intervention.
- Study length of program and length of participation in program and effects on behavior change.
- Look at safety and quality of life issues for women and children.
- Study protective factors and prevention approaches.
- Study men who stop their violence without participation in BIPs.
- Study what it takes to engage men (in different social contexts) in ending violence against women.
- Study nascent domestic violence (e.g. dating violence) to understand what influences the choice to persist or desist.
- Use both qualitative and quantitative methods to see how interventions affect adult survivors and children.
- Study the effects of the woman’s support network in stopping the violence.
- Understand where women go for help, especially the unexpected places, and make connections there with them.
- Develop strategies for responding to the widening gap between research and practice.

* These are participants’ comments and do not constitute a cohesive body of information. Due to space limitations, participants’ comments from these discussions have been shortened and paraphrased.

Appendix 4: Policy and Practice Recommendations*

Topic	Short-term	Long-term
Stopping the abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage men beyond BIPs. • Develop risk assessment and risk management strategies. • Get verbally abusive men into BIPs. • Increase parenting education within BIPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop post-“treatment” alternatives for men. • Increase social change work in communities. • Engage men at community level in stopping violence against women.
Testing BIP effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a comprehensive policy document from the roundtable that articulates perspectives and makes recommendations for BIPs. • Transfer innovative training and fidelity testing. • Increase funds for BIPs with closer enforcement of standards. • Reconceptualize goals of BIPs. • Create practice-based evidence. • Develop minimal standards for training BIP staff. • Create national organization to guide BIPs. • Set accreditation standards that include participation in coordinated community response, focus on woman and child safety, and collaboration with battered women’s groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund research-practitioner collaboration to address evidence-based practice. • Develop BIP best practices. Replicate successful models. • Learn from specific sites what works and build on that.
Assessing safety and wellbeing of women and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate children and youths’ experiences with intimate partner violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen women’s support systems. • Bring battered women’s perspective into BIPs and BIP meetings.
Integrating BIPs with other programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote better community collaboration. • Partner with mental health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide joint, cross-agency funding for multilevel efforts. • Develop community engagement models for specific communities. • Increase community collaboration.
Understanding court responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase judicial training on domestic violence and BIPs. 	
Implementing prevention and early intervention programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community supports. • Focus on prevention with an eye on big picture issues like sexism, racism, and economic oppressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach positive relationship-building in schools. • Develop early intervention approaches for men in partnering and parenting roles.

* These are participants’ comments and do not constitute a cohesive body of information. Due to space limitations, participants’ comments from these discussions have been shortened and paraphrased.

Appendix 5: Research Recommendations*

Topic	Short-term	Long-term
Stopping the abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about what stops men from battering and build those incentives into BIPs. • Study men who have changed inside BIPs and outside. • Expand violence beyond the legal definitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine key components of successful social change work. • Develop promising-practices models of community engagement to reduce domestic violence. • Conduct longitudinal study of change process in men. • Study resource allocation and cost effectiveness.
Testing BIP effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare BIPs that work alone with those who partner with other orgs, esp. those with court oversight. • Need current data on BIP effectiveness. • Study context of BIPs and effect on outcomes. • Embed researchers in BIPs to improve research goals and designs. • Develop 2-3 common outcomes all BIPs can measure to build evaluation data across programs. • Study experiences in BIPs of men by ethnic group. • Do no harm. • Include broader BIP purposes and activities in evals. • Implement systemic and cultural reform of BIPs. • Determine what constitutes best practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use consensus process to design a fair test of BIPs. • Study why battered women thank BIPs. • Conduct multi-site initiative with implementation of model BIP, common principles, and evaluator at each site. • Build more current data about BIP effectiveness and shape messages about BIPs based on those data. • Look at where psychological research and BIP research overlap and what can be learned at the intersection. • Study long-term (10-20 years) effects of BIPs. • Study BIPs for women who are abusive.
Assessing safety and wellbeing of women and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study how criminal justice system interventions affect women's decisions. • Study how women and children change when men participate in BIPs. • Study effects of domestic violence on children. • Develop indicators of family health in context of domestic violence. • Study pregnancy and risks of abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the cycle of violence. • Study efforts to reduce sexism.
Integrating BIPs with other programs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study how best to integrate BIPs with other programs.

Topic	Short-term	Long-term
Understanding court responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn what courts do with noncompliance. • Provide more consistent reports from BIPs to courts. • Develop quantitative measures to give “performance feedback” on individual men who batter to courts and others. • Study court attitudes towards men who batter and BIPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies for courts to support BIP effectiveness. • Study effectiveness of newer domestic violence codes, enhanced sanctions, and presumptive custody laws.
Implementing prevention and early intervention programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study how best to engage men in broad change process. • Study results of community education programs. • Study efficacy of early intervention with expectant and new fathers. • Study how to identify men who batter before they move from verbal to physical abuse. • Study how to prevent battering behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study role of peers and micro and macro communities in ending violence against women. • Disseminate domestic violence research findings to schools and courts. • Develop school programs on healthy relationships.

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