

Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network Meeting Minutes June 11, 2019

Present: Jessica Harvey (Allies in Change), Matt Johnston (DVSD/LCSNW), Dean Camarda (Allies in Change), Linda Castaneda (Castaneda Counseling), Karin Drake (Western Governor's University), Nanci Jarrard (VOA Home Free), Regina Holmes (ARMS), Tammie Jones (OJD), Phil Broyles (Teras), Dawn Penberthy (Clackamas County Probation & Parole), Olga Parker (Modus Vivendi), Chris Huffine (Allies in Change)

Minutes by Jessica Harvey, edited by Chris Huffine

Discussion Topic: Determining Risk of DV Recidivism

What are risk and protective factors seen that seem to predict the continuation of cessation of general DV behaviors, such as verbal and psychological abuse?

The greater the amount of denial the group member has about their behaviors (e.g., abuse and substance use) the greater the likelihood that they will continue to perpetuate the behaviors. In order to reach the "gold standard" (when family members feel constantly emotionally safe) group members likely need to be in group 2 or 3 years. Dropping from the group before the gold standard is achieved can be an indication that they will continue with DV behaviors. One way to determine if the gold standard has been met is to see if the family can tell that the group member has missed a group or two based on their behaviors. In some cases, partners may check in with the group member or the facilitators and offer input on progress. If the group member can be responsive to and incorporate appropriate partner feedback then that is a positive sign.

If a group member shows a lack of investment or consideration in the homework requirements (e.g., journals), it may indicate an inability or unwillingness to examine their own behaviors. Much of the progress and growth seen in groups is a result of introspection. It bodes well for future behaviors if they are willing and able to examine themselves. Discourage the group members from asking their partners with help filling out the journals. They need to develop their own abilities to adequately dissect situations and see it in a detailed way.

It is also concerning if a man only presents himself in a positive light. They need to be able to identify their own problems and areas where they can grow. It is good if they can offer pre and post change examples of their behavior and beliefs. Facilitators should watch for phrases that are used automatically and repeatedly. It is positive if an

individual can begin to interrupt themselves during an abusive act and stop the situation from escalating.

With lasting change, there is usually a shift from an external focus to an internal focus for the group member. In other words, a shift from what they cannot control to what they can control. This may look like a group member being less rattled or wound tight by external events. Resentment and contempt for those around them is not good, however, the abatement of that resentment and contempt is positive. It is not a good sign if they place blame for their own behavior on their partner. A high level of accountability to the group and to their partner is a good indicator of future change, even if they are still abusive outside of the group.

It is also helpful to observe the group members behaviors towards others whenever possible. It is good if they give appropriate feedback, especially about beliefs, to other group members. Not just what feedback they give but how they give the feedback is also important. It is not good when they give feedback that is manipulative. Facilitators may note an increase or reduction of defense mechanisms and how they rationalize other group member's behaviors. It is good when they can identify and give a knowledgeable critique of others in the group. Facilitators can listen for how the group members interpret the behaviors or words of other people in the group. Another factor is how the men receive feedback from the other members and the facilitators. If they are inappropriate with other group members or with office staff, then that indicates that they are not applying the non-controlling beliefs taught in the group to all areas of their life.

Another concern is if the group member has lifestyle instability (e.g., unemployed, lack of

Another concern is if the group member has lifestyle instability (e.g., unemployed, lack of housing). Lifestyle instability can interfere with a person's ability to utilize resources. It is positive when someone has resources and support systems in place. The group member needs support from a BIP perspective and not just a criminal justice perspective. It is valuable to have a support person who will challenge them and their behaviors. If they are not in a romantic relationship, it could be because they are avoiding a scenario where they might be abusive while they are in a group, but they will likely not be single for the rest of their lives. Group members may need help building a healthy community support system. Though it is a small subgroup, partners who are severely impaired or compromised can pose an issue with lasting change.

If possible, it can be helpful to learn how group members present what they learn in group to their partners. Any skill learned can be twisted into a tool of power and control. It is a positive sign if the men are using the tools they learn appropriately outside of the

group. They will not always be utilizing the skills with 100% accuracy so troubleshooting with them about how to use the skills more effectively can be helpful.

Another barrier to change is unaddressed co-occurring mental health issues, such as trauma, mood disorders, or personality disorders. Some group members may never change despite their and the facilitator's effort and they will be released from the program as maximum benefit achieved. Other group members may show pseudo-change, meaning they stop illegal behavior but begin other kinds of abuse. Some group members may be involved in specific court situations where they are discouraged to talk about their behaviors. Other barriers include shame and not living a balanced lifestyle, which can lead to relapse.