



**Batterer Intervention Program Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 3, 2020; 9:00 am to 11:00 am
Remote video meeting**

In Attendance:

Amy Benedum, Steve Berger, Vivien Bliss, Don Chapin, Nathaline Frener, Chris Huffine, Eric Mankowski, Shannon Sivell, Jeremiah Stromberg

Absent: Melissa Erlbaum, Aaron Hartman, Maureen Lowell

Guests: Jane Perlstein, Susan Reyes-Torres

Minutes: Sherree Rodriguez

Welcome/Opening

Jeremiah announced his resignation from the board and introduced Nathaline Frener as the new Department of Corrections (DOC) representative on the Advisory Committee (AC). The group shared their appreciation for Jeremiah's valuable years of service.

Allies in Change – Female BIP Group Leaders

Allies in Change staff Susan Reyes-Torres and Jane Perlstein spoke with the AC about their experience working with female Batterer Intervention Program (BIP) groups. Female groups consist of two categories of women: those who have been mandated to attend by the court and those who have been referred by Department of Human Services (DHS) or other voluntary participation. DHS has a screening process that accesses history of violence and does not refer women with no consistent violent pattern. DHS referrals tend to be for women with true violent tendencies, who typically are physically violent toward their children and psychologically abusive toward their intimate partners. Court referrals consist of women who are mostly secondary aggressors with a small minority of abusive women who target their intimate partners.

Women with abusive patterns tend to be resistant to the program at first and typically become more cooperative as time goes on. Those who are secondary aggressors are generally accountable from the beginning. Tensions tend to run high in the female groups, requiring two facilitators. Almost all have a history of being victimized, in contrast to male BIP participants, for whom this is not necessarily the case. Females generally are responsive to the program, though some take longer than others to complete it.

Considerations for female BIP groups:

- Childcare is an obstacle; many are single mothers.
- Parenting curriculum would be beneficial.
- Mental health treatment is needed for those with unresolved trauma, which can be cost prohibitive.
- Aggressive women with abusive partners have an extra complexity that creates another barrier.
- Collaboration with advocacy groups and having advocates present in meetings may be beneficial.
- It is beneficial to have separate groups for primary and secondary aggressors.
- Substance abuse work is very helpful to those who need it during and after the program.
- Two facilitators present to manage hostility is a necessity.
- Financial assistance to pay for the BIP group is needed; DHS is the only assistance available currently and they only fund 8 weeks.
- Homeless women need further consideration.
- As there are issues of denial at intake for primary aggressors, caution is advised.



- There may be a need for female curriculum.

The group discussed the importance of creating a dialogue with judges and possibly to provide them with a bench card of best practice for immediate reference.

Minutes Approval – The AC approved the minutes of the July meeting, which will be posted to the Department of Justice website.

Intersectionality of BIP work, COVID considerations and racial inequities

The AC discussed challenges brought about by the COVID lock-down resulting in groups utilizing video conference meetings. Concerns include attendees finding ways to subvert the process, and confidentiality violations. There was a consensus that while BIP groups can be conducted in a video format for the COVID constraints, doing so long term is not advisable. However, the group agreed to revisit the needs of rural participants and possible video solutions for those circumstances. Suicidality is more pronounced among BIP participants during COVID and there is difficulty tracking no-contact violations.

Amy shared information about racial inequity in Oregon to be reviewed before the next meeting for further discussion.

ACTION STEPS:

- Eric will share two resources he has accessed from Australia and Europe that address video meeting concerns. The group agreed to review the documents within five days to assess for them for sharing on the website and listserv.
- Amy is sending information to the AC with about racial inequity in Oregon.
- Sherree will conduct a poll to reschedule the October meeting to a Friday.

Upcoming meeting topics

- Membership
- Primary vs secondary aggressors research review

Adjourned at 11:00am