

# Guiding Principles for Abusive Partner Intervention and Engagement

---

**Accountability Definition:** Creating systemic and relational pathways for abusive partners to develop responsibility, healing, and hope for themselves, their families and their communities.

## Guiding Principles

- 1. Survivor voices are centered**

Intimate partner violence can cause harm to victim/survivors/survivors in many ways: physically, mentally, emotionally, and economically. Safety and healing need to be defined by the victim/survivor. Abusive partner intervention and engagement strategies need to collaborate with community-based victim/survivor advocates and victim/survivors to understand and address identified needs.
- 2. Accountability is active and relational**

Intimate partner violence impacts not only the victim/survivor but also family, friend, and community relationships. Because of this, intervention and engagement of abusive partners should address the many relational harms of violence. Accountability is both personal and systemic. System and community-based agencies should create multiple pathways to accountability and identify and remedy the barriers they have created for abusive partners and survivors to safety and accountability. Accountability also requires an abusive partner to be an active participant in both identifying, taking responsibility for, and, where possible, repairing the harm and violence of their thoughts and actions.
- 3. Hope and dignity are restored**

Abusive partner intervention and engagement strategies should create spaces for change, safety, and well-being for the abusive partner. These spaces for change, safety, and well-being should also be created for the victim/survivor. Recognizing the science of hope and the need to create pathways and agency to develop and reach one's goals, intervention and engagement strategies should treat each abusive partner with dignity and respect, valuing their commitment to change and their experiences while including support and skill-building for the abusive partner to address the harm and violence and create goals for healthy, violent-free relationships.
- 4. Culture and community are reflected and valued**

Addressing the harms of intimate partner violence requires collaboration between system and community-based agencies to create abusive partner intervention and engagement strategies that will create safe and healthy intimate partner, family, peer, and community relationships. To do so, these intervention and engagement strategies should create pathways to change and safety that reflect the diversity of the community, the intersectionality of the individuals, and the community, cultural, and personal values that support healthy and safe relationships.

**5. Interventions and engagement strategies respond to the needs and strengths of abusive partners**

Abusive partners may have varying levels of past trauma and criminogenic risks and needs that influence their abuse and their pathways to change. While past trauma is not an excuse for using violence and inflicting violence on intimate partners, addressing past harms and traumas can allow for creating specific, person-centered, trauma and research-informed interventions and engagement strategies. These strategies should also focus on engaging participants' inherent strengths to effect positive behavior change.

---

**For More Information**

With the support of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, and in collaboration with Futures Without Violence and a multi-disciplinary team of national experts, the Center for Court Innovation's Abusive Partner Accountability and Engagement Training and Technical Assistance is designed to help jurisdictions undertaking a comprehensive review of current approaches to domestic violence offender accountability and engagement.

E-mail: [dvaccountability@courttinnovation.org](mailto:dvaccountability@courttinnovation.org)

This project is supported by grant 2018-TA-AX-K026 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this program are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

