

Implementing Family Violence Offender Accountability in Texas: An Overview for Professionals Working in the Courts



Texas Council On
FAMILY VIOLENCE 

The Texas Council on Family Violence promotes safe and healthy relationships by supporting service providers, facilitating strategic prevention efforts, and creating opportunities for freedom from domestic violence.

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New Legislation Impacts Batterer Programs Statewide

Since September 1, 2009, all programs or providers receiving referrals from the courts for family violence offenses must become "accredited." See Code of Criminal Procedure Article 42.12(14)(c-1). To attain accreditation, such programs or providers must comply with Batterer Intervention Provider requirements as provided under CCP Art. 42.141(4)(A).

Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) worked with a variety of stakeholders during the 80th Texas Legislative Session, to pass Senate Bill 44, which mandated these key improvements to Articles 42.12 and 42.141.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Community Justice Assistance Division (TDCJ-CJAD) had the responsibility to adopt accreditation guidelines, set training requirements for licensed professionals providing services to family violence offenders and develop the accreditation process. To achieve these responsibilities, TDCJ-CJAD worked with a committee comprised of professionals from Community Supervision and Corrections Department, TDCJ-Parole Division, family violence advocates, batterers programs and the licensing authorities of the State Board of Medical Examiners, Psychologists, Marriage & Family Therapists, Licensed Professional Counselors and Social Workers as provided under the Texas Occupations Code. See Tex. Occ. Code Ann. Chapters 501, 502, 503 and 505.

BIPP accreditation requires the creation and promulgation of standards for quality services for offenders and ensures victim safety.

Programs or individuals seeking accreditation must submit an application, nominal one-time application fee, and other supplemental documents and develop their Policy and Procedures Manual to demonstrate their knowledge about the BIPP Accreditation Guidelines. Programs may achieve probationary accreditation after the completion of a successful preliminary desk audit. After an on-site audit, programs will be eligible for permanent accreditation which must be renewed every three years.

As an integral member of the court system, your role as a judge, community supervision officer (CSO), prosecutor or Child Protective Services case worker is vital for keeping perpetrators of family violence accountable and initiating a process of change.

Our communities need all levels of the criminal justice and support services systems to hold batterers accountable. We know that accountability represents one of the strongest steps towards changing battering behavior.

Effective BIPPs include:

- The conviction that victim safety must remain the first priority.
- Gender-specific groups focusing on direct intervention in a group format that holds perpetrators accountable for intimate partner abuse and encourage positive behavioral changes.
- Groups focusing on holding batterers accountable for blaming, denying, minimizing, justifying, and rationalizing their behavior, regardless of batterers' relationships, current stress factors, or previous trauma.
- A curriculum based on an intervention model recognizing family violence as the result of one person in an intimate relationship systematically using tactics of emotional and physical abuse in order to maintain power and control over the other.
- Trained facilitators who comprehend the intricacies of family violence and who avoid colluding with batterers and inform perpetrators that battering involves choices.
- Strong collaboration of the court system, community organizations. Ideally, programs would establish a cooperative working agreement with the local family violence shelter or non-residential program.

About BIPPs

BIPPs work to challenge the belief structure of perpetrators of family violence accordingly creating a behavior change. BIPPs hold perpetrators accountable for their behavior and demonstrate to perpetrators they alone are responsible for their abusive and violent behavior.

	Anger Management	Accredited Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs
Length	Approximately 3 to 8 weeks	Approximately 5 to 6 months
Program Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress reduction • Helps the chronically angry to overcome rage that arises in specific situations as well as their general anger against themselves and the world in general • Cool-down techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power & Control dynamic in relationship • How anger is used to control partner • Identifying and changing underlying attitudes and beliefs that promote violence • Emphasis on victim safety and involvement
Victim of Abuse	Anyone	Intimate Partner
Program Victim Contact	None	Victims contacted by mail when the offender enters and exits the program to ensure ongoing safety and provide information about services available
Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapeutic techniques • Exercises by which someone with excessive or uncontrollable anger can control or reduce the triggers, degrees, and effects of an angered emotional state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior is learned over time such that behaviors appear reactionary, but are actually premeditated • Abusive behavior is regulated by an estimation of probable consequences, never by provocation • Intimate partner violence is a pattern of behavior, not a single event • Intimate partner violence is shaped and supported by societal, familial, and cultural norms.
Oversight	None	Texas provides oversight through the Battering Intervention and Prevention Program Accreditation Process, which is monitored by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Community Justice Assistance Division.

Working Together

Accredited Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs work collaboratively with professionals in the court system by:

- Providing thorough perpetrator assessment based on ending violence and holding batterers accountable for their violence.
- Developing an individualized plan for each perpetrator in order to make additional referrals as needed for appropriate services such as substance abuse, mental health issues, etc.
- Providing ongoing communication through entrance, exit and monthly progress reports to the referral source, e.g. courts, probation.
- Offering educational workshops to criminal justice agencies.

Another Layer of Oversight: State-Funded Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs

While the Texas Department Criminal Justice Community Justice Assistance Division (TDCJ-CJAD) accredits additional programs in Texas, the following 25 programs receive funding by TDCJ-CJAD. For a complete list of accredited programs log onto the TDCJ-CJAD website at www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/cjad.

AMARILLO

Family Support Service
Potter County
806-342-2513

ARLINGTON

Women's Haven of Tarrant County
Tarrant County
817-548-0583

BASTROP

Family Crisis Center
Bastrop County
512-321-7760

BEAUMONT

Family Services of Southeast
Texas
Jefferson County
409-833-2668

BROWNSVILLE

Friendship of Women
Cameron County
956-546-6694

CORPUS CHRISTI

Women's Shelter of South Texas
Nueces County
361-884-2900

DALLAS

The Family Place
Dallas County
214-692-8295

DENTON

Denton County Friends of the
Family
Denton County
940-387-5131

EL PASO

Center Against Sexual and Family
Violence
El Paso County
915-562-0077

GARLAND

New Beginning Center
Dallas County
972-276-0423

HEMPSTEAD

Focusing Families
Waller County
979-826-3290

HOUSTON

Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse
Harris County
713-224-9911

LONGVIEW

Moral Compass (Women's Center
of East Texas)
Gregg County
903-247-0588

LUBBOCK

Women's Protective Services
Lubbock County
806-748-5292

MCALLEN

Men Against Violence
Mujeres Unidas/Women
Together
Hidalgo County
956-664-2826

MIDLAND

Project ADAM
Safe Place of the Permian Basin
Midland County
432-522-2700

PLAINVIEW

Crisis Center of the Plains
Hale County
806-293-9772

PLANO

Hope's Door
Collin County
972-422-2911

SAN ANTONIO

Family Violence Prevention
Services
Bexar County
210-930-3669

SHERMAN

Grayson County Crisis Center
Grayson County
903-893-3909

STAFFORD

WCSI BIPP Program
Fort Bend County
281-403-0838

TEXARKANA

Domestic Violence Prevention
Bowie County
903-794-4000

TYLER

Violence Intervention Network
(East Texas Crisis Center)
Smith County
903-579-2505

VICTORIA

Mid-Coast Family Services
Victoria County
361-575-7842

WEATHERFORD

STAR Council
Parker County
254-965-5515

Appropriate referrals for BIPPs are those who:

- Have committed family violence; or
- Are on probation or parole for family violence offenses;
or
- Are respondents of protective orders; or
- Are abusive to their partner in the presence of their
children; and/or
- Acknowledge their violent behavior and have the desire
to change it.

Inappropriate referrals for BIPPs are those who:

- Have untreated psychiatric disorders;
- Need of primary treatment for sexual abuse of a child;
and/or
- Have untreated substance abuse addictions;