

Anger Management vs. Domestic Violence



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Introductions



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Definition of Domestic Violence



- **Domestic Violence rooted in issues of coercive power and control**
 - Violence that is embedded in a pattern of power and control
 - Control= Intimidation, economic abuse, isolation, minimizing and blaming, use of children, economic abuse, and threats.
 - Abusers use tactics that work to maintain power and control
 - Victim likely to be in danger of serious harm or death
 - Mostly men against women

Difference between a DV client and AM Client



• Domestic Violence

- Abusive behavior is targeted towards partner
- Anger often used as an excuse for abusive behavior, but abusive behavior is often planned and is a choice.
- DV client is able to control their behavior when needed (ex. with their boss, etc).
- DV client that has been misplaced in AM will often use techniques learned in AM to manipulate partner and continue to abuse and gain power over them.

• Anger Management

- Anger issues expressed in various settings towards various individuals. AM client does not discriminate whom they get angry with.
- Clients with AM issues find that they cannot control their reactive outbursts no matter the setting or the individual.
- Clients often lack communication skills and emotional regulation skills in order to successfully problem solve.

DV vs. Anger Management Programming

Anger Management

Domestic Violence

AM programs focus on anger as a misunderstood and misaligned emotion which often follows fear, depression, stress, fatigue or a perceived threat or personal attack. The situation which causes anger is not the problem, the unhealthy response to anger is the problem. AM does not focus on partner relationship power imbalances that are present in DV cases.

AM classes are designed to assist clients only in the following areas: Emotional intelligence, stress management, anger management, and communication skills.

AM is inappropriate for DV clients if it is the only or first treatment they are receiving. Inappropriate interventions can put victims at greater risk.

AM is only appropriate for perpetrators of strangers or non-intimate partner violence, road rage, and workplace violence or abuse. AM focuses on how to deal with your anger triggers so that the client can learn to express anger in a healthy way.

Many times, AM clients may benefit from attending traditional counselling, mediation and at times, family counselling to help them resolve any unresolved conflicts in their relationships that are contributing to their anger. These are cases that do not present any power imbalances in their relationships and would not be putting anyone else at a greater risk by attending.

DV programs focus on issues of power and control that play a part in domestic violence. DV programs discuss male socialization, female socialization, substance abuse, child abuse, male domination, and the impact of domestic violence on the individual, the family and community.

DV programs are deliberate and purposeful interventions that are designed to interrupt the cycle of violence and abuse with intimate partner violence. Classes are specific and structured to adhere to well researched best practices. It does not focus on saving relationships, but rather on ending abusive and violent behavior.

DV programs have an assigned partner contact that is accessible to the victim at any time to ensure their safety and guide them in making the appropriate safety plans. This role is unique to DV programs and is not offered in an AM program.

DV programs are only appropriate for perpetrators of partner violence and abuse. These programs address the underlying reasons why we become abusive towards our partners. AM programs do not focus on partner violence and how to stop the cycle of abuse.

Traditional couples counselling, family therapy and misinformed mediation practices can be inappropriate interventions for domestic violence situations where there is a power imbalance. These interventions can do more harm than good as they are not victim focused and can many times put the victim at a greater risk of serious harm.



	Anger Management	Domestic Violence
Is the program government certified?	NO	YES
Who is served by the program?	Anyone, the program is generic	Program is specific for clients with DV charges
How many sessions are in the program?	4	12
Does the program stay in contact with any victim?	NO	YES
Is the program monitored by a government agency?	NO	YES
Is the program affiliated or linked to DV victim services?	NO	YES
Does the program assess the lethality of the client and the risk level of the victim?	NO	YES
What is the emphasis of the program?	Techniques to manage anger triggers	To help clients recognize that abuse is a choice that is rooted in issues of power and control.
Are facilitators required to obtain specialized domestic violence training?	NO	YES

Matching Treatment to Client Need



Why is it important to meet client needs and match to the appropriate services?

- **Victim Safety**
- **Relevant and meaningful interventions for client sustainability**

Meeting Client's Needs with Appropriate Services



- **Before serving a client we ask:**
 - Does the treatment match the need?
 - Who is the victim? What are we doing to support the victims and keep the community safe?
 - Liability and agency reputation- we are responsible to clients and victims; “do no harm” approach.

Abuse and Power



- AM clients can often use abusive tactics when angry, but it may not serve the same person as someone who is repetitively using it against a partner to maintain power and control.
- Abuse creates a power imbalance-why? Abuse is a way to get what we want. We realize that when we are abusive, we gain power by getting what we want. Once used in a repetitive pattern, we get issues of coercive power and control.
- Reasons for abuse are not always rooted in keeping and maintaining coercive power and control however, are more often than not used in a repetitive pattern in such cases. These are the majority of the cases that we see in DV programs.

Maintaining Program Integrity



“Too often, they say, authorities conclude that someone who beats up a domestic partner was angry, and therefore needs to control that anger to prevent a similar episode in the future. At the same time, offenders tend to prefer anger management because it is less expensive and less of a commitment, and thus they often seek such programs during plea negotiations.”

—Portland Press Herald (Maine) 2004 David Hench

- **What do we tell clients that have been charged for DV that is on bail and about to plead?**
 - The AM program is not the right fit for your needs.
 - If found screened for the program, you will still need to attend a DV program so we want whatever service we provide you to not only be useful to you, but act as the appropriate treatment.
- **Currently no funding for AM even though it is required for many court orders. Fee for service.**

Thank you!



QUESTIONS?