

Anger Management versus Domestic Violence Intervention (BIP)

Intimate partner violence is based on one person’s unrealistic and/or unfair expectations or “rules” for his or her partner. This is compounded by a feeling of entitlement to punish or get revenge when the partner doesn’t meet these expectations.

Abusive partners do an excellent job of managing their anger when they choose to do so: for example, they manage their anger with their bosses or in a tense confrontation with someone at a club. Abusive partners choose not to manage their anger with their partners. Abusing is not about loss of control, but rather maintaining it. Anger management alone does not get to the root of intimate partner violence, that is, the issues of power and control and one person’s need and/or perceived right to dominate another.

Anger management alone does NOT address the underlying attitudes and belief systems that allow abusive partners to make the choices they do. Anger management fails to account for the premeditated controlling behaviors associated with abuse. Intimate partner violence is often a series of behaviors inflicted on the victim through direct and indirect controlling behaviors. It is not merely a series of impulsive, angry incidents but often a premeditated system of control.

In sum, anger management programs usually have little impact on the motivations of abusive partners and, if used as a “quick-fix” for domestic violence, may endanger victims. DVI/BIP is more intensive, and studies have seen effectiveness, especially when part of a coordinated community response.

	Anger Management	DVI/BIP
Length	Usually not more than 12 weeks	Must be at least six months in Missouri.
Program Focus	Stress Reduction Cool Down Techniques	Identify power and control dynamics-How “anger” may be aggression used to control partner. Identify and change underlying attitudes that facilitate violence and abuse.
Objects of the Violence	Anybody	Partner, children, other family members.
Program Victim Contact	Not usually done	Best Practices to attempt contact on the survivor’s terms.
Prevalent Theories	Behaviors stem from being provoked.	Behaviors learned over time, appear reactionary but often premeditated. Regulated by probable outcomes. Shaped and supported by societal attitudes.
Oversight	Varies...	Certification process in Missouri.

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