



Counseling and Education to Stop Domestic Violence

E-mail Newsletter

Working to End Domestic Violence Since 1977

August 2006

Welcome to another summer edition!

Last month we introduced you to our discussion forum. This month we hope to encourage you to get involved in the forum by asking questions, taking part in discussions or just taking a moment to comment or say hello!

We're also going to introduce you to Tati, one of our partner contact staff. She'll describe her experience speaking to partners of abusers attending EmERGE. She also discusses some of the concerns and issues that survey responders brought up about conducting partner contacts during the batterer intervention survey we conducted a few months ago.

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Making Partner Contacts: An EmERGE Perspective

by Tati, Partner Contact Specialist



The phone is a funny instrument of communication. It allows you to intrude on dinnertime, in the middle of a child's first steps, or in a rare, quiet moment as someone's staring out of the window. And you never know which, if any, of these is going on in that moment before you say, "Hello."

I've been doing partner contacts now for a few years. I've talked to a lot of women. A lot of strong, courageous women. These same women who, from a different angle, can seem frightened and weak from the daily struggle that is their lives. As I talk to them, they share their histories, their current situations, and their future plans with me. I

laugh with them, nod my head in solidarity, and I respect that they are far wiser than I am in knowing what will work for them in their lives.



It's easy to ask the questions: Why don't battered women leave if it's so bad? Why would they return? I could cite statistical evidence, I could start in on the psychological explanations, but each woman has had a different life that has brought her to this point. No one story is the same, though it often begins with the gradual loss of self, forced isolation, and then the manipulation and escalation of abuse to make her more dependent in emotional, financial, and other ways upon the batterer.

From there, the stories vary. Some women have religious or moral beliefs that have taught them they have to endure this relationship, no matter how abusive; some have had nowhere to run to and no support system to help them; others have been denied help by doctors, the police, clergymen, and her families. And, never underestimate the powers of hope and denial-that this is the last time she will be abused. A woman may believe it is her fault: her batterer is only reacting to something that she has done or has failed to do. Or simply, that he will change because he loves her, or because she loves him. These stories are all the more complex when children are involved.

Before you label these women as weak if they decide not to leave, imagine the strength they have that helps them put on a brave face for their children, make excuses to their families, or lie to concerned strangers. Sometimes a woman just needs help to see this power and to channel it for other uses, if that's what she wants. The best thing I can do is to present options and leave the woman to make her own decision-one of the many capabilities her batterer has tried to take from her.

I dial a number, the phone rings, and I wait for someone to answer it. I know that I'm entering only one moment of this woman's life. My job is to use my one moment to remind her that the rest of the moments in her life can be what she wants them to be.

Current Discussion Forum Highlights



A few computer savvy people have taken the opportunity to get involved in our online discussion forum. In this article, we wanted to feature their comments and questions and hopefully motivate others to join in on the discussions!

Forum member EFGomez has posted topics in the "Overlaps With Alcohol & Other Drugs" forum. He brought up his experience in integrating substance abuse treatment and abuser education, and two Emerge staff have chimed in with their thoughts on the issue. In the future we will feature more articles on how we intervene with substance abusers. This discussion topic can be an excellent opportunity for others out there to learn more as well as contribute their own experience on this issue to the forum.

EFGomez also shared his experience in adapting the Emerge model to work with abusers at a Hopi Reservation in Arizona on the "Sharing Techniques and Approaches" section. He describes a unique approach to group interaction which seems to be beneficial during his group sessions. Please join up to read this and lend your thoughts about his approach!

DGarvin and Tanya were the first people to post information about their abuser education programs in Michigan and South Dakota. The forum has a section dedicated to listing abuser education and other domestic violence services. Emerge receives phone calls from people around

the world looking for services or asking questions. When we can, we try to connect people to a local resource, and we hope that we can collect information from as many programs and agencies as possible to assist in this.

Janet Knappen has provided information on a grant opportunity, so interested parties please check it out! She also posted information on how Illinois refers to their services as something other than "batterer intervention" (you must register to view this topic), as well as information on how Illinois is working to develop increased coordination between abuser education and victim/survivor services.

Finally, Deke, a documentary filmmaker out of California, is attempting to gather information on how people use videos and other media in their abuser education group sessions. He would appreciate any feedback and information, and has posted a few poll questions. If you'd like to share information on what videos you use by answering his poll questions or giving your opinion, please [visit the forum section](#) and get involved!

Additional Information & Links...

- [New 2006 Family Violence Statistics from Canada \(PDF\)](#)
- [Massachusetts 2004 Restraining Order Violator Probation Study \(PDF\)](#)
- [Family Violence Prevention Fund](#)
- [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence Statistics](#)
- [Emerge Materials](#)
- [Emerge Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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