

PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: AN EVALUATION  
OF A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TREATMENT PROGRAM

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AN ABSTRACT IN PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:  
AN EVALUATION OF A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
TREATMENT PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence intervention was created to essentially to stop intimate partner violence through cognitive behavioral therapy. One of the programs that has been at the forefront of domestic violence prevention is the Duluth Model. The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of court-ordered domestic violence offenders while they were attending a domestic violence intervention program at a Midwestern privately-owned probation agency. Additionally, the administrators of the program were interviewed to gain insight into the facilitation of the Duluth Model.

A semi-structured interview was used to gather the participants' perceptions of the program. This approach revealed candid viewpoints on the strengths and weaknesses of the program, curriculum, and the probation agency. Offender participants believed that the facilitators were generally effective, although at times they failed to control the class discussions. Administrator participants viewed the program as an effective tool for teaching

non-violent behavior, but only if the offenders are willing to learn and engage in the course. Both offenders and administrators recognized that the business aspect of the privately-owned probation agency limited how resourceful the company could be to its clients.

The data generally indicated that the program was helping the offenders change their behavior, but some of the interviews revealed otherwise. Although some offenders admitted they were wrong, and spoke about how they were actively using the lessons they learned from the Duluth Model, they still continued to justify their actions. This suggests that some offenders were not motivated to change which demonstrates the need to improve offender motivation in order to improve the effectiveness of the program. More specific strengths and weaknesses of the program are discussed, and policy implications are offered.

## APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, have examined a thesis titled " Perceptions of Program Effectiveness: An Evaluation of a Domestic Violence Treatment Program," presented by Bryana M. Harrah, candidate for the Master of Science degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence may be a taboo topic of discussion in some social circles, but the reports to police departments and national hotlines concerning domestic violence incidents are far from infrequent. According to the United States Department of Justice (1998), it is estimated that the number of incidents of domestic violence may involve somewhere between 960,000 to more than 4 million women per year.

Moreover, the Journal of American Medical Association (1991) reports that domestic violence results in more than 100,000 days of hospitalization, more than 30,000 emergency room visits and over 40,000 visits to a physician per year. For women who are between the ages of 15 and 44, domestic violence injuries occur more often than injuries from auto accidents, muggings, and deaths from cancer combined (Journal of American Medical Association, 1990). These raw numbers offer a glimpse of the extent of domestic violence throughout the country, and although the statistics are essential to informing scholars and practitioners of who are most affected by domestic violence, perhaps a more proactive step would be to focus on the offenders of domestic violence and the effective measures that can be taken to reduce the aforementioned statistics.

### **Criminal Justice Responses**

Prior to 1871, no laws or statutes existed that punished spouses for domestic assault. The states looked at violence against women as a “husbandly right” until *Fulgrahm v. State* (1871) revoked the man’s right to physically punish his wife. By the beginning of the twentieth century most states adopted similar laws, and men found guilty of abusing their

wives were given fines, jail time, or even corporal punishment (Barner & Carney, 2011, p.235). Barner and Carney also discovered that by the 1960s, the criminal justice system was beginning to regard domestic violence as a more serious offense. Courts not only charged men with misdemeanor domestic violence, but occasionally men were also receiving felony convictions. Additionally, *Baker v. City of New York (1966)* increased the strength of jurisdiction for ex parte orders (protection orders), and increased the availability of services to victims of domestic violence. Also emerging at that time were women's shelters. Dobash and Dobash (1992) noted that the first agencies that provided refuge to abused women emerged in 1967, and expanded into the 1970s to include funding efforts to offer services to battered women other than just shelter.

While victims of domestic violence were being offered more services, interventions for the perpetrators of domestic violence did not appear until 1977 (Gondolf, 2002). Gondolf reports that these initial batterer groups were formed as gender-based discussion groups, and then in the early 1980s techniques and skill building were incorporated into the programs. The intervention programs began to evolve by using a psychodynamic approach or a cognitive-behavioral approach to treating batterers.

The psychodynamic approach regarded treatment as the product of the batterer's emotional and familial background. This approach aims at revealing the victimization of the individual as he grew up to uncover the trauma that shaped him to be impulsive, lacking in self-control, emotionally hurt, and fearing intimacy or attachment. Once the moments of trauma and abuse are identified, therapy can help give the offenders an idea of their true identity and self-worth. This kind of therapy can backfire, however, because it can reinforce narcissistic and self-righteous behavior (Gondolf, 2002).

An alternative to the psychodynamic approach is cognitive-behavioral therapy. An example of this type of therapy started in Duluth, Minnesota in the early 1980s developed by Ellen Pence. One of the pioneers of domestic violence prevention initiatives, Pence defines domestic violence as coercive behavior aimed at gaining power and control within a relationship (Healey, Smith & O'Sullivan, 1998). This pro-feminist perspective was a forerunner and model for intervention programs that sought to stop abusive behaviors. The intervention program, labeled the Duluth Model, was designed to change the patriarchal attitudes of domestic violence offenders that viewed domestic violence as an acceptable behavior (Healey et al., 1998). The program sought to teach non-violent alternatives for reactionary choices through the use of cognitive behavioral techniques. The goal of using cognitive behavioral techniques is to change the pattern of thinking for violent men who were taught by their families and their culture that men dominate women (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

One of the key contributing factors to the success of the Duluth Model is the development of a coordinated community response (CCR) designed to mitigate the negative effects of domestic violence. CCR is an interagency effort to change the climate of tolerance of battering by institutionalizing practices and procedures which centralize victim safety, and offender accountability in domestic assault related cases. The objectives of the intervention are to make the first priority be the safety of the victim, secondary to victim safety would be keeping the batterer accountable for his actions, and finally, working with the community to create a zero-tolerance policy for domestic violence. An example of a coordinated community effort is the Minneapolis Intervention Project (MIP). The intervention process began with the requirement of police officers to arrest a domestic violence perpetrator when there was probable cause. This was followed by assisting the victims to receive the proper

services, and also working with the prosecuting attorneys to ensure that the case would be pursued. After a conviction, advocates would connect women to shelters and community agencies, and men that were put on probation were required to attend a batterer's intervention program (Syers & Edleson, 1992). A properly implemented CCR within the criminal justice system like the MIP would include the collaboration of all law enforcement and social service agencies that are in some way involved with domestic violence cases including: the jail, the prosecutors, the courts, men's battering intervention programs, and probation and parole. The purpose of the agencies included in a CCR is to execute or create new policies that maximize victim safety while ensuring offender accountability. The challenge is embedded in the solution: interagency coordination. For example, if new arrest policies are created to arrest a batterer when there is physical evidence of harm, the effects may be limited by the victim or the State dropping charges, or if prosecution is ineffective (Murphy, Musser, & Maton, 1998).

Some courts mandate domestic violence offenders to attend a domestic violence prevention program similar to the Duluth Model as a stipulation of their probation. In fact, more than one-third of first time offenders are mandated to attend a Batterer Intervention Program (BIP) (Daly et al., 2001), but 40-60 percent of men that are mandated to attend do not successfully complete the program (Chang & Saunders, 2002; Daly & Pelowski, 2000; Healey et al., 1998; Rosenfeld, 1992; Wierzbicki & Pekarik, 1993). Although research has shown that prevention programs are not as therapeutic as predicted (Babcock, Green, & Roble, 2004), these programs continue to be utilized for offender rehabilitation. Although the meta-analysis by Babcock et al. (2004) revealed a small effect size for batterer intervention programs, the five percent decrease in the reoccurrence of women's victimization is not

something to be ignored. Five percent equates to approximately 42,000 women in the United States who are not re-assaulted. This research of comparable intervention programs can assist intervention agencies to improve their program design to more effectively reduce recidivism rates.

Although there are comparable batterer intervention programs, this study focuses on the program design and curriculum of the Duluth Model as it was recently implemented at the site of this research project. The agency previously modeled their program after the Duluth DAIP by cooperating with courts and law enforcement, and by using many of the themes from the curriculum, but only recently did the agency redesign their program to be a certified Duluth program. The team from Duluth sent a representative down to Kansas City, Missouri in March 2011 to train staff on how to teach the curriculum.

### **The Duluth Model**

After a gruesome domestic homicide that occurred in 1980, nine agencies sought change in Duluth, Minnesota. The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) joined with the police, the courts, the county jail, the prosecutor, the women's shelter, probation, and three mental health agencies to create a process for change within the Duluth criminal justice system. This new process limited the discretion of the participating agencies so that they all followed specific guidelines, policies, and procedures involving cases of domestic assault (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

### **Program Design**

When the Duluth Model was first implemented, the new policies and procedures required all involved agencies to make some adjustments. Police officers were required to arrest batterers if there was physical evidence that the victim had been assaulted. The county

jail was now required to wait for conditions of release from a judge before releasing the offender. A prosecutor would not drop the charges, regardless of the pleas from the victim to drop all charges from the victim. The judge did not order the victim to go to counseling, and probation officers could not assume violence was not occurring because of a no-contact order. Finally, the mental health community could not offer marriage counseling to any couples that had a history of domestic violence. The main component was the involvement of the community to keep women safe and batterers accountable (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

Once the men were convicted, they were either referred or court-mandated (92 percent of the men in the pilot program were court-mandated to attend, the other seven percent volunteered for the program) to attend a 26-week program. Each man met with a group of men within five days of their court order for an initial intake and screening. Intake consists of gathering each participant's history of violence, history of drug use, self-awareness, and special needs. After intake, men attend an orientation session to give the men a chance to tell their offense, learn the rules and themes of the curriculum, and the action plan for the program. Women are also given an opportunity to attend an orientation to learn about the men's program so that they can take an inventory of the offender's abusive behavior, and to make the women aware of all safety outlets that are available to them (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

### **Curriculum**

The Duluth Model design and curriculum have been modeled in a way that parallels cognitive behavior or cognitive learning theories. Cognitive Learning Theory (also associated with Social Learning Theory) asserts that violence is inherent in the socialization that takes place in the home. Bandura (1973) explained that as children, men who batter learned that

violence was an acceptable behavior to relieve stress and anger. The goals of the Duluth Model are to illustrate to batterers how they use power and control in a relationship of violence, to demonstrate alternative ways of using nonviolent behavior for problem-solving, and to eventually change the batterer's pattern of thinking (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

The curriculum was originally divided into eight themes that were each covered during a three-week period. The 2011 version of the curriculum is now made up of ten themes, but due to how recent the change has been, most of the research and history only includes the original eight themes. The eight themes include: nonviolence, nonthreatening behavior, respect, support and trust, accountability and honesty, sexual respect, partnership, and negotiation and fairness. These themes make up the equality wheel to reinforce positive tactics during conflicts. The power and control wheel displays methods of how batterers maintain control in their relationships through physical and emotional abuse (see Figure 1.1). The power and control wheel was created with the help of over 200 battered women in Duluth who attended 30 educational classes led by the Duluth battered women's shelter. The women helped identify a pattern of behavior that leads to violence as opposed to a cycle of violence or an isolated incident. The power and control wheel is a model to illustrate how men use tactics to maintain an authoritarian and abusive relationship, but the equality wheel (see Figure 2.1) models the goal for the men in the program: to have an egalitarian, interdependent relationship (Pence & Paymar, 1993).



Figure 1.1 Power and Control Wheel

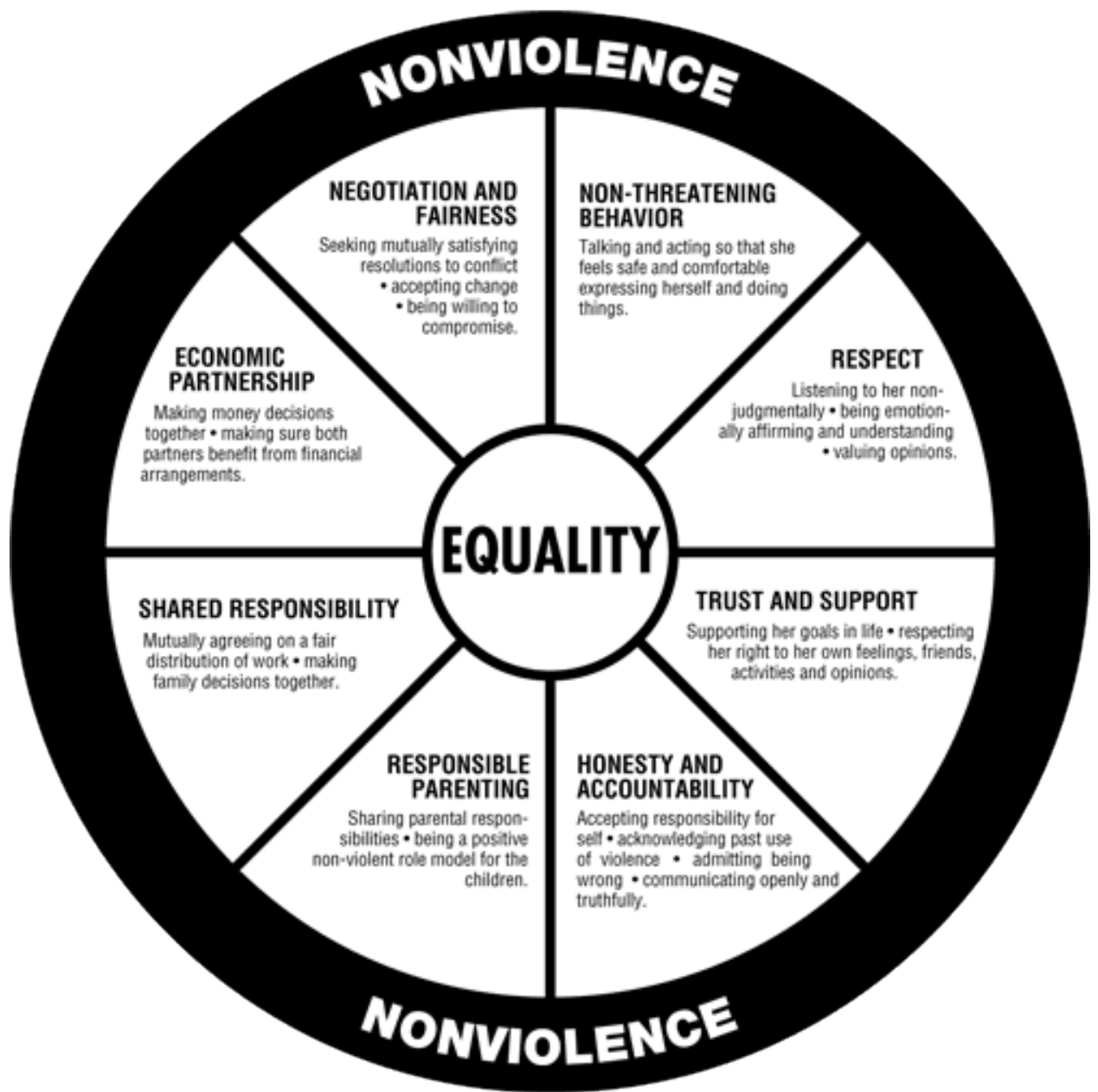


Figure 2.1 Equality Wheel

## **Tools**

The program design equips facilitators with tools to help teach the participants how to achieve equality in their relationships. Each week a group begins with a check-in, and a report of their previous week's action plan. Check-ins are introductions to the group where men are encouraged to talk about their action plans, and disclose any violence that may have occurred over the past week. The action plan is a list of goals and the steps needed to achieve those goals throughout the duration of the program. A control log is a record of abusive actions they took, beliefs about that behavior, alternatives to the actions, and who it affected. A control log is used in order to keep the men focused on their abusive behavior, and to shift their thinking from rationalizing their behavior and victim blaming. The purpose of this log is to help the abusers find an alternative way to handle a situation without using violence. Another part of the curriculum are role plays where men are able to act out the ways they use controlling behavior, but alternatively they can learn tactics of noncontrolling behavior (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

In sum, the issue of domestic violence is a serious concern that affects many people, and because of this, research must inform policy as to what are the best practices for treating offenders. As Gondolf (2002) noted, criminal justice and social service agencies have only been confronting the offender side of domestic violence for 34 years. Programs like the Duluth Model are only now being used in full force. Research and policy offer opportunity for improvement and growth of domestic violence intervention programs which in turn may potentially decrease the likelihood of domestic violence.

The following chapter explores the criminal justice sanctions used to stop domestic violence, the theories and models of change that can impact recidivism, and the behavior

patterns, characteristics, and motivations of violent offenders. Chapter three discusses the study sample, including domestic violence offenders and domestic violence intervention program administrators, and the type of data collected. Chapter three also describes how the data are analyzed, factors that limited data collection, and ethical issues involved with a vulnerable population like the one included within this study. Chapter four details themes and patterns that emerged from the interviews of the offenders and administrators; this chapter provides the reader with a thorough analysis of the study's findings. Finally, chapter five provides a summation of the overall findings, and includes proposed policy for domestic violence intervention programs.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Any one of the facets of intervention set forth by the criminal justice system can potentially affect the likelihood of an offender to recidivate. Being arrested may be sanction enough for an individual to not repeat the abusive behavior. Although domestic violence may cease after a jail sentence, it may not be the “cure” for all. Edleson (1991) and Pence (1983) suggest that not one component of the criminal justice system such as jail time affects future behavior. In other words, the cooperation of the police, the prosecutors and courts, probation, and domestic violence counselors can collaborate to increase the safety of domestic violence victims, and pave the way for domestic violence offender rehabilitation. The following literature review presents a brief history of domestic violence interventions that have been utilized by the criminal justice system and other social service agencies.

#### **Interventions**

Much research has been conducted on the effectiveness of batterer intervention programs. In a study of a community intervention program in Minneapolis, MN, arrest alone did not reduce recidivism, but arrest and a mandate to attend a domestic violence prevention program showed a reduction in recidivism in the following 12 months. The study was part of the Minneapolis Intervention Project that sought to create new policies and procedures for the Minneapolis Police Department when they received new cases of domestic violence. From the reports that were collected, Syers and Edleson (1992) were able to gain a sample of 358 cases of domestic violence perpetrated by men that pled or were found guilty from February 1986 to March 1987. Additional data included records kept by legal advocates and

victim reports. There was a 6-month and a 12-month follow-up period where caseworkers from MIP interviewed victims as well. Most of the men were court-mandated to attend a treatment program offered by the Domestic Abuse Project, also in Minneapolis. The two measures of analysis used in the study were repeat offending from the initial report, and which components of the criminal justice system most significantly impacted recidivism rates. According to the 6-month follow-up interviews, 117 men did not repeat the offense, and 79 men reoffended. At the 12-month follow-up, 74 men had not reoffended, but 47 did repeat their original offense. To measure recidivism, Syers and Edleson measured three components following the original contact with police: (1) no arrest, (2) arrest, but no court-order to attend treatment, and (3) arrest and a court-order to attend a batter's treatment program. The analysis revealed that men were less likely to recidivate if they were arrested and court-ordered to attend treatment. Variables that contributed to predictive strength in reduced recidivism levels included the first police visit and higher education levels. For some men, the first time the police responded to the home or residence was intervention enough to prevent another reported incident of domestic violence. Additionally, they found that the higher the men's education level, the greater the predictive strength of lower recidivism rates (Syers & Edleson, 1992).

In another study, Murphy, Musser and Maton (1998) used archival data from the Baltimore, Maryland State's Attorneys' Domestic Violence Unit of 235 cases of men charged with a domestic violence related offense. The cases were collected from three police districts of men charged between January 1994 to August 1994, and additional follow-up data through September 1995. The researchers interviewed only male offenders between the ages of 18 to 81 years of age. Characteristic variables included frequency of domestic

violence, victim injuries, and time of day of the offense. Post-arrest variables included legal representation, disposition of the case, and court-ordered probation conditions including drug and alcohol counseling and/or domestic violence counseling. Recidivism was measured in two categories as either: (1) another battery charge in the follow-up period or (2) any charge related to domestic violence such as violation of an ex parte, battery, assault, rape, or illegal weapon possession, etc. The combined total of recidivists in these categories was 97 out of the 235 offender participants. The researchers found that the characteristics associated with higher levels of recidivism included those represented by a public defender, and those in their 20s and 40s. Comparatively, the 106 men who were successfully prosecuted had a recidivism rate of 13% and 23% compared to those not successfully prosecuted (129) with rates of 19% and 29%. When probation was added to prosecution they found that recidivism rates dropped to 12% and 21%. Finally, when counseling was added to prosecution and probation the rates dropped further still to 9% and 18%. There are limitations to this conclusion, however, including the fact that only 4% of the offenders experienced this highest level of combined interventions, and less than 20% of the court-ordered offenders completed a 22-week domestic violence intervention program (Murphy et al., 1998).

Shepard, Falk and Elliot (2002) focused on those men who volunteered or were court-ordered to attend domestic violence treatment programs during the years 1994, 1996, 1997, and the first half of 1998. The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) was already in place since 1980 as part of the standard protocol for criminal justice agencies to respond to domestic violence offenders, but the Enhanced DAIP (EDAIP) was developed in 1995 to provide training and guidance for community agencies to match offenders to the appropriate intervention. The men participating in 1994 were categorized as the preintervention period

because they were the last group of the DAIP, the men in 1996 were in the category of the “pilot year” or the first year of EDAIP, and those attending in 1997 and 1998 were the intervention group. The researchers compared the 1994 male offenders to the 1996 male offenders, the 1994 male offenders to the 1997 male offenders, and the 1994 male offenders to the 1998 male offenders. The coordinated community response was a combined effort of police and women’s advocates making a danger assessment of offenders who forwarded the information to probation officers for a presentence investigation. Once the assessment was complete, the probation officers used a sentencing matrix to match the offender’s level of risk with the appropriate intervention program. Recidivism was based on an investigation, a charge, or a conviction of a domestic violence related offense. They found that the male offenders from 1997 and the first six months of 1998 were significantly less likely to recidivate than the 1994 and 1996 offenders. Their promising findings suggested that the offenders who completed the treatment program and those who were not court-mandated were significantly less likely to recidivate than those offenders who did not complete the program.

### **Coordinated Community Response**

Bouffard and Muftic (2007) took an in-depth approach at examining a community based intervention program by examining the characteristics of each individual to predict successful completion of the coordinated community response (CCR). Their sample population was 131 male offenders who were court-ordered to attend an intake interview and a Domestic Violence Inventory (DVI) from January 2003 to December 2003. The characteristic variables included age, race, employment and marital status, criminal history, domestic violence variables, court judgments, completion of the CCR stages, and recidivism

measures. Those offenders previously arrested for domestic violence were less likely to appear for the program intake interview. Further, those who did not appear for the intake interview were more likely to recidivate. They also found that lower education levels, deferred sentences, prior arrest records, and the current domestic violence charge were all significant predictors of an offender being recommended to a treatment program. Conversely, if men had higher levels of education and no previous record of domestic violence, clinicians were less likely to recommend sending them to treatment. Additionally, Bouffard and Muftic (2007) found that those offenders who suffer from some type of substance abuse are less likely to attend a treatment program. Finally, the researchers used multivariate analyses to determine if the completion of the components of the CCR would reduce the chances of recidivating. They found that the number of components completed by an offender did not affect the likelihood of recidivating, but it is important to note that only a few of the participants in the sample successfully completed all of the components of the CCR.

This last study suggests that a CCR type of treatment program for domestic violence offenders is effective if offenders actually attend and successfully complete the program. Bouffard and Muftic (2007) would say that these programs may need improving such as adding a drug treatment component for substance abusers. What is not known is why some offenders are unsuccessful at completing these types of programs. Previous studies suggest a lack of social bonds and stake in conformity (Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2002), others argue that we need more intensive supervision by probation officers (Bouffard & Muftic, 2007).

The previous studies focused on the components of the community based intervention programs and the types of individuals who would be successful if they completed all stages

of the program. What is missing in these studies is the approach taken by Day, Chung, O'Leary, and Carson (2009) to evaluate the program integrity of intervention programs like counseling and rehabilitative treatment. They promote the idea that a successful rehabilitative program for perpetrators of domestic violence "should be able to demonstrate that it leads to reductions in either the intensity or frequency of aggressive and violent behavior and/or promotes women's and children's safety" (Day et al., 2009, p. 204).

### **Program Design**

An effective program should be appropriately designed and based on an empirically supported theory (Andrews & Bonta, 2004), adequate training for group facilitators, and individually matched intervention programs (Day et al., 2009). Some researchers have shown concern for lack of motivation by offenders and their readiness to change (Renwick, Black, Ramm & Novaco, 1997), but Day (2003) said that a collaborative effort should be made by the therapist and client to work on motivational problems so that offenders can actively participate in treatment. Supporting this idea, researchers agree that such collaboration will be a significant prediction of treatment success (Bambling & King, 2001; Horvath & Symonds, 1991).

### **Social Learning Theory**

The first suggestion by Andrews and Bonta (2004) to apply a theory to a program is not new to this area of study, as we saw the Duluth Model use cognitive learning theories to re-teach offenders how to use non-violent alternatives to express their anger. Using social learning and cognitive learning theories, practitioners would spotlight the offender and the offending behavior to analyze their individual processes of cognition, affect, and behavior (Day et al., 2009). Through individual analysis, the offender can be assessed for his or her

risk factors or ‘criminogenic needs’ that are targeted to change (Andrews & Bonta, 2004). Wallach and Sela (2008) studied the attributions of battering men and found that, “effective therapy must target battering men’s attributions, and change them” (p. 658). Other researchers claim that we have to assess an offender’s readiness and motivation to change to properly intervene (Bowen & Gilchrist, 2004; Eckhardt & Utschig, 2007).

Following the principles of Social Learning Theory, practitioners can recognize and target the cognitive processes of the offenders. Sutherland (2004) developed nine facets of the Social Learning Theory to explain criminal behavior. First, criminal behavior is learned; crime is not instinctual. Second, criminal behavior is learned in communication with other people. Third, criminal behavior can only be learned within intimate personal groups. Fourth, learning criminal behavior involves specific techniques as well as motives, rationalizations, drives and attitudes. Fifth, an individual learns to view legal codes as favorable or unfavorable, which influences the motivations to commit crime. The sixth part is also the premise of Differential Association Theory: delinquency occurs when there is an excess of definitions favorable to violating laws over definitions unfavorable to violating laws. Seventh, criminal and non-criminal behavior will vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity. Eighth, the same mechanisms that are used to learn criminal behavior by association are the same as any other type of learning. Finally, criminal behavior cannot be explained by needs and values because one can also explain non-criminal behavior by general needs and values (Sutherland, 2004).

### **Transtheoretical Model**

Some studies suggest that focusing on the type of treatment or theoretical approach is not appropriate if the research does not also focus on for who the treatment is for (Murphy &

Baxter, 1997). Prochaska (1979) created the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of behavior change to assess an offender's readiness to change. The offender would be associated with one of the "stages of change": precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. With this assessment, program facilitators can be more flexible and meet offenders where they are emotionally, mentally and psychologically.

The TTM is similar to "matched interventions" where intervention typologies are paired with the needs and risk levels of the individual, treatment readiness, and motivation to change (Day et al., 2009; Howells & Day, 2003). These needs can range from antisocial behavior problems to severe substance abuse, limited verbal skills, and lack of familial support (Day et al., 2009). Furthermore, domestic violence offenders should not be classified as a homogeneous group of offenders that need the same treatment. Each offender should receive an individual assessment that can match them to a treatment program that can fit their needs (Day et al., 2009).

The literature has shown that one individual approach has not been effective in reducing recidivism or changing behavior; rather, arrest, prosecution strategies, probation monitoring, and counseling services (treatment programs) are an effective, holistic approach when combined. Extending the analysis further, the delivery of an intervention program needs to be underpinned by models of behavior change or matched interventions (Casey, Day & Howells, 2005; Day, 2003; Day et al., 2009; Prochaska, 1979), and individual and psychological theories should be applied to program delivery (Day, 2003; Day et al., 2007; 2009). This research is essential to guiding the current study that will be analyzing a domestic violence prevention initiative to see if a midwestern agency applies similar models like the TTM or the Duluth Model, criminal theories, and intervention strategies to

implement an offender treatment program. This is important because on a small scale, the data collected may inform the agency under study about how the program can retain effective strategies, improve upon areas where offenders and administrators see weaknesses, and build upon the program's strengths. On a larger scale, like the Duluth Model, this study may possibly influence program designs of offender treatment programs that improve offender success rates and secure the rights of the victims.

### **Research Question**

The current research aims to answer whether or not the selected court-mandated domestic violence prevention program is effective from the perspectives of the offenders and the administrators involved with the program. Demographic characteristics of the offenders and administrators, such as age, race, marital status, and number of children are a sample of the inquiries that were made, as well as the professional backgrounds of the administrators. Additionally, offender motivation to change and program attrition are analyzed as mitigating or aggravating circumstances of the program's success. Finally, the integrity of the program is examined as a success factor from the views of the offenders and administrators. The following chapter discusses in detail the methodological approach of this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

To analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a domestic violence prevention initiative, a qualitative approach was employed. The qualitative approach involved an analysis of interviews of domestic violence offenders and administrators of a domestic violence treatment program. The sensitivity of the subject of domestic violence was approached through a face-to-face interview with the participants. As Fitzgerald and Cox (1994) suggested, this type of interview helped to establish rapport between interviewer and interviewee, involving a setting where the researcher determined the meaning and authenticity of participants' responses, and allowed the interviewer a chance to ask clarifying and follow-up questions (as cited in Johnson, 2004).

#### **Study Participants**

##### **Domestic Violence Offenders**

The participants included probationers that were court-ordered to participate in a domestic violence prevention initiative (DVIP) through a private probation agency at two of their offices. One location was in a large Midwestern city with a population of approximately 459,000 people, and the second location was a suburb located in the metro area. The agency granted access to the researcher after approving the interview guide, and being ensured that all collected data would remain confidential. Due to researcher time constraints and accessibility of the participants, the sample size of domestic violence offenders was 15 participants. There was not a specific number for how many participants of each gender and race were needed for the sample; whomever volunteered was allowed participate. There were

three different participant groups: (1) men who attended an evening domestic violence group once per week in the larger city and led by a male facilitator, (2) men who attended a different evening domestic violence group led by a female facilitator in the suburban location, and (3) women who attended an evening domestic violence group led by a female in the larger city.

The men who attended the evening group in the larger city were lead by Terrence, a 27-year-old black male. The five men in this particular group ranged in age from 34 years old to 76 years old. There was one Hispanic male, one multi-racial male (Cuban and Black), and three White males. Three of the men had prior arrests or convictions; one of them being for domestic assault. The women who attended the evening group in the larger city were lead by Sandy, a 42-year-old white female. The four women were between the ages of 26 and 57 years of age. There were three Black females and one White female. Among the women, two of them had been arrested or charged previously, both of which were for domestic violence as well. The third group, lead by Sandy at the suburban office location consisted of six White males ranging in age from 30 to 42 years of age. Four of the men had previous arrests or convictions, three of which were for domestic violence.

In order to solicit participation that was not coerced, thorough procedures were followed to recruit participants for the study. The researcher attended the domestic violence prevention meetings to introduce herself and give a brief overview of the study to prospective participants. The participants were asked to help with the study by volunteering their time to answer several questions about their history, their criminal record, and their participation in the treatment program. The fact that their participation was not a requirement of their probation was emphasized with great importance so that their participation was completely

voluntary and their responses did not seem coerced. Not only did the researcher inform the groups that their participation was not connected to their probation, but the group facilitators who are also probation officers were able to confirm and reiterate that the study was not mandatory. Those who were willing to participate volunteered to come in on a Tuesday or Wednesday, approximately an hour before their scheduled program, to complete the interview. To obtain the sample size, the researcher attended one of the three groups each week over a six-month period to recruit the participants. In order to encourage members of the group to volunteer, the researcher offered to purchase a beverage or snack of their choice as participation incentive. Among the fifteen research participants, only four individuals (two males and two females) took advantage of the incentive. Table 1.1 indicates the three groups separated by facilitator and categorized by age, race, and gender.

Table 1.1 Group Demographics

Groups	Age	Race	Gender
Terrence (admin)	27	Black	Male
1. Steve 2. Orlando 3. Angelo 4. Ken 5. Bill	34	Hispanic	Male
	53	White	Male
	45	Hispanic/Black	Male
	37	White	Male
	76	White	Male
Sandy (admin)	42	White	Female
1. John 2. Jason 3. Ben 4. Josh 5. Clint 6. Richard	36	White	Male
	36	White	Male
	31	White	Male
	30	White	Male
	42	White	Male
	34	White	Male
Sandy (admin)	42	White	Female
1. Josie 2. Lashonda 3. Kim 4. Sheera	57	Black	Female
	32	Black	Female
	26	Black	Female
	31	White	Female

\*\*All names included within the text and the tables are pseudonyms chosen by the participants in order to protect their anonymity.

The interviews were conducted at private probation agency in a closed conference room. This allowed the participants to speak freely without the fear of being overheard by staff or other persons. There were windows in the room at the city office; although their responses were confidential, their participation was not. During the assigned interview times there were also probation clients in the office that could not be prevented from observing participants associating with the researcher. Before any interview began, each participant was prompted to read and sign a consent form. There were no participants that conceded to being unable to read or to having a learning disability. Each section of the consent form was reviewed with every participant so that their participation was informed. These procedures protected the rights of the participants, and the integrity of the study. The consent forms were stored separately from the interviews, in a locked file cabinet. The participants were informed and aware that they were recorded for the duration of the interview, and that the researcher was the only individual reviewing their content.

### **Program Administrators**

To view the program in an alternative perspective, the two group facilitators (one male, one female) as well as the two directors (one male, one female) were interviewed to assess the program integrity on the delivery side of the preventative program. The administrative view informed the research of the goals of the agency, the efforts taken by the agency, and their professional opinion on what areas of improvement could be focused on and what areas of program strength should be recognized.

The administrators were also voluntary participants; although they were not under the same supervisory restrictions as the probationers, they were not required to participate by the

agency owner. They were informed that their responses would be reviewed by the researcher, and their responses would not be shared with the agency owner or their colleagues. The administrators were required to read and review the consent form before the interview began. The researcher reviewed each section of the consent form to protect their rights and the integrity of the study. The administrators were informed and aware that they were recorded for the duration of the interview, and that the researcher was the only individual reviewing their content.

The four administrators shared their work experience and education that developed them for the position they held. There were two program supervisors; Mike, a 62-year-old White Male and Catherine, a 43-year-old White female. Mike had been employed with the agency for seven and a half years at the time of the interview, and his current job title was probation supervisor. He held two bachelor's degrees, and had completed some graduate schooling. Prior to taking the position of probation supervisor he worked for a similar criminal justice agency for more than 30 years. Catherine had been working for the agency approximately fifteen years initially as a probation officer, and then becoming the assistant director in 2001. She held a bachelor's degree in a social science field. Before she took the position as probation officer she had had no previous experience in the criminal justice field. There were two group facilitators: Terrence, a 27-year-old Black male and Sandy, a 42-year-old White female. Terrence had held the position of probation officer and domestic violence group facilitator for a little over a year and a half. He held a bachelor's and a masters degree. Before becoming a probation officer he had worked in a criminal justice related field for nearly 10 years. He supervised multiple employees and developed his experience for teaching by conducting periodical training meetings for his employees. Sandy had been

employed by the probation agency for four and a half years as a probation officer and had been facilitating the domestic violence intervention program since June of 2010. She held a bachelor's degree in a social science field. Sandy had no prior work experience in the field, but she had personal experience as the victim of domestic violence involving her ex-husband in 1995. This experience she only shared with the women's DVIP group, and not the men's groups. She used her own experiences in the men's groups by saying that her friend had gone through those situations. She did not want the men to believe that she had a bias towards men because of what had happened to her.

Further, to analyze program integrity, an additional interview guide was developed for program directors who oversaw program implementation and training of group facilitators. This interview guide was also administered to the group facilitators who worked with domestic violence offenders face-to-face, on a weekly basis, and who also happened to be probation officers. The interviews were conducted at the agency's two main office locations, one at a large Midwestern city of approximately 459,000 people, and the other a suburb of this city. The advantage of interviewing the administrators was that the interview time did not have to depend on whether other individuals were in the office. The schedules of the administrators and the researcher's schedule were much more flexible in order to complete the interview. One disadvantage of note was that one facilitator was interviewed before he was scheduled to teach a DVIP group, and although he had answered all the questions, he had to stop himself from elaborating on relevant subject matter regarding the program.

The goal of this study is to help direct policy makers on what works (and what does not work) for domestic violence treatment programs. In the hopes that the interviews yield rich and informative data, the study will inform policies that can improve program efficacy.

### **Instrumentation**

Two interview guides (see Appendices C & D) were developed based on the literature in this line of research, one for the program participants and one for the program administrators. For example, to assess the offender's perspective, each participant was asked a set of questions concerning their background, the arrest incident, their perspective on the effectiveness of the program, and similar to the administrators, what they think could be improved about the program. The administrators were interviewed to understand how the program is facilitated and implemented, what training is offered, their perspectives on offender participation, and what strengths and weaknesses define the program. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis. Before beginning the interview, the participants were asked to assign themselves a pseudonym to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

The length of the interviews depended on how much information the participants choose to provide. The interviews ranged in length from the shortest being twenty minutes to the longest being sixty-one minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

As the interviews were completed, the principal investigator transcribed each interview using a media player with playback capabilities. Once the interviews were completed and transcribed, the researcher began coding the data using a constant comparative analytical technique. This technique required a constant comparison of

interview data within groups and between groups. Specifically, offender interviews were compared to one another in order to discover themes, administrator interviews were compared to one another in order to discover themes, and finally, offender and administrative interviews were compared to one another in order to discover themes.

The coding process involved both deductive and inductive codes. A coding sheet was developed based on prior research (see Appendix D). For instance, the deductive codes for the offenders included: relationship, current DV, program strength, program weakness, program fit and suggestions. A few of the deductive codes for the administrators included: career, implementation, alternatives and training. This sheet acted as a guide through analysis process to identify themes and patterns within the responses. As interviews were conducted, unforeseen themes arose, and additional codes were added to the list. Some of the inductive codes for offenders included: money, structure, control, perspective, deserve and victim blame. Some of the deductive codes for the administrators included: cultural differences, teaching styles and experience. These additional codes helped formulate questions that supplemented the interview guide for the remainder of the participant interviews. Because of time, however, there were not follow-up interviews with the initial participants to ask these supplemental questions. Table 2.1 displays some of the more significant codes used in the analysis and the corresponding responses of the offenders.

Table 2.1 Interview Responses

Groups	Deserve	Pay	Effective	Qualified	Gender	Attendance	Helpful	Individualized	
<u>Rolander</u> 1. Steve 2. Orlando 3. Angelo 4. Ken 5. Bill	0	1	5	5	1	3	3	2	YES
	3	3	0	0	4	2	1	3	NO
	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	UNSURE
<u>Michelle</u> 1. John 2. Jason 3. Ben 4. Josh 5. Clint 6. Richard	2	2	4	6	2	0	5	3	YES
	3	1	0	0	4	5	1	2	NO
	1	3	2	0	0	1	0	1	UNSURE
<u>Michelle</u> 1. Josie 2. Lashonda 3. Kim 4. Sheera	0	2	2	4	2	0	2	3	YES
	2	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	NO
	2	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	UNSURE

## **Limitations**

Johnson (2004) underscores the difficulty of replication of semi-structured interviews because the less formal nature of asking probing questions that may not be on the original interview guide makes it harder to validate the findings for different times, locations, and populations. She continues by noting that the informal data retrieval method minimizes the consistency of responses to analyze. To strengthen the structure of the data, the coded responses of the participants were compared to those of the administrators. If two different demographical populations produce similar responses, then these themes help validate the findings to be applicable for policy implications. Another limitation for the study was that the participants had all been arraigned and or sentenced for domestic violence or a domestic violence related offense (i.e. violation of order of protection). Therefore, the data does not represent all domestic violence offenders, specifically those offenses not reported to the police. Similarly, the participants were court-ordered to attend the DVIP group, and the sample did not include domestic violence offenders that were not mandated to attend similar groups or those offenders who were incarcerated for domestic violence. The court-referred offenders were forced to attend domestic violence treatment programs, and therefore may have lacked motivation to change. Self-referred offenders have been shown to have higher levels of motivation to change (Bowen & Gilchrist, 2004). If the participants in this study were not ready to change, or felt that they should have been in a treatment program, this could produce more negative program perceptions from offenders than if they were self-referred. In the future, studies should examine an agency with both court-referred and self-referred offenders. However, if there were two agencies, one with self-referred offenders and

one with court-ordered offenders, it would be difficult to compare two types of offenders if they are receiving different treatment regimens.

A criticism is that this study had no control group. Since the offenders were all required by the courts to attend the domestic violence treatment program it would have been beneficial to interview a group of self-referred offenders. Motivation and readiness to change may differ between court-mandated and self-referred offenders, but a lack of comparison group prohibits such insights.

Because the sample of participants for this study was a purposive sample (a selected agency that treats domestic violence offenders), it was not feasible to have an equal sampling of gender, age and races. After an initial observation of the DVIP group meetings, it was assumed that the offender group interviewed would more than likely consist of only a few females, and that has shown to be true with only four females in the sample. Additionally, the offender sample represented a limited number of black (4) or other ethnic (neither black nor white, i.e. Hispanic) racial groups (1). The responses acquired by the females in this study cannot be generalizable to all other female domestic violence offenders. Women in the large Midwestern city may not have the same experiences as women on the East coast or West coast of the United States, not all women have the same familial structure or status as those being interviewed. Further, the female participants can be informative to offenders with similar demographical characteristics, but the data obtained from their interviews cannot always be generalizable to other races and age groups because of cultural and generational differences. The women can, however, add to the qualitative body of literature on perspectives of female domestic violence offenders.

The age range of the participants ranged from 26 years of age to 76 years of age. The problem with the selected group's age range was that the majority of the offenders in the sample were in their thirties (9), and therefore there were limited perspectives from the outlying ages that were representative of their generation's population. The literature says that those that are at high-risk for re-offending are young, with low educational levels, low incomes, single and are from abusive families (Andrews & Bonta, 1994). These characteristics of the younger age group can potentially create negative perceptions of the program based on lack of motivation and readiness to change. For this reason, during the analysis stage of the study, age was tracked for correlations with program effectiveness.

A potentially unforeseen limitation noted by Eckhardt and Utschig (2007) was that offender's may have been suspicious of how their responses would be handled (i.e. discussed with their probation officers), and therefore reluctant to answer questions or divulge genuine or complete answers. This could have possibly created a misjudgment of suspicion for low-motivation and readiness to change. To accommodate for this possibility, the researcher ensured the offenders that no one but herself would have access to the recordings or transcripts, and that any direct quotes would only be associated with their pseudonym.

Another setback of the interview process was the time allotted for the interview. In order to maintain interviewer safety, the only available options to conduct the interviews were when staff was present in the building and at a time that coincided with the researcher's schedule. The resulting time slots were approximately an hour before the DVIP group commenced on one of three weeknights or a weekend morning when various other probation classes were being held. If the participant were to choose a Saturday, this allowed the interview to take place from 9:00am to 12:00pm; more than adequate time to conduct the

interview. Unfortunately and understandably, only three individuals elected to come in on a Saturday, a day that they had not already intended on coming to the agency. This meant that the remaining interviews were under a stricter time limit. At times, the researcher was not able to ask as many clarifying or follow-up questions because of the lack of time. Moreover, two participants did not arrive at the time they were scheduled so their interview had to be completed on two separate days.

Finally, the gender of the researcher (female) may have been a limitation to who volunteered to participate, and how they participated. The majority of the offenders in this program were men. Some men may have chosen not to participate because the researcher was a female, and given the current situation of being domestic violence offenders, they may have had psychological issues with females. Or the issue may have been reversed, and there was more male participation because the researcher was a female. There was an instance where a research participant offered his personal cell phone number if there should be additional questions, and during the interview not-so-subtle comments were made. Other men offered to take the female researcher to dinner instead of her buying them a beverage or snack. The female participants may have chosen not to participate for fear of judgment by another female who had not been in their situation as a female domestic violence offender. Conversely, there may not have been more female participation because they may have believed that the researcher could not relate to their problems/issues with males.

### **Ethical Issues**

As mentioned previously, confidentiality is always important when studying a delicate subject matter. The criminal histories of the offenders were potentially harmful to the professional and personal integrity of their relationships. It was therefore a top priority of the

researcher to maintain anonymity. To do this, each offender was prompted to assign themselves a pseudonym. The interviews were conducted in a closed office room of the agency; whomever was present in the office would not be able to hear the responses of the offender, but for researcher safety there were open windows for monitoring. The only confidential information that the researcher could not guarantee was that other employees, citizens, or the general public that happened to be in the building could see who was participating in the study, but they did not have knowledge of data content.

A second potential ethical issue was psychological and emotional repercussions that the offenders may have incurred as a result of study participation. Bringing up past decisions or actions could have possibly created an emotional reaction. It was a goal of this study to avoid any harm to participants, and to accommodate this risk, a thorough review by the IRB was conducted before any data was gathered. Upon approval, each participant was given a consent form that outlined the purpose of the study, all possible benefits or risks associated with the study, and assurance of confidentiality.

As participants were being recruited, it was becoming evident that the sample would not include younger adults, specifically young males between the ages of 18 to 25. At the end of the recruitment, the youngest participant was a 26-year-old black female. This missing demographic of younger men and women could have changed the outcome of offender perceptions of the DVIP. More of the older men that were interviewed expressed some kind of acceptance that they were wrong. Conversely, if younger adults had volunteered to participate, their attitudes toward the program and motivation to change may have been vastly different. After speaking with the facilitators who had observed that at times the older gentlemen (no comments were made regarding the women's group) would confront some of

the younger males during class regarding their offenses, and tell them that their actions were wrong or inappropriate. This kind of reaction of the older men reveals a difference in motivational attitude to change their negative behaviors. The younger demographic could have feasibly possessed this same way of thinking. Alternatively, however, there may have been a likelihood that the younger men would have had a more negative attitude toward their crimes and the program effectiveness. The possibility of this missing component could have contributed to more criticisms of the program, but it could have supplemented the suggestions for how to efficaciously teach this younger population non-violent behavior.

This chapter outlined the manner in which domestic violence offenders and administrators of a domestic violence prevention program were recruited to offer their perspective on the effectiveness of that program. Although the study was limited by time allotment, gender issues, and variability of participant ages and races, their responses to the interviews have developed insight into what works in domestic violence prevention and where the opportunity for growth lies. The following two chapters reveal the strengths and the flaws of the Duluth Model as being taught by one specific probation agency, suggestions for improvement, and suggested alternatives to the domestic violence intervention program.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

After interviewing fifteen individuals who attended a domestic violence intervention program, the two program facilitators, and the two supervisors at the probation agency, the participants offered candid insight into their histories and their perceptions of the DVIP operations. The following chapter reveals what led these offenders to be in the program, a description of the domestic violence program, and an evaluation of the program through their perspective. On the opposite side of the domestic violence spectrum, the administrators at the probation agency shared their opinions of the domestic violence offenders and the domestic violence program model. The integrity of the program model was judged on its content, its strengths and weaknesses, and how the agency and the facilitators executed the program. Finally, both the offenders and administrators suggested ways for changing the program, and offered alternative treatment methods to the domestic violence intervention program.

#### **History of Violence**

The offender participants that were included in this study varied in age, race, and charges or sentences. There were eleven men interviewed, one of which was of African and Cuban descent, the other was of Hispanic origin, and the remaining nine were White/Caucasian. There were four women interviewed, three were of African-American descent, and one was White/Caucasian. The youngest participant was a Black female, 26 years old, and the oldest participant was a White male, 76 years old. The most common age group was participants between 30 and 40 years of age (9).

## **Sentencing**

Some of the men and women were given different severities of sentences, and in one instance, a man had not pled guilty to his crime, but was ordered by the judge in his case to attend the DVIP while awaiting the date of the plea. In this particular Midwestern state, as of 2011, offenders would either receive a Suspended Imposition of Sentence (SIS) or a Suspended Execution of Sentence (SES). If the offender received an SIS, the charge would be removed from his or her criminal record upon successful completion of the terms of probation. An SES signified a conviction on the offender's criminal record. For that reason, some of the participants will be associated with a charge, and some will be associated with a conviction. One may assume that individuals who attended a domestic violence intervention program had been charged or convicted of domestic assault, but for this study's sample there were actually three male participants whose charge was a Violation of Ex Parte or Violation of Full-Order of Protection. All of the women, and the remaining eight men were charged or convicted of Domestic Assault or Domestic Violence in varying degrees.

## **Prior Domestic Violence Record**

For many of the participants, their charge or conviction for which they were attending the class was the first incident they had had of some type of domestic assault or violation of ex parte. There were, however, three men who had been arrested for domestic assault one other time, and two men who had been arrested multiple times for domestic assault. Two of the women had been arrested for domestic assault one other time. Two of the males who had prior records of domestic assault stated that they were ordered to attend an eight-week anger management class with another probation agency years prior. One of the men said that the teaching style was very similar to the DVIP, but the other male said it had been so many

years since he had attended that he could not comment on the content or compare the two programs. The older female who had a prior arrest said that she had to attend an anger management program eighteen years prior, and because of the time that had elapsed, she could not recall any substantive details from the previous program.

## **Struggles**

As the men and women described their personal stories in detail, it was evident that the judicial process leading up to their sentencing was extensive and time consuming. Each individual was forced to make some kind of sacrifice. The road that led them to the domestic violence intervention program turned out to be quite costly, ranging from thousands of dollars spent on attorney fees or valuable time spent away from loved ones.

The most reoccurring theme among the participants was the financial burden that their charge or conviction had cost them. Steve was actually in another state when he was charged with domestic assault. Since he resided in the Midwest, he was forced to travel to the other state several times before his case was disposed. He explained the cost of his crime, “time off work, not making the money, the flights and hotels. Of course thousands of dollars on an attorney.” Although the litigation process had cost Steve a significant amount of money, he was fortunate to have had funds to hire an attorney. That was not the case for Richard when he found himself taking a plea bargain because he could not afford his bond or legal representation:

“...with no attorney, and no \$10,000 bond, and me having the kids, at this point I had the kids that past year, 90% of the time. They depended on me, so did she. She depended on me to have the kids. Going to jail wasn’t going to be plausible. So they gave me the opportunity to talk with the prosecutor, see if I wanted to work out a plea. It was kinda got into a deal where I didn’t have a choice. I couldn’t afford, I couldn’t afford to make a choice at that point so I just took the plea not knowing what I was getting myself into the probation side of it all.”

Many of the men, like Richard, were also fathers that were forced to spend time away from their children. Ken was one male participant whose charge was a Violation of Ex Parte. With a Violation of Ex Parte came a no-contact clause that made custody and exchanges more difficult. For Ken, the separation became detrimental to his mental health as he suffered, “a three month stint of serious depression.” He further explained, “I didn’t wanna move depression. Not over the divorce, over my children. “ One of the most difficult consequences that Jason had to face was the four months of incarceration that separated him from his children:

“... I remember the first time I talked to my youngest daughter in prison was in diagnostics and she hadn’t seen me in five months and she couldn’t even talk, she was hyperventilating. I mean as soon as she heard my voice she was hyperventilating. She’s like, she didn’t know what to say, she was just bawling. I’m like ‘baby you’re starting to make me cry’. Because I’m like oh man, honestly that’s the point in my life that changed everything for me cause I realized what I did to my own kids by my own actions. That was the one point that changed everything for me that said I wanna do better, and everything from this point on is gonna be about my kids. It’s not gonna be about me. I mean I found myself, all that stuff but man did I hurt my kids.”

For Jason, his consequences forced him to reevaluate his priorities, and he realized the effect his actions had on those he loved. Sheera was involved in a domestic altercation with her boyfriend where she was trying to protect herself from being a victim of domestic violence. As she was trying to protect her child that was present, she backhanded her boyfriend. For that action her boyfriend called the police and had her arrested for domestic assault. She described how her incarceration affected her and her family, “I’ve spent, what, a total of 33 days away from my kids now because of his stupidity. You know, I mean, my kids have gone through a lot. I think my youngest baby was molested while I was in jail for those 28 days.” She continued to describe how a family member took advantage of her child when she was away. Unlike Sheera who blamed her boyfriend, five offenders blamed the justice system for

not being able to see their kids. For instance, as Ben explained, “I haven’t been able to see my boys for a while cause you know, I kept trying to tell them you know, I didn’t do anything to hurt them, my kids, her, or anybody. Everybody wants to act like I’m the villain here so I told them to kiss my ass.”

The type of animosity that Ben exuded was not a unique occurrence. In subsequent and preceding interviews, participants were not modest in revealing their hostility and frustrations with the justice system, the probation agency, and the domestic violence intervention program. In the upcoming sections, the participants unveiled their honest and frank perceptions of the program. First, to better understand where they were coming from, the following section describes the probation agency that hosted the program, the administrators’ experience with the DVIP, and their teaching techniques of the Duluth Model.

### **Program Description**

The domestic violence model that the probation agency used at the time of the study was the Duluth Model. The Duluth Model was described in greater detail in the Chapter Two, but the difference in how the program was designed to be taught and the integrity of its execution could differ across agencies. For that reason, the agency supervisors were asked to give a brief history on their program preceding the Duluth Model, and how they made the transition to the current curriculum. Then, the facilitators explained how their work history and personal experience prepared them to teach the Duluth Model curriculum with their own individual teaching styles.

## **DVIP Before The Duluth Model**

According to the probation supervisors, the agency had implemented a domestic violence intervention program approximately five or six years prior (2005 or 2006) to this study. Prior to 2011 the agency based their program on the Duluth Model curriculum, but they were not adhering to the exact guidelines that the Duluth Model outlined. Facilitator training was minimal according to supervisor Mike who stated, “There was very little formal training on how to conduct domestic violence intervention or batterer’s intervention groups. They kind of learned it on their own with our help. So training was minimum until recently.” As Mike explained, they were using the Duluth Model curriculum, and they saw it necessary to make some of their own changes,

“We adjusted their curriculum we felt and still believe we actually improved on the model because we were able to add components that we thought were relevant and helpful that were not part of the Duluth Model and that was 5 or 6 years ago. Since then, I think that they’ve adjusted their model as well and I think it’s pretty close to the same information.”

One practice that was used before the agency was certified to teach the Duluth Model was co-ed classes. Before 2011, women offenders were in the same class as male offenders. Since there was such a small population of females that were court-ordered to attend the DVIP, they were integrated with the males. Not until recently when there was a certified Duluth Model training were the females separated into their own class.

## **Implementing The Duluth Model**

In October of 2010, a judge informed one of the group facilitators that the city’s Safe Families Coalition was going to compile a bench book, a book that included all of the agencies with best practices that would be distributed to all of the judges. This bench book would inform judges what the best places were to send offenders for substance abuse and

domestic violence programs. If an agency was not following the Duluth Model, then they would not be included in the book. So in March 2011, the agency brought in staff from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program (DAIP) of Duluth, Minnesota for a three-day training to certify the agency's staff on the Duluth Model. According to the administrators there was no periodical training offered after the initial training. The Duluth Model was updated from time to time and according to Sandy, the facilitators would receive the new materials, review it, and train themselves.

The length of the domestic violence program at the agency was 26 weeks. One of the participants in the group was actually ordered to be evaluated for the DVIP as opposed to being ordered to attend, and was assigned a modified program of 12 weeks. The scheduled meetings were from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on one of two nights during the week. There were also two other groups that met on a weekend morning, but individuals were not recruited to participate from those groups due to scheduling conflicts. The classes were generally conducted in that time frame, but according to some participants the class did not start until after the first 15 minutes. According to the facilitators, if an individual had more than three unexcused absences then it would result in a violation to the Court, and they would have to be reinstated by the judge before being able to re-enter the classes. Once the individual was reinstated, they resumed where they left off. For instance, if someone had attended six DVIP groups before receiving a violation then once they resumed their classes, they would restart at class number seven.

The cost of the DVIP group was \$30 a session, for a program total of \$780. Only rarely would judges occasionally waive the fees for the program. There were also rare

occasions when the program director would adjust fees for individuals who brought in proof of little to no income to afford the classes.

After being assessed for the DVIP, males had a choice of which facilitator they preferred, which location, and what meeting time. Men could choose to attend a class on a weeknight or a weekend in the suburban location with Sandy, or they could attend a class on a weeknight or weekend morning in the city with Terrence. Since there were only eight or nine females enrolled in the DVIP there was only one class offered on a weeknight with Sandy. Additionally, it was no longer an option for women to be in a DVIP group with men or vice versa.

### **Evaluations**

The domestic violence offenders and administrators were asked to evaluate each other. First, the administrators offered their perceptions of whether the offenders should have been court ordered, and if the offenders were deserving of the label of batterer or abuser. Second, the offenders evaluated the effectiveness and qualifications of the group facilitators. Next, the offenders evaluated the content and execution of the Duluth Model. The participants pinpointed strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, and offered suggestions for improving the program. Further, the administrators presented their professional opinions on the implementation and adequacy of the program on offender rehabilitation. They also discussed cognitive learning techniques, and if the program was a proper treatment for all offenders alike. Similarly to the offender participants, the administrators suggested strengths of the program and improvements that could be made to the curriculum. Finally, the participants suggested equivalent or more severe types of punishments as possible alternatives to the domestic violence intervention program.

## **Administrator Evaluation of Offenders**

The label, “domestic violence offender” or “batterer” is not a title that can be taken casually. Assigning that label can be stigmatizing to an individual’s behavior or contrariwise it can be constructive to changing abusive behavior of someone that has been branded as such. The facilitators who worked with these individuals on a daily basis and the supervisors who only oversaw the program, discussed the suitability of the label to the individual. Both group facilitators and one administrator agreed that all of the men and women who had attended their program did not deserve the label of domestic violence offender. For instance, Sandy explained how one man in her class violated an ex parte when he flipped off his ex-wife. Sandy had received a copy of the ex-parte that his ex-wife filed in which the wife had stated that he had never physically harmed her. Although Sandy disagreed that all men should be labeled domestic violence offenders she added, “...there’s a few of them I don’t really think they should be labeled with that and have to live with that label, but a lot of them, I think most of them, should have to have that [label].” An opposite viewpoint was that of which Terrence had witnessed as a facilitator. He believed that most of the men were not a stereotypical abuser or batterer. He noted that most of the men he dealt with had some kind of underlying issue that led up to the incident for which they were attending the classes:

“To be honest, most of the individuals that I get, I don’t even think that domestic violence is their core issue. They are not generally bad people. They have trouble connecting concepts. It is more of a societal issue than anything that I have... I have yet to get an individual who was what I would consider a classic batterer. And when I say classic batterer, he’s that guy that is angry and he attacks, let it be emotionally, physically or verbally because he’s angry. Usually they don’t know how to cope with specific situations or specific instances and they act out, almost like children, they act out because of not knowing how to handle specific situations.”

Mike disagreed with his counterparts and suggested that the people enrolled in their domestic violence program were not mislabeled as domestic violence offenders. He allowed that

perhaps the agency has had individuals in the program that may not have needed it, but even that small handful of cases could have taken beneficial information from sitting through the 26-week course. If anything, he added, there were far more domestic violence offenders out there that should be court-ordered to attend the program.

As previously noted, the offender participants were all court-ordered to attend the domestic violence intervention program or in Clint's case he was ordered to be evaluated for the program. According to program supervisor Mike, the agency only had court-ordered individuals that were attending the program, but self-referrals were welcome to attend. Four out of four administrators and facilitators agreed that the offenders in the program should have been mandated to attend the program. Sandy elaborated that the severity of the crime should not matter, all offenders could benefit from being ordered to attend the program. Terrence explained that most men do not believe they have a problem at the time they are ordered to attend. He continued saying:

“If they weren't court-mandated they would never show up. They would never go. Most men that batter do not believe that they have a problem. Most of the men even, I mean they could get into an all-out, drag out fight and they could have shut both of the woman's eyes, and they still believe they were justified and they didn't do anything wrong. The court-mandated part is one of the best tools that we have in actually getting the men to at least take a look at the information and the statistics that are out there. I don't think on their own they would have done it. And I usually tell guys that come into intake, if you weren't arrested, if you weren't caught, if you weren't forced to be here, you would more than likely re-offend.”

Obviously this was a general evaluation of all the offenders that the facilitators, and at times, the supervisors had come in contact with. It would not have been possible for each facilitator to evaluate each male or female that volunteered for this study due to confidentiality reasons. On the other side, however, the program participants were able to give a more specific evaluation of the group facilitators.

## **Offender Evaluations of Facilitators**

The offenders were first asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their facilitator, Sandy or Terrence, by their manner of teaching the curriculum and their control of the class. Among the men in Terrence's group, five out of five men agreed that he was an effective facilitator. Some of the attributes that Steve pointed out that made Terrence effective were, "his outlook, his attitude, his mannerisms, his knowledge of questions he asks and discussions he gets started and where he leads them."

Bill agreed that he seemed very knowledgeable and personable as a leader. For Orlando who did not believe he needed to be in the domestic violence classes, he stated that Terrence's method of teaching had been beneficial to him, "I've learned a lot. Out of these 20 weeks I actually thought I wouldn't even wanna learn anything, but I learned something in every class with him."

The evaluations of Sandy had varied responses regarding her effectiveness in the way she taught the program. Among the women in the weeknight group, two of them agreed she was an effective facilitator. The other two women never agreed or disagreed; they explained what they thought of the class, but never fully answered the question about their facilitator. Sheera, one of the women who did not answer yes or no, suggested that the classes would be better if the facilitator could do more controlling of the conversations among the other women in the group. She continued saying that Sandy had helped her when they had one-on-one conversations regarding her home life, expressing, "I have a lot of respect for that woman, and it's hard to get my respect because of all the crap I've been through." The men in Sandy's weeknight group in the suburbs also had divided opinions. Four out of six men agreed that she was an effective leader, but the other two men did not

answer one way or the other because of qualifying answers. Ben had a similar opinion to Sheera on the control of the class, when asked if Sandy was effective: “Some points yeah, sometimes she lets the class get away from her a little bit.” He elaborated on his thoughts:

“She kinda seems to let a few of the guys kinda take the class in it’s own directions. It seems like it just keeps going in circles instead of making progress. It just seems to be like the same shit, week after week, about the same two or three people.”

Richard had the opposite perspective of Ben as he had observed that Sandy could bring in a conversation that seemed to be veering off the subject, and bring the subject back to domestic violence prevention. He had gained a great amount of respect for her as facilitator through her showing respect to the men in the class:

“She’s so good about listening which I think is the number one thing. There’s so much different skills of what people are in here for and she treats each one with the same respect. She looks them in the eye. I noticed this right from the get-go. She even responds to them in a way that she even repeats what they have said so she lets us understand she knows what we’re talking about, but she’ll go ahead and she’ll take a conversation when one of the persons will want, they’ll just get off the subject.”

Josh stated that Sandy connected with the men on their level so that she could make the men understand that what the curriculum taught was accurate. Additionally, he said that men could go to class believing their behavior was not wrong, but Sandy had a way of making them realize that their behavior was actually inappropriate. Jason said that the way she kept the men accountable during class was effective for him. He said that especially when the class sizes were smaller, Sandy would have more one-on-one interaction with the individuals and make them talk about their crimes.

The second question the participants were asked was if they thought the facilitators were qualified to be leading the domestic violence groups. Without a doubt, all fifteen participants agreed that their facilitator had the qualifications needed to be a DVIP facilitator. The men in Terrence’s group mentioned some qualities such as being very knowledgeable

about the material he taught. Knowledge was mentioned by three of the five men, and Bill stated that he was qualified because he knew that Terrence was a college graduate.

Knowledge was a qualifying component for two of the six men in Sandy's weeknight group as well. Josh believed, in addition to knowledge, that Sandy was qualified because of the way she had structured, controlled and taught the class. The women in Sandy's group agreed that she was qualified, but instead of mentioning knowledge, two of the four women mentioned her personal experience with domestic violence that made her a competent facilitator.

Overall, the general consensus of the three groups was that their facilitators were both effective and qualified to be leading the domestic violence intervention program. For the few men and women that were unsure of how they viewed their facilitator or even for those who responded positively, it was pertinent to ask the participants if the gender of their facilitator was relevant or inconsequential. Once again, the women in Sandy's group were divided. Two out of four women believed that gender was significant to how they responded to the program. For Kim who said that she had been a victim of domestic violence, she would have preferred having a female facilitator because if a man had been teaching her it would have made her uncomfortable and uneasy. Sheera said that she would have been more comfortable with a female because she would have been more reserved in her participation if the group was led by a male facilitator. The men in Sandy's group presented a unique perspective apart from the other two groups because they were being led by the opposite sex. Three of the six men concurred that gender did not matter to them. The remaining three men said that it would be better if a woman taught the men's group. For example, Josh said:

"I think if a man taught it, considering we're all men that has, you know we done something to a woman...I think with a man teaching men, the effect out of the class he wouldn't get the same I don't think. I would take a woman much more serious than a man teaching class."

Ben and Jason thought that it would be helpful if a woman lead the DVIP groups so that they could hear a woman's perspective on the issue. Ben thought that if a male facilitated a male group of domestic violence offenders that the male facilitator would more readily empathize with their situation. He explained:

“I don't think [gender] really matters, but I do also think it may be more effective having her because she has, she knows the way women think obviously so she could tell us 'well I would feel this way.' As where men would be like, I agree with you guys so yeah I think it's probably more effective to have a woman.”

In the group of males led by a male facilitator, four out of five men believed that gender was not an issue. Ken summed up the majority opinion, “I think if they're qualified it doesn't matter what sex you are.” Angelo had a dissenting opinion, “I think a male is better to deal with a male versus a female because a male can understand some of your emotions that we're going through to be non-bias.”

Overall, ten out of fifteen offender participants believed that gender did not matter when considering who facilitated domestic violence classes. Two females thought that a woman was better to teach other women, two males said that a woman would be more appropriate to teach a group of men, and one male said that a male facilitator would be more suitable to teach a group of male domestic violence offenders.

### **Offenders' Motivation to Change**

While interviewing various participants it was evident that the majority had strong opinions concerning their crimes and the program. A few of the attitudes and tones that were observed included: animosity, bitterness, anger, denial, acceptance and remorse. Some of the men and women blamed their victims for being in their position; others acknowledged that they were at fault. The participants, including the administrators, were all asked if they

believed that the men and women in the program were deserving of their sentences, and if they were ready to change their controlling behavior. The offender participants directly answered either yes they deserved their sentence, or no they did not deserve it. There were, however, other comments made throughout the interviews by some participants that would confirm or contradict their initial answers.

When asked if they believed they deserved their sentence or charge, the majority said no. Eight of fifteen offenders said they did not deserve to be charged with domestic assault or violation of an ex parte. Two men said they did deserve their charge, and five of the fifteen were unsure how to answer. John, who had been arrested three times for domestic assault admitted that he was responsible for being charged with domestic assault when he punched his girlfriend in the face. He stated, “I mean in all reality I’ll be a man and stand up for what I’ve done. I don’t think what I did was right, you know. I totally regret ever doing it, and would never do it again.” Ken had been ordered to take the DVIP class because of a violation of an ex parte, which he believed he never violated:

“So why? Why am I here? For sending an email that might have requested that she be civil or that we be civil; that we get the divorce done and over with so we can move on with our lives and the children. And that kind of talk is what’s landed me here. So do I think this is proper punishment? I don’t think there should have been a punishment period.”

The other two men who were charged with a violation of an ex parte maintained their innocence. Richard said he was not guilty because he had never received the papers that informed him there was an ex parte granted to his girlfriend. On the other hand, some men, like Steve, were uncertain as to whether they deserved their punishment:

“I guess. I don’t know. I wouldn’t say I deserve what I got, but probably something had to happen I guess. I don’t know, I don’t know how to explain that one. I’m actually against physical abuse. My mother, when she divorced my father, actually got into an abusive relationship. And I’ve hated it this whole time. And just the fact

that I've been accused of that, even though I know inside that I didn't that I was just more or less protecting myself."

Similarly to Steve, Kim did not believe she was solely responsible for receiving her sentence.

Like some of the other women interviewed and men alike, Kim said she was provoked to react the way she did. She was indecisive when she responded about deserving her sentence:

"In a way I do. And in a way I feel like I don't because I feel like I, a lot of that stuff that went on, if I hadn't have put myself in that situation period, I wouldn't have to go through it. But I feel like he went about things wrong too. He didn't conduct himself as an adult. And he did a lot of provoking things to me... And then, I feel like, I should have to do this because I could have conducted myself as an adult too. I coulda walked away. Instead of letting my fear get the best of me, I could have called the shelter and gotten over there. I coulda left. I could have not even went over there. So, yeah, I kinda do deserve to do these classes."

The men and women were also asked to present their viewpoint on whether or not they believed they had a problem that merited their attendance at the DVIP classes. Only three of the fifteen people said they needed to be at the classes, and surprisingly, those respondents were all men in Terrence's group, none of which said they deserved their sentences. Ten of fifteen people did not consider it necessary for them to attend, and two people were unconvinced that they needed to attend the classes.

Both Orlando and Angelo agreed that they needed to be at the meetings because they learned something from them. Orlando said that he kept an open mind, and the class discussions put things into perspective for him that he may not have otherwise considered. Angelo did not believe he deserved his sentence, but he was positive that he needed to be present at the DVIP:

"...I think it's going to make me a better person in the long run, for what I'm getting out of here; how to deal with certain emotions....I'm finding more and more about me. I wouldn't, I enjoy this program that I'm in because I can vent. I can talk, and I've been finding out a lot about me through other people's struggles so yeah."

Conversely, some of the offenders denied their guilt, so presumably they thought it was unnecessary to attend a domestic violence intervention program. Ben's summation was, "If I did nothing wrong I don't think I need to be at the meetings." Josie did not think she needed to attend the meetings, "because he lied. I didn't hit him. If I'd have hit him I'd deserve to be in a class if that was my punishment." Jason suggested that his four-month incarceration in a treatment facility was enough punishment. After losing his whole family and facing a daunting period in prison, he felt that was sufficient remediation to prevent him from ever physically or emotionally harming the ones he loved again.

Although the general consensus among the offenders was that they did not deserve their imposed sentences and charges, nor did they need to be attending the meetings, the unanimous belief of the administrators was that the offenders needed to attend the DVIP meetings. There was a split opinion, however, on whether or not there was a readiness to change upon court referral among the offenders.

All four of the administrators agreed that the offenders were justly court-ordered to attend the classes regardless of the severity. Terrence stated, "If they weren't court-mandated, they would never show up. They would never go. Most men that batter do not believe that they have a problem." Sandy agreed that although each offender's crime may have been different, it was a program that they could have all used so they should have been court-ordered to participate in the DVIP:

"I think going through the program it makes them more aware of all of their choices, Not just as far as violence, but all of their choices so I think it's a good program that any of them could use. And I've had people in class who have had to do the 26-week program who he had, there was an ex-parte order and he drove through a parking lot and flipped off his ex-wife. That's considered contact; she reported it. So he had to do the class just like another person who held a gun to his girlfriend's head. But you know the guy who flipped his wife off he learned his choices affect other people besides just him because he had children involved too. And he said that was the

biggest thing that he learned from class that it doesn't just affect him, you know. So even as minor as the situation was, he learned something."

The man who flipped off his ex-wife learned after participating in the classes that his choices had consequences. When he first began the classes, however, he may not have been ready and/or willing to learn that lesson. The administrators offered some insight into the offenders' initial attitudes toward the program and their motivation to change.

Catherine and Terrence both agreed that individuals who started the intervention program were not at all ready to change. Catherine said willingness to change appeared after the men started attending the program:

"I think in the beginning they're not willing. I mean they've been ordered by the judge to be here, and that's not a reason to want to change. But once they get into the program, and they hear good advice and kinda get to know themselves better, and maybe even get to know the victim better, there's a change."

Mike and Sandy believed that there were a few individuals who had started the program acknowledging that they had a problem and needed to change. Mike, being an administrator who did not have frequent contact with the offenders in the program, believed that each case was different. He based his opinion on what he had seen at the end of the program:

"I have heard some offenders say they think it was a great program, they got a lot out of it, it changed their lives. But I know that we've also terminated a lot of offenders that never even got into the process, that were in denial or angry or not willing to consider any changes, and were not impacted at all."

As a facilitator, Sandy had more frequent experience with observing the offenders' attitudes toward being in the classes. The majority of men were not motivated to change once they started the program. For a select few she noted that the lengthy legal processes had given some offenders the opportunity to receive help in advance.

"I would say 98 percent of them are not motivated at the beginning, and then there's that two percent who it's been a year, a year and a half since the incident happened before they finally plead, and they've actually taken some steps on their own and

gone into private counseling and done some self-help things. So their eyes are a little bit more opened, which helps. It makes it a little bit easier.”

In the following section, the offenders and administrators have evaluated the integrity of the Duluth Model and how it was being implemented by this particular probation agency. First, the offenders assessed the program for individualization pertaining to their needs. Second, the offenders suggested strengths of the Duluth Model and the program, but also opportunities for improvement. Finally, after having attended a certain number of classes, the participants reflected on the usefulness of the program. Likewise, the administrators evaluated the effectiveness of the DVIP as treatment, and whether it worked as a cognitive learning technique. Second, they gave their input on the appropriateness of the DVIP as proper treatment for all offenders. Third, they discussed the reliability of the Duluth Model being taught by the agency as it was originally intended. Finally, the four administrators also gave their opinion on the program’s significant achievements, and where the program may have had some weaknesses.

### **Program Integrity from Offenders’ Perspectives**

#### **Individualized Curriculum**

As some of participants had mentioned, every individual was ordered to attend the domestic violence class for different scenarios. With that in mind, the question was asked, do you think the program is individualized to meet your needs? To clarify, was the program addressing similar problems or situations to the incident for which they were charged? Five men and three women agreed that the program had fit their situation. Five men did not believe that the Duluth Model was individualized. The remaining two were unsure if the program was tailored to each individual.

John believed that the program was individualized for anyone in the class who had a domestic violence or domestic assault charge. Lashonda agreed that the Duluth Model was applicable to any case, “It help(s) a person period; if it’s my case or any person(‘s) case. It can help anybody if the person really want(s) the help.” Steve believed the program had a universal application. When asked, he replied,

“I think so. I think it applies to everybody. So far the instructors bring up open-ended questions, and a lot of discussions so you discuss amongst other class people that attend the same class. Each person’s situations and perspective is covered so I think so.”

Ben was unsure of how to respond to the question because he had his entire group in mind. Because each person in the classes had discussed their crimes, he knew that there was a range of problems and issues that needed to be addressed. “I don’t know. There’s such a wide ranging group in there, you know, of people that have done different stuff and they’re actually admitting to it.” He suggested that perhaps there might need to be more classes that are more suitable to the severity of the crimes.

For some of the men and women participants, their reasons for believing the program was not individualized was because they maintained their innocence of the crime for which they were accused. Bill held that he was not guilty, and that the program was not individualized for him simply because of his age. “Number one, I’ve already said what didn’t happen. Number two, as far as not putting myself in the same situation again for it to happen again... Well hey, I’m 76, I’m not gonna be getting married again or intend on finding a live-in girlfriend.” Ken argued that although he was not guilty, the specific crime of violation of an ex parte was not addressed in the Duluth Model curriculum:

“I don’t think that my specific reason I’m here is outlined for, you know, sending an email. And violating an ex parte, I don’t know how they would address that. I guess take your computer would be about the only thing they could do.”

In an alternative perspective, Richard did not agree that the program was individualized:

“I don’t think they are so much individualized. I think they’re pretty, pretty broad. They fit my needs. I think they fit the human’s needs...Makes you open your eyes that there is a problem out there...I think it covers quite a broad ...I don’t think it’s specific to me at all.”

## **Strengths**

One repetitious theme of strength among the participants was how the program kept the offenders accountable, and how it forced them to reflect on their own negative behaviors.

In the following excerpts, Jason, John, Steve and Ben described how the program had opened their eyes to self-reflection:

“...you hear somebody else talk about what he did and you’re like ‘aw you dirty son of a bitch’ you know what I mean. And then you’re like well dude I did the same thing basically. It might not have been the same exact way, but you still assaulted somebody that you loved or supposedly loved so hearing those stories and realizing they’re being dumbasses, makes you think about yourself being a dumbass you know what I mean.” –Jason

“It allows people to kinda face life on life’s terms, you know, a little bit. Gives you an opportunity to step back and actually let a person realize, you know, the things that they’ve done to get themselves in that position. Cause, you know, I don’t think, I think that if we weren’t made to take these classes and be accountable for our actions in one way or another then I think that people would just forget about what they did and just go on about life.” –John

“Bringing that person that’s attending the class to terms. Basically opening their eyes and realize that they may have a problem, and they don’t think they do. And the various areas that one would not see that are either violating domestic violence, basically just the lack of respect for their significant other or whoever they’re with. It just shows him how conflicts arise, how you view, how you treat your partner and everything else. Like so far in just the two classes that I’ve been in it’s just a few of the topics have been brought up, it’s just like wow I never would have thought that would have been part of this discussion, but it opens your eyes to see how it effects the big picture, how it triggers things.” – Steve

In addition to reflecting on his actions, Ben offered the idea that his facilitator being a female made it easier for him to understand the viewpoint of a female and why she would think the way she does:

“Well I think [Sandy], she brings a lot of why the woman thinks the way she does. And you know, there’s a bunch of us so we already know how we think the way we do about certain things, and she’s like now is that fair? And we actually sit there and think about it, and no it’s not fair. Some of the stuff, the way we were brought up to think and you know, just learning from our family, different situations, the way the world, we think the world should perceive us. You know, so she brings a lot of light to the subject of being fair in a relationship and what the woman’s thinking so...” – Ben

Another theme that arose during the interviews was the qualifications of the group facilitators. Several participants had mentioned that both Sandy and Terrence were very knowledgeable, respectful in class, and they both had great communication skills. Bill spoke of the agency in general, stating that a strength was, “treating us as human beings, not treating us like dirt, like damn criminals. In other words, everybody’s been respectful...Nobody here has been distasteful.” Ken specifically mentioned the teaching style of Terrence as one of the program’s strengths:

“I think that [Terrence] is knowledgeable. I think that helps if you have somebody teaching a class if you can not only say it, but can give you the information of where he found what he found- the statistics that he’s spitting, the examples he’s using. I think it helps for some people to have foundation to that, and [Terrence] is capable of giving where you can find that.”

Overall, one of the greatest significant aspects of the program that offenders recognized was that the Duluth Model and the groups kept the offenders accountable for their actions. By sitting in a classroom with people in similar situations, they were forced to reflect on their own actions. As previously mentioned, the majority of offenders did not believe they deserved their charges, and many of them did not believe they needed to attend the DVIP, but some had still found the program beneficial. Another strength of the program was the

knowledge that the facilitators had displayed. Not only were they able to present the Duluth Model curriculum, but they were also able to supplement the facts with statistics to underscore the information given. The program, however, had its flaws according to the participants. There were a few areas of the domestic violence program that had room for improvement.

### **Weaknesses & Suggestions**

After interviewing all fifteen of the offender participants, thirteen individuals found what they considered to be a weakness of the domestic violence intervention program. The number one weakness observed was the issue of money. Six out of fifteen participants said that paying \$30 a week, and spending the money for gas was the greatest weakness.

Lashonda pointed out the difficulty it was for herself and other people facing economic hardships to try and find the money to attend the classes;

“You know it is hard, you know, the economy is hard out here to make it. And it’s already hard for people to make it on their own. And then when you got a person like me who coming in, who got to pay something extra outta they means of income. It’s hard.”

Richard was a father who had sole custody of his two children, and he found it difficult to support his children and be able to find the resources to attend the DVIP:

“It’s too much money, not just the class itself, but I live far away. It’s a struggle, it makes it worse, it makes it harder on me. Like I said I paid the money upfront, and it still makes it tough on me. Just finding a vehicle, my car broke down in the past month three times and that’s a struggle, and I also got the children. It’s hard to find, people are struggling everywhere. It’s hard to find people to help, even grandma’s are struggling. And it’s just the expectation to be somewhere every week that’s that far away from you when you can barely get down to the grocery store. You can barely get, you know I got this ten dollar bill I have to last me, I can’t buy groceries for the kids, I have to put it in the gas tank just to get there and drive back.”

Clint found irony in the fact that the problems that created domestic violence were exacerbated by the system that was supposed to help them:

“I think they tell the person that each class is here to help you, but help shouldn’t cost you. Most those people that need those classes, you know she said in there most domestic violence are over financial problems. So here court comes, step in and they’re gonna create more financial problems.”

A second weakness that four of the participants recognized was the control of the classes. Sometimes the facilitator did not keep the classes focused on the topic of discussion. Josie, Sheera, Ben, and Jason, all led by Sandy, noticed a lack of control during the conversations in class. Josie said that sometimes the women in her class tended to take the conversation in a different direction. She saw the problem as, “staying focused. Staying on the subject and being, just pin-pointing to the main subject that’s on the table.” Sheera who attended the same group as Josie suggested that the classes would be beneficial “if we could do some controlling of the conversations of the other classmates in here.” One thing Sheera did not feel comfortable doing was speaking during class because the comments weren’t controlled:

“If one girl wants to talk, she’s gonna talk over you. And if you have an opinion and everyone else doesn’t agree with it, you hear about it, and it becomes an argument. And it takes over the whole class.”

Jason said that the size of the class could interfere with the men’s focus, “I would just say the size. If it gets too many people in there, the guys can start muttering and stuff about other stuff in the back or something like that.” Ben suggested that the organization of the program was a problem, and it could be improved with more structure:

“I think it should be a little more organized. Like when you go to college they give, you know, we’re going over this this week, this week, you know. Just what to expect. This is exactly what we’re gonna talk about, and we’re not leaving here until we go over all of it.”

The next notable weakness was the location of the DVIP classes. As Richard had mentioned, he had to drive a significant distance from his house to attend. Orlando and Bill also commented that there were not enough locations closer to where they resided.

The former weaknesses just noted were all suggestions that the agency could improve on. Ken and Angelo, however, specifically addressed weaknesses to the Duluth Model curriculum, and not the agency that taught it. Angelo saw a cultural difference between Duluth and the city that this study took place in:

“I do not like the Duluth method. Because we’re not in Duluth, Minnesota, we’re in [large Midwestern city]. We all come from different ethnic backgrounds, we were raised different. This is the, Duluth is the should I say mid-American picket fence ways. Its not happening, it’s not, it’s now how, it’s not the times we live in.”

After being in several DVIP classes and hearing the stories of other men in his class Ken observed that Duluth was not adequate treatment for all domestic violence offenders. He thought that some men needed more severe treatment:

“I think they’re limited. I think for people that are, that seriously have a problem with something like that I think they need way more than a two-hour conversation or a two hour class. I think for somebody in the situation that has really done the horrible things that I know of a couple of people in the class have done because they’ll tell you they did it. I think a couple of those guys probably need a lot more in depth, and probably on a more regular basis than [Terrence] provides with his two hour class once a week.”

In summation, the weaknesses of the program according to offender participants were: the amount of money they had to pay for the program, the lack of focus and control of the classes, the location of the agency, the cultural irrelevance of the Duluth Model, and the improper treatment of the Duluth Model for all domestic violence offenders.

Identifying the weaknesses in the program proved to be advantageous because through them, the offenders were able to suggest ways that the program could be improved upon or changed. One criticism that Sheera had was the lack of control during the classes. So

she suggested, “more one-on-one or a back-up officer in the class to where that’s that one person’s job to say ‘hey...listen to what she has to say.’ And I think that would probably solve it all.”

Josie suggested that a silent survey be conducted so that individuals could have a chance to discuss issues in class that they were struggling with. She also suggested adding a segment during class where “you could let someone talk for 15 minutes or five minutes on what they think would prevent them from [reoffending].”

Richard believed that more individual attention and bringing loved ones into the intervention would be a helpful addition to the program:

“I think the number one thing would be more individual attention and definitely some outside correspondence with outside family members, friends, people in our lives especially the spouses. Especially if there’s any chance whatsoever if we’re gonna reconcile the relationship or in my situation there’s separation, but there’s children involved.”

One thing that the offenders had complained about during their interviews was the length of the program; they did not understand why the DVIP had to be 26 weeks long. Bill suggested that if the conversations could be more controlled, then the program could be condensed into a shorter period of time:

“Shorten it. Make each class...don’t allow side conversations between the guys... You could do what is normally done in 2 hours, a lot of times you could do it in an hour, hour and fifteen minutes, I don’t know...Shorten the number of weeks. Like I said, unless you’re dealing with a sub 100 IQ then anybody that’s been through high school should absorb, should be able to absorb in far less than 26 weeks.”

Although the offender participants saw weaknesses in the program, the majority of offenders still believed that the program was helpful to their lives. The next section gives an overview of how or if the offenders found the program applicable in their lives after being in the program.

## **Program Application**

Overall, ten of the fifteen offenders found that the program had been helpful in their lives. Even though ten participants had said they did not think they needed to attend the domestic violence intervention program, many of them were able to find that they benefitted from attending. Those who thought it was helpful mentioned how the program had “opened my eyes” and as Jason put it, “it’s helped me just see other people’s situations and how mine aren’t that different from everybody else’s.” For a few of the participants the program had given themselves pause before they reacted or before they made decisions on who to date. Josh found that the program had benefitted him in any relationship, not just a dating relationship, but he had implemented the techniques at work:

“I came in certain situations, not with the girlfriend or anything like that, just other people with an argument or something. You know you gotta kinda step back like woah okay, let’s discuss this maturely and handle it like two adults rather than two little kids so... I can relate at work. You know, problems come up at work and you know, I try to be the bigger person and don’t let people make it escalate. Which is kinda odd coming from me.”

Ken and Angelo both mentioned how they had been looking for the signs. They looked for red flags before even considering a relationship with someone. Ken remembered an example that he heard from Terrence in class that would stick with him:

“[Terrence] kinda points out compatibility...you know, you might should have known this wasn’t gonna be a beautiful thing if you found her drunk in an alleyway. Chances are good she’s an alcoholic...I have taken that because first dates are interviews. And I think if and when I’m ever ready to see somebody else, yeah I’ll probably hear [Terrence] in the back of my head. I’m sure I probably will take a lot of that with me.”

Angelo had learned a similar lesson on dating, and how he could change the way he thought to have a different outcome in his future relationships:

“I’m learning how to better, for my next relationship, I’m learning things not to do. To be, have my eyes open, to look out for certain signs about this person. I’ve learned

to judge a person on their character not on their content. I've learned to just observe. I mean, you know just to sit back and look. You know, don't act on my emotions, use my intelligence, not just my emotions."

Orlando was the one individual of fifteen who was unsure if the program had been helping him. He said that he had not had any similar situations or altercations in which he could have used the lessons he had learned. For the most part, he said, he was just trying to keep an open mind.

Four individuals said the program had not been helping them for various reasons. Bill and Josie said the program had not helped them because it was their opinion that they did not need to be in the domestic violence program at all. Sheera who had the most criticisms of the program said that she had stopped herself before she reacted in her relationship with her boyfriend, but not because of anything she had learned from the program, "I think it has more to do with the 28 days I spent in jail away from my kids than this." Finally, Richard said that the program had not been helping him because he had already sought help before he started the DVIP classes. Everything that he was being taught he had already learned before he began the groups:

"The time we spent in the program, the time we spent coming here, it's been more frustrating and more harmful. Not that it couldn't have helped me if I would have not already found it on my own. I truly believe I was way ahead of this when I was waiting for court. I was already realized a lot of this stuff. I was never far off of who this class explains you should be."

Generally, the Duluth Model and the agency had been a helpful instrument that taught the men and women a different way of thinking before reacting in adverse scenarios, and to ponder the type of person they could look for in order to have a successful relationship in the future.

From a different angle, the administrators evaluated the effectiveness of the program as treatment, its learning techniques, the program fit for offenders, and if the Duluth Model was being executed as it was originally created to be. In addition, along with the offenders, the administrators offered strengths of the programs, as well as identifying opportunities for improvement.

### **Program Integrity from Administrators' Perspectives**

“Let me note this. I want you to note this. It isn’t always the teacher, it has to be the student as well. The teacher could stand up all day long, and give you all the knowledge that person has. If the student doesn’t apply it, what good’s the knowledge?” – Orlando

### **Effective Treatment**

As a student of sorts himself, Orlando stated in a similar fashion what many of the facilitators had to say when asked if the domestic violence intervention program was an effective treatment. Three out of four of the administrators stated that the effectiveness of the program was contingent upon the offenders’ willingness to change. Catherine simply stated that the program was effective at changing behavior “if the offender wants it to.” Sandy agreed with that statement:

“It’s only effective if they want it to be...that’s why I push very much that it’s their choice. That’s totally 100 percent up to them and the choices that they make. Cause I can talk and teach them until I’m blue in the face, but it’s up to them to make the choices. So it’s not only just holding them accountable for their actions in the beginning, but teaching them to be accountable in the end as well.”

Mike said that this type of program only equipped the offender with “the tools and insight that empowered them to make changes in their life that would prevent or at least reduce, minimize future violent behavior.” He said that the offender had to be willing to make a commitment to make changes in their lives. Their environments also impacted how successful they were with the information they took from the program because they were

more frequently re-exposed to the stressors and conflicts that worked against what the program taught.

Terrence did not believe that the program was effective at changing violent or controlling behavior. He explained how the program only offered offenders an alternative way of thinking:

“I do not think that the program at all is effective in changing the behaviors. I think that what it is effective in doing is allowing them an avenue to think a different way than they thought previously, but I don’t think it changes the behaviors. One, because we have them for such a short amount of time and in such a short amount of time we’re trying to undo 30, 35 years worth of wrong behavior and we’re trying to fit that into a 26 week period. A lot of times the guys, they really don’t even believe what you’re telling them. They think that that, it just works in movies or whatever. And it’s not until they actually go out and apply the concepts that we talk about or we teach in the class to their own lives to where they’re able to have the epiphany or that aha moment. Well maybe I can do something different. Usually it takes them to get in trouble again to actually take a stab at it. So I don’t think that first time people going through the program they actually get it. It usually takes anywhere between 8 to 10 weeks just to get them to be present in the classroom or present to be able to say, “yes I’m here. Yes, I did something wrong, yes I need to change.” So it can take 8 to 10 weeks just to get them to do that.

### **Cognitive Learning**

Terrence was able to pinpoint one thing that the Duluth Model did do: it gave the offenders an avenue to think in a different way. The administrators were asked if the program used cognitive learning techniques. In other words, did the curriculum teach the offenders a different pattern of thinking? The other three administrators agreed with Terrence, that it was able to show the men and women that they could look at situations from a different perspective. Sandy put it in these terms:

“It’s all things that they know, but they don’t think about it. They know it’s not right to you know, hit a girl. They know that’s not right. But they don’t think about it. They don’t think before they act, they just do it. So putting it in their face, holding them accountable for it makes them think before they act.”

Catherine noted how the curriculum put the situations in the perspective of the victim so that they could understand the thought processes of the other party:

“It tries to get the individual to look at why the victim responded the way they did to a situation and how or why they responded in that way to the victim. And in what ways they could, what do I wanna say here? How they could do something different to get a different reaction from the victim.”

Terrence added that the cognitive learning process was not always easy. As he taught his classes, some of the men did not always understand the concepts of the lessons. For that reason, he had to structure his classes in a way so that the men were able to grasp the curriculum:

“When you get a person who is cognitively present in the room like they’re able to put concepts together like they can understand one plus one equals two then the cognitive learning process is, I mean it’s right on point. They’re able to give positive feedback to the class or they’re able to connect these different concepts. But then you have people that have trouble connecting basic or simple concepts. The wheels don’t always turn. You have to kind of manually turn them in unorthodox ways. I use a lot of examples and I bring in a lot of current events or that are happening to help them understand the different concepts. Because a lot of times it’s easier for people to see what other people are doing wrong, but it’s very hard for them to turn the mirror on themselves to see what they’re doing. So if I’m able to take a situation that does not necessarily involve them, and we kinda go through it and figure out what’s going on or what’s happening. They can pick out everything from that, but they’re not able to necessarily pin point those things in their own life.”

### **Proper Treatment**

One factor that differentiated each offender was his or her crime(s). Each individual had varying levels of severity of crimes. The offenders took notice as they sat and listened to others tell their version of their crimes. A pattern that emerged in the interviews was that they compared themselves to other people in their groups. Participants that compared themselves pointed out how their crime was not as serious as some of the people in their class. The facilitators were also aware that the crimes varied among each offender because they read every probable cause statement and police report of every offender on their rosters. The

supervisors had access to the same information, but they had not read every individual police report. The administrators gave an assessment of the level of treatment that would be proper for each domestic violence offender.

Four out of four administrators agreed that the domestic violence intervention program would not be a proper treatment for all offenders alike. Mike believed that for the vast majority of their clients, the DVIP was an appropriate intervention, but a small percentage might actually have benefitted from something else. He continued, saying that many of the offenders in the DVIP classes had substance abuse issues and mental health issues that would probably require treatment in addition to their program:

“Our program only very transitionally only addresses substance abuse. It’s not a substance treatment program. And so while the domestic violence issues and the batterer issues may get addressed, the substance abuse issues need to be addressed in some other kind of program. There may also be mental health issues. You know, maybe not to a level of psychosis, but certainly general counseling needs in terms of improving self-esteem, the ability to make better cognitive decision making, etc. So a lot of other behaviors that get caught up in our offenders have a variety of different problems. And the domestic violence program per say, really only targets part of that.”

Catherine observed the same issue with the program. She said the Duluth Model addressed substance abuse issues, but it did not meet the rehabilitative needs for substance abuse as well. “Substance abuse is one component of it. That one component isn’t gonna cure someone. So I think they need additional treatment for those issues.”

Sandy addressed the issue of those offenders that had recidivated. It may have been appropriate for first-time offenders, but more punitive measures needed to be taken with those who re-offended:

“I think it’s appropriate and proper treatment for first offenders. If an offender has already gone through a program and they’ve reoffended. Obviously they didn’t use anything that was offered in the program and they probably wont use it again if they

have to go through another one. More punitive things to be done at that point; jail, prison.”

Terrence had a similar opinion of what treatment was appropriate for domestic violence offenders:

“I don’t think this cookie-cutter treatment works for everybody. Some people you have to just shock, and again I go back to kids. Some kids when you’re parenting, you have some kids that you’re able to talk to and they understand and they can change their behaviors. Where you have the other kid, that you have to constantly punish for them to get it so some men I think need to go to jail to understand this is wrong. Where there are some people that you can just tell them and show them a different way and they get it.”

### **Program Implementation**

Ellen Pence created the Duluth Model in 1980, originally known as the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP). After more than thirty years have passed, the curriculum has had some changes and restructuring. This agency was officially trained to be certified facilitators of the Duluth Model in March 2011. As Angelo mentioned, however, this was not Duluth, Minnesota. A few participants had also mentioned that the facilitators brought in statistics to strengthen the information from the curriculum. So, the question was presented to the administrators, is the program being implemented the way it was originally intended?

Both supervisors said that for the most part they believed that the facilitators followed the curriculum. Sandy could only speak to her teaching style saying:

“I know in my classes it is. I’m not in the other facilitator’s classes so I don’t know how exactly they do everything, but I think in my classes I do a pretty good job as far as sticking to the curriculum. I do, I will bring in some outside stuff, different statistics of things that kinda get the guys interested a little bit more in things and I follow it really well and I get pretty good response and outcomes from it.”

Terrence admitted that he did not follow the Duluth Model precisely as designed. He saw what he believed were some missing elements:

“There is some really, really good points and good things in the Duluth model, but I think it’s missing a lot of key details. I think that it’s so broad over points instead of really hitting hard on the big issues, the Duluth model does not focus a lot on self-accountability and self-actualization. So what I do with my gentleman in my class, I make them write out who they are first, who do you think you are? And that’s how we deal in the class because one, they can’t understand why when we never make them see their current situation, they always say well that’s not me, this isn’t me... So you have to come to the self-actualization first before we can move on to any type of therapy or any type of treatment or anything else.”

In conclusion, one class was following the curriculum supplemented with statistical facts, and the other class was following the Duluth Model but with modifications. In the next two sections, the administrators recognized the positive and negative elements of the Duluth Model.

### **Strengths**

The male and female offender participants mentioned strengths of the program had been effective facilitators and the Duluth Model was an effective accountability tool. The administrators also mentioned accountability, but they also witnessed the strengths of how the program functioned from a business-professional aspect. Catherine recognized that one of the program’s greatest strengths was “being Duluth based...it’s a nationally known program.” Sandy, who originally persuaded the supervisors to hold a certified training, agreed that the Duluth Model “curriculum itself is a huge basis. Consistency, as far as all the classes. Everybody is supposed to be teaching the same topic, even though we all have different teaching styles. That way, people can get the same information.”

Another positive aspect of the program was that it actually confronted the taboo topic of domestic violence, and it did not minimize the seriousness of the problem. Terrence liked that the model informed the men he taught that they had a problem, their behavior was not acceptable, and how to cognitively process non-controlling behavior:

“The strengths that I see in the program are the fact that we generally are able to shed light on one of a level of crime or a level of victimization that is not widely talked about. A lot of men prior to coming here had no clue what domestic violence was or even that what their behavior was even wrong. I know, it’s hard for me to believe but they don’t believe that what they did was wrong.”

Mike stated that the Duluth Model was not just a program that addressed one issue, but it was complex in its teachings:

“It’s the recognition that domestic violence is not just about anger control. It’s about power and control and relationships, self-esteem, role-modeling, and substance abuse and environment, and I think the program covers a fair amount of that in a way that gets the offender to see that there’s a lot going on with them that they need to work on and address and gives them the tools to help them begin to do that.”

Mike also added that the length of the program, 26 weeks, was beneficial for the offender to re-learn appropriate behavior. Unlike most anger control programs that were in the area that were eight to twelve weeks long, the Duluth Model was a more adequate time frame to re-teach the reinforced violent behavior.

Terrence went on to say that the program achieved success by making the offender accountable for their actions, and not sweeping things under the rug. The model was effective at confronting the offender with their actions so that they knew they were inappropriate and their behavior was unacceptable.

As part of a coordinated community response, the Duluth Model was designed so that probation agencies could work with law enforcement, the courts, and victims’ services to ensure victim safety and offender success in the program. Sandy had experienced the efficiency of working with multiple social service agencies as a strength of the program:

“One of the strengths with the program is just the people involved with the program and the relationships we’ve created with the courts and the community where we’re well known for the program. And a lot of judges and other agencies depend on us because they know we’re consistent, and it’s a good program and we have a lot of good outcomes from it.”

One final strength of the program that Catherine declared was the size of the classes. Before the agency had received certified training for the Duluth Model their class sizes were much larger. She believed that their class sizes used to balloon up to more than 15 individuals. They had since shrunk to seven or eight individuals. A smaller class size would help keep the class focused and allow more opportunities for the individuals to participate.

### **Weaknesses & Suggestions**

The greatest weakness according to the four administrators was the privatization of the agency. Since the agency was profit-driven, money seemingly became more important than the clientele at times. The cost of the program was the greatest weakness among the offender participants, and Catherine agreed, "Some people cannot afford it. Unfortunately we're private and we don't have any state funding for the classes." Sandy felt that making a profit interfered with the success of the clients:

"We want to set them up to succeed, and sometimes the business end gets in the way of that. You know, just because we only have four people in one class and it's not cost effective they wanna cancel the class, but those four people in the class they can't do a class Monday through Friday because of their job so they need a Saturday. Or one person in that class doesn't have a ride, he walks to the office two miles to get there. He can't walk another 20 miles to get to a different office. So it's, I think, the right thing to do is provide the services to where it's going to help our client's the most, benefit them the most."

Mike and Terrence believed that the business side of the company prevented the potential to be more resourceful to the clients. If the company had not depended on a profit, they suggested that there should be an aftercare program for the offenders. Mike expressed, "You know, if we're gonna have lasting, permanent, effective change that followed, there needs to be some kind of follow-up and right now there's no kind of follow-up in our program." Terrence ascended that belief because he believed he would teach the men for 26 weeks, and then they were thrown back into the old environment where the negative behavior

was reinforced. The program needed to provide aftercare so that offenders had an outlet for ongoing accountability.

A third criticism identified by Mike and Sandy was that there were no supervisory evaluations to monitor the consistency of the program between the facilitators. Mike admitted, “I don’t directly observe the facilitators doing the groups, working with the offenders. I do not have access to that ability to assess their effectiveness and how they work in the group.” Sandy cited an example from years prior when she had done her practicum:

“When I did my practicum, you know I said there was the two people teaching the classes; it was like night and day. And when I took that to a supervisor they had no idea what was going on in either class. So I think monitoring it, you know, from a supervisory standpoint to ensure some consistency is something that we lack.”

Similar to keeping the facilitators accountable, Sandy believed that it was necessary to have more training on a regular basis. She said that she had been invited to training seminars with a domestic violence coalition in a neighboring town, but she had been unable to attend because of other work-related duties. She believed it would benefit the clientele more if they were trained more frequently.

One area where the agency was limited was victim contact. Mike understood that the intervention program was specifically designed for the batterer or the aggressor, but there was no built-in expectation for contacting the victim in the case. Most importantly, victim contact would allow the agency to make sure the victim was receiving the resources and the help they needed. If the agency were able to have victim contact then they could verify with the victim that the behavior had changed or if there had been reoffending. Also, the behavior of the victim could have an impact on the success of the offender. If the victim were using drugs or alcohol, that behavior would be out of the control of the offender, and may affect the success of the relationship.

Finally, Terrence identified the limitations that the Duluth Model presented as it culturally applied to the Midwestern city:

“I think that the Duluth model is, it’s a great model and I think that it does address the issues, but some of the things that I think are lacking in the Duluth model is it does not address cultural or societal issues that are faced, that people are facing. I’ve noticed because I have taught classes in different environments and the class of people that we particularly get here in midtown, the Duluth model, the way it stands, does not, does not fit their overall shell of their lifestyle or how they operate...”

The cultural difference did not just apply to the men in the city, but the women in the relationships as well:

“Typically, we see a lot of times where we have men that come in that women are the primary aggressor verses men being the primary aggressor. And I saw that that is a lot different in cultural aspects. I have found where African-American women are have been a lot more aggressive towards their partners verses Caucasian-American women where the men were generally the aggressors.”

Additionally, Terrence was faced with the issue of illiteracy and the type of environment he had to construct for the men in his class so that learning could take place:

“Also, language barriers. I deal with a lot of different language barriers in the classroom. I would say on average, about 90% of my class is illiterate. And so a lot of basic concepts that we would think that normal people would understand or be able to use in their everyday life, they don’t. so I kinda have to think outside the box a little bit when I’m facilitating because structured learning environments don’t typically work for the sample size that I have here mostly because most of the individuals I have in the classroom have not completed the ninth or the tenth grade. So if in school a typical structured learning environment did not work for them, they automatically rebel against it here. And that can go from reading, writing, being able to speak or just understand basic concepts.”

Terrence also offered some suggestions that could be more beneficial to the effectiveness of the program. First, he suggested that the program should be more proactive in nature. He believed that it is a program that should have started earlier in life such as high school in order to educate younger males on the prevalence of domestic violence. He found “that when I get older gentlemen who are usually, if they are over the age of 40, it’s very,

very difficult to get them to change their method of thinking because they've thought that way for so long." He believed that if they started educating at a younger age, it would be easier to teach appropriate behavior. Second, he believed that the program should be longer than 26 weeks; more intensive treatment so that more topics could be covered. Finally, he suggested that the offenders be assessed in the beginning (besides the initial intake) for a speech communication class. He believed that the core issue of some of the men was simply a problem with knowing how to communicate with people, not domestic violence.

The criticisms of the program and the agency from the administrators' perspectives were not small in nature. As the four administrators were aware, the business had to make a profit, but it impeded the resources they could provide to their clients. The facilitators' groups were not monitored so the supervisors were unaware of the consistency of the program between the classes. The lack of victim contact was not beneficial for holding the offender accountable and ensuring that the victim was receiving the help he or she needed. Finally, Terrence suggested that there was a significant cultural difference between the Duluth Model curriculum and how it was applicable to the Midwestern city.

Both administrators and offenders offered their candid opinions and perspectives of the effectiveness of the domestic violence intervention program. The majority of offenders did not want to attend the DVIP classes, but were ordered to be there. So they were asked what kind of alternative punishment or consequence would they have chosen if they had the chance. Likewise, the administrators who had led numerous domestic violence offenders were asked if they would suggest any kind of alternate treatment for this vulnerable population. The following section reveals a different type of treatment.

## Alternatives

The administrators did not agree on one treatment that could have been used in place of the DVIP. Sandy and Mike believed that domestic violence offenders needed the DVIP as treatment. Sandy stated that men could engage in private counseling and self-help on their own, but she said “not everybody’s motivated to do something unless they’re made to. Mike affirmed that statement:

“I think if anything they may need treatment in addition to, but not instead of. Now, whether it’s a different program, a different domestic violence or batterer’s program than ours is not the issue as I’m saying they need to be in a domestic violence batterer’s program in almost every case. There may need to be other issues addressed in more depth, with more narrow focus on other areas, but not in lieu of- just in addition to.”

Catherine had expressed previously that treatment varied on a case-by-case basis, so the DVIP may not have been the proper treatment for all offenders that were in the program. She believed that some individuals could use a more intensive program, but she said, “there’s some offenses that some could get by with an anger control class, and there’s some that 26 weeks isn’t enough. And I feel that individual counseling would work for some also. I mean there’s some that don’t get anything out of a group session.” Mike disagreed that anger control would have been an acceptable alternative as Catherine suggested because he believed “for too long as an example, domestic violence offenders were put through an eight-week anger control class, which doesn’t come close to touching on all issues that need to be addressed with that offender in terms of domestic violence.”

Though the domestic violence program could have been an effective treatment for some offenders, Terrence maintained that there was only one alternative: jail. After assessing numerous offenders for the domestic violence program, he had come to realize that:

“Some I know from the time they come in to intake they needed to just go to jail. There is gonna be absolutely nothing I say that is going to change the way that they feel or the way that they act. They need shock treatment.... But you know, some guys it’s the punishment or the fear of ‘I’m going to jail’ that’s gonna make them stop their behavior. Some people need that to help them to understand, I cannot behave this way. Where there are some other individuals who where you can show them the error of their ways and they have that epiphany moment and they will probably never re-offend or offend again so it just depends.

After all the offender participants were interviewed, not surprisingly, none of them said they would have rather gone to jail than take 26 weeks of domestic violence intervention classes. Josh and Jason, however, had spent a significant amount of time in jail away from their families so they both responded that jail time alone was enough. Josh said that they offered counseling when he was in there, and Jason was able to focus on himself and what needed to change when he was incarcerated for four months. Ken had spent a few years in prison when he was a young adult, and he said that incarceration should not be an alternative if the person needed help:

“Prison is prison makes you rough, tough. It’s a school of criminals. It’s a mastermind. It’s a street education that has college merit, prison. I mean you got all walks of life in prison. That’s not benefitting anybody especially if you want to make somebody a better person. You certainly don’t throw somebody in a cage and tell them to defend themselves for set amount of time, 2 years, 5 years, 7 years, whatever, and come out and be a good boy. Prison will make you, prison changes you.”

Since prison was not a viable alternative in Ken’s mind, he as well as Josie and Lashonda suggested that someone could complete community service hours instead of attending the DVIP classes so that their punishment would be constructive. The punishment should be humiliating, as Ken put it, “something that says ‘I’m an idiot, I messed up,’ you know, ‘this is my punishment.’”

Some of the offenders suggested some form of counseling in place of the domestic violence program. Angelo asserted that there should have been a mediator to work with him

and the victim in his case. John recommended relationship or marriage counseling. Richard also believed that the courts should have forced counseling between him and his ex-girlfriend. He believed that the counseling would have kept him accountable for his inappropriate behavior, but it may have also saved his relationship.

Finally, Steve and Ken shared their final thoughts on the program, and based on what they had witnessed from other men in their class, what further action should have been taken. Steve believed that more extreme cases should have been addressed:

“I think if there’s more severe things, they need more than just these classes. I think, in my mind, these classes are good, but they’re just the beginning steps. This is like the entry thing. If someone is truly, truly a very violent person, they need something more severe.”

Ken had the similar mindset of Steve’s, “Make sure that who’s supposed to be here is here. And the ones that are a little more extreme, this aint enough!”

In conclusion, these evaluations of the domestic violence intervention program have uncovered unique perspectives from both the facilitators and the offenders. All of the participants’ assessments of the program’s functioning elements are vital to coordinating effective treatment with domestic violence offenders. The sample of offenders and administrators are not representative to every population of violent offenders or probation agency, but their responses offer valuable insight into best practices and theories of refinement.

Finally, the next chapter discusses the participants’ evaluations as it applies to the effectiveness of the intervention program. The analysis includes a summary of the program’s reliability as an appropriately matched and executed program for domestic violence offenders. Additionally, the chapter reviews the offenders’ motivational attitudes as they may have affected their responses regarding the value of the program. Furthermore, by

introducing the criticisms and commendations of the program, this study is able to suggest new directions for the future of the domestic violence intervention curriculum.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the effectiveness of domestic violence intervention through offenders' and facilitators' perspectives, and this has proven to be a complex task. The interviews elicited responses that varied in degrees of acceptance, denial, animosity, and resolution. Although the Duluth Model and the probation agency were regarded as generally effective in terms of the curriculum and the facilitators, the reviews were not without criticisms as the offenders and administrators readily provided limitations of the integrity of the program.

The following discussion provides an interpretation of the participants' responses as an overall evaluation of the domestic violence intervention program. First, this section addresses the appropriateness of the program fit for the offenders. Then, a review of the qualifications of the facilitators as capable group leaders is discussed. Next, an assessment of the offenders' attitudes reveals their true motivations to change and participate in the program. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of how the accomplishments and shortcomings of the program could potentially affect the design of the program in the future.

#### **Appropriate Treatment**

Based on the assessments of the offenders and the administrators, the Duluth Model as taught by this probation agency is an effective treatment program. Although most of the offenders did not believe they needed to attend such a program, their overall evaluations of the curriculum, the agency, and the facilitators suggested that it was useful to situations in their lives, and not necessarily just domestic relationships. It is difficult, however, to know if

the program is an appropriately matched treatment based on the offenders denying their involvement in any sort of abuse. Additionally, some participants who denied any fault in their case admitted that they had kept an open-mind or that the program had opened their eyes to the appropriateness of their behavior toward their significant others. Moreover, the quantity of classes attended could have made a difference in the perspective of program effectiveness and participation. Terrence mentioned that it took anywhere from eight to ten weeks for individuals in his groups to “become present” or to admit that they were wrong. The participants that were interviewed had ranged in attendance from two classes to 26 classes. Hence, those who had attended less than half of the classes at the time of the interview may have had a different outlook on their crimes and opinions of the domestic violence classes.

Four of the fifteen participants had attended seven or fewer intervention classes. Those four participants included Steve, Richard, Kim, and Ben. Steve, who had only attended two, was unsure of his guilt, but stated that he was keeping an open mind to what he could learn in the class. Richard did not think he did anything wrong nor did he need to attend the classes, but he was receiving help from the facilitator. Kim admitted fault in her case, and she viewed the program as overall helpful to her life. Ben had more criticisms of the program, but he admitted that he could learn something from the meetings. The attitudes of these four would contradict Terrence’s statement because of their generally positive opinions of the effectiveness of the program. The remaining eleven of the fifteen offender participants had attended at least ten or more classes. Josie, Bill, Orlando and Sheera who had all attended fifteen or more meetings, gave positive remarks about the facilitators, but all four of them had denied any guilt and were still placing some blame on the victim at the time of the

interview. Angelo had attended seventeen classes, denied any guilt in his case, but had accepted that he needed to attend the classes, and that they were helping him. Josh had completed all 26 weeks of the program, and admitted that the program had kept him accountable for his actions, but he had still made comments that insinuated his girlfriend during the time of the incident instigated the domestic violence. In some cases, Terrence's theory was supported by the participants' responses, but for many, the amount of classes attended did not predict their perspectives of the program.

The most effective tool that the program used to its advantage was the court orders. This finding is supported by Daly, Power and Gondolf (2001) who found that the most significant predictor of program attendance was a court-order to attend a batterer program when accounting for other variables including demographics, violence, and psychological related issues. Regardless of whether or not the offenders believed the program was effective, the fact remained that they were legally ordered to attend the domestic violence intervention program. According to the four administrators it was necessary for the offenders to be court-ordered or else they would not attend by their own free will. Although the severity of crimes varied among the men and women, the class was applicable to any form of abuse, and the court order was appropriate for making them face their problems. As Terrence pointed out:

“I usually have them become present in the class by asking them, was this the first time that you were ever verbally, physically, mentally or emotionally abusive to your partner? And I've never gotten an individual to say this was their first time. This was just the first time they got caught maybe so it kinda breeds a pattern to show that if this behavior is not checked it will continue to go on.”

Similarly to Terrence, Sandy referred to a man who violated the order of protection when he used an abusive gesture. Upon entering the program, Sandy said he was not willing to admit that he was wrong, but after completing weeks of treatment, he realized how his behavior

was inappropriate. The men and women need to be mandated to initially realize they have a problem, and then to ultimately prevent recidivism. Sandy stipulated though that offenders should only attend the domestic violence intervention program once. She articulated:

“If an offender has already gone through a program and they’ve reoffended - obviously they didn’t use anything that was offered in the program and they probably won’t use it again if they have to go through another one. More punitive things need to be done at that point, jail, prison.”

As Jason pointed out, jail time was enough to make him realize he would never harm his loved ones again. After he spent four months away from his kids, that was punishment enough. Josh believed the same, that jail and time away from his daughter prevented him from re-offending in the future. In comparison, Josie, Josh, and John had all attended an anger control program for domestic violence, although it was for anger control and only eight weeks long, the three of them had re-offended. Hence, a second round of domestic violence intervention may be futile.

Finally, based on the administrators’ professional opinions, the majority of the clients in the DVIP deserved to be labeled as domestic violence offenders, but not all. Catherine had mentioned how there were times when she wondered why some offenders were ordered to attend the classes. Sandy agreed; even though some of the men that attended for violation of an ex parte needed to be in the classes, she did not believe that they all deserved to be labeled as a domestic violence offender. The label of domestic violence offender seems appropriate if the individual has a history of repeating violent behavior. Sandy and Terrence eluded to the fact that some men and women become violent without reason, but generally those in these classes did not think before they reacted. Multiple factors need to be taken into consideration when labeling someone as a batterer or domestic violence offender: (1) history of violence, (2) intent to do harm, and (3) lethality of the individual. Labeling individuals as domestic

violence offenders can have a dual effect. It can either stigmatize individuals into believing they are batterers, and precipitate continued harmful behavior, or it can incite change in a person to rid themselves of such a label.

### **Facilitators**

Overall, the offenders viewed the two group facilitators as effective teachers; however, one issue that appeared in the men and women's groups was that Sandy and Terrence sometimes lacked control of the classes. Bill mentioned that if Terrence could control the side conversations then he could present all of the material in an hour and a half rather than two hours. Four of Sandy's participants observed the lack of control, which may have reflected in their opinion on the effectiveness of the class. For instance, Sheera mentioned several times in her interview that the conversations lacked structure, they discussed off-topic subjects, and when she attempted to speak she was not allowed to freely voice her opinion without negative reactions from other females. Sheera stated, "these classes are a joke," but if she had a more structured environment she may have felt differently. Ben suggested that if there was a structured outline of the lesson for each week he could more readily focus on learning. He noticed that each week was a repetition of the week before, and the same men repeatedly told the same personal stories.

The teaching tools that did seem to be effective were the approachable attitude that the facilitators possessed. Research has shown that the most effective elements of domestic violence intervention are the relationships that individuals have with their group facilitators, and the support they offer (Rosenberg, 2003; Silvergleid, C. & Mankowski, E., 2006). Several of the men and women stated that Sandy and Terrence were easy to talk to, non-judgmental, and likeable. Sheera and Richard both said that the program was not helping

them, but their one-on-one sessions with Sandy had been the most valuable time they experienced. The second most notable attribute of the facilitators was their knowledge and ability to provide support for the curriculum. What the offenders seemed to need most were evidentiary examples of proper behavior such as video vignettes provided in the curriculum. An additional tool used was statistical findings that were not included in the Duluth Model curriculum but provided independently by the facilitators. Although the facilitators' consistency differed in this aspect, the program would benefit from supplemental material handouts like statistics. Sandy had also mentioned that she discussed current events of domestic violence during class so that the participants related to real-life scenarios, and they maintained engaged in the class. Even though these tools could appear minute to the curriculum as a whole, the reaction of the offenders implied that they were more alert and focused on the material, which might lead to improved program attendance.

Finally, although the facilitators were able to be evaluated by the offenders, the fault identified with this program was that there was no routine evaluation conducted by the probation supervisors. This could be detrimental to the program because if the facilitators are not reviewed, it could affect the operationalization of the Duluth Model. McGuire (2000) stated that programs face the most difficulty when trying to execute the 'program logic'. If the facilitators are not evaluated on a regular basis, there would be no way to know that the program is properly implementing the concepts of the Duluth Model. Mike admitted that he had not monitored the DVIP classes so he could not assess the facilitators. Sandy wanted consistency between the classes, but there was no way of ensuring that would happen between facilitators because they were never observed by the supervisors. One other unfavorable element of the program was that neither facilitator had received any training

when they first began teaching. Terrence remembered how he had taught his first class on his first day of work, and all he had been equipped with was the paperwork for teaching the class. He had not received hands on training, nor had he observed another facilitator. Sandy had observed some of the classes when she was doing her practicum for college, but as she stated, the two facilitators were like night and day. Neither Sandy nor Terrence had any formal training until more than a year after they began teaching DVIP. Even after they received training, they had not received any periodical training thereafter. Without any supervisory evaluations, there would be no way of ensuring that the facilitators were conducting the certified Duluth model. This is a problem with a number of intervention programs, as observed by Day et al. (2009), many agencies have facilitators that do not receive sufficient guidance to deliver the program in a way that upholds the integrity of the Duluth Model as it was intended.

It is important to properly conceptualize the Duluth Model curriculum into the operations of the agency's domestic violence intervention program, but the teaching is irrelevant if the student is not willing to apply the knowledge. The motivational attitudes of the offenders could significantly alter the effectiveness of the domestic violence intervention program. The next section examines the responses of the offenders regarding their general attitudes during the interviews. Their motivational attitudes toward changing behavior could potentially render their perspectives of program effectiveness as irrelevant.

### **Motivation**

There were several key factors that emerged from the interviews that spoke volumes to the overall attitudes of the offenders. First, the men and women's responses to the two questions, 'do you think you deserved the sentence you received?' and 'do you think you

need to be in these classes?’ Second, the number of individuals who admitted they were open-minded to learning something while they were forced to attend. Third, the self-initiated comments that implied the victim was at fault. Lastly, the offenders’ animosity toward the justice system may have preempted a negative attitude toward changing inappropriate behavior before the offenders even entered the program.

The questions of whether they deserved their sentence and the need to attend the meetings were generally rebuffed among the offenders. Eight of fifteen believed that they did not deserve the sentence that they had received, and ten of fifteen believed there was no need for them to attend the domestic violence classes. These responses alone would imply that the offenders were not motivated to change because they denied that they had a problem at all. Some exceptions included men like Jason who believed he did not need to attend because he had received some treatment when he was incarcerated, and Richard had been going to counseling prior to the classes so he believed he already knew what behaviors needed to change. The implication that the court-ordered offenders were not ready or willing to change is supported by Bowen and Gilchrist (2004) who found that court-ordered offenders scored low on the contemplation and action stages of change compared to self-referred offenders. In other words, court-ordered offenders were less likely to acknowledge that a problem existed and were less likely to be taking steps to modify their behavior than self-referred offenders.

To further support this finding, the majority of offenders insinuated that the victim was to blame for their inappropriate behavior. On occasion there were interviews in which the offender accepted responsibility for their abusive behavior, but they also commented on the victim being at fault, contradicting their initial claim. Fourteen out of fifteen offenders blamed the victim by claiming that the victim either instigated a physical altercation or

fabricated a story. For example, Steve admitted that he tried to restrain his fiancé, but she initiated the fight. He used terms like “she flew off the handle” and “she said that I choked her, I strangled her, but that did not happen.” Lashonda had caught her husband in a vehicle with another woman, so she proceeded to ram her vehicle into the other car multiple times. She admitted she was to blame but she rationalized her actions, “I mean I aint gonna say I don’t deserve it because I shouldn’t have did it, but I cracked. I cracked behind being abused, being cheated on.” Kim took responsibility for hitting her boyfriend, but she justified it by saying, “I feel like he went about things wrong too. He didn’t conduct himself as an adult. And he did a lot of provoking things to me.” Josh admitted he should not have restrained his girlfriend, but qualified it with, “I mean I admit it happened, it’s wrong, I shouldn’t have done that, but you know when things are pushed...when you’re pushed too far with the same things going on and on...I was just pushed to the end I guess.” Josh, who was interviewed after he completed all 26 weeks of the program, still had an attitude of being justified. No matter what number of classes they had attended, the offender participants had difficulty taking responsibility for their own actions without qualifying their behavior.

The interviews not only brought out resentment toward the victims, but it also revealed animosity toward the justice system. Nine out of fifteen offenders believed that the courts and the judges unjustly treated them. Some of the men complained that the courts, including the prosecutor’s office did not properly review their cases. Ben stated that he did not think the prosecutor’s office listened to the 9-1-1 tapes, which may have helped his case. Richard had missed one of the last court dates, and his bond was set so high that he had to take a plea. He said that when he appeared in court on the day he thought his hearing was scheduled, the judge would not consider that he had never failed to appear before, always

dressed nicely, and never had a bad attitude. His bond was set so high that he ended up taking a plea so that he could return to his children. Angelo regretted not being able to tell his side of the story in court because everything was handled between his lawyer and the prosecutor, but he was never allowed to tell the judge his version of the scenario. Clint and Jason stated that the judicial system was flawed because of the domestic violence history in this Midwestern city. Specifically, years prior to this study, a judge had allowed a man to be released on probation for domestic violence, and shortly after, he killed his two children. Clint believed, "I'm paying for a scared judge." Jason mentioned the same case and how he was not released for months because judges were being more cautious with domestic violence charges. This was a case that occurred in 2004, so it is difficult to know whether judges in the area were still mindful of that incident. Ken and Orlando both viewed the judicial system as ridiculous because they believed their cases should have been dismissed. Orlando said that what he did was 'property damage' and the judge should have taken one look at his case and said, "man quit wasting my time, dismissed, have a nice day." Ken thought it was ridiculous that the prosecutor pursued charges against him because he sent non-threatening emails. Bill was the most vocal about the injustice of the system because of how he was treated, and because he fervently maintained his innocence:

"The goddamn system sucks. I was talking to someone else out there. You know, if a person really does beat their wife or their kids or whatever, they deserve to be here or in jail or whatever. But the system- all the female has to do is cry wolf and the man's guilty."

This kind of animosity that the offenders had already built up toward the justice system was continually resonating within them. These strong emotions may have carried over to a disdain for the domestic violence intervention program. If their evaluations of the program were mostly negative, it may have stemmed from the original hostility toward the courts and

police officers. Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, and Sherman (1997) surveyed individuals who had been arrested for spousal assault, and found that perceptions of procedural justice significantly affected future criminogenic tendencies. More specifically, if individuals believed they were treated fairly they were more likely to adhere to social norms and less likely to re-offend. In the same way, offenders that participated in the current study may have perceived procedural injustice by the police and the courts, therefore weakening their support for the justice system entirely, including the domestic violence intervention program.

Nonetheless, the animosity set aside, multiple participants had mentioned that while being in the program they had kept an “open-mind.” This type of attitude revealed a willingness to learn and change their behavior even if they believed they were innocent. Among the fifteen participants, thirteen said they had kept an open-mind, or that they had been able to learn something from the classes. This signifies that even in their reluctance to admit that they have been wrong, they could take lessons from the program. Orlando, who denied any guilt in his case, said, “I’ve learned a lot. Out of these 20 weeks I actually thought I wouldn’t even wanna learn anything, but I learned something in every class with [Terrence].” Angelo who did not believe he deserved his sentence did think that he needed to attend the meetings because, “I think it’s going to make me a better person in the long run, for what I’m getting out of here, how to deal with certain emotions.”

Despite the qualifications and the effectiveness of the facilitators, their efforts at teaching new cognitive behavioral techniques would be purposeless if the students were not willing to learn. Angelo commented on the motivation to change of offenders, “A person gotta really wanna change. You can come here for 52 weeks and aint gonna get nothing out of it if you don’t wanna better yourself.” As Orlando mentioned, if the student is not willing

to learn then it does not matter how much knowledge the teacher has. Terrence also made a good point when he said that some men had come into his class in their forties, fifties, and sixties, and at that point in their lives it is difficult to change the way they have been thinking for decades. The perfect example of this was Ben, who explained the way he was raised, “The way I was raised I was the man of the house, you know. This is what we’re doing: I take care of everything. Instead of her, giving her, letting her have input on bills and what needs what.” Bill had expressed the same concern when he was assigned these classes. He denied ever being violent with his wife, and he knew that being 76 years of age he would not be getting a girlfriend and start acquiring new behaviors.

### **Program Critiques**

One piece of information that offenders did not hesitate to provide were criticisms of the Duluth Model and the probation agency. Administrators also readily submitted their business perspectives of the shortcomings of the program. The three most notable themes of weakness between the administrators and the offenders were money, culture, and duration of the program. Money and duration were two of the most significant topics because they were the most frequently mentioned between both groups of participants. Only one participant and one facilitator introduced the idea of cultural relevance, but the importance lies in the possibility of affecting the structure and content of the Duluth Model as a proper treatment for all offenders.

Economic hardship was the cause of much grief for offender participants. Even when they were not asked, the offenders mentioned money wherever it was applicable. Clint suggested the irony of the agency charging so much money to participate, and yet one of the causes of domestic violence is over monetary issues. In his perspective, the agency was

creating more money problems. Some of the men made comments like “it’s all a money game,” and John expressed his view, “It’s all a racket, I don’t care what they say.” If offenders were insinuating that the agency and the courts were only forcing them to take these classes for a profit, then that could certainly affect their motivation to participate in the program and their overall perspective of the effectiveness of the intervention. In a study of the limitations of private probation, Durnescu (2011) found that the financial cost of probation was one of the negative sanctions for offenders that could prevent the full potential of behavioral rehabilitation.

Three of the administrators agreed that the cost of the program was an issue. Catherine conceded that \$30 a week was a ‘little steep,’ but it was a necessary evil in order to operate the private business. Sandy empathized with the offenders that the cost of the program would create a financial burden for her as well, but the exchange for what they learned was appropriate if they chose to use it:

“...to them it seems like a lot. You know, if I had to pay \$30 a week, it would hurt my checkbook too. But for what they get and what they can gain if they choose to, I don’t think you can put a price on it. But I think the \$30 is reasonable.”

Terrence observed that many of the men were ordered into the program because of an escalated situation that stemmed from money issues:

“They’re facing in these types of communities, different situations. I mean they’re facing economic hardship, educational hardships, I mean they’re facing homelessness, they’re facing so many different issues coming in. And domestic violence may not necessarily be their big issue because they’re facing so many other issues that played out in domestic violence. So a lot of times you’ll find men that are in fictional relationships with women because they need a place to stay or they need food or they need clothes. You know they need these basic needs so they find themselves preying on women for these basic needs and then it blows up and explodes in their face.”

Based on what the offenders and administrators have said, the weekly fee may be interfering with the success of the program logic. If it does take the men (and perhaps women too) eight to ten weeks to open up and ‘become present’ in the class as Terrence suggested, one reason may be resentment for the financial burden that the program created for them. A suggestion to rectify this problem is implementing a sliding scale feature for those offenders that face financial hardships such as unemployment, disability, and social security income. If the agency set up a chart of income-contingent payment plans it could affect the success rate of clients. If the offenders can receive some type of assistance that is income-contingent then it could increase the consistency of attendance, and increase the success rate of individuals completing the program. Sandy said that sometimes the agency enforced the rule that if you cannot pay, you cannot come to class. This rule increases the likelihood of violations to the courts for non-compliance, and decreased completion rates. Also, by helping offenders manage their fees this could reduce the animosity and resentment toward the program that prevents some offenders from fully engaging in the program. Finally, by creating a more minimal financial burden on the offenders, it would be one less monetary issue that could instigate domestic violence.

Economic hardship is only one demographic factor of this large Midwestern city. There are several critical issues such as substance abuse and mental instability that the domestic violence intervention is not equipped to address. Terrence and Sandy both alluded to the fact that most of their clients struggled with other issues that manifested into domestic violence. An improvement that can be made to the program is making the agency more resourceful to its clients by approaching all of the issues in their lives that cause domestic violence. For example, methamphetamines influenced Jason and John’s relationships. While

being on drugs, they had both physically abused their significant others. If the agency could connect the offenders with substance abuse treatment, then they would be able to address the controlling behavior and their destructive habits that influence the likelihood of abuse. As many of the men and women explained, unemployment was the cause of their money issues. Terrence also mentioned that some of the men were homeless and preyed on women for a place to stay. The agency could host weekly or monthly informational meetings to connect the offenders with other agencies and resources that could help them find employment and transitional housing. All of this would mean improving or creating a better-managed coordinated community response that helps offenders improve their quality of life, and reduce the opportunities for domestic violence.

Another difference between this city and Duluth, Minnesota is the culture; more specifically, the cultural dynamics of relationships in this large city may be different than the cultural dynamics of relationships a smaller city in northern Minnesota. The Duluth Model was designed after the first DAIP that consisted of men from Duluth, Minnesota. The problem with that is the sample that was used to mold the Duluth Model may not have been entirely representative of all cultural backgrounds. It is reasonable to assume that some men and women in domestic violence intervention programs like the Duluth Model will blame their victim for their actions. Similarly, some of the men in this study blamed the female for being the aggressor. This is in no way insinuating that the victims in these cases were to blame for being abused, but that relationship dynamics are different in the urban areas of this city. For example, Angelo explained the differences in African-American relationships in this urban Midwestern city compared to relationships in Duluth, Minnesota:

“I don’t like the whole scenario of it that says that you’re always the batterer; you’re the combatant. To me it’s always pointing the finger at one person. It’s not showing

that maybe there's two sides of the story. Maybe both of them are batterers, maybe both of them are combatants."

It is true that the Duluth Model teaches individuals to focus on his or her actions because you cannot control the other person, but Terrence recognized that there is a difference in relationships among the African-American population in this city, and perhaps other urban cities, that invalidates that teaching:

"Culturally, in different races, a lot of times there are different sets of norms of what is expected in relationships and so for Duluth, well it would set this stage for this normal husband and wife or man and woman relationship that's not necessarily what we see here. Typically, we see a lot of times where we have men that come in that women are the primary aggressor versus men being the primary aggressor. And I saw that that is a lot different in [the culture of this city]. I have found where African-American women have been a lot more aggressive towards their partners verses Caucasian-American women where the men were generally the aggressors."

It is not an accusatory statement that all African-American women in this particular city are the aggressors, but what Angelo and Terrence were attempting to identify was that African-American relationships do not function in the same manner as Caucasian-American relationships, so the approach to changing violent and controlling behavior in these relationships should not be the same. Indeed, in one study, West and Rose (2000) surveyed 171 African-American youth regarding intimate-partner-violence in a dating relationship, and the results revealed that African-American women were just as likely to be the aggressors of psychological and physical violence. However, they also mentioned that African-American men were more likely to be sexually and verbally violent than the women, and therefore it is difficult to know whether the women's aggression was actually a defense mechanism. As far as the effectiveness of a culturally-tailored intervention program, Gondolf (2007) compared an all African-American batterer intervention group to a racially-mixed intervention group, and found that the men in the racially-mixed group were half as likely to be re-arrested for

domestic violence. Thus, according to Gondolf's study (2007), a racially-mixed domestic violence program appears to be more effective than one that is tailored to one specific culture. While these findings do not support the claims made by Terrance and Angelo, future research should further explore the issues and potential effectiveness of culturally-specific domestic violence intervention programs.

Finally, the last critique by both offenders and administrators was the length of the program – but opposite perspectives were expressed from both groups. Offenders thought the program was too long in length: some suggested twelve weeks, one even said four weeks would be appropriate. Bill suggested coming twice a week and getting the program done in half the time. Many of them asked, “Why does it have to be so long?” Mike answered that by saying, “I think anything less than 26 weeks for most domestic violence offenders meaning, we’re talking about years of reinforced behavior... You’re not gonna change that behavior in an eight or twelve week course.” Terrence’s comment about the process of engaging the offenders would take eight to ten weeks for them to participate only affirmed that offenders need an extensive program. Additionally, even those offenders like Clint and Josh who were interviewed after they had completed the program were still blaming the victims or denying guilt in their situations. This would suggest that they had not entirely changed their thought processes or their behavior. This finding is supported by Bowen, Gilchrist, and Beech (2008) who assessed 52 domestic violence offenders pre and post-treatment. They found that there were no reductions in pro-domestic violence attitudes, anger, interpersonal dependency, or external locus of control. Bowen and Gilchrist (2004) suggest that offenders who have a deficit in motivation to change may benefit from an intervention that is designed to raise

levels of self-efficacy and motivation to change before beginning the court-ordered domestic violence program.

These critiques are not conclusive, and they do not represent every agency that teaches the Duluth Model, but they have valuable implications for adapting to the cultural demographic for those men and women who are ordered to complete the program. The following section introduces the most beneficial elements of the program that should be maintained in the future.

### **Praises of the Program**

Despite the inadequacies, there were significant successes of the program. Accountability appeared in many of the interviews as a great strength of curriculum. The men and women were humbled by speaking out about their own actions, but also reflecting on the actions of others to see how their behavior was not all that different. When Kim was forced to interact with her baby's father, she had learned to keep a level head so that she did not allow herself to be affected by his negative behavior. Steve was able to identify triggers that initiated an altercation, which could be prevented in his future relationships. Jason had caught himself judging others in his classes and then he realized he was no different: it may not have been the exact same situation, but the bottom line was that he assaulted someone he was in a relationship with.

The court order, as Terrence identified, was an advantage for keeping the offenders accountable because for some, they would have more than likely recidivated if they were not forced to go to the intervention program. Another helpful tool was Sandy's roll-call at the beginning of each class that made offenders face their inappropriate behavior every week. Similarly, Terrence asked the men 'who do you think you are?' so that they could work on

self-actualization. This, he believed, must happen first so that treatment for developing non-violent behavior can take place. When offenders mentioned the accountability that the program offered, their attitudes suggested that they were contemplating their behavior and recognizing that they had a problem. Even when the men and women denied fault, they still applied lessons in their relationships, which implies that both domestic and platonic relationships could be improved with the techniques of the Duluth Model.

Facilitators and offenders had identified positive tools of accountability, but they also suggested some ideas that could help prevent attrition. One element that could be added to keep offenders accountable is allowing the facilitators the ability to follow-up with those offenders that have graduated from the program. Terrence wanted to see some type of aftercare program where offenders could check-in and discuss issues that they need to be held accountable for. An aftercare program would be a way for facilitators to reinforce positive behavior while they return to their old lives receiving negatively reinforced behavior. By doing so, the program will be more successful at preventing recidivism. Another improvement as suggested by the offenders would be an opportunity to have an occasional co-ed class with both male and female facilitators and offenders. This would be an opportunity for the offenders to ask the opposite sex their perspectives on certain subjects in a controlled environment. If they are able to see their significant others' opinions presenting itself from someone they are not in a relationship with, then maybe this will create more understanding from both sides.

One asset that all agencies should maintain are qualified and effective facilitators. Generally, not many of the offenders in the program wanted to be in the classes. That was evident in their tones, their attitudes, and their comments. Despite an abundance of disdain

for the program, the facilitators were able to make the situation more tolerable. Their teaching styles also made it possible for the most reluctant students to learn something while they were forced to be present. Sheera saw the classes as a joke because of the lack of control of the class and the conversations, but individual conversations with Sandy were the most helpful moments of the program. Orlando was most impressed by Terrence's ability to present the material in a manner that made him want to learn. Bill appreciated the approachable and non-judgmental attitudes of the facilitators and staff at the agency. The females were more accepting of the curriculum when they knew it was taught by someone who had experienced domestic violence herself. Others simply noticed that the facilitators were knowledgeable of the facts they were presenting that made them qualified to teach.

To enhance the effectiveness of the administrators, it is pertinent that they be able to have contact with the victim so that they can ensure the victim is safe, and the offender is not re-offending. Sandy wanted to see an element where they could be able to connect victims with resources, if needed, to place like domestic violence shelters, housing for the victim and their children, counselors, and people to contact in case they were being threatened again. This is key to the Duluth Model besides rehabilitating offenders – making victim safety the priority.

Overall, the curriculum and facilitators had been effective by keeping offenders accountable and by teaching the curriculum in a way that was more conducive to offenders accepting responsibility for their actions. The final section addresses the implications for how the critiques and praises can be used to improve the content and structure of the Duluth Model.

## **Conclusion**

From its infancy in 1977, domestic violence intervention programs have been improving, changing, and adapting their programs in a manner that restructures the behavior of violent and controlling individuals. The Duluth Model began targeting that behavior in the 1980's using cognitive behavioral techniques and a coordinated community response (CCR) of social service and criminal justice agencies. In an attempt to make domestic violence intervention programs more successful in the future, this study gathered the viewpoints from men and women who attended or taught the Duluth Model at a probation agency in a large Midwestern city and its suburb. The varied responses implicate changes for an improved CCR, and for creating a treatment environment that enhances offender motivation to change.

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of domestic violence intervention through the perspectives of the program's administrators and the domestic violence offenders. The perspectives were able to reveal several themes: (1) the Duluth Model is not relatable to every culture, (2) the program cost is too expensive, (3) offenders were not motivated to change, (4) most offenders were able to apply the information to their relationships, (5) an effective facilitator renders the program somewhat more tolerable for offenders, (6) the program is overall successful at keeping the men and women accountable for their actions, and (7) the program does not necessarily prevent domestic violence, it attempts to re-teach non-controlling behavior.

The elements of Sutherland's (2004) Social Learning Theory were evident in both explaining domestic violence and the cognitive behavioral techniques of the Duluth Model. Based on the interviews with the offenders and administrators, the Duluth Model was taught in a manner that attempted to re-teach non-controlling and nonviolent behavior. Further, the

Social Learning Theory explains that criminal behavior occurs because offenders see crime as favorable or unfavorable to their needs and values. Generally, most offenders said they were not guilty, so perhaps they believed their actions were a favorable way to handle anger or stress. The theory also asserts that criminal behavior is not a response to a person's general needs and values just as domestic violence cannot be an explanation to needs and values because non-violent relationships could also be explained by their general needs and values. The theory also holds that criminal behavior is learned the same as any other noncriminal behavior and that criminal behavior is learned by association. The Duluth Model uses these concepts as the foundation for their curriculum as they display it on their power and control and equality wheels. By using the Social Learning Theory, they were able to develop techniques to teach non-controlling behavior. Sutherland stressed that criminal behavior (i.e. domestic violence in this case) is learned, then so too, can non-violent behavior. Furthermore, domestic violence is learned in communication with others and by association so the intervention used a facilitator to teach non-violent behavior in a group setting that was a source of accountability for addressing their inappropriate behavior. Finally, if criminal behavior requires specific techniques, motivations and attitudes then the Duluth Model sought to teach alternative reactions through role-plays, control logs and video vignettes.

Another theory that was discussed was Prochaska's Transtheoretical Model which assessed offender readiness to change. The Duluth Model did not utilize this model to shape their curriculum, but it would be a policy implication for future domestic violence intervention practices. As the administrators had observed over the years of DVIP, most offenders were not willing or ready to change upon entering the program. Each offender who entered the program went through an intake prior to beginning the program, but the offenders

were not matched with an intervention that matched their treatment readiness. In other words, there were not multiple classes with differentiating treatment intensity. The limited resources of the private probation company would make the option of a program tailored to the offender's needs impossible. Although the Duluth Model was not based on this theory, the program was somewhat successful at shifting the offenders' readiness level from apprehensive to conceding to learning something new.

In summation, the program was effective at enlightening offenders in a way that made them contemplate the roles that power and control play in their relationships. The facilitators were effective executioners of the Duluth Model in a manner that presented the central idea of the curriculum as it intended. There is one missing element, however, that would bridge the gap between a well-executed cognitive behavioral treatment program and changing violent behavior: motivation to change. Historically, court-ordered domestic violence offenders are less motivated to change their negative behavior compared to a self-referred offender (Bowen & Gilchrist, 2004). To ameliorate this problem, offenders need to be screened for preliminary motivational counseling. Consequently, although the offenders would be court-ordered to attend a domestic violence prevention program, they would be willfully choosing to change. If that were to take place, then this would change the offenders' perspectives on the effectiveness of the domestic violence intervention program. The participants would feel less animosity to the program in general because they have accepted that they need the help, despite the procedural injustice they perceived from the police and the courts. Individuals would be less conflicted about the cost of paying for a program meant that they could have better quality relationships. Additionally, it could mean less difficulty for facilitators when trying to control the side-conversations, and remaining on the topic of the

day because offenders would be more inclined to learn. Finally, the offenders would start taking responsibility for their own actions, and stop placing blame on their victim.

## APPENDIX A

### OFFENDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Respondent ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of interview: \_\_\_\_\_  
Length of interview: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_

All information obtained in this information will be completely confidential and used for educational purposes only.

1. What is your relationship status? (single, married, divorced, separated)
2. Do you have any children?
3. Are you employed?
  - a. What is your occupation?
4. Let's discuss your background somewhat. What did your childhood look like-your parents, school, home life, friends, where you grew up, trouble you may have gotten in to, etc.
  - a. Do you think any thing in your background influenced the reasons why you are on probation today?
5. When were you first arrested for domestic violence?
  - a. How old were you?
  - b. Who was involved?
  - c. Was this the first time you were arrested for domestic violence?
6. Have you had other domestic disputes reported to police with any other person
  - a. If yes, with whom and what was your relationship to this person?
7. What was your previous sentence?
  - a. Was attendance at a domestic violence prevention program a requirement of your sentence?
  - b. Do you think you deserved the sentence you received, why or why not?

8. How long was your probation?
9. Who was involved in your current domestic altercation?
  - a. What physical actions were taken against or from this person? (hitting, mutual battering, kicking, etc.)
  - b. Did this person call the police before? (If yes, how many times?)
  - c. Did law enforcement officers ever have to come to residence for a domestic dispute prior to this incident??
10. What is your current sentence?
  - a. Do you think you deserved the sentence you received, why or why not?
11. How long is your probation?
12. What struggles or consequences did you face after being arrested (i.e. loss of employment, custody issues, rumors, strained relationships)?
13. Have you attended a domestic violence prevention program before?
  - a. If yes, was it with this agency or a different one?
  - b. So far, do you think one agency is more helpful than the other (i.e. group facilitations, ?
14. What is the length of the domestic violence program?
  - a. How long are the meetings?
  - b. How long have you been attending the meetings?
15. Do you have to pay for the meetings?
  - a. If yes, do you think this should be a requirement?
16. Do you believe the group facilitator is effective in leading the group?
  - a. In your opinion, does he or she seem qualified to lead the group?
  - b. Do you think that one gender would be better than the other to effectively lead the group. (explain)

17. Is the group facilitator also your probation officer?
  - a. If yes, do you discuss your situation outside of the meetings?
  - b. If no, would you be interested in meeting with him/her outside of the meetings to discuss your situation?
18. Do you think you need to be at the meetings?
  - a. Do you believe that the D.V.I.P. group is individualized to fit your needs?
  - b. Who do you think should attend the meetings?
19. Would you suggest an alternative to attend the meetings as part of a probation requirement?
20. What are the consequences of not attending meetings?
  - a. Are you allowed to miss any meetings without consequences?
21. Have you had to start the program over?
22. What are the contexts of some of the discussions?
  - a. Do you discuss your situation?
  - b. Do you believe the subjects of discussion are often relevant to domestic violence prevention?
23. What are the strengths of the program?
24. What are some of the weaknesses of the program, if any?
25. Do you think the program has been helping you?
  - a. Do you have suggestions for changing the structure?

## APPENDIX B

### FACILITATOR AND ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Respondent ID#:\_\_\_\_\_ Time of interview:\_\_\_\_\_  
Length of interview:\_\_\_\_\_  
Sex:\_\_\_\_\_ Age:\_\_\_\_\_ Race:\_\_\_\_\_

All information obtained in this information will be completely confidential and used for educational purposes only.

1. What is your current job title?
  - a. What are your responsibilities?
2. How long have you been working with Northland Dependency Services?
3. Was this your first position with NDS?
4. What experience did you have before coming to this agency?
5. What education and experience (if any) is required for your position?
6. What is your highest level of education achieved?
7. Is there training offered when you are hired?
  - a. How long is the training process?
  - b. Is there periodical training required after preliminary training?
  - c. Do you think the training you have received is sufficient to perform your job to the best of your abilities?
  - d. Were you confident in performing your job when you first began after training?
8. Do you currently supervise other employees?
  - a. What are their titles and responsibilities?

- b. What supervisory tasks are you responsible for?
9. Do you currently monitor any probationers?
- a. If yes, how many clients do you oversee at a given time?
  - b. What are the ages, races, and genders of those you monitor?
  - c. What are their offenses?
10. Regarding the domestic violence prevention program, how long has NDS been holding these programs?
11. Is there a certain program model that you follow?
- a. Do you think this model has been an effective treatment for offenders?
  - b. Does this model help with cognitive behavior learning styles?
12. Do you think the program is effective at changing offenders' violent behaviors?
- a. Are the offenders ready to change in your professional opinion?
13. Do you think that it is necessary for the offenders at this agency should all be court-mandated to attend this program?
- a. Based on what you know of their personal stories, do you believe they should be labeled as domestic violence offenders?
14. Do you believe that this program is a proper treatment for all offenders alike?
- a. Is this a homogenous group?
  - b. Are all offender needs being met based on what you know about them?
15. Do you believe that the offenders are ready and willing to participate in treatment upon court referral? Explain.
16. What are the strengths that you see in the program?
17. Are there weaknesses of the program design?
18. Do you think treatment is properly implemented and carried out the way it was designed to?

19. What advice or suggestions would you offer for change?
20. Do you believe there are other treatments more suitable to the needs of domestic violence offenders?
21. Is there any other information you would like to add at this time

## APPENDIX C

### IRB APPROVED ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT FORM

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

##### Perceptions of Program Effectiveness: An Evaluation of a Domestic Violence Treatment Program

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Bryana Harrah (graduate student) and Drs. Jessica Hodge, Ken Novak and Toya Like, from the Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology at the University of Missouri- Kansas City. This study is part of the requirement to fulfill a Master's thesis. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

#### • PARTICIPANTS

The population that is eligible for this study consists of the clients of [REDACTED] that are participants in a domestic violence prevention program, the two directors of the program, and two group facilitators of the programs. It is hoped that 25 clients will volunteer to participate and four administrators will volunteer to participate.

#### • PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to gather the opinions and perspectives of clients and administrators in a court-mandated domestic violence treatment program to better understand what areas of the program are helpful to the clients and what areas of the program could be improved.

#### • PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Volunteer approximately one to two hours of your time to answer a few questions about your life, your background, and your opinion about the domestic violence program.

The interviews will take place in an available room of [REDACTED] when you are available for participation.

The interviews will be digitally audio-taped for later review; however I, Bryana Harrah, and my thesis chairperson will be the only individuals who will hear the recorded sessions.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

- **ALTERNATIVES**

The alternative is not to participate in this study, and you can withdraw at any time without any harm.

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

It is the researcher's goal to make you, the participant, as comfortable as possible. Personal questions will be asked that you may not feel comfortable answering and you can refuse to answer any question. Questions about your personal history may create emotional discomfort if you volunteer that information. The questions could potentially initiate an emotional reaction. These reactions could range from anger to remorse or emotional pain to regret. The unforeseen psychological repercussions could be a risk to you. In case of psychological or emotional harm, there will be copies of mental health and counseling agencies that are available in the area if you should need them.

In the event of mental injury resulting from participation in this research project, the University of Missouri- Kansas City does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Missouri- Kansas City provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There will be no benefit to you for participating in this study; however, the more information you can provide to me about the treatment program at the [REDACTED] will potentially inform the directors and researchers of what should be sustained in the program and what could change. This information may result in the program becoming more beneficial to future clients.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

While every effort will be made to keep confidential all of the information you complete and share, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study for quality improvement and regulatory functions.

To help ensure confidentiality, any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential by the researcher, and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of an alias that you can choose for yourself at the beginning of the interview and you will not be asked for your given name. The information obtained in the interview will be stored on a secure campus computer at the University of Missouri- Kansas City, and will be safeguarded with a password, so that access to your personal information will be prohibited.

The information will be used for the completion of a thesis and could potentially be published. If any direct quotes are used, you will be assured anonymity by your alias.

The audio tapes will only be used by the researcher and thesis chairperson, and secured in a locked filing cabinet on the University of Missouri – Kansas City campus. Your responses on the audio tapes will be typed for analysis, which will also be stored on a password protected computer in the Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology at UMKC. All audio tapes will be destroyed once the research and analysis is complete.

**It is important to know that any information regarding a criminal act that needs to be reported to police such as homicide, assault, rape, or any kind of sexual assault will be reported to the proper authorities. In this case, confidentiality will be broken. Non-violent crimes such as using illicit drugs, burglary, theft, and similar illegal acts will not be reported or discussed outside the interview.**

#### • IN CASE OF INJURY

The University of Missouri-Kansas City appreciates the participation of people who help it carry out its function of developing knowledge through research. If you have any questions about the study that you are participating in you are encouraged to call **Bryana Harrah**, the investigator, at **(816) 343-4848**.

Although it is not the University's policy to compensate or provide medical treatment for persons who participate in studies, if you think you have been injured as a result of participating in this study, please call the IRB Administrator of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at (816) 235-1764.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Bryana Harrah, Principal Investigator  
Email: [bmhyvf@umkc.edu](mailto:bmhyvf@umkc.edu)  
(816) 343-4848

or

Dr. Jessica Hodge, Faculty Sponsor  
Email: [hodgejp@umkc.edu](mailto:hodgejp@umkc.edu)  
Daytime phone: (816) 235-5164

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

The University of Missouri- Kansas City Institutional Review Board has reviewed my request to conduct this project. If you have any concerns about your rights in this study, please contact the compliance officer at UMKC-IRB at (816) 235-6150 or email [umkcssirb@umkc.edu](mailto:umkcssirb@umkc.edu).

The purpose, procedures, and risks involved have been explained in full detail. You have had the chance to ask questions, and you may ask questions at any time during this study by calling Bryana Harrah. A copy of this consent form will be given to you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## IRB APPROVED OFFENDER CONSENT FORM

### RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

#### Perceptions of Program Effectiveness: An Evaluation of a Domestic Violence Treatment Program

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Bryana Harrah (graduate student) and Drs. Jessica Hodge, Ken Novak and Toya Like, from the Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology at the University of Missouri- Kansas City. This study is part of the requirement to fulfill a Master's thesis. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

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This study is designed to gather the opinions and perspectives of clients and administrators in a court-mandated domestic violence treatment program to better understand what areas of the program are helpful to the clients and what areas of the program could be improved.

#### • PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Volunteer approximately one to two hours of your time to answer a few questions about your life, your background, and your opinion about the domestic violence program.

The interviews will take place in an available room of [REDACTED] when you are available for participation.

The interviews will be digitally audio-taped for later review; however I, Bryana Harrah, and my thesis chairperson will be the only individuals who will hear the recorded sessions.

#### • PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your participation in this study is not a part of your probation. Your participation will in no way affect (either positively or negatively) the conditions of your probation. Any information you discuss will not be shared with your probation officer or any other employee of [REDACTED].

- **ALTERNATIVES**

The alternative is not to participate in this study, and you can withdraw at any time without any harm.

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

It is the researcher's goal to make you, the participant, as comfortable as possible. Personal questions will be asked that you may not feel comfortable answering and you can refuse to answer any question. Questions about your personal history may create emotional discomfort if you volunteer that information. The questions could potentially initiate an emotional reaction. These reactions could range from anger to remorse or emotional pain to regret. The unforeseen psychological repercussions could be a risk to you. In case of psychological or emotional harm, there will be copies of mental health and counseling agencies that are available in the area if you should need them.

In the event of mental injury resulting from participation in this research project, the University of Missouri- Kansas City does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Missouri- Kansas City provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There will be no benefit to you for participating in this study; however, the more information you can provide to me about the treatment program at the [REDACTED] will potentially inform the directors and researchers of what should be sustained in the program and what could change. This information may result in the program becoming more beneficial to future clients.

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The information will be used for the completion of a thesis and could potentially be published. If any direct quotes are used, you will be assured anonymity by your alias.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX D

### CODING SHEET

#### Offender Codes

Relationship	First arrest	Childhood
Demographics	Domestic relationship	Record
Activity	Motivational Attitude	Discussions
Current DV	Post-arrest	Prior program
Program Weakness	Program Strength	Program Fit
Program Facilitator	Recidivism	Repeats
Alternatives	Suggestions	

#### Administrator Codes

Career	Training	Supervision
Suggestions	Theory/Model	Probationers
Program Fit	Program Strength	Program Weakness
Implementation	Effective	Alternatives

## APPENDIX E

### OFFENDER CODING NOTES

- Relationship - the participant's current relationship status (married, divorced, in a relationship, or single. This would include living situation, if they have any children together, the length of the relationship, and the quality of the relationship.
- Demographics - any indication of age, race, sex, or status of the offender.
- Childhood - this includes childhood and adolescence (17 and younger). This would portray their family life, their history in school, relationship with peers, and delinquency.
- First arrest - an overview of the participant's first offense (if the domestic violence charge is not their first).
- Record - the criminal record of the participant from 18 years of age to present.
- Current DV - a description of their current domestic violence charge, the circumstances that lead up to it, the arrest, charges, sentencing and probation.
- Post-arrest - struggles that the offenders have faced since being arrested and put on probation.
- Domestic relationship - the relationship that he or she was in that involved the current domestic violence charge. The status of their relationship, whether children were involved, and if they are currently still together will be signifiers of this description.
- Activity - the extent of how active the offender is in the domestic violence meetings each week.
- Motivational attitude - whether or not the participant believes he or she should be required to attend the meetings, and what effect this may have on their participation in the program.
- Discussions - the content of the meetings; what issues are discussed.
- Prior program - if the participant was assigned to a domestic violence treatment program previously, and how it compares to the current program.
- Program weakness - what flaws or weaknesses the participants see in the program.
- Program strengths - what are the strengths of the treatment program.
- Program fit - does the treatment program cater to the psychological, mental, and emotional needs of the offender or are all offenders treated the same?
- Program facilitator - the participants' perspectives on how well the facilitator leads the group, and if he or she is effective at leading the meetings.
- Recidivism - if the participant has ever had a previous domestic violence charge, and why they believe they recidivated.
- Repeats - if the participant has had to repeat or re-start the treatment program and why.
- Alternatives - what the participant believes could be an appropriate alternative to the domestic violence treatment program.
- Suggestions - what suggestions the offender has for improvement or change with the program.

## APPENDIX F

### ADMINISTRATOR CODING NOTES

- Career - the employment history of the administrators that have qualified them for their current position.
- Training - what kind of training was received for their position.
- Supervision - what employees the administrator supervises if any.
- Theory/Model - if there is any criminal theory or practical model that NDS follows for their program.
- Probationers - how many probationers each administrator is assigned to, and what kind of working relationship exists between the two.
- Program fit - if the administrator believes the program is designed to meet the criminological needs of the offenders.
- Program strengths - strengths of the treatment program.
- Program weaknesses - what flaws or weaknesses the administrators see in the program.
- Implementation - if the administrators believe the program is being implemented the way it was intended.
- Effective - in reference to the offenders, do the administrators believe the program is effective at treating the offenders, and preventing criminological behavior.
- Alternatives - do the administrators believe that there are other viable alternatives for the offenders that could be more effective or appropriate than the current program.
- Suggestions - what suggestions the administrator has for improvement or change for the program.

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## VITA

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