

Domestic Abuse:

Motivational sessions for fathers harming intimate partners through violence and abuse who are not acknowledging their behaviour

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Introduction

This resource has been designed to support front-line practitioners in their work with domestic abuse in the context of child safeguarding. The activities are designed to support practitioners when they are faced with denial by the person perpetrating the violence and abuse.

It is designed to support individuals to be able to acknowledge their use of violence and/or abuse, understand the impact it has on children and motivate them to make changes about their own behaviour. It is designed in line with the principles of [Safe and Together](#), to hold accountable those causing harm and engage them to make changes to their behaviour.

Aims of intervention

- Safeguard victims/survivors of domestic abuse, including children, by holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour and reducing the risk they pose.
- Motivate individuals who have behaved abusively to acknowledge their behaviour
- Start to build empathy skills and an understanding of the harmful impact of violent and abusive behaviour
- Start to develop the belief that they can make different choices in the future

Limitations

This is not a substitute for behaviour change work, and will not significantly impact the risk that an individual poses, it is the first step in supporting them to recognise their behaviour.

Things to consider before using

It should be used only following immediate safety planning with the victim and once you have moved to an intervention planning stage with a family. As part of any perpetrator intervention it is important to ensure the safety of any victims/survivors including children; safe work with those perpetrating violence and abuse requires engaging the victims/survivors including children. It is important to ensure that any intervention provided to perpetrators does not increase the risk to victims/survivors including children or give a false impression that someone's level of risk is changing when intervention isn't having an impact.

A note about denial

Denial can be frustrating for practitioners because it increases the level of uncertainty that we have to work with. It can also be challenging to understand, particularly where there is clear evidence of harm. Denial on the part of the individual who has behaved abusively may be an attempt to escape the consequences or avoid negative feelings. However, it may also serve to facilitate further abuse or to justify their actions.

Confidentiality

As part of the work with those causing harm it is vital that services share information in order to protect and safeguard victims. As such all perpetrators will have limited confidentiality, this means that information about their engagement and potential risks that they pose should be shared with victims, family members at risk and relevant professionals.

Motivational Outline

Session number	Session name	Session content / resources	Aims of session
1	Getting to know you	DAPP Motivational Session #1 Part 1 - Establish what is important to them; Part 2 - Establish what children need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationship and agreement for working together • Establish what qualities/traits they find important • Establish their understanding of children's needs and establish shared understanding • Build motivation in the importance of their role as a father
2	What is abuse	DAPP Motivational Session # 2 What is abuse Scene 1, 2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of behaviours constitute violence and abuse • Agreement that violence and abuse is never acceptable
3	Impact on children	DAPP Motivational Session # 3 Children's bedroom The next day Pregnancy Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop understanding the impact that domestic abuse has on family functioning • Develop understanding of the impact on children individually • Understanding that choosing to perpetrate domestic abuse is a parenting choice
4	Moving forward	DAPP Motivational Session # 4 Recap Developing goals The pit of shame Identifying next step	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To start to discuss the concerns that we have about the father perpetrating domestic abuse • To motivate the father to establish goals to address his behaviour • To challenge denial, minimisation and blame • To develop next steps going forward

Remote use

It is possible to complete these sessions remotely via googlemeet, team, zoom or other video platform. Tools like jamboard/whiteboard can be utilised instead of pen and paper.

The following safety considerations should be considered before doing sessions remotely;

- That they have access to a suitable device such as a tablet, laptop, or a PC with a functioning camera and microphone. (it's important that you able to see them and their surroundings)
- That they have a private space that won't be interrupted for the duration of the session. That this is away from ex/partner and children
- That we have discussed this with their ex/partner before hand and completed a safety plan with them

After use, please provide feedback using this [google form](#)

For further guidance please speak to Hackney's [Domestic Abuse Intervention Service](#).