

S.C. Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services



Batterer’s Intervention Program Standards

June 2024

The South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services (SCDPPPS) recognizes the importance of batterer's intervention programs in the role of ending domestic violence. The purpose of batterer's intervention programs is to

- hold individuals accountable,
- confront collusion and victim-blaming,
- teach new skills that assist individuals with changing their behavior,
- collect data to assist with the evaluation of programs and recidivism,
- increase the public's awareness of domestic violence, and
- report compliance and noncompliance to SCDPPPS, courts, and other referral sources.

To ensure SCDPPPS staff are making referrals to quality batterer's intervention programs, SCDPPPS has established standards for service providers offering batterer's intervention programs to individuals under SCDPPPS' supervision. The purpose of creating and ensuring adherence to these standards is to

- promote consistency of services statewide,
- provide a process to evaluate services, and
- establish a minimum level of responsibility, service, and accountability expected from providers.

SCDPPPS will review providers every two years to ensure compliance with these standards.

Approved providers have met SCDPPPS standards and are authorized to provide services to individuals under SCDPPPS supervision. To be authorized as an *approved* batterer's intervention program, a service provider is required to meet all of the following standards:

Solicitor's Office Approval

- Received Solicitor's Office approval within the last three years and must proof when applying to become an SCDPPPS-approved provider
 - For providers with programs in multiple circuits, approval is required by each Solicitor's Office
 - Providers are to notify SCDPPPS if they experience difficulty obtaining an approval letter from a Solicitor's Office
 - Must maintain the Solicitor's Office approval and provide proof when requested

Program Structure

- Uses a program structure that:
 - Is at least 26 weeks in length
 - The 26 weeks should not include intake, orientation, and exit sessions
 - Has weekly sessions that are at least 90 minutes
 - The 90 minutes should not include breaks
 - No more than 15 minutes per session should be devoted to viewing videos
 - Holds groups
 - That are gender-specific
 - In-person groups are limited to not less than two and not more than 20 participants
 - The preferred group size is eight to 15 participants

- Web-based groups are limited to not less than two and not more than eight participants
 - Individual intervention is strongly discouraged but may be provided when:
 - An individual is unable to participate in a group setting because they are too disruptive
 - No qualified group program is available
 - An individual's safety would be compromised
- Has a written attendance policy
 - Participants may not have more than four absences throughout the program
 - A fifth absence must result in automatic termination without documented extenuating circumstances
 - In instances of extenuating circumstances, SCDPPPS staff must be notified
 - Retains attendance records for at least six months that document the length of the session on each attendance sheet and has a system to provide the attendance record when requested by SCDPPPS
- Focuses on group accountability by:
 - Encouraging participants to disclose an accurate and detailed description of the most recent violent incident towards victims which led to their referral to the batterer's intervention program
 - The description must be free of minimization, justification, and victim-blaming
 - Encouraging participants to hold each other accountable for their abusive behaviors and instances of denying, minimizing, justifying, and rationalizing
 - Acknowledging and challenging inappropriate comments and jokes
 - Incorporating discussion, activities, and exercises that encourage empathy towards victims and others affected by the participant's abusive behavior
 - Encouraging participants to identify the victim by first name only
- Complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Uses a program model that acknowledges that violence is a learned behavior and that participants can learn to behave differently
- Uses a curriculum that acknowledges the multi-level system of power and control tactics that contribute to intimate partner violence
- Requires participants who attend web-based sessions to:
 - Have access to a reliable internet service
 - Possess a device (e.g., phone, computer) with a camera capability and that the camera remains directed toward him/herself during the entire session
 - Participate in sessions in a quiet space that is absent of any children, household members, or other potential onlookers
 - Test their connectivity before the first scheduled web-based session

Program Components

- Uses intake paperwork that addresses substance use, mental health, recidivism, client lethality (i.e., potential to kill a current or former intimate partner or household member), anti-social traits, and victim safety

- Has an established process to notify SCDPPPS why the person was refused admission into the program and offer an alternative
- Has a written fee payment policy that includes a process to address indigent clients
- Has a written policy addressing failure to pay
- Has a written transfer policy
 - Any individual in good standing in a South Carolina program who seeks to transfer as a matter of preference to another South Carolina program may do so, but class credit is not guaranteed
 - Participants are considered to be in good standing if:
 - All homework assignments have been completed
 - Group fees are current
 - Group attendance policy requirements have been met
 - All contract requirements have been met
 - Participants who want to transfer to a different program must sign a release of information so that the two programs may contact each other to establish the status of the participant in the new program and share any other relevant information about the participant
- Has a written client grievance policy and procedure
 - Before filing any complaint against a batterers' intervention program, the participant should attempt to resolve the complaint informally by talking with the class facilitator
 - If unable to reach an agreement with the facilitator, the participant shall contact the program director who shall attempt to resolve the complaint
 - If the issue remains unresolved, a formal written complaint may be submitted to:

SCDPPPS
293 Greystone Boulevard
Columbia, SC 29210

or Service.Providers@ppp.sc.gov

Attention: Program Planning and Development
 - A victim may file a formal written complaint to:

SCDPPPS
293 Greystone Boulevard
Columbia, SC 29210

or (888) 551-4118

Attention: Victim Services

Victims

- Has an established process for warning victims of threats made by a participant
- Complies with victim contact standards:
 - Notify the client that the victim(s) of the current case will be contacted throughout the treatment process
 - Make reasonable efforts to determine the correct address for the victim(s)
 - Document efforts to obtain the victim's contact information using the provided tracking log or an approved tracking log
 - Contact the SCDPPPS victim advocate if the victim's contact information is unable to be determined within three days of the client's intake and document in the tracking log that the SCDPPPS victim advocate was contacted

- Maintain the victim contact information and tracking logs separate from client files
 - Ensure the victim(s) receive the following:
 - Notification of all imminent threats to health or safety. This should occur immediately. Attempts at immediate notifications should be made by phone and through law enforcement
 - Notification within five days of the client's intake (i.e., signing the participation contract) that the individual has been accepted into services and include the following:
 - Information about the program
 - A statement stating that participation does not guarantee that the individual will stop any or all of their abusive behaviors and that the responsibility for change lies with the individual alone
 - A statement that the victim is not required or expected to help the individual complete the program and that the individual's eligibility for the program is not contingent on the victim's participation
 - Information for a local domestic violence program and an encouragement to develop a safety plan
 - Notification within five days of the client's official discharge from the program and include the following:
 - Notification that the individual has attended the required sessions
 - A statement explaining that completion of the program does not guarantee the individual will cease abusive behavior
 - Information for a local domestic violence program
 - Notification within 24 hours of the individual's termination from the program and include the following:
 - Notification that the individual has been terminated from the program
 - Information about the potential for increased danger to the victim
 - Information for a local domestic violence program and an encouragement to develop a safety plan

Communication

- Distributes written or electronic copies of the rules and guidelines upon completion of intake
- Has an established process to communicate program progress with SCDPPPS' referral source
 - Contact the referring agent/offender supervision specialist within 24 hours of the discovery of any new violation on behalf of the participant
- Has an established process that allows SCDPPPS staff to attend groups

Provider

- Has general liability insurance
- Has space independent of the SCDPPPS county office where services are provided
- Stores files in a secure location and follows a retention schedule

Paid Staff and Volunteers

- Conducts criminal background checks on program staff
 - Program staff must have been violence and abuse-free in their own lives for the past five years to work with the batterer's intervention program
 - Abuse includes stalking, criminal mischief, or non-violent acts that are intended to create fear or harass another individual
 - Any incidents of violence and abuse committed by program staff must be disclosed to their program supervisor within 24 hours of the occurrences
 - These program staff shall not continue to be involved with the batterer's intervention program
- Remains free from conflicts of interest with the batterer's intervention program by not:
 - Receiving gifts, compensation, or other consideration of value from any participant or from any other party that might give the appearance of being designed to influence the assessment of a participant
 - Being employed by another entity in a manner that is deemed to be a conflict of interest by these batterer's intervention program standards
 - Being employed by another entity where disclosure by the batterer's intervention program participant of their actions might create confidentiality breaches
 - Recruiting potential clients who are or have been in the batterer's intervention program for one's own private counseling or therapy practice
- Complies with education requirements
 - Group facilitators must have the following minimum qualifications:
 - A minimum of a bachelor's degree in a human services-related field
 - Two years of work in a field in which domestic violence is present
 - Program supervisors must have the following minimum qualifications:
 - A master's degree in a related field
 - Two years of work in a field in which domestic violence is present
 - For consultation purposes, all non-licensed supervisors/facilitators shall have direct access to someone who is fully licensed
- Compliant with professional development requirements
 - Group facilitators and supervisory staff shall complete a minimum of 12 credit hours of continuing education annually
 - The 12 credit hours must include at least three different topics
 - Approved areas of training are:
 - Ethics
 - Substance use assessment and intervention
 - Intimate partner violence and the law
 - Power and control model
 - Child abuse and maltreatment
 - Anti-oppression work
 - Cultural competence
 - Group leadership skills
 - Suicide prevention, assessment, and screening
 - Risk assessment for abusers

- Approved methods of training:
 - Seminars and workshops
 - Participating in webinars
 - Online training programs
 - Completing relevant academic coursework

Preferred providers are providers that have met SCDPPPS standards and have satisfied additional, preferred qualifications. Agents/offender supervision specialists are instructed to use *preferred providers* over *approved providers*. To be authorized as a preferred batterer's intervention program, a service provider is required to meet two of the following standards:

- Attend annually at least one SCDPPPS domestic violence training or event
- Participate regularly in community events focused on domestic violence
- Meet quarterly with SCDPPPS' domestic violence agent

Every two years SCDPPPS will review a provider to ensure compliance with standards. However, SCDPPPS will conduct a review before two years if a complaint is received or upon the request of the provider. If a provider is not compliant with all standards, and depending on the severity of noncompliance, one of the following may occur:

- The provider will receive a corrective action plan and a follow-up review will be scheduled
- The provider will not be approved to provide batterer's intervention programming and services for individuals under the supervision of SCDPPPS will be removed immediately.
- If previously approved, the provider will be removed from the service provider directory and services for individuals under the supervision of SCDPPPS will be removed immediately

A denied/removed program can submit a new application for review six months after the denial date.

**For questions regarding the approval process, please contact
Service.Providers@ppp.sc.gov.**

SCDPPPS Batterer's Intervention Program Checklist

A service provider is required to meet all standards to be approved to render services.

Required Standards			
Category	Standard	Standard Met	
Solicitor's Office Approval	Has a letter of approval (Date of letter: _____)	Yes	No
Program Structure	Has a program that is at least 26 weeks in length	Yes	No
	Hold weekly sessions that are at least 90-minute	Yes	No
	Holds gender-specific groups	Yes	No
	Complies with group size limitation	Yes	No
	Has a written attendance policy	Yes	No
	Focuses on group accountability	Yes	No
	Complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act	Yes	No
	Acknowledges that violence is a learned behavior and that participants can learn to behave differently	Yes	No
	Acknowledges the multi-level system of power and control tactics that contribute to intimate partner violence	Yes	No
	Complies with web-based standards (if applicable)	Yes	No
Program Components	Has intake paperwork that addresses substance use, mental health, recidivism, client lethality, anti-social traits, and victim safety	Yes	No
	Has a process to notify SCDPPPS why the person was rejected and what is an alternative	Yes	No
	Has a written fee payment policy	Yes	No
	Has a written policy addressing failure to pay	Yes	No
	Has a written transfer policy	Yes	No
	Has a written client grievance policy and procedure	Yes	No
Victims	Has a process for warning victims of threats made	Yes	No
	Complies with victim contact standards	Yes	No
Communication	Distributes written copies of the rules and guidelines	Yes	No
	Communicates program progress with agents/offender supervision specialists	Yes	No
	Allows SCDPPPS staff to attend groups	Yes	No
Provider	Has general liability insurance	Yes	No
	Has a space independent of the SCDPPPS county office where services are provided	Yes	No
	Holds files in a secure location and follows a retention schedule	Yes	No

Required Standards		
Category	Standard	Standard Met
Staff	Conducts criminal background checks	Yes No
	Complies with conflicts of interest standards	Yes No
	Complies with education requirements	Yes No
	Complies with professional development requirements	Yes No

A provider has to have met two additional standards to be considered a preferred provider.

Additional Preferred Standards		
Standard	Standard Met	
Attends at least one SCDPPPS domestic violence training or event annually	Yes	No
Participates in community events focused on domestic violence	Yes	No
Meets quarterly with SCDPPPS' domestic violence agents	Yes	No

Comments

Check applicable designation

Preferred: _____	Approved: _____	Not Approved: _____
If Applicable, Corrective Action Plan: _____ _____	Corrective Action Plan Completion Date: _____	
SCDPPPS' Staff Signature: _____	Date: _____	