

## The Six Big Lies

*If you hear your partner making statements like these while he is in the program, you should understand that he is lying to himself—and to you.*

1. *“I’m not the only one who needs counseling.”*
2. *“I’m not as bad as a lot of the other guys in there.”*
3. *“As soon as I’m done with this program, I’ll be cured.”*
4. *“We need to stay together to work this out.”*
5. *“If I weren’t under so much stress, I wouldn’t have such a short fuse.”*
6. *“Not that I’m in this program, you have to be more understanding.”*
7. *“Once I quit drinking, I will have a better handle over my anger.”*

*These statements have one thing in common: they let him off the hook for his abusive behavior.*

## Steps You Can Take To Keep Yourself Safe

*If you have any reason to believe you may be at risk for abuse while your partner is in a program, there are several things you can do to protect yourself.*

1. *Call 911 if you are in immediate danger.*
2. *Call WomenSafe for emergency shelter, counseling, and legal advocacy (1-888-285-5665).*
3. *Contact the program he is in to let them know about any threatening or potentially threatening behavior.*

## Did you Know?

- Batterers DO NOT have problems managing their anger. This is reflected in their daily life since they do not use violence within their communities, or with other people they know (boss, church, others). Battering is TARGET SPECIFIC. Anger management treatment does not address the core belief system that is the hallmark of those who batter—power and control, entitlement, coercive behaviors, nor do they have systems in place to protect the victim.
- Additionally alcohol does not cause battering, while it may intensify violence, one doesn’t cause the other. Treatment for alcoholism is essential, but if the battering behavior isn’t also treated, you end up with a sober batterer.

**WOMENSAFE, INC.**  
the   
**Green House**

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Web: womensafe.org

**For 24 hour Crisis Support  
Management, call COPEline  
1-888-285-5665**

## A Guide For Survivors Whose Partners Are In A Battering Intervention Program



*This information provided by:*

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# *Couples Counseling Won't Stop The Violence And It Could Potentially Increase Risk To The Victim.*

Your partner may try to get you to both go to couples counseling, telling you that you both have a problem and should work on it together. Couples counseling does have its place in working out problems, but abusive relationships are not ones best handled in this venue. Abuse is something that batterers should address...ONLY. If you think the two of you would benefit from joint counseling, then by all means, go AFTER the Batterers Intervention Program is completed and there is no longer emotional, verbal, physical abuse or controlling behaviors.

## ***What Are Signs Of A Good Batterer's Intervention Group?***

- *Education is given on the nature of domestic violence.*
- *A focus is on changing attitudes and beliefs.* The program should work to establish new, non-aggressive attitudes, and focus on ways to express emotion effectively without being violent.
- *Achieving equality in the relationship.* There should be a focus on helping batterers come up with long-term strategies for achieving the mutual respect, trust and support necessary to maintain a non-abusive relationship.
- *Awareness of patterns.* Techniques for maintaining non-violent behavior should be given.

***Research is still inconclusive as to the effectiveness of male batterer treatment programs.  
Choose wisely.***

## ***How Do You Know If The Program Will Work?***

There are no guarantees that any program will work; a lot depends on your partner's motivation and capacity for change. The programs that work will use the following standards:

- *Your safety is the first priority.* Programs should always assess your safety when communicating with you. A program should never disclose information that you have given them without your permission.
- *Lasts long enough.* Change takes time. A year or more in a program is preferable, although that is not always possible.
- *Holds the abuser accountable.* The first step of accountability is that the abuser takes responsible for choosing to use violence in a relationship.
- *The curriculum gets to the root of the problem.* Programs that only address anger, communication skills and stress do not work. They need to address the issues of control.
- *Your participation is optional, but the program is open to your input.* Some programs may initiate contact with you to discuss your partner's behavior outside the program. Don't let anyone lead you to believe that his progress is dependant upon your participation.
- *Encourages follow-up support.* The program should promote self-help and social support beyond the duration of the program.



## ***How Do You Know If The Program Is Really Working?***

- The violence and threats have stopped.
- Responsibility for actions are being acknowledged.
- You are not afraid to be with them.
- You can express your anger without feeling intimidated.
- Your opinion is being respected, even if it is not agreed with.
- You have the right to say "no" without any additional repercussions.
- You can negotiate without being humiliated or belittled.
- You don't have to ask permission to go about your daily business.
- You are listened to and respected.
- The abuser recognizes that they are not "cured" and that change is going to be a lifelong process.

## ***Warning Signs***

- *"VENTING" Is NOT OK.* Techniques and therapies like pillow punching or primal screaming are NOT appropriate for batterers. They tend to reinforce, rather than discourage, violent behavior. These techniques should not be a part of any intervention program.
- *Manipulation.* Old habits die hard. Your partner's abusive behavior is rooted in a desire to control the relationship and that pattern will not change over night. They may no longer be violent, but may manipulate you into doing what they want. You may be so hopeful for change that you want to believe things are different. If you don't feel safe, then chances are, you're not.

*Adapted from the Texas Council on Family Violence,  
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