

Domestic Violence Offender Management Board  
Division of Criminal Justice  
Colorado Department of Public Safety  
303-239-4528 1-800-201-1325  
dcj.state.co.us/odvsom

Anger Management vs. Domestic Violence Offender Treatment  
An Overview  
Chart Available on Page Two

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### Battering Behavior

It is the nature of domestic violence offenders that their behaviors tend to be covert, deceptive, and secretive. These behaviors are often present long before they are recognized publicly. Domestic violence behavior is dangerous. When domestic violence occurs, there is always a victim. Both literature and clinical experience suggest that this violence and/or abuse can have devastating physical, emotional, psychological, financial and spiritual effects on the lives of victims and their families. Offenders may deny and minimize the facts, severity, and/or frequency of their offenses. Domestic violence offenders often maintain a socially-acceptable facade to hide their abusive behaviors. At its extreme, domestic violence behavior can result in the death of the victim, offender, family members, and others.

Because of the cyclical nature of offense patterns and fluctuating life stresses, domestic violence offenders' levels of risk are constantly in flux. Changes that occur as a result of the supervision or treatment of offenders cannot be assumed to be permanent. For these reasons, continuous monitoring of risk is the joint responsibility of the responsible criminal justice agency and the approved provider. The end of the period of supervision should not necessarily be seen as the end of dangerousness.

Domestic violence offender treatment in Colorado includes the following distinctions from anger management and other private therapy:

- The offender must receive treatment only from providers approved by Colorado to provide the treatment.
- Individual treatment goals are determined by the provider to reduce recidivism and increase victim and community safety.
- Decisions regarding treatment and containment are made jointly between approved providers and criminal justice agencies.
- Approved providers are required to consult and communicate with the victim advocate and other involved agencies.
- Confidentiality of the offender is limited by the requirements of the criminal justice system and the needs of victim safety.
- Victim advocacy is an essential component of offender treatment. Victims have confidentiality.
- Minimization and denial of the need for treatment is expected, and therefore, treatment involves the challenging of the offender's perceptions and beliefs.

## **Batterer Intervention (domestic violence offender treatment) is more than Anger Management**

The treatment of domestic violence offenders in the State of Colorado employs a variety of theories, modalities, and techniques. Court ordered domestic violence offenders are a separate category of violent offenders requiring a specialized approach. The primary goals are cessation of abusive behaviors and victim safety. These programs also provide contact with partners, assess substance abuse and mental health status and make referrals.

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Anger Management</b>	<b>Colorado Approved Domestic Violence Offender Treatment</b>
<b>Are programs or counselors state-certified?</b>	No	Yes. State Approval of providers is granted and monitored by the Colorado Domestic Violence Offender Management Board.
<b>Who is served by the programs?</b>	Perpetrators of stranger or non-intimate violence.	Specifically designed to work with intimate partner violence and domestic violence offenders.
<b>How long are programs?</b>	Usually 8-20 sessions, with an average program lasting 10 sessions.	A minimum 36 sessions, treatment is based on offender risk.
<b>Do programs contact victims?</b>	No	Yes. If the victim chooses, the program will remain in regular contact with her/him to provide referrals, updates, safety planning, and information. Victim confidentiality is maintained.
<b>Are programs monitored by a state agency?</b>	No	Yes. By the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Domestic Violence Offender Management Board.
<b>Are programs linked with a battered women's agency?</b>	No	Yes. Each Approved Provider must have a linkage with a battered women's agency.
<b>Do programs assess batterers for lethality?</b>	No	Yes. While not a perfect prediction model, Approved Treatment Providers perform risk and other forms of assessment and evaluation. The intake evaluation explores many sources of information such as criminal history.

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<b>What is the emphasis of the intervention?</b>	Violence is seen as a momentary outburst of anger. So perpetrators are taught to use techniques like “time outs.”	Physical violence is seen as one of many forms of abusive behaviors chosen by batterers to control their intimate partners, including physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic abuse. Domestic violence offender treatment hold batterers accountable for the violent and abusive choices they make. They teach batterers to recognize how their abuse affects their partners and children and to practice alternatives to abusive behaviors.
<b>Are group facilitators trained about domestic violence?</b>	Subject to agency discretion.	State standards specify 77 to over 200 hours of specialized training depending on education level, 100-300 domestic violence offender treatment counseling hours experience and clinical supervision.
<b>How would I address grievances with this type of program?</b>	Talk to the director of the program.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Talk to the director of the program.</li> <li>2. Call the Domestic Violence Offender Management Board Program Administrator at 303-239-4456 or the Department of Regulatory Agencies 303-894-2900.</li> </ol>
<b>What type of data collection occurs?</b>	No statewide system.	The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Domestic Violence Offender Management Board has utilized a statewide data collection system.