

DAWN FARM GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH BATTERERS

Dawn Farm has given a great deal of time and consideration to the interface of addiction and battering. We believe that it is very easy for addiction professionals to inadvertently collude with batterers by minimizing their responsibility for their abuse. These guidelines are intended to help Dawn Farm staff avoid common pitfalls in working with addicted batterers.

The following are Dawn Farm's beliefs about the relationship between battering and addiction. These beliefs should guide all of our work with batterers.

- Intoxication and/or addiction do not cause, justify or explain battering. In fact, substance misuse is often a tool of manipulation for the batterer.
- Battering is not a disease and is not involuntary.
- Addiction and domestic abuse are both primary problems and need to be addressed as such. Addressing one can't/shouldn't be delayed while addressing the other.
- Abstinence will not eliminate battering. In fact, violence is likely to increase with abstinence.
- Sustained abstinence is unlikely if battering isn't addressed.
- Battering is likely to continue if addiction isn't treated.
- Addiction treatment is not a sufficient intervention for addressing battering.
- The concepts of "powerlessness over drugs and alcohol" in addiction treatment settings and "power and control" in domestic violence **are** compatible.

To ensure that accountability and victim safety are maintained, Dawn Farm has established the following practices:

- All men receiving treatment services are screened for domestic violence.
- Men identified as having a history of domestic violence are immediately referred to a batterer intervention program (BIP) and, where ever possible, two-way releases are established. This is done regardless of the client's explanation (See *Dawn Farm's Response To the "I Was Drunk" Question*)
- If the client has a probation or parole officer, they are informed of the referral and with the client's compliance with the referral.
- Clients who are on probation for DV are expected to abide by all terms of probation and violations are reported to the probation officer.
- In the event the client refuses the referral it is dealt with clinically as a potential relapse issue.
- Dawn Farm counselors make every effort to support the practices and philosophies of the BIP. (ex. – DF staff never use the term "anger management" when working with batterers.)
- Dawn Farm avoids facilitating contact between the batterer and the victim. When it is deemed necessary the decision is made by the treatment team and the Clinical Director. If the batterer is involved in a BIP and/or the victim is receiving DV services, those programs should be consulted.
- Dawn Farm holds batterers accountable for their abuse. (e.g. confronting minimization and obfuscation of responsibility).
- Dawn Farm recognizes the potential for batterers to misinterpret or twist twelve-step practices, literature and sayings into tools for avoiding accountability. (ex. – powerlessness vs. power and control; misapplication of the disease model.) Further, Dawn Farm recognizes that AA/NA sponsors are generally unaware of this potential problem. Therefore, Dawn Farm takes responsibility for educating clients in an attempt to avoid these potential problems. (See *Common Misunderstandings About AA and DV*)
- As addicted batterers approach steps 8 & 9, Dawn Farm counsels them to make *indirect* amends to their past victims by staying out of their lives and making sure that they never abuse another partner.