



Probationers Group Guidance

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I.Domestic Violence Perpetrator Group Guidance II.Parent-Child Group Guidance

I.Domestic Violence Perpetrator Group Guidance ¹

1. Origin

Item 1, Article 2 of the “Domestic Violence Prevention Act” gives a clear definition of domestic violence: “Domestic violence refers to an act of harassment, control, threat or other illegal action conducted against any family member that is physical, psychological, or economical in nature.” In addition to spouses, family members also include persons with existing or former cohabitation relationship, and relationships

between lineal and collateral relative by blood or by marriage. According to statistics of reported incidents of domestic violence, approximately 70% are of marriage or intimate cohabitation relationships (marital violence), 20% are child or youth abuse, and 10% are violence between other family members, such as elder abuse, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law violence, or violence between sibling. However, regardless of the form of violence or nature of relationship, the two parties have existing or former intimate relationship or are relatives, and therefore, the influences

1.Authored by Probation Officer Chen Ya-Zhen.



of violence are more profound than common violent behaviors. Studies also show that domestic violence has obvious continuity and recurrence rate, which requires authorities to pay more attention and take measures.

According to data from the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Committee, Ministry of the Interior, reported incidents of domestic violence increased from 94,927 persons in 2000 to 134,250 in 2013. This shows that more and more victims, or persons who discover domestic violence, are no longer tolerating violent behaviors and are being admitted into the domestic violence handling system through the reporting mechanisms of various agencies. One main mission of domestic violence prevention is to protect the safety of victims. Also, through practical experience of domestic violence

prevention, it has been discovered that proactively helping domestic violence perpetrators to learn and consider how to stop their actions is an important core task. Hopefully, by changing their violent belief and behaviors, these perpetrators can learn positive ways of interaction, and mend the emotional experience of their spouses and children.

2. Objectives

This program targets domestic violence perpetrators, or probationers with violent inclination, and the classes focus on power and control in order to enable domestic violence perpetrators to learn about their own emotions and proper coping strategies and enhance their motivation to become “responsible persons”, allowing them to become aware of their issues of power and control and leading to an equal relationship

with a focus on the concept of gender equality.

Participants of the group program will learn about non-violent relationship, preventing crimes through helping domestic violence perpetrators. The program helps domestic violence perpetrators to understand their own actions and know the consequences so that they learn to control themselves. The program focuses on replacing punishment to individuals with group therapy in aim to solve the issue of domestic violence and facilitate family harmony. The legal system regards domestic violence perpetrator treatment program as a necessary means to stopping domestic violence, and sometimes replaces legal punishments with domestic violence perpetrator treatment programs.

3. Outcome Assessment

(1)Pre-test: At the first group counselling session, all participants are asked to fill out a self-assessment questionnaire and set group objectives.

(2)Group Dynamics Assessment: Participants are asked to fill out a feedback

form after each group session in order to learn their experience and feelings. Lecturers shall prepare a session record after each group counselling session.

(3)Post-test: Participants are asked to fill out a self-assessment questionnaire again after the last session of group counselling, and examine the group objective achievement rate at the end of group counselling.

4. Expected Benefits and Effect

The program helps domestic violence perpetrators explore and analyze the challenges they face, including personal, psychological, social, and family issues. Also, through group sharing and mutual learning, the program enables domestic violence perpetrators to discover their own resilience and successful experiences to improve their ability to control impulsive behaviors, and develop proper ways to relieve emotions and manage stresses.

5. Implementation

Starting in April 2016, the program was held from 14:30 to 16:30 on the third Monday of the month for a total of



eight times. The group counselling sessions were led by two clinical psychologists. Each session began with stress relief practice (20 min). Then the psychologists would ask about the participants' daily lives (40 min), followed by participants' cognition adjustment and learning activities (30 min), and finally experience sharing and feedback and discussion (20 min). Each session lasted 2 hours.

6. 2016 Implementation Report of the Agency

The effect of group counselling was assessed based on performances of individuals participating in the program. Also, the Group Feeling Scale was used to assess participating individuals' level of satisfaction and collect feedbacks and suggestions, hoping to enhance probation officers' understanding on probationers in order to inform the handling of future cases. Sixteen persons participated in the group, and through the treatment program, the psychologists evaluated their attitudes, daily lives, and views on domestic violence and observed their clinical traits, characteristics, and participant's main

issues; finally, the psychologists would evaluate the likelihood of recidivism.

(1) Group Satisfaction Questionnaire: The program used Group Feeling Scale (five-point scale, 20 questions; see appendix) for group assessment. The group consisted of 16 participants, and 10 questionnaires were collected.

A. The average score of all responses was 3.75, showing that the participants in the group are inclined to agree on they are satisfied. The average score of each question was greater than 3 (average total score of 75.7, 20 questions; average score of each question: $75.7/20=3.75$). Regarding the group counselling activities, the analysis showed that most of the participants found them to be beneficial.

B. All participants agreed on six questions, and No. 19 had the highest average score (4.1). Participants found the activities to be beneficial, as listed below, and the majority of the group indicated that they had learned to avoid acts of domestic violence in the future.

a. No. 6 "I understand better my own thoughts through concept sharing and analysis in the group"

b. No. 7 “I learned to understand and view my own struggles from different angles”

c. No. 10 “I learned new ways and concepts to deal with emotions”

d. No. 13 “I learned things from other people’s experiences that are beneficial to me”

e. No. 14 “I did not feel embarrassed why I cried in the group”

f. No. 19 “I learned in the group to avoid committing acts of domestic violence again”

C. Two questions received relatively low scores, and No. 20 had the lowest score. Analysis showed that the participants had low self-concept and self-recognition, and many participants had no interaction or contact with the concerned parties, or they simply avoided any contact with them to prevent dangerous situations.

a. No. 9 “After participating in the group counselling, I like myself more”

b.No. 20 “My relationship with the concerned party has improved”

D. Diagram of Group Feeling Scale Average Scores.

E. Group Feeling Scale Questionnaire.

(2) The Group Feeling Scale showed that most participants were satisfied with the atmosphere and content of the group counselling, and developed trust in the group counselling, as they did not feel embarrassed when they cried in the sessions. This suggested that they had developed a certain level of trust in the group. As for cognition adjustment, participants revealed that through group sharing, they could learn to understand their own thoughts better, and through other people’s experience and suggestions, they learned to consider and understand issues from diverse angles, avoiding obsessive thinking and reducing the likelihood of domestic violence. In respect to emotion, they learned new ways and concepts to deal with their own emotions; however, the group counselling only



Subject Content and Execution of Domestic Violence Perpetrators Group Guidance

No.	Date	Subject Content
1	4/18	Pre-test. Stop use of violence. Reduce group resistance, and understand violence is a kind of power and control.
2	5/16	Non-threatening behaviors. Define “non-threatening behaviors,” and set goals for change.
3	6/20	Emotions management. Know one’s own emotions and appropriate coping strategy.
4	7/11	Issue of respect. Understand emotional abuse.
5	8/15	Support and trust. Understand that isolation is a means of control.
6	9/19	Be honest and responsible. Enhance respondents’ motivation to become a “responsible person.”
7	10/17	Partnership. Allow respondents to be aware of their own issues of power and control, and guide them towards a equal relationship.
8	11/21	Post-test. Fair negotiation. Focus on concepts of gender equity.

took place once a month, and that likely prevented participants from further mingling together, as it also took some time for them to open up to and relax in the group.

II. Parent-Child Group Guidance²

“AAA, you look troubled today, what

happened?”

“I returned home after years in prison, my wife and daughter are both happy to welcome me back, but my son seems to hate me. He always gives me the long face and keeps a distance from me.”

2. Authored by Honorary Probation Officer Lin Xiu-Wei.

“AAA, so interacting with your children has left you frustrated? Does anyone else have similar trouble?” Now, let’s experience the importance of communication through this origami communication activity..

What have you realized or discovered through the activity we just did?

“The same instruction will be interpreted differently by different people at different times and places, when they understand things differently or listen selectively; no wonder I always feel like my children are talking back to me. It turns out we have not been on the same page.” “We always feel that we have made ourselves clear, but our children never do what we ask them to. Through this activity, I have learned the importance of clarification.”

We often say to our children: “Did you not hear me when I said ‘go do your homework first, then watch TV?’” “I told you to go to bed early, but you are still playing with your phone. I’ll have to take it away from you if you don’t put it away and sleep.” “I work hard and get home at night to see my child playing with the phone in bed. It really angers

me.” We are caring for them, but it seems like we are enemies. Parent-child communication becomes parent-child conflict. Do we know the reason for this? Through this activity, we hope that everyone can learn the importance of communication; in addition to really listening to the other person, feel what they feel, and respect their privacy and choice; we must also be brave enough to say sorry when we make mistakes. It is important to educate our children through our own actions so that they understand how we work hard for them and care for them.

Thank you, Probation Officer Ya-zhen and Director, for giving me this opportunity to interact with others in a small group, so I can further learn the difficulties and frustrations other participants have interacting with their children after returning home. Returning home from prison, you need to adapt to changes in the society; it is hard to find a job, and you have to face dysfunctional relationships with your children; no wonder you feel as if you went berserk, never mind putting yourself in their position and considering their needs. What do you do when you



realize your temper is rising? Do you go head to head with your children? Or do you pause and step aside to take a deep breath, and then communicate with them after you have calmed down? We all think that our children are disrespectful, but have we thought about where we were when they needed us by their side the most as they grew up? Who accompanied them? How did they face the judgemental look from their peers in school? Who understands their inner needs? Who gives us the right to demand for their respect immediately upon our return? Have we expressed our gratitude for our spouses or parents who have never abandoned us and have shouldered the burden of taking care of our families while waiting for our return?

We guided the participants to realize

that changes start from themselves. Some participants expressed when they reported back in the second month: “The method you taught us last time is very effective. My child now responds to me, and our relationship has improved a lot.” We were very happy to hear that, but we also reminded the participants that they should constantly check and adjust their emotions, so they could through zentangle cultivate their spirits and lead by example to teach their children the ability to face and solve problems.

Other participants mentioned that their family members only asked them to stay away from trouble, and it did not matter if they got a job or not. We tried to guide them to realize the problem and change the way they think, that they were already adults and their par-



ents were getting older and could not take care of them in the long run. However, they still could not understand. We were frustrated and felt sorry for their parents.

Participants shared drastically different dynamics in personal interactions; one of the families was positive and harmonious, while another was always critical and judgemental. If parents could not achieve consensus, children would not know what to do and would learn to be speculative; it would be too late to teach them the right way of doing things after they have grown up, resulting in more social problems. Immediately, some participants expressed that was exactly the environment they grew up in, and that they did not wish to see others undergo the same experience. Some participants even said that they were frustrated growing up because their parents were very strict, and therefore they were more liberal with their own children, giving them a lot of freedom. Yet as a result, they have lost their authority in front of their children, and the children showed little respect for adults. Some participants shared that they were rebels early on, never

listened to their parents, and rarely showed care for their own children; they did not have a sound relationship with their children, but now they discovered that their grandchildren and children (actually themselves too) share similar personalities, and did not know how to correct their behaviors.

During the scavenger hunt, we discovered how everybody does things differently. Some set their goals first, observed who met the criteria, and once the instructors signalled the start of the game, they would immediately take action and finish the task quickly; they even had time to give suggestions and help others to complete the task. Some participants had to change their targets after seeing others have finished the missions. Through this activity, participants realized they also needed to be flexible when they interact with family participants and friends so that their relationship would not become rigid. Obviously, some participants mentioned that flexibility depended on the nature of the relationship; if the other party were employers or someone who had authority over them, they would have to make adjustments; but it



would be another situation when they were facing family members. We could only respect their choices, but we also reminded them to think about the activity we did today, and ask themselves what they really wanted to have at the end of the day?

After watching a clip from “I Not Stupid 2,” a participant immediately asked other participants: “Who here says I love you to your family?” Participants all said that when their children were still young, it was easier to say; but it was more difficult to say I love you after children grew up. The participant who asked the question shared that after returning home, he was grateful for his parents not giving up on him, and he often hugged his parents and told them he loved them. Their relationship became much better, and he hoped that everyone would go home and try to tell their parents and their spouses that they loved them.

Some participants shared about what they had learned. They felt frustration with putting what they had learned in class to use after returning home. We explored the reasons for it, and found

out that after setting the rules, they were too flexible when it came to enforcing the rules, and their children would just continue to bend the rules.

Yes, parents lacking confidence would not be able to raise brave kids; parents full of anxiety could not raise kids who were capable of solving problems; and parents without flexibility would not raise kids that respected others. In this age of information explosion and temptations, how does one build a happy family and become responsible parents? The participants were facing graver challenges compared to normal families, just like one activity in which they must remember to calm down and find the right method to solve the problems and overcome problems with love.

It was not easy for the participants to open up and share their troubles and experience in the small group. I had long participated in the promotion of “Happy Donut” campus parent group education program launched by the Family Education Center, New Taipei City Government, where parents always actively participated and loved

to share with others during the 2.5-hour sessions. The program consisted of four sessions and a total of ten hours, where all parents shared their experience and learned from others' experience. They always asked if there were more programs like that. So, I was more than happy to accept the job when the director asked me if I could head a program for the participants. Considering various factors, including their availability, I changed the design of the program to three monthly 1-hour sessions; participants could choose to attend one session, or all three monthly sessions in the program. I also changed the closed group activity to an open group activity. I understood that some participants were only here because they were required to fulfill the hours, and I anticipated that the outcome might not be as effective. After the program started, I found out that it was more difficult than I expected because the participants were more reserved and defensive, and they were often silent in breakout discussions when they had to share with the rest of the group. After the sessions, however, they would come and share with me or with oth-

ers. I could not understand why, so I summoned up my courage and asked the participants. They pointed out to me: "We all came out from prison, and we tried so hard to stay away from other participants and showcase our better sides. Who would be willing to share own defeats?" "We understand how dedicated you are, and we always remind ourselves that, when we communicate, we will reconfirm and respect different opinions from others; but please do not ask me to share with the group." I would like to thank the participants for sharing with me what they really thought, so I could make adjustments and improvements. I also gained deeper realization and learned a lot more through activities like this, reminding myself that when I design activities, I need to consider more things so that the activities can be more effective. Once again, I would like to thank the director and Ya-Zhen for giving me this opportunity to grow.



Extracts of Group Members' Thoughts

- After spending a year with my child, I discovered that he lacks confidence. My child is lazy and always lies, taking things for granted. I am worried about his future. I am racing against time, and now I understand how hard it is to be a parent.
- We had a stressful relationship, but through faith, our parent-child interaction has been improved. I hope to learn more relevant knowledge to further improve our relationship.
- We should express our love timely.
- Through the video, I want to rediscover the chemistry and love between my child and me.
- I realized that I was too impatient and never fully understood the needs of my kid. I will remind myself to pause, watch and listen.
- I should not speak bluntly and should praise them more.
- When I am sharing and the other person is not paying attention, I would get mad and feel disrespected. I now understand why I did not have a good relationship with my child and will try to adjust my behaviors.
- I learned the importance of networking through the activities. My child is still young and may not have this issue, but it is better to learn it now so that later on it will be easier for me to understand his needs.
- It turned out that I have unknowingly labeled my child. Although we want our children to grow up according to our expectations, but it never turns out to that way. I will continue to remind myself not to label my child in the future.
- I have always been rebellious and never tried to understand my children's needs. I hope to use what I have learned to interact with them. I hope it's not too late.
- It takes love, patience, communication, and negotiation to interact with children. I should not dwell too much on one thing.
- I will remind myself to be positive and see the strengths of my child, identify them and encourage them.
- I will remind myself to give them some space. Like the scavenger hunt we had in the first class, you need to be flexible or no one wins.
- We should not dwell too much on the problem; we need to find someone and discuss with them how to work things out.
- It is a great feeling to have a home again as my wife and kids came back to live with me. I hope to maintain positive interaction with my family.
- We should calm down when we encounter bottlenecks so that we can peacefully find the solution and solve the problems.