

## A Better Man Project / Partner Guide

- Batterer intervention programs are certified and monitored by the Department of Children and Families. They serve only as an additional tool for courts to hold batterers accountable for acts of domestic violence against their intimate partners. These programs are not punishment and are not a substitute for appropriate legal sanctions, such as jail, probation, or fines.
- A certified batterer intervention program is a 29-week educational program that includes orientation, intake/enrollment, assessment and 29 weekly group sessions (classes). Each class is for 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- The weekly classes provide information and assignments that help participants understand the dynamics of domestic violence, the impact on children, and how to initiate positive changes in their relationships. This program will provide the tools necessary to help the participant to change their attitudes and behaviors.
- To complete the program the participant must have completed an assessment, been in compliance with all program rules and contract, participated in the group at an acceptable level, attended all classes as ordered by the court or other referral source, and paid all required fees.
- Anger management classes, couples counseling, or substance abuse counseling does not replace batterer intervention, and one should not be substituted for the other.
- Couples or family counseling with an abusive partner may be dangerous. This type of counseling should only be entered into after the batterer has completed the intervention program at which time you may re-evaluate your situation.
- Stress, anger, communication problems, being provoked, or drugs and alcohol are not the cause of domestic violence.
- Domestic violence is learned attitudes and behaviors that one intimate partner uses to achieve and maintain control over the other. It may be through threats or force, or both, such as emotional abuse, verbal abuse, economic abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse.
- Participation in a batterer intervention program does not guarantee that your partner will change their violent behavior. Batterers must first acknowledge their violence, take responsibility for it, and be willing to change. Other factors such as legal and financial consequences also motivate a batterer to change.

Advocates at the domestic violence center can be a vital resource for you and will assist you with a full range of services, free-of-charge, regardless of whether you stay in the shelter. They will discuss options with you and help you make decisions about your particular situation. Advocates are also able to assist you with safety planning, provide counseling and support groups, provide legal advocacy, and much more. All contact with advocates at the domestic violence center is kept strictly confidential.

Resources by County:

**Manatee County**

**Hope Family Services**

**941-747-8499**

**Manatee County Sheriff's Office**

**941-747-3011**

**Clerk of Court, Manatee County**

**941-749-1800**

**Office of the State Attorney**

**941-747-3077**

**County Probation**

**941-749-3051**

**Sarasota County**

**Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center**

**941-365-1976**

**Sarasota County Sheriff's Office**

**941-861-5800**

**Clerk of Court, Sarasota County**

**941-861-7400**

**Office of the State Attorney**

**941-861-4400**

**County Probation (Professional Probation Services)**

**941-894-1232**

**Hillsborough County**

**The Spring**

**(813) 247 – SAFE (7233)**

**Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office**

**813-247-8300**

**Clerk of Court, Hillsborough County**

**813-276-8100**

**Office of the State Attorney**

**813-272-5400**

**County Probation (Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office)**

**813-318-5365**

For additional information, resources, legal advocacy, or to be connected to your local center you may also call toll-free:

**Florida's Domestic Violence Hotline. 800-500-1119**

If you have any questions concerning *A Better Man Project*, please call us at **941-250-0124**