

Can an abuser really change?

Yes, by accepting responsibility for the violence, and getting help. Much depends on their motivation and commitment to working on their problems. Positive signs include that your partner:

- **Has stopped being violent or threatening to you or others.**
- **Acknowledges that abusive behavior is wrong.**
- **Understands that they do not have the right to control and dominate you.**
- **Does not coerce you into having sex.**
- **Does not make you feel responsible for their anger or frustration.**
- **Respects your opinion, even if they don't agree with it.**
- **Respects your right to say "no."**
- **Can negotiate without humiliating and belittled you.**
- **Does not cause you to feel afraid when you are with them.**
- **Can handle you expressing anger without feeling intimidated.**

Wouldn't couples counseling be a better solution?

Your partner may try to get you to 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 the most effective way to stop this kind of violence is a specialized program to target abusive beliefs and behaviors.

Should I leave if they are violent again?

Your first consideration should be for your safety and support. For additional information, you can call 1-888-363-2287 to be referred to your local DV program.

Advocates at the domestic violence center can be a vital resource for you. They 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 court advocacy, and much more. All contact with advocates at the domestic violence center is kept strictly confidential.

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Partner Guide

INFORMATION FOR YOU -

If your partner is completing a Batterer Intervention Program

**Kansas Batterer Intervention
Information & Referral
1-800-828-9745
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Monday - Friday**

**PROVIDED BY
OFFICE OF THE KANSAS
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

If your partner has entered an intervention program for batterers, you're probably relieved that they are getting help. It's important to know that there are no miracle cures for their violence. Your partner is the only one who can make the decision to change. This pamphlet will tell you what you need to know about a good program, what signs to watch for in your partner, and what to do if you think you may still be in danger of being abused.

Am I to blame for the violence?

Absolutely not! The primary goal of this group is to help each member accept total responsibility for their violence -- regardless of whether any problems exist in the relationship. Your partner's abusive behavior is rooted in a desire to control the relationship and that pattern isn't going to change overnight. They may no longer be violent, but they may still try to exert control by manipulating you into doing what they want.

Trust your instincts! If you don't feel safe, then chances are you are not.

What is my role, and how do I know if the program will work?

You can be as connected or disconnected from this program as you would like. You have the right to NOT participate, simply by telling the program that you would not like to be contacted. There are no guarantees that any program will work; a lot depends on your partner's motivation to change. Some programs work better than others. Those that work well 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 permission.
- **Lasts long enough.** Change takes time. Programs should last at least 24 weeks. The longer the program, the better the chances are that they will change.
- **Holds your partner accountable.** The first step of accountability is to take responsibility for choosing to use violence in the relationship.
- **The curriculum gets to the root of the problem.** The content of the program is set up to challenge the underlying belief system of control and domination. Programs that only address anger, communication skills, and stress do not get to the root of the problem.

What if they are sorry?

Many people who abuse their partners are sorry about it afterwards. However, it takes a willingness on the part of the batterer to accept total responsibility for their violence and its effects on others. Rather than manipulation through apologies, a batterer must make a commitment to stop their violence and take action to honor that promise. Some attempts to avoid accountability may include statements such as:

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. "Now that I'm in this program, you have to be more understanding."

These statements have one thing in common: they let them off the hook for their behavior. Remember, they need to be willing to accept responsibility for the violence in order to change.