

Signs of a Batterer and Predictors of Potential Abusers •

SCREENING
The use of the pronoun "he" is meant to indicate that most abusers are men. In heterosexual relationships, 95% of the time the batterer is the man and the one who is being abused is the woman. Violence does occur in lesbian and gay male relationships. There are rare situations where a man is battered by a woman.

When you are dating or involved with someone, watch out for any of the following "danger signs." Many of the questions describe situations which are no longer in the "warning stage," but rather dangerous battering relationships.

- ① **Did he grow up in a violent family?** Men who grow up in families where their mother was beaten or where they or their siblings were abused run the risk of becoming abusers. They grew up with the idea that violence is an acceptable and normal way of getting what you want, and that you can get away with it.
- ② **Does he use force or violence to "solve" his problems?** Does he have a criminal record? Does he get into fights with people? Actually most batterers do not attack anyone except their partners or children who are safe, low-risk targets. In addition, most batterers do not have a police record.
- ③ **Does he overreact to small problems or frustrations** such as not finding a parking space or having to wait in line?
- ④ **Is he destructive when angry?** Does he punch walls or throw things when he is upset? Does he smash dishes or break valuables in a rage? Does he drive like a maniac just to scare you?
- ⑤ **Is he cruel to animals?** Those who abuse animals are often abusive to partners and children.
6. **Does he have problems with alcohol or other drugs?** Although alcohol or other drug use does not cause battering, it is frequently associated with more serious injuries. Alcohol or other drug use is present in domestic violence situations about half the time. Does he use alcohol or other drugs and then blame it for his behavior? Does he challenge or encourage you to use alcohol or other drugs?
- ⑦ **Is he very insecure?** Is he worried or touchy about his masculinity? Does he boast about his sexual ability and his success with women? Does he try to act tough?
- ⑧ **Does he think everyone treats him badly?** Does he talk about "getting even" or "getting back" at people? Does he think everyone is out to get him?
9. **Has he hit former partners, wives or girlfriends?** The man who has battered one partner will batter the next.
- ⑩ **Is he extremely jealous and possessive of you?** Does he keep tabs on you? Does he want you with him all the time even when it is inconvenient for you? Does he demand a minute-by-minute accounting of your time? Does he accuse you of having affairs with everyone you know? Does he use his jealousy or concern for your safety to limit your activities?
- ⑪ **Does he discourage or prevent you from going to school, getting a job, working for a promotion, or doing other things that would make you more independent?** Does he try to keep you from improving your life?

- ⑫ Does he drive away your friends and family so that the only person you have in your life is him? Does he try to isolate you? Does he criticize others for "putting ideas" in your head?
- ⑬ Does he have rigid traditional ideas about what men and women should be and act like? Does he feel that men should wear the pants in the family? Does he treat you like his property? Does he expect you to anticipate and fulfill all his needs? Does he feel that men are in charge of disciplining their wives and children? Does he make all the decisions for both of you? Does he keep information from you?
- ⑭ Does he treat women like second class citizens? Does he dislike women, except for sexual purposes? Does he talk about women as if they are only good for sex? Does he treat women like objects? Does he tell anti-woman jokes and expect you to laugh? Does he make fun of strong and independent women?
- 15. Does he play with or seem obsessed with weapons? Does he threaten to use them? Has he used them?
- 16. Does he read or view pornography? Violent pornography? Does he try to persuade, coerce or force you to act out what he reads or sees?
- ⑰ Does he go through extreme highs or lows as if he were two different people?
- 18. When he gets angry, are you afraid of him? Do you try to anticipate what he wants to keep him from getting angry? Do you change your behavior to avoid upsetting him? Do you feel like you are walking on eggshells? Are you scared of him? Do you worry about he might do?
- 19. Does he force you to have sex? Call you sexually derogatory names? Does he force you to do things you do not want to do? Does he try or force you to get drunk or high, and then get you to do things he knows you do not want to do? Forced sex is rape, even if the rapist is your partner, husband or boyfriend.
- 20. Does he take your money from you? Does he make you ask for money?
- ⑳ Does he threaten to hit you? Threaten to kill you?
- ㉑ Does he threaten to hurt or kill your children, your family or your friends?
- ㉒ Does he threaten to kill himself if you leave him?
- ㉓ Are you afraid to leave or break up with him?
- ㉔ Has he hit you? Choked or bit you? Locked or tied you up?

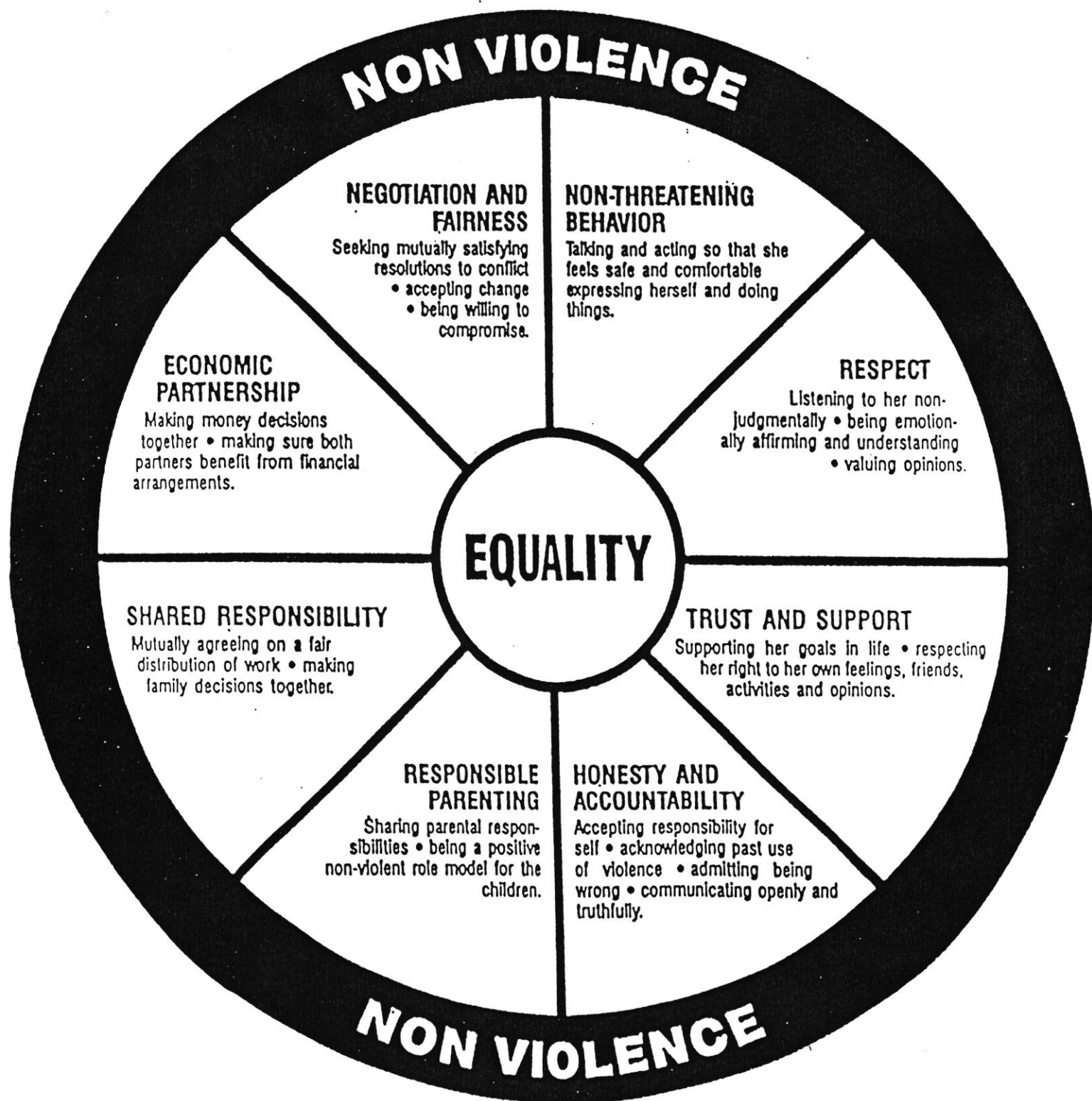
If you are already a battered woman, you are not to blame for his violence. You cannot change him. The abuse will get worse and worse until he decides he must change. Marriage or having children will only make it worse. Stopping his drinking or other drug use will not stop the violence. Couples counseling or marital treatment will make the abuse worse.

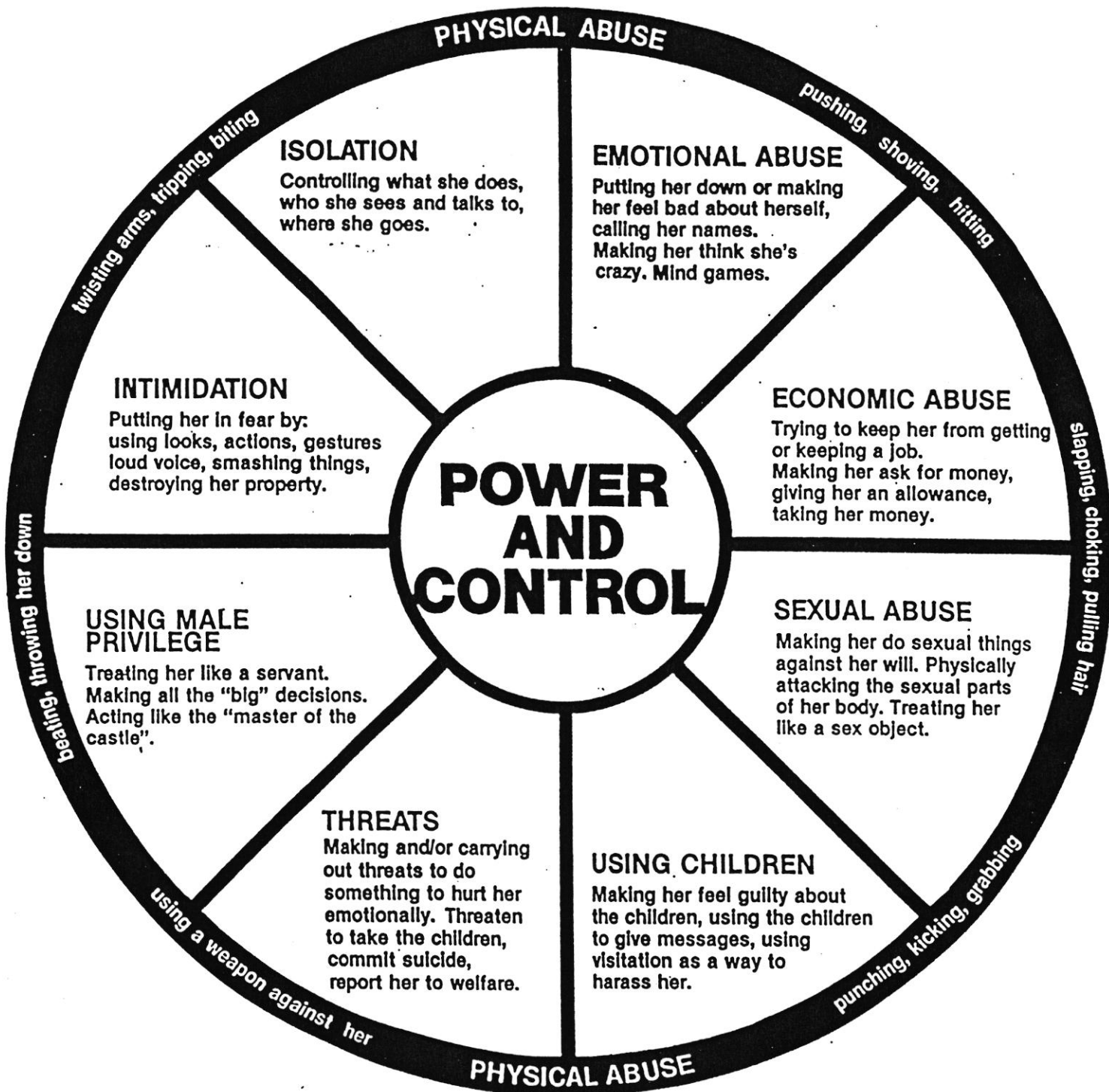
Help is available.

In Washtenaw County, call **995-5444**.

Elsewhere, call 1-800-333-SAFE.

*These questions are meant to be indicators or danger signs. They should not be used for diagnosis or assessment.





SIGNS TO LOOK FOR IN A BATTERING PERSONALITY

Many women are interested in ways that they can predict whether they are about to become involved with someone who will be physically abusive. Below is a list of behaviors that are seen in people who beat their girlfriends or wives. The last four signs listed are almost always seen only if the person is a batterer--if the person has several of the other behaviors (say three or more) there is a strong potential for physical violence--the more signs the person has, the more likely the person is a batterer. In some cases, a batterer may have only a couple of behaviors that the woman can recognize, but they are very exaggerated (e.g., extreme jealousy over ridiculous things). Initially, the batterer will try to explain his behavior as signs of his love and concern, and at first the woman may be flattered. As time goes on, the behaviors become more severe and serve to dominate the woman.

1. Jealousy:

At the beginning of a relationship, an abuser will always say that his jealousy is a sign of love. Jealousy has nothing to do with love; it's a sign of insecurity and possessiveness. He will question the woman about who she talks to, accuse her of flirting, or be jealous of time she spends with family, friends, or children. As the jealousy progresses, he may call her frequently during the day or drop by unexpectedly. He may refuse to let her work for fear she'll meet someone else, or even do strange behaviors such as checking her car mileage or asking friends to watch her.

2. Controlling Behavior:

At first, the batterer will say that this behavior is because he's concerned for the woman's safety, her need to use her time well, or her need to make good decisions. He will be angry if the woman is "late" coming back from the store or an appointment. He will question her closely about where she went, who she talked to. As this behavior gets worse, he may not let the woman make personal decisions about the house, her clothing, going to church. He may keep all the money or even make her ask permission to leave the house or room.

3. Quick Involvement:

Many battered women dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before they were engaged or living together. He comes on like a whirlwind, claiming "love at first sight"; and he will tell the woman flattering things such as "you're the only person I could ever talk to" or "I've never felt loved like this by anyone". He needs someone desperately, and will pressure the woman to commit to him.

4. Unrealistic Expectations:

He is very dependent on the woman for all of his needs; he expects her to be the perfect wife, mother, lover, friend. He will say things like "if you love me, I'm all you need--you're all I need". She is supposed to take care of everything for him emotionally and in the home.

5. Isolation:

The man tries to cut the woman off from all resources--if she has men friends she is a "whore"; if she has women friends she is a "lesbian"; if she is close to family she is "tied to the apron strings". He accuses people who are her supports of "causing trouble"; he may want to live in the country without a phone, he may not let her use the car, or he may try to keep her from working or going to school.

6. Blames Others for His Problems:

If he is chronically unemployed, someone is always doing him wrong--out to get him. He may make mistakes and then blame the woman for upsetting him and keeping him from concentrating or doing his job. He will tell the woman she is at fault for almost anything that goes wrong.

7. Blames Others for His Feelings:

He will tell the woman "you make me mad", "you're hurting me by not doing what I ask", or "I can't help being angry". He really makes the decision about what he thinks and feels, but will use feelings to manipulate the woman. Harder to catch are his claims that "you make me happy" or "you control how I feel".

8. Hypersensitivity:

The man is easily insulted, he claims his feelings are "hurt" when he's really very mad, or he takes the slightest setbacks as personal attacks. He will "rant and rave" about the injustice of things that have happened to him--things that are really just part of living--like being asked to work overtime, getting a traffic ticket, or being asked to help with chores.

9. Cruelty to Animals or Children:

This is a man who punishes animals brutally or is insensitive to their pain or suffering. He may expect children to be capable of doing things far beyond their ability (whips a two-year-old for wetting their diaper), or he may tease children or younger brothers and sisters until they cry. (Sixty percent of men who beat the women they are with also beat their children.) He may not want children to eat at the table or expect them to keep to their room all evening while he is home.

10. "Playful" Use of Force in Sex:

This man may like to throw the woman down and hold her down during sex, he may want to act out fantasies during sex where the woman is helpless. He is letting her know that the idea of "rape" excites him. He may show little concern about whether the woman wants to have sex and use sulking or anger to manipulate her into compliance. He may start having sex with the woman while she is sleeping, or demand sex when she is ill or tired.

11. Verbal Abuse:

In addition to saying things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, this can be seen by the man degrading the woman, cursing her, running down any of her accomplishments. The man will tell her that she's stupid and unable to function without him. This may involve waking her up to verbally abuse her or not letting her go to sleep.

12. Rigid Sex Roles:

The man expects a woman to serve him; will say that she must stay at home, that she must obey him in all things--even things that are criminal in nature. The abuser will see women as inferior to men, more stupid, unable to be a whole person without a relationship.

13. Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde:

Many women are confused by their abuser's "sudden" changes in mood--they will describe that one minute he's nice and the next minute he explodes; or that one minute he's happy and the next minute he's sad. This does not indicate some special "mental problem" or that he's "crazy". Explosiveness and mood swings are typical of men who beat their partners, and these behaviors are related to other characteristics such as hypersensitivity.

14. Past Battering:

The man may say that he has hit women in the past, but they made him do it. The woman may hear from relatives or ex-spouses that the man is abusive. A batterer will beat any woman he is with; situational circumstances do not make a person an abusive personality.

15. Threats of Violence:

This would include any threat of physical force meant to control the woman-- "I'll slap your mouth off", "I'll kill you", "I'll break your neck". Most men do not threaten their mates, but a batterer will try to excuse this behavior by saying "everybody talks like that".

16. Breaking or Striking Objects:

This behavior is used as a punishment (breaking loved possessions), but is mostly used to terrorize the woman into submission. The man may beat on tables with his fist, throw object around or near the woman. Again, this is a very remarkable behavior; only very immature people beat on objects in the presence of other people in order to threaten them.

17. Any Force During an Argument:

This may involve a man holding a woman down, physically restraining her from leaving the room, or any pushing or shoving. (i.e., The man may hold the woman against a wall and say "you're going to listen to me".)

TX

3 Things In Order For Men To Change

- 1) Batterer has to be held responsible & must be in control of the tx

Do not tx ind. psychopathology

- 2) learns he never is going to get away w/ it again

~~Batterer~~

Battering is learned

Accountability

TX

- 1) understand intent of abuse as means of control
"Control lease"
- 2) Increase willingness to change his actions
- 3) where was it learned? Increase understanding (cultural + social)
- 4) How to change behavior
- 5) Honesty + accountability to victims