

Restorative Justice and Domestic Violence: Questions for men who have abused
By Tod Augusta-Scott

A. Values and ethics:

- 1) What are your values? What is important to you in relationships?
What type of relationship would you prefer?
- 2) What are some of the ways you have lived these values?
 - Discussion about respect, trust, professionalism, accountability, etc. and stories about how values operationalized

B. Taking responsibility:

- 1) Some men talk about 'taking responsibility' as being important to them? Is it important to you?
- 2) What does taking responsibility mean to you?
What do you want your kids to learn to do when they make mistakes?
When they have acted against their better judgement/ values?
Would you want to take responsibility for your own actions even if your partner does not?
If your partner is being disrespectful and off track, do want to follow her down the disrespect path or do you want to stick to your own values? (i.e., there is no excuse for abuse)
- 3) What difference would it make to study your escalation, the "warning signs" that precede yelling, etc.?
How might studying these 'warning signs' help prevent it from occurring in the future?

C. Studying the effects to prevent harms from happening again:

- 1) What difference would it make if you could put yourself in your partner's shoes?
What do you think some of the effects/ harms of the yelling, etc. have been on your partner? (this helps men respond in a helpful way to the possible harms rather than being shocked when they hear them for the first time, never having thought about them before)
What difference do you think it would make to her if you were able to hear what her experience is? (which does not mean that you had the same experience; its not a matter of agreeing or disagreeing – it simply a matter of hearing how she experience it)
How might fully acknowledging her experience prevent the situation from happening again?
What would happen if a guy minimizes or denies his partner's experience? How might he (inadvertently) do that?
- 2) If you feel bad about these harms, what does that say about your values? (that the organization/ you do care for the personnel of the organization, that you want people to feel respected, that you are anti-racist, etc.)
If you, the organization didn't feel bad, what would that say about your/ the organizations values? (this is important, men need to be given permission to feel ashamed if they have acted contrary to their values, they need to honour their shame, seeing the shame as a reflection of their values, how they would prefer things to be.)

D. Healing and Repair:

- 1) What difference would it make to hear about the effects in terms of healing and repairing these harms? Building trust the harms will not happen again?
- 2) What would it be like to participate in a restorative process?
What would be your concerns? How might it be helpful?
- 3) How might a restorative justice process contradict and/or support living your values?

Sometimes, the restorative justice approach might involve bringing the woman and man together.

Restorative Circle

Inappropriate

Appropriate

<p>Women</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women who deny and minimize their level of risk 2. women who sacrifice themselves and their safety for their relationship women who identity is dependent on the relationship 3. Women who are terrorized by their partners; women who are afraid 4. Women who cannot be honest with him about the effects because she feels it is her role to take care of him emotionally; feels she needs to protect him, feels guilty, feels like she is betraying or hurting him 5. women who are powerless, fragile, overwhelmed, victimized, passive 6. women who blame themselves, take responsibility for his abuse 7. women staying because she can't leave; she doesn't want the relationship 8. Women who feel pressured to participate in conjoint sessions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. women who are able to assess their level of risk 2. women who make themselves and their safety a priority, women whose identity is independent of the relationship 3. women who are not afraid and are primarily angry their partners 4. women who can be honest about the effects without taking care of him emotionally, feeling guilty, or like she is betraying him 5. women who are powerful, strong, aware, victimized, and assertive 6. women who hold him responsible for his abuse 7. women staying because she want to stay; she wants the relationship 8. women who initiate conjoint work without feeling pressured to participate
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<p>Men</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men manipulating the woman and worker through "hollow promises and apologies" as well as minimizing and denying the abuse 2. Men who only want power and control; psychotic, terrorizing her 3. Men who don't want to change 4. Men who feel their abuse is acceptable 5. men who blame her, hold her responsible for his abuse 6. Men who are pre-occupied with themselves, self-absorbed with self-loathing; self-pity 7. Men relying on their partners to notice and affirm the men's own changes, men emotionally reliant on partners 8. Men who say "What's done is done, there's nothing I can do about it now." 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men serious about ending their abuse; wanting to take responsibility for the effects of the abuse; honestly facing up to it vs. avoiding it, running from it 2. men who want safety, love, respect, and equality in their relationships 3. men who want to change 4. men who feel their violence is unacceptable 5. men who take responsibility for the abuse as reported by him and herr 6. men who are empathetic, other-centered, self-confident 7. Men relying on themselves to notice and affirm their own changes, men able to rely on themselves emotionally 8. Men who are asking themselves, "How can I take responsibility for healing and repairing the effects of my abuse?"
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Do men and relationships really change?

Weak Signs of Change

Strong Signs of Change

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men changing only because she wants him to change 2. Men feeling hopelessness, despair, believing they can't change 3. Men making "hollow promises and apologies" that they will change 4. Men conning, begging, or demanding trust 5. Men relying on their partners to notice and affirm the men's own changes 6. Men over-confident about their changes: "that will never happen again, thinking their process of self-monitoring is finished 7. When relapse occurs, automatically concluding, "Nothing's changed!" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men changing because they want to change 2. Men believing they can change 3. Men defining differences between hollow vs. sincere apologies; actions speak louder than words 4. men earning trust over time 5. Men relying on themselves to notice and affirm their own changes 6. Men engaged in an on-going process of self-reflection on their ideas and behaviors 7. In terms of changing chronic behavior, the first thing to change is frequency of incident, then duration of incidents, and then intensity
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