

II. Guiding Principles

The following principles are intended specifically for individuals arrested for committing a crime of domestic violence against an intimate or former intimate partner; however, these principles are universal and applicable to those who perpetrate any act of family violence.

1. Domestic violence is illegal and will be treated as a criminal act under the law.
2. The primary goals of domestic violence offender programs are the cessation of all forms of violence and abuse and the development of skills for safe, respectful, and healthy relationships.
3. The safety and rights of victims/survivors is of paramount importance and shall not be compromised for the preservation of a relationship or any other reason.
4. The autonomy and right to self determination of victims/survivors will be respected and facilitated through both the sharing of program goals and appropriate referrals to supportive, trauma-informed domestic violence services available in the community.
5. Offenders are solely responsible for their intentional choice to engage in violent, coercive, and/or abusive behavior and, through swift and immediate consequences, will be held accountable for their actions without displacing blame on the victim, alcohol or substance abuse, or physical or mental illness.
6. Providers of services for domestic violence offenders are responsible for ensuring interventions and the manner in which services are delivered are the most effective for facilitating behavior change.
7. Offenders are capable of changing their behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs and living a non-violent lifestyle; programs offer tools intended to foster each participant's potential to change. Whether or not an offender chooses to change their behavior and beliefs remains their responsibility.
8. While providers are accountable to individual offenders in the manner detailed in the Domestic Violence Offender Program Standards, they are also expected to be accountable to victims and the wider community. Providers are responsible for attending to issues of victim safety, security, and rights to self-determination; consequences to secondary victims; and the impact on public safety and social justice in the community.