

— Interviewing Perpetrators: Effective Responses —

Good domestic violence practice includes intervention with perpetrators. This can, at times, be challenging. It is important to maintain a good engagement without colluding with the client. Here are some suggested responses to perpetrator statements that will help you to remain focused on:

- 1. The perpetrator’s behavioral choices and their connection to child safety and well being**
- 2. The impact of the perpetrator’s behaviors on children**

| Perpetrators’ Statement | Suggested Response |
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| <p>“I was drunk”</p> <p>“I blacked out”</p> <p>“I don’t remember what happened”</p> | <p>“Do you believe the account of what happened that’s written in the police report?”</p> <p>“Do you believe what other people have said occurred?”</p> |
| <p>“I only shoved her. She got hurt when she fell.”</p> <p>“It’s not like I hit her. I just got in her face.”</p> <p>“I didn’t even touch her. I punched the wall instead of hitting her.”</p> | <p>“What is like for your partner when you act this way?”</p> <p>“What was it like for your children when this happened?”</p> <p>“Are you concerned that your children were scared when this occurred?”</p> <p>“What did you tell your children about the bruises they saw?”</p> |
| <p>“I would never hurt my kids”</p> <p>“I never hit my kids.”</p> <p>“My children weren’t even there.”</p> | <p>“How did you explain why you were out of the house to the children?”</p> <p>“What did your children hear?”</p> <p>“How do you think your children felt when they saw you get arrested?”</p> <p>“Does the way you act towards their mother fit with your idea of being a good dad?”</p> <p>“Which of your decisions have negatively impacted your children?”</p> |

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| <p>“I was only trying to help her. She was out of control.”</p> <p>“She’s bi-polar and she’s been off her meds.”</p> | <p>“Can you describe specifically what you did and said to try to ‘control’ her?”</p> <p>“How do your children respond to the way you talk about their mother?”</p> <p>“Does she experience the way you act towards her as supportive of her?”</p> |
| <p>“She was drunk and I was afraid she’d drive my kids.”</p> <p>“She’s a drunk”</p> <p>“I don’t want her druggie friends hanging around my family.”</p> | <p>“Since you’re concerned about your children, how do you think they responded to you assaulting her?”</p> <p>“How do your children feel when you call her these names?”</p> <p>“How do you support her sobriety?”</p> |
| <p>“It’s a woman’s state.”</p> <p>“I only got in trouble because that cop is out to get me.”</p> <p>“Everyone just believes the woman’s story.”</p> | <p>“What, specifically, did you do that led to your arrest?”</p> <p>“How were you behaving before the police arrived?”</p> <p>“What do you see as your contribution to the problems in the relationship?”</p> |
| <p>“Can you tell my partner that (she) needs to do couple’s counseling?”</p> <p>“My partner started it, I was only defending myself.”</p> <p>“My partner pushes me. I’m not normally like this.”</p> | <p>“I’m here today to talk with you about your behaviors and your children.”</p> <p>“Your record shows that this isn’t the first time you’ve acted this way.”</p> <p>“I’m concerned about your behavior and at this point I’d suggest you do a program to address that.”</p> <p>“I believe you can control your behaviors and I’m concerned that you aren’t taking responsibility for that.”</p> <p>“I’m also concerned about your control towards your partner, not just this incident.”</p> |