

Beliefs That Lead to Partner Violence

Purpose: To become aware of the underlying causes of violence in a relationship

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Copies of the handout for everyone

Process: Read and discuss the handout.

How do these statements reinforce gender stereotypes?

Do these statements imply that men are aggressive, stronger, and more capable than women in general?

Do any of these statements reflect the idea that men are natural leaders and should be in charge?

Which statements are true? Which are false? Why?

Why might beliefs like these lead to violent behavior?

Are beliefs "ingrained" or taught by family, religion, culture, etc?

What influences have we had in life that teach us violent behavior?

What beliefs could be used to blame someone or something else for violent behavior?

How are minimizing, denying, and blaming related to violent behavior?

Example: when a police officer stops a driver and asks him if he knows how fast he was going, the driver may come up with one of the following responses:

1. Minimizing - I wasn't going very fast. It was really no big deal.
2. Denying - I don't know how fast I was going. (or, I'm sure I wasn't speeding)
3. Blaming - My kid was screaming in the back seat and I just couldn't focus.
4. Justifying - I'm late for an important appointment.

When people use these tactics to rationalize their violence with their partners, it takes away accountability for a person's actions. It also creates confusion and mistrust in the

other person. Can anyone describe instances where participants recognize how they or others used these tactics to rationalize violent behaviors?

BELIEFS THAT LEAD TO PARTNER VIOLENCE

ANGER CAUSES VIOLENCE

WOMEN ARE MANIPULATIVE

IF I DON'T CONTROL HER, SHE WILL CONTROL ME

SMASHING THINGS ISN'T ABUSIVE OR THREATENING; IT'S VENTING

SOMETIMES THERE IS JUST NO ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE

WOMEN ARE JUST AS VIOLENT AS MEN

WOMEN WANT TO BE DOMINATED BY MEN

SOMEBODY HAS TO BE IN CHARGE

JEALOUSY IS NATURAL IN MEN

MEN CAN'T CHANGE IF WOMEN WON'T

THE WORLD IS A DANGEROUS PLACE

I MUST SURVIVE

I CAN TRUST ONLY MYSELF

I WILL GET WHAT I WANT WHEN I WANT IT

I'M DOING NOTHING WRONG

I'M TOO SMART TO GET CAUGHT

IF I GET CAUGHT, I CAN TALK MY WAY OUT OF THE SITUATION

IF I CAN'T GET OUT OF IT, THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE LIGHT