

# Men's Nonviolence Program Orientation

## DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT (DAIP)

### INTRODUCTION

All relationships have conflict. Getting angry, feeling hurt, and arguing are all part of relationships. We choose how to act and react to conflict. If we use violence or threats, or if we force someone to do certain things, that is abuse.

Some men blame their anger, their partner, alcohol, or drugs for their violence. Blaming someone or something else will not make violence go away. To stop from being violent we must first want to be nonviolent and then commit to doing whatever it takes to change. We cannot change someone else. We must learn to take 100% responsibility for our own violent and abusive actions. This is not easy. We must do the hard work of looking at the permission we give ourselves to act the way we do. We must be willing to give up power and control and strive for equality. Violence and abuse destroy relationships, people, communities, self-respect, dreams, and our children's future.

Our socialization as men teaches us that we are entitled to use violence when things aren't going our way. Without counting the cost, we make the choice to use violence and abuse. It may take a crisis before we stop and look at ourselves. This crisis can be an opportunity to make a commitment to be nonviolent and ask: *"How do I want to act in relationships?" "Do I want to continue to hurt the people I love?" "What can I do to make my life more complete and peaceful?"*

Many men are court ordered to attend the classes and do not want to participate. We know you may find it hard to be here. We invite you to stay open-minded so that you can benefit from the men's nonviolence program.

### UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Many people believe that violence is caused by anger, stress, poor communication skills, problems with alcohol or drugs, or the loss of control. Although some of these factors may contribute to the problem (like pouring gas on a fire) and may make it easier to choose violence, they are not the reason for the violence. Violence is not about losing control, but rather about trying to get control over a person or situation. Domestic violence occurs when someone decides to use physical, sexual, emotional, and/or spiritual abuse to get their way—or to make someone do something, stop them from doing something, or punish them.

To understand why people use violence, we have to ask what they wanted to make happen by using the violence. Violence is always an intentional choice. The choice may occur in a split second, but it is still a choice. Some people may regret using violence and wish they hadn't, but at the time they chose to use violence, they meant to do it. Domestic violence is likely to be a pattern of behaviors and is usually not a single isolated event.

Most of us started learning them at a very early age. When we act on these beliefs, we think we have the right to do whatever it takes to get the other person to obey us. The nonviolence classes examine these beliefs, their effects on us and others, and the way new beliefs can move us towards nonviolence and equality.

Changing a belief system is a lifelong journey that is both very challenging and very rewarding. Over the long term you, your partner, your family, and the community will gain tremendously. The next section introduces some ideas you can act on now. They will also be explored in the class.

## SELF-DEFENSE

Self-defense is the use of the amount of force reasonably necessary to defend oneself to prevent or stop the infliction of bodily harm. Many men state that their actions were in self-defense but later realize it wasn't necessary to choose violence. Using violence as self-defense is always a last resort. Ask yourself: Could I have anticipated that the situation might become hostile and left at that point? Could I have talked my way out of the situation? Could I have left? Could I have called the police? Could I have yelled for help? If you could have done any of these things, then your actions were not self-defense. Also, you can use only enough force to gain safety. It is not self-defense to punish someone with excessive force or to use the situation as a justification for assaulting another person.

## MEN'S NONVIOLENCE CLASSES

We hope this program will help you look at the costs of violence, ask yourself questions, and experience the benefits of nonviolence. The nonviolence classes are not anger control or therapy groups. Their focus is not to "fix" your relationship, but to stop the violence and abuse that are destroying it. We will work with you to:

- Examine your belief system and behaviors that support violence.
- Expand definitions of violence and controlling behaviors.
- Discuss the effects of violence on women, children and yourself.
- Identify and practice non-controlling alternatives.

We hope you will find your involvement helpful and we invite you to set goals for positive change.

After the orientation session, you will join a class for 27 weeks.

All classes operate under the following rules:

1. Remain nonviolent and do not use threats while involved with DAIP.
2. Come to class free of the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
3. Do not use racist or sexist language, or wear clothing with degrading messages during class.
4. Participate in class discussions and cooperate with DAIP staff.
5. Come to class on time and stay until the end of the session.
6. Accept responsibility for your actions. Focus on yourself.
7. Refer to your partner or ex-partner by her first name ("Mary," not the "old lady").
8. Keep names and personal information you hear in class confidential.

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM DAIP?

- To be treated with respect.
- To be informed of your current status with the program (how many classes you have completed and whether you are likely to be suspended from the program).
- To have the information you share in classes kept confidential, except when there is concern for your safety or the safety of others, or when there have been reports of further violence. Child abuse laws require that we report to local child protection agencies any suspected act of abuse or neglect which could result in harm or danger to children.

- To have complaints heard. If you have any concerns, please raise them with a men's program coordinator.
- To have anyone who observes the class follow the DAIP confidentiality policy. The DAIP is a nationally-recognized model for promoting nonviolence. As a result, visitors will occasionally observe our classes.

## COUPLES COUNSELING

Many people are interested in working on relationship issues through the use of couples counseling. While this can be beneficial, it is our policy that you complete the nonviolence classes before participating in couples counseling. It is essential that you first have dealt with your own use of violence and abusive behavior and have made the commitment to remain nonviolent. Couples counseling is hard work and can be stressful and painful. It must be a "safe place" for both parties involved.

## UNDERSTANDING OUR BELIEF SYSTEMS

We may not often stand back from our lives and look at how we do things. For example, when before crossing the street we automatically look left for traffic, we are acting on the belief "Traffic will come towards me from the left." We don't even need to think about it—it has become automatic. It's not until we cross a one-way street or travel to a foreign country that we realize we may have to change that belief to stay alive. Similarly, the way we act in our relationships, especially in our relationships with women, is built on a series of learned beliefs. Some of these beliefs are at the root of our violence. For example:

- Sometimes I have the right to use violence to get my way.
- Men should be the head of the household. Someone has to be the boss.
- Women should do what they're told.
- If I warn her and she still doesn't do what I say, then it is her fault that I am violent.

Below are some other beliefs which set the foundations for a nonviolent lifestyle and more equal relationships with women and better friendships with men.

- A woman and a man can have a partnership and share the power, leadership, and responsibility.
- No matter what, I do not get to be violent. I can be nonviolent. I will not use violence!
- I can talk about what I want or need and how I feel, and the other person does not have to change anything.
- I can accept that lots of times I am just not going to get my way. Other people live on the planet.
- I believe in equality and respect between males and females in the community.

## CHOOSING TO REMAIN NONVIOLENT

Sometimes we are aware of our choice to use violence. At other times we make the choice so quickly, we think our violence "just happens." Violence is always a choice. Whenever you are having violent thoughts or making the choice to be violent, you can always choose to respond in a positive or non-abusive way. If you think you might use violence, it is better to remove yourself from the situation right away. Think about the consequences of your actions. Think about all the people you may hurt (including yourself) if you choose to use violence. Think of the damage violence does to your relationship with your partner, your children, and other people around you.

Walking away from a difficult situation is a short-term way to remain nonviolent and should not be used to avoid difficult discussions. As you apply the program ideas to your life, your need to use emergency action to stay nonviolent will decrease.

## EMERGENCY ACTION

Talk to your partner about the ideas in this booklet at a time you're both able to listen to what the other is saying. Suggest that sometimes it may be better for you to take time away from the situation so that you are better able to stay nonviolent.

Whenever you think you might be going to do something abusive, remember you do have the choice not to be abusive.

Don't raise your voice, swear, threaten, or use intimidating behavior.

When possible, go somewhere to relax and use positive self-talk. Remind yourself of your action plan and your steps towards positive change. It may help to walk, jog, or do some deep breathing to feel calmer. Do not drive, drink alcohol, or take drugs. Stay away from friends or family who support your hostility towards your partner.

When you come back, if you still can't talk about it, decide with your partner on a good time to discuss the issue. It might be safer to talk it over with someone you both trust. Sometimes after time apart, you may both decide the issue wasn't worth discussing, and you may both decide to drop it. If you discuss it again and you think you might be abusive, stop—remember to choose nonviolence. There are always more options than violence.

## POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Self-talk is what you say to yourself in your head. It is based on your belief system and can be positive or negative. When people change their negative self-talk, such as, "She's provoking me," to positive self-talk, such as, "I can handle this without being mean," they feel less hostile towards the other person. Following are some examples of positive self-talk:

- My number one goal is to be nonviolent—I can do that.
- I can stay calm. I don't need to win arguments.
- What others say doesn't control me. I can control myself.
- It's time to relax and slow down. I don't need to feel threatened.
- I know that my anger comes from my old beliefs. It's okay to walk away from this.
- I can be angry without using violence or hurting others.

## GOOD COMMUNICATION

This requires cooperation, not competition. You have the right to say what you want to say, but if you are abusive, then it will work against the positive changes that you are making. For good communication, both people must listen. The most important goal is to remain nonviolent in your relationship.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR COURT STATUS

Many men complete the DAIP program as a condition of probation. Others attend because of a family court order for protection. Although DAIP is not part of the court system, we have to report to the court or your probation officer about your participation. You may be suspended from the program if you re-offend, fail in attendance requirements, or are abusive or uncooperative. A report would be given to the court. This could result in jail time, starting the program over, or attending additional classes. We encourage you to attend regularly, participate, and complete the program.

## NO-CONTACT ORDERS

A no-contact order means that you cannot go to your partner's residence or contact her in any way without the court's permission. You cannot have any communication even if your partner makes contact first or gives you permission. You are not allowed to watch her home or place of work, follow or stop her in any public place, or go to your child's school without the court's permission.

## ORDER FOR PROTECTION

As with a no-contact order, you are not allowed to watch your partner's home or place of work, follow or stop her in any public place, or go to your child's school without the court's permission. Orders can be changed but only by a judge. With a family court order for protection (OFP), either party can ask for a review hearing to change the order. Remember, you are the only one who can violate the OFP and be criminally charged. The court is not telling your partner what she can and cannot do—the order applies to you.

## CONSEQUENCES OF RE-OFFENDING

If there is an OFP against you and you assault or threaten your partner (or children) again, you may be arrested and placed in jail. You could be convicted of a violation of the order, which then becomes a part of your criminal record. The sentence can be up to one year's probation, 90 days in jail, and a \$700 fine.

In the criminal court, a first misdemeanor domestic assault offense may carry a maximum sentence of 90 days in jail and a \$700 fine.

A second domestic-related criminal offense against the same person within five years, or against any person within two years, is a gross misdemeanor with a maximum of one year in jail and a \$3,000 fine.

A third assault against the same person within five years can become a felony, with a maximum five-year prison sentence and a \$10,000 fine. A third or subsequent conviction of assault against anyone within three years could also be a felony. At the end of this booklet is some information on legal terms, including a definition of domestic abuse from the Domestic Abuse Act, Minnesota Statute 518.B 01. During your participation in the DAIP we will be expanding upon this legal definition.

## THE DOMESTIC ABUSE LAW

The following information is drawn from the Domestic Abuse Act, Minnesota statute 518.B 01, 1998. An order for protection may be filed by a family or household member on their own behalf; or a family or household member, a guardian or a reputable adult aged 25 or older on behalf of a minor; or by a minor aged 16 or older against a spouse, a former spouse or person with whom the minor has a child, if allowed by the court.

## DEFINITIONS

**Domestic Abuse:** (Committed against a family or household member by a family or household member) Physical harm, bodily injury, or assault (such as hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, stabbing), or the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault, between family or household members (such as verbal threats, threatening gestures). Terroristic threats, such as threats to commit a crime of bomb threats or brandishing a replica firearm. Criminal sexual conduct committed against a family or household member by another family or household member (such as forced intercourse or forced sexual contact; or intercourse or any other form of sexual contact with a minor).

**Family or household members:** Spouses; former spouses; parents and children; persons related by blood; persons who live together or who have lived together in the past; persons who have a child in common, even if they have not been married or lived together; persons who have an unborn child in common; persons involved in a significant romantic or sexual relationship.

**Order:** A legal document telling you that you are directed to do something. It is “served,” which means that usually a court official will personally deliver it to you.

**Petitioner:** Person who applies for the orders.

**Respondent:** Person against whom the order is made.

**Ex-parte order:** Interim or short-term orders that are made before the court hearing. These are usually made when the judge decides that protection is urgently needed.

**Modification:** A change made to the original order by the judge at a review hearing.

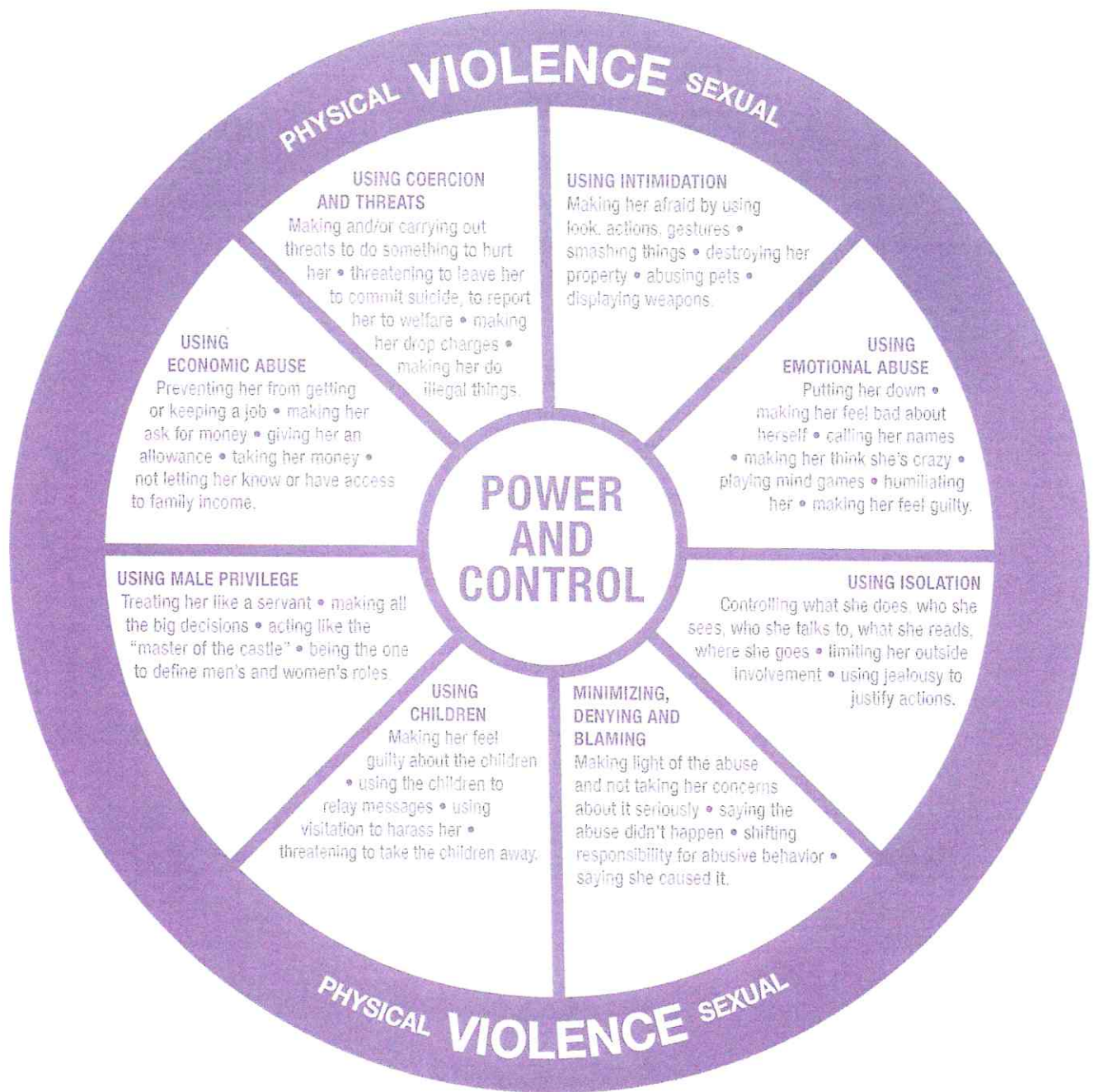
*Remember—we can work together. Change is possible.*

# Men's Nonviolence Class Rules

## DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT (DAIP)

202 East Superior Street • Duluth, Minnesota 55802 • 218-722-2781

1. Remain nonviolent and do not use threats while involved with DAIP.
2. Come to class free of the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
3. Do not use racist or sexist language, or wear clothing with degrading messages during class.
4. Participate in class discussions and cooperate with DAIP staff.
5. Come to class on time and stay until the end of the class.
6. Accept responsibility for your actions. Focus on yourself.
7. Refer to your partner or ex-partner by her first name (“Mary,” not the “old lady”).
8. Keep names and personal information you hear in class confidential.
9. Turn cell phones off during class time.



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[www.theduluthmodel.org](http://www.theduluthmodel.org)



# Control Log

## MEN'S NONVIOLENCE CLASSES

1. **ACTIONS:** Briefly describe the situation and the actions you used to control your partner (statements, gestures, tone of voice, physical contact, facial expressions).

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2. **INTENTS:** What did you want to happen in this situation?

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3. **BELIEFS:** What beliefs do you have that support your actions and intents?

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4. **FEELINGS:** What feelings were you having?

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5. **MINIMIZATION, DENIAL, AND BLAME:** In what ways did you minimize or deny your actions or blame her?

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6. **EFFECTS:** What was the impact of your action?

On you \_\_\_\_\_

On her \_\_\_\_\_

On others \_\_\_\_\_

7. **PAST VIOLENCE:** How did your past use of violence affect this situation?

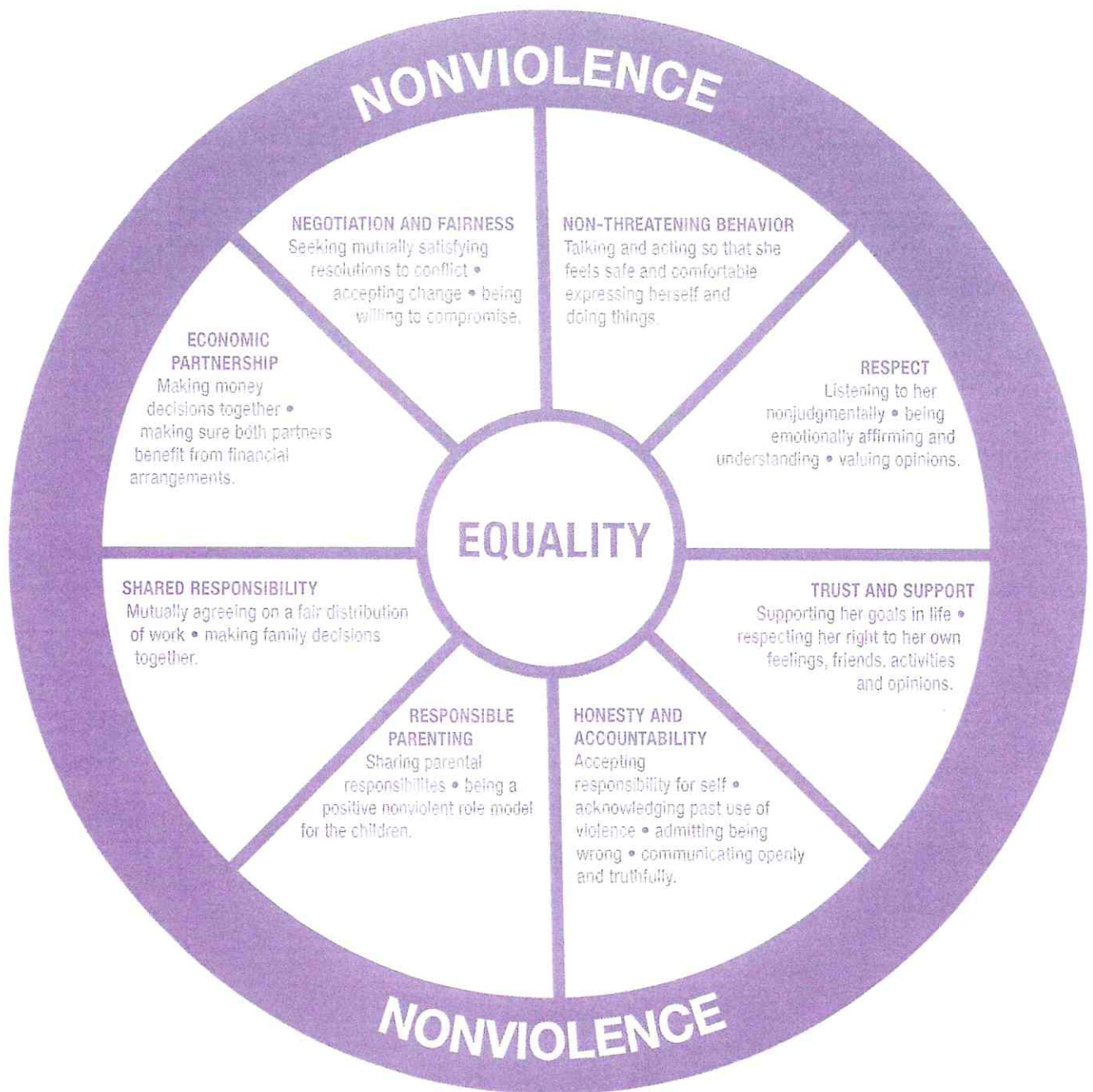
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8. **NON-CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS:** What could you have done differently?

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# Equality Log

## MEN'S NONVIOLENCE CLASSES

1. **ACTIONS:** What are the actions (statements, gestures, tone of voice, physical contact or presence, facial expressions) you use to demonstrate equality (respect, trust and support, etc.) with your partner?

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2. **INTENTS:** What do you want to happen when you act this way?

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3. **BELIEFS:** What beliefs do you have that support your actions and intents?

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4. **EFFECTS:** What is the impact when you choose to act this way?

On you \_\_\_\_\_

On her \_\_\_\_\_

On others \_\_\_\_\_

5. **PAST VIOLENCE:** How does your past use of violence impact your efforts to have an equal partnership?

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