



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES , 2005/2006 For Relationship Violence Treatment Programs

The Vision of ERA is to contribute to stopping violence in relationships through province-wide provision of effective, accessible, ethical services for individuals who have used abuse in relationships. Although we wish to respond to all abuse in intimate relationships, our primary focus is on men's use of abuse against women given that official statistics indicate that 85% of reported incidents are of men using violence against their female partners.

*This document is intended to address the principles of safety, respect and dignity, community responsibility, competency, and our belief in human potential. These principles are the foundation of our work with offenders to stop violence in relationships.*

- In working with offenders, the physical and emotional safety of victims (the overwhelming majority of which are women and children) is the highest priority.
- The provision of effective, accessible and ethical services for offenders is essential to ending relationship abuse.
- Services must be made available to both offenders who are court mandated and those who seek help voluntarily.
- It is essential that programs for offenders not operate in isolation, but be included in a coordinated system of services for victims and children.
- Abuse is a choice and it is essential that those who use violence and abuse be held accountable for their actions.
- Relationship violence is a crime, and communities must intervene at all levels to heal the damage, prevent recurrence, and address the context of inequality that promotes abuse in relationships.
- Effective programs for offenders will address all forms of abusive and controlling behaviours.
- As well as addressing violence/abuse directly, it is essential that programs support offenders in developing healthy relationship and parenting skills.
- Effective programs respect the language and rituals of all cultures but do not accept religious and cultural beliefs as justification for abuse in relationships.
- Work with relationship abuse offenders requires specialized training.
- It is essential that those who provide programs for offenders model the principles of non-abusive behaviour taught in the programs.
- Intervention services must be delivered in a manner that demonstrates respect for the dignity and potential of all individuals.