



The Future of Batterer Programs

Reassessing Evidence-Based Practice

Edward W. Gondolf

Northeastern Series on Gender, Crime, and Law
Northeastern University Press

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A critical assessment of the research related to batterer programs with recommendations for heightened engagement of men, ongoing risk management, and better coordination of courts and services

Batterer programs are at a critical juncture, with a handful of experimental program evaluations showing little or no effect from the prevailing program approach. This finding has prompted calls to overhaul or replace such programs. Edward W. Gondolf examines batterer research in light of the push for “evidence-based practice” and advocates a progressive evolution of batterer intervention as it currently stands. Cautioning against the call for programs based on a “new psychology,” he argues that current cognitive-behavioral approaches are appropriate for most cases, with the addition of ongoing risk management for severely violent men. Overall, he promotes a broader picture of batterer intervention and advocates better implementation of the basic principles established in the criminal justice field.

Endorsements

“The Future of Batterer Programs is an excellent book that . . . expands the discussion for those interested more specifically in victim safety and coordinated community response. It is refreshing to read such a non-polemical book in this field, which sometimes tends towards emotional rhetoric.”—Arlene N. Weisz, professor, School of Social Work, Wayne State University

“This book is terrific! It offers both new research and original insights that cannot be found in existing works. The critical examination of the ‘batterer programs don’t work’ mantra is particularly helpful. The book should be a primer for practitioners working with batterer programs and judges, probation officers, advocates, and family service workers will find answers to the questions raised about batterer programs.”—Barbara J. Hart, J.D., Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine

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**THE FUTURE OF BATTERER PROGRAMS:
REASSESSING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**
Edward W. Gondolf

To Order:

University Presses of New England: \$35

<http://www.upne.com/155537692.html>

Amazon.com: \$25 pre-publication price

http://www.amazon.com/Future-Batterer-Programs-Evidence-Based-Northeastern/dp/155537707/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1325009168&sr=1-2

2012 • 336 pp. 6 x 9"

\$35.00 Paperback, 978-1-55553-770-8

\$85.00 Hardcover, 978-1-55553-769-2

\$29.99 Ebook, 978-1-55553-771-5

Expected: April 2012

Back Cover Summary:

Batterer intervention programs for male offenders are at a critical juncture. The evidence-based practice movement and its demand for outcome evaluations have intensified debate over program effectiveness and utility. In particular, a handful of experimental program evaluations show little or no effect from batterer programs. As a result, some psychologists are calling for more “sophisticated” approaches that treat a variety of psychological issues, different categories of offenders, and couple interactions. A few have vigorously denounced the prevailing approach to batterer intervention as merely ideological and overly simplistic.

In this comprehensive and lucid reassessment of the issues, Gondolf reviews a broad range of research that supports a progressive evolution of batterer intervention, rather than its replacement or overhaul. His comprehensive and lucid account exposes the limitations and misuses of evidence-based practice, and presents “evidence” that the current cognitive-behavioral approaches are appropriate for most cases. “High-risk” batterers and severely violent men need, moreover, to be contained with additional supports for the men and protective measures to their partners. Overall, Gondolf delineates and promotes a broader picture of batterer intervention and advocates for better implementation of basic principles established in the criminal justice field.