

8 Things You Should Know About the Dignity and Respect Curriculum for Abusive Partners

Dignity and Respect is a new evidence-informed curriculum to be used by the abusive partner intervention program, funded through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, for defendants mandated to attend by a court. Below is a list of some of the frequently asked questions about Dignity and Respect.

1. What is the Dignity and Respect Curriculum?

Dignity and Respect uses cognitive behavioral strategies to help participants identify harmful thoughts, beliefs, actions, and values with the goal of creating life skills and strategies that promote healthy relationships. The curriculum focuses on 4 areas of accountability and change: self, intimate partner relationships, family, and community. Dignity and Respect also looks at the impact of trauma on past and current intimate partner violence and uses a culturally-sensitive approach to engage participants in developing healthy relationships.

2. Why does the program address trauma and oppression?

Dignity and Respect recognizes that experiences of trauma are common and that past trauma, as well as personal, community, and system oppression, influence behaviors, values and actions. While past trauma should never be an excuse for violence or harm, Dignity and Respect seeks to examine how

trauma may contribute to violent or harmful behavior. Dignity and Respect helps participants build new skills to have healthy, non-violent relationships in the future.

3. How is Dignity and Respect different from anger management?

Dignity and Respect was developed to address intimate partner violence specifically and emphasizes survivor safety; while anger management builds skills to minimize angry or impulsive behavior and does not look at the thoughts, beliefs and values that are tied to that behavior.

4. How long is the program?

Dignity and Respect has a 16-week and a 26-week curriculum.

5. Why is Dignity and Respect being created?

There is broad concern that the current abusive partner intervention programming mandated by the criminal justice system is ineffective in reducing domestic violence.

6. How does the program plan to collaborate with victim advocates?

Dignity and Respect's program staff and facilitators will work closely with victim advocates to receive necessary information and training to prevent and respond to any safety concerns and rising issues. Additionally, the program will provide survivors with general information about the program and how to connect with community-based advocates for ongoing safety planning and support.

7. How does the program plan to interact with other criminal justice stakeholders?

The Dignity and Respect curriculum was developed with insights from a wide range of domestic violence stakeholders. Additionally, program representatives will participate in relevant domestic violence and criminal justice meetings as well as ongoing domestic violence court stakeholder meetings.

8. What kind of compliance information is the program planning to share?

Program staff plans to send regular compliance reports to the judge, court staff, or probation and may have be able to send staff to compliance hearings, if needed.