

## Domestic Violence Behavioral Checklist

Client Name \_\_\_\_\_ Ct. Division \_\_\_\_\_ Judicial District \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
 ML Number \_\_\_\_\_ Case Number \_\_\_\_\_ Offense of Conviction \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_ Interview date \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Perpetrator/Victim ( all that apply):  Married  Living together  Separated  Divorced  Intimate Relationship

0 = None, 1 = Past, 2 = Present, 3 = Past & Present

**Relationships:**

- \_\_\_ 1 (L) Custody Dispute
- \_\_\_ 2 (L) Multiple relationships
  - a. Cohabitations # \_\_\_ b. Marriages # \_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 3 (M) Children's whereabouts unknown
- \_\_\_ 4 (M) Restricted visitation with children
- \_\_\_ 5 (M) Multiple separations
- \_\_\_ 6 (M) Partner left hurriedly with no warning
- \_\_\_ 7 (M) Victim requested restraining order issued
- \_\_\_ 8 (M) Relationship is volatile
- \_\_\_ 9 (M) Reports victim has "severe" problem
- \_\_\_ 10 (H) Currently looking for partner
- \_\_\_ 11 (H) Reports separation: not eating, sleeping, working

**Offense and criminal history:**

- \_\_\_ 12 (L) Arrested for non D.V. disturbance
- \_\_\_ 13 (M) Arrests with underlying D.V. basis
- \_\_\_ 14 (M) Non D.V. criminal history
- \_\_\_ 15 (M) Violation of restraining order
- \_\_\_ 16 (H) Crime committed during separation
- \_\_\_ 17 (H) Prior arrests: menacing/harassment/assault
- \_\_\_ 18 (H) Reports of stalking behavior
- \_\_\_ 19 (H) Probation violations for new offense

**Dysfunction in the following:**

- \_\_\_ 20 (L) School
- \_\_\_ 21 (L) Work
- \_\_\_ 22 (L) Financial
- \_\_\_ 23 (L) Other relationships: Few friend
- \_\_\_ 24 (M) Relationships: no friends/alienated family
- \_\_\_ 25 (M) Admits to a pattern of abusive behavior
- \_\_\_ 26 (M) Multiple charges in short period of time
- \_\_\_ 27 (M) Family of origin has history of:  
 Violence \_\_\_ Substance Abuse \_\_\_ Mental Health \_\_\_  
 Abuse \_\_\_ Multiple living arrangements \_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 28 (M) Admits lesser crime than official report
- \_\_\_ 29 (M) Suicidal (thoughts)
- \_\_\_ 30 (H) Suicidal (attempts)
- \_\_\_ 31 (H) Suicidal (plans)
- \_\_\_ 32 (H) Denies any crime
- \_\_\_ 33 (H) Reports "unwilling to let partner go"
- \_\_\_ 34 (H) Threats of death/threats to use weapon
- \_\_\_ 35 (H) Homicidal thoughts, attempts, or plans
- \_\_\_ 36 (H) Substance use during present offense
- \_\_\_ 37 (H) Prior alcohol or drug treatment
- \_\_\_ 38 (H) Prior D.V. treatment

**Tally**

- 39 \_\_\_ First time offender: Present offense 1st occurrence, no physical injury occurred, no "Medium Risk" items checked and no more than 2 "Low Risk" items are checked.
- 40 \_\_\_ Medium risk offender: Any of the "Medium Risk" items checked.
- 41 \_\_\_ High Risk Offender: Any single "High Risk" item checked.
- 42 \_\_\_ Assigned Supervision Level (First time offender=1, Medium risk offender=2, High risk offender=3)

(If administrative override indicate reason or item number)

**Treatment Needs/Referral (List all that apply-up to 3)**

- 43 \_\_\_ 1 = Male Perpetrator    2 = Female Perpetrator    3 = Bilingual
- 44 \_\_\_ 4 = Drug/Alcohol    5 = Gay/Lesbian

45 \_\_\_ Treatment Referral to: \_\_\_\_\_

# Domestic Violence Behavioral Checklist User's Guide

Domestic violence is a pattern crime involving dysfunction or chaotic behavior in either multiple short-term relationships or in lengthy, committed relationships. The central feature of these relationships is the perpetrator's issue of power and control, which manifests itself in ongoing conflict, and at times can become explosive. These individuals are incapable of maintaining a calm, stable relationship. The dysfunction or chaos may be displayed in the form of substance abuse, verbal abuse, infidelity, separations, custody battles, explosive violence, criminal behavior, or obsessive dialogues with the partner that offer no compromise or solution.

The use of this checklist can identify areas of dysfunction and chaos, and assist the probation officer in determining an appropriate level of intervention and supervision.

## Relationships

1 (L) *Custody Dispute*: This criterion does not automatically indicate the need for completion of a certified, 36 week domestic violence program. However, a current custody dispute should prompt the interviewer to gather more information. A custody dispute may precipitate an explosively violent incident, or indicate a stalking situation.

2 (L) *Multiple relationships*: Cohabitation can include partners sharing the same residence, partners maintaining separate residences but time is spent together at one or the other, or involve multiple episodes of separation and reuniting with the same partner marriages can be common-law or legal unions. This criterion should be checked if there are two or more of these relationships. A check on this criterion does not indicate the need for completion of a certified, 36 week domestic violence program. However, the interviewer should gather information about the circumstances of each relationship, and the dissolution. Particular emphasis should be placed on listening for clues about abuse.

3 (M) *Children's whereabouts unknown*: This criterion is an indication of serious disruption in the offender's life, and the interviewer should seek to determine the circumstances. The offender may state that the partner took the children to "get back at them" or that the partner is trying to "turn the kids against them." The reality may be that the offender abandoned the family, or that the partner has gone into hiding due to the offender's abuse of the partner, the children, or both. If the offender has been denied visitation as a result of a court order or social services agency action, it may be due to an abusive situation involving the partner, the children, or both. The interviewer should question the offender about past relationships that produced children. Separation and no contact with any children would require a check on this criterion.

4 (M) *Restricted visitations with children*: In cases where social services or the courts have placed restrictions on the offender's visitation with children, the offender should be seen as posing a potential risk to those children.

(M) *Multiple separations*: Abusive relationships involve a great deal of ongoing conflict, as well as power and control issues, and violent episodes. Couples involved in long-term relationships may frequently separate as a result of this dysfunction. Separation may be for as little as one night, or as long as several months. This criterion should receive a check if the relationship has experienced two or more separations. The offender frequently will respond to questioning by saying that they get upset and spend a night or a weekend apart, but always get back together, and "it's no big deal." A sign of the dysfunction is that the individuals can not live with each other, nor can they maintain separation from each other.

6 (M) *Partner left hurriedly with no warning*: The offender may tell the interviewer that the partner just "took off" with all their belongings, while the offender was at work. The offenders may indicate they are angry and surprised, and have no idea why the victim left because everything was just fine up until that time. Victims of abuse will often plan their escape from a relationship long before actually leaving. They are aware of the danger they might be in if the offender learns they are attempting to leave. They will leave when they know the offender is elsewhere.

7 (M) *Victim requested restraining order*: This criterion should not receive a check if an automatic restraining order was issued by the court. It is intended to indicate that the victim has requested a protective order. If the victim has requested the protective order, the interviewer should explore the potential for stalking.

8 (M) *Relationship is volatile*: This is a difficult criterion to define, as there are numerous indicators that can be obtained during an interview. These are relationships that the offender may describe as violent, or may describe such indicators as frequent arguments, screaming, name calling, throwing or breaking objects, or one or the other person locking themselves

in a room or storming out of the house. The offender may make statements that they are afraid of the victim, or that the victim is impossible to live with.

9 (M) *Reports victim has "severe" problem*: This should not be misunderstood as an attempt by this instrument to place any responsibility for the abuse by the offender, on the victim. It is intended to indicate the offender's attempts to shift blame and attention away from themselves, and toward the victim. When discussing the victim with the offender, the interviewer may hear the offender stating that the abuse occurs because the victim is irrational, violent, alcoholic or drug addicted, manic depressive, crazy, promiscuous, prone to PMS, or was in a previous abusive relationship and overreacts to "normal" conflicts with the offender.

10 (H) *Currently looking for partner*: If the offender and victim are separated, it is critical to determine if the victim has attempted to flee from the offender, and if the offender is attempting to locate the victim. This is a high risk criterion, and represents a potentially obsessive, lethal situation. The interviewer should utilize Appendix A when interviewing an offender that fits this criterion. Attempt to find out how the offender is looking for the victim. Indications of this situation may come from seemingly non-threatening statements from the offender. They may express concern for the welfare of the victim or the children, and state they are calling the victim's employer, friends, or family in an attempt to locate the victim. They may talk about going to see friends of the victim, or waiting outside the victim's place of employment, just to talk to the victim about reconciliation or to give the victim some money or belongings.

11 (H) *Reports separation and not eating, not sleeping or not working*: Separation is a stressful time in any relationship, and in an abusive relationship it represents one of the most potentially lethal events that can occur. Domestic violence is based on power and control issues, and separation represents loss of control to the perpetrator. There is an intense need for the perpetrator to reestablish control, or what they may perceive as control. If separation is reported it is imperative for the interviewer to attempt to ascertain the level of functioning of the offender. If they are making statements that indicate disruption in eating, sleeping, or working this should be considered an indicator of "decompensation" and depression. This is a critical time for concerns about homicide and suicide, and the interviewer should ask the offender about thoughts in these areas.

### **Offense and Criminal History**

12 (L) *Arrested for non-D.V. Disturbance*: This criteria is designed to record contacts with police for minor disturbances, such as noise disturbances, that do not involve a crime against a person that has been plead down. If the offender's criminal history includes only such a minor offense, it is not an automatic criterion for completion of a certified, 36 week domestic violence program.

13 (M) *Arrests with underlying D.V. basis*: This criterion should be marked if the offender has an arrest history that includes any incident where the underlying factual basis involves domestic violence, regardless of any plea agreement or final disposition in the case. The interviewer should be aware of cases involving harassment of a friend or relative of the offender's intimate partner. The victim in the report may not fit the definition of domestic violence; however the actual target of the harassment may be the intimate partner. For the purpose of this instrument, this situation would require a check on this criterion.

14 (M) *Non D.V. criminal history*: An offender who has even a minor criminal history, in addition to current D.V. charges, would receive a check on this criteria and would require a referral for a 36 week certified domestic violence program. If the criminal history is extensive, or involves serious felony convictions, an administrative override to high risk supervision should be considered.

15 (M) *Violation of restraining order*: An offender charged with this offense represents a risk for obsession and stalking, and the interviewer should utilize Appendix A. This criterion should be checked for violation of any restraining order, even if the order was not requested by the victim.

16 (H) *Crime committed during separation*: The interviewer should determine if the offense was committed during a period of separation. If so, the interviewer should utilize [Appendix A](#) to explore obsession and stalking. These situations should be considered potentially lethal, as the offender may be pursuing the victim.

17 (H) *Prior Arrests for menacing, harassment, or assault*: A history of arrests for these crimes against persons not including the current incident represents a potential for high lethality. It is not limited to domestic violence, and should be checked for crimes against any person.

18 (H) *Reports of stalking behavior*: If the offender is charged with stalking, or information received indicates stalking, the interviewer should consider the situation to be highly lethal. The information may come from the victim, the offender's self reports, or other persons.

19 (H) *Probation violations for new offense*: This criterion would be checked for probation revocations, or revocations of a deferred judgment and sentence, resulting from subsequent criminal offenses, including drinking/driving offenses. This is not meant to include revocations for technical violations, such as failure to attend treatment.

**Dysfunction in the following:**

20 (L) *School*: This criterion should be checked if the offender failed to complete high school. It should also be checked if the offender finished high school but reports poor grades, difficulty in following rules, or troubles with authorities, including suspensions or expulsions.

21 (L) *Work*: A history of serious employment problems is a criteria that predicts re-offending. If the offender is unemployed at the time of the interview, but has a history of stable employment, this criterion is considered low risk. If the offender has a significant history of unstable employment the interviewer should consider an administrative override to medium risk.

<22 (L) *Financial*: This criteria should be checked if the offender is reporting financial stress, such as bankruptcy, inability to pay monthly bills, or having to work two jobs to keep up with bills.

23 (L) *Other relationships, few friends*: If the offender reports they have few friends that they can contact in times of high stress and receive support, this criterion should be checked. If the offender reports that they have many friends, the interviewer should question further. It may turn out that the "many friends" actually live in another state, and the offender has not had contact any recent contact.

24 (M) *Other relationships, no friends or alienated family*: This criteria would be checked if the offender reports they have no friends they could count on for support in a time of high stress, indicates a distrust of others, or describes themselves as a "loner." The offender may report little or no contact with family members due to alienation or conflict.

25 (M) *Admits to a pattern of abusive behavior*: This criterion is meant to identify abusive behavior prior to the current offense. Any pattern of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse would require a referral to a minimum 36 week certified domestic violence program. The pattern may include verbal abuse, destruction of property, wall punching, or controlling finances or behavior.

26 (M) *Multiple charges over short period of time*: If the offender has repeated, separate charges over a short period of time, and they are separated from the victim, the interviewer should strongly consider that the offender is stalking the victim.

27 (M) *Family of origin has a history of*: Disruption and dysfunction in the family of origin is a common feature among batterers. Offenders often report they were raised in unstable and unpredictable family situations. The disruption and dysfunction could include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- *Violence*: The offender may have been raised in a situation where there was violence between siblings, or violence between parents.
- *Substance abuse*: One or both parents have a history of alcohol or drug abuse.
- *Mental health*: One or both parents, or a sibling, have suffered from a significant mental health issue such as manic depression, schizophrenia, or severe depression.
- *>Abuse*: The offender was a victim of child abuse. This could include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect.

- *Multiple living arrangements*: Offenders frequently report being raised by a variety of relatives, such as aunts, uncles, or grandparents. They may report being moved back and forth between parents who were separated. They may have been adopted, or raised in foster homes or institutions.

28 (M) *Admits to a lesser crime than the official report*: During the interview, the offender may deny committing the act described in the police report, but will admit to lesser acts that are still criminal and abusive. The offender may deny that they punched the victim with a closed fist, as reported in the police report and victim statement, and will state to the interviewer that they only slapped the victim with an open hand.

29 (M) *Suicidal (thoughts)*: This criterion refers to suicidal ideation in the past, and not related to the offender's current situation or relationship. If the suicidal thoughts are current the interviewer should consider an administrative override to high risk, and note the concern to the referral agency.

30 (H) *Suicidal (attempts)*: Any history of suicidal attempts places the offender in the high risk category.

31 (H) *Suicidal (plans)*: If the offender has formulated a plan for suicide they are high risk. The interviewer should also consider the potential for homicide/suicide, and the victim should be contacted.

32 (H) *Denies any crime*: Despite overwhelming evidence from police reports and victim statements, the offender denies that a violent act was committed, or denies that what they did was wrongful. If the offender is in complete denial, or refuses to accept any responsibility for the violence, they should be considered high risk.

33 (H) *Reports "unwilling to let partner go"*: An offender who is separated or fears the loss of the relationship may make statements to the interviewer such as, "I will not be able to survive the loss," "I can't stand to see the victim with another partner," or "If I can't have 'the victim,' nobody can." Statements like this indicate obsession, and the interviewer should look at stalking issues.

34 (H) *Threats of death or threats use of weapon*: Anytime there is a direct threat to the victim, the victim and the appropriate authorities should be notified. This criterion should be checked for both current and past threats of this nature.

35 (H) *Homicidal (thoughts, attempts, or plans)*: If an offender expresses any thoughts about killing the victim, the interviewer should attempt to determine how serious the thoughts are, and if the offender has formulated a plan. Any expressed thoughts should be taken extremely seriously, and the offender should be considered extremely high risk.

36 (H) *Alcohol or drug use/abuse during present offense*

37 (H) *Prior alcohol or drug treatment*: These two criteria need to be considered together and independently. For the purpose of this instrument, Level I and Level II alcohol education would not be considered as prior treatment, but Level II therapy would be considered treatment. If the offender meets only one of these criteria, it is to be considered a medium risk indicator. If the offender meets both of these criteria it is to be considered a high risk indicator.

38 (H) *Prior D.V. Treatment*: If the offender has been involved in domestic violence treatment prior to the current charges, regardless if they completed the program or not, they are considered high risk.