

Assessment of Motivation to Change

Is it possible for people who choose to cause harm to change? Yes. But is it likely? If you have a partner who is promising to change their behavior, ask yourself these questions:

1. Do they acknowledge having a problem with violence?
2. Do they acknowledge having a problem with anger?
3. Do they acknowledge having any problems or difficulties?
4. Do they keep appointments?
5. Do they arrive to appointments, custody exchanges, etc. on time?
6. Are they willing to discuss the violence?
7. Have they tried to stop the violence in the past? If so, what did they do?
8. Have they ever been to counseling before? If so, for what, when, and how long?
9. To what degree do they minimize and deny the violence?
10. Do they appear remorseful?
11. Do they feel their violence is justified? If so, would they do it again?
12. Do they acknowledge that they could benefit from counseling? If so, how?
13. Do they have any insight into why they use violence? If so, what?
14. Do they see the violence as functional in the relationship? How or how not?
15. Do they state that they *want* to be nonviolent in their relationship?
16. Are they willing to cooperate with requirements (programs, probation, ect)?
17. To what degree do they externalize (i.e. put responsibility for their behavior on someone or something else)?
18. If they're in a batterer's program: are they hearing *and accepting* the message that *they* are responsible for their own behavior and violence and that it's not okay?

Ultimately it comes down to a few key points: do they **recognize** that their behavior is unacceptable, do they **accept responsibility** for their behavior, do they **actively want to change**, and **what are they doing on a practical, proactive level** to change that themselves? If any of these factors are missing, your partner is statistically unlikely to change for the long-term.