

Groupwork Services

Domestic Abuse Group

**Names have been changed in the interests of client confidentiality.*

John* was referred to the Domestic Abuse Group (DAG) programme, having committed an offence of assault against his partner; John had two previous convictions for assault against his partner. John received an 18 month probation order with a condition to attend DAG and also alcohol counselling.

John's initial placement on DAG was withdrawn due to poor attendance, but following a review it was agreed that John would be given another opportunity and he was placed on a subsequent group, which he later completed.

John initially claimed that he had no recollection of the offence, which he attributed to a "blackout" although he did not dispute that the offence took place. He attributed his offending behaviour to a combination of "acting on the spur of the moment" not thinking things through and alcohol use.

Using the 'Offence Account' exercise, John was given the opportunity to explore his offence and was able to recall both the time leading up to, and the offence itself. Through this exercise John was able to take more responsibility for his offence, acknowledging the thoughts and feelings underlying his behaviour and recognising that alcohol was neither the cause of nor an excuse for his behaviour. In particular he identified his negative thinking about his partner and his feelings of jealousy, insecurity and being emasculated that underpinned his offence and the intentions of his behaviour to get at his partner and to gain control of the situation.

During the programme John developed his victim empathy and awareness from undertaking an exercise called 'Victim Chairs' in which he was able to acknowledge the impact of his offence on not only his partner, but also the wider impact on family and friends. John was also able to identify that his violence was part of a pattern of abusive behaviour towards his partner and was able to identify his 'early warning signals' in relation to high-risk situations. John also had the opportunity to practice his communication skills within the group, which he had identified as an area that he needed to work on within his relationship.

John participated well in the programme and showed progress in considering his behaviour and how to reduce his future risk of being abusive. John said that he had benefited from attending the programme and reported improvements in his relationship with his partner through his developed communication skills. Through communication with the Women's Services Worker John's partner confirmed that John was implementing what he learned from the programme his partner reported that their was a positive shift in his behaviour and that she felt safer as a result.

Forth Valley Groupwork Services

