## Healthy Choices Education Program

**Program Policies**

#### Philosophy of the Program

This intervention program has been developed based on the psycho-educational model for making sound, healthy choices in terms of behaviors. This program focuses on learning healthy living choices, non-criminal decision making, skills building in relationships, improving communication, escalation strategies, This is an educational group curriculum that focuses on challenging unhealthy beliefs and destructive, criminal attitudes and behaviors which have resulted in legal consequences, safety risks, damage to relationships or self. Unhealthy choices are not viewed as a pathology or mental illness, but rather a skill deficit, a learned behavior or a result of unhealthy core beliefs which fuel unhealthy behavioral choices.

The classroom format for this intervention has been selected with purpose. This program is an educational program and is not mental health or addictions treatment in any way. Participants will be encouraged to engage in community based treatment for mental health or addictions issues if needed by contacting their probation officer for a referral.

1. **Participant Rights**

Participants have the right to not be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nor age or for any other reason.

Participants have the right to request information from their record and to discuss this information with their class instructor.

Participants have the right to know what information is being collected and for what purpose.

1. **Waivers**

A waiver of confidentiality is required by all participants in order to participate in this program. This waiver releases this agency of confidentiality concerns listed above. This waiver will be used for, but not limited to, contact with the victim in this case, contact with probation and/or parole officers, reports made to the Court(s), contact with arresting parties or other police agencies, contact with family members, contact with employers, contact with present or new partner(s) and contact with other service agencies interested in this case.

Information provided will be released as it pertains to the following:

1. Attendance and progress in the program including absences,

compliance with treatment objectives, attitude, interactions with

others, commitment to change, and acts of violence and/or abuse.

1. Discharge information
2. Payment information
3. Attendance record
4. Assessment of safety and risk factors of emotional, physical and sexual abuse
5. Any threats made toward self and/or others

Electronic recording devices nor recording of the class are not permitted in the group under any circumstances. This is a breech of confidentiality.

All participants must agree to protect the identity of other group members and not to reveal anything outside the class that would identify another participant. Any violation of confidentiality is cause for immediate expulsion from the program.

1. **Fees and Payment**

Fees for orientation and class sessions are due at or prior the time of the event. Non-payment of the fee not paid at the time of the class will result in a participant being unable to stay for that class and will be marked as absent. The charge for the initial class orientation is $35.00. The orientation session is required prior to beginning to attend classes. Each weekly class is $25.00. Proof of payment will be provided via email or if classes are in person, on your signed attendance log. Please bring your log with you to each class.

If any participant is absent for a class which has already been paid for, the credit will remain in their account for use on the next class or classes. Any pre-payments which are not used by class attendance will be returned to the participant via the payment method used, if the participant withdraws from the program entirely. Credits returned to the participant’s payment method my take 7 to 10 business days to reach your account.

1. **Attendance**

The partnership skills educational program is designed to be a minimum of 18 weeks in duration and a maximum of 36 weeks based on individual needs and issues. The duration of the program will be determined by an individual’s progress in each class. A total of 3 absences in that period are allowed. Charges will not be made for those absences. Missing a 4th class will result in failure in the program and will require a participant to begin the class over or result in further Court action.

We make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. All absences from the class count toward the total allotment of absences. Late arrivals will be counted as an absence for that week due to the disruption it creates in the class and the disrespect contained in that behavior.

An initial orientation is required for all class members. This orientation is designed to help provide the new participant with information on the program. No cell phones, tablets or electronic devices are allowed to be used during the classes for any purpose. Photos and/or video recordings during the class are prohibited. Anyone arriving more than 5 minutes late for the class, will be marked absent.

1. **Assignments**

Assignments and paperwork are required to be completed at times in the class. Assignments must be completed and brought to the class when due in order to receive credit for that session. If the homework is not completed, it will count as an absence.

If a participant has difficulty with reading and/or writing, they must notify one of the facilitators so that accommodations can be made in this area.

1. **Reporting**

A report of each member’s progress and attendance will be forwarded in writing to the appropriate probation/parole officer weekly. This report will include information about attendance record and progress on goals in the class. Telephone contact with probation/parole officers, CPS worker or other representative about each member’s progress is not uncommon and may be expected. These progress reports may include recommendations regarding the number of sessions recommended. This recommendation may change at any time based on the progress in the program.

1. **Program Rules**

**These program expectations are explained in the program policies and reviewed with the participant at the time of the orientation and any violation of these expectations will result in immediate removal from the program.**

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During video online classes:

During video classes, the participant will remain in front of the camera, with their camera on. They will mute themselves when not speaking in order to reduce back ground noise.

Participants will be appropriately fully dressed and seated, and not laying down.

Participants will be no more than 5 minutes late past the scheduled start time of the class or they will be marked absent for that session.

Participants will be alone in a private setting during the class to protect the confidentiality of the other classmates.

Participants will not drive during the class or be in a vehicle with another person during the class.

Participants must remain in the class for the full time of the class and will not receive credit for their attendance if they chose to leave prior to the end of the class.

Participants will not reveal the identity of, or provide any information that may lead to the identification of another class participants. Breach of this confidentiality expectation will result in immediate removal from the program.

Participants will not be under the influence of alcohol or any elicit substance during the class.

1. **Non-Compliance/Failure**

Non-compliance with intervention recommendations/expectations may result in termination from the program. Failure in this program may be a result of, but not limited to:

* 1. Continued criminal behaviors; particularly physical violence.
  2. Failure to make appropriate use of intervention services.
  3. Failure to comply with other intervention conditions of provisions which are a part of the contract
  4. Violation of the program rules and/or policies
  5. Violation of any of the provision of the Court order
  6. New criminal behavior or new legal charges for any legal offense
  7. Failure to pay fees due at the time of service.
  8. Excessive absences
  9. Violation of confidentiality

Failure in this program will result in an immediate referral to probation, parole and/or the Courts. This program will encourage a response from the Court that reflects an understanding of non-compliance with intervention goals that have been designed to increase accountability and community safety.

Participants who are discharged from the program due to excessive absences, may re-start the program without an additional orientation within 60 days. A new orientation will be required if a re-start request is longer than 60 days from the last class attended.

1. **Contractual Discharge**

Discharge from the program will be based on an assessment of several factors including:

* 1. A belief that behavior is a choice.
  2. Having an understanding of the power and control wheel and its use in each member’s life.
  3. Accepting responsibility and being accountable for their choices.
  4. Having demonstrated an understanding and having implemented alternative strategies
  5. Having demonstrated a commitment to change
  6. Following successful completion and discharge in the program, you will be allowed to continue, free of charge, as long as no additional legal charges or incidents of violence have occurred.
  7. Having completed the minimum number of required classes and not exceeding the allowable absences.
  8. Only one re-start due to absences is permitted.

1. **Alcohol/Drug Use**

Anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the class will be asked to leave the session. Substance abuse issues and their relationship to violence and poor behavioral choices will be presented in the program and may be required by probation and/or the Court. Substantial substance abuse or dependence issues will be referred for a substance abuse assessment and/or treatment by a community agency.

1. **Weapons**

No weapons are permitted in the classes or on the grounds under any circumstances. Any violation of this protocol will result in the immediate dismissal from the program.

1. **Non-Court Ordered Participants**

Non-court-ordered participants are welcome to join the program. These members will be required to follow all of the policies and the rules of this program, as would court-ordered individuals. No exceptions can be made to any of the rules or policies in any case as this would result in unfair treatment practices.

1. **Evaluation**

Ongoing evaluation will be made of the program to insure the highest level of accountability possible. The opportunity to evaluate the program will be offered to all participants at the end of their program, as well as, at anytime to any participant or victim. Confidentiality of all participants will be maintained and no identifying information will be released from any evaluation process. The information obtained through evaluations, as well as statistical information collected will be used to improve the program toward the goal of program accountability to the batterers, victims and the public.

1. **Revisions To The Program Policies**

Revisions to these policies may need to be made at times to insure improved services and accountability of the program and its participants. When such policy changes are made, the changes will be presented to each participant currently in the program and new policies copies will be made available. We reserve the right to refuse program services to anyone who does not comply with these policies or presents evidence of potential danger to class members or the staff.

1. A copy of these program polices is available on our website for download at [www.healthyrelationshipnow.com](http://www.healthyrelationshipnow.com).