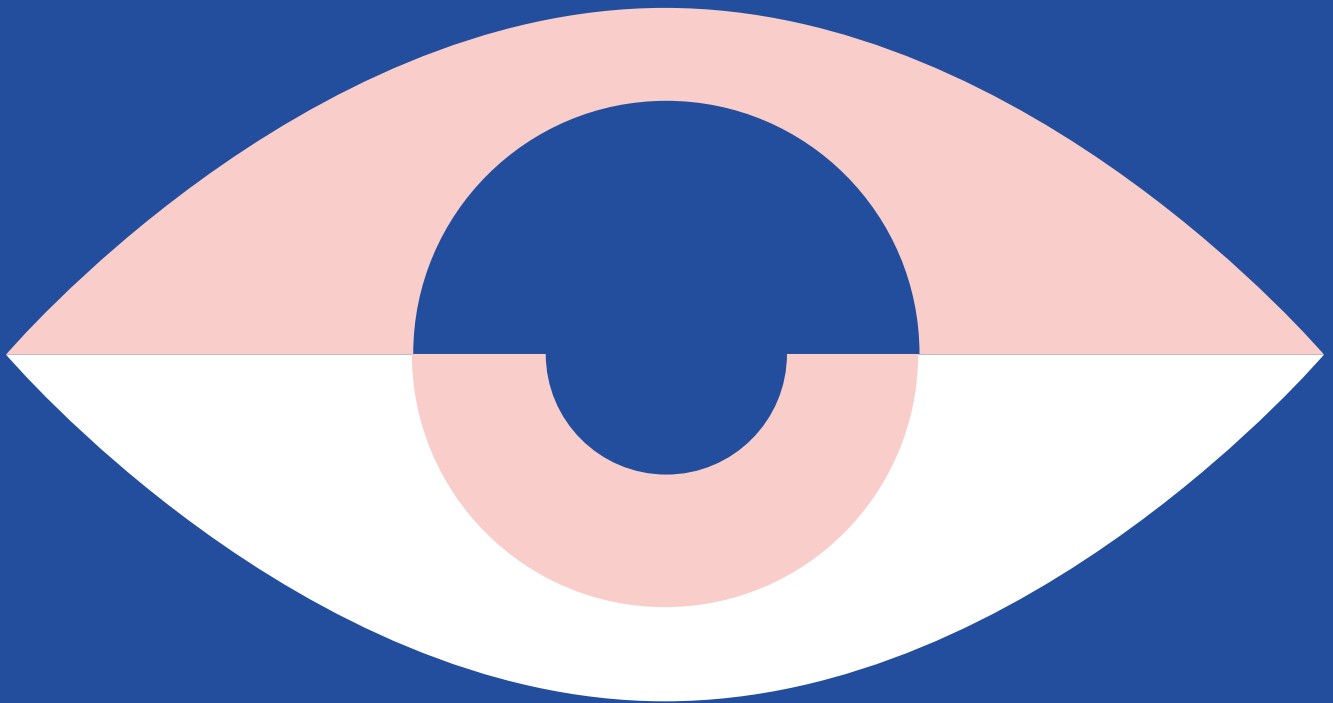


# Exploring an understanding for the person committing domestic violence



Imme van Klingereren, February 2023

# Exploring an understanding for the person committing domestic violence



## **Thesis**

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# Summary

Domestic violence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm” (2013). **Blijf Groep** is one of the organizations in the Netherlands that concerns itself with the subject of domestic violence.

Whilst social, environmental, family, and individual influences play a role in the creation of unintentional partner violence. In particular, gender inequality, experiencing stress, or touching upon vulnerable feelings can trigger starting domestic violence. The dynamic that develops can lead to a vicious cycle that perpetuates violence. Because domestic violence is an interaction between two people and often there is no clear identification of a victim or a perpetrator, this thesis refers to those involved as ‘the person who experiences domestic violence’ and ‘the person who commits domestic violence’. When one of the people involved reaches out to Blijf Groep, the social workers mainly focus on them because they are seen as the one who has experienced the most severe violence. The needs of the person who committed domestic violence are not considered as much. The social workers have little understanding of them, and therefore, they are not included in the counseling process.

The central aim of this research has been to explore an understanding of the person who commits domestic violence since, for a lasting solution to domestic violence, they have to be included in the counseling process.

This research was divided into a theoretical study, qualitative context research, and an exploratory study with methods including interviews, quick prototyping, and user tests. In addition, the course of a violent relationship and the counseling process at Blijf Groep were mapped. This research led to the insight that the initial phone call between the residential social worker and the person who committed domestic violence can be an entrance. The phone call takes place at a vulnerable time in which both involved are most open to receiving help and can be the starting point for the rest of the counseling process.

Based on the insights of this research, a workshop for social workers was designed which consists of a workbook and twelve theme cards. The purpose of the workbook is to allow social workers to reflect on themselves and their work so they become aware of the origins of incomprehension for the person who committed domestic violence and how these affect their involvement in counseling. For support during the counseling process, the theme cards contribute to solution-focused work by providing knowledge about the background of the person who committed domestic violence, with accompanying questions that can create an entry point for conversations. Besides, it helps social workers to chart the origins and persistence of violence (see image 1).

Finally, the workshop has been evaluated with social workers. The design succeeded in creating an understanding during the first phone call. Therefore, it is proposed that the workshop should be included in mandatory training at Blijf Groep so the social workers learn how to work systemically from the start.



Image 1: **Zicht op mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen**. The final design of the workshop, consisting of a workbook and theme cards, about people who commit domestic violence for residential social workers at Blijf Groep.

# Preface

I would also like to express my appreciation to all the social workers and experts from Blijf Groep who were eager to share their personal stories with me and wanted to participate in testing the concept. I have profound respect for the fierce job you spend so much time on.

Above all, I want to thank my direct social environment for supporting me throughout the project. Thank you for giving me motivational speeches and for thinking along with me when I could not figure it out myself.

Dear reader, I hope that reading this thesis makes you more aware of the extent and intensity of domestic violence and that it contributes to making domestic violence openly discussable so an understanding of those involved can be created.

Enjoy!

Imme

Dear reader,

This thesis is one of the final deliverables of my graduation project for the Design for Interaction master program at the Delft University of Technology.

In this project, I am exploring an understanding for people who commit domestic violence among residential social workers at Blijf Groep located in Amsterdam. Domestic violence, and especially unintentional partner violence, is a frequent occurrence in the Netherlands. However, there is still a big taboo on the subject. When Blijf Groep proposed to research the stigma surrounding people who commit domestic violence, it immediately sounded like an interesting challenge! I soon discovered that the subject matter was much more complicated than I initially thought. Foremost because it is a subject that is not much talked about, but also because it is a somewhat heavy topic. Fortunately, many people helped and guided me in my research, for which I would like to thank them.

First of all, I want to express my gratitude to my supervisory team. I would like to thank Nynke Tromp and Annemiek van Boeijen, as my chair and mentor. Thank you for the constructive feedback, the fruitful discussions, and for supporting me to tackle the complexity of the project.

In addition, I would like to thank Blijf Groep Amsterdam, and especially Janneke Vosse. Thank you for allowing me to do research into this extremely interesting and valuable topic, for being involved, for providing me with feedback, and for connecting me with the people who participated in this project.

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# 1

## Project introduction

This chapter introduces the research question, presents the company Blijf Groep and the structure of this report.

## 1.1 Introduction

Everyone has a right to safety in their home, but unfortunately, this is not a given. Research shows that 45 percent of all people in the Netherlands experience domestic violence at a certain point in their lives. However, due to a stigma around domestic violence, there is not enough conversation on this topic resulting in little knowledge or understanding from society (Veiligheidswijzer, 2021).


The first time domestic violence was discussed on a larger scale was in 1974 when the women's movements emerged and women's shelters (called blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis) were opened. The sheer volume of women signing up here clearly showed how isolated the victims were (Blijf Groep, 2020). From then on, different trajectories were initiated for those affected by domestic violence, consisting of shelters, mother and child training, and other help for women to be able to take care of themselves again. For their male partners, the offer of help remained limited and stayed hidden in the integrated approach for the whole family system. People believed the person who committed domestic violence did not deserve direct help. After all, they have been the ones committing violence and harming their family.

From 2011, the academic consensus was to create sustainable safety, help is also needed for the person who committed violence. This focus leads to quickly and effectively stopping domestic violence and would reduce the likelihood of violence reoccurring. In addition, it would ensure the person who committed domestic violence to not fall back into a violent relationship with a (new) partner. Despite most aid organizations recognizing the benefits of involving the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process, systemic work is still not always put into practice, and the people who committed domestic violence often do not get the help they need.

Within this project, research is conducted on those involved in unintentional partner violence and their counseling process at Blijf Groep located in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The project aims to gain more understanding of the person committing

domestic violence among residential social workers. Most aid organizations are primarily set up to offer help to the person who sought counseling because of domestic violence. Therefore, social workers have little knowledge about them and they are not given tools and methods on how to (maintain) contact with them. As a result, people who committed domestic violence are not understood during the first phone call with a residential social worker which causes them to respond angrily out of frustration. Because social workers find it difficult to make a safety assessment based on this interaction, they are left out of the counseling process. However, to stop domestic violence permanently, all involved need to be included in counseling.

The outcome of the project is a design represented by a prototype. The final design contributes to the creation of an understanding of the person committing domestic violence among residential social workers of Blijf Groep. When successful, the design can be distributed at Blijf Groep.

In this thesis, different jargon of Blijf Groep is used. The words are in *italic* and the meaning can be found in the glossary at the back of the thesis. The different colors of the quotes indicate which stakeholder the quote belongs to. **Orange** quotes belong to the residential social workers and experts of Blijf Groep, **red** quotes are from the person who committed domestic violence, and **blue** quotes are from the person who experienced domestic violence. In addition, several insights gained during this research can help create an understanding of the person who commits domestic violence. These are used in developing the final design. These are indicated in the text by the following sign: 

## Scope

This thesis examines domestic violence in the Netherlands at the Oranje Huis Amsterdam. The residential social workers are middle-class Dutch-speaking women between the age of 25 and 45. They all work in the women's shelter, called the Oranje Huis, on location in Amsterdam and live in this area.

The Oranje Huis preferably offers help to families from regio Amsterdam. If necessary, people from other parts of the country can also come to the Oranje Huis, which is inherent to the national function of the women's shelter (Moussa, 2022). According to a recently conducted research from Veilig Thuis, the people who commit domestic violence are comparable to the national population in terms of age, migration background, or education. However, there is more poverty and unemployment among them (Lünnemann et al., 2020).

# 1.2 Introduction

## Blijf Groep

This research was commissioned by Blijf Groep located in Amsterdam. Blijf Groep is one of a number of organizations that tries to stop domestic violence in the Netherlands. They create lasting safety by offering tailored assistance to all family members who are affected by the violence.

The roots of Blijf Groep are in the women's shelters, which provided women with a secret safe place beginning in the 1970s. At the start of this century, it became clear that secret locations offered insufficient security and perspective for the people experiencing domestic violence. Therefore, Blijf Groep developed a new approach to stopping domestic violence, called the Oranje Huis methodology. With this method, they focus on open, visible, and future-oriented work. Currently, the Netherlands has three 'Oranje Huizen', located in Amsterdam, Alkmaar, and Almere (Blijf Groep, 2020).

The main goal of the Oranje Huis methodology is to permanently stop domestic violence within the family and promote recovery from the consequences of violence.

They divided this goal into four sub-goals (Moussa, 2022):

- Immediate safety for the person seeking help, the children, and the (ex-)partner is ensured.
- The risk factors that perpetuate domestic violence have been eliminated, and the consequences are limited. This is necessary to prevent new incidents of violence from happening in the future.
- The person seeking help, the children, and the (ex-)partner start their recovery during the counseling process at Blijf Groep. At the end of the counseling process, they have a concrete plan to continue working on their recovery.
- Parents need to learn how to create safety for their children. Besides, they need to have sufficient parenting skills at the end of the counseling process for the healthy development of their children.

# 1.3 Project approach

Blijf Groep tries to achieve these goals by providing outpatient care for those who can stay at home and they help the people who cannot stay at home to build a safe life in the shelter. Help for those who cannot stay at home takes place at location Oranje Huis. The Oranje Huis is an open and visible facility in the center of Amsterdam. The decision to make the Oranje Huis visible is to reduce the taboo surrounding domestic violence and lower the threshold to seek help. The Oranje Huis preferably offer help to families from their region. This allows the client to stay connected to their social network as much as possible. The Oranje Huis only houses people seeking help (mainly women) and their children (see image 2) (Moussa, 2022).

Blijf Groep would like to put *systemic work* into practice by offering help to all members of the family. They believe that for a lasting solution to domestic violence, all family members need to be involved since they all experience the consequences of the violence and can contribute to stopping it constructively. Therefore, Blijf Groep tries to include the children and the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process. During the stay in the shelter, the residential social worker contacts the (ex-) partner of their client, and -if safety permits and the person who experienced domestic violence agrees- they are involved in the counseling process. If the (ex-)partner agrees to participate in the counseling process, they are also a client of the Oranje Huis (Moussa, 2022). Unfortunately, according to Blijf Groep, the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process currently does not happen often enough.

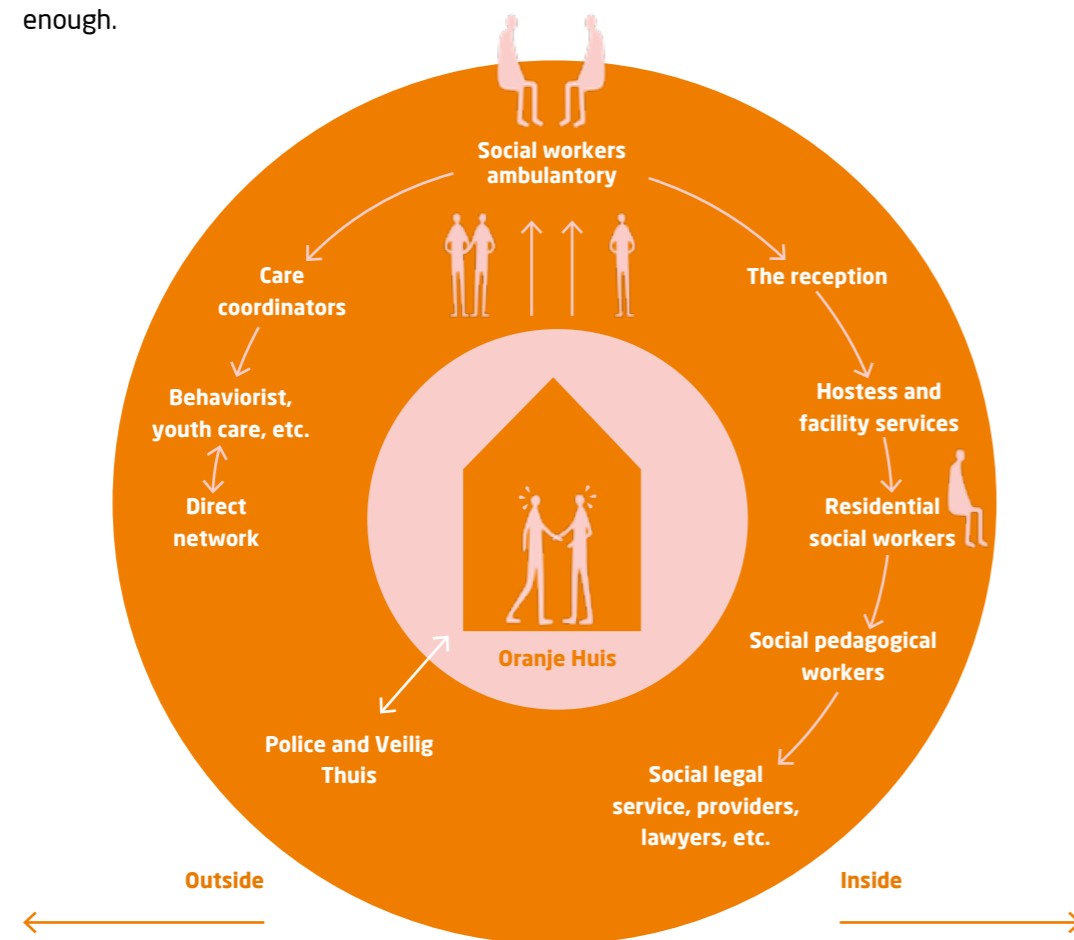


Image 2: A visual representation of the two counseling processes at Blijf Groep, including the employees with whom those affected by domestic violence come into contact. Outside the Oranje Huis, the outpatient counseling process takes place in people's homes, and inside the Oranje Huis, the counseling process in the shelter is shown.

In the context of this graduation project, the problem is approached as a design project. Meaning that idea generation, creative thinking, diverging and converging, and iterating are important aspects of the approach. An essential characteristic of the entire design process is that it is human-centered. This indicates that during the whole project, every step was evaluated by the end users. This project followed the three main phases of the design process: a research phase, an ideation phase, and the development of the concept. In the next sections, there will be an explanation of which design activities took place during each of these phases (see image 3).

## Research phase

This research started by creating a **Design Brief** defining the topic of this thesis (see Appendix A). However, the research question described in the Design Brief was very broad, therefore the research phase was used to further explore and specify the subject and its stakeholders.

A **literature study** was done to get familiar with the existing knowledge on the subject and its context. Also, conferences and webinars about domestic violence were visited, books were read, and semi-structured interviews with experts and social workers from Blijf Groep were performed, in conducting **user research**. This research was conducted to discover more details about the specific challenges people in the aid industry encounter in the counseling process with a person who commits domestic violence. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were held with two people who committed domestic violence to find out if they ran into similar problems regarding the counseling process. Thereafter, a journey mapping session was kept to map the counseling process of both involved at Blijf Groep located in Amsterdam. Based on these insights, the context was narrowed down and the research question was further specified.



This led to the following research question:

How can **an understanding be created** of the person committing domestic violence among the residential social workers of Blijf Groep?

Additionally, more research on the stakeholders was conducted, which eventually lead to the formulation of the boundary conditions the final design must meet.

### Ideation phase

The ideation phase started with the **design focus** which included the intended interaction and interaction qualities. The design goal was formulated:

**Creating an understanding of the people who commit domestic violence** among residential social workers, so they can offer them **customized assistance during the first phone call** and later in the counseling process.

This design focus was then translated into a set of design questions. During the **concept development**, a brainstorming session was held in which out-of-the-box ideas were created. After these ideas were compiled into three concepts, semi-structured interviews with residential social workers led to the selection of one of the concepts. Thereafter, interviews with a co-creative character were organized to define the design content with a behaviorist from Blijf Groep and a psychiatrist from De Waag. In developing the concept further, quick prototypes have been made and feedback was gathered from experts and residential social workers. Eventually, this led to the **initial design**: a workshop about people who commit domestic violence for residential social workers of Blijf Groep.

### Development of the concept

In the final phase of the graduation project, the initial design was developed. A prototype was made, which was **evaluated** with a group of four social workers and two experts from Blijf Groep. This led to many new insights which could be reflected upon. A final iteration of the initial design was made which led to the **final design**. A **conclusion** was written on the thesis and the final design. This report concludes with **recommendations** for further development of the design and focus points for Blijf Groep.

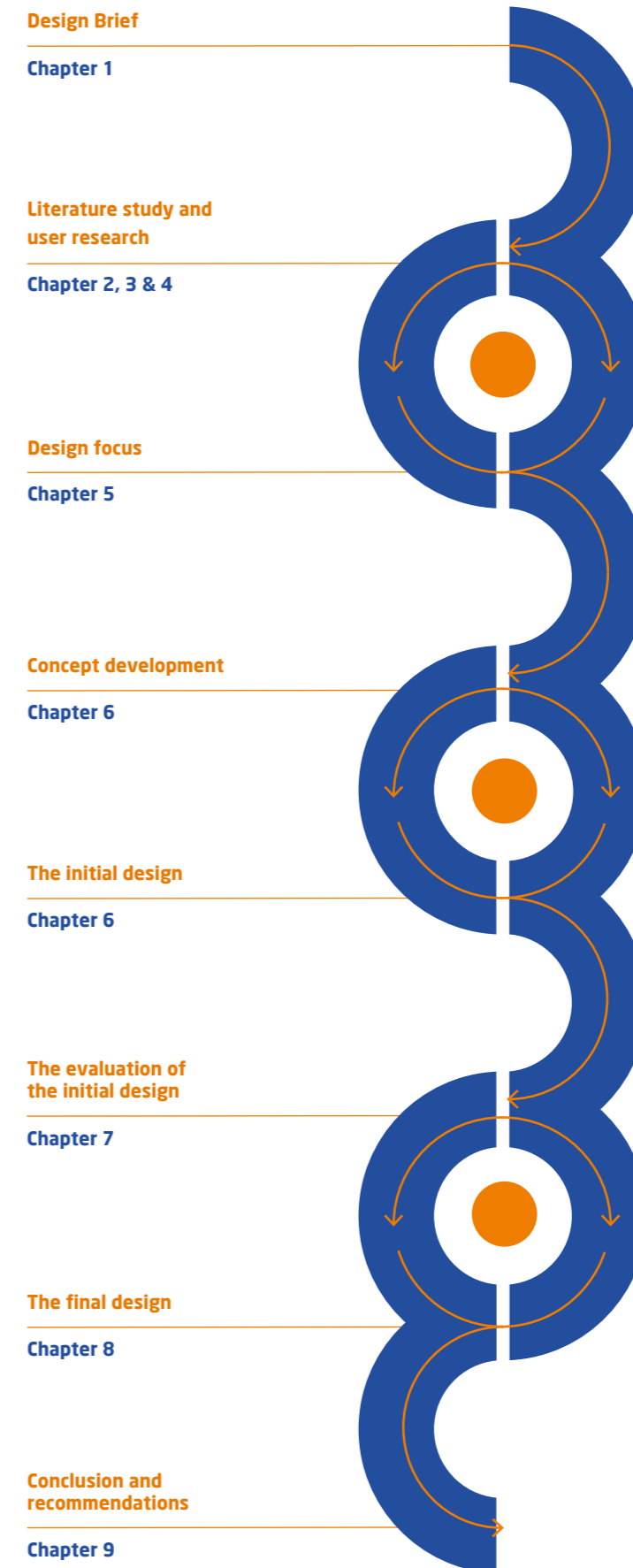


Image 3: This visual represents the project approach, including the corresponding report chapters. At three moments in this project, diverging took place by expanding knowledge and ideas. After which these ideas and information were converged by clustering. This is shown in this visual by arrows expanding and joining.

# 2

## The context

This chapter lays out the definition of domestic violence, the development of laws and regulations in history, explores the dynamics between those directly involved and examines the factors that increase the likelihood of domestic violence.

## 2.1 Unintentional (ex-)partner violence

### The history of domestic violence

Until the 1950s, the power differential between men and women was a generally accepted fact. Women had gained greater legal and political equality since gaining universal suffrage, but socially women were still disadvantaged compared to men. Partner violence was seen as an exceptional phenomenon and something that only occurred in unsocial families. However, such violence had to be stopped for the good of society. Starting in the 1960s, a movement emerged to break this traditional division of roles. They fought for gender equality. For the first time, domestic violence was no longer seen as an individual relationship problem, but as a social problem. The first Blijf-van mijn-lijfhuis was opened in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. This shelter focused on self-help by volunteers: women who had been abused were brought into contact with one another and talked about their experiences. The number of women using this shelter clearly showed the extent of the problem of violence against women (Van der Velde, 2019).

Internationally, women's rights came on the agenda through the United Nations (UN). When the fourth UN World Conference on Women took place, the Ministry of Justice in the Netherlands decided to investigate the extent of the problem of domestic violence. This research revealed that 45 percent of Dutch people had experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives, making it the most common form of violence in society. With the results of this survey, the extent and severity of the problem dawned on the government. This realization led to the presentation of the policy report "Private Violence - Public Cause", which the Cabinet presented in 2002 (Van der Velde, 2019).

From here, domestic violence was no longer purely a security problem in the eyes of the government, and addressing domestic violence became a part of the public health policy. They became obligated to intervene in cases of domestic violence. As a result, the term 'violence against women' was replaced by the more neutral term 'domestic violence' (Van der Velde, 2019).

## Domestic violence

Domestic violence is violence perpetrated by someone from the victim's domestic circle (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2022). According to the APA Task Force, domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behaviors by one person in an intimate relationship against another to gain power and control unfairly (Walker, 1999). Currently, the Netherlands has about 200,000 victims of serious domestic violence every year. This makes it the most common form of violence in our society. 45 percent of the total Dutch population between the ages of 18 and 70 have been a victim of some form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence in a domestic environment (Blijf Groep, 2020). Domestic violence includes various types of violence, such as violence in dependency relationships, (ex-)partner violence, child abuse, honor-related violence, and elder abuse (Beetz, 2022). More than 60 percent of domestic violence in the Netherlands concerns (ex-)partner violence (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, 2021). Therefore, this research will focus on (ex-)partner violence.

### (Ex-)partner violence

(Ex-)partner violence is any form of violence between partners or ex-partners (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, 2021). In aid work, a distinction is made between three different categories of partner violence: intimate terrorism, common couple violence, and violence resistance (Daru et al, 2015). Firstly, intimate terrorism relates to serious forms of violence, coercion, and control and arises from the need for one partner to exercise power over the other (Bogaerts et al., 2010). This often coincides with isolation and dependence (economic or otherwise) on the other. Secondly, common couple violence commences with powerlessness, through loss of control and direction. An interactive dynamic starts between two partners which leads conflicts to escalate into violence perpetrated by both partners. In this type of violence, there is no need to have control over the other (Beetz, 2022). Finally, violent resistance arises as a response to a threatening situation and is used as a defense (Douma & Hoes, 2016).

According to experts, social workers in aid work need to get a clear image of the dynamics of violence during the diagnostic phase. That is why social workers choose to classify a case into one of these three categories and designate those involved as victims and perpetrators, so they can offer tailored help more quickly (Daru et al, 2015). However, violence is an interaction between two people which depends on several factors and influences. These factors are further explained in Chapter 3.

### (Un)intentional partner violence

Within the types of violence described above, a distinction can be made between intentional (deliberate) and unintentional violence. In the case of intentional violence, the premise of the quarrels is to gain power over the partner. In practice, it turns out to be difficult to get a grip on intentional violence because those who commit domestic violence often cope with personality disorders. Therefore, Blijf Groep is not able to offer the specialized help needed. It also may be that punishment is the only solution (Barendregt et al., 2021). Unintentional partner violence often arises from differences in opinions, values, and norms. This can lead to conflicts and arguments, resulting in mental, physical,

economic, or sexual violence. Unintentional partner violence includes common couple violence and violent resistance (Daru et al., 2015). These types of violence are treatable by the social workers that use the methodologies of Blijf Groep, therefore this research will focus on unintentional partner violence.

There is a wide range of maltreatment that can be used by abusive partners. They may use emotional, verbal, psychological, physical, financial, spiritual, cultural, or sexual abuse (see table 1) (Barendregt et al., 2021).

Maltreatments	Characteristics
Emotional, verbal, or psychological abuse	Name-calling, humiliation, jealousy, mind games, making the partner feel crazy, making the partner feel bad about themselves, making the partner feel as they are to blame, and making comments such as "No one will ever love you as much as I do", "No one will ever believe you", and "You are stupid or fat", etc.
Physical abuse	Shoving, hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, pinching, grabbing, hair pulling, biting, strangling, or intimidating the partner with threats of physical abuse (such as throwing objects, or punching walls).
Financial abuse	The perpetrator uses money as a way to control their partner or to keep them from leaving, such as not letting them work, taking their paycheck, forcing them to take high-rate installment loans for bad credit, giving them an "allowance" (or not allowing them to control their income), counting their receipts, not allowing them to establish their credit and withholding financial information from them.
Spiritual or cultural abuse	Denying the partner the right to practice their religion, to pursue religious, spiritual or cultural activities, belittling the partner's religious beliefs, or stating that certain forms of abuse are justified as a cultural tradition or as acts supported by religious beliefs.
Sexual abuse	Any unwanted touching, kissing, demanding sex, forcing unprotected sex, coercion and manipulation of sex.

Table 1: Maltreatments, including their characteristics, which abusive partners might use during a violent relationship.

## 2.2 Those directly involved

### Victims and perpetrators

Fonds Slachtofferhulp Nederland stated that a victim is someone who suffers physical, financial, or mental damage through no fault of their own (2022). On the other hand, a perpetrator is someone who assaults, threatens, or commits physical and sexual abuse (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, 2021).

During this research, it was discovered that those involved in domestic violence are quickly labeled as victims or perpetrators by society. One reason for this is the stereotypical image that exists in society about victims and perpetrators. For example, this research shows that people tend to associate perpetrators with men who are two meters tall, quite wide, full of tattoos, and poorly educated. In the same manner, victims are often associated with women who are small and shy (see image 4). Social psychologist Bijlstra mentioned this pigeonholing stems from people's urge to simplify the world (Bijlstra, 2020). A social worker from Blijf Groep said the following about this:

P2: "This distinction between victims and perpetrators is because the whole of society is categorized that way. **People want a designation for someone who has done something.** However, this leads to judgments about groups in society."

Nevertheless, these terms are also used in the healthcare industry and by social workers and experts at Blijf Groep. They talk about victims and perpetrators since that makes it clear who they are talking about. Besides, interviews showed that social workers fear they do not give enough recognition to the victims if they do not call them so since they have often experienced intense and long-term violence (see boundary condition 2.2).

P5: "A victim sometimes **wants to be called 'a victim'** herself, because she has been beaten and she has been wronged."

### The different roles of those involved

The survey of the Ministry of Justice in the Netherlands (1997) has led to the insight that men can equally be perpetrators and victims of violence. That man could also be a victim was a striking conclusion and was discovered because, for the first time, the scientists had also interviewed men. The results of the study sparked a public discussion about who is a perpetrator and who is a victim. Some researchers became convinced that women's violence has remained invisible in much research since the women's movement had "put up a smokescreen" by portraying men as perpetrators and women as victims (Van der Velde, 2019).

These discussions led to the insight that **the concepts of victim and perpetrator are not so black and white but more ambiguous.** The roles of perpetrator and victim can alternate during a relationship and the roles can change during an argument or certain phases of their lives (Arum et al., 2021). Besides, those involved may alternate between using physical and psychological violence.

P1: "It is a kind of scale. For many people, it will be somewhere in the middle. There are exceptions where it is just obvious 'you are the perpetrator and you are the victim.'"

P2: "It is not good to put people in the category of victim or perpetrator because **people are more than that** and maybe victims also have a share. Attention needs to be paid to the victim's part to prevent the violence from happening again."

In this report, those involved in domestic violence will be referred to as people who commit domestic violence and people who experience domestic violence.

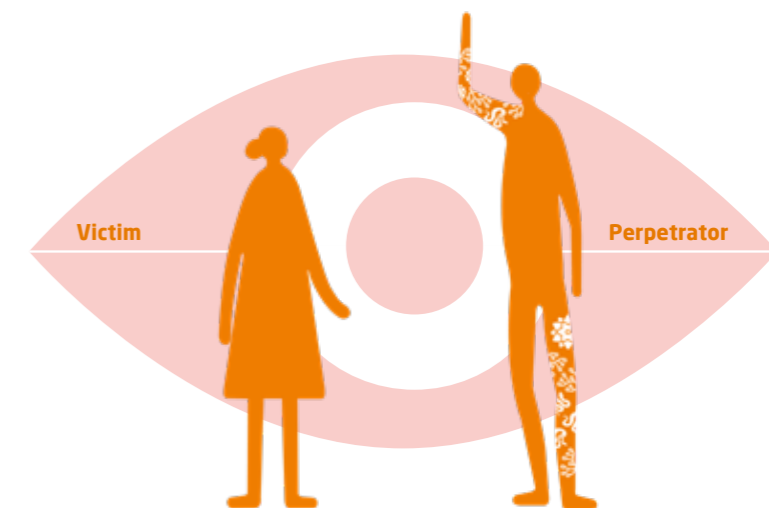


Image 4: A representation of the stereotypical image that exists about the people involved in domestic violence.

## 2.3 From perpetrator-victim thinking to integrated approach

### The development of systemic work

Gradually, a shift became visible in counseling from perpetrator-victim thinking to system thinking, in which the violence is dealt with integrally. It became clear that people seeking help wanted the violence to stop but did not want to stop the relationship. Besides, aid organizations became aware that both involved have a share in the continuation of violence. This confirmed the idea that help needs to be provided to all people involved in the counseling process, to stop domestic violence permanently (Van der Velde, 2019).

Nowadays, the Social Support Act (Wmo) of 2007 is of great importance in addressing domestic violence systemically. The law formally gives the directing role to stop domestic violence to municipalities. This means that municipalities are responsible for addressing domestic violence and must cooperate with relevant agencies. The municipality itself must provide women's shelter and implement policies to prevent domestic violence. As a result, combatting domestic violence is approached differently in each city. Unfortunately, systemic work is not applied correctly everywhere, and often not enough attention is given to the person who committed domestic violence (Van der Velde, 2019).

The Oranje Huis' approach to domestic violence is in line with Amsterdam's municipality, which means that *residential social workers* have to contact the person who committed domestic violence.

## 2.4 Influences on domestic violence

There is often a lead-up to domestic violence in a relationship. However, multiple factors are indicators of the likelihood of unintentional (ex-)partner violence to occur. These are called the 'risk factors'. The influences can be subdivided into family factors, social and environmental factors, and individual factors. To describe these factors, a standard classification model from Beetz (2022) was used and expanded.

The theme cards of Module 2 from the final design connect to this paragraph (see image 5).

### Family factors

- Violence in youth: Being mistreated, or witnessing abuse within one's own family is a predictor that perpetrator and victimization patterns will repeat in later relationships (intergenerational transmission of violence) (Harthoorn et al, 2016).
- Having children: Different views on parenting and the inability to properly share responsibilities, tasks, and dilemmas within the family or community lead to stress and form a risk factor. Violence is a way of solving family problems and dealing with stress in a family where power inequality prevails.
- Communication and interaction patterns in the family: When people have limited social and communication skills, arguments and tensions in the family situation can degenerate into transgressive behavior (mutual or otherwise) and domestic violence (Moussa, 2022).

## Social and environmental factors

- An environment or culture that legitimizes violence: In some cultural contexts, physical aggression against women is tolerated and legitimized. This can lead to specific norms and values for the person who will later commit or experience domestic violence. As a result, they create a personal image of relationships, men and women, and how to resolve conflicts (Blijf Groep, 2020).
- Traditional views on gender roles: Violence is rooted in gender roles and power inequality between men and women.
- Social connections: Some people find it easy to build a strong connection with someone (protective factor), while for others this is difficult and the connection remains weak. Not being able to build a strong connection with someone, is a risk factor (Moussa, 2022).

## Individual factors

- Demographic factors: Personal statistics that include information such as age, upbringing, and character.
- Personality issues: People may use violence when they feel threatened or attacked by a specific interaction with their partner that touches an area of low self-esteem. Besides, social skills and competencies can play a role.
- Mental and physical health: People can suffer from psychological complaints such as depression. Furthermore, people who commit domestic violence often perform substance misuse as well. For example, they are addicted to alcohol or drugs.
- Unemployment, problems at work, low income or debt, and dependent residence status or housing can be risk factors.



Image 5: The theme cards of Module 2 from the final design connect to this paragraph. Chapter 8 will explain the significance of the three theme cards: the family background, the relational background, and the individual background.

Some of these risk factors are changeable. These are known as dynamic risk factors and apply, for example, to poverty, unemployment, extreme fear of the partner, and unsafe living situations. Blijf Groep focuses on eliminating or reducing dynamic risk factors. Other risk factors are not changeable, called the 'static factors'. Examples of static factors are: having experienced child abuse, single parenthood, psychological problems, and the personality of the partner. For these risk factors, Blijf Groep focuses on reducing the risk factor or supporting coping with it (Moussa, 2022).

In addition to risk factors, some factors make domestic violence less likely. According to the Verwey-Jonker Institute, some protective factors against partner violence are autonomy, resilience, social participation, education, independence (economic or otherwise), a caring attitude, self-reflection, responsibility regarding violence, acceptance of an egalitarian relationship between partner and children, processing trauma, and dealing with violence experiences in childhood (Moussa, 2022). Furthermore, socioeconomic conditions have an influence, such as employment, income, not having debt, and proper housing. Besides, connecting to an individual's strengths, families' strengths, and a supportive social network are seen as helping factors in breaking patterns of domestic violence (Lünnemann et al., 2020). For all people involved, different sets of factors play a role in the creation and/or perpetuation of domestic violence.

## Possible effects of the factors

Interviews with multiple people have been conducted focusing on how the factors described can be transformed into triggers to start domestic violence. At Moviera, a shelter for those involved in domestic violence, they use the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) model to explain to the people who commit domestic violence what happens and to create an understanding of the situation. The NLP model is based on the principle that we perceive the external world through our senses and that these perceptions are converted into external behaviors. According to this model, the factors people experience while growing up lead to three unconscious processes: omission, distortion, and generalization. Based on our perception and unconscious filtering of this information, we form an internal representation or thought pattern. The mood arises, which ultimately drives behavior and aggression (Mind Academy, n.d.).

Moviera: "We show the need to get to work with the perpetrator. They commit domestic violence in front of their children while being unaware of its causes and effects on their environment."

# 2.5 Key Takeaways

## Unintentional (ex-)partner violence is treatable

Unintentional (ex-)partner violence, which includes common couple violence and violent resistance, is treatable. This violence arises from differences in opinions, values, and norms, which can eventually lead to escalation. The social workers zoom in on the dynamics between those involved in unintentional (ex-)partner violence during the counseling process using the Oranje Huis methodology developed by Blijf Groep (see image 6).

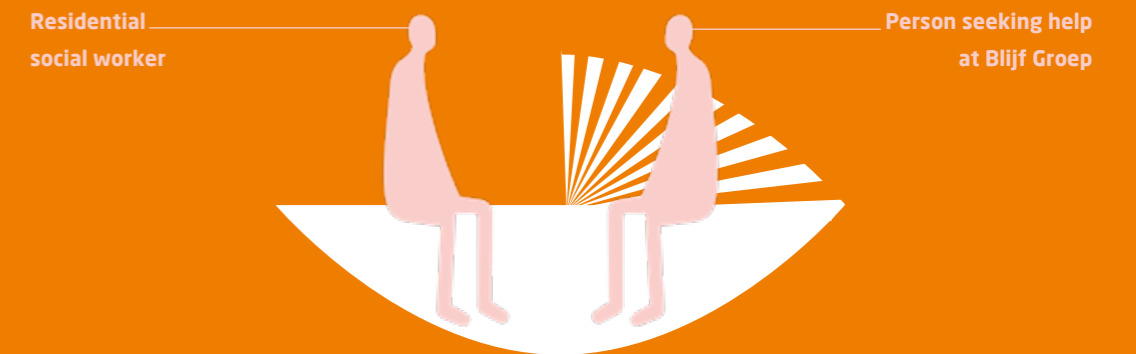


Image 6: A conversation between a residential social worker and the person seeking help in a counseling process at Blijf Groep about the dynamics that occurred during unintentional (ex-)partner violence.

## The concepts of perpetrators and victims are ambiguous

The terms victim and perpetrator are widely used in society and among social workers. However, the concepts of victim and perpetrator are not so black and white but more ambiguous since these roles can alternate in a relationship or during a fight. Besides, using these terms can pigeonhole those involved in domestic violence and may cause them to behave differently or receive a different treatment. Therefore, using this terminology should be avoided, and there needs to be a focus on the dynamics between those involved (see image 7).

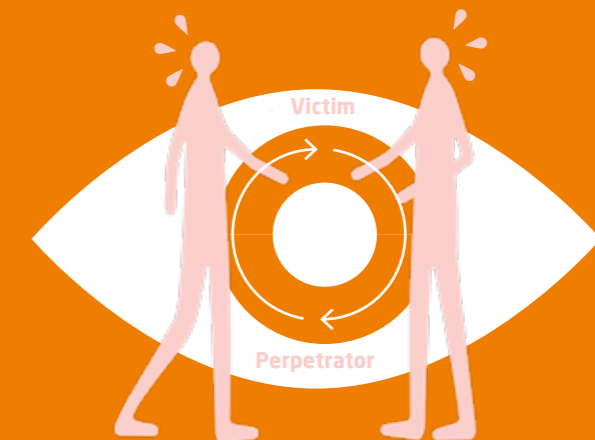


Image 7: The concepts of victim and perpetrator are ambiguous and should be avoided during counseling.

## Risk and protective factors have an impact on the genesis of violence

People grow up with various social, environmental, family, and individual factors. These can have a profound impact on perceptions. These perceptions can eventually lead to a drive for aggression, which increases the likelihood of a violent relationship. The risk factors and protective factors for ending up in a violent relationship may be the same for both involved in domestic violence (see image 8).

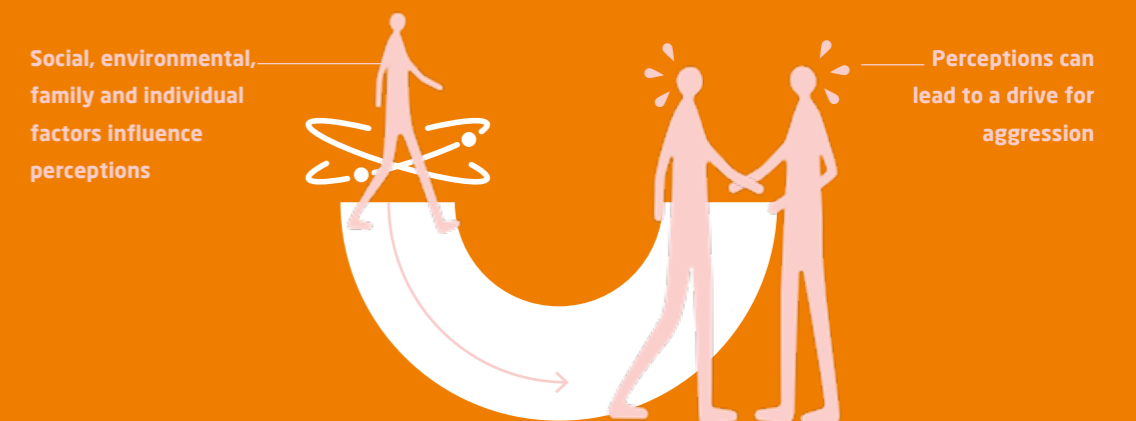


Image 8: Social, environmental, family, and individual factors have a profound impact on the likelihood of a violent relationship for both involved.

# 3

## The course of a violent relationship

This chapter describes the course of a violent relationship including the counseling process of those directly involved.

### 3.1 The background of those directly involved

This paragraph zooms in on the growing up of those involved and examines the influences that lead to the emergence of domestic violence (see image 9).

The theme cards of Module 3 from the final design connect to this paragraph (see image 11).

#### Intergenerational transmission

As described in Chapter 2.3 various factors affect a violent relationship, but the main influence on a person's likelihood of getting into an abusive relationship is an intergenerational transmission. According to the Verwey-Jonker institute, children who witnessed violence between or against their parents from a young age, are at increased risk of using or experiencing violence themselves against their children or partner (Lünnemann et al., 2016). It is often difficult for parents to (re)acknowledge the impact of violent quarrels on their children.

P5: "It is not always a mistake. How can your parents teach you how to behave during a relationship, when they never learned it from their parents?"

P7: "I learned from a young age that aggression can be a weapon. I perfected that until I was fifty. I knew better and better what worked and where the limits were. After a while, these limits decreased."



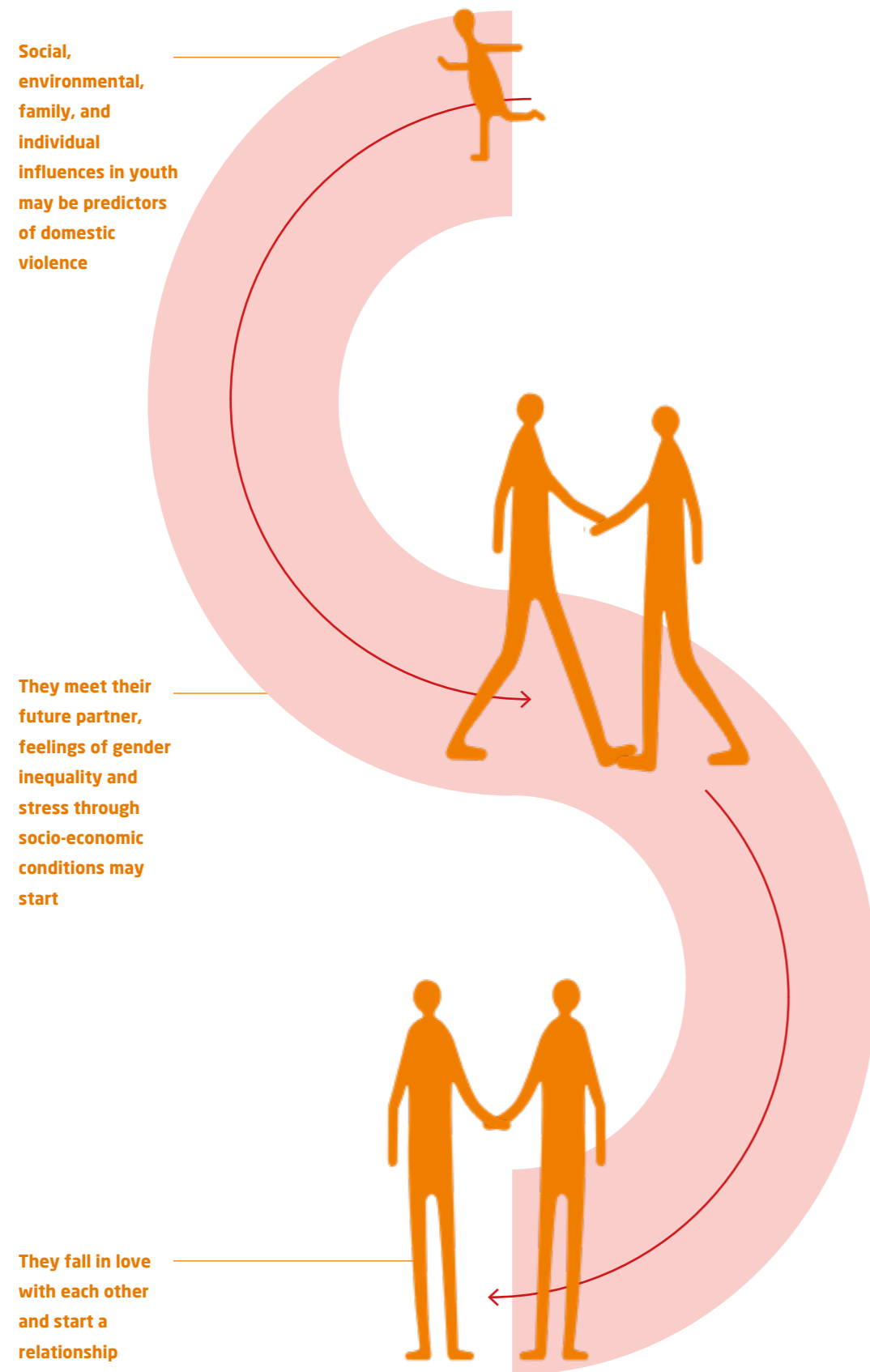



Image 9: A timeline representing the influences those directly involved in domestic violence encounter while growing up that affect their relationship.

### Socio-economic conditions

Socio-economic conditions also have a profound effect on the likelihood of the emergence of domestic violence. According to Gjertson, poorer people are more likely to be involved in domestic violence due to contextual factors. For example, the neighborhood where they live or employment instability. Secondly, one of the partners may be economically dependent on the other, preventing them from leaving the relationship. Besides, unemployment, debt, or not having a proper home can cause stress (Oguntayo et al., 2018). Prolonged stress has major effects on the brain. For example, stress can cause people to forget appointments, not keep promises, be inflexible, and be more easily angered (Slot, n.d.)

When partners are sufficiently calm when someone is angered or during the start of a conflict, they can empathize with the other person and come up with a solution. When there is too much stress, the relationship between those involved becomes unbalanced. The reptilian brain can take over and react with a survival strategy that consists of fight or flight. This over-stimulation can lead to unnecessary aggressive behavior (Hoogsteder et al., n.d.).

### Gender inequality

 Gender inequality may reinforce aggressive behavior. This inequality manifests itself in societal conceptions of masculinity and femininity. **Gender roles are socially and culturally determined and are influenced by factors such as age, class, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation.** The interpretation of what is appropriate for women and men thus varies over time, by society and between social classes. According to the current ideas of masculinity in the Netherlands, men must be strong, not overly emotional, and heterosexual. As a result, some men use violence to overcompensate or to be "dominant" (Zweege, 2022).

P5: "The images that people in society have about men, reinforce men's sense of how they should behave. **They try to pursue what they think is expected of them from the environment.**"

Girls are taught from an early age to be understanding, gentle and caring. Relationship coaches and girls' forums constantly remind women that they are more emotionally inclined than their male partners and that they must actively work with their empathy skills for the success of their relationship (Zweege, 2022).

## The first outburst

Stereotypical gender roles and expectations often lead to differences in power, independence, and accepted behavior between men and women. Failure to conform to these stereotypes can be a trigger for violence. For example, if a person becomes unemployed and values traditional norms, there is a greater likelihood that conflict will arise which may ultimately result in violence. Furthermore, feelings of powerlessness or stress can cause one of the partners involved to react more violently to something that has happened or been said, while the other does not understand where the reaction is coming from. As a result, the other partner may feel vulnerable (Hoogsteder et al., n.d.).

P1: "For most perpetrators, their aggression stems from powerlessness. Often these are emotionally unstable men: easily jealous, or afraid of being abandoned. When those feelings are triggered, tensions arise, which can lead to an outburst."

When certain dependencies make it difficult to distance oneself, it can lead to prolonged violence which in turn perpetuates power differences (Moussa, 2022) (see image 10).

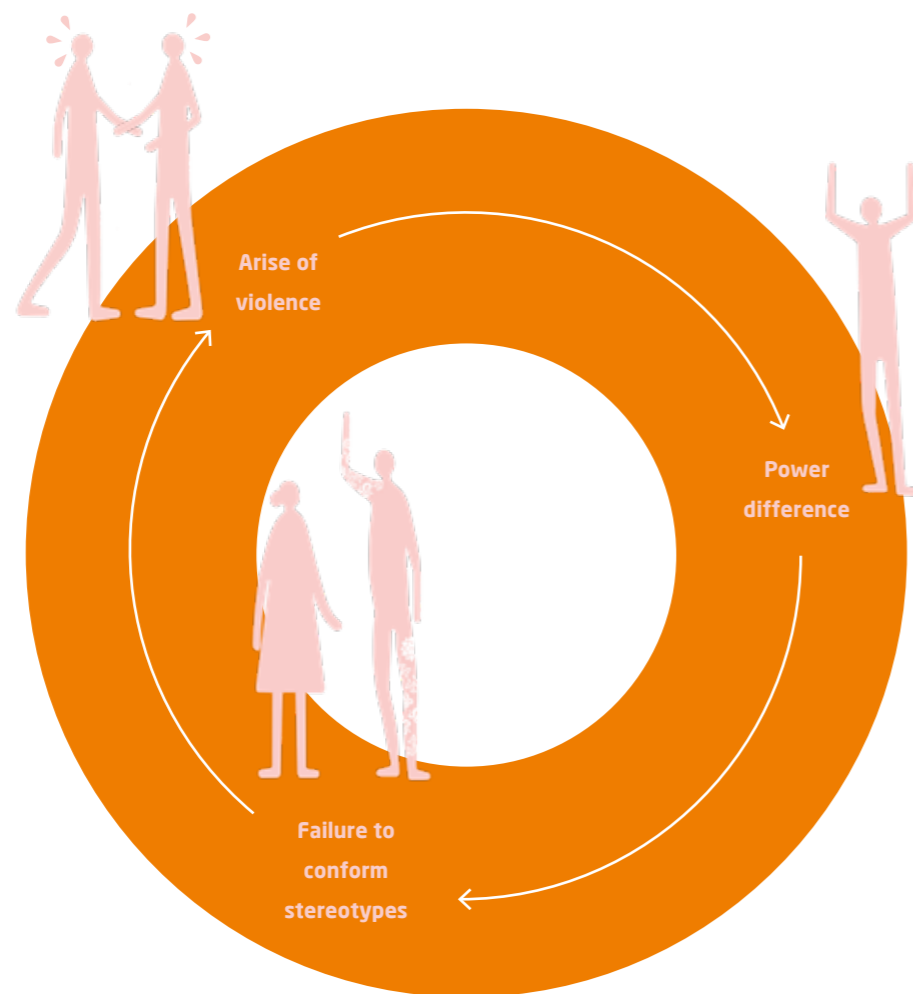


Image 10: The arise of violence represented by a vicious circle in which stereotyping is key.



Image 11: The theme cards of Module 3 from the final design connect to this paragraph. Chapter 8 will explain the significance of the two theme cards: the impact of vulnerability and the impact of stress on the occurrence of violence.

## 3.2 The emergence of a violent relationship

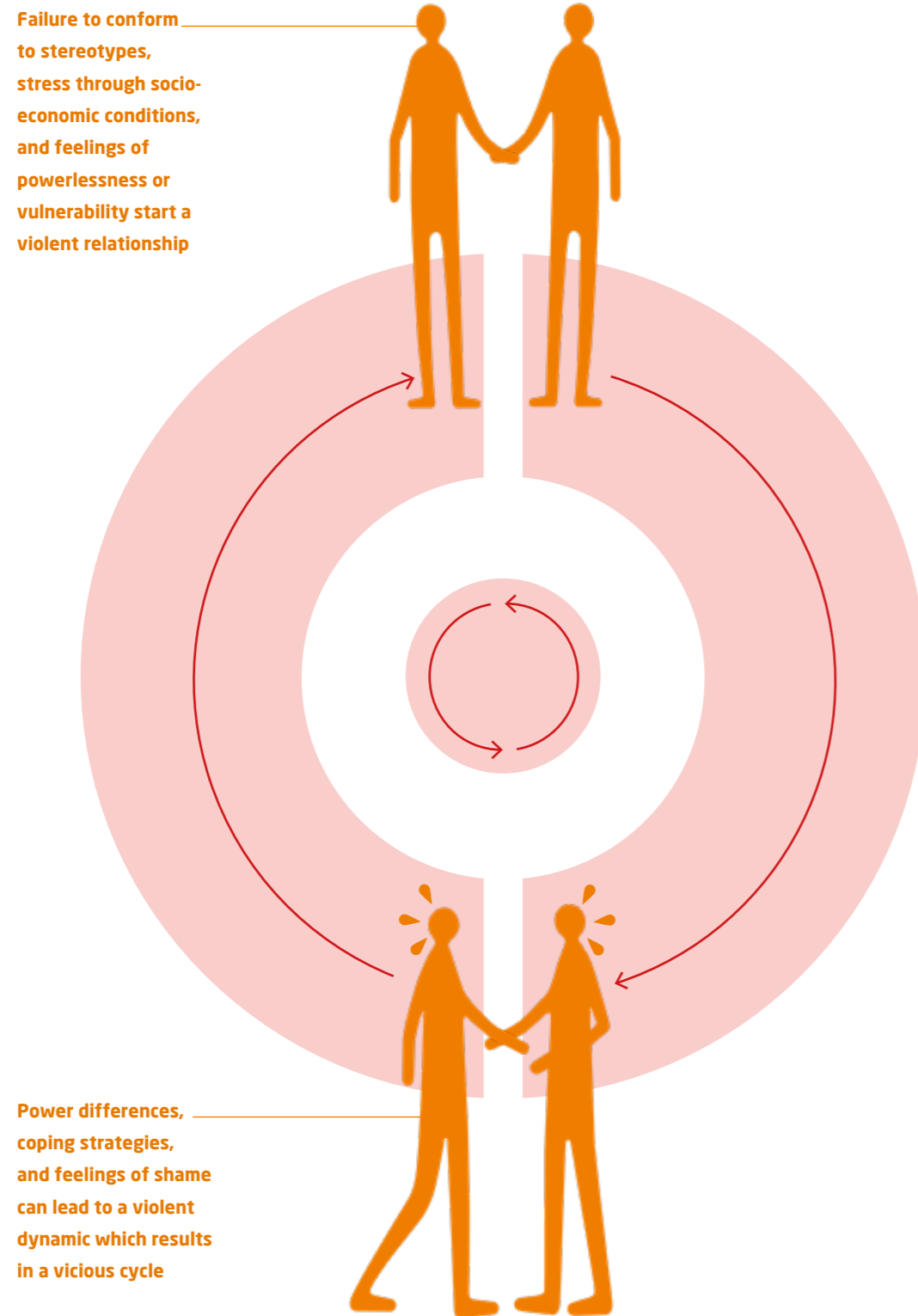


Image 12: An initial outburst of violence occurs, after which both parties involved find themselves in a vicious cycle of violence in which they can challenge each other.

This paragraph looks at the initial violence and how it leads to a violent dynamic between the two people involved (see image 12).

The theme cards of Module 4 from the final design connect to this paragraph (see image 14).

### A vicious cycle

From an initial incident of violence between two partners, a violent dynamic can develop. This is explained using the following case (Elle, 2021):

*'My ex and I seemed made for each other. We shared the same interests, we came from creative backgrounds, and found each other very attractive. We had just moved in together, and although we adored each other, there were already some cracks visible in our fledgling love. He was caring and generous, but also jealous and dependent on my love. He mentioned a few times that he felt that he was not enough for me.*

*The first time it went wrong was after I went to a cafe with a friend. I had not let him hear from me all evening, even though I had seen he called me several times. He was worried, so he went to the café. He said that it frustrated him that I did not take his feelings into account. I gave him a push, but when he pushed me back a great power difference occurred and I fell against the wall behind me. He immediately regretted it and he told me that he would never do it again.*

*He thought he had expressed his regrets enough, but I wanted to talk about the incident several more times. This got on his nerves so the violence between the two of us got worse.*

*We both wanted to believe in the idea of us. We wanted to fit the romantic image we had in mind when we started this relationship. We developed a survival structure in which we could deal with the relationship but started to feel less about ourselves.'*

As can be seen in the case study, couples enter a vicious cycle in which the severity and degree of violence continue to increase after the first outburst (Bogaerts et al., 2010). The build-up of violence can be divided into several phases. It all starts with the tension-building phase. This phase is characterized by one of the partners sensing tension and fearing an outburst. During this stage, one person tries to calm their partner down and walks on eggshells to avoid any major violent confrontations. The second phase is called the violent episode. This phase is characterized by outbursts of violence. During this stage, the other partner attempts to dominate their partner with the use of violence. The partner reacts or flees. The third phase, the reconciliation, is characterized by the partner showing affection or offering an apology, with the appearance of an “end” to the violence. During this stage, overwhelming feelings of remorse and sadness are shown. The apology is accepted (Bogaerts et al., 2010). These three phases represent an interaction between both parties involved. For example, walking on eggshells with one partner may be a short-term solution, but the tension is still building on both sides (see image 13).

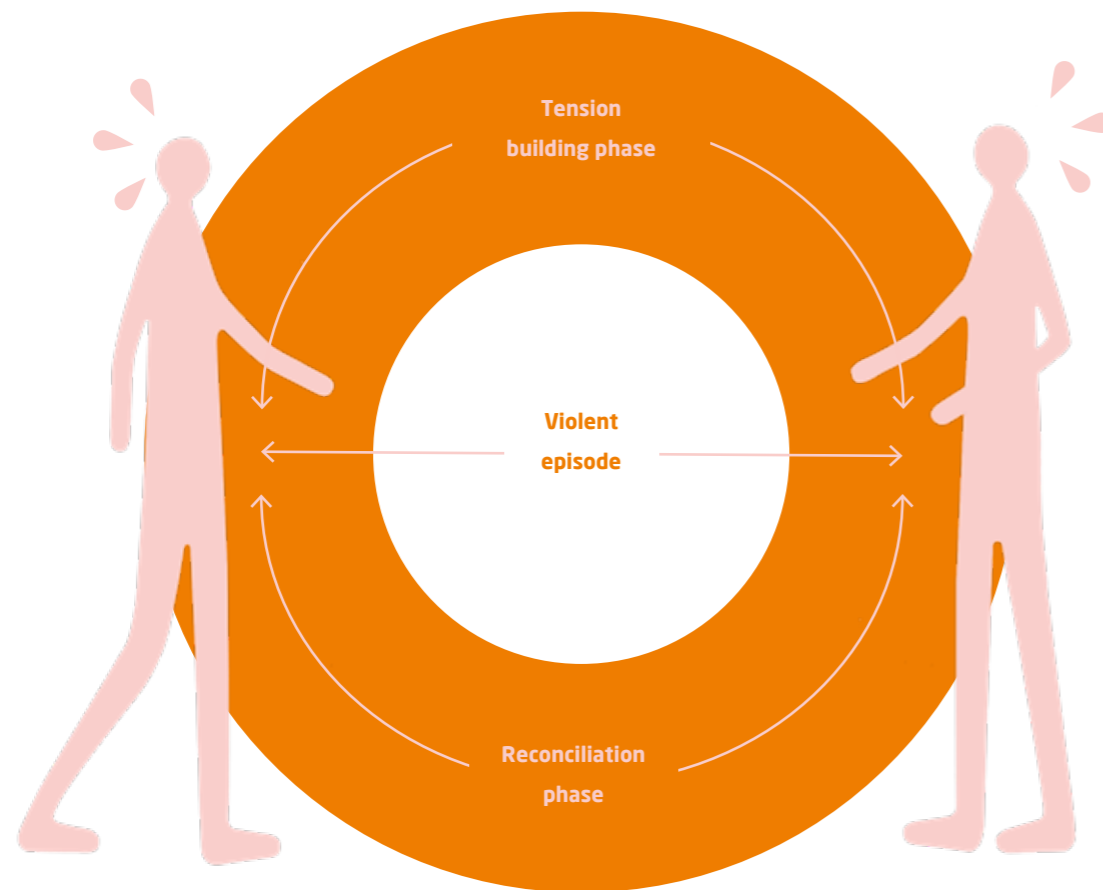


Image 13: The build-up of violence in a relationship consisting of the tension-building phase, the violent episode, and the reconciliation phase.

According to Daru et al. (2015), women are more likely to use psychological violence and threats. In contrast, men more often push or grab their partner painfully or frighteningly.

P2: "In most domestic violence, **both partners are aggressive**. The husband hits the hardest and is the most violent, but his partner also uses psychological violence. She does other things that contribute to escalation which she is not aware of. Such as humiliating or excluding her husband."

During a fight, three coping strategies of the partners might occur which can cause arguments to escalate and can make the violent situation more unsafe. These patterns vary per relationship:

- Coping strategy 1: The partners get angry and push each other away. This interaction can provoke one of the partners, causing the behavior to escalate.
- Coping strategy 2: Both partners involved seek confrontation and an attack leads to a counterattack.
- Coping strategy 3: Both partners have given up communicating and deflecting tension.

### Staying in the relationship

Violence has physical and emotional consequences for those involved. Physical consequences can be: sleeping problems, headaches, high blood pressure, breathing problems, etc. Emotional effects may include: low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, etc. (Geweld in jeugdzorg info, 2022). Yet partners often stay in an abusive relationship for months or even years. In some cases, people have been on the verge of leaving the house or refrained from Blijf Groep over seven times. Humiliation and guilt play a major role in this. People who have experienced domestic violence are often unaware of the severity of the abuse. Once they find out, they still stay in the relationship because they are ashamed. Reporting the partner's behavior would involve revealing embarrassing and humiliating details they would rather never discuss (Patrick, 2018). According to Tessel ten Zweekge, a former victim of domestic violence and author of the book 'Dat zou jij nooit toelaten', it hurts so much to acknowledge that you are being abused that it is easier not to think about it at all.

P8: "I do not understand why I am lying about the situation, but I can not seem to stop it either. I google, 'Help I am being abused' and the first hit I see is the police logo on the screen. I do not want that. I have heard from girlfriends what can happen when you call the police about intimate violence. 'Can you prove that you said no? That you did not want to?' Of course I can not. I took seven pictures of bruises on my body, but how am I supposed to prove that he caused them?"

According to an expert from Blijf Groep, these examples explain why the number of reports made of partner violence by the person who experienced domestic violence stays relatively low.

P3: "It is estimated that **only 6 percent of all cases of partner violence are reported**. These are only cases of physical partner violence because mental violence is not yet prohibited in the Netherlands."

During this research was found that the person who committed domestic violence also finds it difficult to escape the relationship because there is often not much help available, and if they find the help, they are not able to gain understanding from the social workers. One reason for this is that social workers first hear the story of the person who sought help because of domestic violence and are mainly in contact with them. As a result, violence first must get out of control before the person who committed domestic violence are being taken seriously. Unfortunately, help is too late at this point.

P6: "**Aggression problems are chronic**, you never get rid of it. It is just like alcohol or drug addiction: you can stay off it for 10 years. You can not use aggression for 10 years, but there is only one little thing needed that either triggers you or slows you down. You have one fight with someone and you are back to square one and you can start all over again."

P7: "It was quite an obstacle for me to look for help. I knew I had a problem but I did not know where to look for help and I also did not dare to. **Once I asked for help, I was sent away.**"



Image 14: The theme cards of Module 4 from the final design connect to this paragraph. Chapter 8 will explain the significance of the three theme cards: the types of violence, the three coping strategies of violence, and the consequences of violence.

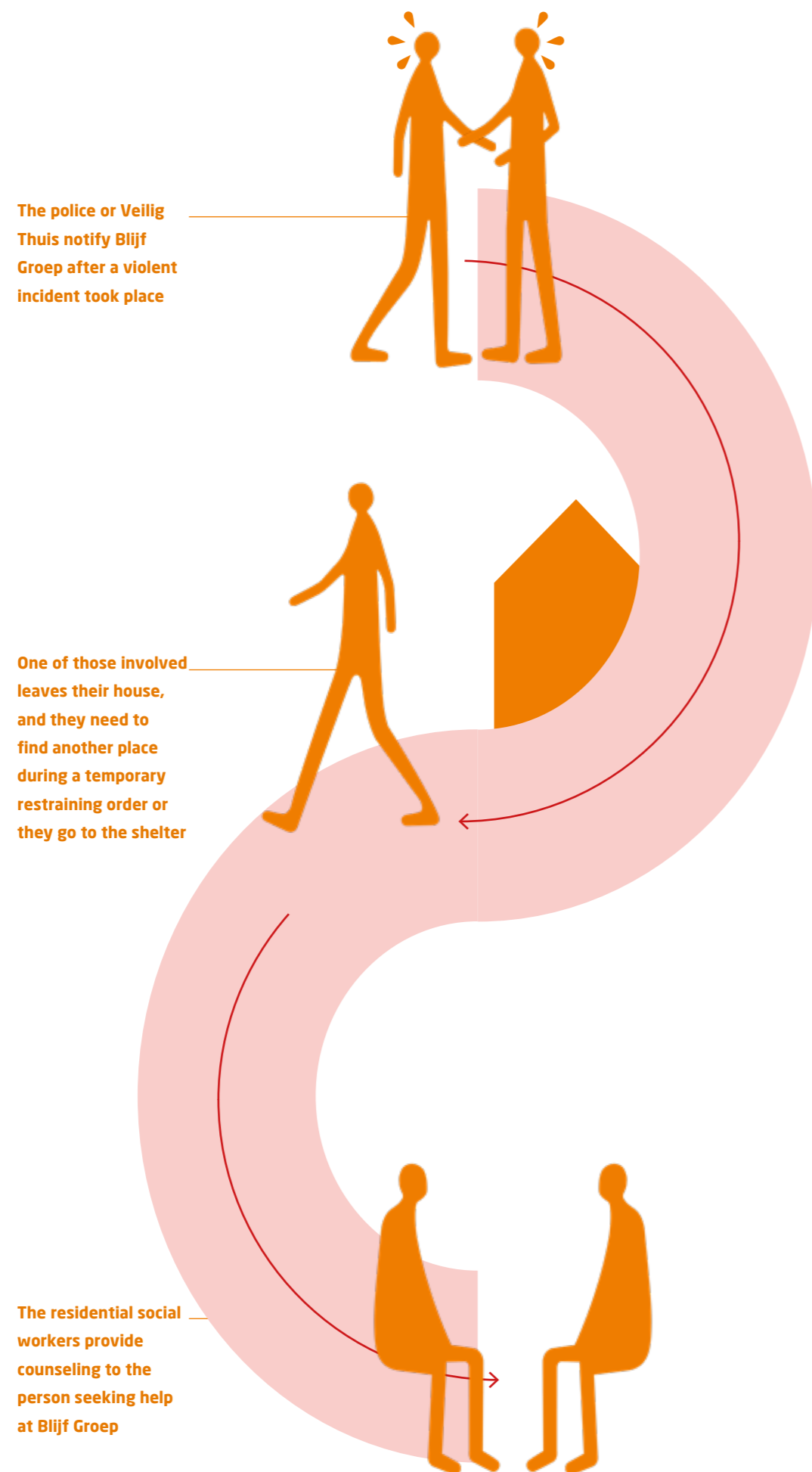


Image 15: A timeline representing the counseling process at Blijf Groep with the person seeking help because of violence.

## 3.3 The counseling processes at Blijf Groep

There are several ways in which people who commit domestic violence can end up in a counseling process. They can apply themselves at the shelter, or their surroundings can report to the general practitioner, a mental health institution, the police, or Veilig Thuis. As described in Chapter 1, Blijf Groep uses the Oranje Huis methodology to help the people who sought help and their family. A journey mapping session was held with an ambulatory social worker and a residential social worker from Blijf Groep to map the counseling they provide. The outcomes of these sessions are used for reconstructing the two most commonly used trajectories at Blijf Groep (see image 15).

### The notification

The police or Veilig Thuis are notified after a violent incident. They are called by the person who experienced domestic violence, the family, neighbors, or the Neighborhood Team. The police send people to the family to check the situation and contact Blijf Groep. When there is domestic violence and it is not necessarily unsafe at home, the counseling process ambulatory from Blijf Groep is started. The *ambulatory social workers* have contact with both parties and identify safety for all family members. At the same time, they offer resilience training and support talks for those affected. After providing help, they decide if additional trajectories are needed for a safe situation. Two possible trajectories are the temporary restraining order or the reception of the person who experienced domestic violence in a shelter. It is also possible that one of the partners flees and reports to the shelter or other help organizations outside Blijf Groep.

## Temporary restraining order

A temporary restraining order requires one of the partners to leave the home for ten days. This usually involves the male partner who is seen by social workers as the most violent since they often use physical violence in which a large force difference emerges. The purpose of the restraining order is to ensure immediate safety and initiate emergency counseling.

P4: "The temporary restraining order is decided by the police or Veilig Thuis. That is advantageous to us because now we can say to clients that the restraining order is not our decision which contributes to the continuation of working with them to find the best solution for the situation."

During the first week of the temporary restraining order, individual interviews and home visits are conducted with both parties. On day seven or eight, there is a meeting with all family members and social workers to discuss what support is needed after the restraining order expires. The temporary restraining order can be extended to eighteen days and occurs in 60-70 percent of cases. Referrals for follow-up care are also made at this point (see image 16).

Sometimes imposing a temporary restraining order is not safe. This is the case when the police are convinced that someone is not going to comply with the restraining order, if someone is dangerous or if someone indicates that they will return home as soon as they are released. In this case, it becomes 'mock security', and the person who experienced domestic violence is taken into the shelter at Blijf Groep.

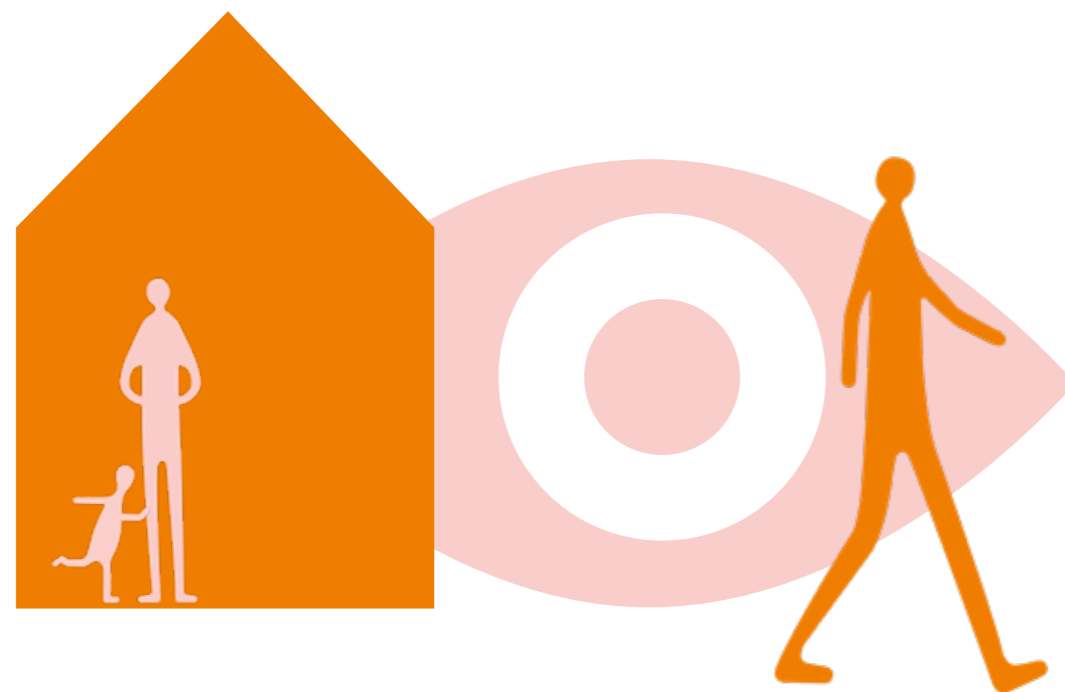


Image 16: From the moment the temporary restraining order is initiated, the most violent partner is obligated to leave the house for ten to eighteen days and they must find another place to stay. They get counseling in the meantime.

## The shelter (Oranje Huis)

The Oranje Huis is for people who experience severe and structural domestic violence and call on the shelter for help. Because women are more likely to experience such violence and seek help, the Oranje Huis houses (mainly) women and their children.

People for whom it is necessary to escape their home situation as quickly as possible first arrive at the Oranje Huis on an emergency bed for three days. After investigating their situation, they are given a permanent room for six months and the crisis trajectory starts. During their time in the shelter, the focus of help is on three core themes: safety, system-oriented work, and strengthening the direction. Blijf Groep's goal is to include all family members in the trajectory, including the children and the person who committed domestic violence. This approach is based on the belief that all family members experience the consequences of violence and can contribute to stopping it constructively. However, this can only be accomplished when the safety of those involved is guaranteed (Boundary condition 4.3). To investigate this, residential social workers need to perform a risk assessment. They use the knowledge they receive from the police and Veilig Thuis as a starting position. If safety permits and the person who experienced domestic violence agrees, the (ex-)partner is contacted by telephone after a few days. This initial phone call is used to assess the safety to decide whether further contact with the person who committed domestic violence is possible. When the residential social worker adequately estimates the safety situation as secure, they initiate system conversations with the entire family.

P2: "We are expected to contact the partner of our client but we notice that it is difficult to enter into a conversation with him. We also do not possess tools or knowledge on how to initiate this contact."

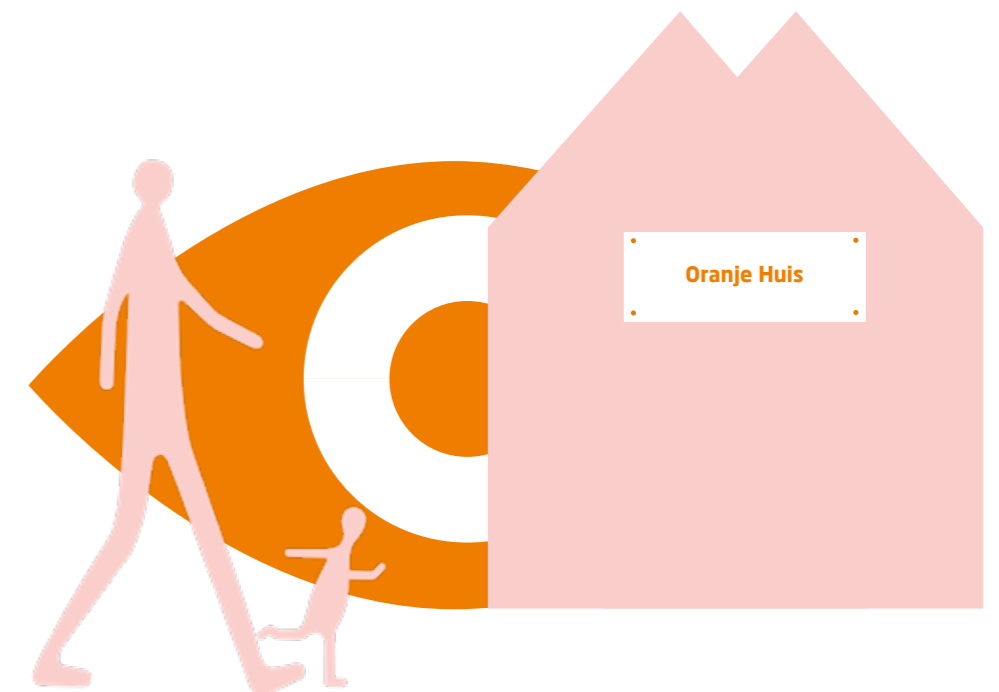


Image 17: The Oranje Huis shelters people who sought help and their children because of domestic violence. They stay in the shelter for an average of six months before moving into a new home.

During the trajectory, the person seeking help remains in the shelter where they are offered various resilience training and other types of help from Blijf Groep. For their partner, it is possible to stay in their house (see image 17). Although Blijf Groep tries to involve all those involved in domestic violence equally, in reality, this does not happen and almost all treatment and tools are focused on the person who experienced domestic violence (see boundary condition 3.4).

### External help for the person who committed domestic violence

There is very little help available for people who commit domestic violence in the Netherlands. Besides, this help is often offered in combination with a criminal justice program. Depending on the severity of the violence, the person who committed violence may be placed under probation supervision. They require mandatory forensic treatment, and aggression regulation training and must attend a carousel group.

Since 2016, a few support groups started emerging for people who committed domestic violence. These primarily serve as aftercare for the person who committed domestic violence. Two organizations that have started these peer groups are 'de Pion', and 'Agressie, en daarna', both of which were visited during this research. In these groups, men who committed domestic violence come together to talk about their experiences and are supervised by an *expert by experience* (see image 18).

Rene Haring started 'Agressie, en daarna' because he noticed there was no help available for him after he was out of treatment by the probation department.

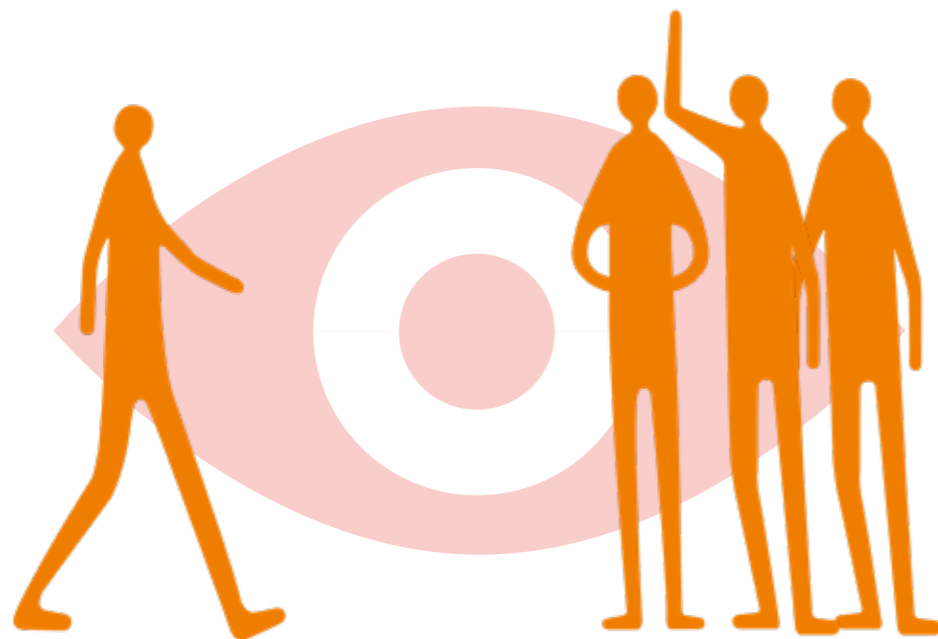


Image 18: There are a few support groups in the Netherlands for people who commit domestic violence. Here they talk with experts by experience about their problems and look for possible solutions together.

P6: "After two years, my sentence was over, the money tap closed, and I was declared cured. But I was not ready at that point. I was still quite hot-tempered. All I knew was that **it helped to talk about my experiences to keep my aggression low.**"

These support groups work well because there is no distinction made between the people who come in. It is important to acknowledge that people who commit domestic violence are a very diverse group of people. Professor of antisocial behavior, psychiatry, and society, Arno van Dam, stated during a webinar about people who commit domestic violence (2022):

"**Not every perpetrator is the same perpetrator**, and not every perpetrator has the same background. Ultimately, there are multiple forms of violence, but that should not be looked at in the group. I think the most important thing is whether the perpetrator wants to work on himself. He must want to participate."

### Experience expertise

In the shelter and the support groups described above, people who experienced domestic violence are deployed. They are called experts by experience. Experts by experience turn their experiences of domestic violence and recovery processes into helping others. The experiences distinguish an expert by experience from social workers who (mostly) do not have personal experience with domestic violence (SlachtofferWijzer, 2021).

P6: "Experts by experience are not professionals. **The language of professionals is a different language than the language of the client.** Therefore, they often do not understand each other."

Research shows that it is incredibly valuable to use experts by experience, for example in support groups, within case studies, or in education. Experts by experience can set an example in recognizing the social and personal aspects of domestic violence. By sharing their background, they lower the threshold for people who are still in an abusive relationship to search for help and accept counseling. In addition, it is sometimes more natural for experts by experience to acknowledge the situation because they have encountered the same problems and can talk about them more easily (Boer et al., n.d.).



Several interviews with experts and people who committed domestic violence show that **acknowledgment and recognition cause people to open up** (Boundary condition 3.1) and lower the barrier to accepting counseling.



## 3.4 Final contact between partners

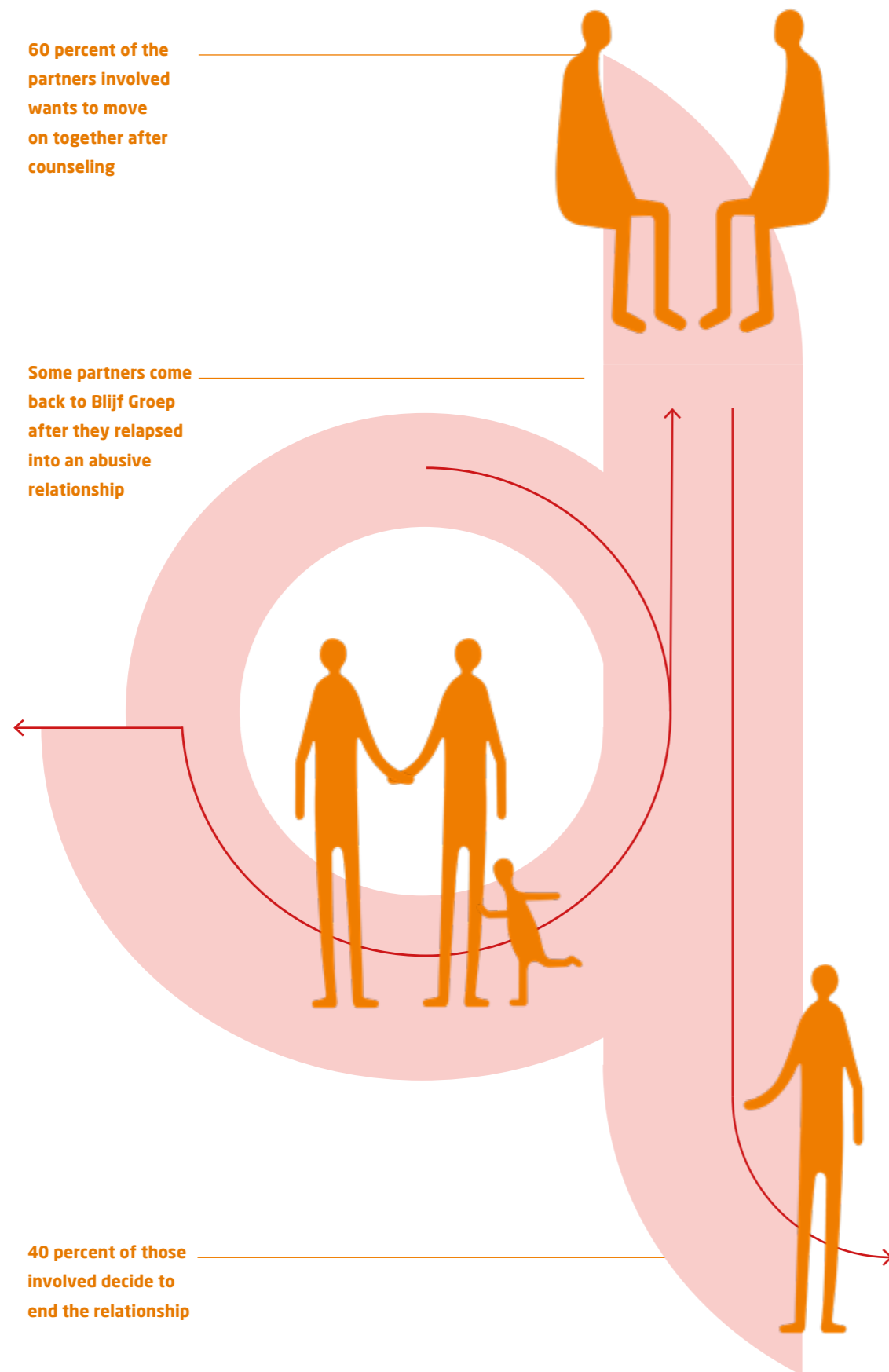


Image 19: A timeline representing the end of the counseling process at Blijf Groep, after which those involved restart their relationship or continue their lives separated.

In many cases, contact between the partners involved in domestic violence is restored, whether it is safe or not. However, a significant percentage lapsed back into the old pattern of violence after counseling (see image 19).

The theme cards of Module 5 from the final design connect to this paragraph (see image 20).

### A plan for the future

It varies per case whether only the person who sought help receives counseling or both involved receive help. In addition, this help can come from different organizations (such as probation services, Blijf Groep, support groups, etc.). As described earlier in this chapter, the help Blijf Groep offers depends primarily on the risk assessment and the safety assessment of their residential social workers. In a small number of case studies, Blijf Groep organizes system conversations in which discussions between partners, social workers, and (possibly) children take place. The goal of these system conversations is to make a plan for the future with the person who sought help because of domestic violence. Besides, they must recognize the benefits of change before they can leave the trajectory or shelter. Some people who have experienced domestic violence leave the counseling process prematurely to return to their partner.

For partners who complete the trajectory, it varies whether they get back together. 60 percent of the partners involved in domestic violence still want to move on together after counseling. They wanted the violence to stop, not the relationship (Blijf Groep, 2020). One of the biggest motivators to continue their relationship after the counseling process, are their children.

The other 40 percent decide to end the relationship. Reasons could be that they liked the peace of the temporary restraining order or shelter, because the counseling led to new insights, or because one of the partners did not accept counseling (Blijf Groep, 2020).

P6: "Victims remember only 5 percent and 95 percent they do not remember. **They are not living, they are surviving.** For a perpetrator, it is identically the same. He gets a temporary restraining order or does not know where his partner and children are. He is also surviving."

In some cases, people who experienced domestic violence return to Blijf Groep after a certain period. They relapsed into an abusive relationship after the treatment did not lead to sufficient insight or acceptance of the problem. The Verwey-Jonker Institute (2020) has researched when partners re-enter a violent relationship after (one of them) receives help. This study revealed that in over 50 percent of families, the home situation was no longer safe one and a half years after being reported to Veilig Thuis. The study showed that when violence decreases, family members fare better. However, the violence needs to stop completely to restore the well-being of partners and their children (De Booy, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to include both involved in counseling. Besides, **social workers must dare to name and address the violence during counseling to stop it.** According to Steketee (Lünnemann et al., 2020):

"Especially local social workers are not always well equipped to address violence. **They should be better trained in spotting and naming domestic violence.** Even when families say the home situation has normalized, they should remain vigilant. There is a high risk that the old patterns of violence will resurface."

The Verwey-Jonker Institute research also shows that the occurring violence is not the only problem. Most families face an accumulation of problems: poverty, unemployment, alcohol use, parenting stress, and mental disorders. Therefore, **more knowledge about (the background of) both involved is needed to ensure an integrated approach** which is important to achieve sustainable safety (De Booy, 2020) (see boundary condition 3.3).



Image 20: The theme cards of Module 5 from the final design connect to this paragraph. Chapter 8 will explain the significance of the two theme cards: the relationship with the (ex-)partner and repairing old damage with the (ex-)partner.

## 3.5 An intervention in the corrective phase

These four paragraphs outline the course of a violent relationship. As can be seen in image 21, there is a place for intervention at various points.

The first window of opportunity for intervention is preventive and occurs while growing up. Those involved in domestic violence learn different things through social, environmental, family, and individual factors. By becoming aware of these factors, they become conscious of their behavior in future relationships, and in some cases, the emergence of domestic violence might be prevented.

Another moment for intervention is corrective and takes place at the initial involvement of the aid organizations. The counseling process in the shelter focuses on the person who sought help for domestic violence. Because the person who committed domestic violence is often not involved in counseling, the violence is not stopped permanently.

Finally, an intervention is possible in the aftercare of the families who continue their relationship after the counseling process. Currently, support groups are a form of aftercare or secondary prevention. However, a large percentage of partners who move on together after counseling still end up with Blijf Groep in the end.

In theory, a preventive intervention could realize the most impact since fewer people will enter a violent relationship. But in practice, a large percentage of people who experienced domestic violence end up in women's shelters each year, and many of them return after they completed counseling. Blijf Groep already has contact with those people, which results in an opportunity. If it is possible to improve the counseling process with both involved in domestic violence, safety is likely to be ensured and violence stopped. Besides, partners are less likely to fall back into old patterns. As a result, there seems to be a possibility for intervention in the corrective phase by focusing on the counseling process with the residential social workers of Blijf Groep (see boundary condition 1.1). The next chapter will examine the context of the residential social workers and their challenges according to the involvement of people who commit domestic violence.

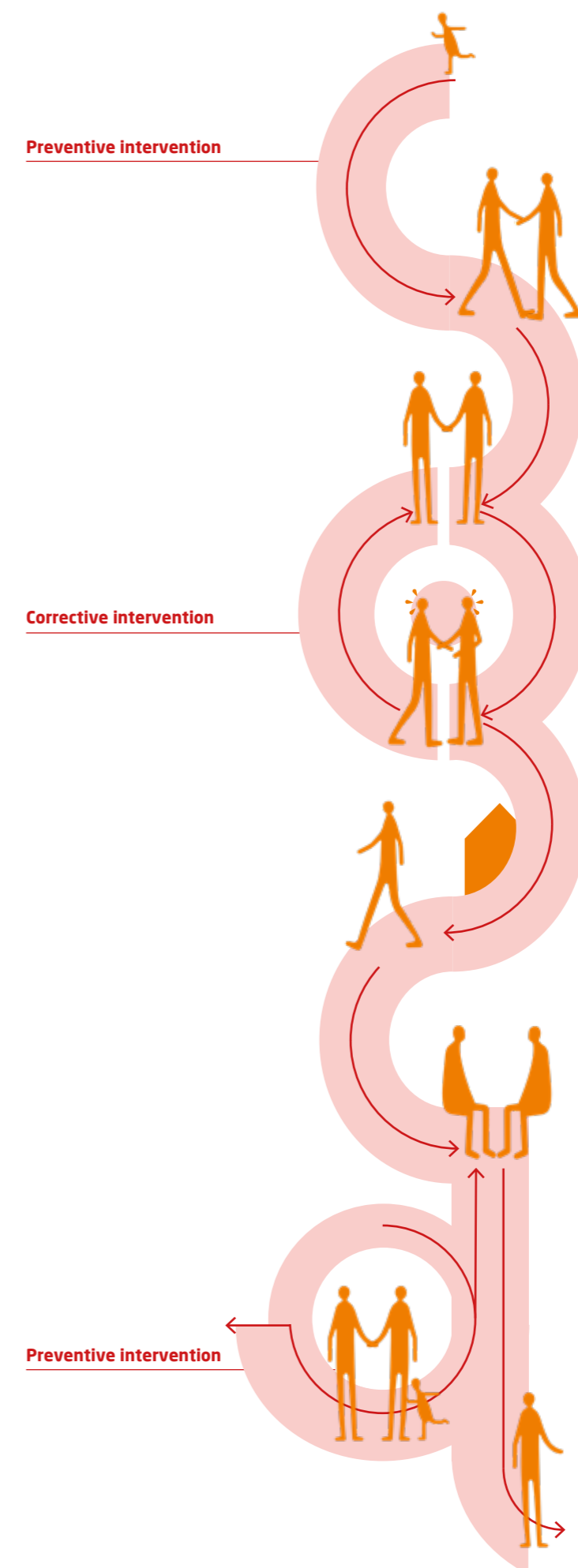


Image 21: A visual representation of a possible course of a violent relationship with some key moments for intervention.

# 3.6 Key Takeaways

## The dynamic between those involved leads to a vicious cycle of violence

The violence dynamic between those involved in domestic violence arises from existing gender stereotyping and feelings of vulnerability or stress. In a violent relationship, this dynamic leads to a vicious cycle where expectations and power differences perpetuate the violence. In addition, three types of coping strategies of those involved can make the situation more unsafe (see image 22).

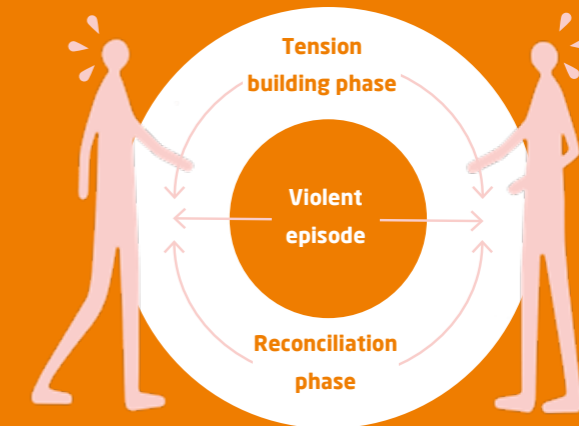


Image 22: The dynamic between those involved in domestic violence leads to a vicious cycle of violence.

## The focus of the social workers is on the person who sought help because of domestic violence

When the person who sought help is accommodated in the Oranje Huis, they are immediately offered different forms of counseling. The focus of help is on three core themes: safety, system-oriented work, and strengthening the direction of the person who experienced domestic violence. If safety permits and the person who experienced domestic violence agrees, the (ex-)partner is involved in the counseling process (see image 23).

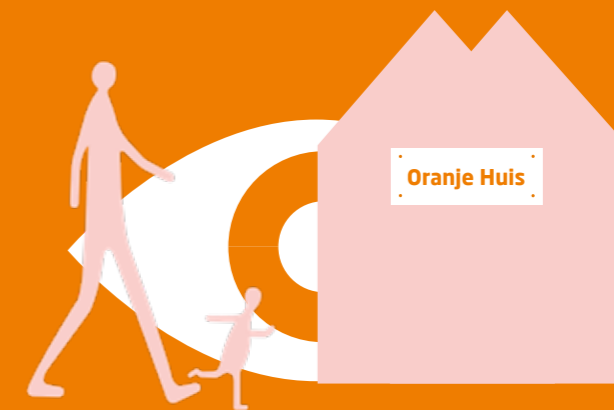


Image 23: The focus of the residential social workers of Blijf Groep is on the person who sought help because they would have experienced the most severe violence.

## Creating recognition and acknowledgment increases the motivation to accept help among people who committed domestic violence

The person who committed domestic violence is often not involved in the counseling process by the residential social workers of Blijf Groep but they can participate in support groups. As can be seen in these support groups, the creation of knowledge, recognition, and acknowledgment causes people to open up. Besides, it lowers the barrier to accepting help (see image 24).



Image 24: Creating recognition and acknowledgment between the person who committed domestic violence and the residential social workers of Blijf Groep, could cause the person who committed domestic violence to open up.

# 4

## Counseling process

In this chapter, the counseling process with residential social workers is researched. There is a focus on the initial phone call between the residential social worker and the person who committed domestic violence, including the specific challenges that occurred.

### 4.1 The context of residential social workers

When zooming in on the shelter's counseling process, the residential social workers are the first to contact those affected by domestic violence. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three residential social workers to research their tasks within Blijf Groep.

#### Residential social workers

Residential social workers are *SKJ registered* and work at the Oranje Huis where people that seek help are cared. At Oranje Huis Amsterdam, mainly women work as residential social workers. They are the trajectory manager and are responsible for promoting the safety and self-sufficiency of the person who experienced domestic violence and their children. Together with their client, the residential social workers map the safety: the risk and protective factors, the underlying interactions, and patterns of violence. This way, they get a clear overview of what they need to work on during the counseling process. Besides, they help their clients to become in control of their life (Moussa, 2022).

Social workers learn how to work with their clients during mandatory training sessions offered by Blijf Groep. During these training sessions, the social workers study how to put the theory of the Oranje Huis methodology into practice since Blijf Groep produces and propagates their methods themselves and these are reviewed by the organizations Movisie and NJI (see boundary condition 1.4). According to this research, social workers like to be in close contact with their clients and find the social aspect of their work interesting. They acknowledge the value of their work and therefore, they want to perform it to the best of their ability. All social workers at Blijf Groep have finished further education and are eager to learn and discuss. They want to keep developing themselves and voluntarily attend new training sessions and courses to expand their knowledge. However, interviews revealed they prefer practicing new learnings rather than reading large chunks of text (see boundary condition 2.1). They like talking to each other and exchanging their experiences and ideas (see boundary condition 2.3).

## Working guidelines

During the counseling process with the person seeking help, social workers must adhere to the guidelines of the Oranje Huis methodology (Moussa, 2022):

- The counseling sessions are demand-oriented and dialogue-driven. The clients' question is the starting point of the assistance provided. Social workers use their expertise and experience to utilize open dialogue with their clients.
- From the professional responsibility, social workers do not avoid confrontation. In dialogue with their clients, the social workers provide their professional vision to get new insights into their situation.
- When safety permits, the social worker should contact their clients' (ex-)partner. In conversations with the (ex-)partner, social workers should adopt a pluralistic attitude of involvement. Besides, they need to have an open attitude toward all present. They are not allowed to express judgments.
- The system conversations they might have after three to four weeks into the counseling focus on the strengths and problem-solving abilities of the client and the (ex-)partner.
- The social workers mirror what consequences the choices of those involved in domestic violence may have on the safety of their children. When the clients compromise child safety, the professionals discuss possible alternatives with them. Besides, they need to discuss the ultimate consequences of these choices.

As seen in the guidelines, the social workers focus on those who have experienced domestic violence and are receiving shelter. In some of the guidelines, the (ex-)partner of the client is involved. These guidelines are mainly about the attitude the social worker should have toward them and show the focus of the system conversations. These are the only guidelines residential social workers receive about contacting people who committed domestic violence. The next paragraph researches the first two contact moments between a residential social worker and people who commit domestic violence.

# 4.2 Contact with the person who committed domestic violence

The time in the shelter consists of two phases: the crisis shelter phase and the follow-up care. In the first phase, the person who committed domestic violence is contacted by phone by the residential social worker. In the second phase, the first (physical) conversation between the residential social worker, the person seeking help, and the person who committed domestic violence takes place (Moussa, 2022). These phases will be briefly explained, including the experiences of the social worker and the person who committed domestic violence during the contact moments.

## Crisis shelter phase: achieving immediate safety

During the first phase of the counseling process, the safety of the person who experienced domestic violence and the children is ensured. Besides, the violent situation and requests for help need to be clear so proper counseling can be prioritized and initiated. The residential social worker tries to achieve this by making an initial safety assessment for each family member. Besides, they try to identify the patterns of violence between those involved. The social worker uses several tools to gather information about the situation and increase safety (see table 2) (Moussa, 2022).

To achieve these goals, the social worker needs to have conversations with the person who sought help, the children, and if possible, the (ex-)partner. It is important that during these conversations it becomes clear what kind of help Blijf Groep can offer to all family members.

During the first conversation with the person who experienced domestic violence, important factors are identified: Does the client have a residence permit, housing, and are children involved? In addition, a risk screening is made about the (ex-)partner, the situation is researched, and the type of used violence is examined. Based on the risk screening, it is decided whether the client is getting a code red, orange, or green. In the case of a code red, contact with their (ex-)partner is excluded. They are not informed of where their

Tool	Function
(Screening) tools for mapping domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory tools residential social workers need to use are: Risk screening assessment of the situation and research on the safety of the person seeking help. Based on this, an action plan is made.</li> <li>Optional tools: Making a genogram and/or ecogram, checking the relationship history of those involved, doing a safety check with the Police and chart the vicious cycle of violence.</li> </ul>
(Screening) tools to assess the impact of the situation on the children and increase their safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory tools: Making a child safety and action plan (ARIJ).</li> <li>Optional tools: Observations of children's work, fill in the safety chart of 'Veerkracht' and new knowledge through the leaflet 'Violence in the home affects children'.</li> </ul>
Individual interviews with both involved in domestic violence	Interviews with each family member to assess the level of safety and underlying risk factors. Besides, research is performed on organizing immediate safety.

Table 2: Tools residential social workers use to gather information about the situation of the person seeking help which contributes to increasing the safety of those involved in domestic violence.

partner and children are. Besides, they do not get the help offered by Blijf Groep. In the case of a code orange or green, the person who committed domestic violence is contacted by phone after three to four days (Moussa, 2022).

During the initial phone call with the (ex-)partner, the residential social worker opens the conversation with the following sentence: "Your wife and children are safe". The purpose of this phone call is to inform the (ex-)partner of the situation and to hear their side of the story so a safety assessment can be made. During this conversation, social workers need to pay attention to whether the story of the (ex-)partner matches the story of their client. Based on this initial phone call, further follow-up steps are taken and a decision is made whether more phone calls follow, system conversations are possible or further contact is stopped. In the meantime, the person who experienced domestic violence is offered help for their health, finances, parenting, safety, housing, IND, etc. In addition, children take part in a stabilization program of Blijf Groep (Moussa, 2022).

Frequently, the problems between the partners turn out to be so severe that the period of six weeks is not sufficient to stop the violence and/or sufficiently guarantee the safety of those involved and their children. If this is the case, the applicant for help proceeds to follow-up care (Moussa, 2022).

### The perspective of the person committing domestic violence on the contact moments during the crisis shelter phase

The person who committed domestic violence may not have heard from their partner and children for several days before the first phone call. As a result, the person who committed domestic violence feels they are not given a fair chance with the social worker like their partner, who is already in the shelter. They might react frustrated and angrily.

Process facilitator: "Social workers do not always know how to respond to the person who committed domestic violence during a first phone call. They say: 'Your wife is in the shelter and so are your children, they are safe'. The perpetrator can react extremely violently and will not be involved in the counseling process."

This angry and frustrated response also stems from the little explanation they get in the first phone call about their (ex-)partner and children. They only hear that they are safe, but the person who committed domestic violence does not know where they are, how long they will be gone, or whether they will ever return.

It also happens that the person who committed domestic violence denies what happened and does not agree with the story their (ex-)partner told, or they have a different version of the story.

P9: "Sometimes you get someone on the phone who wants to convince you that his wife is not well psychologically, and now he is suffering because of that."

A small percentage of them admit what went wrong and express regret.

### The perspective of the residential social worker on the contact moments during the crisis shelter phase

The main task of social workers is to create safety for their clients and their children. Therefore, during the first phone call, they feel they cannot be transparent with the person who committed domestic violence.

P11: "It is very difficult because I cannot be fully transparent to the perpetrator. But during the conversation, I have to make choices in which I can properly justify myself."

Besides, the social workers meet the person who committed domestic violence after they heard the situation from the (ex-)partner's perspective, which makes it hard to have an open conversation with them.

P9: "When it comes to women it seems like we are more cautious. We tend to lean more toward her side of the story."

They find it difficult to continue the conversation after there has been an aggressive response. This study found that social workers often have difficulty dealing with the emotions of the person who committed the violence. As a result, the social worker does not ask further questions and hear the full story of the person who committed domestic violence. Based on this initial conversation, they do not deem the situation safe enough to initiate further (system) conversations. As a result, the majority of the people who committed domestic violence are not included in follow-up care.

P10: "I have perpetrators as clients that I have never seen because it would be too unsafe, I only speak to them over the phone."

P13: "Most social workers are female and need to contact their male partners. They do not recognize his emotions and find it hard to respond the right way."

### Phase follow-up care: risk factors and rehabilitation

In follow-up care, the focus is on reducing the risk factors that play a role in perpetuating domestic violence. Besides, recovery-oriented care is initiated.

To achieve these goals, the social workers ensure that they identify risk factors that are at play in the family and which impact their safety. Besides, a plan is made to reduce the risk factors (Moussa, 2022).

In this phase, Blijf Groep strives to have system conversations with the entire family. These system conversations are organized on a tailor-made basis since each family requires a different way of working (system-oriented) (see boundary condition 1.3). As a result, the system conversations can take place physically at Blijf Groep, or by using mail, telephone, video calling, etc.

When there is violence out of power and control, such as intimate terrorism, it is not desirable to organize system conversations. The person who committed intentional violence has more serious, underlying issues. Therefore, putting them in the same room as their (ex-) partner is dangerous since it can jeopardize the safety of the person who experienced violence. Instead, opting for parallel conversations with both parties involved is better. When interviews reveal that the person who committed domestic violence also needs help, they are referred to the appropriate counseling services.

The follow-up care concludes with a safety action plan (Moussa, 2022). Full recovery from the violence takes longer than the time the client and the children stay in the shelter. At the exit, the client must be able to ensure the immediate safety of themselves and the children, continue to work on reducing or dealing with any risk factors, and make a plan to continue working toward recovery. Furthermore, the client needs to be able to make their own decisions about the future again.

### The perspective of the person who committed domestic violence on the contact moments during the phase follow-up care

The person who committed domestic violence may still be frustrated during the phase follow-up care since several weeks have passed and they still have not been able to share their experiences.

P10: "Since we have limited time, the (ex-)partner's story can sometimes not be told. However, they feel that they have the right to tell their side of the story because their wife has also been listened to."

They might also be confused. Some people who committed domestic violence still do not know what happened because they deny the situation or because their 'reptilian brain', which occurs in stressful circumstances, can cause them to remember only parts of the event. According to an expert from Blijf Groep, some of them feel guilty about the situation because the time apart gained them self-insight, and therefore, they dare to admit their mistakes.

### The perspective of the residential social worker on the contact moment during the phase follow-up care

During system conversations, residential social workers find it hard to be open and maintain an impartial stance with the person who committed domestic violence. They base help on the story they heard from the person who committed domestic violence. This runs counter to the methodology of system-oriented work which is included in the Oranje Huis methodology.

However, system conversations take place in only a small percentage of cases, since social workers deem the situation not safe enough based on the initial phone call. Therefore, most social workers stop contact with the (ex-)partner after the crisis shelter phase.

### A focus on the first phone call

Based on the initial phone call, the person who committed domestic violence is often not involved in the further course of the counseling process. However, the first phone call takes place in the crisis shelter phase, just after a breakup occurred between those involved in domestic violence. This moment is a vulnerable time for both and they are most open to accepting help and seeking a solution together (see boundary condition 4.1). Besides, it is the first moment the person who committed domestic violence has contact with a social worker. When the initial phone call improves, the social worker can assess the situation better. As a result, they could find the situation safe enough to conduct follow-up conversations. This way, the initial phone call can be a starting point for a longer counseling process with the person committing domestic violence (see boundary condition 4.3).

As can be seen, several factors influence the course of the initial phone call between the person who committed domestic violence and the residential social worker. These will be investigated further in Chapter 4.3.



## 4.3 Influencing factors on the first phone call

A context mapping session and a discussion with a group of residential social workers from Blijf Groep helped to research the factors that influence the initial phone call according to the person who committed domestic violence and the residential social worker. These factors were examined using literature.

The theme cards of Module 1 from the final design connect to this paragraph (see image 26).

Factors that influence the first phone call according to the people who committed domestic violence

### **Shame toward the immediate network causes the person who committed domestic violence to be reluctant to accept help**

A barrier for those affected by domestic violence not to accept help right away is the immediate network. The social context influences what people think, feel, and do. This determines: what someone sees as a problem, how someone experiences the problem, how they look for solutions, or which solutions are considered acceptable. However, the immediate network is often uninformed of what is happening within the family. Those involved in domestic violence prefer not to talk about the situation. They feel ashamed and guilty and try to appear 'normal' and reasonable to the outside world (Walker, 1999).

P8: "I love my friends and my parents, but I am fooling them all for an alcoholic Brit with childhood traumas. Besides the accumulation of guilt, I also worry. **If I ever confessed what happened, who would believe me?**"

Secondly, there is a taboo on domestic violence in society. Many people think domestic violence is a private affair where society 'should not interfere'. Some people recognize things happening in their loved one's family but do not want to be involved (Walker, 1999). As a result, the immediate network is not informed of what is going on until those involved in domestic violence have begun a counseling process with Blijf Groep.

P4: "Usually some people are aware of the circumstances but not aware of how intense it was. **The temporary restraining order is for those directly involved a reason to start talking about it because it is undeniable.**"

Moreover, sociocultural attitudes, values, and norms justify violence in certain cultures. In honor-related violence, the reputation of integrity and reliability is so important that family members who know about the violence condone it (SlachtofferWijzer, 2021).

### **Stigma affects the person who committed domestic violence to open up**

Since physical aggression was increasingly banned in Western societies, domestic violence was only visible to those involved and in a small number of 'deviant' cases to social workers, doctors, and police. This displacement of violence between men and women from public life has created a taboo on domestic violence (Brinkgreve & Rineke, n.d.). As a result, there is little talk about domestic violence, and people who may or may not be involved in it, are less aware.

P6: "If you have a drinking problem or a drug problem, you can talk about it quite easily. However, **you cannot talk to someone about how you abused your wife.** You will very quickly end up in punitive measures and that is a taboo."

There are many preconceptions about people who commit domestic violence, called stigma. A stigma is a powerful negative social stamp that affects the way people are seen and see themselves (Crowe et al., 2019). These stigmas take place at the structural level (economy, environment, and media) and interpersonal level (healthcare professionals, colleagues, family, and friends) (see image 25).

The impact of these stigmas goes so far that those involved in domestic violence start to believe the stigmas about themselves (self-stigma). For example, those directly involved in domestic violence find it embarrassing to talk about domestic violence. They are often unaware of the severity and nature of the emotional and psychological abuse. But once they find out, many involved remain under the radar because they are ashamed of the fact that they chose to remain in an abusive relationship. Besides, starting to talk about their (ex-)partner's behavior would involve revealing embarrassing and humiliating details, which they would rather never discuss (Patrick, 2018).

Additionally, the people involved in domestic violence convince themselves that the violence is not as bad as it seems. Downplaying the violence and daily worries seem to hinder the voluntary (proactive) step toward assistance. As a result, those directly involved do not accept the help that they are given or even deny the violence (Crowe et al., 2019). This stems from the stigma that only people who are 'crazy' should see a psychiatrist or psychologist. Moreover, some people believe that 'it is weak to seek help'. It is not easy for them to open up and talk about violence since they are used to solving their problems on their own. Besides, they often feel ashamed for what happened and experience emotions of failure when their relationship ends (Barendregt et al., 2021).



Image 25: Examples of stigmas occurring at structural and intrapersonal levels collected during this research.

### The person who committed domestic violence is later involved in the counseling process than their (ex-)partner

The fact that the partner is not involved in the counseling process from the beginning can lead to resistance on their part. They know that their (ex-)partner has been in contact with the social worker and therefore they feel they do not start the conversation with a clean slate. As a result, the person who committed violence already feels they have lost.

P6: "Perpetrators lose a lot. They lose their relationship, power, prestige, dominance, children, home, and work. When there is a temporary restraining order or a divorce, the man leaves, and the woman stays. So **what is there to gain from cooperating?** They can only achieve less. Less power, less prestige, less control."

### The person who committed domestic violence lacks feelings of trust in the social workers

When people who committed domestic violence enter the counseling process, there is often a lack of trust. According to interviews with experts from Blijf Groep, the person who committed domestic violence does not feel addressed by the seal of approval called women's shelter, which Blijf Groep received in 2019. The hallmark 'Safety in Women's Shelters' stands for a guarantee of safety for clients who need to use that national system (Moussa, 2022).

P2: "We are already called a women's shelter. That name does not address man. **So a man guilty of violence is not going there.**"

P5: "There is a combination of fear of bias 'you take the victim's side anyway' and fear of what we are going to do with the information they are telling us. They are afraid that we will tell it to probation, to the police, or to the courts. **That lack of judgment is important to stay in touch with a partner.**"

In addition, opening the phone call with "your wife and children are safe" makes the person who committed domestic violence not feel recognized as a person by the social workers. This results in a lack of feelings of equality. As a result, they do not think they can share their experiences. Arno van Dam (2022) says the following about this:

"Safety is of course a priority and violence cannot be condoned, but **perpetrators are lumped together, while it is a mixed group.** Varying from criminal, addicted perpetrators to good family men who lose control of themselves."

### Having children can be a motivation for the person who committed domestic violence to accept help and actively participate in the first phone call

One motivation for accepting help and seeking a solution are the children of those involved in domestic violence. During partner violence, parents experience intense and upsetting emotions that can cause parenting problems. Often they can not provide the care and security the child needs because their issues take up too much of their time. Besides, the effects of partner violence on children do not become apparent to parents until the violence has stopped. Parents may struggle with their children's problem behavior and discipline due to a lack of attention for the children through neglect, acting out, and being too lenient. It can be difficult for parents to restore their children's trust (Nederlands Jeugdinstituut, 2022). In addition, it is hard for parents to (re)acknowledge that violent quarrels and their reactions to them have a profound impact on their children.

P1: "The perpetrator of violence is often not seen as a good parent while he will never do anything to his children."

Nevertheless, when parents dare to face the impact of their behavior on their children, they can be the biggest motivator to work on their relations. For example, they want their children to be able to continue living in their familiar environment with both their parents.

P2: "Parenting is an important driver, so during a counseling process, we zoom in on that. The children must not suffer from the situation."

P5: "On Monday both partners sometimes want nothing to do with each other, but on Wednesday I get a message saying that 'maybe we should work on it anyway because the children miss him so much'."

### Factors that influence the first phone call according to the residential social workers

#### The social workers lack the time and knowledge to assess the situation correctly

As soon as the person seeking help is reported in the shelter, action must be taken. Due to the lack of time and money, a quick assessment of the situation is made. The social workers do not have much knowledge and experience with people who commit domestic violence. As a result, the person who committed domestic violence is labeled as the perpetrator and is not offered immediate help (see boundary condition 1.2).

P5: "I wish we could involve the (ex-)partner or father of the children more. Domestic violence occurs in the relationship between people so if you want to solve it permanently you need them both."

P7: "If you want to give good counseling, you need time, but that costs money. However, I think there is much to gain in providing the perpetrators with good care. In the short run, this will take more time and cost more money, but in the long run, it becomes cheaper because the violence is solved quickly."

#### The focus of the counseling process is 'safety comes first'

During a trajectory with Blijf Groep, the safety of those involved is paramount, with a focus on the person seeking help and the children (Blijf Groep, 2020). These safety assessments quickly label the person who committed the violence as "dangerous" because it is based on the story of the person seeking help. They research together what happened, and what the risk factors are related to the (ex-)partner. Therefore, they already have an opinion of the person who committed domestic violence before the initial phone call takes place (see boundary condition 3.2).

P10: "We tend more toward the women's side. The shelter set up is to keep women safe. Women are much more likely to be victims of violence, so we are more inclined to believe her."

P5: "It is weird how many social workers are reluctant to engage in conversation with the suspected perpetrator. They ask: 'What are we supposed to do with him? Is that even safe?' It is a lot of handholding, fear, and not knowing how to handle it."

Besides, it is perceived as challenging to deal appropriately with the behavior of the person who committed domestic violence. Some people who have committed domestic violence react with anger and frustration. Others may feel that they are under a magnifying glass and, therefore, start behaving in a socially desirable manner. Sometimes this scares the social workers. As a result, they find it hard to be transparent or ask questions.

P10: "I prefer direct aggression and intimidation. I want the perpetrator to say what he thinks than act desirable toward me and send death threats to his wife at night."

#### Personal norms and values influence social workers' perceptions of the person who committed domestic violence

Some social workers mentioned that their background could influence their perception of the person who committed domestic violence. Human beings are shaped by norms and values which can subconsciously take over (Handhavingsacademie, 2015). Interviews revealed that social workers feel that these norms and values influence how they view the person who committed domestic violence. They have thoughts and feelings



about the stories they hear during their work, for example about lying, cheating, and honesty. These feelings and thoughts can make it difficult to remain unbiased and be multipartisan during conversations with both involved.

**Identifying the expectations of the person who committed domestic violence to participate in the counseling process can ensure that motivation to take part increases**

Multiple social workers indicated during the interviews that they were not aware of the motivation of the person who committed domestic violence to participate in the counseling process. Because of this, they found it difficult how to approach them. A person may not want to take part in the counseling process because they do not think it is necessary or because they think everything is going well. It might be possible that the person who committed domestic violence may no longer have confidence that things will work out. Simultaneously, their expectations can be unrealistic.

By mapping this out, it becomes clear to the person who committed domestic violence what the benefits are of participating in the counseling process. In addition, social workers can better assess what they can do for them which might increase their motivation to participate in counseling.

**Concluding notes**

Creating an *understanding* among social workers for the person who committed domestic violence can improve the first phone call. They need to understand why they have committed domestic violence and what causes this behavior.

Expanding their knowledge about the background of people who commit domestic violence is necessary to properly assess the situation. Besides, this could explain the factors which cause the people committing domestic violence to be reluctant to open up or not accept help, such as the shame toward the immediate network and prevailing stigma. In addition, the construction of the counseling process can reinforce distrust and might result in frustrated responses because they are later involved in the counseling process and do not feel acknowledged. Therefore, social workers must ensure they create feelings of equality with the person who committed domestic violence. Besides, they need to become aware of the norms and values which influence their preconceptions, so they dare to ask questions and initiate contact. This way, the person who committed domestic violence feels they can share their experiences. As a result, the time needed to make a deliberate safety assessment can reduce.

Lastly, during the conversation, more focus can be placed on the intrinsic motivation of the person who committed domestic violence to participate in the counseling process. Besides, they can identify the involvement of children to increase this motivation.



Image 26: The theme cards of Module 1 from the final design connect to this paragraph. Chapter 8 will explain the significance of the two theme cards: the motivation of the person who committed domestic violence to take part in the counseling process and charting the involvement of children (if any).

# 4.4 Boundary conditions of the design

Based on the research on the context of domestic violence, the course of a violent relationship, and the counseling process with people who commit domestic violence and residential social workers (see Chapters 2, 3, and 4), boundary conditions have been established. In the text is indicated on which information the boundary conditions are based. The final design must meet these boundary conditions.

## 1. Use of the design

- 1.1 The use of the design must be accessible to residential social workers of Blijf Groep located in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. They should be able to use it regularly and have easy access.
- 1.2 The design should be purposeful and efficient so that using it does not take up unnecessary time.
- 1.3 There should be room for autonomy among social workers when using the design.
- 1.4 The design should be easily implementable within the company Blijf Groep. Blijf Groep must be able to produce and propagate the design themselves.

## 2. Form of the design

- 2.1 The design should consist mainly of pictures and images, avoiding large pieces of text as much as possible.
- 2.2 The design should ensure an inclusive communication strategy and avoid sensitive terms so that social workers become aware of the power of language.
- 2.3 The design should exude openness and transparency that will spark conversations between social workers.

## 3. Content of the design

- 3.1 The design should create recognition and acknowledgment between the residential social workers and the person who committed domestic violence.
- 3.2 The design should challenge the social worker to reflect on themselves and make them aware of their biases toward people who commit domestic violence.
- 3.3 The design should provide social workers with knowledge about the person who commits domestic violence.
- 3.4 The design should provide the social workers with tools they can use during the counseling process with the person who committed domestic violence.

## 4. Impact of the design

- 4.1 The design should improve the first contact moment between the person who committed domestic violence and the social worker.
- 4.2 The design should ensure the safety of the residential social worker and those involved in domestic violence.
- 4.3 The design should support the social workers to put systemic work into practice.

# 4.5 Key Takeaways

The first phone call in the counseling process can lead to an entrance to involve the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process

Since the social workers do not feel they can be open or transparent, they begin the first phone call with the sentence: "Your wife and children are safe". This sentence causes frustration and a defensive response from the person who committed domestic violence since they are still in limbo. However, giving them the space to share their experiences and listen can be an entrance for opening up and cooperation in the counseling process (see image 27).

Residential social worker calling the person who committed domestic violence

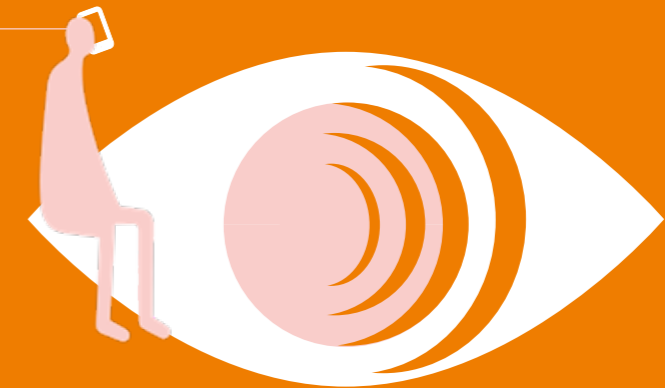


Image 27: The first phone call can provide a way in for the person who committed domestic violence to take part in the rest of the counseling process.

Social workers need to realize where their perception of people who commit domestic violence comes from

Learned norms and values can influence thoughts about, for example, gender identity and gender roles. These learned views influence the opinion that social workers have about the behavior of people who commit domestic violence and affect their biases. This might impact their response toward the person who committed domestic violence (see image 28).



Image 28: The background of residential social workers might influence their thoughts about people who commit domestic violence, therefore they need to be aware of it.

More knowledge about the background of people who commit domestic violence makes it easier to assess the situation

When social workers have more knowledge about the background of the person who committed domestic violence and its impact on the onset and continuation of violence, they can be more understanding of their side of the story during the counseling process (see image 29).

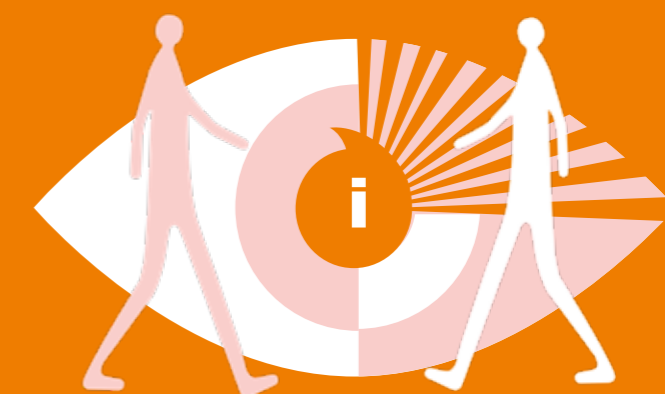


Image 29: More knowledge about the background of the person who committed domestic violence could lead to an understanding of their situation.

# 5

## Design focus

Based on the key learnings from the theoretical research and context research, this chapter describes the focus of the design project, the intended interaction, the design goal and interaction qualities will be explained.

## 5.1 The interactions that occur

The starting point of the project was to create an understanding of the person committing domestic violence. During the literature study and context research, it is found that people who commit domestic violence are not involved in the counseling process at Blijf Groep because there is no understanding among residential social workers. However, the first phone call in the counseling process could lead to an entrance. The initial phone call is an opportunity to connect with the person who committed domestic violence because it happens just after a rift occurred between those involved and because it is the first contact moment between the person who committed domestic violence and the residential social worker of Blijf Groep. Besides, it could be the start of a counseling process with them by which systemic work is applied.

### The current interaction

After domestic violence gets out of control, the person who sought help at Blijf Groep and the children are sheltered in Oranje Huis Amsterdam. Here they are immediately offered help from a residential social worker. The person who committed domestic violence is left alone in the house and does not know where their partner and children are.

After four to five days, they receive the first phone call from a residential social worker in which they are told that their partner and children are safe. The focus of the social workers is on the person who sought help. Therefore, they first hear the story of the person who experienced domestic violence, they lack knowledge about the background of people who commit domestic violence, and they do not have tools for (maintaining) contact with the people who committed domestic violence.

The people who committed domestic violence are later involved in the counseling process and do not get a chance to share their experiences. Therefore, they might respond frustrated and defensively toward the social worker.

Based on this first conversation, the social worker makes a safety assessment and decides whether further contact with the (ex-)partner is possible. As there is often a limited understanding of the person who committed domestic violence during the first contact, only a small proportion is further involved in the counseling process (see image 30).

### The desired interaction

After domestic violence gets out of control, the person who sought help because of domestic violence and the children are taken into the shelter of Blijf Groep. Here they are immediately offered help from a residential social worker. Because the social workers know the added value of involving the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process, they are contacted as soon as possible about their partner and children.

The residential social worker knows the origins of incomprehension, and they have more knowledge about the background of people who committed domestic violence. Therefore, they find it easier to approach them openly and with a pluralistic attitude during the first phone call. The social workers have tools that encourage them to ask questions that help them understand the person who committed domestic violence.

The people who commit domestic violence feel they can openly share their experiences and that they are listened to. Therefore, they are motivated to participate in the counseling process. They trust the social workers and remain calm.

Based on this phone call, the social worker makes a safety assessment and decides whether further contact with the (ex-)partner is possible. Because the social worker is more understanding during the initial phone call, they remain in counseling and can participate in system conversations with their families. During the counseling process, both involved work on themselves, which results in a lasting solution to domestic violence (see image 31).

Based on the first telephone call, it is decided not to further involve the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process

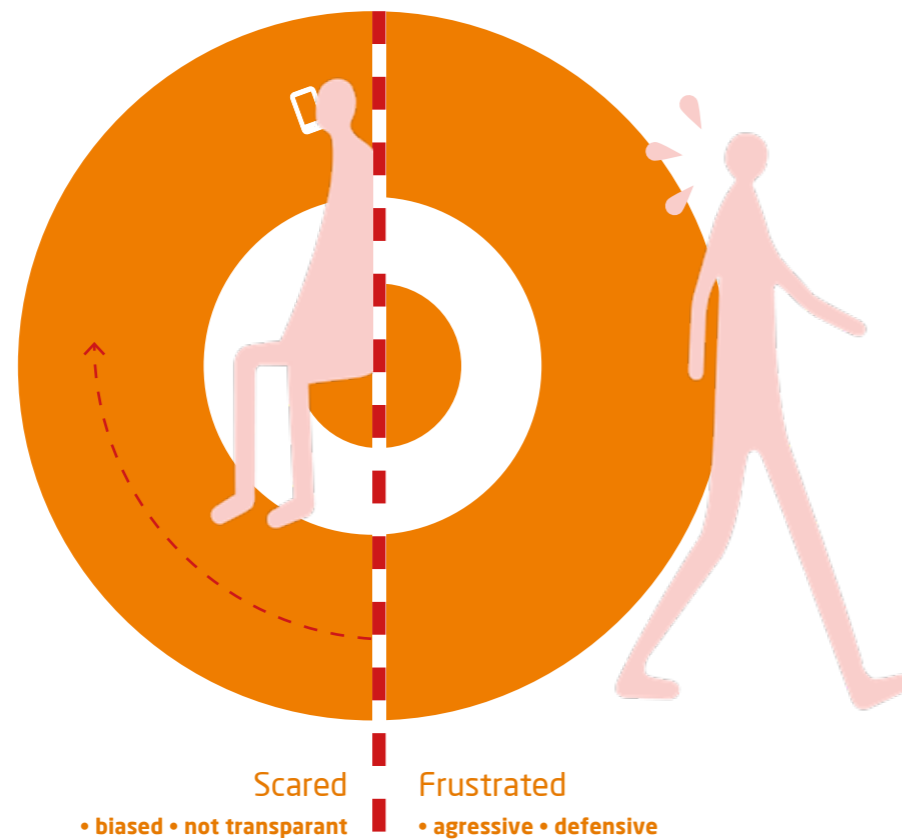


Image 30: The current interaction between the residential social worker and the person who committed domestic violence shows that there is no understanding during the initial phone call resulting in not including the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process.

The person who committed domestic violence remains involved in the counseling process and systemic work is applied in practice

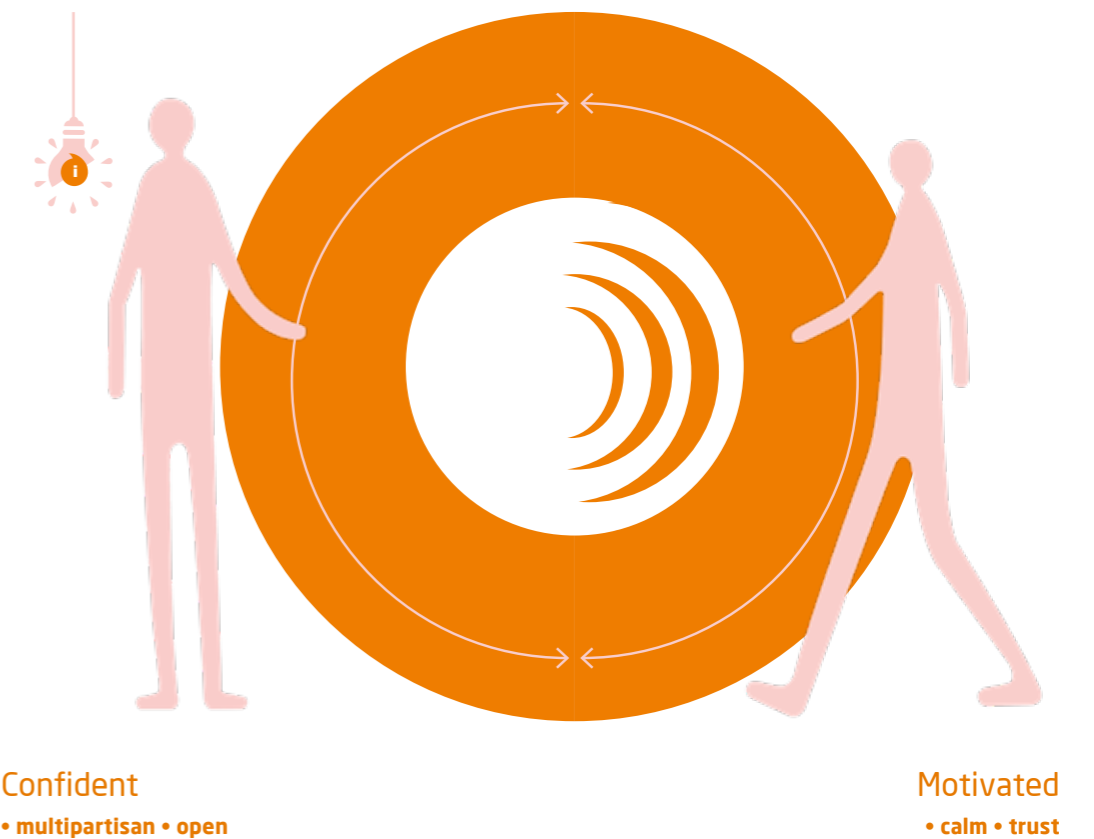


Image 31: In the desired interaction between the residential social worker and the person who committed domestic violence, an understanding is created. The person who committed domestic violence is involved in the counseling process putting systemic work into practice.



## 5.2 Design goal

I want to design a product that contributes to creating an understanding of the people committing domestic violence among residential social workers so they can offer them customized assistance during the first phone call and later in the counseling process.

To achieve this, social workers need to become aware of their biases toward people who commit domestic violence and create knowledge of the impact on the counseling process, so they enter the initial conversation with more openness and multiple partisanship. As a result, the person who committed domestic violence feels heard and wants to participate and continue in the counseling process, allowing systemic work to be put into practice and ensuring lasting safety.

### Context

The professional support organization Blijf Groep is for couples that suffer from domestic violence in the Netherlands. The product must be integrated into the counseling process at Oranje Huis Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

### The users

The users of the product will be the residential social workers at Blijf Groep. The residential social workers at Blijf Groep are mostly women between the age of 25 and 45. The women have finished further education and are eager to learn and discuss.

## 5.3 The interaction qualities of the design

### Powerful

The interaction is experienced as convincing and confident.  
The design should briefly and clearly state the goal so social workers can work purposefully.

### Responsive

The interaction is experienced as alert and reflective.  
The design should support social workers to take immediate action but let them decide per case what is necessary to achieve.

### Collaborative

The interaction is experienced as supportive and unifying.  
The design should be personal but encourage social workers to share their experiences so they can support one another.

# 6

## The concept development

This chapter provides an overview of the concept explorations. Besides, the initial design of the workshop and its content is explained.

## 6.1 Explorations of the concept

As mentioned in Chapter 1 the ideation phase is the second phase of the design approach that was used for the execution of this project. The ideation phase aims to come up with a solution that meets the design goal.

### The ideation phase

From my previous research and interviews with experts and residential social workers, several factors emerged that impact the first phone call between the person who committed domestic violence and the social worker (see Chapter 4.2). The factors and design criteria were used as a starting point for the ideation phase. At the beginning of the design process, a brainstorming session took place to generate the first design ideas. Clustering these ideas led to the creation of three concepts (see Appendix B). Residential social workers at Blijf Groep evaluated the concepts.

### The three concepts

The three concepts that came out of the brainstorming were:

- A workshop for residential social workers about people who commit domestic violence. The workshop's purpose is to get residential social workers to reflect on themselves and the situations they experience as hard concerning the involvement of people who committed domestic violence in the counseling process. The workshop encourages them to discuss existing cases, the different roles of those involved, and the prejudices they might have with their colleagues.
- A toolbox that supports residential social workers to stand in the middle during the initial system talk with the people involved in domestic violence. The toolbox consists of a template that inspires those involved in domestic violence to draw or write their experienced situations. The triggers that become visible are discussed using theme cards which include subjects that social workers talk about with the person who committed domestic violence to map the occurrence and perpetuation of domestic violence.

- A new strategy for Blijf Groep in which people who committed domestic violence are subjected to a different counseling process that runs parallel to the current counseling for their (ex-)partner.

#### The choice for the final concept

The elements of the three concepts that the social workers found most interesting were:

- Reflecting: Social workers acknowledged the added value of reflection on themselves and the person who committed domestic violence.
- Discussing: The social workers agree they can learn a lot from (the experiences of) their colleagues.
- Discovering: There is a great need among social workers to learn more about (the background of) people who commit domestic violence.
- Applying: The social workers want to possess tools that support them during conversations with the person who committed domestic violence.

Discussions with residential social workers revealed they were most enthusiastic about the workshop. According to Tate (2009), workshops strengthen support within a group, and participants actively participate rather than passively listen. In addition, workshops offer the opportunity to create a clear purpose and can support finding a personal way of working. As a result, the learning effect increases.

Furthermore, (the properties of) this concept most closely correspond to the boundary conditions which were stated beforehand. For example, the concept supports social workers to put systemic work into practice, it challenges them to reflect on themselves and makes them aware of their biases toward people who commit domestic violence. Besides, the concept could provide social workers with knowledge about the person who commits domestic violence and spark conversation between social workers.

P10: "A workshop can help me become aware of my blind spots and biases regarding perpetrators. Besides, it can make me conscious of the mistakes I used to make during the counseling process. I think I am super 'woke,' but a workshop about people who commit domestic violence will lead to more self-insight."

Therefore, it is decided to make an initial design of the workshop. The elements which include reflecting, discussing, discovering, and applying will be considered during the development of the workshop.

## 6.2 Content of the workshop

The workshop's content is conceived with residential social workers, a behaviorist from Blijf Groep, and a psychiatrist from De Waag. De Waag is a center for outpatient forensic mental health services in the Netherlands. They provide specialized care for people who combine transgressive or criminal behavior with a mental disorder. One care program they offer is for people who commit domestic violence. Some people enter De Waag voluntarily, and others are referred by the general practitioner, police, or judicial authorities (De Waag, 2022). The psychiatrist interviewed during this research specialized in treating people who commit domestic violence.

To map potential questions that social workers might have about people who commit domestic violence and their preferences for subjects to be applied during the workshop, semi-structured interviews with a co-creative character with three social workers were conducted. From these interviews, three matters emerged that they experienced as hard regarding the involvement of the person who commits domestic violence in the counseling process.

- Entering the initial phone call without judgment.
- Being multipartisan during the initial phone call.
- Involving the person who committed domestic violence in the further course of the counseling process.

### Entering the initial phone call without judgment

According to Van Driel (2020), to understand someone else, first, an understanding of your norms and values needs to be created. Based on this, contact between the social worker and the person who committed domestic violence can be customized to act correctly. As stated in Chapter 4.5, social workers may be unaware of their norms and values and how these affect their possible biases and incomprehension with the person who committed domestic violence during the counseling process. By creating awareness through reflection, social workers might understand where this comes from.



**Creating awareness about the different roles of those involved can ensure social workers humanize the person who committed domestic violence.** It became clear from the interview with De Waag's psychiatrist that the profile of people who experienced and committed domestic violence is often the same. For example, both involved have the same risk and protective factors (see chapter 2.3). Therefore, it is important to discover the background of people who committed domestic violence (their roles and the emergence of violence). During an interview, a psychiatrist at De Waag says the following about this:

"They have the same kind of mechanisms. A victim outsources their sense of self-worth to the perpetrator, but the perpetrator equally outsources their sense of self-worth to the victim. Once social workers recognize these mechanisms, they can look at the situation from the point of view of the person who committed domestic violence. They can become more understanding of their side of the story."

### Being multipartisan during the initial phone call

According to the Oranje Huis methodology, social workers must adopt multiple partisanship during the conversation with those involved in domestic violence (Moussa, 2022). Multiple partisanship means that the social worker must be alternately partisan with all members of the client's context affected by the counseling process, including the person who committed domestic violence.

Social workers are there for their clients. Interviews revealed that, as a result, they tend to believe their side of the story due to the amount of contact they have. However, when the social worker can no longer ensure the balance between connecting on the one hand and maintaining their distance on the other, there is a risk of an impasse. The social workers may then begin to doubt themselves and their abilities. By having them reflect on their counseling process, they can discover what they find hard regarding the distribution of their attention to both involved in the counseling process (Hoecke, 2004). Besides, this makes them more aware of how they currently involve the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process.

P10: "I think that a lot of my behavior stems from things that affect me unconsciously. I immerse myself in the situation I experience as difficult to deal with."

To ensure multiple partisanship, the social workers must remain at the same meta-level distance from everyone in the system with an open attitude of 'respect'. The social workers will have to radiate that they believe everyone has positive factors. This attitude can be shown by asking open-ended questions during conversations.

P10: "I think it is valuable to have an open mind and give someone the opportunity and space to tell his story. Social workers need to judge him on what happened and is said."

The psychiatrist from De Waag: "We treat quite severe problems, but we approach everyone with a lot of respect, even if they have done very nasty things. Clients are sensitive to that. You can acknowledge that what happened is very intense and unpleasant and that their wife is troubled by it, but no one ever started a relationship to be abusive."



**Motivational interviewing is a method that can ensure openness to both parties.** By using reflective listening and open communication strategies, the person who committed domestic violence feels that they are being listened to, which makes them more likely to open up. As a result, the social worker hears both involved's stories equally (Hoogsteder et al., n.d.).

### Involving the person who committed domestic violence in the further course of the counseling process

However, not every case is the same, and people who committed domestic violence will respond differently to social workers. Mutual discussions among social workers can give them insight into what other tactics help to keep the conversation going and keep the person who committed domestic violence involved in the counseling process. For example, a specific area of focus mentioned several times in discussions among social workers is providing them with expectation management.

P10: "For my clients, it is important that they know what to expect and that nothing unexpected happens. I try to work toward that by establishing at the beginning what he needs, but it is still difficult."

During the initial phone call, they need to find out what the person who committed domestic violence expects from the counseling process and how motivated they are to keep participating. Besides, it is necessary to examine the origin of this motivation, for example, having children. Based on this, the social worker clearly states what they can or cannot do for the person who committed domestic violence.

Besides, they should communicate that they are there for the person who committed domestic violence to solve their problems within the specified time frame. This way, they provide clear frameworks in which clients can position themselves. In addition, they create boundaries in the counseling process.

The psychiatrist at De Waag: "Most of the men I talk to have regrets, but above all, they want to reconnect with their children and perhaps with their partner. **Perspective is important.** I speak to many frustrated men who tell me they are working on themselves but do not hear anything. Every message they send is interpreted as stalking or crossing a border. That makes them desperate."

## 6.3 The initial design of the workshop

In this paragraph, the initial design of the workshop, consisting of a workbook and theme cards, is explained. Throughout the entire process, I evaluated the ideas, prototypes, and design elements with the intended users and with experts. These insights led to several design evaluations and improvements, resulting in the initial design.

### The workshop

This workshop is designed for the residential social workers of Blijf Groep. The purpose of the workshop is for the social workers to create an understanding of people who commit domestic violence, by letting them discover information about the background of people who commit domestic violence. Besides, they reflect on themselves and the counseling process with the person who committed domestic violence. They discuss their insights with other social workers and they are provided with tools to involve the person who committed domestic violence in the further course of the counseling process.

The workshop consists of three parts:

- A workbook that encourages residential social workers to reflect on themselves, their work, and their experiences concerning the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process.
- Theme cards provide the social workers with background information about people who commit domestic violence and with questions to ask during the counseling process to identify the onset and continuation of violence.
- A workshop in which they discuss the outcomes of the workbook and practice the theme cards.

Ultimately, social workers comprehend the situation of the person who committed domestic violence and develop a clear vision of what they think is the best treatment. These insights should help them to keep the person who committed domestic violence involved in the counseling process.



Image 32: A rendering of the initial design of the workbook.

### The initial design of the workbook

The focus of the workbook is on the social worker's self-reflection and charting of the origins of incomprehension (see image 32).

According to this study, social workers need to be aware of how their upbringing, environment, and experiences influence the image of domestic violence and those involved. A study from Movisie (2016) states that this leads to not only growing their self-confidence and developing their resilience but also making them aware of any prejudices and the origins of their misunderstanding. These traits are valuable during contact with people who commit domestic violence (Hoogsteder et al., n.d.). Therefore, the social workers will use this workbook to start thinking about:

- Their background and their role as social workers.
- The roles of someone who committed domestic violence.
- The risk and protective factors that lead to perpetuating domestic violence.
- Their contact with the person who committed domestic violence during the counseling process.

At the end of the workbook, residential social workers write down the factors experienced as influencing the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence during the counseling process. These factors serve as a summary of the prior assignments. To avoid repetition, the various parts of the workbook and their respective objectives are explained in Chapter 8: Toward a final design.

### The design elements of the workbook

The form of the workbook: As described in the boundary conditions, the design should ensure an inclusive communication strategy and avoid sensitive terms. Therefore, this product refers to the person who committed domestic violence and the person who experienced domestic violence or sought help. Besides, the workbook includes imagery consisting of silhouettes of bodies and different colors. The social workers are highlighted in orange throughout the workbook. In addition, the workbook is physical, so residential social workers of Blijf Groep can easily access it. In addition, the various assignments are formulated openly, leaving room for autonomy. Lastly, the final assignment serves as an overall reflection. Therefore, post-its are added so social workers can easily look back in the workbook and assemble notes.

The content of the workbook: One of the boundary conditions is that the design should challenge the social worker to reflect on themselves and make them aware of their biases toward people who commit domestic violence. Therefore, the workbook consists of several assignments that encourage them to think about themselves and their work. These assignments are briefly described and supported by sub-questions. Furthermore, the workbook contains several quotes from people who committed domestic violence and experts from De Waag. These quotes can provide some recognition and acknowledgment among social workers. The workbook consists of two assignments in which social workers need to think of the roles of those involved and the influencing risk- and protective factors, resulting in feelings of equality with the person who committed domestic violence. In addition, there are two additional pages in the workbook with references to literature, podcasts, and businesses specialized in counseling people who committed domestic violence.

### User journey

The workbook consists of six assignments. Social workers can work through the assignments at their own pace and time. Preferably, they start filling in the workbook two weeks before the start of the workshop. This way, they have enough time to think about the various assignments and spread the implementation.

An overview of the initial design can be found in Appendix C.



Image 33: A rendering of the initial design of the theme cards.

### The initial design of the theme cards

The theme cards serve as support by providing the social workers with knowledge about the background of people who commit domestic violence with accompanying questions they can ask to map the onset and continuation of violence (see image 33).

There are several important topics to discuss with the person who committed domestic violence. The questions related to these topics are described on theme cards, which are divided into five modules:

- MODULE 1: A conversation opening for the first phone call.
- MODULE 2: The background of the person who committed domestic violence.
- MODULE 3: The triggers that cause the violence.
- MODULE 4: The dynamics of violence between those involved.
- MODULE 5: (New) contact with the (ex-)partner.

The information and studies on which the information of the theme cards is based are indicated in several places in this thesis with an image of the theme cards. Module 1 was inspired by Chapter 4.2: Influencing factors on the first phone call. During this initial phone call, it is important to identify the motivation of the person who committed domestic violence to participate in the counseling process and whether motivating factors are present, such as children. Therefore, Module 1 can serve as a starting point for the rest of the contact moments between the social worker and the person who committed domestic violence. Modules 2 to 5 serve to support the continuation of the counseling process. These are based on Chapter 3: The course of a violent relationship.

To avoid repetition, the various theme cards with their questions are explained in Chapter 8: Toward a final design.

### The design elements of the theme cards

The form of the theme cards: A boundary condition is that the design should exude openness and transparency that will spark conversations between the social workers. Therefore, the social workers receive the theme cards physically and they have a reasonable size. However, social workers can easily carry them along. In addition, the theme cards consist of separate cards so that social workers can change the order or grab only the theme cards they deem necessary. The front of the theme cards contains the topic and a brief description of the relevance. The back side describes questions the social workers can ask the person who committed domestic violence during the counseling process.

The content of the theme cards: The theme cards include questions the social workers can ask the person who committed domestic violence during the counseling process. This way, the social workers are provided with knowledge about the person who committed domestic violence. The design should be purposeful and efficient, so the number of questions is limited to a maximum of six. One Module is manageable within the timeframe of one conversation. Besides, social workers have enough choices to apply which questions best fit the conversation.

### User journey

The theory on which the theme cards are based is explained in the workshop. Thereafter, the social workers receive the theme cards. This way, the social workers avoid distractions during the explanation. Next, participants get the theme cards physically handed out so they can use them for support during their work.



Image 34: A rendering of the initial design of the workshop's presentation.

### The initial design of the workshop

The third part of the concept focuses on social workers discussing and practicing the theme cards (see image 34).

During the physical part of the workshop, the social workers are going to:

- Discuss their insights from the workbook.
- Practice using the questions on the theme cards.

By practicing the theme cards during a workshop, social workers know how to apply the new knowledge with accompanying questions during the counseling process.

### The design elements of the physical workshop

The form of the workshop: Through roleplaying, the social workers practice the questions of the theme cards. Roleplaying helps them to exercise new behaviors, clarifies communication, and creates insight into the consequences of certain behaviors (Clapper, 2010). Besides, conversations and discussions can be sparked in which they exchange experiences.

The content of the workshop: During the workshop, the theory of one Module is explained to the social workers, and the background information of the theme cards is clarified.

### User journey

The workshop lasts two hours and takes place at Oranje Huis Amsterdam. During the prototype test, only Module 3 was explained. Besides, I facilitated the workshop. However, it should be facilitated by a *process facilitator* from Blijf Groep. They also provide current training programs and are in close contact with social workers. Besides, they have a lot of knowledge about the different elements of the counseling process.

The entire presentation of the workshop can be found in Appendix D.



# 7

## Evaluation of the initial design of the workshop

To further develop the workbook and theme cards, the initial design of the workshop is evaluated by social workers and experts from Blijf Groep.

## 7.1 Evaluation approach

The purpose of the final test was to see how the employees of Blijf Groep experienced the workshop and whether the outcomes created an understanding of people who commit domestic violence in the counseling process.

The procedure of the evaluation

### **The workbook**

The participants tested the workbook individually in their environment without my presence. The test's purpose was to examine whether the workbook challenged the participants to self-reflect and if it made them aware of their role in including the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process.

The workbooks were sent to seven participants, eight days before the physical part of the workshop took place. The participants filled in the workbook in their environment at their chosen time. They could complete the entire workbook at once or spread filling it in over several days.

A small instruction was incorporated that described the purpose of the workbook and how to complete it. Furthermore, additional post-its on which the participants could fill in some feedback while completing the workbook were sent (see Appendix E).

After eight days, a joint reflection took place with five participants. The participants shared what went well, and what was unclear about the workbook. They used the post-its to support their opinion.

### **The theme cards and the workshop**

The theme cards and the workshop were tested physically at Blijf Groep in Amsterdam with five participants that also filled in the workbook: four residential social workers and one expert. I facilitated the workshop. It was investigated whether the materials from the workshop were perceived as new knowledge by the participants and whether it increased their knowledge about people who commit domestic violence.

Before the workshop took place, the participants received an email with the time and location of the workshop. They did not get other instructions on how to proceed with the workshop.

This evaluation was a full two-hour test to evaluate the form and content of the theme cards and workshop. The participants then anonymously reflected on the workshop using a reflection form. See Appendix E for the reflection form.

### **Evaluation with process facilitators**

Lastly, two process facilitators of Blijf Groep evaluated the workshop. They received the materials from the workshop one week before the semi-structured interview took place. They did not get further instructions or information on how to complete the workshop. The purpose of this test was to find if the form of the workshop fits with the current training programs of Blijf Groep.

The current mandatory training programs at Blijf Groep focus on the person seeking help who stays in the shelter. The training programs revolve around Blijf Groep's Oranje Huis methodology. The majority of the training offered by Blijf Groep lasts two to three days and takes place on location at Blijf Groep located in Amsterdam. Participants receive an email before the workshop that includes digital files which they have to read to prepare. The training sessions consist of an explanation of the methodologies and their importance. The participants are divided into groups to practice this theory. Afterward, the social workers discuss the outcomes in plenary with the process facilitator who gives the training session (Blijf Groep, 2020).

In addition, Blijf Groep proposes several e-learnings for which social workers can sign up. These e-learnings provide social workers with additional information on the effects of domestic violence, alcohol and drug policy, etc. Social workers can follow the e-learnings in their own time and from home. The e-learnings take an average of two hours to complete and are offered on the Blijf Groeien platform (Blijf Groeien, n.d.).

### **The participants who tested the workshop**

The participants were residential social workers and experts of Blijf Groep. All participants were between the age of 25 and 45 with different cultural backgrounds. They needed to have experience with people who committed domestic violence. In the end, five participants tested both the workbook and the workshop. Besides, two process facilitators evaluated the content of the workshop.

### **Research questions for evaluation**

Three research questions needed answering during the evaluation test. These were supplemented with additional questions. Because the results of the evaluation test were collected through joint reflection, reflection forms, and semi-structured interviews, these questions are guidelines.

Research question 1: Did the participants understand what to do within the workbook and the theme cards?

- Did the participants understand the purpose of the workbook and theme cards?
- Were the various assignments within the workbook clear?
- How did the participants fill in the workbook?
- Were the information and the questions on the theme cards clear?

Research question 2: How did they experience conducting the workshop?

- Were the workbook and theme cards perceived as new insights and knowledge?
- Did the participants understand how the workbook and theme cards were connected?
- Did the concept fit the current training programs of Blijf Groep?
- How did they feel about the components offered in different formats (blended learning)?
- Did they have enough time to complete the workbook and the workshop?

Research question 3: Can the residential social workers of Blijf Groep use the workshop's results during the counseling process?

- Did the workshop make the social workers aware of their role in the counseling process, including involving the person who committed domestic violence?
- Did their knowledge about people who commit domestic violence enhance during the workshop?
- Are the social workers going to use the theme cards offered during the counseling process?
- Is an understanding of the person who committed domestic violence created among residential social workers of Blijf Groep?

### **Data analysis**

At the end of the evaluation, different methods were used to analyze the data.

### **The workbook**

The post-its on which the participants had written comments and remarks about the workbook were analyzed qualitatively. The feedback given during the joint reflection was transcribed. From this, goals were established for improving the workbook. These goals are described underneath the 'next steps' in Chapter 7.2.

### **The theme cards and workshop**

The reflection forms completed by the participants at the end of the workshop were collected and analyzed. Goals were established for improving the workshop. These can be found as 'next steps' in Chapter 7.2.

## 7.2 Results of the evaluation

### Evaluation with process facilitators

The interviews with the two process facilitators were transcribed into English. The assembled data was analyzed qualitatively. Goals were established for improving the workshop. These can be found as 'next steps' in Chapter 7.2.

### Additional interviews with residential social workers

Three weeks after the completion of the workshop, semi-structured interviews took place with two social workers who had participated in the workshop. The purpose was to explore whether they could apply the knowledge they had gained during the workshop in the initial phone call with the person who committed domestic violence or at another moment in the counseling process.

### Testing the workbook

**Participants:** Five residential social workers and two experts from Blijf Groep

**Where:** At home

**Timeframe:** Eight days

### Findings of the prototype test

Before the workshop took place, seven participants completed the workbook. The participants were generally enthusiastic about the workbook but also mentioned some improvements (see image 35).

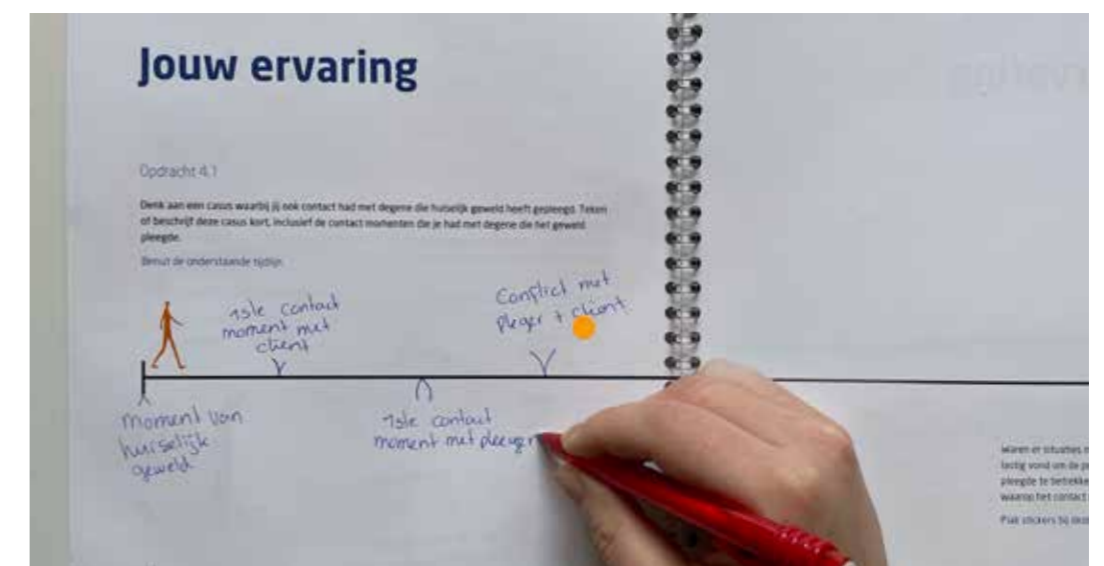


Image 35: One of the social workers completing the initial design of the workbook during the prototype test.

### The form of the workbook

The participants liked the physical workbook. During other training programs, they receive their materials as digital files. They indicated that they usually do not read these digital files since they contain lots of text and take too much time. They felt that time had been spent on them because this workbook looked visually appealing, and they received it printed. Besides, the questions and images provided inspiration, which motivated them to fill in the workbook.

P11: "We chose to work in the social and interactive branch for a reason. Everything has to be digital, but we still prefer something tangible."

Another advantage of the physical workbook was that other social workers who did not participate in the workshop also had seen it. Therefore, the workbook led to discussions and conversations among the social workers concerning the involvement of people who commit domestic violence in the counseling process. The workbook made other social workers curious about the workshop, which resulted in them wanting to participate.

### The content of the workbook

The participants indicated that the different assignments and questions stimulated them to reflect. They liked that the systemic terms of the Oranje Huis methodology were conducted in the workbook, such as the different roles of those involved, the risk factors, and the protective factors. Besides, they found it valuable that they needed to think about these terms regarding themselves. However, some participants indicated that they found some questions too complicated since they were broadly worded and, therefore, difficult to answer. They did not finish these assignments.

P12: "I like to start with answering the questions I already know the answer to, such as the risk and protective factors of people who commit domestic violence. I get stuck if I have to think about myself right away."

Other social workers found that the open-ended questions provided a lot of inspiration. According to them, these questions raised awareness.

P11: "I found it interesting to tell something about myself. Normally we are only concerned with others, so it is good to be aware of what you think of yourself for once."

Furthermore, in some assignments, it was unclear which stakeholders the social workers needed to think about. For example, some participants were unsure in assignments 3 and 4 whether they had to think about a case they were working on or whether they were allowed to make a case up themselves.

Although the participants were enthusiastic about the workbook, some had not completed it for time reasons. The participants needed to complete the workbook at home. The idea was that they could complete the workbook at a time and in an environment they felt comfortable with, which might provide them with more inspiration. However, the social workers indicated that when there is no scheduled time for completing the workbook, it quickly gets lost at the bottom of a pile of other tasks. A solution to this could be to schedule the time to complete the workbook as part of the training session or to get a time indication of how long it takes to complete the workbook. A disclaimer is that the workbook was tested during one of the busiest periods for social workers at Blijf Groep. During the prototype test, there was a severe shortage of social workers. Therefore, the caseload was high, and they had less time for additional training or activities.

The participants who had not completed the workbook did indicate that they had read through it beforehand. Even though they had not completed the assignments, reading the workbook did prompt reflection. In addition, all participants wanted to keep the workbook so they could use it afterward. In particular, they found the "extra" section valuable, which lists phone numbers for additional help for people who commit domestic violence.

P12: "I am preserving this workbook because I can easily access it. After this workshop, I want to take the time to write everything out."

### Next steps for developing the initial design of the workbook

This prototype test of the workbook provided information about the strengths and weaknesses of the initial design of the workbook. The following steps should be included when improving the initial design:

#### The form of the workbook

- Adding more quotes to the initial design of the workbook makes it lively, which can create recognition and acknowledgment among the social workers.

#### The content of the workbook

- More social workers would complete the workbook when it is clear from the start how long it takes to fill in or when it is part of the training session.
- The introduction should state that the workbook is for themselves and that they do not have to share the content with others. This way, the barrier to starting writing is lowered.
- For each assignment, the workbook should clearly state who the social workers should think of when completing.
- Each assignment should contain a combination of open-ended questions and subquestions which serve as inspiration. This way, social workers can make their selection of the questions they want to answer.

## Testing the theme cards and the workshop

**Participants:** Four residential social workers and one expert from Blijf Groep

**Where:** At Blijf Groep

**Timeframe:** Two hours

### Findings of the prototype test

The theme cards and workshop were tested at Blijf Groep with four social workers and an expert. Before the workshop, they all received the workbook (see image 36).



Image 36: One of the social workers studying the initial design of the theme cards during the prototype test.

### The form of the theme cards and workshop

Participants liked that, after completing the workbook individually, the workshop included a physical component with other participants. The physical part of the workshop consisted of three parts: a reflection on assignment six of the workbook, the theory about the person who committed domestic violence, and roleplay to practice the theme cards.

During the first part, the participants collectively reflected on the factors they had written in assignment 6 of the workbook. Discussing these factors provided recognition.

P12: "The discussion about the factors was fun. Sometimes I thought: 'Oh do you have that too?'. **It put my insecurities regarding counseling with the person who committed domestic violence into perspective.**"

It worked well that each part of the workshop included interactive elements. An interaction among the participants started, in which they collectively discussed their difficulties and motivations regarding the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence in counseling. This way, they were allowed to share experiences and give each other tips.

In the second part of the workshop, the theory about the person who committed domestic violence was explained. The participants found this theory valuable but did not have enough space and time to absorb it and ask in-depth questions.

In particular, the participants found the roleplay inspiring. During other training sessions, they also need to roleplay, but there is always a stage actor involved to play the person who committed domestic violence. Because they were allowed to present their case, and they needed to reenact those involved themselves, they felt their experiences were put into perspective. The social worker who presented the case also played the person who committed domestic violence. She indicated that reenacting her client led to many new insights about the origins of their attitudes. Therefore, she started thinking about the creation of their behavior. At the same time, she found it interesting to see how another social worker responded to her.

P13: "I found it special to reenact him. **I did get an understanding of his situation and noticed how I could have reacted differently to him during the counseling process.**"

In addition, the conversation with the observers after the roleplay provided a joint reflection on the theory received, with accompanying theme cards. The social workers were able to state how they saw the theme cards reflected in the roleplay and gained a better understanding of the content of the theme cards. Finally, the social workers found it helpful to physically receive the theme cards at the end of the workshop. They all indicated that they would use them during the counseling process.

### The content of the theme cards and workshop

During this workshop, making contact with the person who committed domestic violence was discussed. The participants were not aware of the influence of conversation techniques on making contact with the person who committed domestic violence. Therefore, they found the theory on these techniques valuable and wanted to apply it in practice.

P14: "Through conversation techniques, you can make sure that the person who committed domestic violence feels that he is listened to. Besides, **he might become aware that he also needs us.**"

P12: "Being aware of the new knowledge I had gained made me conscious of the knowledge I already had. Besides, I know what I still need to learn. Ultimately **more self-confidence is created in the counseling process.**"

The participants liked that the workshop lasted “only” two hours, but sometimes they felt there was too little time for asking questions or further explanation about parts they found unclear. Therefore, they suggested that the workshop should take an additional two hours. It is also possible to add more information to the theme cards.

### Next steps for developing the initial design

The following steps should be included when improving the initial design:

#### **The form of the theme cards and workshop**

- The collective reflection on the factors of assignment 6 does not have to be a separate section in the workshop. The evaluation of the workbook showed that this already leads to discussions with regard to the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence among the social workers.
- The social workers should receive the theme cards before the workshop so they can read them through. Besides, there is more time to ask questions and practice the theme cards during the physical workshop.

#### **The content of the theme cards and workshop**

- Background information about the person who committed domestic violence should be given to which the questions on the theme cards refer. Besides, the module each theme card belongs to needs to be included. This way, social workers indicate when to use each theme card in the counseling process. Besides, when the social workers receive this information in writing they can look back on it.
- The theme cards should include an image that makes the subject clear at a glance.

### Evaluation with process facilitators

**Participants:** Two process facilitators of Blijf Groep

**Where:** At Blijf Groep

**Timeframe:** Two interviews of one hour each

### Findings of the prototype test

The final prototype test consisted of two semi-structured interviews with process facilitators in which the workshop was discussed. Before these interviews took place, they received the materials from the workshop.

#### **The form of the workbook, theme cards, and workshop**

Both process facilitators were enthusiastic about the blended form of learning of the workshop. They indicated that Blijf Groep does not offer training sessions like this, but they want to achieve this in the future.

Process facilitator: “The workshop consists of different components that lead to blended learning. I wish more training sessions at Blijf Groep were structured this way.”

One of the process facilitators was critical of the workbook. She indicated that social workers would not complete the workbook before the workshop. She mentioned that it might help to offer the workbook digitally. Besides, she commented that they could use the workbook during individual *supervision* with social workers, as it could support the conversation about the quality of their work.

Process facilitator: “This workbook helps you think about your role as a social being. It would be interesting to reflect on the outcomes during supervision.”

Both process facilitators indicated that theme cards like this always work well. Since the theme cards are summaries of the theory and thus consist of little text, they think social workers would use them in practice.

#### **The content of the workbook, theme cards, and workshop**

Both process facilitators liked that the workshop contained methodologies Blijf Groep uses to treat the person who experienced domestic violence. However, they were not aware that this content was new knowledge for the social workers. The current training programs focus only on those who experienced domestic violence and lack information about this content regarding the person who committed domestic violence.

They also mentioned that the purpose and importance of the outcome of the workshop should be clearly stated at the beginning of the workshop. In addition, they were very curious about the factors that the participants had written down in assignment 6. They indicated that further development of the training sessions and adapting the content to the needs of the social workers would increase their motivation to participate.

### Next steps for developing the initial design

The following steps should be included when improving the initial design:

- The importance of the workshop needs to be explained to the social workers.
- Although social workers prefer a physical workbook and theme cards, it is convenient to digitize, for example, through e-learning. This way, the workbook is accessible at any time to everyone within Blijf Groep.
- The social workers get mandatory training. Therefore, discussing their experiences with people who commit domestic violence and practicing the theme cards could be integrated into existing training programs to apply for systemic work from the start.

### Additional interviews with residential social workers

After three weeks, interviews took place with residential social workers who had also participated in the workshop.

One of the social workers had not been able to practice the theme cards because she currently does not have a case in which she has contact with the person who committed domestic violence. However, she browsed through the workbook from time to time to reflect on the case studies she had already accompanied. In addition, she mentioned that she had applied the questions from the theme cards during contact with youth protection.

P11: "I asked the questions from the theme cards to the youth protection worker involved in one of my cases. He did have contact with the person who committed domestic violence. By asking the questions to him, I tried to get a better image of the person who committed domestic violence I was dealing with."

Another social worker indicated that she wanted to continue applying the insights from the workshop and the questions from the theme cards in the future.

## 7.3 The main insights of the evaluation

### The research questions

This section contains a brief reflection on the research questions prepared in advance. Based on the insights, there is described what is needed to improve the initial design in the final iteration.

#### **RQ1: Do the participants understand what to do within the workbook and the theme cards?**

The social workers indicated that they found it valuable that the workbook encouraged them to reflect on themselves and that the various assignments were clear and served as sufficient guidance. They mentioned that completing the workbook made them aware of their preconceptions and lack of understanding of the person who committed domestic violence and how this influenced their involvement in the counseling process. Besides, they experienced the workbook as inspiring and instructive. However, some of the questions were too broadly worded.

Most social workers wanted to use the questions on the theme cards during counseling with the person who committed domestic violence. They indicated that the questions could support them in mapping the origins and continuation of the violent relationship, which would help them understand the situation better. They recognized the Module 3 topics covered during the workshop but lacked some background information on the questions. They would have liked the theme cards to contain more information about people who commit domestic violence so they would not require additional information from the workshop. In addition, a symbolic illustration explaining the purpose of the theme cards would be valuable.

In conclusion, extra sub-questions will need to be added to the workbook, which the social workers can directly answer. Besides, imagery, consisting of coherent shapes and bright colors, will be included on the theme cards so they can easily recognize and remember them. However, the images need to leave room for the social workers' interpretation so they do not contribute to preconceptions. Lastly, the information on people who commit domestic violence offered during the physical workshop will be added to the theme cards so the residential social workers can read it whenever they want.

**RQ2: How did the participants experience conducting the workshop?**

The social workers indicated that this was the first workshop they had attended that focussed on the person who committed domestic violence and led to new insights and knowledge. Although the initial design in its current form does not yet fit with the existing training programs of Blijf Groep, the process facilitators saw the information and construction of the workshop as having added value. In particular, they saw blended learning as progressive and would like to implement it in Blijf Groep's future training programs. The process facilitators found it valuable that through reflecting on the workbook, the social workers became aware of the creation of misunderstanding of people who commit domestic violence and that the theme cards supported them in creating an understanding.

It would also be possible to offer the workbook and theme cards as e-learning. This way, the materials are accessible to all Blijf Groep employees. Another advantage of designing theme cards as e-learning is that they can consist of smaller steps, and there is more room for examples. Besides, this would allow the social workers to go through the theory at their own pace (see Appendix F for an example of an e-learning).

However, employees at Blijf Groep would like to have the choice of receiving the physical workbook and theme cards. An advantage of offering the materials physically is that it leads to conversations about people who commit domestic violence among residential social workers and increases the motivation of the social workers to fill it in. Fortunately, Blijf Groep is willing to produce it. Since the social workers did not have enough time to complete the workbook and ask questions about the theme cards during the workshop, these should be self-contained. In addition, the social workers need to understand that following the workshop will take time. But eventually, it will save time in the counseling process because the person who committed domestic violence is earlier involved.

In conclusion, the theme cards and modules should be self-contained by providing them with the working method. Furthermore, additional information needs to be added to the workbook that clearly states the goal and the added value of creating awareness of the person who committed domestic violence.

**RQ3: Can residential social workers of Blijf Groep use the workshop's results during the counseling process?**

In the end, the reflections in the workbook made the social workers aware of their role in the counseling process, including involving the person who committed domestic violence. Besides, the information in the workshop enhanced their knowledge about people who commit domestic violence.

During the evaluation, it became clear that the workbook and theme cards can be integrated into the existing training programs. The process facilitators indicated that the theme cards can be used as a guide for other training programs since the theme cards encourage the social workers to map the violent dynamics between both people involved. An advantage of this is that social workers learn how to work systemically from the beginning. However, social workers should read the theme cards in preparation. As a result, there is more time in the workshop for answering specific questions and practicing the theme cards in role plays.

In conclusion, discussing the workbook and practicing the theme cards will be included in the existing training programs of Blijf Groep.

**Concluding notes**

Overall, the social workers indicated that the workshop contributed to creating an understanding of the person committing domestic violence. The design provides valuable information for social workers. They found it interesting to reflect on themselves using the workbook. They said that it made them aware of their role in involving the person who committed domestic violence. Besides, they mentioned they wanted to use the theme cards during counseling since they could support them in (maintaining) contact with the person who committed domestic violence.

However, based on this evaluation it is not clear if the workshop has a profound impact on the further assistance provided by the social workers toward the person who committed domestic violence and if it contributes to the realization of sustainable safety. More research is needed to find out.



# 8

## The final design

This chapter contains visuals and a description of the final design.

### 8.1 A last iteration resulting in the final design

During the final iteration, the main insights of the evaluation were incorporated. In this paragraph, the final design is visualized and explained.

#### Zicht op huiselijk geweld

*Translation: Gaining perspective on domestic violence*

A workshop that supports social workers to involve the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process by creating an understanding. The workshop consists of a workbook and twelve theme cards.

#### The final design of the workbook

The workbook is completed by the residential social workers in preparation for the counseling process. After completing the workbook, the social workers are aware of how their previous experiences led to preconceptions and incomprehension about the person committing domestic violence (see image 37). The workbook consists of six assignments that encourage social workers to self-reflect. See Appendix G for the entire design of the workbook.



Image 37: A rendering of the final design of the workbook.



The first pages of the workbook serve primarily as an introduction. The social workers discover the purpose of the workbook and the included theme cards.



Social workers can fill in their information at the beginning of the workbook, including their name, function at Blijf Groep, and a drawing of themselves.



In this section of the workbook, the importance of the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence is explained. Besides, the origins of a violent relationship are described from which the five Modules of the theme cards are derived.



Social workers reflect on their background and their work as social workers. The way they work may depend on their age, class, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, which have a profound effect on their norms and values.



Social workers reflect on the different roles of their clients, to humanize the person who committed domestic violence since the profile of people who experienced and committed domestic violence is often the same.



They reflect on an existing case in which they had contact with the person who committed domestic violence. They draw or describe two situations they experienced as challenging. Thereafter, they reflect on what they learned during those experiences and how it influences their current way of working.



Social workers discover where these roles stem from by thinking about possible protective and risk factors to create more awareness about the background of those involved.



After the reflection, the social workers think about how they could improve the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process and what potential solutions could be.

The last pages of the workbook contain theoretical information about making contact with the person who committed domestic violence through motivational interviewing and include the accompanying theme cards.



In the final assignment, the social workers are asked to reflect on involving the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process. They need to write factors they believe cause the person committing domestic violence to be insufficiently involved in the counseling process.



This page explains how social workers can contact the person who committed domestic violence through motivational interviewing to create an opening and make the expectations clear.



This section contains additional materials which can provide the social workers with extra information about the person who committed domestic violence. In addition, it lists three companies they can refer them to during the initial phone call.



Double-sided reflective listening is part of motivational interviewing. The social workers could apply this technique when using the theme cards. This allows the person who committed domestic violence to open up since they have the feeling they are listened to.

## The final design of the theme cards

There are twelve theme cards divided into five modules. The theme cards are located at the back of the workbook and serve as support during the counseling process. They contain knowledge about the background of people who commit domestic violence, with accompanying questions that can be used during counseling. See Appendix H for the entire design of the theme cards.

The purpose of the theme cards is solution-focused work toward creating an understanding. The theme cards consist of:

- Knowledge about the background of people who commit domestic violence. This background information is briefly described on each theme card.
- Questions linked to background information. Social workers can ask these questions during the counseling process to get an idea of the origins and continuation of domestic violence among those involved.

Module 1 can be used during the initial phone call. The other modules are complementary when the person who committed domestic violence is involved in the continuation of the counseling process

The different modules are assembled based on the research from this thesis. These were expanded with the help of treatment techniques from De Waag (2022).



The back section of the workbook contains the twelve theme cards. These are located separately in the folder so social workers can decide whether, and in what order, they want to use the cards.

## Module 1: A conversation opening for the first phone call.



### The motivation of the person who committed domestic violence to participate in the counseling process.

When the person who committed domestic violence is involved in the counseling process, the social worker should know:

- Their motivation to participate in the counseling process.
- What their expectations are of them.
- What the prospects are for the outcome of the counseling process.

The person who committed domestic violence may not think that treatment is necessary because they are doing well. One may be disappointed or hurt, so there is no confidence that things will work out. Besides, expectations toward the (ex-) partner may not be realistic.



### Charting the involvement of (any) children.

It should be discussed whether those involved in domestic violence have minor children (jointly) living in the home. This involves identifying:

- What the views are of the person who committed domestic violence about paternity, maternity, parenting, and separation, and whether these influence the (continuation of) the violence.
- Whether the children have been present during intimidation and psychological violence between those involved as this can be harmful.

Having children can be a motivation for the person who committed domestic violence to accept help and actively participate in the counseling process.

**Module 2: The background of the person who committed domestic violence.**



**The family background.**

The fears and needs in a relationship of the person who committed domestic violence depend on past experiences. The person who committed domestic violence may:

- Have been abused in the past.
- Previously have witnessed violence within one's family.

Furthermore, learned communication and interaction patterns, quarrels, and tensions may cause the current family situation. Therefore, the past family situation needs to be identified.

- Hoe was de sfeer vroeger bij jou thuis?
- Hoe was de relatie die je ouders of je verzorgers met elkaar hadden?
- Kan je met behulp van drie woorden beschrijven hoe de relatie met je ouders of verzorgers was? Bijvoorbeeld liefdevol, afstandelijk, kritisch, begripvol, etc.
- Wat heb je tijdens je jeugd geleerd over relaties?



**The individual background.**

The person who committed domestic violence may use aggression or feels threatened when the (ex-)partner touches on:

- The low self-esteem of the person who committed domestic violence.
- Psychological complaints that may stem from depression.

Unemployment, problems at work, low income, debt, and dependent residence status or housing may affect this.

- Ben je gediagnosticeerd met psychische problematiek?
- Wat is deze problematiek?
- Is je (ex-)partner gediagnosticeerd met psychisch problematiek?
- Wat is deze problematiek?



**The relational background.**

Previous relationships with others affect how the person who committed domestic violence looks at the current relationship. The person who committed domestic violence may:

- Have traditional beliefs about gender roles. Stereotypical role patterns and expectations may lead to differences in power and independence.
- Find it hard to build a strong relationship with the partner and lacks trust.

Those involved may stick to the role patterns of an old relationship with a new partner. When the new partner does not pursue this, violence can occur.

- Wat was de rolverdeling tussen jou en je partner in voorgaande relaties?
- Heb je traumatische dingen meegemaakt in relaties waar je nu nog last van hebt?
- Wat zijn je eerdere ervaringen in relaties met elkaar troost bieden of elkaar steunen?
- Heb je het gevoel dat je moeite hebt met het vertrouwen van je (ex-)partner?

**Module 3: The triggers that cause the violence.**



**The influence of vulnerability on the occurrence of violence.**

Experiences from childhood, previous relationships, and current relationships can cause the person who committed domestic violence to be vulnerable:

- Arguments may arise from feeling hurt.
- One of the people involved reacts more violently to something that happens or is said, while the other does not understand where the reaction is coming from. That reaction can lead to another argument.

A coping strategy emerges in which the partners challenge each other out of fear or because they are scared to be hurt again.

- Wat zijn jouw kwetsbaarheden (behoeften en angsten)?
- Wat is jouw reactie wanneer deze kwetsbaarheden getriggerd worden?
- Hoe reageert jouw (ex-)partner op jouw kwetsbaarheden?
- Wat zijn de kwetsbaarheden (behoeften en angsten) van jouw (ex-)partner?
- Wat is jouw reactie op je (ex-)partner?



**The influence of stress on the occurrence of violence.**

When the brain of the person who committed domestic violence is in the “tolerance mode”, they remain calm enough during a conflict to empathize with the other person and come up with a solution.

When someone experiences too much stress, they can become unbalanced:

- The reptilian brain can take over and react with a survival strategy that consists of fight or flight (overstimulation). This overstimulation can lead to unnecessary aggressive behavior.
- If fight or flight does not work, the brain can switch to freezing (understimulation).

It is necessary to examine stress to determine the causes of the violence.



**The three coping strategies of violence.**

Three coping strategies can make the violent situation more unsafe. These patterns become active during disagreements and vary from case to case:

- Looking up and fending off: Getting angry and backing down can provoke the person who committed domestic violence, causing the behavior to escalate.
- Looking up and repelling: Both parties involved seek confrontation and an attack leads to a counterattack.
- Repel and repel: The involved parties have given up communicating and deflecting tension.

By understanding the coping pattern between those involved, the counseling process can be adjusted accordingly.

**Module 4: The dynamics of violence between those involved.**



**The kind of violence.**

Violence is a dynamic of abuse between two individuals to gain power and control unfairly. The violence is structured in three phases:

- A tension building between the partners.
- The eruption of violence.
- The reconciliation, with the appearance of an end to the violence.

The expression of aggression can be in the form of psychological, physical, financial, cultural, or sexual abuse. Further, the roles of perpetrator and victim may alternate during a relationship or argument. By making the person who committed domestic violence name what type of violence occurred, this is taken out of the private sphere and can give them insight into the need for the counseling process.



**The effects of violence.**

Violence has physical and emotional consequences for those involved, for example:

- Physical consequences can be: sleeping problems, headaches, high blood pressure, breathing problems, etc.
- Emotional effects may include: low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, etc.

Furthermore, there is a chance that those involved in domestic violence may relapse into old patterns of violence after the counseling process or pass on the dynamics of violence to the children (intergenerational transmission).

**Module 5: (New) contact with the (ex-)partner.**



**The relationship with the (ex-)partner.**

60 percent of partners involved in domestic violence still want to remain together after counseling. They want the violence to stop, not the relationship. Social workers should:

- Assess how the person who committed domestic violence views their (ex-) partner.
- Find out if the person who committed domestic violence wants to continue with the (ex-)partner after counseling.

By mapping this it becomes clear with what purpose those involved go through the counseling process.



**Repairing old damage with the (ex-) partner.**

Several situations may occur during a relationship that can be perceived as hurtful to one of those involved. These situations may be brought up in arguments, which can create annoyance. These situations can:

- Make those involved increasingly angry with each other.
- Ensure that those involved help each other, which does not increase and can even decrease the other's irritation.

If those involved in domestic violence want to remain in their relationship after counseling, it is relevant to explore how they influence each other, and how they interact and respond to each other.

**The training session**

The social workers can reflect on the insights of the workbook and practice using the theme cards during mandatory training programs at Blijf Groep.

Since Blijf Groep would like to apply for systemic work in practice, they need to deliver the training on those involved systemically instead of offering two separate training sessions about both involved in domestic violence. Therefore, it would work best if discussing the workbook and theme cards, is implemented in the current mandatory training of Blijf Groep (which currently only focuses on people who experience domestic violence) (see image 38).

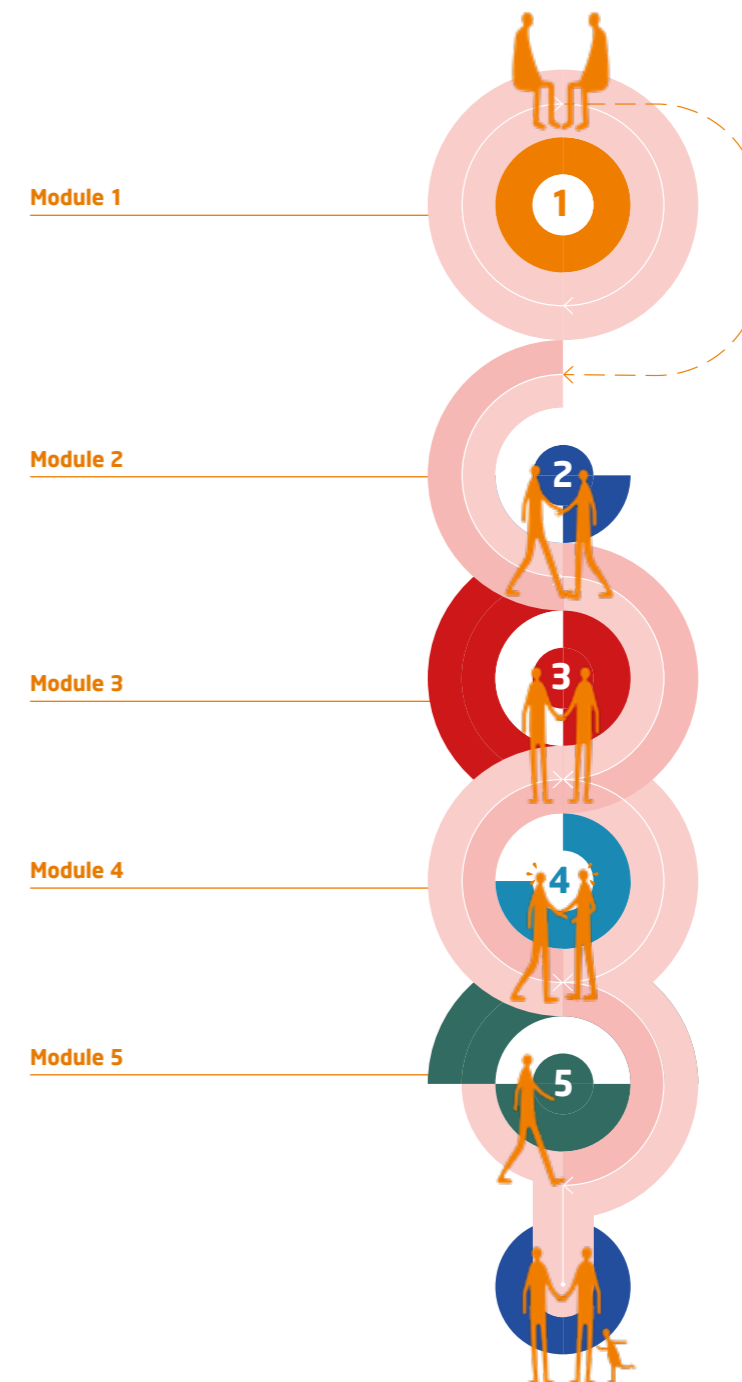


Image 38: An outline of a violent relationship showing which phases the five Modules of the theme cards connect to.



## 8.2 Implementation of the final design

### The facilitator of the workshop

A process facilitator offers the current training sessions at Blijf Groep. Blijf Groep has four process facilitators who conduct all training. A process facilitator has the responsibility of directing a team or department to work coherently toward a new goal for which cooperating is especially important (Blijf Groep, 2020).

Process facilitators have close contact with social workers. They know what kind of problems social workers face and they have the knowledge to solve these. Since they conduct all training sessions at Blijf Groep, they will eventually facilitate the elements of the workshop about people who commit domestic violence.

Process facilitators create and share the training programs on the platform Blijf Leren. This platform describes the purpose of the workshop, the duration of the different steps (agenda), and the script (see image 39) (Blijf Leren, n.d.).



Image 39: An example in which the workshop is integrated on the Blijf Leren platform of Blijf Groep (Blijf Leren, n.d.).

### Tips for the training facilitator to provide the new training programs

To implement the workshop in existing training programs, some tips were assembled for the process facilitator to follow while delivering the training.

- The five modules can be divided into five different training sessions.
- The optimal number of participants is often between 8 and 15. With this number, there is still room for personal input (and explanation) while the group is large enough to maximize the power of group dynamics.
- Social workers can practice using the theme cards during roleplay. It is advisable to have the social workers submit their cases and reenact the role of the person who committed domestic violence themselves, so there is no need to hire a staging actor. When social workers reenact their role, they understand the person who committed domestic violence and become aware of how they could have treated them differently.
- Practicing the theme cards should continually be repeated after mandatory training sessions so social workers keep practicing the content and remain aware of their pitfalls. There could be a possibility for repetition during supervision or caustics.

### The platform Blijf Groeien

For the social workers, the training will be implemented on the platform Blijf Groeien. Blijf Groeien is a platform on which Blijf Groep offers various training sessions for social workers. Some training sessions are mandatory to attend, while others are voluntary. Both physical training sessions and e-learning are offered on this platform. For new employees at Blijf Groep, the intent is to incorporate the final design into existing training programs. Social workers learn from the beginning to work systemically and not to approach those involved separately. Therefore, new social workers will receive this workbook and theme cards before the start of their mandatory training programs and read them in preparation.

However, social workers who are already working at Blijf Groep have not yet had training on people who commit domestic violence. For them, this training session is offered separately on the Blijf Groeien platform. The Blijf Groep employee has access to all training courses and can select the training session they want to attend (see image 40). They can request the training and pick up the workbook and theme cards at Blijf Groep or print them themselves. Practicing and discussing the workbook and theme cards can be done jointly during casuistic or supervision with the process facilitator.

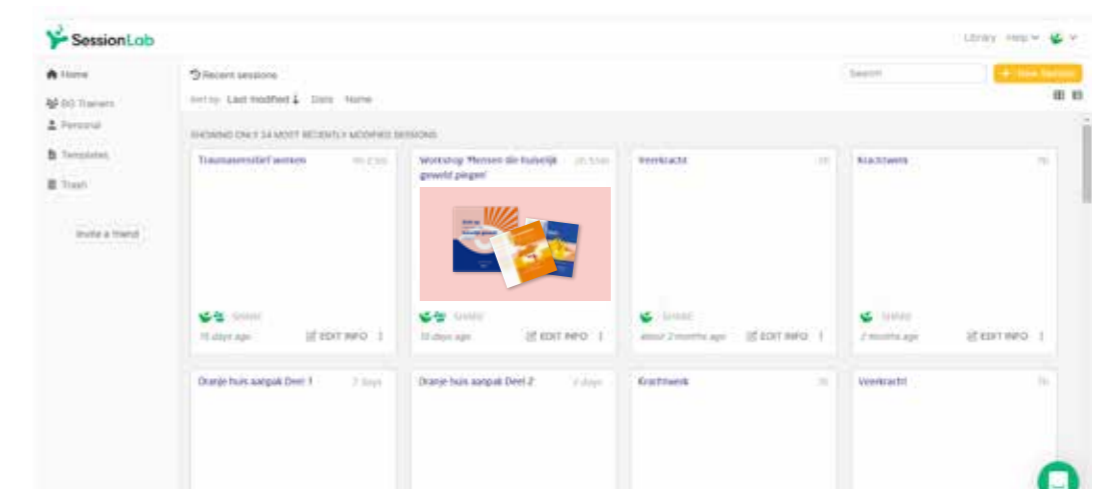
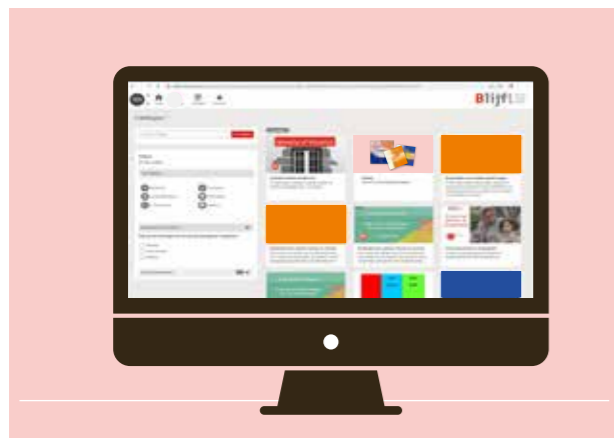


Image 40: An example in which the workshop is integrated on the Blijf Groeien platform of Blijf Groep (Blijf Groeien, n.d.).

## Use scenario of the final design

The use scenario explains how the workshop can be implemented at Blijf Groep.



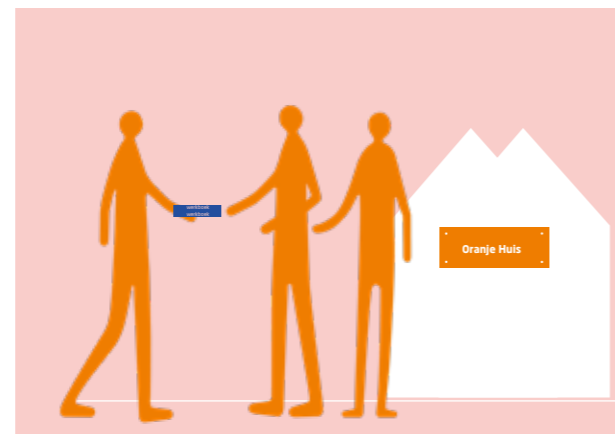
1. This workshop on people who commit domestic violence is included in Blijf Groep's mandatory training programs. New social workers follow the training when they start working at Blijf Groep.



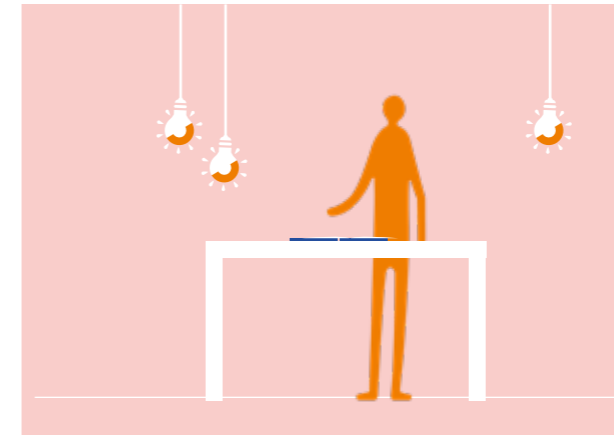
2. Social workers who already work at Blijf Groep can register for the workshop online through the Blijf Groeien platform. They can also refer to the workshop during individual supervision with their process facilitator.



3. The workshop consists of one workbook and twelve theme cards. Each social worker receives all materials.



4. The materials are distributed to social workers in Oranje Huis Amsterdam when they start working at Blijf Groep or when they enroll in the training at Blijf Groeien.



5. The social workers fill in the assignments and workbook at home, at their own pace and time.



6. By reflecting on the final assignment, social workers become aware of where their lack of understanding comes from and how it affects the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process.



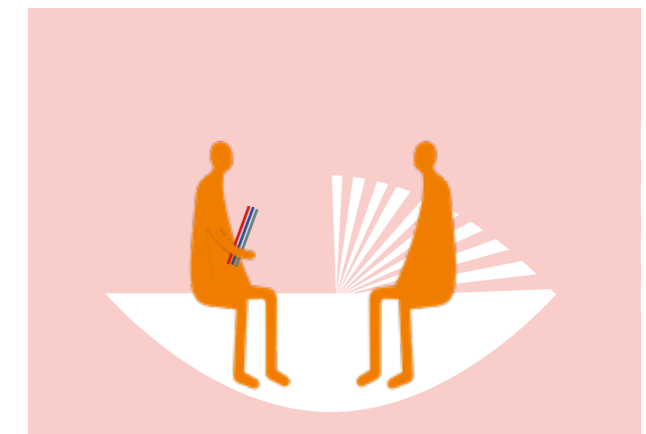
7. The second part of the workbook explains the theory of having and maintaining contact with people who commit domestic violence during the counseling process.



8. The theme cards include information on the background of people who commit domestic violence with accompanying questions the social workers can ask during counseling to map the onset and continuation of violence.



9. The workbook and theme cards are discussed in mandatory training sessions of Blijf Groep, so systemic work is applied from the start.



10. The theme cards and workbook provide the social workers with an understanding of the person who committed domestic violence, enabling them to offer systemic help.

# 9

## Evaluation of the process and design

This chapter contains the conclusion of this thesis and recommendations for improving the functionality of the design and implementation at Blijf Groep. This chapter concludes with a personal reflection.

## 9.1 Conclusion

The project aimed to make a design that contributes to creating an understanding of people who commit domestic violence among residential social workers of Blijf Groep in Amsterdam. People who commit domestic violence often feel deprived during their first phone call with a residential social worker. The social workers have little knowledge about their background and they can not share their experiences. As a result, the social workers have less understanding of their side of the story, and the person who committed domestic violence is not offered as much counseling as the person who asked for help. This research led to the insight that the initial phone call between the Blijf Groep's residential social worker and the person who committed domestic violence can be an entrance for a longer course of counseling. When understanding is created before and during this initial conversation, the person who committed domestic violence is more likely to be involved in the counseling process. As a result, systemic work might be put into practice. By working systemically, the underlying problems of those involved can be worked on more effectively, reducing the amount of assistance needed to stop domestic violence permanently.

The result of the project is a workshop about people who commit domestic violence designed for residential social workers of Blijf Groep. Through a blended form of learning, they are encouraged to reflect on themselves. Consequently, they become aware of the origins of their lack of understanding of people who commit domestic violence and how this affects their involvement in the counseling process. For support during the counseling process, the workbook includes theme cards. The theme cards offer social workers new information about the background of people who commit domestic violence with accompanying questions that help them to chart the occurrence and continuation of violence. This research showed that this contributes to creating an understanding of the person who committed the violence among residential social workers. As a result, the social workers who tested the workshop better understood the situation of the person who committed domestic violence and were open to providing them with counseling. Therefore, the social workers were enthusiastic about the workshop and acknowledged the added value. They would like to see the workshop implemented. However, it is

recommended that it is integrated into the mandatory training of Blijf Groep so social workers learn from the start how to work systemically.

Besides, the final design aligns well with the goals of Blijf Groep. The main goal of the Oranje Huis methodology is to permanently stop domestic violence and promote recovery from the effects of violence. In addition, Blijf Groep wants to ensure the immediate safety of those involved (Moussa, 2022). The social workers receive tools to promote recovery for the person seeking help and the children. However, the theme cards could be an extension. They could support the social workers in contacting the person who committed domestic violence and assessing their situation, allowing the risk factors to be eliminated and the consequences reduced. Lastly, by identifying the motivation of those involved to participate in the counseling process and the involvement of children, parents become aware of the importance of safety for their children and how they can contribute to their healthy development.

Evaluating the design showed that it provides the social workers with valuable information for social workers which helped them to reflect and make the first contact with the person who committed domestic violence. However, this research was based on the hypothesis that creating an understanding of the people who commit domestic violence among residential social workers would increase their participation in the counseling process. Unfortunately, within the timeframe of this project, I was not able to examine whether this hypothesis was correct. Therefore, additional research is needed to find the impact of the design on the further assistance of the people who committed domestic violence by the residential social workers and if the design contributes to the realization of sustainable safety.

As it stands, the workbook and theme cards can be produced by Blijf Groep. Some parts of the workshop need to be digitized or offered as e-learning. This way, the handouts are accessible to all social workers at Blijf Groep. Another advantage is that Blijf Groep can share the knowledge with other women's shelters, such as Moviera, so greater systemic change can be achieved. Furthermore, the workshop could be given to people who have contact with the person who commits domestic violence before they enter the counseling process (such as police or Veilig Thuis). This way, a fair counseling process for the person who committed domestic violence is likely to be guaranteed earlier in the process. A former person who committed domestic violence mentioned the following about the final design:

"I think it is a great tool. I see an added value in this product for all employees working in the field of domestic violence. It could already be used with the neighborhood teams who start the initial contact."

Lastly, involving people who commit domestic violence in counseling has not been seen as added value until recently. Therefore, there is not much research done on this subject. Not only among social workers there is a great need for knowledge about people who commit domestic violence but also among other people in the field and society. The final design and this thesis could contribute to expanding the knowledge and making domestic violence and the experiences of both involved openly discussable. A consequence could be that the barrier to talking about domestic violence could be lowered in their direct environment. This way, people who commit domestic violence are more likely to take the step to aid organizations themselves, ensuring lasting safety in the domestic domain.

## 9.2 Recommendations

### Possible improvements to the design

#### **Digitize the workbook and theme cards**

Even though the social workers and experts of Blijf Groep like to receive the workbook and theme cards physically, they should also be offered digitally. This could be done, for example, by integrating them as e-learning on the Blijf Groeien platform. This way, the materials would be accessible to all residential social workers at Blijf Groep. Besides, Blijf Groep can share the knowledge regarding the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence with other woman's shelters.

#### **Integrate components of training into mandatory training programs**

In the ideal situation, the final design of the workshop about people who commit domestic violence would be integrated into the mandatory training programs of Blijf Groep. While evaluating the concept, the process facilitators indicated that they recognized some methods used in the workshop from existing (non-compulsory) training sessions. However, in current training sessions, these methods are only narrated and applied from the perspective of the person who experienced domestic violence.

Blijf Groep's training programs will be reviewed and rearranged next year. The structure of the five modules can be used as a guideline because they identify the origins and perpetuation of violence for both parties involved. This way, social workers get the methods and techniques taught from both perspectives from the start, which may result in them involving the partners evenly in the counseling process.

### **In an extension of the workshop, the three violent dynamics and the cultural differences between those involved need to be explained**

Because social workers can use the theme cards to assess the onset and persistence of violence on a case-by-case basis, this could contribute to tailored assistance. However, during this project, research on unintentional partner violence is conducted. Therefore, the theme cards only explain this type of violence. However, in aid work, a distinction is made between three categories of partner violence: intimate terrorism, common couple violence, and violent resistance. According to experts, the social worker needs to research which violence dynamics are involved in the diagnostic phase because those involved need different types of treatment (Daru et al., 2015). The person who committed domestic violence can suffer from multiple personality problems, such as antisocial, borderline, narcissistic, or dependent. These personality problems are manifested in certain behaviors, self-image, and the image they have of others (De Waag, 2022). The training on people who commit domestic violence could be expanded by discussing these different types of people who commit domestic violence. This could be valuable in achieving acknowledgment among residential social workers that people who commit domestic violence are a very diverse group.

Cultural background also influences the emergence of violent dynamics and the acceptance of abuse. An explanation of different cultures and their influence on the acceptance of violence could be included. For example, there is a significant difference between a soccer hooligan born in the Netherlands who learned to be aggressive and a person who came to the Netherlands from Syria and knows traditional gender roles.

### **Making a validation by measuring the effect of the design**

The design is based on the hypothesis that creating an understanding of the people who commit domestic violence among residential social workers increased the participation of those who committed domestic violence in the counseling process. Because there are no statistics on the number of people who commit domestic violence that is currently involved in the counseling process at Blijf Groep, it is impossible to find out whether this workshop has a direct impact. For this reason, I would like to recommend conducting a study to validate this hypothesis scientifically. The evaluation test results give a general impression of how the social workers experienced the usage of the prototype. However, it should be evaluated by measuring the number of people who have committed domestic violence who are involved in the counseling process before and after attending the workshop.

In addition, additional research is necessary to determine what the impact of the design is on the further assistance of the people who committed domestic violence by the residential social workers and if the design contributes to the realization of sustainable safety.

## General recommendations

During this research, I came across several strategies that Blijf Groep could include internally to involve the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process.

### **Develop a separate counseling process for people who commit domestic violence**

The person who commits domestic violence should also have a personal social worker from the start of the counseling process. This way, both partners are equally involved. For example, Blijf Groep could create pairs of social workers who accompany a different partner. These social workers can consult each other about the state of affairs and adjust the counseling process accordingly. A disadvantage could be that it in the short run will take extra time, manpower, and money.

The question remains whether Blijf Groep is the right organization to counsel people who commit domestic violence since they originated from women's rights. Perhaps it would be better to create another organization within Blijf Groep to make more impact. For example, an organization operated by experts by experience who are specialized in treating people who commit domestic violence.

It would also be a possibility for Blijf Groep to work more closely with organizations such as De Waag. De Waag is an agency that specializes in treating people who commit domestic violence, while Blijf Groep specializes in people who experience domestic violence. The two companies could complement each other in this regard. The persons involved would receive equal help from both parties and feel equally involved in the counseling process. Systematic conversations could be organized between those involved, Blijf Groep and De Waag. If full cooperation between the two organizations would be too much to implement, a social worker could also refer the person who committed domestic violence to De Waag during the initial phone call.

### **Giving those involved the choice of who will be sheltered at Blijf Groep**

Blijf Groep could give those involved in domestic violence the choice of who is taken care of in the shelter. When the choice is left to those involved, they can decide who needs counseling. In addition to a shelter for people who experience domestic violence, Blijf Groep could also offer a shelter for people who commit domestic violence.

### **Blijf Groep must get rid of the name 'women's shelter'**

Blijf Groep should stop calling themselves 'women's shelter'. Since 2019, there has been a Quality Mark for Women's Shelters. Shelter organizations with Hallmark together form a national system of safe shelter. The hallmark 'Safety in women's shelter' starts with a guarantee of safety for clients who need to use that national system. However, people who commit domestic violence do not feel addressed by this label. In addition, Blijf Groep states that they 'offer help to people experiencing domestic violence'. This should be changed into 'offering help with domestic violence' so both involved in domestic violence feel addressed.

## 9.3 Personal reflection

During my Master, I have always tried to pick subjects that intrinsically motivated me. Therefore, I wanted to do my graduation project on a social issue. A colleague told me about a project she had done about elderly abuse in the domestic setting. The taboo surrounding domestic violence triggered my curiosity. I only knew that it is a common problem in society, that it often takes place between partners, and that it is a subject not being talked about. Blijf Groep came up with the proposal to research the stigma surrounding people who commit domestic violence. A valuable topic I was eager to do my graduation research on.

When starting this project, I thought it would be an advantage because I did not have much knowledge and preconceptions about those involved in domestic violence. I noticed from conversations with social workers it was easier for me to understand both sides of the violence dynamics than for them with years of work experience in the field. However, the lack of knowledge also caused me to be somewhat naive. In my quest to find people to interview, I approached several (I thought) so-called 'victims' and 'perpetrators'. However, the first moment of contact proved to be more complicated than I expected. In the first phone call I had with a person who committed domestic violence it was clear that the wording of my (research) questions contributed to perpetuating stigma on people who commit domestic violence. The terms I used were quite sensitive, and my approach was not direct enough. On the other end of the phone, I got a frustrated response.

Even though this first interaction was not pleasant, it got me thinking. More must have been going on causing us both to react in the ways we did. As I continued my research, I shared this story with several experts and social workers at Blijf Groep and soon found they ran into similar problems during the first phone call. They all experienced it as complicated. Having experienced firsthand how many social workers feel daily, I became extra motivated to work on the project and find a way to improve this interaction between a residential social worker and the person who committed domestic violence.

### **Personal learning ambitions**

Despite my eagerness to find a solution, I found conducting this research more challenging than expected. One of the reasons for this was the many violent stories I read and heard during interviews about domestic violence, from which I found it difficult to separate myself emotionally and remain objective. My perfectionism made me want to understand all stakeholders before continuing my research which came at the expense of researching other relevant topics, such as the influence of cultural backgrounds on the origin of domestic violence. I am aware that the ethnicity and sociocultural background of those involved in domestic violence affects the occurrence and continuation of violence and the interaction between them and the social worker. I have talked about this with social workers, but I would have liked more focus in retrospect on the person who committed domestic violence. Besides, it is important to plan interviews ahead of time and take delays into account so there is enough time left to analyze the data and research other relevant topics.

An advantage of talking to so many people is that I developed my interview skills. In the beginning, I found conducting interviews complicated because I had approached almost all interviewees myself and therefore did not know much about their background regarding domestic violence. I did not know what I could ask about such a sensitive topic. However, I soon discovered that everyone was open to telling their stories and sharing their experiences as they were eager to work toward a solution. At the start, I found it difficult to convey the design decisions to a non-designer. Therefore, in addition to conducting semi-structured interviews, I did a journey mapping session in which the interviewees had to outline their workday and I facilitated an interactive workshop including a joint reflection with all participants. I noticed that this contributed to a mutual understanding between me as the designer and the interviewees.

I also wanted to learn how to analyze qualitative data and synthesize it from different sources. In addition to reading papers and doing interviews, I attended several webinars and a conference about gender-related violence. Attending these activities was very valuable because, in addition to learning more about gender-based violence, I got to talk about my project with people from other organizations throughout the Netherlands, which gave me a new perspective on the issue. Because I ended up collecting a lot of data, it took more time to analyze it. Translating the data to defined insights made me manage to conduct and prioritize focused research.

Presenting my research and (design) results was my final challenge. I wanted to maintain a personal style in the product and my report. A visual language that was sufficiently binary and not stereotyping was hard to find. Besides, there needed to be a balance between an appealing image and sufficient knowledge and clarity. By using simple shapes and color language, I think I succeeded in presenting my (design) results in an understandable and accessible way.

Altogether, I think I have completed a beautiful project. All projects have their ups and downs, and this project was no different. However, I have learned much about my abilities and qualities as a designer, and I learned to rely on myself. I can look back on a successful project that has allowed me to dive deep into this super-relevant topic, and I am proud that it resulted in a product that has value to Blijf Groep. Hopefully, creating an understanding of people who commit domestic violence will contribute to stopping it permanently. With my graduation coming to an end and no concrete plans ahead, I am ready for the next adventure.

# Glossary

- **Ambulatory social worker**

Ambulatory social workers visit their clients at home. The condition for those involved to receive ambulatory care is that the home is safe enough to live in. In addition, both people involved will have conversations with the social worker. They teach their clients how violence occurs and what the risk factors are so they do not fall back into old patterns (Blijf Groep, 2020).

- **Expert by experience**

An expert by experience is someone who is trained to convert their own experience with domestic violence and their recovery process into helping others. Personal experience distinguishes an expert by experience from a social worker who does not have this experience (Boer et al., n.d.).

- **Proces facilitator**

Process facilitators provide case management and work guidance to social workers at Blijf Groep. They have individual supervision programs with the social workers. Furthermore, they create and provide training sessions on the theory of the Oranje Huis methodology (Blijf Groep, 2020).

- **Residential social worker**

A residential social worker works with those affected by domestic violence who are received in the shelter of Blijf Groep. They identify their client's social and legal bottlenecks and offer psychosocial and material assistance if necessary (Blijf Groep, 2020).

- **SKJ registered**

The SKJ is the Foundation Quality Register Youth for HBO and WO professionals who deal with children and youth (18-) in their daily practice. For SKJ registration, social workers need to demonstrate they have sufficient up-to-date knowledge or experience with their intended clients.

- **Supervision**

Every month the process facilitators have conversations with the social workers. During these conversations, the content and qualities of their work are discussed.

- **Systemic work**

Systemic work is a trajectory in which those involved in domestic violence should be taking part in the counseling process. By involving everyone in the counseling process, more insight is created into their roles in the system and their relationship with each other. In addition, this can provide insight into barriers that cause those involved to relapse into certain behaviors that lead to the pattern of violence (Blijf Groep, 2020).

- **Understanding**

In this thesis, understanding is defined as awareness, empathy, mental representation, and recognition (Begrijpen, 2020).

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# Appendices

## A. Project Brief

Exploring an understanding for the perpetrators of domestic violence.

Date: 05-09-2022 till 03-02-2023

### Supervisory Team

** chair	<u>Nynke Tromp</u>	dept. / section:	<u>DA</u>
** mentor	<u>Annemiek van Boelien</u>	dept. / section:	<u>DA</u>
2 <sup>nd</sup> mentor	<u>Janneke Vosse</u>		
	organisation: <u>BSJ Groep</u>		
	city: <u>Amsterdam</u>	country:	<u>the Netherlands</u>

Chair should request the IDE Board of Examiners for approval of a non-IDE mentor, including a motivation letter and c.v.

Second mentor only applies in case the assignment is hosted by an external organisation.

## Approval Project Brief

chair Nynke Tromp date 26 - 08 - 2022 signature Nynke Tromp - IO Digitally signed by Nynke Tromp - IO Date: 2022.08.26 16:50:02 +02'00'

**CHECK STUDY PROGRESS**  
To be filled in by the SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs), after approval of the project brief by the Chair. The study progress will be checked for a 2nd time just before the green light meeting.

Master electives no. of EC accumulated in total: 21 EC  
Of which, taking the conditional requirements into account, can be part of the exam programme: 21 EC  
List of electives obtained before the third semester without approval of the BoE

YES all 1<sup>st</sup> year master courses passed  
 NO missing 1<sup>st</sup> year master courses are:

name C. van der Bunt date 02 - 09 - 2022 signature C. van der Bunt Digitally signed by C. van der Bunt Date: 2022.09.02 14:29:51 +02'00'

## Introduction

Please describe, the context of your project, and address the main stakeholders (interests) within this context in a concise yet complete manner. Who are involved, what do they value and how do they currently operate within the given context? What are the main opportunities and limitations you are currently aware of (cultural- and social norms, resources (time, money, technology)).

More than 200,000 people are victims of serious or repeated domestic violence every year in the Netherlands (Huiselijk geweld, 2017). Yet there is a big taboo on this phenomenon and especially on the perpetrator of domestic violence.

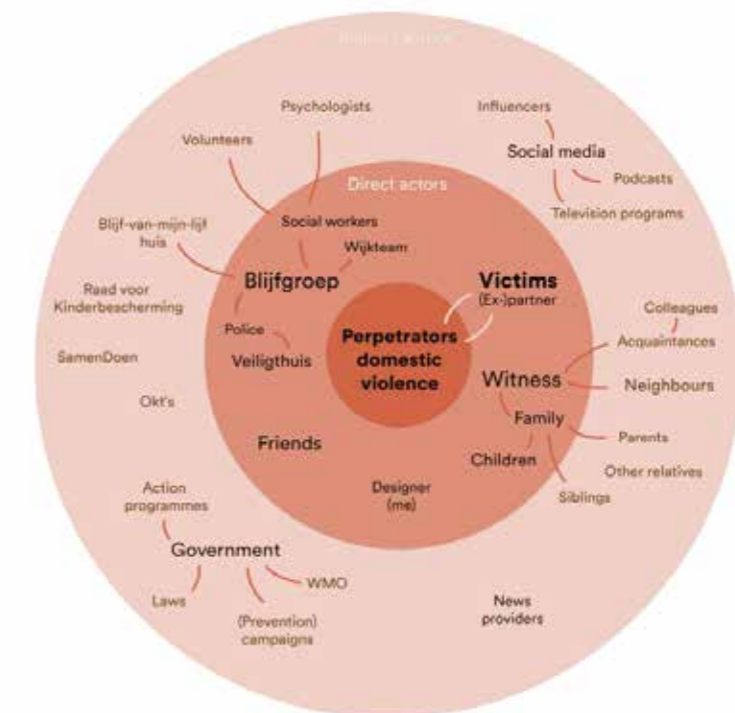
Domestic violence is violence perpetrated by someone from the victim's domestic circle. These can be partners, ex-partners, family members, relatives and family friends who usually have a power difference (Ministerie van Justitie, 2022). This ranges from belittling, humiliating or constantly checking someone's movements, to forbidding contact with family and friends. However, 60% of domestic violence is committed by a partner or ex-partner, with women being the largest group of victims (Huiselijk geweld, 2017).

There is a great stigma attached to domestic violence. For example, there is an image that domestic violence occurs mainly among the socio-economically fragile due to a lack of social and material status (SlachtofferWijzer, 2021). But it also manifests itself among the highly educated and the better off. A recent literature review shows that the relationship between financial dependence and intimate partner violence is very complex and that there are many other causes of intimate partner violence, such as the transmission of domestic violence from parent to child, neurological disorders, the balance of power between men and women and (youth) traumas (Janssen, 2022). Furthermore, domestic violence happens behind closed doors and victims hardly dare to speak up about

it. It is also difficult for the immediate environment to recognize or intervene in domestic violence. Nearly half of all Dutch people do not act out of shyness. Reasons for not acting out can be uncertainty about what they can do, doubt whether they see it correctly and/or fear because they cannot estimate how drastic the consequences will be (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, 2021).

Blijf Groep is one of the organizations that helps to stop domestic violence and creates safety through tailor-made assistance. They offer help to all those involved: victims, perpetrators (male ex-partners), children, witnesses and the environment (family and friends). They try to do this by identifying and discussing the problems and their causes. Blijf Groep helps them to build a safe life in the shelter or their own environment. They also deal with issues such as; How does domestic violence arise? And how can it be managed? (Stichting Blijf Groep, 2020). Their vision is to create sustainable security and break patterns of violence and to stop intergenerational transmission in the direct situation.

There are various ways in which domestic violence can be stopped. For example, by providing education about domestic violence in schools (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2021). Besides, there exist Blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuizen where victims are accommodated and helped through various methodologies and programs (Stichting Blijf Groep, 2020). Furthermore, a perpetrator can receive a restraining order. In these examples, the focus is mainly on the victims of domestic violence and their families. A very important, but often underexposed, part of stopping domestic violence is to hear and understand 'the other side of the story', namely the side of the perpetrator. This is now often not heard because of the image that society creates about the perpetrator of violence. Television programs and podcasts only tell the stories of the victims and the perpetrators are not named in government campaigns either (Moviera, n.d.). Therefore, during my graduation project, I want to explore what design can do in understanding the perpetrators of domestic violence.



All stakeholder who have contact with the person who has committed domestic violence

## Problem definition

Limit and define the scope and solution space of your project to one that is manageable within one Master Graduation Project of 30 EC (= 20 full time weeks or 100 working days) and clearly indicate what issue(s) should be addressed in this project.

Due to the current social debate about domestic violence, there is a stigma on the perpetrators of violence. A stigma is a characteristic that distinguishes people from others and stems from the enforcement of social norms (Dovidio et al., 2008). Within the stigma I am going to research, the people involved in domestic violence are divided into perpetrators and victims. The victim is seen as vulnerable and someone who needs help, while the perpetrator is seen as a 'bad guy' who willingly hurts his partner. In this case, the combination of self-stigma, structural stigmatization, and interpersonal stigmatization leads to a vicious circle (Vegt et al., n.d.). Resulting in no trajectory with the perpetrator, since society, social workers and clients don't understand the perpetrators. Therefore, they do not get help offered from authorities and do not dare to ask for help themselves anymore.

However, the perpetrator's perspective is just as important because:

1. Perpetrators are often victims too.
2. Punishing the perpetrators does not prevent and does not help to solve the situation.
3. To create sustainable safety, it is necessary to build a care relationship.

Furthermore, a distinction is made between two types of violence: intentional (deliberate) and non-intentional violence. In the case of intentional violence, the premise of the quarrels is to gain power over the partner. In practice, it appears that it is difficult to get a grip on intentional violence, and therefore, punishment is often the only solution (Barendregt et al., 2021). That is why during this project I will focus on non-intentional partner violence. Unintentional partner violence often arises from differences in opinions, values and norms that lead to conflicts and quarrels, resulting in mental, physical, or sexual violence.

## Assignment

State in 2 or 3 sentences what you are going to research, design, create and / or generate, that will solve (part of) the issue(s) pointed out in "problem definition". Then illustrate this assignment by indicating what kind of solution you expect and / or aim to deliver, for instance: a product, a product-service combination, a strategy illustrated through product or product-service combination ideas. In case of a Specialisation and/or Annotation, make sure the assignment reflects this/these.

I want to design an intervention that contributes to understanding the perpetrators of domestic violence (Dutch men between the ages of 18 and 35) to deal well with the stigma. In this way, violent offenders are more likely to be offered tailor-made help. To ensure that this can be achieved within the 100-day time frame, I will divide this issue into two sub-questions.

The two sub-questions are:

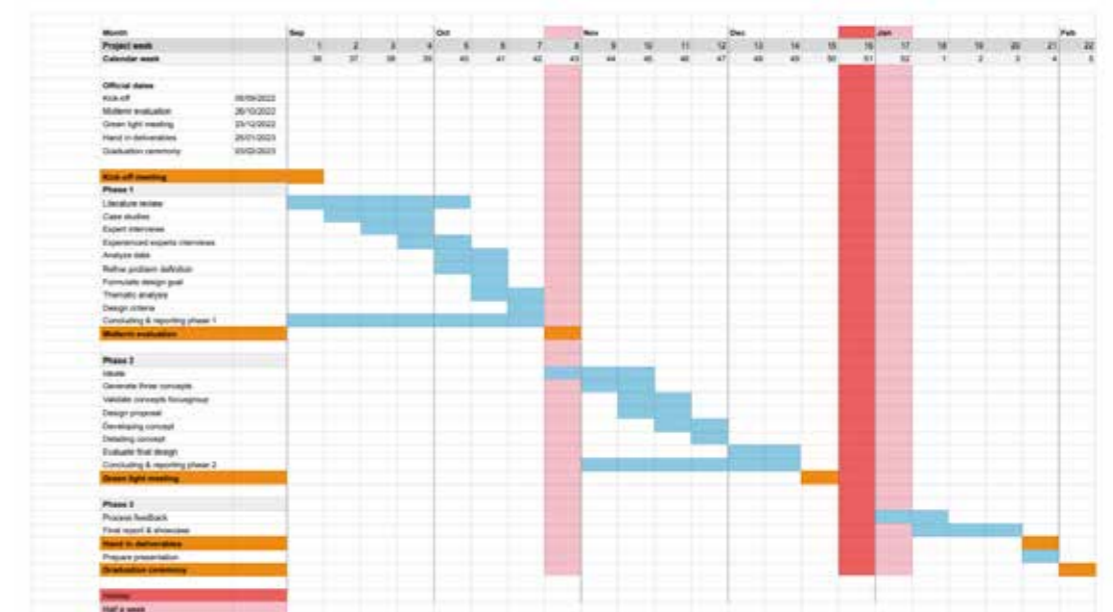
- 1a. Understanding the Stigma
  - How is the stigma built up (place, roles, assumptions, etc.)?
  - How is the stigma maintained (research self-stigmatization, structural stigmatization and interpersonal stigmatization resulting in vicious circles at different levels)?
- 1b. Nuancing the stigma
  - Is the stigma justified (general discourse of offenders)?
  - What shows that a perpetrator is more than a perpetrator?
2. Exploring interventions
  - What kind of interventions have a direct effect on changing image (what is the existing offer and what are the success factors)? (Arum et al., 2021)

I can imagine that a concrete intervention for this target group or its stakeholders (society, care providers and clients) is desirable. This could be in the form of a tool/ conversation starter or a strategy illustrated through a product. Furthermore, during my design process, I have to consider the emerging principles for designing for the taboo.

## Planning and approach

Include a Gantt Chart (replace the example below - more examples can be found in Manual 2) that shows the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings, and how you plan to spend your time. Please note that all activities should fit within the given net time of 30 EC = 20 full time weeks or 100 working days, and your planning should include a kick-off meeting, mid-term meeting, green light meeting and graduation ceremony. Illustrate your Gantt Chart by, for instance, explaining your approach, and please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any, for instance because of holidays or parallel activities.

start date 5 - 9 - 2022 end date 3 - 2 - 2023



Gantt Chart of the planning

In the research phase (phase 1) I plan to perform qualitative research. I will start with a literature review to get a clear overview of the current understanding of the problem. Next, I will perform qualitative research using a small number of case studies. Within these cases, I will visit Blijf Groep and conduct semi-structured interviews with experts (practitioners, employees of Blijf Groep, etc.) and experienced experts (perpetrators and victims). In these interviews I would like to explore the story behind each case, as well as understanding which resources/mechanisms allowed the perpetrator to receive help despite the stigma surrounding their situation. Based on this research I will refine the problem definition and formulate a design goal. Thereafter, I want to search for corresponding themes within this collected information (thematic analysis). These themes can help me in defining the design criteria and can inspire me toward idea directions.

In the second phase of the process, I will focus on the design proposal. I will explore potential design directions through brainstorming and ideation within each theme. After generating three different concepts, I will organize a focus group to validate the concepts. This focus group will give me more insights into the type of solution that is desirable which can also help me in formulating the final design proposal. After making the design proposal, I will further develop the concept and make a detailed design. Eventually, I will evaluate the final design through user testing and by interviewing stakeholders to see whether the design solves the predefined design goal. Finally, I will process this feedback.

In the final stage of my graduation project, I will spend most of my time finalizing my design and report. Furthermore, I will start preparing my final presentation so I can present everything clearly during the Graduation ceremony.

## Motivation and personal ambitions

Explain why you set up this project, what competences you want to prove and learn. For example: acquired competences from your MSc programme, the elective semester, extra-curricular activities (etc.) and point out the competences you have yet developed. Optionally, describe which personal learning ambitions you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project, such as: in depth knowledge a on specific subject, broadening your competences or experimenting with a specific tool and/or methodology. Stick to no more than five ambitions.

I wanted to graduate in a subject in which Social design and Designing for Taboo coincided. I started looking at various relevant topics and organizations and eventually ended up at Blijf Groep. They asked me if I could conduct research on 'Creating understanding for domestic violence perpetrators'. Lack of understanding for the perpetrators of the violence is something they often encounter within their organization, among the victims, their employees and society.

I immediately found this topic very interesting to research because it responds to a large social debate. Besides, the issue contains several interesting elements to explore further which can lead to different design directions, which makes the project challenging. This is also a premise of prior projects I have done. For example, I choose different courses in which tools were taught to research these kinds of topics. I followed VIP to learn how to 'design' the vision underlying the design, which taught me to view societal issues from a different perspective. I also took courses such as Culture Sensitive Design and Social

Venturing in which I learned tools to research taboo topics and designed with and for target groups I was not familiar with. Furthermore, I did an internship at Ink Social Design where I experienced the design process in practice and learned how best to do research, conduct interviews and where pitfalls and opportunities lie which I can use in finding suitable solutions.

My personal learning ambitions for this project are:

1. I want to learn how to better analyze qualitative data and synthesize it from different sources of research.
2. I want to develop my interview skills. I want to use different kinds of communication tools to conduct (personal) interviews that can help me to be more sensitive toward the participants. Besides, I need to try to stay away from any biases about the people I am going to interview.
3. I want to learn to present my research and (design) results in an understandable, accessible way. I, therefore, want to take enough time to structure my presentations and make them visual. I also need to work on communicating my story.
4. I want to learn to go through a social design process individually. I want to find my 'design identity' and be able to express more eloquently who I am and what I want to achieve or can contribute as a designer. Therefore, it is also important that I stick to the research process that I have drawn up myself.
5. I have to learn to deal with my perfectionism so that I don't linger too long on certain parts of the project. I want to dare to make decisions without spending too much time on them or working out everything in detail.

# B. Three concepts

## Concept 1: The workshop

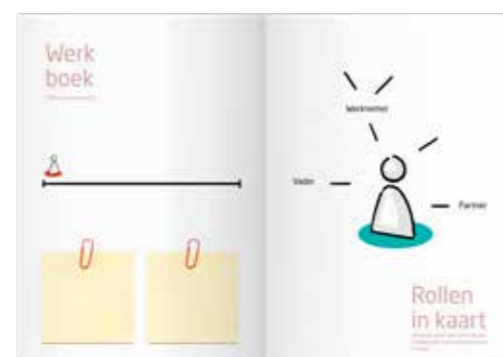
The workshop encourages residential social workers to have an open conversation about those involved in domestic violence.

### Purpose

The workshop aims to reduce prejudices about those involved in domestic violence so that residential social workers are not scared when they come into contact with them. This way, they can offer them tailored help.

### Operation

The residential social workers receive a workbook two weeks in advance with various assignments whose outcomes can be used as input for the workshop day. This workbook challenges them to think about situations they have experienced as difficult concerning those who commit domestic violence. During the workshop, existing situations are discussed, the different roles of those involved are identified, prejudices are talked about and they give each other tips. Based on open discussions, a new picture is formed about those involved who commit domestic violence. At the end of the workshop, the residential social workers will have enough starting points that they can use to shape their care trajectories.



Concept 1: The workshop

## Concept 2: The toolbox

This toolbox provides tools to the social worker, which support them to equally engage both stakeholders of a domestic violence situation in a systems conversation.

### Purpose

The goal of the toolbox is that both involved in domestic violence feel heard during a systems conversation by residential social workers.

### Functioning

This toolbox helps residential social workers identify the background and experiences of both parties involved during the system's conversation. By having the people involved draw or write their stories, similarities and differences become visible. These can then be discussed using the topic cards. During this discussion, patterns emerge: What are the triggers, how can the other person recognize these triggers, and what is needed to prevent the situation from escalating (again).

## Concept 3: The strategy

This guide offers a customized extension of the systemic work method for residential social workers, focussed on both stakeholders.

### Purpose

To expand the counseling process so that those who commit domestic violence are offered a timely and equal counseling pathway, just like their partner.

### Operation

This visual guide goes through the counseling process in steps. With a new case, the residential social worker can follow this guide and complete it themselves. For each stage, two options are shown. The social worker can then choose one option based on the situation of the people involved. When the guide is completed the social worker has created a customized pathway that she can use for her clients. Furthermore, the guide offers tips for Blijf Groep on how they can expand the help offerings for those who have committed domestic violence.



Concept 2: The toolbox



Concept 3: The strategy

# C. The initial design of the workbook



## Discovering

The first two pages of the workbook serve primarily as an introduction. It explains the purpose of the workshop and why it is necessary to attend it. Besides, the social workers can fill in their name and position.

Goal: Getting an understanding of the purpose of the workshop.



## Reflecting

In the first assignment, the social workers reflect on themselves. They describe how they see themselves as a person and as social workers.

Goal: Gaining more insight into themselves.



**Reflecting**  
 The social workers reflect on the different roles of those involved in domestic violence.  
 Goal: Putting their role as a social workers into perspective.



**Reflecting**  
 The social workers reflect on two situations they experienced as challenging with the person committing domestic violence.  
 Goal: Creating an understanding of their experienced difficulties.



**Reflecting**  
 They consider the risk and protective factors that influence the person committing domestic violence.  
 Goal: Creating an understanding of the person committing domestic violence.



**Orientating**  
 The social workers think about how they could improve their contact with the person committing domestic violence.  
 Goal: Thinking about potential solutions.





### Reflecting

In the final assignment, the social workers write factors on post-its that they believe cause the person committing domestic violence to be insufficiently involved in the counseling process.

Goal: Structuring their thoughts.



### New goals

Social workers note the main points of interest for the initial phone call with the person who committed domestic violence.

Goal: Establishing personal focal points.



### Extra

This section contains additional materials for social workers to gain more knowledge about the person committing domestic violence. In addition, three companies are described as they can refer their client to during the initial phone call.



### New goals

Social workers set three goals for themselves during the counseling process to better engage with people committing domestic violence in the future.

Goal: Setting personal goals.

## D. The design of the workshop presentation



**B** Zich op mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen



Training

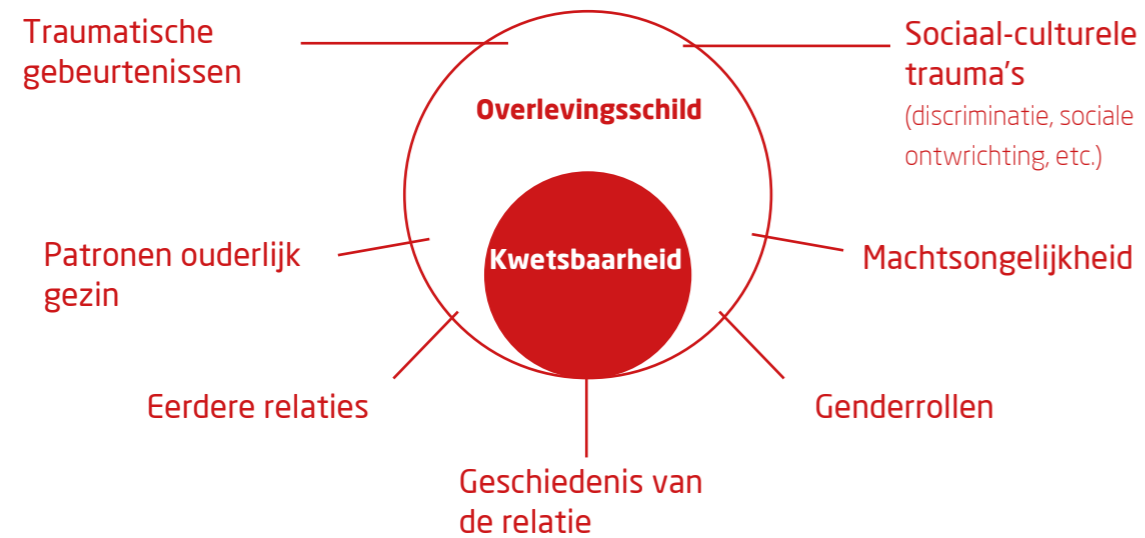
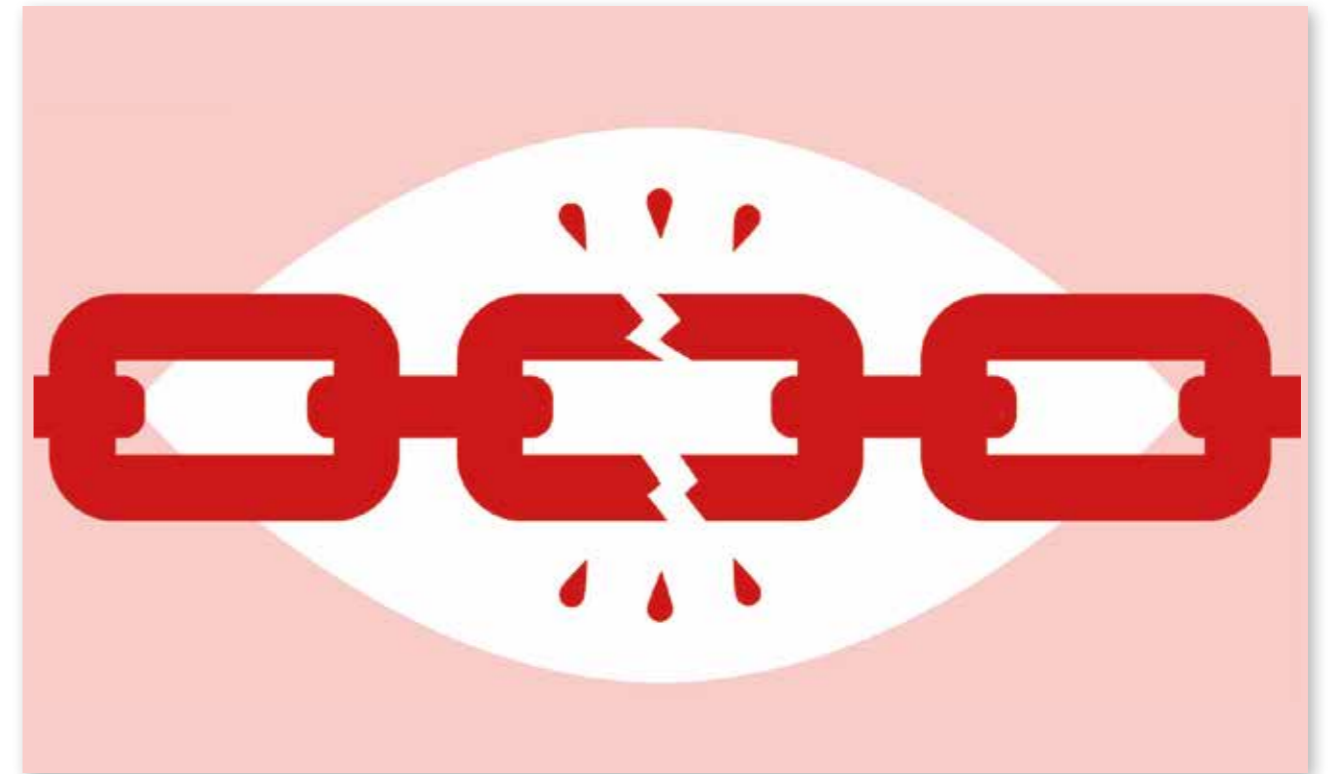
**De kwetsbaarheidscyclus**

Ervaringen uit de kindertijd, de eerdere relatie en de huidige relatie kunnen een **kwetsbare plek** veroorzaken bij degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd



## De kwetsbaarheidscyclus

- Ruzies ontstaan doordat **een van de partners zich gekwetst voelt**, terwijl de ander dat niet in de gaten heeft
- Die nare ervaringen zorgen voor **een kwetsbare plek**
- Hierdoor **reageer je heftiger op iets wat gebeurd of gezegd is**



## Relevante vragen

- Wat zijn jouw kwetsbaarheden (behoeften en angsten)?
- Wat is jouw reactie wanneer deze kwetsbaarheden getriggerd worden?
- Hoe reageert jouw (ex-)partner op jouw kwetsbaarheden?
- Wat zijn de kwetsbaarheden (behoeften en angsten) van jouw (ex-)partner?
- Wat is jouw reactie op je (ex-)partner?

Waarom de hersenen van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd zich in de 'tolerantieruimte' bevinden, blijft men tijdens een conflict voldoende kalm om zich te kunnen inleven in de ander en een oplossing te bedenken. Bij te veel stress kan men uit balans raken.

• Het reactiebrein kan de overhand nemen en reageert met een overtuigingsstrategie wat bestaat uit vechten of vluchten (overprikkeling). Dit kan leiden tot onnodig agressief gedrag.

• Als vechten of vluchten niet werkt, kan het brein overschakelen naar beheersing (onderprikkeling).

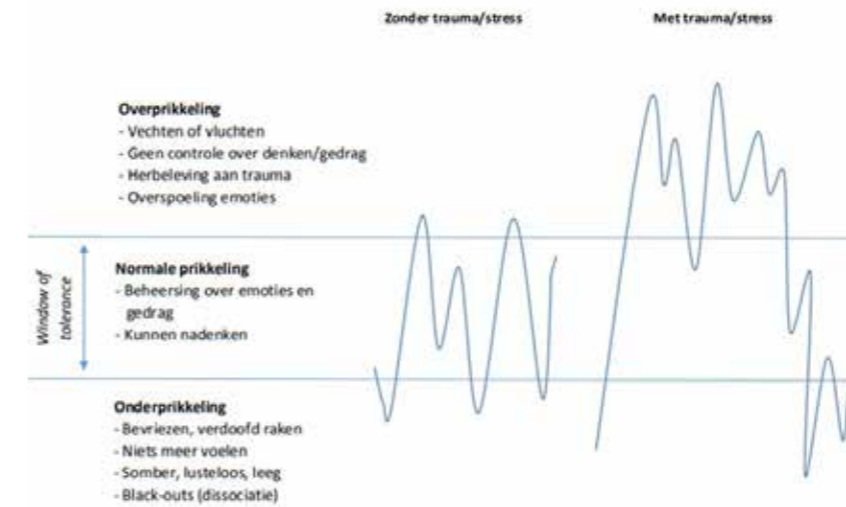
Het is noodzakelijk om stress te onderzoeken om de oorzaken van het geweld te bepalen.

**MODULE 3**  
De invloed van **stress** op het ontstaan van geweld



- Kun je voorbeelden van stress noemen die voorkomen in jouw leven?
- Denk je dat dit chronische stress is?
- Vind je dat er bij jou of je (ex-)partner sprake is van verhoogde stress (overprikkeling)?
- Vind je dat er bij jou of je (ex-)partner sprake is van lage stress (onderprikkeling)?
- Wat voor invloed heeft dit op jullie relatie?

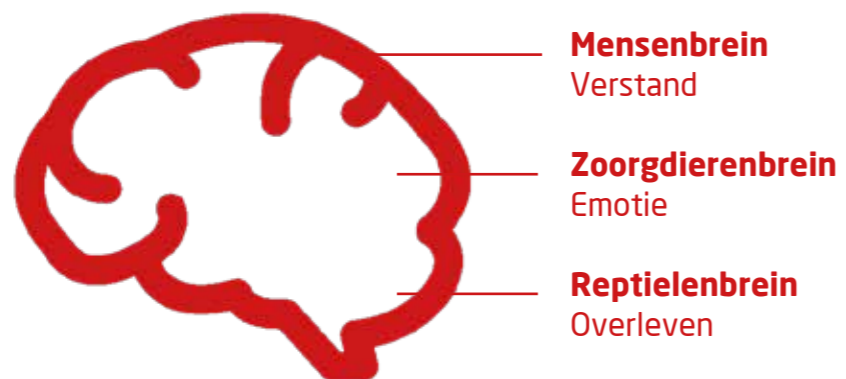
## Window of tolerance



(De Waag, 2022)

## Het in kaart brengen van stress

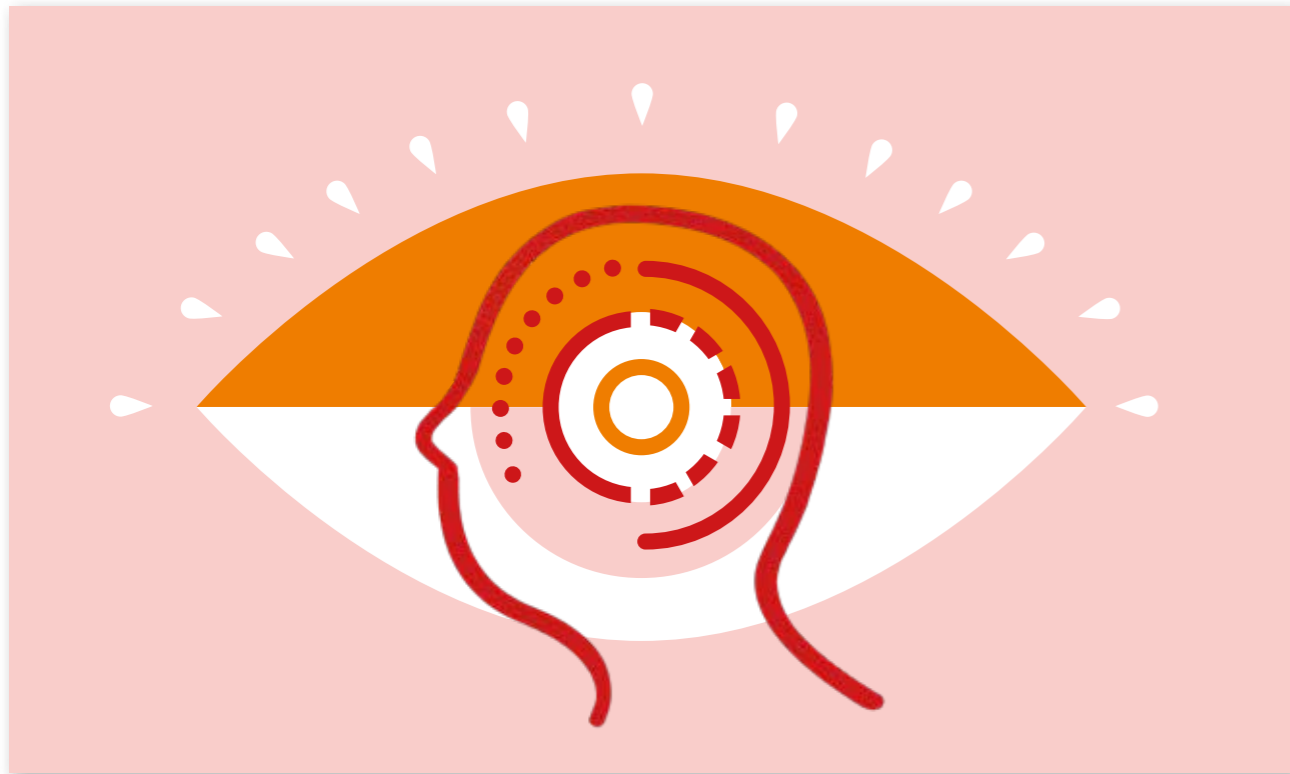
Stress is een factor die ervoor kan zorgen dat iemand in **de overlevingsstand** terecht komt. De hersenen spelen hierin een rol:



## Window of tolerance

Wanneer de hersenen van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd zich in de 'tolerantieruimte' bevinden, blijft men tijdens een conflict **voldoende kalm om zich te kunnen inleven in de ander** en een oplossing te bedenken.

Het is daarom noodzakelijk om te onderzoeken wat ervoor zorgt dat de hersenen hieruit raken.



### Relevante vragen

- Kun je voorbeelden van stress noemen die voorkomen in jouw leven?
- Denk je dat dit chronische stress is?
- Vind je dat er bij jou of je (ex-)partner sprake is van verhoogde stress (overprikkeling)?
- Vind je dat er bij jou of je (ex-)partner sprake is van lage stress (onderprikkeling)?
- Wat voor invloed heeft dit op jullie relatie?



### De casus

- Heeft iemand (een situatie) binnen een casus uit je werkboek die je wilt bespreken?
- Rollen:
  - de **maatschappelijk werker**
  - degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd**
  - de overige deelnemers zijn **observator**



## Evaluatie observersatoren

- Wat valt jullie op?
- Welke vragen blijven hangen?
- Herkennen jullie (onderdelen van) de themakaarten?
- Wat heeft de persoon die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd nodig in deze situatie?



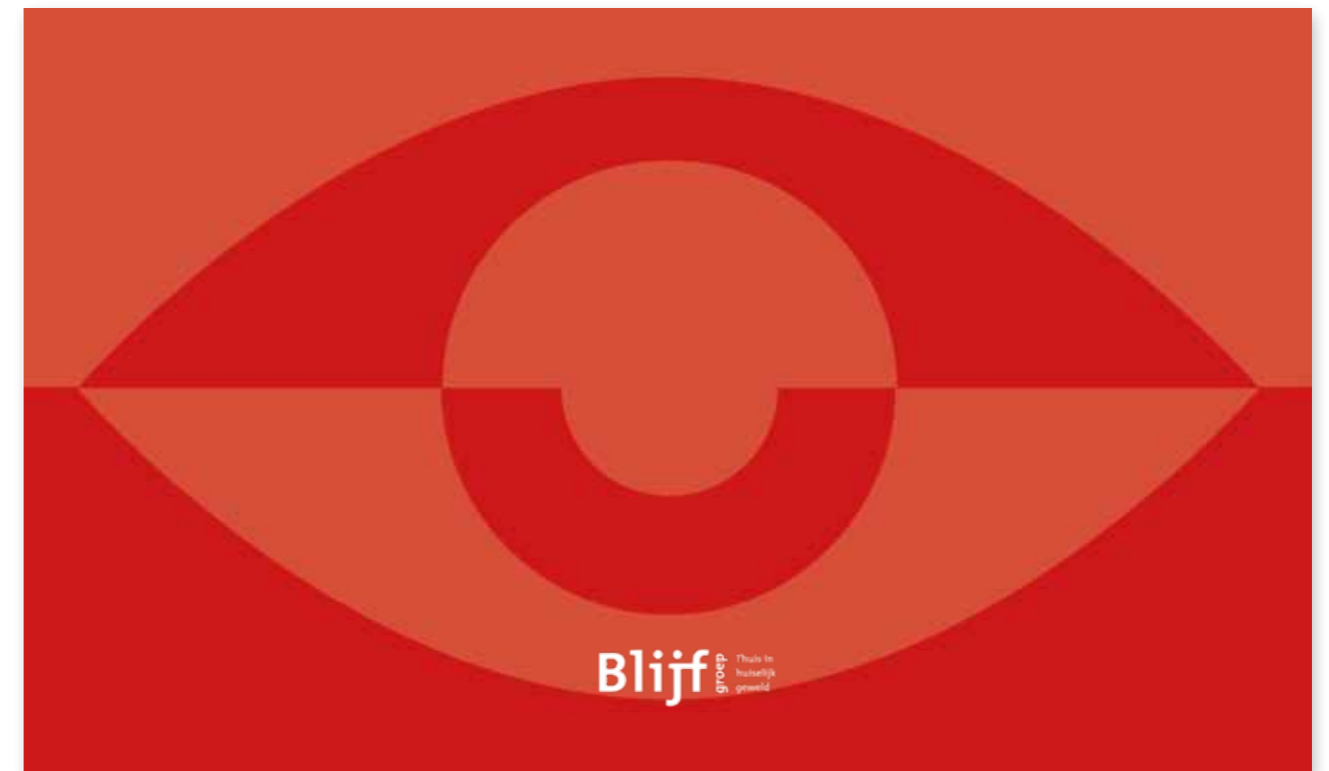
## Evalueren

- Wat viel **de observatoren** op?
- Lukte het om de **themakaarten** toe te passen?



## Evaluatie maatschappelijkwerker en degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd

- Wat vinden de **maatschappelijk werker** en **degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd** van de situatie?
- Wat ging er goed en wat ging er minder goed?



# E. Reflection forms prototype test

## Hallo!

Leuk dat je meedoet met de pilot workshop over mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen.

Ter voorbereiding van de workshop wil ik je vragen om dit werkboek, bestaande uit zes (kleine) opdrachten, in te vullen. Dit werkboek helpt jou om alvast na te denken over:

- Jouw rol als hulpverlener
- De rollen van de betrokkenen van geweld
- De risico- en beschermende factoren
- Jouw contact met mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen tijdens het hulptraject
- De factoren die invloed hebben op dit contact

De resultaten van dit werkboek gebruik je als input voor de workshop.

## Vorbereidingen

Dit werkboek dient ingevuld te worden voor de start van de workshop op **13 December, om 14.30 uur in het Oranje Huis te Amsterdam.**

De opdrachten zijn een aanzet tot reflectie, maar neem vooral de vrijheid om ze op jouw eigen manier uit te voeren. Als je ergens meer ruimte nodig hebt of het anders wilt doen, mag dat.

Let op: de resultaten uit opdracht 6 van het werkboek worden gebruikt als input van de workshop. Indien het werkboek in zijn totaal om te veel tijd vraagt, is het dus handig om in ieder geval opdracht 6 in te vullen.

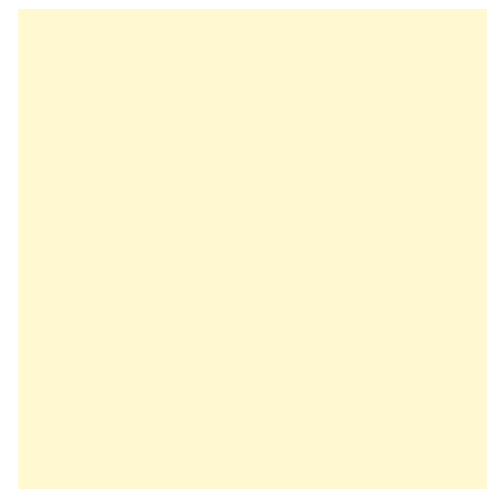
Instruction form that was included when testing the workbook.

## Extra

Omdat dit een pilot workshop is, ben ik erg benieuwd naar jouw feedback. Hieronder kan je post-its vinden die je kan gebruiken om de feedback die jij voor mij hebt over het werkboek en de workshop op te schrijven. Jouw feedback is erg waardevol om de workshop voor toekomstige deelnemers verder te ontwikkelen.

**Graag dit werkboek en jouw ingevulde post-its meenemen naar de workshop.**

Heel veel plezier en tot volgende week!  
Imme



## Reflectieformulier

Dankjewel voor je deelname aan de pilot workshop over mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen. Ik ben erg benieuwd naar jouw feedback zodat ik de workshop verder kan ontwikkelen. Zou je daarom dit reflectieformulier voor mij willen invullen? Alvast bedankt!

	Helemaal oneens				Helemaal eens
De inhoud van de workshop was relevant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De verschillende onderdelen van de workshop waren duidelijk en helder	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De workshop sloot aan op mijn voorkennis over mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Het niveau van de workshop was goed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik heb het gevoel dat ik tijdens deze workshop nieuwe kennis heb opgedaan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De duur van de workshop was goed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik kan de themakaarten gebruiken in mijn werk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De persoonlijke doelen die ik aan het einde van de workshop heb opgesteld zijn nuttig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou de workshop aanbevelen aan mijn collega's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aan het einde van de workshop heb ik voldoende handvatten om mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen in het hulptraject te betrekken	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou graag nog een aanvulling willen krijgen op deze workshop over andere onderdelen in de behandeling van mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Wat vind je van de voorbereiding van de workshop met behulp van het werkboek?

.....  
 .....

Wat zijn andere thema's die je graag besproken zou willen hebben in de workshop?

.....  
 .....

Heb je tips voor het verbeteren van de workshop?

.....  
 .....

Heb je nog andere opmerkingen?

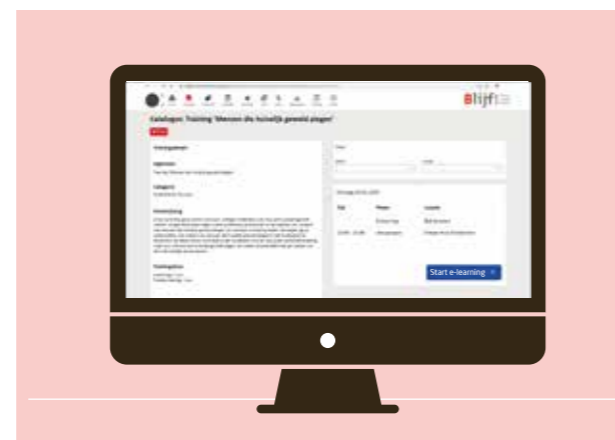
.....  
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Reflection form for reflecting on the initial concept of the workshop.

# F. Use scenario e-learning



1. Social workers can register for the workshop about people who commit domestic violence online through the platform Blijf Groeien.



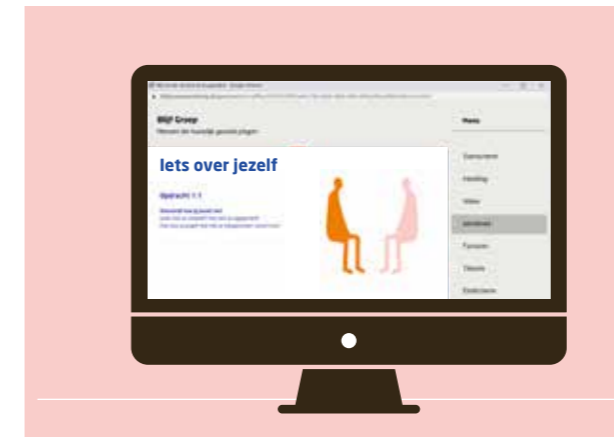
2. The workshop consists of two parts: an e-learning and a physical workshop. Social workers must first complete the e-learning before they may participate in the workshop.



3. The e-learning is online on the platform Blijf Groeien and consists of two parts. The first part is about the workbook and the second part is about the theme cards.



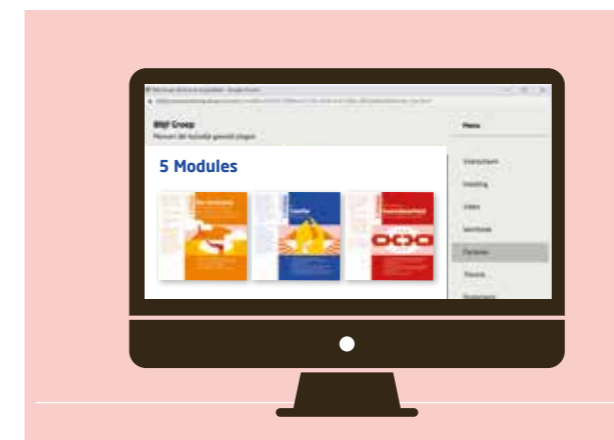
4. The social workers can also print the materials or pick them up at Blijf Groep in Amsterdam.



5. The social workers start with the first part of the e-learning which consists of filling in the workbook.



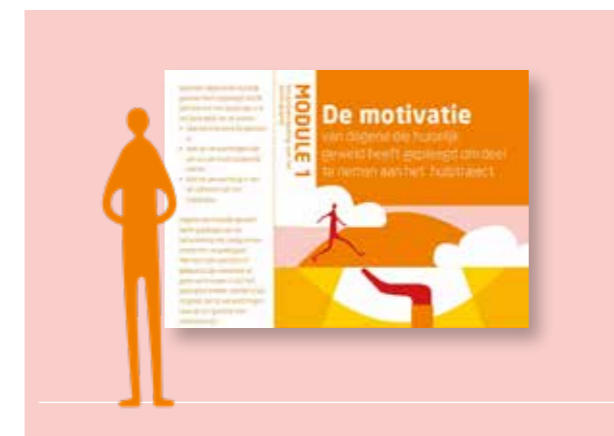
6. The e-learning is complete when social workers filled in the factors that influence the involvement of the person who committed domestic violence in the counseling process (assignment 6).



7. The second part of the e-learning consists of the theory about people who commit domestic violence. Within this theory, the topics of the theme cards are covered.



8. Social workers can choose which theme cards to complete.



9. The workbook and theme cards are discussed in the existing training programs of Blijf Groep, so systemic work is applied from the start.



10. After completing the e-learning, the social workers have gained access to the theme cards through Blijf Groeien.



## G. The final design of the workbook



**Zicht op**  
mensen die  
**huiselijk geweld**  
plegen





"Plegers hebben alleen maar te verliezen: eventueel de relatie, macht, aanzien, dominantie, kinderen, huis en werk. Want als jij een huisverbod krijgt of er komt een scheiding, dan moet de man vertrekken: **Wat is er dan te winnen?** Praten met een hulpverlener is ongeveer je eigen glazen in gooien. Je kan alleen maar minder: minder macht, minder aanzien. Daar ga je toch niet aan meewerken."

René Haring, ervaringsdeskundige

## Inhoudsopgave

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Met behulp van dit werkboek creëer jij zicht op mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen in het hulptraject. In dit werkboek wordt gesproken over 'degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd'. Dit gaat niet over degene die bij Blijf Groep om hulp heeft gevraagd al kan deze persoon ook geweld hebben ervaren.

\* Het invullen en doorlezen van dit werkboek kost ongeveer 2 uur.

## Doel werkboek

Het werkboek vul je in ter voorbereiding op het hulptraject met mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen. Je gaat reflecteren op:

- Jouw rol als maatschappelijk werker.
- De rollen van iemand die geweld pleegt.
- De risico- en beschermende factoren.
- Jullie contact tijdens het hulptraject.

Na het invullen van het werkboek heb je duidelijk in kaart gebracht waarom degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd onvoldoende wordt betrokken in het hulptraject.

De opdrachten zijn een aanzet tot reflectie, maar neem vooral de vrijheid om ze op jouw eigen manier uit te voeren. Als je ergens meer ruimte nodig hebt of het anders wilt doen, kan dat. Je vult het werkboek voor jezelf in en je hoeft de uitkomsten niet met anderen te delen.

### Themakaarten

Achterin het werkboek bevinden zich twaalf themakaarten. De themakaarten bevatten achtergrondkennis over mensen die

huiselijk geweld plegen. Daarnaast bevatten de themakaarten vragen die je kunt stellen tijdens het hulptraject aan de betrokkenen van huiselijk geweld om het ontstaan en voortduren van geweld in kaart te brengen. Deze zijn verdeeld in vijf modules:

#### MODULE 1

Een gespreksopenering voor het eerste gesprek.

#### MODULE 2

De achtergrond van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd.

#### MODULE 3

De triggers die het geweld veroorzaken.

#### MODULE 4

De geweldsdynamiek tussen de betrokkenen.

#### MODULE 5

(Nieuw) contact met de (ex-)partner.

Tijdens het hulptraject kun je de volgorde van de modules aanhouden, maar het is ook mogelijk om niet alle themakaarten uit te voeren of deze in een andere volgorde te doorlopen.

Veel succes!

"Het verhaal van het slachtoffer moet serieus genomen worden. Echter is het wel belangrijk om te onderzoeken hoe reëel de angst voor haar (ex-)partner is en waar het door ontstaat. Uiteindelijk gaan de meeste vrouwen na het hulptraject weer terug naar hun (ex-)partner, daarom moet hij **gedurende het hele hulptraject betrokken worden** en moeten wij als hulpverlening ook luisteren naar zijn kant van het verhaal."

Psychiater, de Waag



## Kennis en begrip

Het belang van het betrekken van de persoon die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd in het hulptraject.

Familie, relatie en individuele invloeden zijn voorspellers van huiselijk geweld. Met name genderongelijkheid, het ervaren van veel stress of het aanraken van kwetsbare gevoelens zijn aanleiding tot het ontstaan van huiselijk geweld. De geweldsdynamiek die vervolgens begint tussen de betrokkenen kan leiden tot een vicieuze cirkel die het geweld in stand houdt.

Om huiselijk geweld te stoppen moeten beide partners betrokken worden in het hulptraject, als de veiligheid dit toe laat. Het is daarbij belangrijk om de betrokkenen van huiselijk geweld binair te benaderen en behandelen. Zij dragen namelijk bij aan het in stand houden van geweld, ervaren de gevolgen ervan en kunnen dus beiden een aandeel hebben in het constructief stoppen. Wanneer beide partners in het hulptraject worden betrokken, wordt het geweld eerder

opgelost en vervallen de betrokkenen minder snel in oude patronen in een (nieuwe) relatie na het hulptraject.

Meer kennis en begrip voor beide betrokkenen onder maatschappelijk werkers is nodig voor een integrale aanpak. Wanneer je meer begrip hebt voor de situatie van jouw cliënten, is het eenvoudiger om je open en meervoudig partijdig op te stellen tijdens het eerste contact. Hierdoor voelt de persoon die zich schuldig heeft gemaakt aan huiselijk geweld zich gehoord en is de kans op een actieve deelname aan het hulptraject groter. Systemisch werken kan dan in de praktijk worden toegepast. Dit draagt bij aan het hoofddoel van de Oranje Huis Aanpak om huiselijk geweld duurzaam te stoppen en de directe veiligheid van de betrokken te waarborgen.

# Dit werkboek is van...

**Naam**

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**Functie**

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**Teken jezelf**



# Iets over jezelf

## Opdracht 1.1

Omschrijf hoe jij jezelf ziet.

Waar kom je vandaan? Hoe ben je opgegroeid?

Wat is je karakter?



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## Opdracht 1.2

Omschrijf hoe jij jezelf ziet als maatschappelijk werker bij Blijf Groep.

Waar loop je tegenaan in je werk? Wat gaat goed? Wat gaat slecht?

Wat zijn jouw verwachtingen van jezelf? Wat verwacht je van jouw collega's?

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# De betrokkenen

## Opdracht 2

Schrijf bij elke betrokkene de naam met bijbehorende rollen.

Tijdens het hulptraject kom je, naast jouw cliënt, ook in aanraking met andere betrokkenen bij het huiselijk geweld, zoals de betrokken (ex-)partner, de kinderen, etc. Denk aan een casus waar je momenteel aan werkt. Wie zijn deze betrokkenen en welke verschillende rollen hebben zij?



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**Degene die om hulp heeft gevraagd bij Blijf Groep:**  
Bijvoorbeeld: vervult de rol van moeder, partner, etc.



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**De betrokken (ex-)partner:**



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**zij:**



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# Mindmap

## Opdracht 3.1

**Maak een mindmap van de risicofactoren.**  
Wat zijn volgens jou risicofactoren die er toe kunnen leiden dat mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen in deze rollen terecht komen? Denk bijvoorbeeld aan invloeden die voortkomen uit familie, cultuur, het individu, het milieu, etc.

**Individueel:**  
Bijvoorbeeld: woonsituatie, persoonlijkheidsstoornis, etc.

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## Opdracht 3.2

**Maak een mindmap van de beschermende factoren.**  
Wat zijn de beschermende factoren die ervoor zorgen dat mensen niet in die rollen terecht komen? Denk bijvoorbeeld aan zorgzaamheid, mogelijkheid tot zelfreflectie, verwerking van trauma, etc.



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# Jouw ervaring

## Opdracht 4.1

### Beschrijf een casus op onderstaande tijdlijn.

Denk aan een bestaande casus waarbij jij ook contact had met degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd. Teken of beschrijf deze casus kort, inclusief de contact momenten die je had met degene die het geweld pleegde.



De tijdlijn loopt door op de volgende pagina →

**Plak stickers bij twee situaties** in deze casus waarbij jij het lastig vond om de persoon die huiselijk geweld pleegde te betrekken in het hulptraject.



## Opdracht 4.2

Bekijk de twee situaties uit de tijdlijn van opdracht 4.1 waar je een sticker bij hebt geplakt en beantwoord de volgende vragen.

### Situatie 1

Wat was de situatie?

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Waar liep je tegenaan tijdens het hulptraject?

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Wat heb je er van geleerd?

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Wat betekent dit voor je huidige manier van werken?

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## Situatie 2



Wat was de situatie?

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Waar liep je tegenaan tijdens het  
hulptraject?

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Wat heb je er van geleerd?

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Wat betekent dit voor je huidige manier  
van werken?

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# Wat als...

## Opdracht 5

Denk na over hoe de twee situaties waar je op gereflecteerd hebt in positieve zin veranderd zouden kunnen worden.

Hier kun je ook dingen opschrijven waar je helaas geen invloed op hebt, maar die wel meespelen in het contact tussen jou en mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen. Wat als je een toverstaf had? Wat zou je dan veranderen?



"Er hoeft maar een ding gezegd te worden: **'Ik snap heel goed wat jij bedoelt en voelt. Weet dat'**. Meer hoeft je niet te zeggen terwijl dat zo veel meerwaarde heeft..."

Ervaringsdeskundige

Teken of schrijf hier hoe jij de twee situaties zou willen veranderen.



# Persoonlijke reflectie

## Opdracht 6

Nu je alle opdrachten hebt gedaan is het handig om je gedachten te structureren. Dit doe je met behulp van een aantal post-its (zie de pagina hiernaast).

**Op de post-its schrijf je de factoren die er volgens jou voor zorgen dat degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd onvoldoende bij het hulptraject wordt betrokken.**

Denk bijvoorbeeld aan:

- De eigenschappen van mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen.
- Jezelf als maatschappelijk werker.
- De manier waarop het hulptraject is vormgegeven.
- Omgevingsfactoren, etc.



**Factoren** die invloed hebben op het betrekken van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd in het hulptraject.

# Aantekeningen



“De meeste plegers hebben spijt en een kort lontje, maar willen vooral weer heel graag contact met hun kinderen en misschien ook wel met hun partner. **Perspectief daarin is heel belangrijk.** Ik zie hier namelijk veel gefrustreerde mannen die zeggen dat ze aan zichzelf werken maar niks horen. Elk appje wat ze sturen wordt uigelegd als stalking of grensoverschrijdend. Daar word je wanhopig van.”

Psychiater, de Waag

# Aantekeningen

30



"Niemand is ooit een relatie begonnen met het doel om te mishandelen. Dus wat is er eigenlijk gebeurd? Hoe zit het? Als hulpverlener open staan voor de andere kant van het verhaal is heel waardevol."

Psychiater, de Waag

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# Extra

Er bestaan verschillende podcasts, documentaires en informatiebronnen over mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen.

Op deze pagina staan een aantal interessante kijk en luister tips.

## Podcasts

**'Ik sla mijn vrouw'**  
Omroep Brabant

**#056 Rene Haring - plegers van huiselijk geweld**  
Timm Consultancy

**Niet jouw schuld - partnergeweld**  
Act4respect

## Documentaires

**2Doc: Man Made**  
NPO

**Rene pleegde huiselijk geweld: had hij eerder hulp moeten krijgen?**  
RTV Oost

**Naslagwerk webinar 'Inzet van ervaringsdeskundige ex-plegers: wat werkt?' video-opname, Q&A en hand-out**  
Moviera



## Hulpaanbod voor mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen.

Twee organisaties die speciaal zijn opgericht voor mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen zijn 'Agressie, en daarna' en 'De Pion'.

### Agressie, en daarna

Agressie, en daarna zet ervaringsdeskundigen in om vragen van betrokkenen van huiselijk geweld te beantwoorden. Verder bieden ze zelfhulpgroepen, lotgenoten contact, begeleiding, ondersteuning, voorlichting en workshops aan voor mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen.

info@agressieendaarna.nl  
Tel: 040-2985752

Verder kunnen mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen doorverwezen worden naar **de Waag**. Zij bieden een hulptraject aan die speciaal is vormgegeven om hen te helpen.

info@dewaagutrecht.nl  
Tel: 030-272 06 85

### De Pion

De Pion erkent dat agressie en machteloosheid bij iedereen de overhand kunnen nemen, maar dat hier een stigma op heerst. Daarom bieden zij supportgroepen en workshops aan waarin zij op gelijkwaardige basis iedereen bij staan die de geweldscyclus wil beëindigen.

info@de-pion.nl  
Tel: 088 3744 744

Je hebt gereflecteerd op het hulptraject met degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd. In het volgende gedeelte van het werkboek wordt uitgelegd hoe je contact kan leggen door middel van motiverende gespreksvoering. Achterin het werkboek bevinden zich de themakaarten die jou kunnen ondersteunen tijdens dit contact.

## Contact maken

Bij het contact maken met degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd kan gebruik worden gemaakt van motiverende gespreksvoering. Dit draagt bij aan:

- Het ontwikkelen van de motivatie van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd om deel te nemen aan het hulptraject.
- Het creëren van een plan om verandering te realiseren.

Ten eerste moeten de verwachtingen van de betrokkenen van huiselijk geweld in kaart worden gebracht. Het is belangrijk om te communiceren dat je er bent voor de persoon die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd om hun problemen binnen de gestelde termijn op te lossen. Probeer hierbij de motivatie en de betrokkenheid van (eventuele) kinderen in kaart te brengen.

Tijdens het contact maken met degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd is het belangrijk dat de 'boosheid' wordt genormaliseerd. De weerstand die optreedt kan daarom worden benoemd.

Verder kan het als maatschappelijk werker van groot belang zijn dat je naar het verhaal van de persoon die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd luistert en valideert wat er wordt gezegd. Benoem waar mogelijk de goede intentie of de lijdensdruk die ervaren worden.

Daarnaast wordt degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd door het stellen van vragen gestimuleerd om eigen wensen en plannen te bedenken. Om dit te waarborgen kan gebruik worden gemaakt van de techniek dubbelzijdig reflectief luisteren.

Dubbelzijdig reflectief luisteren is beredeneerd gissen naar wat iemand bedoelt en dit als samenvatting terug geven. Vaak zijn mensen ambivalent over iets wat ze zeggen of denken en kijken ze op twee manieren naar de situatie.

## Dubbelzijdig reflectief luisteren

Tijdens een dubbelzijdige reflectie wordt benoemd wanneer iemand ambivalent is.

Voordelen van reflectief luisteren zijn:

- Degene die huiselijk geweld pleegt voelt zich gehoord en begrepen.
- De persoon is geneigd om verder te vertellen aangezien een reflectie wordt beantwoord met een bevestiging ("Ja, precies...").

Twee voorbeelden van een dubbelzijdige reflectie tijdens het hulptraject zijn:

- 'Ik ben niet anders dan mijn vrienden. Wat is er mis met af en toe even goed stoom afblazen?' Hierop kan je reageren met: 'Aan de ene kant is stoom afblazen goed, aan de andere kant heeft de vorm waarin dit is gebeurd ook nadelen gehad'.
- 'Je zult wel vinden dat ik niet meer alleen moet zijn met mijn kinderen, maar dat doe ik dus mooi wel!' Hierop kan je reageren met: 'Aan de ene kant wil je het gedrag veranderen, en tegelijkertijd wil je ook een goede vader zijn'.

Dubbelzijdig reflectief luisteren is niet hetzelfde als papegaaien. Papegaaien is het letterlijk herhalen wat iemand vertelt. Dit kan irritatie oproepen waardoor het gesprek stil valt. Een reflectie begint daarom niet met de volgende zinnen 'Ik hoor je zeggen dat...' of 'Als ik je goed begrijp...'.  
[Lees hier meer over reflectief luisteren](#)

"Er moet iets te winnen zijn voor de pleger, dus daar moet je naar gaan zoeken: 'Wij zijn er niet op uit om jou klein te krijgen maar we willen jou graag helpen. Wat zou voor jou helpend zijn? In wat voor tempo zou dat moeten? Het gaat mij om jou en niet over wat er gebeurd is.' **Begin bij de mens en daar ga je vertrouwen winnen.**"

René Haring, ervaringsdeskundige





## H. The final design of the theme cards

**THEMAKAARTEN**

Deze twaalf themakaarten bevatten achtergrondinformatie over mensen die huiselijk geweld plegen. Aan de informatie zijn vragen gekoppeld die je kunt stellen tijdens het hulptraject. Dit kan jou helpen om een zo volledig mogelijk beeld te krijgen en begrip te creëren.

De themakaarten zijn verdeeld in vijf modules.

**MODULE 1: Een gespreksopening voor het eerste gesprek.**

- De motivatie van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd om deel te nemen aan het hulptraject.
- Het in kaart brengen van de betrokkenheid van (eventuele) kinderen.

**MODULE 2: De achtergrond van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd.**

- De familie achtergrond.
- De relationele achtergrond.
- De individuele achtergrond.

**MODULE 3: De triggers die het geweld veroorzaken.**

- De invloed van kwetsbaarheid op het ontstaan van geweld.
- De invloed van stress op het ontstaan van geweld.

**MODULE 4: De geweldsdynamiek tussen de betrokkenen.**

- Het soort geweld.
- De drie basispatronen van geweld.
- De gevolgen van geweld.

**MODULE 5: (Nieuw) contact met de (ex-)partner.**

- De relatie met de (ex-)partner.
- Oude schade herstellen met de (ex-)partner.

Wanneer degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd wordt betrokken in het hulptraject, is het belangrijk om te weten:

- Hoe gemotiveerd de persoon is.
- Wat de verwachtingen zijn van jou als maatschappelijk werker.
- Wat de verwachting is van de uitkomst van het hulptraject.

Degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd kan de behandeling niet nodig vinden omdat het nu goed gaat. Men kan teleurgesteld of gekwetst zijn, waardoor er geen vertrouwen is dat het goed gaat komen. Verder is het mogelijk dat de verwachtingen naar de (ex-)partner niet realistisch zijn.

Een gespreksopening voor het eerste gesprek.

## MODULE 1

# De motivatie van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd om deel te nemen aan het hulptraject



- Waarom wil je wel meewerken aan het hulptraject?
- Waarom wil je niet meewerken aan het hulptraject?
- Hoe kijk je nu tegen je relatie aan?
- Wat verwacht je van je (ex-)partner?
- Wat denk je dat je (ex-)partner van jou verwacht?

Er moet besproken worden of de betrokkenen van huiselijk geweld (gezamenlijk) minderjarige kinderen hebben die in het huis wonen. Daarbij wordt in kaart gebracht:

- Wat de opvattingen zijn van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd over vaderschap, moederschap, opvoeding, scheiding en op wat voor manier deze het (voortduren van) het geweld beïnvloeden.
- Of de kinderen aanwezig zijn geweest bij intimidatie en (psychisch) geweld tussen de ouders aangezien dit schadelijk voor hen kan zijn.

Het (gezamenlijk) hebben van kinderen kan ook een motivatie zijn voor degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd om hulp te accepteren en actief deel te nemen aan het hulptraject.

Een gespreksopening voor het eerste gesprek.

## MODULE 1

# Het in kaart brengen van de betrokkenheid van (eventuele) kinderen



- Hebben jij en je (ex-)partner kinderen?
- Wat zijn jouw opvattingen over de rolverdeling binnen de opvoeding?
- Zijn de kinderen getuige geweest van ruzies tussen jullie?
- Heb je hier met de kinderen over gepraat?
- Ontvangen de kinderen (externe) hulp?

De angsten en behoeften in een relatie van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd, zijn afhankelijk van ervaringen uit het verleden. Degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd kan:

- Vroeger zelf mishandeld zijn.
- Vroeger getuige geweest zijn van geweld binnen het eigen gezin.

Verder kunnen aangeleerde communicatie- en interactiepatronen, ruzies en spanningen veroorzaken in de huidige gezinssituatie. Het is daarom belangrijk om in kaart te brengen hoe de gezinssituatie was van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd. Bijvoorbeeld, kon men vroeger bij iemand terecht bij pijn of ziekte?

## MODULE 2

De achtergrond van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd.

### De familie achtergrond



- Hoe was de sfeer vroeger bij jou thuis?
- Hoe was de relatie die je ouders of je verzorgers met elkaar hadden?
- Kan je met behulp van drie woorden beschrijven hoe de relatie met je ouders of verzorgers was? Bijvoorbeeld: liefdevol, afstandelijk, kritisch, begripvol, etc.
- Wat heb je tijdens je jeugd geleerd over relaties?

Eerdere relaties met anderen beïnvloeden hoe degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd in de huidige relatie staat. Degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd kan:

- Traditionele opvattingen hebben over genderrollen. Stereotype rolpatronen en verwachtingen kunnen leiden tot verschillen in macht en onafhankelijkheid.
- Het lastig vinden om een sterke band op te bouwen met de partner door gebrek aan vertrouwen.

De betrokkenen kunnen in de rolpatronen van een oude relatie blijven hangen bij een nieuwe partner. Wanneer de nieuwe partner dit niet nastreeft kan er geweld ontstaan.

## MODULE 2

De achtergrond van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd.

### De relationele achtergrond



- Wat was de rolverdeling tussen jou en je partner in voorgaande relaties?
- Heb je traumatische dingen meegemaakt in relaties waar je nu nog last van hebt?
- Hoeervaarde je troost of steun bieden aan je partner in eerdere relaties?
- Heb je het gevoel dat je moeite hebt met het vertrouwen van je (ex-)partner?



Degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd kan agressie gebruiken bij gevoelens van bedreiging, wanneer de (ex-)partner raakt aan:

- Het lage zelfbeeld van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd.
- Psychische klachten die voort kunnen komen uit bijvoorbeeld een depressie.

Werkloosheid, problemen op het werk, een laag inkomen, schulden, een afhankelijke verblijfsstatus of huisvesting kunnen hier invloed op hebben.

## MODULE 2

De achtergrond van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd.

### De individuele achtergrond



- Ben je gediagnosticeerd met psychische problematiek?
- Wat is deze problematiek?
- Is je (ex-)partner gediagnosticeerd met psychisch problematiek?
- Wat is deze problematiek?

Ervaringen uit de kindertijd, de eerdere relatie en de huidige relatie kunnen een kwetsbare plek veroorzaken bij degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd:

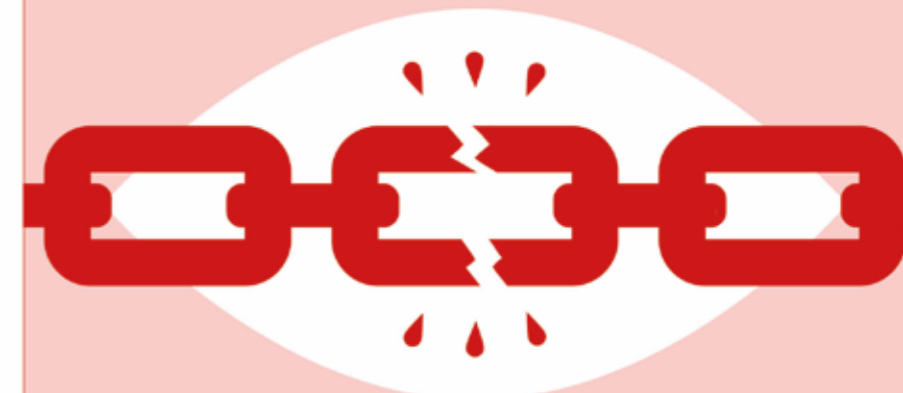
- Ruzies kunnen ontstaan doordat men zich gekwetst voelt.
- Een van de betrokkenen reageert heftiger op iets wat gebeurd of gezegd is, terwijl de ander niet begrijpt waar de reactie vandaan komt. Die reactie kan leiden tot een volgende ruzie.

Er komt een coping mechanisme op gang waarin de partners elkaar uitdagen uit angst om opnieuw gekwetst te worden.

## MODULE 3

De triggers die het geweld veroorzaken.

### De invloed van kwetsbaarheid op het ontstaan van geweld



- Wat zijn jouw kwetsbaarheden (behoeften en angsten)?
- Wat is jouw reactie wanneer deze kwetsbaarheden getriggerd worden?
- Hoe reageert jouw (ex-)partner op jouw kwetsbaarheden?
- Wat zijn de kwetsbaarheden (behoeften en angsten) van jouw (ex-)partner?
- Wat is jouw reactie op je (ex-)partner?

Wanneer de hersenen van degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd zich in de 'tolerantiezone' bevinden, blijft men tijdens een conflict voldoende kalm om zich te kunnen inleven in de ander en een oplossing te bedenken. Bij te veel stress kan men uit balans raken:

- Het reptielenbrein kan de overhand nemen en reageert met een overlevingsstrategie wat bestaat uit vechten of vluchten (overprikkeling). Dit kan leiden tot onnodig agressief gedrag.
- Als vechten of vluchten niet werkt, kan het brein overschakelen naar bevroren (onderprikkeling).

Het is noodzakelijk om stress te onderzoeken om de oorzaken van het geweld te bepalen.

## MODULE 3

De triggers die het geweld veroorzaken.

### De invloed van **stress** op het ontstaan van geweld



- Kun je voorbeelden van stress noemen die voorkomen in jouw leven?
- Denk je dat dit chronische stress is?
- Vind je dat er bij jou of je (ex-)partner sprake is van verhoogde stress (overprikkeling)?
- Vind je dat er bij jou of je (ex-)partner sprake is van lage stress (onderprikkeling)?
- Wat voor invloed heeft dit op jullie relatie?

Geweld is een dynamiek van misbruik tussen twee personen om op oneerlijke wijze macht en controle te krijgen. Het geweld is opgebouwd in drie fasen:

- Een spanningsopbouw tussen de partners.
- De uitbarsting van geweld.
- De verzoening, met de schijn van een einde aan het geweld.

Het uiten van agressie kan in de vorm van psychologisch, fysiek, financieel, cultureel of seksueel misbruik. Verder kunnen de rollen van dader en slachtoffer elkaar afwisselen tijdens een relatie of ruzie. Door degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd bewust te laten benoemen wat voor soort geweld er heeft plaatsgevonden, wordt dit uit de privésfeer gehaald en kan het men inzicht geven in de noodzaak van het hulptraject.

## MODULE 4

De geweldsdynamiek tussen de betrokkenen.

### Het **soort** geweld



- Welke vorm(en) van geweld heb jij toegepast in de relatie?
- Welke vorm(en) van geweld heeft je (ex-)partner toegepast in de relatie?
- Zijn er andere vormen van geweld die tussen jou en je (ex-)partner hebben plaatsgevonden?

Er zijn drie omgangspatronen die de geweldssituatie onveilig kunnen maken. Deze patronen worden actief bij de kleinste meningsverschillen en verschillen per casus:

- Opzoeken en afweren: Boos worden en terugtrekken van een van de betrokkenen kan de ander uitlokken, waardoor het gedrag escaleert.
- Opzoeken en opzoeken: Beide betrokkenen zoeken de confrontatie op en een aanval leidt tot een tegen aanval.
- Afweren en afweren: De betrokkenen hebben beiden het communiceren opgegeven en gaan de spanning uit de weg.

Het hulptraject kan aangepast worden op het omgangspatroon.

## MODULE 4

De geweldsdynamiek tussen de betrokkenen.

### De drie basispatronen van geweld



- Hoe herken je bij jezelf dat je agressief gedrag gaat vertonen?
- Hoe herkent je (ex-)partner dat je agressief gedrag gaat vertonen?
- Wat kan je (ex-)partner doen wanneer de kans op agressief gedrag bij jou groot is?
- Wat moet je (ex-)partner niet doen wanneer de kans op agressief gedrag bij jou groot is?

Geweld heeft lichamelijke en emotionele gevolgen voor de betrokkenen, bijvoorbeeld:

- Lichamelijke gevolgen kunnen zijn: slaapproblemen, hoofdpijn, een hoge bloeddruk, ademhalingsproblemen, etc.
- Emotionele gevolgen kunnen zijn: een laag zelfbeeld, angst, depressief, etc.

Verder is de kans aanwezig dat de betrokkenen van huiselijk geweld na het hulptraject in oude geweldspatronen terugvallen of dat ze de geweldsdynamiek doorgeven aan de kinderen (intergenerationele transmissie).

## MODULE 4

De geweldsdynamiek tussen de betrokkenen.

### De gevolgen van geweld



- Welke lichamelijke gevolgen heb je gezien bij jezelf?
- Welke lichamelijke gevolgen heb je gezien bij je (ex-)partner?
- Welke emotionele gevolgen heeft het geweld voor jou (gehad)?
- Welke emotionele gevolgen denk je dat het geweld voor je (ex-)partner heeft (gehad)?

Zestig procent van de bij huiselijk geweld betrokken partners wil na het hulptraject nog steeds samen verder. Zij willen dat het geweld stopt, niet de relatie. Het is belangrijk om:

- In te schatten hoe degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd tegen de (ex-)partner aankijkt.
- Erachter te komen of degene die huiselijk geweld heeft gepleegd verder wil gaan met de relatie met de (ex-)partner na het hulptraject.

Door dit in kaart te brengen wordt het duidelijk met welk doel de betrokkenen het hulptraject doorlopen.

## MODULE 5

(Nieuw) contact met de (ex-)partner.

# De relatie met de (ex-)partner



- Om welke eigenschappen waardeer jij je (ex-)partner?
- Wat is één van je mooiste herinneringen die je samen met je (ex-)partner hebt gedeeld?
- Zou je weer samen willen komen met je (ex-)partner?

Er kunnen tijdens een relatie verschillende situaties plaatsvinden die voor één van de betrokkenen van huiselijk geweld als kwetsend wordt ervaren. Deze situaties kunnen in ruzies aangehaald worden en kunnen irritaties veroorzaken. Dit kan:

- De betrokkenen steeds bozer op elkaar maken.
- Ervoor zorgen dat de betrokkenen elkaar helpen waardoor de irritatie van de ander niet wordt versterkt of zelfs afneemt.

Wanneer de betrokkenen na het hulptraject verder willen met hun relatie, is het relevant om te onderzoeken op wat voor manier zij elkaar beïnvloeden in de wijze waarop ze met elkaar omgaan en hoe ze op elkaar reageren.

## MODULE 5

(Nieuw) contact met de (ex-)partner.

# Oude schade herstellen met de (ex-)partner



- Waarmee heb jij je (ex-)partner gekwetst?
- In wat voor situatie was dit?
- Wat heb je precies gedaan of juist niet gedaan?
- Wat zou je (ex-)partner helpen om de pijn los te laten?
- Wat zou jij over deze gebeurtenis tegen je (ex-)partner willen zeggen?



