



Benefits of Group Counseling for those in Domestic Violence Treatment

The question, “Why do we do groups, instead of individual counseling?” often arises when men enroll in domestic violence treatment. Besides the obvious ability to offer services at a lower cost to participants (Group Rates: \$25-35/session vs. Ind. Rates: \$50-\$120/session), clinicians, facilitators and lawmakers are also aware of the tremendous therapeutic benefits clients receive when participating in a group setting.

Below is a table describing some of the researched and documented¹ benefits available to you through your participation in this group treatment program:

Benefit	Description
<i>Universality</i>	You are not the only person who has engaged in abuse. There is no need or benefit to deny, minimize, or become defensive when we talk openly about past or present abusive behaviors. Everyone in the room is there/here to help you overcome any unwanted thinking or behaviors regarding abuse and control.
<i>Instillation of Hope</i>	Despite what you’ve done, or how unstable and/or chaotic your life may be right now, you <i>can</i> change. Listening to the real experiences of others in group may be just the encouragement you need to keep pressing on. Doing the right things, consistently over time, nearly always results in a more positive outcome.
<i>Catharsis</i>	It feels good to identify and appropriately express emotions that you may have previously ignored and/or built up (stuffed) to the point of a violent and/or abusive outburst. Men often report the immediate benefit they feel after “getting something off their chest” in the group.
<i>Family Reenactment</i>	For some men, the healthy interaction in group helps offset the abusive interaction(s) that they may have experienced in their family of origin, or in their current family and/or work situation(s).
<i>Cohesion</i>	As a member of the same group each week, you will often experience closeness with other group members, helping you to overcome emotional isolation and/or unhealthy emotional dependence upon your partner or family. Many of you are in a “No Contact” situation with your partner and/or family and may need to connect with other members in a healthy way to avoid the temptation to break your court order.
<i>Altruism</i>	You will be asked to help other group members throughout your treatment period and they are being asked to help you. This help can be done in many ways, but may include positive feedback, explanation, mentoring, even appropriate confrontation. Helping others helps to raise your self-esteem and increases your likelihood to pursue group goals such as non-violence.
<i>Interpersonal Learning</i>	In addition to the benefits of <i>Cohesion</i> and <i>Altruism</i> , you will receive corrective feedback from group members and leader(s) on how to improve your style of relating in and outside of group.
<i>Information</i>	You will learn about domestic violence, healthy approaches to intimacy, anger management, and non-violent/non-controlling conflict resolution.
<i>Modeling</i>	You will learn from the group leader(s) and other members about how you can relate without violent or controlling behaviors.
<i>Socializing Techniques</i>	You will be able to try new ways of relating within the group, and receive information from the leader(s) and other members on your interpersonal skills. You can then generalize use of these skills to your various relationships outside of group.
<i>Existential Factors</i>	You will recognize that you do not control many aspects of the world, including your partner (or children, employees, other drivers, etc.). You will recognize that you have choices; your choices have consequences; and that you are accountable for your choices, as it is for everyone else.

¹ Yalom, I.D. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (5th ed.). New York: Basic Books