

ASSESSING PHYSICAL ABUSERS: BREAKING THE ABUSER'S SECRECY

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ABSTRACT

Physical abusers who are court ordered to complete a domestic abuse or anger management assessment often are assessed without interviewing the victim or the abuser's current partner. Most of the time the current victim is the current partner, at times it is not the same person. Abusers maintain their cycle of violence and control by maintaining secrecy about their violent history and by limiting access of their victims and partners to professionals involved in assessing treatment and risk needs. After assessing 45 subjects it was found that not only were the victim and partners willing (although not always happy at first!) to be interviewed but they provided important information about the abuser's violent and controlling behavior. The information obtained for the abuser's victim or partners was significant and important.

KEY WORDS: Abusers, interviewing victims of abuse, forensic assessment.