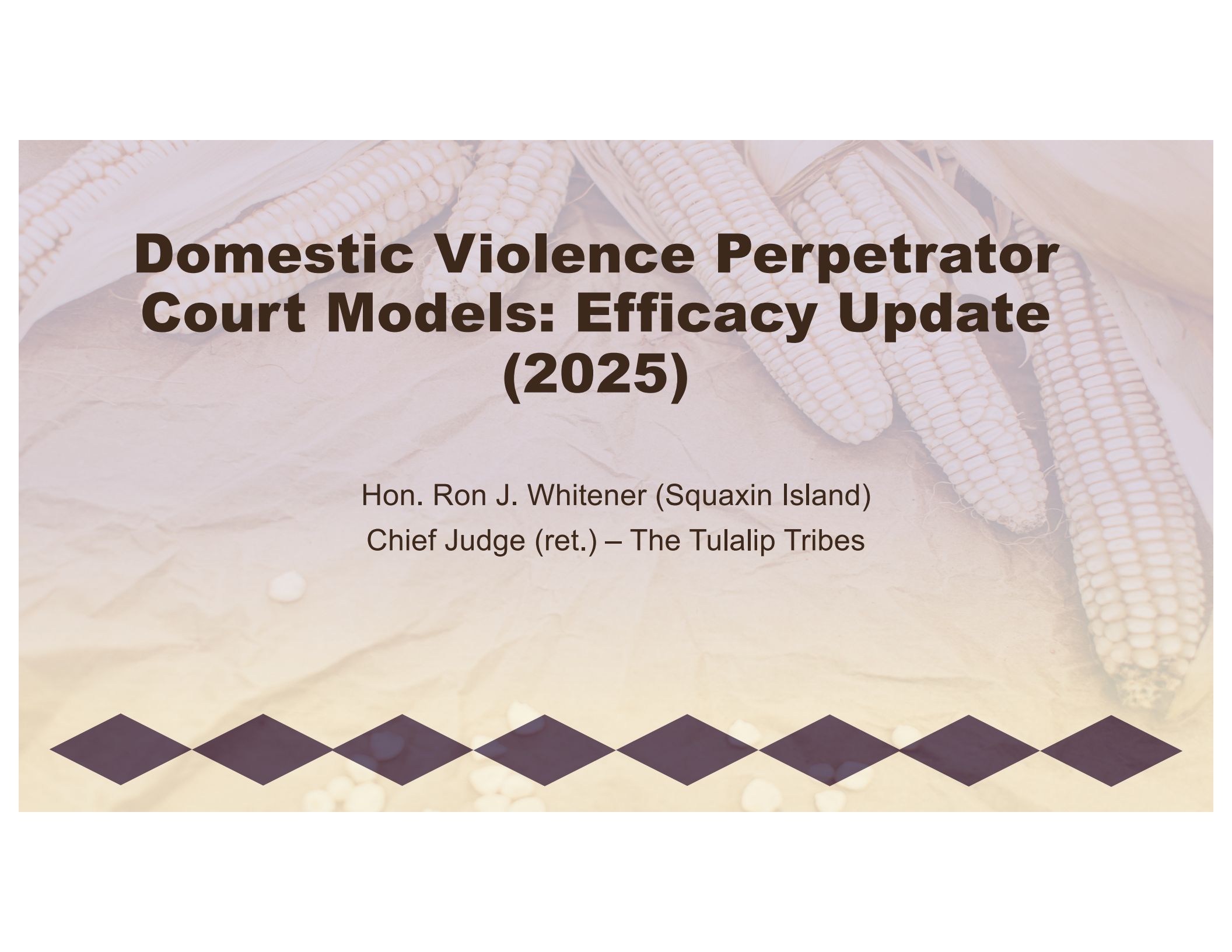




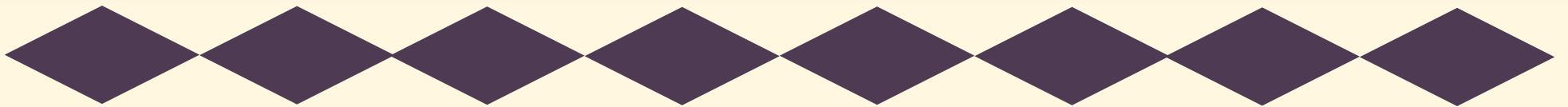
Domestic Violence Perpetrator Court Models: Efficacy Update (2025)

Hon. Ron J. Whitener (Squaxin Island)
Chief Judge (ret.) – The Tulalip Tribes



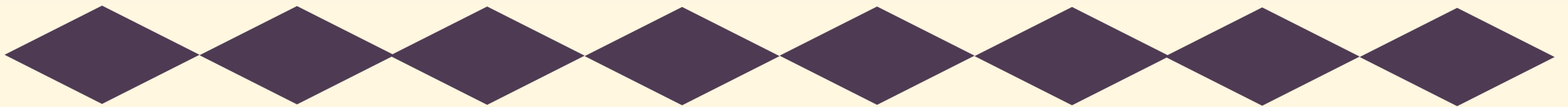
Background

- Domestic violence perpetrator treatment programs are widely used in the U.S.
- Main approaches include Batterer Intervention Programs (BIP) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Programs are mandated by courts or referred by agencies



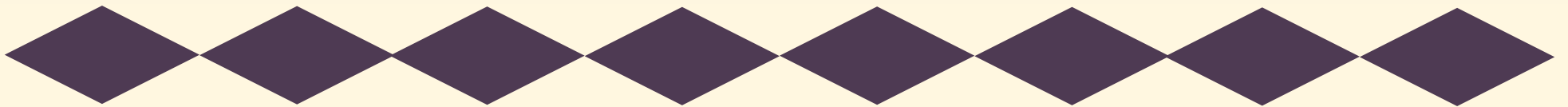
Why Healing to Wellness Model Shouldn't be Used

- Domestic violence perpetrators are often not amenable to the drug court model for several well-documented reasons
 - Primarily tied to the distinct nature of intimate partner violence compared to drug offenses
 - Systemic and organizational barriers:



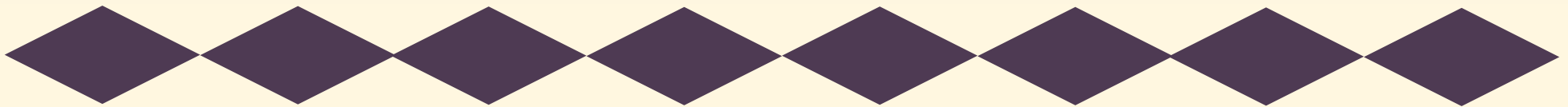
Nature of the Problem

- Drug courts are designed for offenders whose primary issue is substance abuse, using a model based on addiction treatment and relapse prevention
- Domestic violence revolves around patterns of power, control, and aggression, not just addiction
 - Drug court therapeutic approaches may not address the underlying dynamics of violence
- Federal drug court funding and many local programs exclude individuals with violent criminal histories from participation, regardless of substance use comorbidity
 - Systematically bars most domestic violence offenders, who often have related or prior violent offenses.



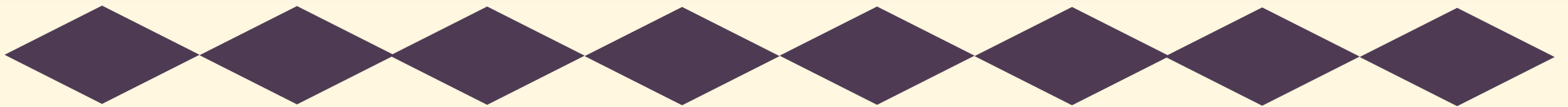
Limited Identification & Integration

- Specialized courts often attend to either substance abuse or violence, but not both
- Substance abuse is frequently unrecognized or untreated among perpetrators unless clearly documented in a police report
- Court structures, definitions of judicial roles, and resource limitations lead to a lack of integrated or holistic intervention for co-occurring issues



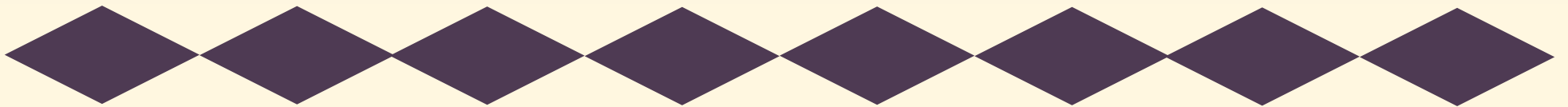
Ineffectiveness for Violence Patterns

- The methods used in drug courts like reward and sanction schedules, frequent monitoring, and group-based therapy, are aimed at substance use cycles, not relational abuse cycles
- The skills, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms in drug court are generally ineffective for altering abusive behaviors rooted in power and control issues



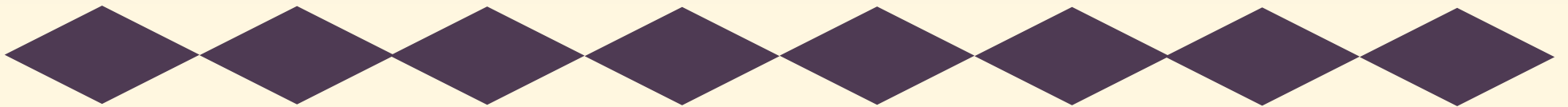
Systemic Barriers

- Legal, policy, and resource limitations
 - Stigma and inconsistent application of recommendations
 - Lack of wrap-around services, such as psychiatric or trauma-informed care, further hinders effectiveness for this population



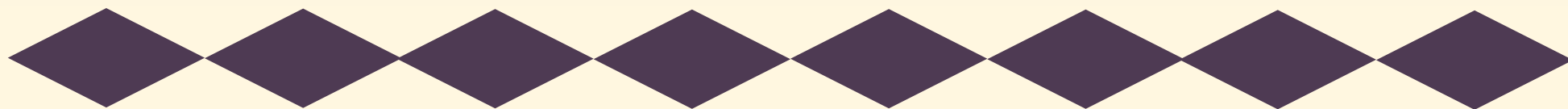
Past DV Court Model - Surveillance

- Focused primarily on surveillance of the batterer
 - Enhanced systems for judicial monitoring
 - Vigorous compliance monitoring
 - Fast sanctioning processes
- Key components
 - Frequent court appearances
 - Mandatory participation in batterers treatment
 - Detailed compliance check
- Focused more on harm reduction than therapeutic change



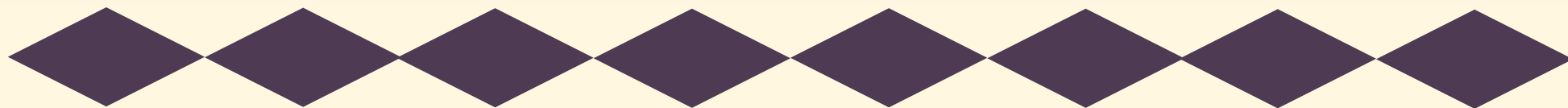
Surveillance Model - Frequently Used Practices

- Special DV dockets with enough time to review compliance
 - Adherence to court orders
 - Participation in treatment programs
 - Compliance with protection orders
- Electronic monitoring
 - Ankle bracelets, location tracking, exclusion zone alerts
- Mandatory reporting requirements
 - Participants required to submit documentation of compliance
 - Providers report missed sessions, failures, or concerning behavior directly to the court
- Sanctions
 - Responses to violations are clear and consistent
 - Sanctions are graduated
 - Case management systems designed to trigger alerts for missed appointment or violations



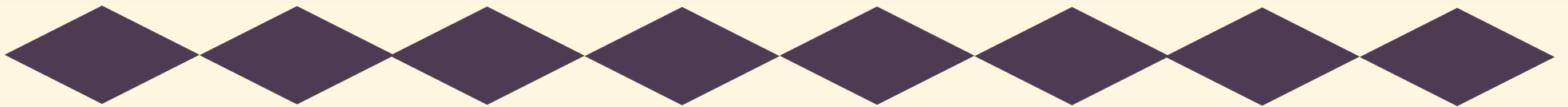
The Duluth Model - Batterer Intervention Programs

- Built on a feminist and sociological perspective
 - Attributes DV to societal norms of patriarchy and control
 - Uses psychoeducational group sessions to challenge beliefs and encourage nonviolence
- Focuses on attitudinal and behavioral change
 - Emphasizes personal accountability and gender equality
- Uses weekly group classes focusing on the “Power and Control Wheel” and the “Equality Wheel”
- Still is integrated into a surveillance model



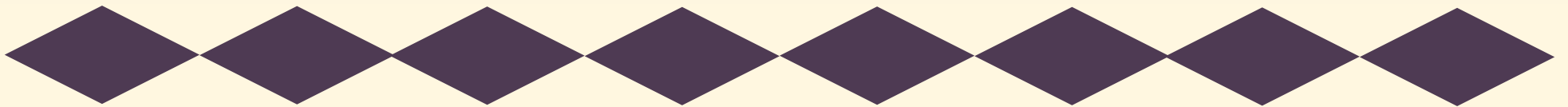
BIP Treatment Core features

- Group format
 - Most BIPs use group sessions rather than individual therapy, fostering accountability and peer confrontation [stopvaw +1]
- Curriculum
 - Programs emphasize the dynamics of domestic violence, impact on victims, and the importance of accepting responsibility for abuse
- Psycho-Educational Approach
 - The Duluth Model, commonly used in BIPs, focuses on identifying abusive tactics, promoting non-abusive alternatives, and challenging denial or minimization of violence



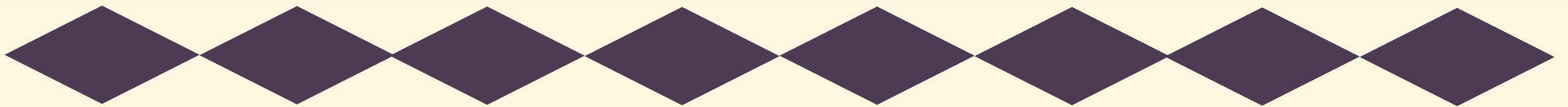
Core Features cont.

- Skill-Building
 - Sessions teach cooperative communication, conflict resolution, respect, trust, and equitable relationship
- Accountability
 - Participants are held accountable for behavior, encouraged to develop safety plans, and challenged on abusive attitudes and beliefs
- Victim Safety Coordination
 - Programs often coordinate with victim services to monitor participant progress and enhance victim safety
- Length & Intensity
 - Duration and intensity vary, with many programs requiring 24–52 weeks of attendance and regular progress assessments



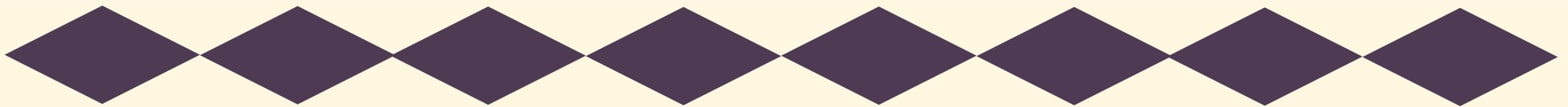
Common Group Session Outline

- Welcome and check-in
 - Facilitator greets participants
 - Reviews group guidelines
 - Offer brief personal check-in or mood assessment
- Review of previous session
 - Last week's topic, homework, or skill practice
- Introduce current topic
- Skill-building exercise
- Group discussion and reflection
- Homework and goal setting



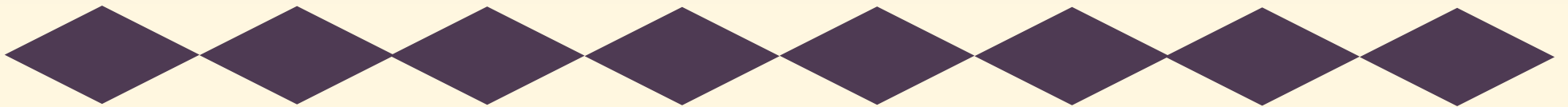
BIIP Accountability Core Components

- Facilitator Challenge and Support
 - Skilled facilitators consistently confront denial, minimization, and excuses for abuse, while supporting honest self-reflection and progress. Facilitators that emphasize responsibility for violent behavior increase real accountability within the group
- Skill-Building and Practice
 - Programs teach practical skills for non-abusive communication and conflict resolution, encouraging participants to apply what they learn in real life and report back to the group on their progress
- Regular Monitoring and Feedback
 - Progress is tracked throughout the intervention, with frequent feedback from facilitators and, in some programs, probation officers or court staff. Accountability is enhanced when participants understand their progress and are held to specific behavioral goals



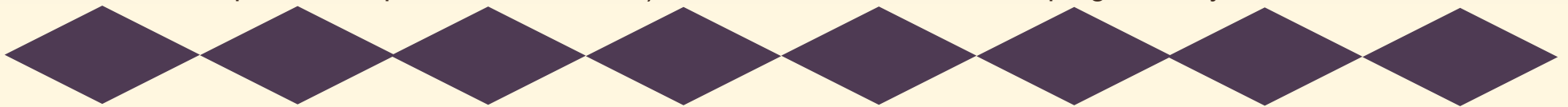
BIP Victim Safety Core Components

- **Victim Safety Coordination**
 - Effective BIPs communicate with victim services, monitor risk, and adjust participant plans for accountability to the safety of victims as well as their own behavioral change
- **Written Contracts and Safety Plans**
 - Participants may complete written agreements outlining goals for nonviolence and steps to sustain accountability, increasing commitment and transparency



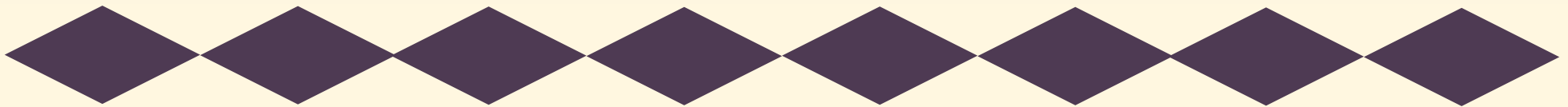
BIP Monitoring

- Attendance Tracking
 - Consistent recording of session attendance is critical. Missed sessions are documented, and participants are required to make up for absences or face sanctions as outlined by the program or referring agency
- Session Participation Records
 - Facilitators keep detailed records of participants' engagement during sessions, noting contributions, attitudes (e.g., denial or accountability), and progress in adopting non-abusive behaviors
- Homework and Assignments
 - Many programs use homework (e.g., written reflections, action plans) and require participants to present these for discussion and review. Completion and quality are documented in participant files
- Behavioral Progress Reports
 - Facilitators regularly evaluate progress on specific behavioral goals set at program onset (e.g., demonstration of conflict resolution skills) and provide written feedback
- Collaboration with Court and Victim Services
 - Programs share compliance reports with courts, probation officers, and sometimes victim services to ensure external accountability and increase victim safety
- Sanctions and Incentives
 - Non-compliance (missed sessions, failed assignments) triggers sanctions (e.g., warnings, increased requirements, potential termination) that are all recorded. Positive progress may be rewarded and noted



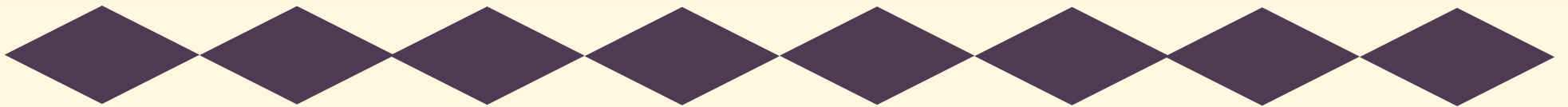
Measuring Effectiveness of BIP Courts

- Pre and post session surveys
 - Measures changes in participants' knowledge, mood, and attitude
 - Uses Likert scales, or custom questionnaires (Beck Depression Inventory, Perceived Stress Scale)
- Structured group feedback forms
 - Forms allowing reflections on what was learned, how they can apply concepts, and perceived growth
 - Outcome Questionnaire, Group Questionnaire, Group Session Rating Scale
- Behavioral observations by facilitator
 - Conflict resolution, communication, cooperation, compliance
- Therapeutic Factors Inventories
 - Group Climate Questionnaire, Therapeutic Factors Inventory
- Homework and task review
- Self report and peer survey
- Attendance and compliance logs



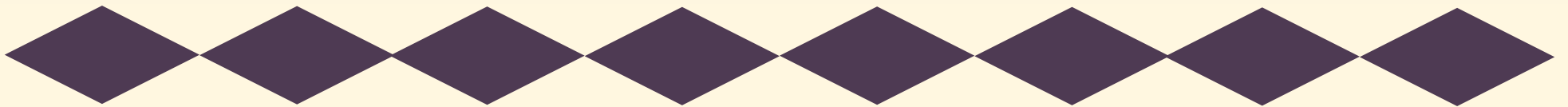
How Effective are BIPs?

- Batterer Intervention Programs typically reduce recidivism by about 5–15% compared to doing nothing or relying solely on legal monitoring
- While these programs are slightly more effective than no treatment or court supervision alone, their impact remains modest according to multiple meta-analyses and systematic reviews
- Intervention efficacy is higher when programs are carefully targeted to those at moderate to high risk, but across all groups, most studies find only a small decrease in recidivism relative to controls



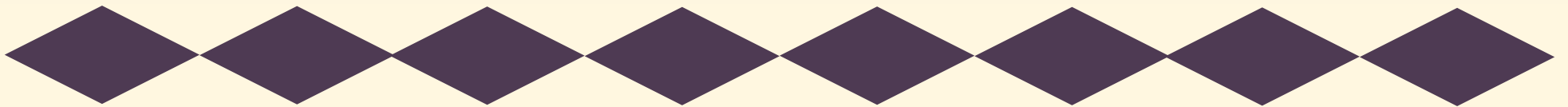
Innovations and Promising Practices

- Motivational interviewing and engagement strategies show 71–79% reduction in recidivism for some groups
- Tailoring intervention duration and approach to participant risk is more effective than one-size-fits-all
- Combining substance abuse treatment and personalized therapy may improve outcomes



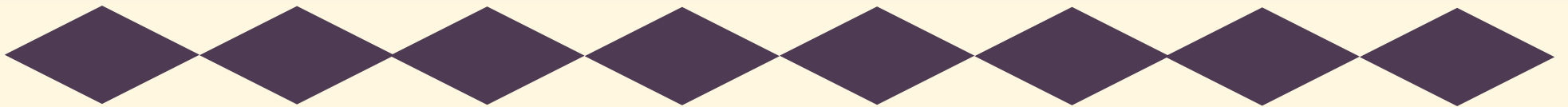
Limitations and Controversies

- Not all perpetrators benefit; high-risk individuals show less improvement
- Drop-out and non-compliance limit program success
- Standardized evaluation methods still lacking in the field

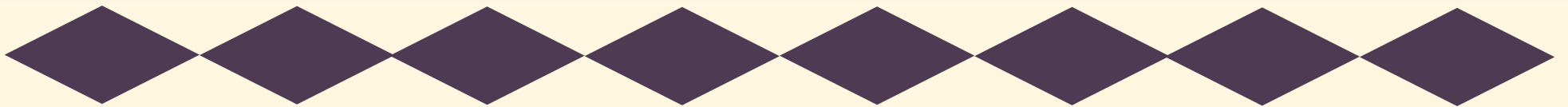


Key Takeaways

- Modest gains overall, but new strategies show promise
- Strongest results when interventions are tailored and engagement is high
- Research is ongoing to optimize efficacy, especially for high-risk subgroups

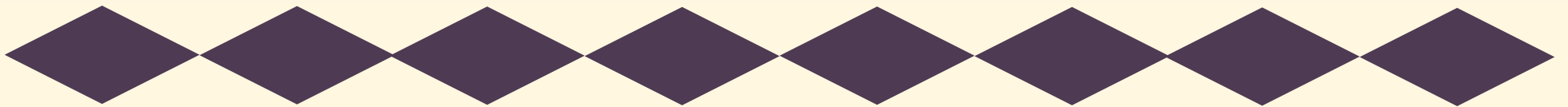


Juvenile Family & Intimate Partner Violence



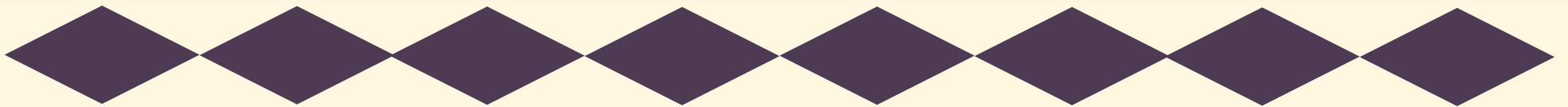
Standard Juvenile DV Court Models

- Focused on youth violence toward family members
- Tries to focus on therapy, family engagement, skills development
- Uses diversions & restorative justice options
- Integrates with family support, mentorship, and educational services
- Can use substance abuse and/or mental health treatment
- BUT historically used adult methods for intimate partner violence

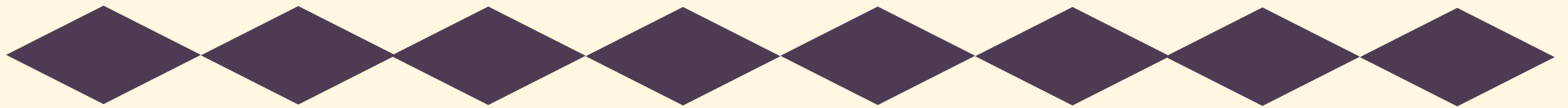


New Promising Programs for Juvenile Intimate Partner Violence

- Youth Relationships Project
 - Community based but may be court referred
 - Some evidence showing improvements in perpetration and victimization outcomes
- EVOLVE and Social Learning/Feminist Intervention
- Diversion and community court models
 - Focuses on rapid intervention with restorative justice and skill building models
 - Use individual counseling for anger management, empathy, non-violent communication
 - Oversight through juvenile probation
 - Coordinates with victim advocacy and school-based prevention

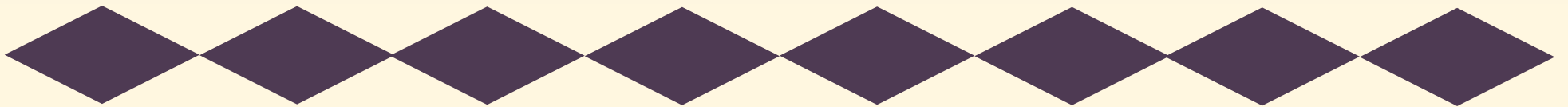


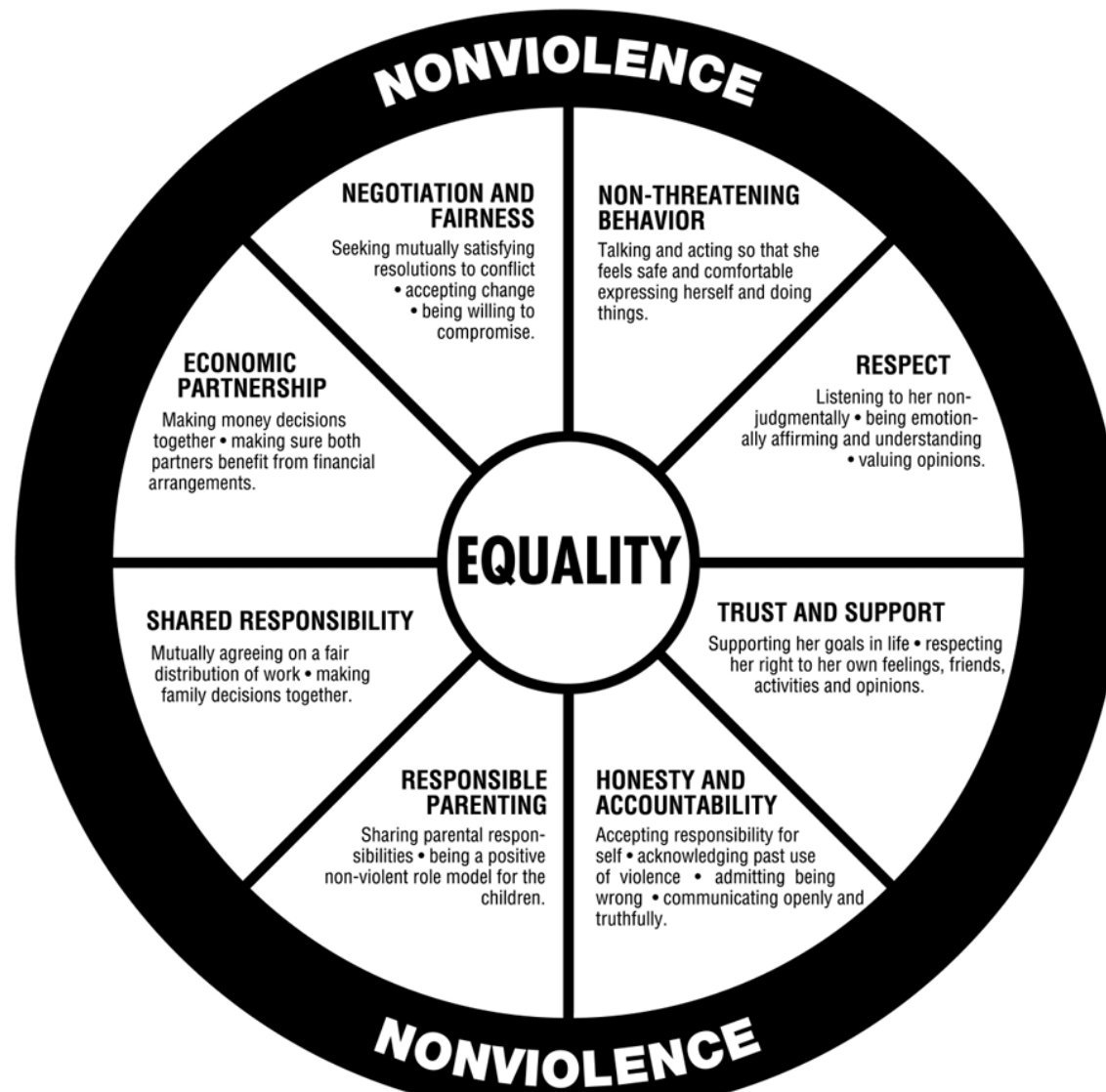
Activity - Spinning the Equality Wheel



Instructions

Read each segment of the Equality Wheel and select two sections. Write an example of what this behavior looks like in a healthy friendship or romantic relationship. We will reconvene to discuss our answers after 10 minutes.





Thank You!

