

## Is He Changing?

Many times, survivors want to know how to tell if their abusive partner is changing. This is a really tough question to answer, but one that only the survivor can answer. There are some options that may help an abuser to change that are better than others. Such as attending a certified batterers intervention program (BIP) rather than counseling. BIP's are designed as psycho-educational group to address the core issues of power and control. And just because he/she completes a BIP group, it does not mean he/she has changed. Counseling can be a rocky road to travel because many therapists do not have a lot of training and experience in working with abusers. That is something to check into if your abuser is insisting on counseling.

Some survivors share that to help with the situation they are going to try couples counseling. Couples counseling is not a safe option due to the fact that a survivor, more often than not, will not feel safe to share how she/he truly feels. At the same time, the abuser will most likely dominate the conversation in the manner that will not hold him/her accountable for being abusive.

For a survivor wondering if her/his abusive partner has/is changing here are some thoughts to think on:

- Do you feel you can truly say what you want without fear of "punishment" or being yelled at?
- Do you feel you can do things that your abusive partner has not "allowed" in the past and he/she will be ok with it?
- What does your "gut" instinct tell you?
- Think of the abusive behaviors and tactics that your abusive partner has used against you. Do you see those same behaviors and tactics? Has your abusive partner started using new tactics and behaviors against you that might not seem as bad as the other ones, but are still abusive?
- Look over the power and control wheel, are any of those tactics/behaviors taking place? For example does he/she blame you for making him/her mad? Does he/she try to determine what you can and can't do?

Talking with a dv/sa advocate can be very helpful for you. They will not tell you what do to or determine if your abusive partner has or hasn't changed, but they will be able to have discussions with you about this topic and provide you educational materials regarding domestic violence.