

Assault and battery

Offense: Simple assault, extortion, battery, assault and battery

A form of bullying

Assault is a threat to use force to make someone do something. At its core, it's a form of bullying. Sexual assault uses the threat of force to gain compliance in unwanted sexual behavior. Extortion and unarmed robbery both use the threat of force to make someone "voluntarily" give up money.

Often about power and control

Often the underlying issue beneath these threats is power and control. Being able to control another person's behavior has enormous appeal to some young people, especially if there are large parts of their own lives that they can't control. But economic gain can be an end in itself, especially if the money will be used to support a drug habit.

Battery is physically touching someone against their will. When victims refuse to comply to the threat of force, perpetrators may resort to the use of physical force to get what they want. That is why assault and battery often are cited together. Forcible rape is sexual battery.

Impulsivity

Another form of battery is less about the need for control over others, or feeding a drug habit, than it is about impulsive reaction. Impulsivity can be seen as a combination of lack of self-control and inability to predict consequences of actions. Impulsive battery usually occurs in the context of a dispute that escalates, rather than being resolved peacefully. It can be tied to perceived lack of respect, as well as poor skills for resolving conflict.

Lack of assertiveness is also tied to physically lashing out at others. People who hit others are often perceived as being aggressive; but passive people, who reach a "boiling point" can also be reactive batterers. Young people who batter others have often been battered themselves under the guise of family discipline.

Address both presenting behavior and cause

Effective intervention requires all of these offenders to identify the reasons for their offensive behavior and to address both symptoms and underlying causes.

Goals of intervention

Youth will:

- Strengthen norms against use of drugs or alcohol
- Improve social skills, especially in assertiveness
- Master cognitive-behavioral techniques for controlling self talk
- Learn stress management techniques
- Develop stronger bonds to community
- Develop decision-making skills and problem-solving strategies
- Adopt an exercise program matched to their temperament and body type

A suggested scope and sequence

SKILL TRAINING TOPICS

Controlling impulses

Stopping reactions
Predicting consequences

Decision-making

Resolving conflict
Problem solving

Managing feelings

Physical sensations
Internal triggers
External triggers

Assertiveness

Voice
Body
Message
Reasons
Resisting peer pressure

Empathy

Understanding feelings
Perspective taking

Asking for help

CHALLENGE TOPICS

Hitting Extortion

Abuse
Addiction
Aggression
Anger
Beaten
Bullying
Drugs
Envy
Fear
Money
Revenge
Secrets