

Teshuvah

Teshuvah- “the act of returning to a life of decency after atoning for the harm one has done to another.”

Steps of *Teshuvah*:

1. Acknowledgement that one has done something wrong
2. Public confession of one’s wrongdoing to both God and the community
3. Public expression of remorse
4. Resolve by the offender not to sin in this way again (perhaps announced publically)
5. Compensation of the victim for the injury inflicted accompanied by acts of charity to others
6. Sincere requests of forgiveness by the victim- with the help of the victim’s friends and up to three times, if necessary
7. Avoidance of the conditions that caused the offense, perhaps even to the point of moving to a new locale
8. Acting differently when confronted with the same situation in which the offender sinned for the first timeⁱ

Steps 7 and 8 may be contradictory. If offenders intentionally avoid conditions that caused the offense, they do not have the opportunity to act differently when confronted with the same situation. Yet, the welfare of the community is prioritized. For example, pedophiles should remain away from children as much as possible. Thus, it is more important to protect children from abuse than to allow for the offender the possibility of full return.ⁱⁱ It is important to note, that if the offender does not admit to wrong-doing, s/he cannot not complete *teshuvah*.

Washington State Certified Perpetrator Treatment Programs

Domestic violence intervention programs are similar to the process of *teshuvah* in that the emphasis is not on an internal, psychological process of the offender, but rather on a behavioral and interpersonal process between the offender and the community.ⁱⁱⁱ The program’s focus is to hold those who abuse accountable for their behaviors, and to help those who abuse change their behavior so that they cease to abuse altogether. The primary goal of domestic violence intervention programs is to increase the victim’s safety. As in *teshuvah*, the overall well-being of those impacted by the offender’s behavior, the victim and the community, is what is paramount.

WAC 388-60-0045:

(1) A domestic violence perpetrator treatment program must focus treatment primarily on ending the participant’s physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

(2) The program must hold the participant accountable for:

(a) The abuse that occurred; and

(b) Changing the participant's violent and abusive behaviors.

(3) The program must base all treatment on strategies and philosophies that do not blame the victim or imply that the victim shares any responsibility for the abuse which occurred.

WAC 388-60-055:

The primary goal of a domestic violence perpetrator treatment program must be to increase the victim's safety by:

(1) Facilitating change in the participant's abusive behavior; and

(2) Holding the participant accountable for changing the participant's patterns of behaviors, thinking, and beliefs.

Just as in *teshuvah*, if participant does not accept full responsibility for his/her abusive actions, the treatment has not been completed.

ⁱ Dorff, Elliott, *Love Your Neighbor And Yourself: A Jewish Approach to Modern Personal Ethics*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), p.220.

ⁱⁱ Dorff, Elliott, *Love Your Neighbor And Yourself: A Jewish Approach to Modern Personal Ethics*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), p.220.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dorff, Elliott, *Love Your Neighbor And Yourself: A Jewish Approach to Modern Personal Ethics*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), p.222.