

RCW 10.01.240 Domestic violence proceedings—Duty to specify whether intimate partners or family or household members. Whenever a prosecutor, or the attorney general or assistants acting pursuant to RCW 10.01.190, institutes or conducts a criminal proceeding involving domestic violence as defined in RCW 10.99.020, the prosecutor, or attorney general or assistants, shall specify whether the victim and defendant are intimate partners or family or household members within the meaning of RCW 7.105.010. [2021 c 215 s 114; 2019 c 263 s 202.]

Effective date—2022 c 268; 2021 c 215: See note following RCW 7.105.900.

Findings—Intent—2019 c 263 ss 202-803: "The legislature recognizes that domestic violence treatment has been the most common, and sometimes only, legal response in domestic violence cases. There is a growing concern about the "one size fits all" approach for domestic violence misdemeanors, felonies, and other cases. In 2012, the legislature directed the Washington state institute for public policy to update its analysis of the scientific literature on domestic violence treatment. The institute found traditional domestic violence treatment to be ineffective. Treatment needs to be differentiated and grounded in science, risk, and long-term evaluation. The institute's findings coincided with a wave of federal, state, and local reports highlighting concerns with the efficacy of traditional domestic violence treatment. A new approach was needed to reduce recidivism by domestic violence offenders, provide both victims and offenders with meaningful answers about what works, and close critical safety gaps. Subsequently, the legislature directed the gender and justice commission to establish work groups and make recommendations to improve domestic violence treatment and risk assessments. The work group recommended establishing sentencing alternatives for domestic violence offenders, integrated systems response, and domestic violence risk assessments. During this time, the department of social and health services repealed the administrative codes for domestic violence treatment, and issued new codes grounded in a differentiated approach and evidence-based practice. There is no easy answer to what works to reduce domestic violence recidivism, and offenders often present with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues, but new administrative codes and work group recommendations reflect the best available evidence in how best to respond and treat domestic violence criminal offenders.

Improving rehabilitation and treatment of domestic violence offenders, and those offenders with co-occurring substance and mental health issues, is critical, given how often practitioners and courts use treatment as the primary, and sometimes only, intervention for domestic violence. Given the pervasiveness of domestic violence and because of the link between domestic violence and many community issues including violent recidivism, victims and offenders are owed effective treatment and courts need better tools. State studies have found domestic violence crimes to be the most predictive of future violent crime.

The legislature intends to modify sentencing alternatives and other sentencing practices to require use of a validated risk assessment tool and domestic violence treatment certified under the Washington Administrative Code. These new practices should be

consistently used when criminal conduct is based on domestic violence behavioral problems." [2019 c 263 s 101.]

Intent—Definition of domestic violence—2019 c 263 ss 202-205:

"The legislature intends to distinguish between intimate partner violence and other categories of domestic violence to facilitate discrete data analysis regarding domestic violence by judicial, criminal justice, and advocacy entities. The legislature does not intend for these modifications to definitions to substantively change the prosecution of, or penalties for, domestic violence, or the remedies available to potential petitioners under the current statutory scheme." [2019 c 263 s 201.]