Working With Families When Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence Intersect

Child Welfare Level I

Kristie Mitchell, MSW
CDSVRP
How about you?

- Name and Role
- How comfortable are you with addressing domestic violence?
TRAINING GROUND RULES

- Maintain an open stance – open to new ideas

- Agree to Disagree
Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System

Trauma-Informed Domestic Violence Programs

Trauma-informed response for victims of domestic violence and their children
FIRST THOUGHT FOR THE DAY…

It takes two things for violence to occur. A perpetrator willing to perpetrate violence and a community willing to let it happen!
From your observations…

- Who are victims of domestic violence?
- Who are perpetrators of domestic violence?
Alyssa Wiles, 14, youngest in a dating relationship killed last year.

“based on our information, Michael Ray was in a dating relationship with the victim,” Leah Edwards said, Stephens county assistant district attorney. “when the victim attempted to break up with him, he broke into her home in the early morning hours of June 10 and stabbed her approximately four times, three in the back and one under the arm.
NEW PRACTICE GUIDELINES 2012

Domestic Violence Manual
FOR
Child Welfare Professionals
A Desk Reference Guide

"The emotional recovery of children who have been exposed to domestic violence appears to depend on the quality of their relationship with the non-battering parent more than on any other single factor."
— Bancroft and Silverman

Some content reproduced from the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence and Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Children and Family Services
Issued July 2012
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The primary focus of CPS intervention cases is the ongoing safety of children.
- Children deserve to live in homes free of domestic violence.
- All families in domestic violence situations deserve assessment and proactive services that meet their individual needs and respect their unique strengths.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- One of the best ways to protect children in homes with domestic violence is to support and help non-abusive parents to protect themselves and their children.

- Safety permitting, **all systems involved** in the child’s care must work in collaboration to ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

- Separation from the abuser does not always end the abuse.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

“CPS intervention strategies should partner with the non-offending parent to build the protective capacities within the family to keep children safe”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

“The preferred way to protect children in most domestic violence cases is to join with the adult victim in safety planning and to hold the abusive partner accountable.”

SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Oklahoma
Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS)
Child Welfare
Substantiations for Domestic Violence

- State FY 2009: 9.32%
- State FY 2010: 13.57%
- State FY 2011: 15.44%
- State FY 2012: 24.16%
- State FY 2013: 25.10%

Source: OKDHS Child Welfare Substantiated Reports for Abuse and Neglect
Oklahoma

- As of July 31, 2012, 10%* of child support cases (18,368) had family violence identified.
  (OKDHS Quarterly Family Violence report, July 31, 2012)

- OKDHS TANF - 30 – 50% of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) recipients disclose domestic violence
  (V. Harrison, personal communication, October 16, 2013)
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
What Do We Know?
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

COUNTERINTUITIVE

“Contrary To What Common Sense Would Suggest”
From 1994 to 2010, about 4 in 5 victims of intimate partner violence were female (80%); 1 in 5 were male (20%).

Oklahoma

- Oklahoma now ranks 3rd in the nation for women killed by men in single victim, single offender incidents (Violence Policy Center, 2014).

- Report year 2012 Oklahoma was 17th in the nation (UCR, 2010).

- The lifetime prevalence of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner is greater for Oklahoma women than in any other state (Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 2010).
WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the United States, more frequent than car accidents, muggings, and rapes combined (20% to 25% of all ER visits).


Each year in the United States 3.3 Million children are exposed to domestic violence.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?


WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- Fathers who batter the mother of their children are twice as likely to seek sole custody than are nonviolent fathers and are three times as likely to be in arrears in child support. 
  *Source: American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family, 1996, p.40*

- More than half of all child abductions result from domestic violence. 
  *Source: Grief, Jeffrey & Hagar, Rebecca, Abduction of children by their parents: A survey of the problem. Social Work, 1991*
WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Domestic Violence And Child Sexual Abuse


WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What does the phrase ‘domestic violence’ mean to you?
- What acts do you think qualify as ‘domestic violence’?
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

What Causes Domestic Violence?

- Learned behavior (supported by social learning theory)
  - modeled in family of origin
  - abusive behavior is rewarded – achieves desired results

- DV is not caused by the following, but these issues can exacerbate the violence:
  - substance abuse
  - mental health issues
  - external stress
  - inability to manage anger

Sources: [http://www.ncadv.org/learn/TheProblem_100.htm](http://www.ncadv.org/learn/TheProblem_100.htm)
The Abusive Personality by Donald Dutton, 1998
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

OKDHS DEFINITIONS


“Domestic violence means assaultive or coercive behaviors such as physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, or economic coercion against another adult, emancipated minor, or minor child who are family or household members or who are or were in a dating relationship.”
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Oklahoma Statutory Definition

"Domestic abuse" means any act of physical harm, or the threat of imminent physical harm which is committed by an adult, emancipated minor, or minor child thirteen (13) years of age or older against another adult, emancipated minor or minor child who are family or household members or who are or were in a dating relationship;
"Family or household members" means:

a. spouses,
b. ex-spouses,
c. present spouses of ex-spouses,
d. parents, including grandparents, stepparents, adoptive parents and foster parents,
e. children, including grandchildren, stepchildren, adopted children and foster children,
f. persons otherwise related by blood or marriage,
g. persons living in the same household or who formerly lived in the same household, and
h. persons who are the biological parents of the same child, regardless of their marital status, or whether they have lived together at any time. This shall include the elderly and handicapped;
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Definition

“Domestic Violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners or formerly intimate partners.”

OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Pushing, punching, strangulation ("choking"), burning, shooting, dragging, restraining, locking in the house, throwing down stairs, kicking, poking, slapping, cutting, tripping, holding down, hair pulling, squeezing, pinching, suffocating, and kidnapping; Sleep deprivation; driving car recklessly, withholding food/water; withholding medical treatment and medication (incl. prenatal care); preventing needed medical care.

(Source: Illinois coalition Against Domestic Violence)
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual assault, rape (incl. marital rape), making degrading sexual comments, forcing or coercing sex, assaulting breasts or genitals, forcing a partner to have sex with a third person, criticizing appearance, bragging about infidelity, accusations of infidelity, forced cohabitation; forcing the victim to have an abortion or sabotaging birth control methods
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Destroying property, prized possessions, relatives’ property - taking her money, restricting access to household finances, making the victim ask or beg for money, only giving the victim small amounts of money at a time, controlling access to family assets in family court (*victim bargains away assets to try and obtain custody*), not allowing victim to work or attend school, forcing victim to work or hold down multiple jobs, continual harassment at work – compromising victim’s employment, victim absenteeism from work due to domestic violence.
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Making threats of violence, forcing a woman to do degrading things, controlling her activities, frightening her, or using her children as leverage against her, killing a family pet, creating crisis, embarrassment, minimizing, denying and blaming the victim for the abusive behavior, forcing the victim to engage in illegal activity.

Extortion – threatening to expose something the victim does not want others to know or see.
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

VERBAL ABUSE

Name calling, yelling, making demeaning comments, threatening, belittling, constant phone calls, actively undermining her authority with children, setting her up so that he can humiliate her in public or in front of family and friends.
Youtube Video “Wife Beating Caught on Video”

“Breaking Point”
Highlights the devastating effects of emotional/psychological abuse and the impact of chronic trauma.
DYNAMICS - CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Manipulation through cycle – tactics of power and control

Emotional abuse

Argue, insult, accusation

Tension-building phase

Threats, pushing, hitting

Violent episode phase

Choking, use of weapons

Apologies, reconciliation, promises
WHEN VICTIMS USE FORCE

- Many battered women have used some type of physical force at one time or another during the relationship.

- The force used by battered women occurs for the following reasons:
  - Self-defense, including escape attempts
  - Pre-emptive – “inducing”
  - Because not using force has not kept them safe.
  - Retaliation for a history of abuse

- When battered women make the choice to use force they are often arrested and/or charged with a crime – or experience misidentification as being the batterer in many systems including child protective services.

Source: House, E. When Women Use Force.
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Often report that they were not living in an ongoing state of fear of the perpetrator;
- Often did not have prior experiences of violent relationships,
- Rarely experienced post-separation violence;
- More likely to express anger rather than feel fear or intimidation;
- Many indicated that they had difficulty in expressing their experience.

OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

“Why does she stay?”

“Why doesn’t she leave?”

instead of asking...

“What are the challenges and how can we help remove barriers to leaving?”

Group Activity
Brainstorm challenges to leaving an abusive relationship.
OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Feeling Trapped

- Fear
- Economic
- Children
- Family
- Faith
- Isolation

Challenges to Leaving

- Immigration Status
- Cultural
- System Challenges
PERPETRATOR AS PARENT
Something My Father Would Do
PERPETRATOR AS PARENT

“The perpetrator, through the use of intimate partner violence, creates an environment of fear and intimidation that can affect every member of a family, including children”.

PERPETRATOR AS PARENT

General Observations

1. Demonstrate a wide range of parenting capacities – some may want to improve their ability to act as an appropriate parent.
2. COERCIVE CONTROL – “if victim does not do what she is told – he ups the control – Bancroft, 2013
3. Potential to be very retaliatory

PERPETRATOR AS PARENT

4. ENTITLEMENT - BELIEVES he has the right to do what he is doing – and may actually frame his behavior as protecting his rights.

- Special rights & privileges
- His needs come first – “self-centered”
- He cannot be criticized
- He is owed gratitude
- May pervert religious doctrine to support his attitude of entitlement.

PERPETRATORS A PARENT

- He reverses “self-defense and aggression” by 180 degrees – to demonstrate to you how violent she is (Bancroft 2013).

- MANIPULATIVE – He tries to split you off from the victim, sets professionals against each other.

- CONTEMPT – Anger is not usually a good indicator of who is the perpetrator but contempt for the victim is.

PERPETRATOR AS PARENT

Undermining the Abused Parent’s Authority as a Parent

- Undermining of mother’s parenting and destructive to the mother-child relationship.
  
  e.g. Encouraging child to be disrespectful (abusive) towards mother

- Interfering with her authority as a parent

- Teaching the children violence-supporting beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.

- Telling the children that the abused parent is to blame for the violence.

- Telling the children that they cannot be a family because of the victim.

- Telling the children that the abused parent is an alcoholic or mentally ill (“crazy”)

- Sabotaging the abused parent’s rules for the children.

PERPETRATOR AS PARENT

Related to Child Visitation

- Keeping the children longer than agreed
- Threatening to abduct the children
- Showing up unexpectedly to see the children
- Picking the children up at school without informing the abused parent
- Showering the children with gifts during visits
- Constantly changing visitation plans without notice
- Not coming to see the children and blaming the victim
- Harassing the victim during exchanges.
PERPETRATOR AS PARENT

Using the Children Against the Victim

- Constantly calling the victim under the disguise of talking to or about the children – excessive use of cell phone to call children.

- Threatening to take custody away if she does not agree to reconcile.

- Battering or threatening to kill the victim in front of the children/Forcing the child to witness the abuse of the mother or adult victim

- Telling the victimized parent that no one will believe her, everyone will think she is crazy, and she will lose custody of the children.
PERPETRATOR AS PARENT

Related to Children Generally

- Keeping court cases active by frequent filings.
- Physically abusing the children and ordering them not to tell their mother.
- Criticizing, threatening, or abusing his new partner in front of the children.
- Not permitting the abused parent access to proper health care for the children.
- Driving recklessly with the children and/or the victim in the car to upset the mother.
- Withholding child support or quitting a job or remaining underemployed in order to avoid paying child support.
- Recruiting relatives to speak negatively about the victim to the children or to allied professionals – law enforcement, child welfare, court etc.
VICTIM AS PARENT
VICTIM AS PARENT

• Women’s Parenting may or may not be affected by their experiences with domestic violence – some research shows that abused women parent as effectively as their non-abused counterparts.¹

• Experience greater levels of stress (which does not necessarily equate to diminished parenting).¹

• May compensate for violent events by offering increased nurturing and protection for their children.¹

• Diminished authority as a parent.

VICTIM AS PARENT

Coping And Survival Strategies

- Minimizing or denying the violence
- Taking responsibility for the violence
- Using alcohol or drugs
- Self-defense
- Remaining in the relationship
VICTIM AS PARENT

- Victims describe many ways in which their parenting has been impacted by the actions, attitudes and manipulations of the perpetrator.
  - May be living in constant fear of the abuser
  - Try to appease the abuser (stop the violence/abuse) by setting unrealistically high standards for themselves and the children – to be good – to be quiet – not to cry -
VICTIM AS PARENT

- Insulted, humiliated, embarrassed
- May use themselves as a shield to protect the children from being hurt.
- Verbal abuse in front of children may make it difficult to manage their children – or discipline
- They may begin to doubt their ability to parent – resulting in inconsistent parenting
VICTIM AS PARENT

- Some protect by adopting an overly permissive style of parenting.
- Some find it difficult to deal with their perception of the children’s similarities to the abuser – particularly if abuse and aggression emerges in their teenage sons.
- Some mothers may inappropriately use their children as confidants
- Have very little privacy
- Very little opportunity to express opinions or ideas
VICTIM AS PARENT

- Inconsistent and confusing emotional climate of the home – children may not learn about consequences or boundaries for appropriate behavior. This can make it hard for mothers to set limits on behavior.

- PTSD, depression, anxiety resulting from the trauma of abuse.

- Exhausted
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, VICTIMIZATION AND TRAUMA

“Adult victims of domestic violence experiencing trauma or other mental health issues (depression, anxiety etc.) may face additional risks when they come into contact with systems and individuals who are not equipped to understand these additional challenges”.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, VICTIMIZATION AND TRAUMA

We Have A Moral And Ethical Duty To Provide Trauma-Informed Services and Environments That Are Free from Inadvertent Re-Traumatization and Re-Victimization
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, VICTIMIZATION AND TRAUMA

- The experience of trauma may lead to the development of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for victims of DV;
- Psychological abuse can be as damaging as physical violence;
- The experience of severe violence is not necessary to develop PTSD but the intensity of the PTSD is usually related to the severity of the violence.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, VICTIMIZATION AND TRAUMA

- **Meta-analysis:** 31% to 84% (40%-84%) of women victimized by domestic violence develop PTSD;

- Women in **shelters** experience PTSD at greater rates than non-sheltered women;

- Domestic violence is a leading cause of female suicide attempts; *(Coker et al, 2002; Golding et al, 1999, Stark & Flitcraft, 1995)*

- Spousal abuse scores were the strongest predictor of alcoholism in women. *(Miller et al, 1989)*
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, VICTIMIZATION AND TRAUMA

- The adult victim’s experience of trauma may impact the child’s experience of trauma;
- The emotional healing of the child is correlated to the safety and healing of the adult;
- Women involved with the courts experience PTSD at greater rates than non-court involved victims.
THE CHILDREN
THE CHILDREN

“...My picture tells the story about the day my dad was hitting and kicking my mom in the kitchen. I got very scared so I ran down the street but then I got really scared because I didn’t know where to go, so I had to go home.” ~ J. 8 years old

Source: YWCA of OKC
Abusers create risk to children
WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- 63% of all males between the ages of 11-20 who are serving time for homicide in the U.S. are incarcerated because they killed their mother’s abuser. 
  

- 80-90% of children in those homes can give detailed descriptions of the violence experienced in their families, although many adults believe that they have protected their children from exposure to the violence.

  **Source:** Doyne, S., Bowermaster, J. & Meloy, R. *Custody Disputes Involving Domestic Violence: Making Children’s Needs a Priority.* Juvenile and Family Court Journal, 1999
“THE ADVERSITY PACKAGE”

- Homelessness
- Domestic Violence
- Child Maltreatment
- Poverty
- Parental Substance Abuse
Impact to Children

- Direct Child Abuse
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Psychological/Emotional
  - Neglect

- Impact from Parenting Style and Coercive Control tactics and attitudes of Perpetrator

- Death Witness to Homicide
- Injury – including Accidental Injury

- “Adversity Package”
THE CHILDREN

Risk to Children (Pre and Post-Separation)

Factors that might indicate child can only be safe through out of home placement:

- Other types of child abuse create safety threats

- Batterer continues to expose the children to serious violence despite intervention

- Child has reduced ability to manage circumstances or has conditions that increase vulnerability

THE CHILDREN

Risk to Children (Pre and Post-Separation)

Factors that might indicate child can only be safe through out of home placement:

- Batterer has a history of serious domestic violence
- Adult abuse of alcohol or other drugs presents an additional safety threat
- No other workable plan can be put in place

**The Children**


- “Not all children exposed to violence suffer significant harmful effects. The most critical protective factor for a child is the existence of a strong, positive relationship between the child and a competent and caring adult.” J.D. Osofsky and E. Fenichel, editors *"Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Violent Environments: Hurt, Healing and Hope."* Dec. 1993/Jan. 1994
Children exposed to domestic violence are at increased risk for developing a broad range of emotional, behavioral, social and developmental problems.
## IMPACT TO CHILDREN

### An Overview

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Regression</th>
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<td>Loss of Safety</td>
<td>Aggression, hostility</td>
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<td>Loss of Trust</td>
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<td>Loss and Betrayal</td>
<td>Lower Social Competence</td>
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<td>*Self-Blame</td>
<td>Poor Academic Performance</td>
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<td>Guilt and Shame</td>
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<td>Role Reversal</td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<td>Developmental Delay</td>
<td>Trauma &amp; PTSD</td>
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*Sometimes blames the victim*
THE CHILDREN

Male children who witness domestic violence towards their female caregivers are 50% more likely to be violent towards their partners as adults.
IMPACT TO CHILDREN

Learn:
- Violence solves problems
- Intimidation gets results
- I’m to blame – and/or the victim is at fault
- Controlling and manipulating
- Harmful stereotypes
- Love = abuse
- Domestic violence is normal
- Nothing is safe
IMPACT TO CHILDREN

- 6 times more likely to commit suicide
- 24 times more likely to be sexually assaulted
- 67 times more likely to engage in delinquent behavior as an adolescent
- 1500 times more likely to be abused or neglected

Source: United States Department of Justice: Special Report, 2002
THE CHILDREN

- 1 in 6 women will be abused during pregnancy
  
  *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

- 3 times the risk of homicide (attempted or completed) if abused during pregnancy
  

- The risk of pregnancy-associated homicide is greater for those women who do not receive prenatal care.
  

- Immediate injury to woman and her baby

- Lack of access to prenatal care

- Maternal stress

- Negative pregnancy outcomes
Domestic Violence Risk Assessment and Safety Planning/Options
Community Response

- Separated and divorced women are most at risk, especially in the first 2 months after leaving. Eventually those who leave should be safer.

- Majority of battered women who leave their abusers are NOT killed- BUT ONLY when communities increase the safety of women leaving violent relationships.

- Men having a gun is the strongest risk factor for intimate partner homicide. Women being separated during the past year from the abuser is the next most important risk factor.

BOTTOM LINE: If the victim says she is in extreme fear of harm, BELIEVE HER and urge all others in the system to also BELIEVE HER.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY PLANNING/ OPTIONS

- **Danger Assessment** – Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell at [www.dangerassessment.org](http://www.dangerassessment.org)

  Research compared factors distinguishing victims who were in the "homicide" group versus the "abused group":

  1. Ever used, or threatened to use, a gun, knife or other weapon against the victim? (20.2X)
  2. Ever threatened to kill or injure the victim? (14.9X)
  3. Ever tried to strangle the victim? (9.9X)
  4. Is the abuser violently or constantly jealous? (9.2X)
  5. Has the abuser ever forced the victim to have sex? (7.6X)

  *(i.e. if the abuser has used or threatened to use weapons, the victim’s risk of DV homicide is 20.2X that of the “average” DV victim)*
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GUNS

1. Even just access to firearms increases the risk of intimate partner homicide more than five times 5X more than in instances where there are no weapons.

2. Perpetrators who possess guns tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their partners.

3. Oklahoma – 10 year period – 1,059 victim homicides - 52% of homicides committed with a firearm (ODVFRB)

SAFETY PLANNING FOR DV

Assess The Perpetrator’s Risk To Children

- Level of physical danger to adult victim/serious injury to victim
- Weapons used or threatened
- History of physical abuse to the children
- History of sexual abuse to the children
- Abuse of animals
- Level of psychological cruelty to victim and/or child
- Sense of entitlement and view of victim and children as possessions
- Escalating violence – frequency and severity
- Threats of kidnapping, hostage taking, suicide or homicide
- Violations of protective order


85% OF WOMEN AND 63% OF CHILDREN SEEKING SHELTER FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REPORT ANIMAL ABUSE IN THE HOME.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY PLANNING/ OPTIONS

Safety Planning With The Child

Assess for risk/safety:

- Is the child intervening or will intervene
- Is the child likely to be injured during the violence
- Is the victim and child denied access to basic needs
- Are there reports that the perpetrator has substantially harmed or making believable threats to do so to anyone in the family, including pets
- Is there evidence that the child is experiencing trauma
WORKING WITH THE NON-OFFENDING PARENT

- Interview the NOP alone
- Avoid victim-blaming questions/statements
- Offer safe alternatives and access to Domestic Violence resources
- Do not demand that victim leave the abusive relationship
- Reassure the victim that she/he is not responsible for the perpetrator’s violence.
- Assist her/him to plan for her safety and the safety of his/her children (develop an interim plan and refer to a DV service provider for more comprehensive safety assistance)
- Refer her/him to and help her/him access resources
SAFETY PLANNING

General Considerations

• Allow the victim to make safety decisions for herself. Ask her what she would like to do. (Accept that each person must find solutions she can live with) – help her to think about the possible outcomes of her decisions/choices based upon your knowledge of DV, dynamics, dangerousness and options for safety. "Domestic Violence Manual For Child Welfare Professionals: A Desk Reference Guide. 2012. OKDHS. p 47."

• Every effort should be taken to maintain confidentiality and privacy;

• Do not ask about abuse in the presence of a potential domestic violence perpetrator or in the presence of any other person the client has not privately identified as a someone who can be trusted with that information. Remember: Disclosure of abuse carries a significant risk of retaliatory behavior on the part of the perpetrator.

WORKING WITH THE NON-OFFENDING PARENT

Sensitive Questioning

5 Things to Say to a Victim

1. “You don’t deserve to be hurt.”
2. “It is not your fault.”
3. “You have a right to be safe.”
4. “I am concerned about your safety and the safety of your children.”
5. “There are voluntary, free and confidential services available to assist you with your needs.”
SAFETY PLANNING

General Considerations

• Intervention with batterers can reduce the risk to children. Document the batterers coercive behaviors, the adverse impact on children, and any actions taken by the batterer to harm the children. Engage batterers in making concrete change. Make them “visible” in the family dynamic and case plans.

• Do not mandate “unnecessary” services for the victim – they should be determined collaboratively and jointly determined with overall safety in mind. Ask “In what way can I (or others) be helpful to you”

WORKING WITH THE DV PERPETRATOR


- New Jersey’s Division of Youth and Family Services Domestic Violence Case Practice Protocol warns, “interviews with batterers should not move beyond obtaining their account of the incident. Direct and specific inquiry or confrontational questioning must be avoided.” New jersey dep’t of human servs., Supra note 21, at 8–11 (emphasis in original).
WORKING WITH THE DV PERPETRATOR

- Listen critically - batterers will frequently attempt to minimize or deny their behavior, blame the victim, justify the violence, blame alcohol, drugs, or other stress, or claim loss of control.

- Do not confront the batterer with the victim’s statements about abuse – if possible, workers can use police or other agency reports to discuss violence during an interview.

WORKING WITH THE DV PERPETRATOR

- Assess his/her ability to remain safely involved in the family whether in the home or through visitation
- Ask what steps he/she will take to create safety. Is he/she willing to develop a “plan for non-violence”
- Ask questions about steps the perpetrator has taken or will take to accept responsibility
- Conduct meetings or interviews with the perpetrator in the agency office or other public place. If this is not possible, have a co-worker, supervisor or law enforcement official to be present
WORKING WITH THE DV PERPETRATOR

- Notify supervisor, others, security that a potentially dangerous individual will be on the premises.
- Inform the victim if their partner’s anger has escalated, posing a risk to the victim or the children.
DOCUMENTATION
DOCUMENTATION

- Document Safety Strategies
- Document Protective Capacities
- Document Batterer Accountability

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY PLANNING/ OPTIONS

Acquisition of Reliable Information

- Police arrest reports (obtain reports for each arrest, not just the most recent)
- Police records of “domestic disturbance” calls
- Perpetrators criminal record
- Perpetrators mental health record
- Victim’s affidavits from past protective orders
- Information from probation or parole officers
DOCUMENTATION

• Clear and thorough documentation is essential to strong casework.
• Documenting domestic violence in CPS cases can be helpful or harmful to victims and their children
• Case records and forms should accurately identify the victim and perpetrator of domestic violence (if at all possible)
• Document the effects of domestic violence on the abused partner and children
• Document the perpetrator’s pattern of control, paying particular attention to “how the fear and uncertainty generated by prior behavior continues to impact current parenting, decision-making, risk analysis and safety planning of the adult victim,” as well as the effect that the batterer’s actions have had on the children.
Any information in the case record or public documents (e.g., court records) pertaining to a confidential address of a victim (e.g., shelter location or relocation to new housing) should be flagged and **never** shared with the abuser.
DOCUMENTATION

- When information must be shared in court proceedings, victims should be notified in advance of the court date so they may plan for their safety. *(If needed, involve court security to escort victim to and from court)*

- If appropriate, consider requesting separate court hearings – particularly if victim requests it
Examples of documentation recommendations are:

- Do not lump batterer and victim together. Avoid phrases like:
  
  "couple engage in violence"

  "parents have a history of domestic violence"

  "parents have a history of domestic violence altercations"

  "a dynamic between parents"

  "parents are entangled in an abusive relationship"

  "violence or abuse in the parents' relationship"

- Be precise & descriptive
Avoid euphemisms or vague terms like “argued” if what you mean is “hit”

Describe the pattern:

“Father has engaged in an escalating pattern of physical violence and intimidation that involved multiple incidents of physical assault, threats to kill the mother and her children.”

Affirm the batterer’s role in harming the children through his actions:

“These behaviors have isolated the mother from her support system, the children from relatives, and led to them moving school systems and residences twice in the past year (as a result of evictions).”
Avoid blaming the victim for the batterer’s violence and abusive behavior.

Avoid phrases like:

“Dysfunctional” family

Mother “allows” or “enables” the violence

Use language that focuses on the batterer’s role in creating harm or risk to the children and mother’s attempt to protect:

“Despite the mother’s efforts to protect the children, the batterer is creating conditions injurious and harmful to the children.”
ISP goals for the DV Victim

Don’t mandate a specific service or option; instead, explore choices with the adult victim to meet the expected outcomes. Support the victim’s decision making.

- Focus on Safety Planning – options for safety
- Focus on concrete supports – housing, financial supports, legal protection.
CASE DOCUMENTATION

Examples for the ISP Goals for the DV Victim

- Safety permitting, Mrs. Smith will participate in an OAG domestic violence victim services program and develop an appropriate plan for child safety;

- Mrs. Smith will address the impact of domestic violence on her child by involving her child in domestic violence trauma counseling.
Examples for the ISP Goals for the Batterer

- Mr. Smith will not use further violence towards any member of the household, including pets.
- Mr. Smith will have all weapons removed from the premises, including, but not limited to guns, bows and arrows, shotguns, knives and hunting rifles.
INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICE PLAN (ISP) PROGRESS REPORT

Risk Factor: Domestic Violence - Adult

To Do:

Goal: Mrs. Mary Smith will need to be able to have healthy boundaries and relationship with her significant others.

1. Mrs. Smith will schedule an intake appointment with the xyz Domestic Violence Agency as soon as possible.
2. Mrs. Smith will initiate services, participate, and successfully complete the program.
3. She will follow through with all recommendations.
4. She will not allow physical force within her family.
INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICE PLAN (ISP) PROGRESS REPORT

Risk Factor:
Domestic Violence - Adult

To Do:
Goal: Mr. Joe Smith will need to be able to have healthy boundaries and relationship with children’s mother, Mrs. Mary Smith.

1. Mr. Smith will schedule an intake appointment with a DHS approved agency Domestic Violence Program as soon as possible;
2. He will do the assessment and will follow through with all recommendations made by the service provider and those recommendations will be added to his court ordered treatment plan.
INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICE PLAN (ISP) PROGRESS REPORT

Risk Factor:
Domestic Violence - Adult

To Do:
1. Mrs. Smith will contact an approved DHS service provider for Domestic Violence treatment such as xyz agency.
2. Mrs. Smith will submit to assessment, attend, and complete a Domestic Abuse service treatment program. Any other recommendations of the provider will be addressed to the court and requests will be made to add those recommendations to client’s ISP as deemed appropriate.

Progress:
Client is in a women’s co-dependency group at “Just say no” substance abuse agency
“Mrs. White will ensure that she is not involved in any domestic violence situations with Mr. White”

“If Mr. and Mrs. Jones reconcile, they will participate in family therapy to address relationships and the dynamics of a healthy relationship”.
CASE DOCUMENTATION

“Mrs. Jones will contact an approved DHS agency to schedule an intake appointment for classes in domestic violence and/or batterer’s intervention”

“Mrs. Black has a history of domestic violence altercations with others, some of which have led to her entering domestic abuse shelters”
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES
INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- **Recommendations specific to the batterer**

- **Recommendations specific to the victim**
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA SERVICES

Certified Domestic Violence Victim Services

- Emergency Shelters
- Local Domestic Violence Service Providers – Advocacy/Crisis Intervention/Case Management/Counseling/Safety Planning/Court Advocacy/Housing/Resources
- SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program)
- DVNE (Domestic Violence Nurse Examiner Program)
- Batterer’s Intervention Programs
Other Community Resources

- Victim Protection Order ("VPO")
  - Minors – 16 years old and over
  - < 16 years old – adult family member must file
  - *Same-sex dating relationships can file

- ACP - Address Confidentiality Program
- VINE Program
- Victims Compensation
PROCEED WITH CAUTION

- Psychological Evaluations
- Marital/Couples Counseling – in most instances not appropriate
- Anger Management – in most cases not appropriate – OAG certified BIP is best practice intervention
- Watch for Children’s Attorney’s who only speaks with the alleged perpetrator – and not the adult victim, children or the victim service provider
THE RESOURCES


Assessing Dangerous: Violence by Sexual Offenders, Batters, and Child Abuser, Edited by J.C. Campbell, Sage, 1995

THE RESOURCES

www.childtrauma.org
www.ocadvsa.org
www.familynonviolence.org
www.uniteforkids.org
www.futureofchildren.org
www.uta.edu.ssw/lehmann