



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MANUAL

FOR Child Welfare Professionals

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



 **Kansas
Coalition**
against sexual &
domestic violence

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INTRODUCTION

There is growing evidence of the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment or child welfare-related issues. Best practice in the intervention of these cases must address the co-occurrence of domestic violence. The purpose of this manual is to provide direction for child welfare professionals when working with families where domestic violence and child welfare-related issues are both occurring.

This manual addresses situations where survivors of domestic violence are non-abusive and provide the primary source of care and support for the children, and abusive partners or batterers remain a risk to the safety of the children and the survivor. It does not address situations where a non-abusive, protective parent cannot be identified and both the batterer and survivor are a risk to the safety of the children.

The primary focus of child protection intervention in domestic violence cases is the ongoing safety of children. The best way to protect children in most domestic violence cases is to keep children safe and together with their protective parent, and to hold the batterer accountable for their abusive and violent behavior through interventions and case plan expectations.¹

Anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, class, race, lifestyle, or religion may experience domestic violence at the hands of their partner. However, gender-specific language is used throughout this manual, as research consistently shows that women are at significantly greater risk of domestic violence than men.

Child welfare professionals should always follow federal and state law and agency policies and procedures when working with families where domestic violence and child welfare-related issues are both occurring.

DEFINITIONS

Domestic Violence/ Battering: Occurs when one *intimate partner or former intimate partner* exercises a pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors* against the other intimate partner or former intimate partner. These abusive and coercive behaviors are used to gain dominance, power, and control over the intimate partner, and can include the use of illegal and legal behaviors and tactics that undermine the victim's sense of self, free will, and safety.

* Abusive and coercive behaviors may include physical violence; sexual violence; stalking; emotional abuse; economic abuse; use of children; use of privilege; minimization, denial, and blame; intimidation; isolation; coercion and threats.

Batterer/ Abusive Parent/Abuser: A person who exercises a pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors against an *intimate partner or former intimate partner*.

Survivor/ Victim/ Non-Abusive Parent: A person who is, or has been, subjected to a pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors by an *intimate partner or former intimate partner*.

Alleged Child Victim: The alleged victim of a child abuse or neglect investigation.

Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault Program: A nonprofit organization whose primary purpose is to provide free and confidential services to victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, including, but not limited to, emergency accommodations, crisis hotlines, supportive counseling, parent and child advocacy, community education, and referral services. *See Section 8*

Safety Planning: An ongoing process designed to help a survivor of domestic violence think through things that may change her level of safety. It is not a checklist or form but rather includes discussing plans and options with the survivor for situations that may put the survivor's or her children's safety at risk. Domestic violence and sexual assault advocates are specially trained in the safety planning process. Contact your local domestic violence or sexual assault program for assistance with this process. *See Section 8*



SECTION I: WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Power and Control Wheel
The Wheel as it Applies to Children
Identifying Domestic Violence
Risk Factors: Staying vs. Leaving

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Power and Control Wheel

- › The Power and Control Wheel is the most widely-used tool to show the experience of domestic violence.
- › The Power and Control Wheel has eight spokes that represent the abusive and coercive tactics, tools, pressures, and rationales batterers may use to obtain, maintain, or reinforce power and control over the victim.
- › Physical and sexual violence (outer rim) may not be necessary to establish power and control over the survivor; the threat of such violence may be enough.
- › By using these abusive and coercive tactics, the batterer gains power and control over the victim that undermines the victim's sense of self, free will, and safety.
- › The Power and Control Wheel can be helpful to use as a screening tool or a discussion tool with victims of domestic violence.



Developed by: Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

The Wheel as it Applies to Children²

- › The following describes how domestic violence and battering behavior may impact children, using the Power and Control Wheel.
- › It is important to explore each spoke of the Wheel thoroughly in order to provide appropriate and effective interventions for the family.



USING INTIMIDATION

Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures
• smashing things • destroying her property • abusing pets
• displaying weapons.

Batterer may use intimidation by:

- › Using looks, actions, and gestures to intimidate or cause fear in the family.
- › Destroying property to show authority, intimidate, or punish the family.
- › Using male or adult size to intimidate the mother or the children.
- › Abusing pets to send messages or threats of violence to the family.
- › Displaying or cleaning weapons in front of the family to send messages or threats of violence.
- › Using violence in front of the children.



USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Putting her down • calling her names • making her think she's crazy • playing mind games
• humiliating her • making her feel bad about herself • making her feel guilty.

Batterer may use emotional abuse by:

- › Forcing the children to engage in put-downs or name-calling of the mother.
- › Putting the children down or calling the children names.
- › Humiliating the mother in front of the children.
- › Forcing the mother to engage in embarrassing acts in front of the children.
- › Undermining the value of the mother (e.g., making the mother believe she is an unfit parent, telling the mother the children do not love her).
- › Shaping how the children view their mother.
- › Being inconsistent in visitation, discipline, or parenting.

USING ISOLATION

Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes • limiting her outside involvement • using jealousy to justify actions.

Batterer may use isolation by:

- › Not letting the mother see or spend time with the children.
- › Limiting opportunities for the mother and the children to get help from outside sources.
- › Not allowing the children to participate in age appropriate activities outside the home.
- › Not allowing the children to invite friends into the home.
- › Controlling access to trustworthy adults (e.g., school counselors, grandparents, extended family members).
- › Not allowing the mother to respond to the children's needs (e.g., hurts, fears, basic needs).



MINIMIZING, DENYING, AND BLAMING

Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously • saying the abuse didn't happen • shifting responsibility for abusive behavior • saying she caused the abuse.

Batterer may use minimization, denial, and blame by:

- › Making the children believe the mother is to blame for the violence.
- › Pitting family member against family member.
- › Fostering instability and creating confusion for the children by denying the violence happened.
- › Normalizing the violence.
- › Making light of the violence.
- › Causing the children to feel guilty and to believe they are to blame for the violence.



USING CHILDREN

Making her feel guilty
about the children

- using the children to relay messages
- using visitation to harass her
- threatening to take the children away.

Batterer may use children by:

- › Making the mother believe anything that happens to the children is her fault.
- › Using the children as confidants.
- › Threatening to take the children away, make a child abuse report, or hurt the children if the mother reports the abuse or tries to leave the batterer.
- › Exposing the children to the abuse through direct observation, overhearing, or knowing about the abuse.
- › Undermining the mother's efforts to parent the children.
- › Probing the children for information about the mother or her new partner.
- › Controlling the use of contraception or having children born close together; overwhelming the mother.
- › Causing physical harm to the children as a result of violence toward the mother.
- › Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect perpetrated directly against the children.

USING MALE PRIVILEGE

Treating her like a servant • making all the big decisions • acting like the "master of the castle" • being the one to define men's and women's roles.

Batterer may use male privilege by:

- › Forcing the mother and the female children to do household duties.
- › Teaching the children to not respect women.
- › Centering family life around the batterer.
- › Demanding the children keep quiet about the abuse.
- › Demanding the mother handle the unpleasant or demanding tasks of child rearing.
- › Seeking custody after separation or frequently gaining custody rights based on inappropriate grounds.
- › Demanding the children meet the needs of the batterer.
- › Showing poor emotional boundaries.
- › Teaching the children that women are weak or stupid.
- › Having the ultimate authority but assuming no responsibility, including household chores or parenting.
- › Establishing rigid gender roles for the children.
- › Creating rules for everyone in the household to follow and changing the rules without warning.



USING ECONOMIC ABUSE

Preventing her from getting or keeping a job • making her ask for money • giving her an allowance • taking her money • not letting her know about or have access to family income.

Batterer may use economic abuse by:

- › Creating poor credit for the mother so that she is unable to get financing on her own.
- › Controlling the family finances or withholding information about the family finances.
- › Giving the mother a meager allowance for her and the children's needs.
- › Withholding child support.
- › Refusing to help pay for necessities.
- › Creating reasons for the mother to lose her job (e.g., calling her work frequently, making her miss work, withholding transportation).
- › Disrupting child care arrangements needed to maintain employment.

USING COERCION AND THREATS

Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her

- threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare • making her drop charges
 - making her do illegal things.

Batterer may use coercion and threats by:

- › Threatening to report the mother to welfare to impact her economic benefits.
- › Threatening to report the mother to child protective services.
- › Making threats to harm the mother or the children if the mother leaves him.
- › Threatening to report the mother or the children to immigration authorities.
- › Making threats of retaliation toward the children who disclose abuse to outside helpers.
- › Threatening to abandon the children.
- › Making threats of suicide or other self-harm.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Identifying Domestic Violence³

Proper identification of domestic violence will assist the worker in determining appropriate interventions and referrals, as well as appropriate considerations for the safety of family members.

When is Violence Abuse?

- › Not all violence that occurs between intimate partners is domestic violence, so what do you look for when distinguishing domestic violence from other “relationship” or “situational” violence? It is important to make this distinction because the strategies and services will need to be different when it is domestic violence.

Workers must distinguish between different uses and contexts of violence, by considering:

- The perpetrator’s **INTENT**.
 - Is the intent to dominate, control, bring their partner into compliance, or to induce fear?
- The **MEANING** of the violence to the victim.
 - How does the victim interpret the behavior of their partner?
 - Is the victim afraid for her physical, sexual, or emotional safety?
- **The EFFECT** of the act on the victim.
 - What is the impact of the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse on the victim?

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Risk Factors: Staying vs. Leaving⁴

What are the risks if a victim of domestic violence stays in a relationship with an abusive partner versus leaving the relationship?

- › Batterers continue to pose danger whether or not they are living with their partners, separated or divorced, incarcerated, or subject to protective orders. Many batterers' motivation to intimidate and control the survivor increases after separation, due to loss of other control tactics.
- › Many survivors face higher risks of violence when they attempt to leave the batterer and are most likely to be killed when attempting to report or leave. This is often referred to as separation violence.
 - Separation violence may happen when the survivor is preparing to leave, when she is leaving, or for many months or years after leaving.
- › Victims may also face housing instability or potential homelessness if they do not have adequate resources or if they depend on the batterers' income.

The graphic below illustrates the different risk factors that a victim of domestic violence takes into consideration when determining whether it is safer for her and her children to stay in the relationship or to leave.

Risks in Leaving

- Physical violence
- Risks to children
- Financial losses
- Risks to family/friends
- Legal risks
- Life-generated risks

Risks in Staying

- Physical violence
- Risks to children
- Financial losses
- Risks to family/friends
- Legal risks
- Life-generated risks

- › The risks are similar for a survivor when deciding to leave or stay. One option may involve different or more risks than the other at any given time. Only the survivor can determine which option is safest for her and her children.



SECTION 2: PREPARING TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY

Prior Considerations

Safety Considerations

Cultural Considerations

Interviewing Tips and Guidelines

PREPARING TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY

Prior Considerations⁵

Prior to meeting with any of the family members, consider the following:

- › The initial meeting with each family member is an opportunity to learn about the needs of the whole family and how workers can assist and support the family in meeting those needs.
- › Address risk, safety, and protective factors each time you meet with any family member.
- › Enhancing the safety of the survivor is an opportunity to reduce risk to the children, as well.
- › Assume that male and female caretakers have an equal responsibility for the emotional and physical well-being of the children.
- › Understanding the batterer's abusive and coercive tactics toward the survivor and the children is key to improving the safety and well-being of the children.
- › The use of violence, abuse, and control are choices made by the batterer.
- › Send appropriate messages of responsibility for the abuse.
- › Batterers can be helped to make changes in their behavior in order to play a more positive role in the lives of their children.

PREPARING TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY

Safety Considerations⁶

Safety considerations:

- › Consider the safety of the worker, survivor, and children prior to meeting with any family members.
 - Should the worker go to the home with another worker?
 - Should the batterer or alleged perpetrator come in to the office?
 - Should law enforcement be notified or assist with the interview?
- › Conduct meetings with each family member separately, throughout the case.
- › Keep the survivor informed and up-to-date throughout the duration of the case so that she can plan for safety, particularly if there are any changes in the batterer's behavior or participation in services.
- › Interview the survivor before interviewing the batterer or alleged perpetrator.
- › Discuss safety options with the survivor around meeting with all family members together in a safe manner, as well as any safety concerns the survivor may have about the worker meeting with the batterer.
- › Do not share information provided by the survivor with the batterer.
- › Notify the survivor when the batterer interview will occur.
- › Consider any information that may suggest there is a threat to safety (e.g., batterer has threatened harm to himself or others; batterer has harmed himself or others; batterer has access to weapons). *See Section 5*

PREPARING TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY

Cultural Considerations⁷

- › Recognize that everyone has different life experiences and cultural backgrounds that include experiencing different oppressions, as well as privileges. These life experiences shape cultural values, beliefs, and world views, and inform how we interact with those around us.
- › Be mindful of sexual orientation, race, gender, ethnicity, and class issues that families may be experiencing or have experienced in the past and how those issues may shape how they interact with worker.
- › Recognize and be aware of personal biases and prejudices and how they may impact the worker's interactions with families; for instance the belief that certain cultures or communities are more violent and accepting of violence than others.
- › Accept that families may have a different set of values from the worker and the worker's role is not to impose her or his own values on others, but rather to understand what values and beliefs are meaningful to each family member.
- › Gather information on a person's interpretation of their culture, and how they identify with their own culture.
- › Because victims of domestic violence may experience the abuse in culturally specific ways, workers should consider the cultural background and the unique issues faced by the victim and their children in order to tailor services to meet their needs.
- › Ensure that anyone with Limited English Proficiency has access to interpretation services and materials in their native language, throughout the duration of the case. If possible, assign workers who speak the same language as the family. Ensure that the interpreter is knowledgeable about domestic violence and the terms used in that specific language to refer to domestic violence. Never use family members or friends to interpret.

Source: Warrier, S., *Culture Handbook*

PREPARING TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY

Interviewing Tips and Guidelines⁸

- › Only ask about domestic violence when the worker is able to meet with each family member separately.
- › Ask about domestic violence with EVERY family regardless of the nature of the original report or reason for referral.
- › Provide opportunities to each family member to meet with the worker separately. The survivor and the children are not likely to disclose information if they are in the presence of the batterer. This can be highly dangerous.
- › Due to negative past experiences or cultural beliefs, victims may be distrustful of the system and therefore be distrustful of the worker. It is crucial to build rapport with a possible victim before asking about domestic violence. If rapport or trust does not exist, a victim is not likely to disclose domestic violence.
- › Normalize the conversation. Using normalizing and universal language while asking about domestic violence can make it easier for someone to disclose they are experiencing domestic violence.

Examples of Normalizing and Universal Language:

- › “Many families we work with are struggling with their relationships, so we started talking to everyone about their partners and how things are going...”
- › “Because violence is so common in many people’s lives, I ask all my clients about it.”
- › “I don’t know if this has ever been a problem for you, but many of the clients I see are dealing with abusive relationships. Some are too afraid or uncomfortable to bring it up themselves, so I’ve started asking everyone about it.”

PREPARING TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY

Interviewing Tips and Guidelines, cont'd⁹

- › Interview the children outside the presence of the parents.
- › Conduct interviews in a location that is safe and comfortable for the children.
- › Ask the survivor how she might approach talking to the children about the violence so that there exists an initial understanding of the children's likely attitude or behavior.
- › Understand that the children may feel responsible for what happened or feel guilty for telling about the abuse.
- › Be aware that the survivor may think the worker is there to take the children. The batterer may have threatened her with calling child protective services and has reinforced the idea that the worker is there to take the children.
- › Always assure survivors of confidentiality, and explain any limitations to your confidentiality that may apply (e.g., mandatory reporting of child abuse). This should be done by the worker prior to the survivor sharing or disclosing any information.
- › A thorough understanding of battering tactics will assist in providing appropriate interventions and referrals.
- › Explore and ask about batterer tactics identified on the Power and Control Wheel. *See Section 1*
- › Batterers may manipulate the interview in ways the worker may not be aware (e.g., takes control over the interview, tries to side with the worker, tries to triangulate professionals involved, portrays self as victim).
- › Never leave domestic violence information around or in a packet of materials without asking the victim if it is safe to do so.

PREPARING TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY

Interviewing Tips and Guidelines, cont'd¹⁰

Screening Question Examples:

- › Have you ever been hurt, threatened, or intimidated by a current or former partner?
- › Are you afraid of a current or former partner?
- › Has your partner ever forced you to do something you did not want to do?
- › Has current or past abuse ever prevented you from going to work or school or prevented you from providing for the basic needs of you or your children?
- › Has anyone taken away something you needed to be independent (e.g., medications, wheelchair, immigration papers, photo identification, birth certificates)?
- › Has your partner ever taken the children without permission, threatened to take the children away from you, or otherwise harmed the children?
- › What worries you the most about your relationship with your partner or your partner's behaviors?
- › How are decisions made in your relationship? How do you feel about that?
- › How are finances and daily responsibilities handled in your relationship? How do you feel about that?
- › How are parenting responsibilities divided up between you and your partner? How do you feel about that?
- › What was the most recent thing your partner has done to harm you or your children? When was it?
- › How might working with our agency put you or your children in danger?

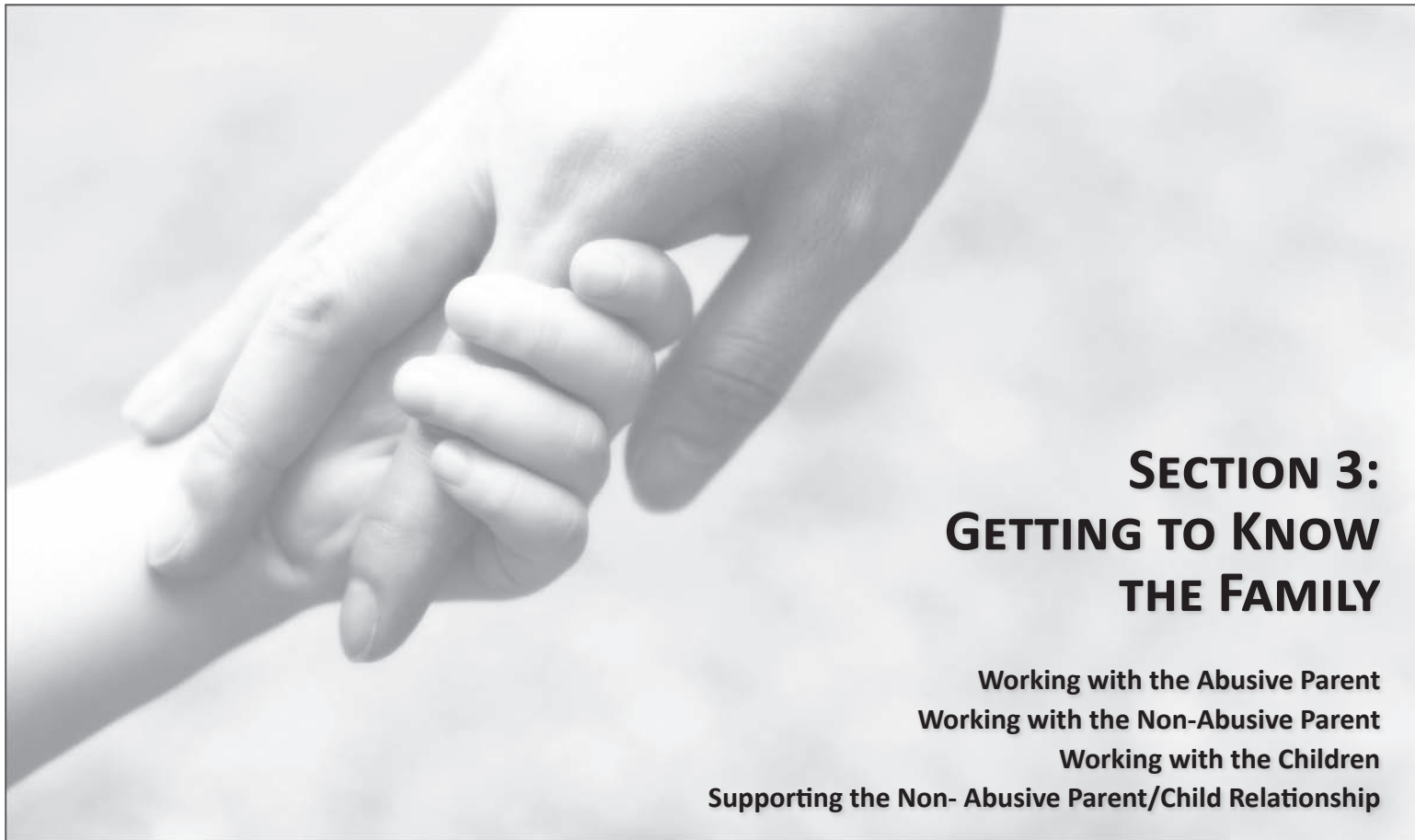
PREPARING TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY

Interviewing Tips and Guidelines, cont'd¹¹

Appropriate responses to the survivor include:

- › I'm glad you talked to me about this today."
- › "You don't deserve to be hurt."
- › "It is not your fault."
- › "You deserve to be treated with respect."
- › "You have a right to be safe."
- › "I believe you."
- › "There are voluntary, free, and confidential services available to assist you with your needs. Would you like me to assist you in making contact with the local domestic violence program?"

It is important to keep in mind that the worker does not have to be an expert in domestic violence to help families experiencing domestic violence. It is not the worker's job to "fix" domestic violence; make a victim leave the relationship; or to tell clients what to do. It is important to remember that providing support and information can make a real difference to families. Workers can help parents and children when they make the effort to understand their situations from their perspective and recognize the impact abuse can have on parenting ability, as well as family health and overall functioning.



SECTION 3: GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Abusive Parent
Working with the Non-Abusive Parent
Working with the Children

Supporting the Non- Abusive Parent/Child Relationship

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Abusive Parent¹²

Safety: Consider the worker's safety, the safety of the survivor and the child victim.

Do not disclose information provided by partners or children to abusers. Use collateral information and reference the source of information.

Respect: Maintain a calm demeanor. Avoid labeling, instead focus on behaviors.

Example: "Most men who have been physically abusive are really regular people who end up doing harmful or hurtful things to their families. However, they are responsible for their behavior. But people can change their behavior. It's not about bad people; it's about harmful behavior."

Set Limits: If the batterer is using tactics of intimidation and threats towards you, call his attention to it and request that he change his behavior.

Inform the batterer that if the interview needs to be ended due to his behavior, it will be documented.

Meeting Goals:

1. Establish rapport and begin building a working relationship with the abusive parent.
2. Gain his perspective on his use of abusive behaviors and the impact it has had on his partner and children.
3. Determine whether he will take responsibility for his abusive behaviors; agree to change his behavior, and participate in services.

Rapport: Show interest in learning about their perspective and what is meaningful to them in their life. Utilize active listening skills. Explain your role and expectations, as the worker. Clearly state any concerns you have.

Example: "What do you like about your partner? How did you meet?"

"What goes well in your relationship?"

"I am here to make sure your children are safe. We have a report that your children... (had bruises, said that they were hurt or saw their mother get hurt, etc.). I can provide you with recommendations for services and help you do whatever you can to make sure your children are safe."

Gather Collateral Information, such as, but not limited to:

- Speaking with friends and family
- Parole/probation officers
- Police Reports
- Criminal Records
- Protection Orders
- Child Abuse Reports
- Mental Health Records
- Hospital Records
- Substance Abuse Treatment Records

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Abusive Parent, cont'd.¹³

Fatherhood: Abusive parents usually aspire to be good fathers and tie success in fatherhood to a positive sense of manhood.

This desire to be a good father can be a motivating factor for change for an abusive parent and offers the opportunity for workers to educate them on the impact of domestic violence on their children.

Ask the abusive parent about their idea of fatherhood and how they view their relationship with their own father.

Building a positive rapport with the abusive parent is crucial in challenging the abuser's point of view while still being strength-based.

Assume that the abusive parent can change and they simply need more information and education to make better choices.

Examples: "I know you want to be a good father. How do you think your children were affected by what you did?"

"Here are some examples of how living in a home where there is violence can affect kids: they may become violent or victimized in future relationships, be angry with you for a very long time, or do poorly in school. Have you seen this in your children? Even if they are silent and don't show anything, it will affect them. I know you are not trying to scare them and leave them with bad memories, but this is what is likely to happen."

"Let's talk about the difference between respect and fear. Did people use fear with you when you were a kid? What is respect? How do you earn your kids' respect?"

Accountability: Maintain a firm emphasis on the concept that violence and abuse are not justified, no matter what the circumstances are, and that it is up to him to get help or to leave the home.

Prudence (Be Cautious): It is essential to avoid debate and arguments with abusers and to minimize the escalation of a situation.

It is useful to accept the reality of disagreement without engaging in arguments or attempts to pressure agreement.

Workers do not have to convince abusers to admit violent behavior or agree to attend a Batterer Intervention Program (BIP). Instead, workers present service plan requirements urging that the abuser take steps to get help and make things better, while noting that noncompliance with the service plan has to be documented in the case file.

Be aware of your demeanor. If a worker is cold, demanding or seems judgmental, the abusive parent may respond with increased oppositional behavior or refuse to meet. If a worker is avoidant or overly accommodating, the abusive parent may feel they have achieved a victory over the system or that their abusive behavior is acceptable.

Example: If there is a clear disagreement, the worker can say: "We may have a difference of opinion that we cannot resolve right now."

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Options for Working with a Hostile or Threatening Abusive Parent¹⁴

Limit Setting Examples:

- “When you behave in this way (describe what just happened) it is threatening (highly disruptive, etc.) and I cannot work when things are like this. I know that you are upset (mad), and that this is unpleasant, but if this continues, I will have to leave and document the reason why I could not continue the interview in the case record.”
- “I need to be able to continue this conversation in a way that is good for both of us. I don’t know if you are aware of it, but you are (interrupting, refusing to talk about yourself, getting very loud, making threatening gestures, etc.). I cannot continue the interview this way. It has to be a two-way conversation. I want to listen to your side of things, but I also need to ask you some questions. Can we continue with questions?”
- If behaviors continue, terminate the meeting and document why.

Adapted from: Mederos, F., *Accountability and connection with abusive men: A new child protection response to increasing family safety*.

Redirect Examples:

- “I would like to hear more about what happened. Can we go back to what you did? I’ll be able to help you better if I hear from you about what happened. We were at this moment (explain). What happened next?”
- “When there has been an allegation of domestic violence, it is a difficult thing. Some people feel blamed and accused. In my experience, it’s not about terrible people but about serious actions that can really hurt families. Men who do this can change. It will help you and your kids. If we can talk about what happened, maybe I can help you.”

If a worker has felt endangered:

- The meeting should end. It is important to document this event in the case record.
- Consult with a supervisor about what happened.
- Assess the risk of the abuser retaliating against his partner as a result of the interview.
- It may be necessary to warn the partner immediately or to address a heightened sense of risk in safety planning.

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Abusive Parent: Culture, Core Values and Beliefs

Values and Beliefs:¹⁵ Ask for examples of his values and beliefs. Connect how his behaviors are conflicting with his values and beliefs.

Discuss with the abusive parent how they can apply those values to making meaningful change in their behavior and how they interact with their family.

Values inform our beliefs and this is where batterers insert their skewed thinking.

Examples:¹⁶ “Let’s talk about your values and how they relate to your behaviors.”

“What values are most important to you, as a father?”

“Is this behavior (insert specific behavior) justified by your value (insert specific value) or does it contradict it?”

“If your kids had a partner that did the things you have done, how would you feel about it?”

Value - “The father is the protector.” **Belief** - “As the father I am able to set a timer to make sure you’re back in time in order to protect you.”

Culture:¹⁷ In each culture, there are values, traditions and practices that facilitate abusive and coercive relationships, and there are also values, traditions and practices that support and promote functional and respectful relationships.

It is helpful to develop an understanding of the values and practices of each person’s culture that support non-violence and healthy relationships, and learn to reflect these values when meeting with the abusive parent. These values can also be incorporated into service plans.

Utilize cultural strengths. Ask if there are any family members, elders in the community, friends, clergy or others who have influence over the abuser or the abuser respects who can play a constructive role.

Be aware of your own assumptions and biases about domestic violence, race, class, and ethnicity.

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Abusive Parent: Culture, Core Values and Beliefs

Questions to ask the abusive parent:¹⁸

- › Describe your relationship with your partner.
- › What goes well in the relationship? What do you disagree about?
- › Do you and your partner have conflicts? About what?
- › What happens when you have conflicts or strong disagreements?
- › What do you do when you feel angry, jealous, or possessive of your partner?
- › Does your partner seem afraid of you? In what ways?
- › Has your partner ever been hurt during an argument?
- › Where are the children when the argument happens? Have the children ever been hurt?
- › What do you think is the most important aspect of being a father? What does it take to be a good father?
- › How do you think the children are affected by what you did?
- › If you need to leave the home, do you have a place to stay? Can the worker help him find a place to stay?
- › What did the children do when you did...[behaviors]?
- › What have you done to stop your use of violence? Have you asked anyone for help? What happened?

Children-focused questions:¹⁹

- › Have the children ever been hurt, accidentally or on purpose?
- › Where are the children when the fighting happens? How do the children respond to the violence?
- › How safe are the children?
- › How safe do the children think you are?
- › How do the children interact with peers? Who are the children's favorite teachers, friends, or people?
- › Are the children involved in any activities outside of the home?
- › How do the children treat you?
- › How are the children disciplined?
- › How do you support your partner's parenting efforts?
- › What are the rules of the house?
- › How do you imagine (child's name) would think about what you just told me?

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Non-Abusive Parent²⁰

Survivors of domestic violence are faced with many challenges and barriers. Consider the following examples:

Life-Generated Risks:

- › Conflicts with religious or cultural beliefs
- › Physical or mental disability
- › No place to go
- › Lack of resources
- › Lack of job skills
- › Lack of resources for LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual) communities
- › Limited access to housing
- › Limited English proficiency

Batterer-Generated Risks:

- › Shame about the violence
- › Emotional attachment or affection for the batterer
- › Economic reliance on the batterer
- › Isolation or lack of support
- › Hope the batterer will change his behavior
- › Lack of community or criminal justice demand for batterer accountability

Survivor's fear of:

- › The batterer's behavior and what the batterer might do
- › Threats or harassment by the batterer
- › Stalking by the batterer
- › Unsupervised parenting time with the batterer
- › Being deported or arrested
- › Harm to pets

Survivor's fear for:

- › The children or of losing custody of the children
- › Other family members' safety

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Non-Abusive Parent²¹

Questions to ask a survivor of domestic violence:

- › How often do you spend time with family and friends in supportive activities? Have you ever been prevented from spending time with them?
- › Does your partner ever monitor your activities? Your phone calls? Your social media or email?
- › Do you feel safe? Have there been times when you did not feel safe?
- › Do you have plans that help keep you safe? What are those?
Note: These plans cannot be shared with anyone.
- › Have you sought safety or support from any agency or person in the past? How was that experience?

“If we start with needs, we get programs;
if we start with strengths, we get possibilities.”

- Lupe Serrano, the late Executive Director
of Casa de Esperanza

Children-focused questions:

- › Have the children ever been hurt, accidentally or on purpose?
- › Where are the children when the fighting happens? How do the children respond to the violence?
- › If the children are hurt, scared, or upset, are you allowed to comfort them?
- › How safe are the children? How are the children disciplined?
- › Have the children ever expressed or indicated they worry about you?
- › Has your partner ever threatened to take the children away?
- › Has your partner ever threatened to harm the children?
- › How do the children interact with peers? Who are the children's favorite teachers, friends, or people?
- › Are the children involved in any activities outside of the home?
- › Do you feel that if certain things about your relationship with your partner were different, that your relationship with the children would also be different?
- › How do the children treat you?
- › Does your partner undermine your parenting? In what ways?
- › How does your partner participate in the parenting?

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Non-Abusive Parent: Understanding Safety and Protective Strategies

- › Children's safety is directly linked to survivors' safety, and survivors' actions often focus on children's well-being.
- › Enhancing survivors' safety and stability is a major avenue for children's well-being.
- › It is crucial for child welfare workers to understand what safety and protective actions the non-abusive parent has utilized to help increase safety for her and her children. These strategies should be documented (See Section 4) and should never be shared with the abusive parent.
- › When taken out of the context of domestic violence, safety strategies used by a survivor can be misinterpreted by outside professionals. It is important for workers to gain an understanding of the survivor's thought process around what made a specific decision safer for her or her children in the moment.²²

Protective and Safety Questions²³ (See Section 5 for more examples):

- › In what ways has the non-abusive parent promoted the physical and emotional safety of her children?
- › In what ways has the non-abusive parent promoted the well-being of her children?
- › In what ways has the non-abusive parent promoted a nurturing and stable environment for her children?
- › In what ways has the non-abusive parent promoted her children's healing from trauma?
- › "What are your concerns around safety for yourself and your children?"
- › "What felt safer for you about your decision to do X instead of Y?"

Protective Strategies Examples (See Section 5 for more examples):

Note: This is not an exhaustive list or a "checklist" of things the survivor needs to do.

- › Reaching out for help
- › Staying active in children's lives (school, etc.)
- › Staying in the relationship or leaving the relationship
- › Seeking legal assistance
- › Maintaining family traditions
- › Maintaining children's routines
- › Maintaining medical appointments
- › Trying to find help for the abuser
- › Working with a domestic violence advocacy program
- › Seeking safe shelter
- › Sending the children outside to play
- › Disciplining the children
- › Challenging or complying with the batterer's demands

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Children²⁴

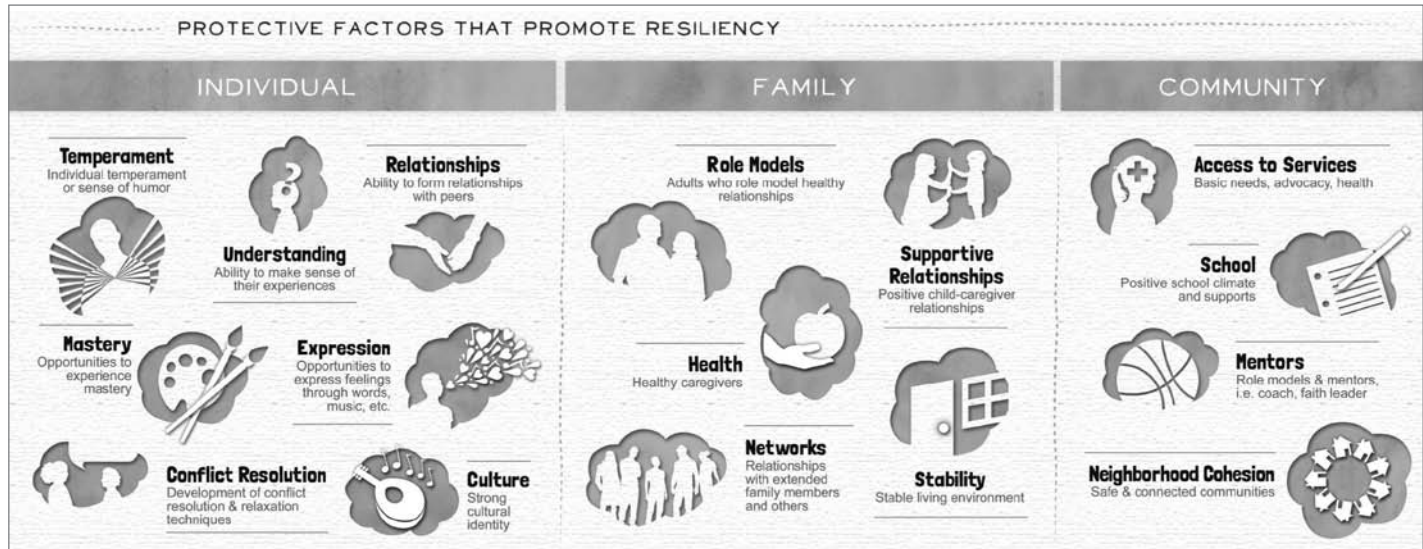
Questions to ask children:

- › Who visits the home? Do you have any pets?
- › Who are your favorite teachers, friends, or people?
- › What do you like to do with your mom? Dad?
- › What are things that bother you about your mom? Dad?
- › What are things that bother you about your brothers or sisters? What do you like to do with your brothers or sisters?
- › What happens when mom and dad disagree about...? When your mom and dad argue, what happens?
- › What happens when dad gets really mad? Has anyone ever been hurt when dad gets mad? Is that different or the same when mom gets mad? Has anyone ever been hurt when mom gets mad?
- › People can be hurt in a lot of different ways – by words, by touching (like hitting), or by other touching that bothers them or makes them feel uncomfortable. Have you ever seen or heard anything like this happening in your family?
- › What happens when you get in trouble? How does that make you feel?
- › What makes you feel scared at home? What do you do when you are scared? What makes you feel better?
- › Have you ever told anyone when you have been scared? Who did you tell? What happened after you told? Has anyone ever talked to you about what to do when you are scared?
- › What do you do when mom and dad are mad at each other?
- › If you had something important to tell your mother, when would you tell her?
- › Do you think about this [child's words for the violence] a lot? When do you think about these things? When you are at school? With friends?

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Working with the Children: Promoting Resilience²⁵

- › Every child is different, and every child responds differently to trauma. Age, developmental stage, gender, and culture can all influence how a child responds to a traumatic event.
- › A child's protective factors are attributes that reduce the effect of stressful or traumatic events on a child's life and promote resilience.
- › Research indicates that the main protective factor in helping children heal from the experience of domestic violence is the presence of a consistent, supportive, and loving adult which is most often with the non-abusing parent.



Source: Promising Futures: Best Practices for Serving Children, Youth and Parents, www.promisingfutureswithoutviolence.org

GETTING TO KNOW THE FAMILY

Supporting the Non-Abusive Parent/Child Relationship

- › When working with families experiencing domestic violence, the idea of safety is not solely about physical protection for victims and their children, but includes basic human needs such as promoting resiliency, resources and well-being for all family members—individually and in their community.
- › As part of promoting well-being and resilience, workers should incorporate information and support to rebuild, build, and strengthen parent-child bonding.
- › Reinforce the non-abusive parent's listening skills as a critical component of strengthening the parent-child bond.²⁶

6 basic needs for children to promote resilience:²⁷

1. A safe and secure home environment.
2. Adults who will listen to them, believe them, and shelter them.
3. A sense of routine and normalcy.
4. Support services that meet their needs.
5. Learning that domestic violence is wrong and being trained about non-violent ways of resolving conflict.
6. Adults who will speak out and break the silence.

“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 & Silverman

10 Tips for Caregivers to Promote Resilience in Children:²⁸

1. Treat them with respect.
2. Accept them for who they are.
3. Focus on strengths.
4. Teach and practice empathy.
5. Show flexibility.
6. Show them undivided attention.
7. Let mistakes be learning experiences.
8. Teach problem-solving and decision-making skills.
9. Use discipline to teach.
10. Let them help.



SECTION 4: DOCUMENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Documenting Safety and Protective Actions
Documenting Batterer Responsibility
Documentation Recommendations

DOCUMENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Documenting Safety and Protective Actions

Include in your documentation any of the following:²⁹

- Specific descriptions of the batterer's pattern of control.
- Past violent behavior, threats, intimidating actions, and other forms of control.
- How the fear and uncertainty generated by the batterer's prior behavior continues to impact current parenting, decision making, risk assessment, and safety of the survivor and the children.
- Details about the severity of the violence, extent of the injuries, duration of the incidents, unpredictability of violent behavior, and the physical proximity to the children.
- If the children are being used as a way of gaining access to, or control over, the survivor.
- An assessment of how these actions are impacting the children.
- Precise language affirming the batterer's role in harming the children.
- Description of battering behaviors that interfere with the parenting efforts of the survivor.

Document how the survivor has provided for the safety and well-being of the children:³⁰

- How has the survivor's behavior helped the children or lessened the impact of the batterer's behavior?
- Explore and acknowledge the survivor's strengths and ways in which she has protected the children.
- How has the survivor managed to keep herself and the children safe thus far?
- In what ways has the survivor provided for safety that do not immediately appear to be safety strategies or protective actions?
- What are the survivor's resources?
- What does the survivor say that she needs? What does the survivor say the children need?
- Help the survivor strategize around basic needs, options for safety, support systems, and resources in the community.
- Validate her experience as a survivor and as a non-abusive, protective parent.

DOCUMENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Documenting Safety and Protective Actions³¹

Examples of safety strategies and protective actions (this is not intended to be used as a checklist):

- Working with a domestic violence or sexual assault advocate or program.
- Accessing a domestic violence shelter or homeless shelter.
- Obtaining protection orders, restraining orders, or no contact orders.
- Calling 911 or teaching the children to call 911.
- Working to protect the children from the violence by sending them to stay with relatives or friends.
- Notifying school officials of batterer's potential for violence, the safety plan, emergency contact information, protection orders, or heightened awareness to and possible changes in children's behavior.
- Talking to the children about how to respond to the violence.
- Minimizing, denying, or refusing to talk about the abuse for fear of making it worse.
- Leaving, going back, or staying in the relationship so the violence does not escalate.
- Maintaining a routine.
- Meeting basic needs.

- Engaging the children with outside activities and relationships.
- Attending school functions such as parent-teacher conferences.
- Following family traditions.
- Providing the children with age appropriate tools to understand and cope with the violence.
- Identifying a person to assist with visitation to reduce potential for violence during transfer of the children.
- Taking the children to a counselor or consulting with the children's counselor.
- Moving out of the home with the children.
- Seeking legal assistance or gaining custody of the children.
- Refusing or not following through with services to avoid angering the batterer.
- Trying to improve the relationship or finding help for the batterer.

DOCUMENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Documenting Batterer Responsibility

Child protection efforts should focus on holding perpetrators of domestic violence (batterers) accountable for their abusive and violent behavior and on keeping children safe and together with their protective parents whenever possible. These efforts should be reflected in the way cases involving domestic violence are documented.³²

Document the batterer's responsibility for the abuse:³³

- Connect the adverse impact on the children directly to the batterer's behavior.
- Document how the batterer views his use of abusive behaviors and the impact he believes it has on his partner and his children.
- Document how the batterer has interfered with the "normal development" of the children.
- Document how the batterer has interfered with the survivor's parenting (e.g., undermining of the survivor's efforts to provide safety for the children, undermining the survivor's attempts to engage the children in age appropriate activities).
- Assess what information about the batterer's behavior needs to be given to the children's therapist or other service provider, if applicable.
- Document any threatening, controlling, or aggressive behavior the batterer may demonstrate with a worker or their partner, during a family meeting or during visits with his children.
- When documenting abusive behaviors, be specific. If they called their partner names, what names? If they use controlling behaviors, what are the specific behaviors?

Evaluating Change-Does the batterer:³⁴

- **See it.** Can they acknowledge the abusive behavior happened? Are they acknowledging the impact the abuse has had on their family?
- **Own it.** Who are they blaming? Are they taking responsibility? Are they supporting their partner's parenting efforts?
- **Change it.** Are they changing their behavior to match their values? Are they able to focus on the children's needs over their own needs or wants?
- Document any involvement or lack of involvement by the batterer in attending case plan meetings, attending visits, or worker/parent meetings; as well as their participation in completing case plan tasks and meeting with other service providers.
- Document if the batterer refuses to engage with workers or with any case plan requirements.

Domestic violence perpetration is a parenting choice (whether the children witness it or not).³⁵

DOCUMENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Documentation Recommendations³⁶

- **Do not lump the batterer and victim together. Avoid phrases like:**

- “Couple engages in violence.”
- “Parents have a history of domestic violence.”
- “Parents both deny the violence.”

- **Be precise and descriptive:**

- Avoid euphemisms or vague terms like “argued” if what you mean is “hit.”
- Describe the pattern, for example:
 - “The 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 their 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 labeling the non-abusive parent as the perpetrator of neglect due to a “failure to protect.”**

- **Avoid phrases like:**

- “Dysfunctional” family;
- The non-abusive parent “allows” or “enables” the violence;
- The non-abusive parent “failed to protect” the children.

- **Use language that focuses on the batterer’s role in creating harm or risk to the children, for example:**

- “Despite the mother’s efforts to protect the children, the batterer is creating conditions that are injurious and harmful to the children.”

Adapted from: Oregon Dept. of Human Services (2015)
Child welfare practices for cases with domestic violence



SECTION 5: FAMILY SAFETY PLANS

Safety Assessment: Introduction

Safety Assessment for the Abusive Parent

Safety Assessment for the Children

Safety Assessment: Level of Dangerousness

Safety Considerations for the Non-Abusive Parent and Children

FAMILY SAFETY PLANS

Safety Assessment: Introduction

The following safety assessment checklists are intended to assist child welfare professionals in determining appropriate case plans and services for families experiencing domestic violence. The danger and risk posed by batterers to children and survivors varies widely and may increase or decrease over time. These assessments are not a guaranteed predictor of human behavior or outcomes. Rather, these checklists are intended to guide child welfare professionals in their decision-making processes when working with families experiencing domestic violence. Assessments are a snapshot in time. Therefore, they should be fluid and ongoing and conducted throughout the life of a case rather than relying on one individual assessment.³⁷

Was the family assessed for domestic violence when the case was opened and at other appropriate intervals?

Level of Dangerousness³⁸

Safety assessments for families experiencing domestic violence gather critical information regarding:

- Nature and extent of the domestic violence;
- Batterer's level of dangerousness and risk posed to the children and survivor;
- Impact of the domestic violence on the children and survivor;
- Batterer's fatherhood capacity;
- Protective strategies of the survivor; and
- Safety and service needs of the family.

FAMILY SAFETY PLANS

Safety Assessment for the Abusive Parent

What is the batterer's fatherhood capacity?

Is the batterer:³⁹

- Willing to model constructive behavior for his children?
- Committed to non-violence as demonstrated by accepting responsibility and accountability for the abusive behavior and willingness to engage in services for help in changing the abusive behavior?
- Willing to support the parenting of the survivor rather than undermining her parenting efforts?
- Capable and willing to set the children's needs as priority?
- Using the children to hurt the survivor or to gain access to her (e.g., verbally assaultive at visitation exchanges)?
- Capable of empathy?
- Capable of stable and healthy attachments?
- Able to differentiate between fear and respect?
- Able to promote a strong bond between the child, the non-abusive parent, and siblings?

Does the batterer:⁴⁰

- Blame someone other than himself for his violence (e.g., the children or survivor)?
- Minimize his violence?
- Acknowledge the impact the domestic violence has had on the children?
- Have the ability to tolerate the various developmental stages of his children and to set structure that is not overly rigid and punitive?

Can the batterer provide:⁴¹

- A sense of physical and emotional safety for the children?
- Structure, limits, and predictability for the children?
- A sense that the children are not responsible for the violence?
- Developmentally appropriate care-taking that meets the children's psychological and social needs, esteem and well-being?

FAMILY SAFETY PLANS

Safety Assessment for the Children⁴²

Will the children be safe if allowed contact or unsupervised parenting time with the batterer or his family?

- What is the batterer's level of the violence in the home?
- Is there a history of physical violence towards the survivor? The children?
- Is the batterer sexually abusing the children or engaging in other acts that would be considered boundary violations?
- Is the batterer psychologically cruel to the survivor or the children?
- To what degree has the batterer exposed the children to or engaged the children in his violence?
- Has the batterer used the children to further abuse the survivor (e.g., threatening to take the children away from the survivor, using the children as a tool/pawn)?
- Has the batterer undermined the survivor's efforts to parent the children?

- Is the batterer neglectful or severely under-involved in parenting of the children?
- Is there a risk that the batterer will abduct the children?
- What was the batterer's level of coercive or manipulative control exercised during the relationship?
- Is there a history of a high level of entitlement and self-centeredness?
- Has the batterer refused to accept the end of the relationship or to accept the survivor's decision to begin a new relationship?
- Has the batterer placed the children at physical or emotional risk while abusing the survivor?

FAMILY SAFETY PLANS

Safety Assessment Level of Dangerousness⁴³

What is the batterer's level of dangerousness? Examine the facts of the case for the following indicators:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An increase in the severity or frequency of physical violence over the past year.• A separation in the relationship during the past year.• Batterer owns a gun or firearm.• Batterer is unemployed.• Batterer has previously used a weapon against the survivor or the children, or threatened them with a lethal weapon.• Batterer has threatened to kill the survivor or the children.• Batterer has previously avoided being arrested for domestic violence.• Survivor has a child that is not the batterer's.• Batterer has forced the survivor to have sex when she did not wish to do so.• Batterer is violently or constantly jealous (possessive) of the survivor (e.g., "If I can't have you, no one can") | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Batterer has tried to strangle ("choke") the survivor.• Batterer uses illegal drugs.• Batterer is an alcoholic or problem drinker.• Batterer controls most or all of the survivor's daily activities (e.g., who she can be friends with, when she can see her family, how much money she can use, when she can take the car).• Batterer has been physically violent to the survivor while she was pregnant.• Batterer has previously threatened or tried to commit suicide.• Batterer threatens to harm the children.• Batterer follows or spies on the survivor, leaves threatening notes or messages, destroy the survivor's property or calls/texts the survivor when she does not want him to. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

FAMILY SAFETY PLANS

Safety Considerations for the Non-Abusive Parent and Children⁴⁴

Everyone's needs for safety are different, and this is particularly true for victims of domestic violence. Oftentimes, safety includes feeling safe from physical harm but can also include feeling safe in a number of different life domains and settings (*see Figure 1*). The non-abusive parent is the best resource in determining what the safety risks are for her and her children, or when those safety risks have changed. Any safety strategies that the non-abusive parent has used currently or in the past should be kept confidential and never shared with the batterer. A safety plan should only be written down if the non-abusive parent determines it is safe to do so. For safety strategy examples *see Section 3 and 4*

What are the survivor's concerns about safety? Consider the following:

- The survivor's level of fear for her safety.
- The survivor's level of fear for the children's safety.
- The survivor's belief that the involvement of child protective services or another child welfare agency will anger the batterer, thereby escalating his violence.
- How the survivor feels the batterer's abuse has affected her.
- How the survivor feels the batterer's abuse has affected the children.
- The survivor's fears about what the batterer may do.
- The degree to which the survivor believes the batterer's abuse has prevented her from being able to care for the children.

Figure 1:





SECTION 6: FAMILY CASE PLANS

Conducting the Family Case Plan Meeting

Holding the Abusive Parent Accountable

Promoting the Parent/Child Bond between the Non-Abusive Parent and Children

Addressing Non-Compliance with the Abusive Parent

Assessing Non-Compliance with the Non-Abusive Parent

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Conducting the Family Case Plan Meeting

Research indicates that the most effective way to protect children is to keep the non-abusive parent safe. Ensuring the safety of the survivor requires promoting change in and holding the batterer accountable. The key to change is stopping old behaviors and replacing them with new, respectful ways of interacting with survivors and children.⁴⁵

Prior to the case plan or family meeting:⁴⁶

Schedule separate meetings with the abusive parent and the non-abusive parent and children to every extent possible, if the family must meet all together, ensure each family member is offered a time to speak privately with the worker to relay any changes in safety, their concerns, or provide any input they may fear revealing in front of the abusive parent.

If the answer is “yes” to any of the following, separate meetings are necessary:

- Protection from Abuse or no-contact order exists.
- The non-abusive parent or children express fear of conducting the meeting in the presence of the abusive parent.
- There is a high level of dangerousness posed by the abusive parent (e.g., Use of weapons, serious injury to the non-abusive parent or children, strangulation, death threats, threats to flee with the children, etc.).
- The abusive parent having access to the non-abusive parent’s information will put her or the children at further risk.
- The abusive parent has threatened to harm a worker.

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Conducting the Family Case Plan Meeting⁴⁷

During the meeting:

- Set up a safety agreement with all participants of the meeting, including that this meeting is a place of physical and emotional safety and each person has the right to feel safe during the meeting.
- Pay attention for any behavioral indicators that someone is feeling unsafe, including any safety signals or codes that have been developed with the children or the non-abusive parent prior to the meeting, and respond accordingly.
- Let meeting participants know that the worker may suggest a break or move to separate meetings if there is a safety concern observed by the worker or expressed by other meeting participants.
- Ensure the family is aware of what the child welfare agency's concerns are, as well as what the goals are at the beginning of the case plan meeting.
- Define domestic violence and how that definition will be used.
- After building rapport with family members, develop a timeline including the safety and danger factors that were identified. This timeline can be used to further understand the pattern of abuse of the batterer, as well as what safety and protective strategies the non-abusive parent used in response to that pattern of abuse.
- Develop the case plan and tasks collaboratively with the family. When the family is involved in the development of the plan from the beginning, it is more meaningful for the family and can increase buy-in from family members.

After the meeting:

- Check-in privately with each family member to see if there are any concerns about the impact of the meeting on safety.
- The worker should check in privately with each family member about any violence or threats that occurred after the meeting.

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Conducting the Family Case Plan Meeting

Are the plans generally appropriate for families experiencing domestic violence?

Does the case plan and case plan tasks:

- Focus on batterer for the abusive and violent behaviors and appropriate interventions?⁴⁸
- Prioritize removing the batterer before removing the children?⁴⁹
- Include documentation that is written in a manner that holds the batterer responsible and avoids blaming the survivor?⁵⁰
- Avoid provisions or directives for the survivor that only the batterer can be responsible for or held accountable for ensuring?⁵¹
- Protect confidential addresses and locations of the survivor and children so that those are never shared with the batterer?⁵²
- Protect confidential safety strategies employed by the survivor and children so that those are never shared with the batterer?⁵³
- Include language accommodations or disability accommodations?⁵⁴
- Directly address the issues that brought the family to the agency's attention?⁵⁵
- Reflect services that are tied to an identified need, and are safe and useful to the family?⁵⁶
- Reflect services that are provided by professionals with knowledge on domestic violence?⁵⁷
- Reflect services that are available and accessible?⁵⁸
- Reflect culturally and linguistically appropriate service requirements?⁵⁹

If the children were removed from the home, consider the following:⁶⁰

- Must the children remain out of the survivor's care to remain safe?
- Is the batterer still in the family home?
- Does the batterer's current abuse preclude the survivor from protecting the children from further harm, either alone or with the help of services?
- Are the batterer's actions coloring the agency's assessment of the survivor's ability to care for the children?
- Has a protection order as part of the Child In Need of Care (CINC) case been considered to remove the batterer so the children may stay in the family home?
- Has the agency checked the foster care or relative care placement for the presence of domestic violence?

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Holding the Abusive Parent Accountable⁶¹

- › Batterers should always have separate and individualized family safety plans, service plans, and case plan tasks apart from the survivor.
- › Work in conjunction with the court, court services, or other community agencies, if involved (e.g., probation can include the same tasks as the child welfare safety plan/service plan/case plan, creating more oversight and accountability and less opportunity for manipulation of agencies and professionals).

Elements of a Case Plan for the Abusive Parent:

- Ending physical, psychological, or emotional abuse of their partners and children.
- Complying with all court orders, including protection orders.
- Removing all weapons from the residence.
- Moving out or finding alternative housing.
- Addressing substance use or mental health issues.
- Participating in employment programs or services.
- Supporting their partner's parenting.
- Allowing or facilitating their partner and children's access to services, resources, and supports.
- Receiving education about the effects of abuse on their children.
- Attending a domestic violence-informed parenting class.
- Completing an assessment for a batterers' intervention program (BIP).

Do not view permanent separation of the survivor and the batterer as the only acceptable case plan and outcome, as this is often unrealistic and can increase the danger posed by the batterer to the survivor and the children.

Not recommended for batterers:

- Anger Management

Anger Management is not an appropriate intervention for batterers. In Anger Management, the emotion of anger is viewed as the primary problem and the focus is on managing that emotion. People with anger management problems tend to display anger across their professional, personal, and social relationships. Domestic violence is not anger-driven; it is a systematic method of asserting and maintaining power and control over an intimate partner. As such, intervention for batterers must focus on changing the belief system of domination and control.

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Holding the Abusive Parent Accountable⁶²

Does the case plan for the batterer:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Address the safety of the survivor and the children?› Hold the batterer accountable for his actions and not hold the survivor responsible for the behaviors and actions of the batterer?› Include an assessment for a batterers' intervention program (BIP) and to follow any recommendations?› Include substance abuse or mental health treatment to be a co-occurring service with the BIP program, if applicable? Does this also include random alcohol and drug testing?› Include a method to maintain close communication with the criminal justice system, BIP provider, or other service providers regarding the batterer's compliance with the conditions of the case plan? Does this include confidentiality waivers for all clinicians, BIP providers, probation or parole officers, child welfare agencies, partner, and the courts?› Include supervised visitation? Is there a plan for monitoring or intervening regarding the batterer's behaviors during visits? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Allow for the assessment of behavior change on the part of the batterer?› Require compliance with all protective orders and other court orders?› Require stopping all violent, coercive, intimidating behaviors towards the survivor and children?› Require the batterer to remove all weapons from his possession and control?› Require participation in parenting classes that address the impact of domestic violence?› Provide for financial support of the survivor or the children?› Require the batterer to demonstrate support of survivor's and children's therapeutic services? Does the case plan specifically state that the batterer will not undermine or sabotage those services?› Include employment and housing services? |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Promoting the Parent/Child Bond between the Non-Abusive Parent and Children⁶³

- › Seek to understand the survivor's experience of domestic violence and what the survivor believes are challenges and barriers.
- › By exploring barriers with the survivor, the worker can help to safety plan, refer to appropriate services, and assist in minimizing some of the identified barriers to safety.
- › Offer access to resources and services, but do not impose services upon the non-abusive parent. Whenever possible, provide services for the non-abusive parent on a voluntary basis.
- › Keep service plans for the non-abusive parent minimal. Avoid creating long lists of requirements solely because the non-abusive parent has been victimized. Focus on concrete supports that the non-abusive parent identifies as a need (e.g., safe housing, medical care, financial assistance, legal protection) as well as on support that counteracts coercive tactics used by the abusive parent.
- › Avoid mandating actions that will compromise the safety of the survivor or the children. Consider issues such as who will take care of the children while the non-abusive parent is receiving services. If it is the abusive parent, is this safe?
- › Be aware that the survivor may present as angry, disorganized, or depressed. All of these may be responses to trauma and abuse and will likely be alleviated with increased safety and support.
- › To the extent possible, help the non-abusive parent identify supports within their own culture and community for building safety and emotional support. Refer to culturally competent or culturally specific programs and arrange interpreters, when needed.
- › Service plans may consist primarily of actions the worker will take to assist the non-abusive parent, such as:
 - The child welfare agency will pay to have the non-abusive parent's locks changed.
 - The worker will ensure that the non-abusive parent knows about available services and supports in the community for victims of domestic violence.
 - The worker will provide the survivor with a written statement for use in obtaining a protective order or in other matters.

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Promoting the Parent/Child Bond between the Non-Abusive Parent and Children⁶⁴

Does the case plan for the survivor:

- Address the safety concerns of the survivor?
- Refrain from holding the survivor responsible for the batterer's abusive behavior?
- Increase the children's safety by increasing the survivor's safety?
- Support and rebuild the bond between the survivor and the children and between siblings?
- Identify and build on protective factors of the survivor?
- Identify and build on the family's strengths, resources, and sources of support?
- Include housing, medical, and economic support? Child care assistance? Transportation? Access to legal services?
- Allow for the survivor's voluntary participation in domestic violence advocacy services?
- Include mental health services for trauma-focused therapy, alcohol, or drug abuse treatment, if applicable?
- Include services that are culturally and linguistically competent?
- Directly address the issues that brought the family to the agency's attention? Directly address the needs expressed by the survivor or the children?
- Provide for the survivor's and children's services to be delivered separately and independently of the batterer to ensure safety (e.g., parenting education or other therapeutic interventions)?
- Address any social service options or remedies available to the survivor, such as hardship extensions necessary for TANF or other financial assistance?

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Promoting the Parent/Child Bond between the Non-Abusive Parent and Children

Referrals for survivors as appropriate to the individual's needs:

- › Local domestic violence or sexual assault program (these services are voluntary and confidential, and should not be mandated) See Section 8
- › Kansas Statewide Crisis Hotline 1-888-END ABUSE (367-2287)
- › Mental health services for trauma-focused therapy
- › Mental health services or family therapy for the survivor and the children
- › Drug and alcohol recovery services
- › Credit counseling
- › Legal services
- › Supervised visitation and exchange services
- › Housing resources
- › Family Preservation Services
- › Economic and Employment Services
- › Child care assistance
- › Law enforcement, if in immediate danger
- › Immigration assistance or resources
- › LGBTQ resources

Not recommended for survivors:

- Couples Counseling or Therapy⁶⁵

Couples counseling is not recommended in a relationship where domestic violence is occurring. Couples counseling is focused on addressing relationship problems and implies that both partners in a relationship contribute to an issue that needs to be fixed. Domestic violence is not a relationship problem; it is a systematic method of asserting and maintaining power and control over an intimate partner. Couples counseling may also lead to further abuse and may be dangerous for the victim. The batterer may use counseling as another tool to gain power over the victim, and if the victim reveals her feelings or the batterer's behavior in counseling, the batterer may retaliate.

- Mediation⁶⁶

Serious concerns have been raised about issues of safety, power imbalances, and the rights of victims when mediation is used. Batterers use abuse and violence to gain and maintain domination and control over the victim. Thus, a victim in mediation usually cannot advocate for herself without fearing the response of her abusive partner.

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Promoting the Parent/Child Bond between the Non-Abusive Parent and Children⁶⁷

- › One useful tool to use when meeting with children is the Three Houses Tool developed by Greening and Weld in which the child answers questions about what is in their House of Worries, their House of Good Things, and their House of Dreams.
- › The Three Houses Tool can be used to increase the worker's understanding of what the child's concerns, worries, strengths and goals are, as well as getting a clearer picture of the family dynamics.
- › The tool can be adapted to meet the developmental needs of most children. The tool can be completed verbally with the worker asking questions and writing down the child's responses; or it can be given to the child to complete in writing or using a form of art the child likes (e.g., drawing, coloring, creating a collage, etc.) with the worker processing with the child the meaning behind what the child chose to include in each house.
- › With the child's permission, include notes about what the child meant with a particular drawing or symbol they chose to include.
- › It can be helpful to begin with the House of Good Things, particularly if a child is anxious, and work up to the House of Worries or give the child the choice of where to start. Get the child's permission before sharing the information about their houses with anyone.



FAMILY CASE PLANS

Addressing Non-Compliance with the Abusive Parent⁶⁸

- **Closely monitor the abusive parent and their progress on the case plan.**
 - Keep lines of communication open with the non-abusive parent, probation officers, batterer's intervention providers, and others involved with the family, as well as reviewing court records, reports, and recommendations of other service providers.
- **Ask the abusive parent how they have actively supported their partner's parenting.**
 - Can they give an example of a time they told the children their other parent was right or deferred to them?
 - Can they give an example of a time they supported the bond between their children and the non-abusive parent?
 - Ask the non-abusive parent to verify whether the abusive parent has supported or undermined their parenting efforts and how.
- **Note changes in behavior, not simply compliance with case plan tasks.**
 - Compliance does not equal success or increased safety; changed behavior indicates increased safety.
 - Use all sources of information to assess the degree of actual change resulting from following case plan tasks or completing service provisions.

- **Document attempts made by the abusive parent to sabotage the child welfare process.**
 - Note any manipulative or coercive behaviors toward the non-abusive parent, the children, or worker.
- **Document continued assaults or coercive and controlling behaviors towards the non-abusive parent.**
 - Note how these affect the children's safety, stability, and well-being, as well as how they reflect on the parenting judgment of the abusive parent.
- **Some abusers cannot be a safe part of their children's lives.**
- **If engagement efforts with the abusive parent fail, and it appears that they will not end their violent and coercive behaviors, work with the non-abusive parent and children should focus on:**
 1. Protecting the children and the survivor from the abusive parent's coercive tactics.
 2. Supporting the children's relationships with the non-abusive parent.
 3. Documenting the abusive parent's unwillingness or incapacity to change.

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Assessing Non-Compliance with the Non-Abusive Parents

When it appears that the survivor may not be complying with service requirements, it is important to:⁶⁹

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider safety first.• Do not assume that this means the survivor's parenting is not protective or appropriate.• Talk with the survivor about their compliance and progress away from the batterer.• Talk with the survivor about safe times and places to connect, as this is part of planning for safe interventions.• Distinguish between compliance with the service requirements and appropriate parenting. A survivor may be unable to comply because of sabotage by the batterer.• Check that service requirements are consistent with what the survivor thinks will help keep the children safe. If not, construct plans that are more relevant and appropriate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate whether case plan tasks increase the safety of the survivor and children, and increase her ability to protect the children.• Evaluate whether the service requirements are culturally appropriate.• Find out if and how the batterer interfered with the survivor's compliance with the requirements.• Carefully explore what barriers the survivor has encountered and whether or not they relate to the effects of the abuse (e.g., lack of transportation or resources for childcare). |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Check to see if service requirements impose too many burdens on the survivor. A survivor may be working outside the home in addition to full-time parenting, or may be involved with other court proceedings requiring multiple appointments or appearances. These activities are directly related to protecting children but are often omitted from case plans.⁷⁰

FAMILY CASE PLANS

Assessing Non-Compliance with the Non-Abusive Parents

- It is important for workers to understand that denial of the violence is a common safety strategy that survivors use, and it does not mean that the survivor is ignoring her children's safety and well-being.
- A decision by the survivor to withhold discussing the violence with a worker or during a family meeting or case plan meeting should not be viewed as oppositional, uncooperative, or non-compliant, but rather as a way of trying to maintain her own and her children's safety.⁷¹

Evaluate whether the service requirements compromise the survivor's safety. Survivors may resist requirements that make them or the children vulnerable to the batterer.⁷²

For Example:⁷³

- › A protection order can be a good tool in some cases. In other cases, it can increase danger.
- › The non-abusive parent is often a good judge of what will increase or decrease the danger they face from the abuser.
- › Forcing a victim to obtain a protection order may feel like "doing something," but it is no guarantee of increased safety.
- › Ask the non-abusive parent what they think will work to increase their safety and assist in any way you can to make these things happen. This may include providing financial resources, changing locks on the doors, having a respected relative come to stay in the house, providing assistance to help the abuser get a job, or job training.

Accurately document how the batterer's actions have interfered with compliance if the batterer has sabotaged the survivor's attempts to comply with service plans. Document the effects on the children and the survivor, making particular note of how it reflects on the batterer's parenting, judgment, and capacity to place the needs of the children ahead of his own.⁷⁴



SECTION 7: DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

Family Assessment

Safety and Protective Actions

Batterer Responsibility

Case Plan Tasks for the Abusive Parent

Case Plan Tasks for the Non-Abusive Parent and the Children

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

Documentation Example: Family Assessment/Reason for Referral (Excerpt)⁷⁵

This worker completed an investigation regarding Cindy Smith, 8 years old, in which Mr. Smith, father, was alleged to have engaged in violent acts toward Ms. Smith, mother, in Cindy's presence. Based on law enforcement records, there have been three separate incidents in the past year where Mr. Smith has harmed Ms. Smith, requiring Ms. Smith to receive medical treatment. All three incidents involved Mr. Smith threatening Ms. Smith or Cindy with weapons. In one event, Cindy called law enforcement for help. In the most recent event, Cindy wrestled Mr. Smith in an attempt to get the gun away from him. School records indicate Cindy has missed school for one or two days following the dates of the last two incidents. At the time of the first incident, Cindy's teacher made a referral to the grade school counselor because Cindy was uncharacteristically withdrawn and tearful. School records indicate the number of Cindy's aggressive episodes have increased, while Cindy's grades have declined in the past year. Therapist's reports regarding Cindy and Ms. Smith indicate Cindy has anxiety reactions ranging from aggressive behavior to uncontrollable crying events. The therapist believes these behaviors to be a result of Mr. Smith's violent incidents in the home. In the social worker's interview with Cindy, she expressed being fearful of her father, especially when he raises his voice or argues with her mother. Mr. Smith does not deny arguing with his wife but claims her injuries are the result of her lack of coordination. Mr. Smith has terrorized Cindy by creating a climate of fear and engaging in violent and threatening behavior toward Cindy and toward Ms. Smith in Cindy's presence that demonstrates a flagrant disregard for Cindy. Due to child's behaviors and performance at school, child expressing fear and therapist's description of child's emotional health, there is clear and convincing evidence of emotional abuse as defined by KAR due to alleged perpetrator's acts which impairs or endangers the child's social or intellectual functioning.

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

Documentation Example: Safety and Protective Actions of the Non-Abusive Parent⁷⁶

Ms. Smith has engaged in a pattern of supporting the safety and well-being of her child. Ms. Smith engaged in age appropriate play, attempted to defuse her partner's anger and abusive behavior through the avoidance of his questions, and engaging him in a conversation about chores, redirecting the conversation, reminding her partner about their child's needs, preparing dinner for the family, defending her parenting and her child's participation in age appropriate play. She also resisted her partner's abuse by standing up to his verbal abuse and actively tried to remove herself and her daughter from her partner's abusive behaviors, but was prevented from doing so by her partner's intimidating and threatening behavior.

Documentation Example: Batterer Responsibility

While Ms. Smith engaged in a series of efforts to shield her child from her father's verbal abuse, threats and intimidation, father continued to choose to expose his child to verbal abuse, threats, and intimidation of her mother. Mother's age appropriate play and her efforts to shield her child from her father's abuse should be seen as clear strengths as a parent. Mother appears to be actively engaged in supporting her child's safety and well-being.⁷⁷

Mr. Smith's pattern of coercive control has adversely impacted the family functioning in the following ways: Mr. Smith's assaultive behaviors have compromised the safety of the home and led to police involvement. This has led to a disruption in the home and required Ms. Smith to relocate with their child. It is reasonable to assume that this relocation has required some degree of adjustment for both Ms. Smith and their child. Further adjustment had been required of Ms. Smith as she has recently obtained employment and sought suitable child care for their child. The separation from Mr. Smith has created additional financial stressors for Ms. Smith and their child. Mr. Smith's use of assaultive behaviors resulting in the separation from Ms. Smith and their child has the potential to interfere with a healthy father/child relationship.⁷⁸

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

Case Plan Tasks for the Abusive Parent⁷⁹

Not all examples will be appropriate for all cases. This is not an exhaustive list.

- **The Abusive Parent will not:**

- Use further violence towards any member of the household, including pets.
- Use further intimidating behavior towards any member of the household, including, but not limited to, verbal threats, destruction of property, throwing objects, and punching walls.
- Use physical discipline with the children.
- Deny partner access to phone, vehicle, or other forms of communication or transportation.
- Interfere with the other parent's efforts to seek services for herself and the children.
- If separated from their partner, make any unwanted or unexpected visits to survivor's home or place of employment.

- **The Abusive Parent will:**

- Have all weapons removed from the premises, including, but not limited to, guns, bows and arrows, shotguns, knives, and hunting rifles.
- Respect all existing court orders, including protective orders, restraining orders, custody and visitation orders, and child support order.
- Maintain financial support for the children, regardless of whether he resides with them.
- Support all reasonable efforts to provide the children with appropriate services, including child care and health care.
- Disclose to partner all information relevant to child abuse and domestic violence, including prior arrests and prior child welfare cases with other children.
- Share with partner all relevant information about income and family financial circumstances.
- Seek a batterers' intervention program assessment and comply with the recommendations of that program to address issues of control and abuse.

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

Case Plan Tasks for the Abusive Parent Cont'd⁸⁰

Not all examples will be appropriate for all cases. This is not an exhaustive list.

- **The Abusive Parent will:**

- Be able to acknowledge a majority of past abusive and violent behavior toward the survivor and the children, including, but not limited to:
 - Detailing the abusive nature of physical and nonphysical actions;
 - Displaying an understanding of the impact of these behaviors on his partner, the children, and himself;
 - Displaying an ability to discuss his own abusive actions without blaming others or outside circumstances for his behavior;
 - Being able to demonstrate non-abusive, non-violent behavior when in prior similar circumstances he would have become violent or abusive.

- **The Abusive Parent will:**

- Disclose to partner all information relevant to partner's immigration status, immigration concerns, and immigration proceedings.
- Provide partner with her immigration documentation.
- Disclose to partner his immigration status.
- Stay involved with any mental health counseling and follow treatment recommendations, including taking prescribed medications.
- When necessary, seek and follow the recommendations of a substance abuse evaluation.

- **Therapeutic treatment for the batterer, including batterers' intervention programs, will have as its goals:**

- The cessation of violent, abusive, and controlling behaviors toward the adult partner;
- The cessation of violent and abusive behaviors toward any children in the home;
- Education about the effects of violence, abuse, and controlling behaviors on family members;
- Collateral contact with the adult survivor and the referring agency for exchange of information about the purpose and limitations of the counseling, the batterer's pattern of abuse and violence, and other relevant information about the batterer.

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

Case Plan Tasks for the Non-Abusive Parent and the Children⁸¹

- › Focus on the concrete supports victims need (housing, financial assistance, legal protection) as well as support that counteracts coercive tactics used by the batterer.
- › Include the unique needs and strengths of both the non-abusive parent and the children.
- › Include tasks that support and promote the parent/child bond between the non-abusive parent and the children, as much as possible.
- › The case plan should include identifying a “safety net” of supportive adults outside the home for the children.
- › The case plan should include identifying or increasing the social supports for the non-abusive parent outside the home, as well.
- › Longer-term case plan goals are to assess the trauma impact of experiencing domestic violence to the children and determine if mental health and other support services are needed.

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

Case Plan Tasks for the Non-Abusive Parent and the Children⁸²

Documentation Example: Case Plan Tasks for the Non-Abusive Parent

Not all examples will be appropriate for all cases. This is not an exhaustive list.

- **[Child Welfare Agency Name] will assist the parent in:**

- Finding adequate housing and resources on housing assistance.
 - Accessing employment services and obtaining employment.
 - Applying for assistance in paying utilities, such as the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP).
 - Getting enrolled in GED classes, college courses, or additional educational endeavors identified by the parent.
 - Getting utilities turned on in the parent's name.
 - Financial literacy such as opening a bank account or learning how to budget monthly expenses.
 - Exploring immigration needs and available remedies.
- The non-abusive parent will have an appropriate plan and arrangements for child safety if there is contact from the batterer.
 - The agency will assist the parent in identifying at least two activities she likes to do with her children and incorporate those activities into parenting time.

- The non-abusive parent will mitigate the impact of the batterer's violence on the child by involving the child in counseling.³⁶
- The non-abusive parent will continue to maintain regular communication with the child's school to address any educational needs or adjustments needed in regards to addressing the impact of domestic violence on the child's educational needs.
- The agency will provide the parent with contact information for the local domestic violence agency and will assist the parent in accessing advocacy services if the parent chooses to do so. Participating in domestic violence advocacy services are on a voluntary basis and the parent is not required or mandated to participating in those services if they choose not to do so.
- The agency will assist the non-abusive parent in completing an application for the Victim's Compensation Program for themselves or their children. If there are criminal charges against the batterer, the non-abusive parent may be eligible for Victim's Compensation, which can offer assistance in paying for mental health services, medical treatment or funds to help with relocation.

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

Case Plan Tasks for the Non-Abusive Parent and the Children⁸³

Documentation Example: Case Plan Tasks for the Non-Abusive Parent

Not all examples will be appropriate for all cases. This is not an exhaustive list.

- If appropriate, the agency will assist the parent in scheduling a mental health evaluation with a therapist knowledgeable on domestic violence. The parent will complete the evaluation and follow the recommendations.
- If appropriate, agency will assist the parent in scheduling a substance abuse evaluation with a clinician who is knowledgeable on domestic violence. The parent will complete the evaluation and follow the recommendations.

Caveat:

- A referral for a mental health evaluation is not always necessary or appropriate for victims of domestic violence.
- Experiencing domestic violence does not, in and of itself, constitute a mental illness.
- If a mental health evaluation is deemed necessary, carefully choose evaluators who have a good understanding of domestic violence, trauma and its effects on victims.
- For non-abusive parents who also have substance abuse or mental health issues, recent research stresses the importance of dealing with trauma in conjunction with dealing with the substance abuse or mental health as opposed to dealing with one first.

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES


Case Plan Tasks for the Non-Abusive Parent and the Children⁸⁴

Documentation Example: Case Plan Tasks for Children

Not all examples will be appropriate for all cases. This is not an exhaustive list.

- The agency will assist the child in identifying at least two supportive adults to turn to when they need help or extra support.
- If appropriate, the agency will schedule a mental health intake for the child to process any possible trauma impacts.
- If appropriate, the agency will schedule for any testing needed for development concerns of the child.
- The child will receive educational testing to identify any intervention needs and will receive necessary services, if recommended.
- The agency will ensure that the child remains current on any medical, eye or dental exams.
- The child will be able to contact the non-abusive parent when (Insert plan for continued communication between child and non-abusive parent) by (Insert what forms of communication have been arranged that are safe and appropriate).

- The agency will assist the child in developing safety strategies that are age and developmentally appropriate.
- The agency will ensure continued contact and communication between the child and any positive family members or peers.
- The agency will assist the child in identifying at least two activities they like to do with the non-abusive parent and incorporate those activities into visitation.
- If appropriate, the agency will provide age appropriate education on healthy relationships.
- The agency will explore what child-focused domestic violence advocacy services are available in their area and assist the child in participating in advocacy services if the child would like to do so.



SECTION 8: COLLABORATING WITH YOUR LOCAL DV AGENCY

Creating a Successful Collaboration
Confidentiality Requirements of Domestic and Sexual Assault Programs
Community Resources to Explore
Additional Domestic Violence Resources for Child Welfare Professionals

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY

Creating a Successful Collaboration⁸⁵

- It is crucial for child welfare workers and domestic violence advocates to have frequent and ongoing consultation with each other that is grounded in mutual trust and respects each other's knowledge, intentions, and counsel.
- These working relationships are ongoing, always evolving, and ask a high level of openness, honesty, maturity, and capacity to operate outside of comfort zones.
- A successful collaboration between the child welfare agency and local domestic violence agency contributes significantly to the furtherance of improved safety and quality of life for all.
- Due to turnover of staff in both the child welfare and the advocacy fields, it is important for collaboration to occur on both the level of individual workers as well as the organizational level of the agencies, and to view collaboration as a process which requires ongoing maintenance rather than a one-time event.

Your local domestic violence advocates are not just a resource for families, but a resource for you, too!

Advocates can offer support and assistance in a number of different ways including:

- Safety Planning
 - A worker can call the local domestic violence hotline anytime and receive support and assistance with safety planning around domestic violence.
 - It can be helpful to put the advocate on a speakerphone or support the non-abusive parent in speaking directly to the advocate.
- Crisis Intervention
- Providing education to the non-abusive parent and children, as well as other family members.
- Providing education to child welfare workers
- Providing resources and referrals

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY

Creating a Successful Collaboration⁸⁶

What is collaboration?

Collaboration is the process of two or more people working together, interacting and exchanging knowledge in the pursuit of a common goal.

A collaboration is:

- › A mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship.
- › Professionals within a community working cooperatively across disciplines.
- › Built on an understanding of common goals, and clarity about the individual roles and responsibilities.
- › Respect for each partner's core values and organizational mission.

Components of successful collaboration:

- › Understanding each other's unique professional roles and functions
- › Trust and mutual respect
- › Effective communication
- › Assuming all parties have good intentions
- › A mutually agreed upon common goal

Making Collaboration Work:

- › Build on investment of all partners
- › Requires relationship building and trust
- › Requires leadership as peers
- › Brings stakeholders together
- › Requires constructive processes

The mutual goal of child welfare professionals and domestic violence agencies is to increase safety for adult and child victims of domestic violence and to hold domestic violence perpetrators accountable.

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY

Confidentiality Requirements of Domestic and Sexual Assault Programs⁸⁷

- Sharing information can truly impact the safety of survivors and their children. Domestic violence advocates are required by federal law to follow specific confidentiality requirements in order to enhance safety for survivors and their children.
- The role of an advocate is to act to protect survivors' right to autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Advocates provide information to the survivor about their options around releasing any information, including safety concerns and needs. Advocates support the decision made by the victim to release information or not.
- An advocate in the state of Kansas will not disclose information about a survivor, whether that person is a minor or an adult, unless one of the three criteria below are met:
 - 1. There is an informed, written, time-limited release signed by the survivor.**
 - The release must be from the domestic violence advocacy program and advocates cannot accept releases signed from any other agency.
 - Releasing information cannot be required as a condition to receive advocacy services.
 - Informed releases assure survivors have the chance to consider the positive or negative results around releasing information.
 - 2. There is a court order signed by a judge.**
 - This does not include subpoenas. A subpoena can be issued by someone other than a judge and is different than a court order.
 - 3. There is a statutory mandate.**
 - The only statutory mandate in Kansas is Mandatory Reporting. Kansas law requires certain professionals to promptly report when they have reason to suspect that a child has been harmed because of physical, mental or emotional abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse.
 - Domestic violence advocates are not included in the definition of mandated reporters of child abuse as defined by Kansas statute, but that does not mean advocates do nothing if they have concerns that a child they are working with is being abused. Advocates address child abuse-related concerns by providing direct intervention and ongoing advocacy, resources, and referrals that enhance safety and support for survivors and their children.

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY

Confidentiality Requirements of Domestic and Sexual Assault Programs⁸⁸

- When criteria is met to share information, an advocate can only share:
 - The information that a survivor has identified on the written, signed release.
 - The minimum amount of information necessary to fulfill the requirements of the court order or mandate.
 - The advocate is required to make reasonable attempts to provide notice to victims affected by the release of information and shall take steps necessary to protect the privacy and safety of the persons affected by the release of information.

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY

Community Resources to Explore

- In addition to collaborating with the local domestic violence agency it is also important for child welfare workers to be aware of the other resources and services available in the community that may be helpful for families experiencing domestic violence.
- It is not uncommon for families who are involved in the child welfare system or have experienced domestic violence to be interacting with other community service providers, as well. When child welfare workers make a concerted effort to collaborate with other community resources it has the potential to reduce barriers for families, as well as offering families more meaningful and tailored resources and interventions.⁸⁹
- Below is a list of different community service providers. Your community may not have all the resources listed and there may be others in addition to what is listed here. This is not an exhaustive list.

- **To find the Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Program nearest you visit: www.kcsdv.org/find-help**

- Child Advocacy Centers
- Child Visitation and Exchange Centers
- Substance Abuse Treatment Providers
- Community Mental Health Centers and Private Practice Mental Health Providers
 - Identify therapists and substance abuse treatment providers that are knowledgeable about domestic violence to refer clients to in your area.
 - If there is not a therapist or substance abuse treatment provider in your area that is knowledgeable about domestic violence work with the local domestic violence program to provide training to those professionals in your area to increase the capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence.

- Batterer's Intervention Program Providers
- Employment Services
- Housing Assistance
- Salvation Army
- United Way
- Health Department
- Child Development Centers
- Disabilities Organizations
- Legal Services
- Attorneys knowledgeable about domestic violence
- Children and Youth Programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters or Boys and Girls Clubs of America
- Home Visitation Programs

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Agency Name:

Contact Person:

Phone:[illegible]

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCY

Additional Domestic Violence Resources for Child Welfare Professionals

- **Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence**
 - www.kcsdv.org; 785-232-9784
- **Promising Futures- Futures Without Violence**
 - <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org>
 - <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/children-youth-teens/promisingfutures>
- **Kansas Crisis Hotline**
 - 1-888-END ABUSE (1-888-363-2287)
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
 - 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
 - <http://www.thehotline.org>
- **The Batterer as Parent 2nd Edition by Lundy Bancroft, Jay Silverman, and Daniel Ritchie**
- **Safe and Together Institute, formerly David Mandel & Ass.**
 - <http://endingviolence.com>
- **FORGE**
 - <http://forge-forward.org>
- **The Northwest Network of Bi, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse**
 - <http://www.nwnetwork.org>

- **The Trevor Project**
 - Crisis Hotline for LGBTQ Youth: 866-488-7396
 - <http://www.thetrevorproject.org>
- **Battered Women's Justice Project**
 - <http://www.bwjp.org>
 - Practice Guide For Family Court Decision-Making in Domestic Abuse- Related Child Custody Matters
 - <http://www.bwjp.org/assets/documents/pdfs/practice-guides-for-family-court-decision-making-ind.pdf>
 - Online Video Tutorial (Should be viewed prior to utilizing the Practice Guides and Worksheets
 - <http://www.bwjp.org/resource-center/resource-results/child-custody-decision-making-worksheets.html>
- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)**
 - <http://www.nctsn.org>
 - **NCTSN Children and Domestic Violence Fact Sheet Series (2015)**
 - http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/childrenanddv_factsheetseries_complete.pdf



SECTION 9: REFERENCES

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