

**NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION FOR
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SPECIALIZED
TRAINING: DAY ONE**

**SAFELY ENGAGING ADULT VICTIMS
AND THEIR CHILDREN**

HANDOUTS

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HANDOUT I 1

RACHAEL'S VOICES

- 1) I can't stand this any more, but even after he's gone he won't leave me alone. He's said he'll find me anywhere.
- 2) Listen Rachel, I don't know what those people are telling you but I'm their father. How can you take THAT away from them?
- 3) How can I ever afford to do this by myself? The food, the rent, the car insurance and now all the summer camps for the kids and they both need new clothes!
- 4) The kids are asking for him constantly and crying every night. What am I doing to them?
- 5) (almost crying, obviously distressed) I just can't tell this story one more time. I know I'm a screw up, but do they have to keep reminding me?
- 6) Where do they expect me to live if I make him stay out? He's the one on the lease anyway.
- 7) The courts/police can't really help me if he wants to find me and hurt me. He has always gotten away with it and no one's been able to stop him before.
- 8) Maybe I should do what the pastor says and just pray more about how we can work this out.
- 9) Honey, I know it's hard, but your father was like this too and we got through it. It's important for the kids to have a father.
- 10) I haven't worked in years. Who the hell is going to hire me with no experience?

HANDOUT 1 2

RACHAEL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Question 1: Prior to this current crisis, what is the richness that makes up Rachael's family life?

Question 2: What would Rachael identify as the greatest needs of herself and her children?

Question 3: What strengths, resources, and supports do you see in the children's lives? What risk factors do you see?

Question 4: Was Rachael really being uncooperative? What is a more accurate way to write that last case note?

Adapted from S. Hubert, R. Houtte & L. Reedy, *Engaging Families: Moving From Confrontation to Collaboration*, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, 2005

HANDOUT II 1

WORKING PREMISES/BASIC CONCEPTS FOR INTERVENTION

1. Priority of the safety and welfare of family members is essential and is the guiding force for case planning and service delivery.
2. Adult victims need to be active participants in safety planning.
3. Holding perpetrators accountable for their use of violence is essential to prevent further abuse.
4. A coordinated community response by all service providers is essential to ensure effective intervention that will protect victims and stop perpetrators' violence.

HANDOUT II 2

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORT

Mandated reporter Officer Allan Taylor filed a report of child abuse/neglect against Calvin and Rachael Wiggins regarding neglect of Portia, age 12 and Darryl, age 9 due to domestic violence and physical abuse of Darryl by Mr. Wiggins. Officer Taylor states that last evening the police responded to a 911 call placed by Rachel Wiggins due to her being hit by her husband, Calvin Wiggins. This is the fifth time the police have responded to the home regarding a domestic disturbance. There have also been 2 911 hang up calls. When the police responded to the 911 hang-up calls mom and the children were alone and Mrs. Wiggins stated she accidentally pressed 911 while cleaning the telephone. Officer Taylor stated in the past the children have been asleep, were at school and once were playing at a neighbor's home therefore they did not witness the incidents. The police stated the incident happened at 8:30 p.m. and both children and the mom were crying. Darryl was observed to have a bruise on his forehead. Mrs. Wiggins reported that he received the bruise as he tried to intervene when she was being struck by Mr. Wiggins who pushed Darryl had causing him to bump his head on the wall. Mr. Wiggins resisted arrest, was arrested, and placed in jail.

Adapted from: S. Hubert, R. Houtte & L. Reedy, *Engaging Families: Moving From Confrontation to Collaboration*, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, 2005

HANDOUT II 3

POLICE REPORT

On 6/12/02 I, Officer Allan Taylor, and my partner, Officer Tom Fuentes, responded to a 911 call alleging domestic violence. When we arrived we heard a male screaming in the home. Rachel Wiggins answered the door when we knocked though the male was telling Mrs. Wiggins not to open the door when we identified ourselves as police officers. Mrs. Wiggins reported that her husband, Calvin Wiggins had grabbed her by her arms forcibly, shook her, slapped her several times, and that her head hit the bathroom door frame twice. We also observed a chair to be overthrown and the kitchen table pushed against a wall. Mrs. Wiggins had bruising on both of her upper arms, her face was bruised and swollen on both sides and she had a cut near her left temple area. Mrs. Wiggins refused to get medical attention when we offered to call an ambulance. Mr. Wiggins was informed he was going to be placed under arrest and he starting yelling, cursing, and refused to turn around and be handcuffed. After a brief struggle Officer Fuentes placed him under arrest and he was taken to the police station to be booked and placed in jail. Two children were present in the home and both were crying, as was Mrs. Wiggins when we first arrived. Nine-year-old Daryl was found to have a bruise on his forehead. Mrs. Wiggins reported that during the incident Daryl began to cry and ran across the room and got between his mother and father, telling father to stop. She reports that father pushed Daryl hard and Daryl bumped into the wall and hit his head. Photographs were taken of bruises on Mrs. Wiggins arms, face and temple area, and of Daryl's forehead. A child abuse report will be filed with DCYF as I have responded to other domestic incidents between Mr. and Mrs. Wiggins.

Adapted from: S. Hubert, R. Houtte & L. Reedy, *Engaging Families: Moving From Confrontation to Collaboration*, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, 2005

HANDOUT II 4

POLICE RESPONSES

4/5/96: Hang-up 911 call. Officers responded to the home-Rachel Wiggins stated she was cleaning her phone and accidentally hit the number programmed for the police dept. We asked to enter the home and only found her and two children present. Nothing seemed out of place.

8/12/97: Response to domestic incident. Mrs. Wiggins called 911 stating her husband was intoxicated and under the influence of illegal drugs. Police responded to the home. He was observed to be under the influence of alcohol, had broken some dishes and was yelling at Mrs. Wiggins. She denies he hit her. Mr. Wiggins was PC.

12/20/97: Response to domestic incident. Neighbor, Audrey Collins, called police stating there was a fight at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Wiggins. Neighbor states Mr. Wiggins is yelling, cursing and neighbor hears glass breaking in the home.

3/12/98: Hang-up 911 call. Officers responded to the home as no one answered the return call to the home to see if assistance was needed. Mrs. Wiggins opened the door and stated she accidentally pressed the number set for the police dept. and denied anything was wrong. Mrs. Wiggins appeared agitated and seemed to have been crying but denied anything was wrong. Officers entered the apartment and did not find anyone else in the home. Mrs. Wiggins denied Mr. Wiggins was home or had recently left the home. Informed to contact police again should she need police assistance.

7/4/98 (2:33 a.m.): Neighbor called police stating Mr. Wiggins setting off firecrackers and yelling at his wife when she told him to come in the home. Neighbor reports she heard Mrs. Wiggins cry out as if Mr. Wiggins hit her.9/13/99: 911 call by Mrs. Wiggins stating Mr. Wiggins threatening to smack her if she didn't cook for him. Mrs. Wiggins reports he is under the influence of alcohol and possibly drugs and she is afraid he will hit her.

Adapted from: S. Hubert, R. Houtte & L. Reedy, Engaging Families: Moving From Confrontation to Collaboration, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, 2005

HANDOUT II 5

SCREENING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

As part of the initial intake regarding alleged child abuse/neglect, Intake CPSWs shall ask callers if they have knowledge of domestic violence occurring within the family. When documenting each referral, Intake CPSWs shall indicate if domestic violence is a factor in the referral.

The Intake Unit refers reports of domestic violence to the District Office Assessment Supervisor when:

- The child is reported to be residing at the site of the domestic violence and has suffered or is likely to suffer an injury or physical contact as a result.
- The child is reported to be emotionally injured, unable to function at normal developmental age, unable to perform daily activities (regression as seen by changes in ability to perform daily activities such as eating, sleeping, toileting) as a result of the domestic violence and the reporter can state specific emotional or physical behaviors being exhibited by the child as a result of the domestic violence.
- Law enforcement officials who have responded to an incident involving domestic violence request DCYF assistance due to harm or a threat of harm to a child.
- A credible report is received of domestic violence occurring on a regular basis in a household where infants or children reside as substantiated by law enforcement or others with specific details of frequency or severity.
- Ordered by superior court or district court, pursuant to RSA 173-B:4 I (a) (4) – 1 and 173-B:5 I (b) (5) (A).
- Firearms or other deadly weapons were used in the domestic violence incident and children were present.

HANDOUT II 6

ASSESSMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR CPS DECISION MAKING

- 1) Is the child in danger?
- 2) What is the nature of the risk to the child?
- 3) Who is responsible for causing the child to be in danger?
- 4) Is emergency intervention necessary?
- 5) When is further assessment needed?
- 6) Which interventions would ensure the safety of the child?
- 7) How best can the risk to the child be monitored over time?

HANDOUT II 7

INFORMATION NEEDED FOR RISK ASSESSMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN CPS CASES

- 1) Domestic violence perpetrator's assaultive and coercive conduct
- 2) Impact of the domestic violence on the adult victim
- 3) Impact of the domestic violence on the children
- 4) Protective factors
- 5) Lethality risk of the domestic violence
- 6) Additional risk factors to consider during CPS case planning

HANDOUT II 8

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Interview her privately and not in the presence of her abusive partner.

Assure confidentiality and discuss its limits.

Dispel myths about DCYF and explain the process.

Value her expertise in knowing her family.

Inform her of contacts DCYF will have with her abusive partner and engage her in planning for how those contacts can be carried out in the safest way possible.

HANDOUT II 9

PURPOSES OF INTERVIEWS WITH ADULT VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Develop rapport

Assess child safety (domestic violence related or other threats to children's safety)

Gain her perspective on the abusive partner's dangerousness to her and her children

Assess the impact of the violence on her parenting

Assess her parenting skills and strategies aside from the violence

Learn about her coping skills and safety strategies

Identify her past helping efforts and the results of those efforts

Assist her with safety planning

Get her perspective on what help the family needs

HANDOUT II 10

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR'S PATTERN OF ASSAULTIVE AND COERCIVE BEHAVIORS

For each question listed below, if the adult victim (or domestic violence perpetrator) answers yes, encourage a description of exactly what happened. Monitor responses as they unfold and adjust your inquiries accordingly; you do not have to ask every suggested question. For example, sometimes in telling a story of an episode, the victim or perpetrator will supply many illustrations of domestic violence tactics inventoried below.

1. Physical Assaults

- a. Has your partner used physical force against you?
(Have you...against your partner?)
- b. Has your partner pushed, shoved, grabbed, shaken you?
(Have you...your partner?)
- c. Has your partner restrained you, blocked your way, pinned you down?
(Have you...your partner?)
- d. Has your partner hit you? Open hand? Closed hand? Struck you with an object? (Have you...?)
- e. Has your partner choked you? Used weapons against you?
(Have you...?)
- f. Has your partner assaulted you physically in any other way?
(Have you...?)

2. Sexual Assaults

- a. Has your partner pressured you for sex when you did not want it? If so, describe how. (Have you...?)
- b. Has your partner manipulated or coerced you into sex at a time or in a way that you did not want? If so, how? (Have you...?)
- c. Has your partner physically forced you to have sex at a time or in a way that you did not want? Has your partner injured you sexually? Forced you to have unsafe sex? Prevented you from using birth control? (Have you...?)

3. Psychological Assaults

- a. Has your partner threatened violence against you, the children, others or self? (Have you...?)
- b. Has your partner used violence against the children, family, friends, or others? (Have you...?)
- c. Has your partner attacked property or pets, stalked, harassed, or intimidated you in any other way? Has your partner threatened to harm you? How does your partner frighten you? (Have you...?)
- d. Has your partner humiliated you? In what ways does your partner hurt you emotionally? What names or put-downs does your partner use against you? (Have you...?)
- e. Does your partner attempt to isolate you? Attempt to control your time, your activities, your friends? Does he follow you, listen to phone calls, open mail? (Do you...?)

4. Economic Coercion

- a. Who makes the financial decisions? How are finances handled?
- b. Has your partner tried to control you through money? If so, how? (Have you...?)

5. Use of children to control partner

- a. Has your partner threatened or used violence against the children? Sexual abuse against children?
- b. Does your partner use the children against you? If so, how?
- c. Does your partner sabotage your parenting? Obstruct visitation?
- d. Has your partner taken or threatened to take the children?
- e. Has your partner threatened to harm the children? Interfered with your care for the children?
- f. Has your partner made the children watch or participate in your being abused? Made the children spy on you?
- g. Has your partner ever threatened to report you to Child Protective Services? Have you reported your partner to CPS?
- h. Have you done any of the above?

HANDOUT II 11

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE ADULT VICTIM

When a victim or perpetrator acknowledges domestic violence, ask for elaboration as follows:

- 1. What kinds of injuries or health problems have you (has your partner) had due to the domestic violence?**
 - a. Loss of appetite or excessive eating? Sleep disturbances? Increased use of alcohol or drugs? Headaches, pain?
 - b. Increased illnesses or medical problems?

- 2. What kind of psychological and emotional problems are you (is your partner) having?**
 - a. Difficulties concentrating, depression, anxiety, fears, feelings of being numb, nightmares? Are you (is your partner) taking any medications for these problems?
 - b. Have you (has your partner) tried to hurt or thought about hurting yourself (herself)? Do you (does your partner) have a plan? Do you (or your partner) have thoughts of hurting someone else?
 - c. Have you (your partner) thought of hurting or harming your partner (you)? Do you (your partner) have a plan? Do you (or your partner) have thoughts of hurting someone else?
 - d. Are you having trouble caring for your children?

- 3. In what ways does your partner control you? (Do you control your partner in any of the following ways?)**
 - a. Do you have to get your partner's permission (or does your partner have to get your permission) for any of the following:

- What you wear?
 - What time you go to bed? Your daily schedule?
 - Who you see? What appointments you have?
 - Your discipline of the children? Where you work?
 - How your spend your money?
 - How much time you spend with him?
 - Talking with CPS?
- b. What would happen if you (she) did something he (you) opposed? What would happen if CPS wanted you (her) to do something he (you) opposed?

HANDOUT II 12

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE CHILDREN

1. Injuries or health impact to children?

What kinds of health issues does your child have? Medical problems due to domestic violence? Injuries or other health effects? Bruises, broken bones, black eyes, burns, pain, unconsciousness due to hitting or choking? Injuries from weapons? Has your child's health changed in recent months?

2. Psychological and emotional impact?

Have there been any emotional changes? Withdrawal, depression, increased irritability, anxiety, nightmares? Are you aware of any suicidal thoughts or acts by the child?

3. Behavioral Problems?

Have your children had behavior problems in family, school, and peer relationships? Have your children used physical force or threats of physical force against you or others? Are the children dealing with anger in ways that disturb you? Problems in eating, sleeping, running away, alcohol or drug abuse, cutting themselves, harming animals, destroying toys?

4. Social Problems?

Have your children suffered social disruption due to the domestic violence: moves, changing schools, isolation from friends, loss of family members, etc.? Social relationships with family, peers, other adults? Problems in learning?

5. How does the domestic violence impact the adult victim's parenting of the children?

Is the domestic violence interfering with your ability to take care of the child, to consider the child's best interests, to keep the child safe? Do you feel supported in parenting the child? By the perpetrator? By others?

6. How does the domestic violence impact the parenting of the domestic violence perpetrator?

Is the perpetrator able to take care of the child, to consider the child's best interests, to keep the child safe?

Continued...

Does the perpetrator support the parenting of the adult victim? Does the perpetrator undermine the parenting of the victim or expect the victim to be the sole parent? Does the perpetrator use the children to control the adult victim? Does the perpetrator use physical force against the children?

HANDOUT II 13

INFORMATION TO CONSIDER IN ASSESSING PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Gather information about protective factors from all sources, including adult victims, perpetrators, and others with knowledge of family and community.

1. Victim resources include factors such as the victim's

- a. resistance to the perpetrator's or community's victim-blaming.
- b. belief in herself and/or her children.
- c. willingness to seek help.
- d. use of available money, time, and material goods.
- e. work skills.
- f. parenting skills.
- g. ability to plan for the children's safety.
- h. knowledge of the abuser and the situation.
- i. health and physical strength.
- j. use of safety strategies for herself and the children.

2. Children's resources include such factors as the children's

- a. age and developmental stage.
- b. positive relationships with adult victim, siblings, other family members, and neighbors.
- c. actions during violence.
- d. help-seeking behavior.
- e. instructions from the adult victim or perpetrator about what to do.
- f. ability to carry out safety plans.

3. Community resources for victim safety and perpetrator accountability include

- a. victim advocacy/support services.
- b. effective criminal justice response to domestic violence (police, prosecutors, courts, and corrections).
- c. effective civil or family court response to domestic violence.
- d. welfare and social services.
- e. effective health care.
- f. safe housing.
- g. community of faith.
- h. family/friends of the victim and/or perpetrator.
- i. rehabilitation programs for domestic violence and perpetrators.
- j. accessible substance abuse treatment.

4. A perpetrator's resources to stop the abuse include

- a. halting abuse of the victim or children during the CPS process.
- b. acknowledgement of abusive behavior as a problem.
- c. acknowledgement of responsibility for stopping abuse.
- d. cooperation with current efforts to address abusive behavior.
- e. awareness of the negative consequences of abusive behaviors on the victim, children, and the abuser's physical well-being, self-image, legal status, social relationships, and employment.
- f. cooperation during the interviews.
- g. commitment to victim safety.
- h. demonstration of ability to comply with court orders.
- i. successfully stopping abuse in the past.
- j. respect for limits set by victim and/or other agencies.
- k. support for parenting efforts of adult victim.
- l. consideration of children's best interests over parental rights.

HANDOUT II 14

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSING THE OUTCOME OF THE VICTIM'S PAST HELP- SEEKING

These questions are directed primarily to the adult victim, although modified versions can be posed to the perpetrator or the children.

1. Does the extended family know about the violence? Who knows? What has been the response? Do you feel safe in talking with them about the problem?
2. Is there anyone outside the family (friends, co-workers, clergy) who knows about the violence? How have they responded? Have you felt supported? Do you feel it is safe to talk with them?
3. Have the police been called? Who called them? What was their response? Did that help you?
4. Have you ever gone to court for a protection order? To press charges? To get a divorce? What was the experience like for you?
5. Have you ever left home to protect yourself or the children? What happened? Was this helpful to you? Were you able to take the children?
6. Have you ever gone to a counselor or the medical personnel for help with this issue? What happened?
7. Have you ever used a battered women's services program? What happened?
8. Has your partner ever gone to counseling or to a program for the domestic violence? What happened?

HANDOUT II 15

ASSESSING THE LETHALITY RISK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence can pose risk of injury or death to

- A. adult victim
- B. children
- C. community members
- D. perpetrators

Due to the behaviors of

- A. perpetrator
- B. adult victim
- C. children

Gather information from

- A. adult victim
- B. children
- C. other family members
- D. perpetrator
- E. others (probation, police, counselors, anyone having contact with family)

HANDOUT II 16

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LETHALITY ASSESSMENT: FACTORS TO CONSIDER

1. Domestic violence perpetrator's access to victim

2. Pattern of the perpetrator's abuse

- a. frequency/severity of the abuse in current, concurrent, past relationships
- b. use and presence of weapons
- c. threats to kill
- d. hostage taking, stalking
- e. past criminal record

3. Perpetrator's state of mind

- a. obsession with victim; jealousy
- b. ignoring negative consequences of his violence
- c. depression/desperation

4. Individual factors that reduce behavioral controls of either victim or perpetrator

- a. substance abuse
- b. certain medications
- c. psychosis, other major mental illness
- d. brain damage

5. Suicidality of victim, children, or perpetrator

6. Adult victim's use of physical force

7. Children's use of violence

8. Situational factors:

a. separation violence/victim autonomy

b. presence of other major stresses

9. Past failures of systems to respond appropriately

HANDOUT II 17

FACTORS TO CONSIDER AND CRITERIA TO CONSIDER IN DETERMINING HIGH RISK TO CHILDREN IN CPS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

In determining high risk and the need for immediate response, workers should consider the following as additional risk factors where domestic violence is present.

1. Domestic violence related injuries to an adult or child.
2. Severe or frequent domestic violence assaults or escalation of severity and frequency.
3. Display or use of weapons during domestic violence assault.
4. Perpetrator's threats to kill or seriously harm himself or others.
5. Perpetrator stalking of adult victim and/or children.
6. Menacing conduct of domestic violence perpetrator and risk to child of being assaulted or snatched.
7. Substance abuse problem in the family.
8. Non-abusive parent forced to flee and leave children with perpetrator. Or non-abusing parent and children have fled, without a place to go.
9. Adult victim unable to care for child due to the trauma of a recent assault or to the trauma from a series of multiple incidents.
10. Risk increases when the perpetrator has ongoing access to adult victim and/or children.

HANDOUT II 18

INITIAL CONTACT WITH MOTHER

CPSW made phone call to the Wiggins home. Ms. Wiggins answered the phone. CPSW identified herself and asked her if this was a safe time to talk a little bit about a report that the Division had recently received. CPSW asked if anyone was home that might be upset if she were on the phone. Ms. Wiggins indicated that it was a safe time. CPSW indicated that she had been notified that something happened at her home last night and wanted to know if Ms. Wiggins and the children were okay. Ms. Wiggins responded that they were fine. CPSW asked if it was okay for her to explain the Division's process after receiving a report. She asked what the report was about. CPSW told her that the report caused some concern about her and her children's safety because of an incident that occurred last night. Ms. Wiggins said that she and the children are fine now as she has a protective order and he is gone. CPSW asked again if it was okay to tell her about what the Division's process was after such a report is received. Ms. Wiggins did not respond, so CPSW proceeded to tell her that she wanted to interview her first in a safe setting to discuss what occurred and how the Division might be able to help. Ms. Wiggins indicated that she did not need help from the Division. CPSW told her that very well might be the case, and that we would determine that together after the worker had a chance to conduct an assessment that would rely very heavily on information that she would share about her family and their needs. CPSW explained that she would also want to talk with her children and also her husband during the assessment period. CPSW stated that it was important for her to understand how Ms. Wiggins' husband and children perceived what was happening and for all parties to decide together if there is help that the children need. She became agitated and asked why that was necessary. CPSW reflected this back to her and asked what her concern was. She stated that her husband was not going to be happy about the Division's involvement. CPSW stated that this is often the case, and that she would do whatever she could to make the meeting productive and not to increase her or the children's risk as a result. CPSW also explained that it was important for CPSW to understand Mr. Wiggin's attitudes and sense of responsibility for the safety of his family. CPSW stated that we would talk more about this during an interview and asked if she was willing to schedule this. She said that she was, although she wasn't happy about having to do this. An interview was arranged for tomorrow morning. CPSW told her that she wanted Ms. Wiggins to feel safe to talk freely and asked where Ms. Wiggins felt the interview should take place. Ms. Wiggins stated that her home would be fine

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HANDOUT II 19

INTERVIEW WITH MOTHER

Ms. Wiggins was present for the scheduled home visit. She appeared angry when CPSW first arrived but was able to let go of her anger and answer my questions after CPSW commented that people are usually upset by the Division's intervention into their lives. When questioned about the incident Ms. Wiggins stated she was done with Mr. Wiggins and did not want him back in the home. Ms. Wiggins stated the day of the incident she went to court and was granted an emergency protective order. When CPSW asked Ms. Wiggins if she went for a final order, she stated that she did not because she was done with her husband. CPSW asked if Ms. Wiggins had past experience with protective orders. She said that she had and that they had not always worked.

Ms. Wiggins stated that Mr. Wiggins has a bad temper and that he has hit her on two other occasions but this was the worst time. When questioned about what happened that evening Ms. Wiggins stated she was concerned about household bills and told Mr. Wiggins she was going to get a job. She stated that they have been struggling with money for quite some time. Mr. Wiggins argued that no wife of his was going to work and when Ms. Wiggins stated he could not stop her, he jumped up and went after her. She stated she ran away from him. He flipped over a chair and grabbed her in the kitchen by her arms and slapped her several times and she hit her head against the door frame. At that point, their 9-year-old son Daryl jumped in between them and yelled at his father to stop. Mr. Wiggins pushed Daryl with some force and Daryl fell against the wall bumping his head. At that point she was able to pull away and ran into her bedroom and called the police.

CPSW expressed concern for her safety and that of the children. I told her that the police report stated that they were all crying when the police arrived and that they were also concerned about Daryl being hurt during the incident. Ms. Wiggins began to cry and admitted the kids started screaming and crying when they heard the chair fall and saw their father hitting her. She stated her daughter was pulling her son from the kitchen and trying to cover his eyes. She said her son started punching his sister because he wanted to see what was happening. That is when he jumped between them and was pushed. After she got away from her husband she said the kids also ran into her bedroom. She said her son appeared scared and was holding onto his sister. Ms. Wiggins stated that the Division had no business talking to her or her family because she was done with her husband and was not going to take him back. CPSW asked her if she had separated from him before. She replied that she had for brief periods of time. CPSW asked what his responses to that had been. She stated that he had violated the protection order that she had. CPSW told her that often the risk to a woman and children is increased during separation and that it would be important for her to have the opportunity to work on a safety plan. CPSW asked if she had sought assistance before. She said no, just the order of protection. CPSW told her that there was help available through the Division and

other agencies. She said that she had been given the number for a crisis center when she went for the order of protection, but never called. CPSW talked with her about the DVS.

CPSW commented that seeing her children that upset must have been very difficult for her. CPSW asked Ms. Wiggins how her children knew to run into the bedroom. She stated that she has talked with them about what to do if their father appears scary to them. CPSW told her that it was so important that she had done this planning with her children. She said that she has also told her children that it is okay for them to call 911 if they are scared. CPSW said that a police report had indicated that during one incident the children were at a neighbor's. She said that her neighbor is a friend who is very supportive. She said that day she knew her husband was on edge so she sent the children over there. She told CPSW that these examples should show that she knows how to take care of her children. CPSW validated that she had taken steps to protect her children. CPSW told her that children can be affected by these incidents differently and it was important for CPSW to gain a sense of how her children were doing in light of the circumstances. CPSW asked if she was worried about anything where her children were concerned. She said that sometimes Daryl does not listen to her. CPSW pointed out that she had indicated earlier that he hit his sister during the incident the other night. She said yes, that sometimes his behavior is aggressive. CPSW pointed out that this is often the case with children, especially boys, who have witnessed domestic violence. CPSW said that one of the decisions we had to make was whether or not there was help available through the Division or in the community to alleviate these issues.

CPSW told Ms. Wiggins that the goal of the Division's involvement is to enhance the safety of her and her children. CPSW told her that I want to meet with her husband to hear from him about what happened and get a sense of where he is with accepting responsibility for the situation and with efforts to correct it. She said that didn't matter as she was done with him. CPSW pointed out that he is still the father of the children and has a responsibility to assure his children's safety. CPSW told her that I would talk with him using information from the police report and other sources of information other than her. I told her that I would talk with her again after the interview with him. I asked her how she thought he would respond to CPSW. She said that he was not going to be happy. CPSW asked her what the best way to engage him would be. She said that he does not like authority figures, so it would best if CPSW was not confrontational with him. CPSW told her that I wanted to talk with him so would make every effort for the conversational to not be conflictual. She seemed relieved by this.

CPSW asked Ms. Wiggins if I could talk with the children tomorrow at school and explained that I would be discrete and that it was important that I see them in a setting where they feel safe. She did not object.

Adapted from: S. Hubert, R. Houtte & L. Reedy, *Engaging Families: Moving From Confrontation to Collaboration*, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, 2005

HANDOUT II 20

FOUR SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTIONS WITH ADULT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Validate her experiences

Build on her strengths

Help her regain control of her life

Help her explore her options

GANLEY, A., SCHECHTER, S. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. A NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES. FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION FUND, 1996.

VALIDATE HER EXPERIENCES

- a. Avoid stigmatizing her with a label of “battered,” but be concerned about the harm that is done to her.
 - Put affective labels on the experiences. “It sounds painful and scary.”
 - Raise your concerns about danger to her
 - Explain the concept of coercive control and help her see what the domestic violence perpetrator is doing to hurt her.

- b. Interview her in the language in which she communicates most comfortably. If she prefers talking to a practitioner from her ethnic or racial group, offer her this option if you can, making sure the practitioner or interpreter understands and respects the need for confidentiality.

- c. Support the client for telling her story.

- d. Empathize with her and validate her feelings. Because the domestic violence perpetrator blames her for the violence and because society frequently does nothing to stop the assaults, many adult victims feel crazy and self-doubting.

- e. Take a stand against the violence and articulate a clear set of beliefs about violence to the adult victim (e.g., “You never deserve abuse.” “You are not responsible for the violence, no matter what you do, even if you strike back, drink, or take drugs. The perpetrator is responsible for the violence.”). Make statements like the following: “Abuse is wrong;

staying with your partner may not always be best for you or the children. You deserve more.”

- f. Universalize. Make statements to your clients like, “I’ve talked to many women in circumstances like yours” or “Many women who are beaten feel the way you do.”

- g. Offer information and data (e.g., violence tends to increase in severity and frequency over time). Refer women to resource guides such as *Getting Free: A Handbook for Women in Abusive Relationships* by Ginny NiCarthy or *When Love Goes Wrong: What to Do When You Can’t Do Anything Right* by Ann Jones and Susan Schechter (see Bibliography).

- h. Urge the adult victim to join groups so that she can receive support and validation.

- i. Anyone who is abused looks for answers to the question, “Why is he doing this to me?” Take the time to go through her explanations to this question. Help her develop explanations that make it clear the perpetrator is responsible. Help her understand that she is not the cause of domestic violence and untangle confusing information.

BUILD ON HER STRENGTHS

Acknowledge a woman's strengths such as the specific ways she has protected herself or her children, methods she has used to escape the abuse, the courage she has demonstrated by telling you about violence or by reaching out to resources and support systems for help, and her familial and cultural support systems.

Do not ask questions that are victim-blaming, such as:

- How can you stay in a situation that is hurting your children so much?
- What keeps you with a person like that?
- What did you do that caused him to hit you?
- What could you have done to de-escalate the situation?
- Is there any way in which you participate in the escalation of the violence?
- What is it about your culture that makes women “take it” from men?

Adult victims are not passive recipients of abuse. Rather, they constantly try to stop the violence and protect their children and themselves. Their thoughtfulness is often invisible to the outsider because frequently, in the face of erratic and irrational assault, it is best to proceed very cautiously. Even talking to the CPS worker may set off another round of attacks.

Good assessment in CPS cases involves continually identifying ways that an adult victim has attempted to protect the children, whether or not she was successful in the eyes of the worker. By working with the adult victim to build on these experiences, the worker can help her protect the children successfully.

GANLEY, A., SCHECHTER, S. *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. A NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES.* FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION FUND, 1996.

HELP HER TO REGAIN CONTROL OVER HER OWN LIFE

Victims of domestic violence are adults who are making difficult choices during crises. Because the domestic violence perpetrator strips away the victim's sense of control and dignity, the worker's goal must be safety and a restoration of control. To do this, keep in mind the points below.

- Allow adult victims to make decisions for themselves. Do not bully or mandate conditions for your help, such as, "You must prosecute your partner; you should leave him." Rather, explore options and the consequences of the adult victim's choices. If the worker thinks the victim's choice of staying with her partner endangers a child, tell the woman this directly. If the worker believes a child must be removed to protect the child, say this directly and try to help the mother make choices that are safe for her and her children (i.e., placement of the children with family and friends).
- Allow adult victims to talk about their ambivalence (the good and bad feelings) toward their perpetrator. We only resolve problems when we can acknowledge their complexity.
- Accept that each adult victim must find solutions with which she can live. For example, some find divorce unacceptable. Some African-American, Latina, and Native women may feel conflicted about using a criminal-justice system they feel is racist. For immigrant women, leaving the perpetrator and moving to a new community or a shelter where no one speaks their language or understands their culture may not be an acceptable option.
- Accept that an adult victim's opinions and solutions may change over time. When victims get new information about domestic violence and help with planning their safety, they may change their minds about staying with the perpetrator, or using the court for protection.
- Always ask questions like, "In what way can I or others be helpful to you? What do you want to do? Listen carefully to her requests and try to respond to them.

EXPLORE HER OPTIONS

CPS workers must ensure that battered women are fully informed of shelter, legal, housing, health care, and welfare options. As the worker explores and builds options with the adult victim, it is important to keep the following tasks in mind:

- Always ask the woman what she tried in the past and what worked for her. Explore the consequences of her choices.

- Help her to prioritize; what is important for her safety now?

- Remember that, in a crisis, we all forget. Write things down in a language she understands. Break tasks into manageable pieces.

- Help the woman mobilize her support systems. Sometimes the domestic violence perpetrator tears the adult victim away from family and friends. Rebuilding those connections, if they are good and safe, is crucial to her well-being and may also open new options for her and her children. If her former support system is not available, help her build a new one.

HANDOUT III 1

RACHAEL'S STORY: NEW DEVELOPMENTS

When the Assessment CPSW calls to schedule a home visit, Ms. Wiggins reports that Mr. Wiggins returned to the home two weeks ago. Ms. Wiggins says that she felt pressured to allow him to come home because he's been trying so hard and the kids really miss him. She feels sure he really wants to make things different. And, now that he is home, things are going ok. Ms. Wiggins was having difficulty making ends meet and worried that she would have become homeless without his income. Mr. Wiggins is promising that he will do whatever it takes to make things right with his family. The kids are happy to have their Dad back. Ms. Wiggins is thinking about going to couple's counseling with father in order to get their relationship back on the right track.

Adapted from: S. Hubert, R. Houtte & L. Reedy, *Engaging Families: Moving From Confrontation to Collaboration*, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, 2005

HANDOUT III 2

SAFETY PLANNING TOOL WITH ADULT VICTIMS

A. ASK SOME OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS YOU DISCUSS SAFETY.

1. In what way can I (and others) help you?
2. What do you feel you need to be safe?
3. What particular concerns do you have about your children's safety?
4. What have you tried in the past to protect yourself and your children (e.g., left for a few days, sought help from family, friends, or a shelter, fought back, got an order for protection)? Did any of these strategies help? Will any of them help you now?
5. Who in your support system will help you? How can they help? Can we involve them?

B. IF THE CLIENT HAS SEPARATED FROM THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR, EVALUATE THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS WITH HER:

1. Changing locks on doors and windows.
2. Installing a better security system – window bars, locks, better lighting, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
3. Teaching the children to call the police or family and friends if they are snatched.
4. Talking to schools and childcare providers about who has permission to pick up the children and developing other special provisions to protect the children.
5. Finding a lawyer knowledgeable about family violence to explore custody, visitation, and divorce provisions that protect the children and the adult victim.

6. In rural areas where only the mailbox may be visible from the street, covering the box with bright colored paper so that police can more easily locate the home.
7. Obtaining an order of protection.
8. Telling neighbors that her partner is gone and asking them to inform her if he returns to the area.
9. Figuring out what she can do (or is willing to do) if/when her partner returns.

C. IF THE CLIENT IS LEAVING THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR, REVIEW THE FOLLOWING WITH HER:

1. How and when can she most safely leave? Does she have transportation? Money? A place to go?
2. Is the place she is fleeing to safe?
3. Is she comfortable calling the police if she needs them?
4. Who will she tell or not tell about leaving?
5. Who in her support network does she trust to protect her/
6. What can she and others do so that her partner will not find her/
7. How will she travel safely to and from work or school or to pick up children?
8. What community/shelter/legal resources will help her feel safer? Write down their addresses and phone numbers. Help her call them. Encourage her to use them.
9. What custody and visitation provisions would keep her and the children safe?
10. Would an order of protection be a viable option?

D. IF YOUR CLIENT IS STAYING WITH THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR, REVIEW THE FOLLOWING WITH HER:

1. In an emergency, what works best to keep her and the children safe?
2. Who can she call in a crisis?
3. Would she call the police if the violence starts again? Is there a phone in the house or can she work out a signal with the children or the neighbors to call the police or get help?
4. If she needs to flee temporarily, where can she go? Help her think through several places where she can go in a crisis. Write down the addresses and phone numbers.
5. Would a protection order help her?
6. If she needs to flee, where are the escape routes from the house?
7. Identify dangerous locations in the house and advise her to try not to be trapped in them.
8. If there are weapons in the house, explore ways to have them removed.
9. Advise her to make an extra set of car keys and to hide some money in case of an emergency
10. Remind her that in the middle of a violent assault, it is always best for her to trust her judgment about what is best – sometimes it is best to flee, sometimes to placate the assailant, anything that works to protect herself and the children.
11. Advise the client to have the following available in case she must flee.
 - Birth certificates
 - Social security cards
 - Marriage and driver's licenses and car title
 - Bank account number, credit and ATM cards, savings passbooks
 - Lease/rental agreements, house deed, mortgage papers

- Insurance information and forms
- School and health records
- Welfare and immigration documents
- Medications and prescriptions
- Divorce papers or other court documents
- Phone numbers and addresses for family, friends and community agencies
- Clothing and comfort items for her and the children
- Keys

HANDOUT IV 1

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

- Talk to children at their level using age appropriate questions.
- Make eye contact but understand that they may not be able to do that with you.
- Respect the child's space.
- Speak slowly and simply.
- Engage in small talk to establish rapport.
- Explain what is happening including who you are and the reason for your involvement.
- Let the child tell her/his story.
- Believe the child.
- Validate the child's feelings.
- Be willing to explore all the complicated and conflicted feelings that the children have about their home lives. Children from violent homes often experience divided loyalties, loving and resenting both parents. Reassure them that it is normal in their situations.
- Remember that the children may have been expected to keep secret the abuse that is occurring at home. Every action you take should be considered in light of its potential to jeopardize the safety of the children and their families.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep.
- Reassure the child.
- Be clear with the child about what information you will have to share with others.

HANDOUT IV 2

QUESTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

Assessing the pattern of domestic violence perpetrator's abusive conduct:

At times children can provide important information regarding the nature of the violence in the home. Helpful questions may include:

- What happens when parents (the adults) fight?
- Does anyone yell?
- Does anyone throw things or damage property?
- Has anyone used a knife or a gun?
- Tell me about the last big fight between them.
- Have you ever been made to take sides?

Assessing the impact of the domestic violence on the adult victim:

Children may provide information about how the violence is impacting on the adult victim.

- Has anyone gotten hurt or injured?
- Is your parent afraid?
- Have you seen the police or anyone else come over because of the fights?
- Have you seen injuries or damaged property?

Assessing the impact of the domestic violence on the children:

Children may provide direct information regarding the degree to which they have been harmed by the domestic violence.

- Have you been hurt by any of their fights?
- What do you do when the fights happen?
- What do your brothers and sisters do?
- Are you ever afraid when your parents fight?
- How do you feel during the fight? After the fight?
- Do you worry about the fighting?
- Do you talk to anyone about the fights?
- Do you feel safe at home?
- Have you ever felt like hurting yourself or someone else?

Assessing the children's protective factors (including survival and safety strategies):

It is very important to identify the types of protective factors that help children cope with the violence in their families and the strategies and behaviors they may use to increase their own safety.

- Where do you go during their fights?
- Have you tried to stop a fight? What happened?

- In an emergency for your parent, yourself, or your brothers and sisters, what would you do? Whom would you call?
- Have you ever called for help? What happened?

Assessing dangerousness:

Children may be one more source of information that can help you assess the dangerousness of the violence in the home.

- Has anyone needed to go to a doctor after a fight?
- Do the adults have or use guns, knives or other weapons?
- Do you know where the weapons are?
- Has anyone threatened to hurt someone? What did the person say?

HANDOUT IV 3

SAFETY PLANNING WITH CHILDREN “SAFE”

- S** Stay out of the fight.
- A** Avoid getting trapped.
- F** Find a phone.
- E** Everyone knows it's not your fault.

HANDOUT IV 4

MESSAGES FOR CHILDREN

- You don't need to keep secrets when you feel scared or sad.
- You are not to blame for the violence in your home.
- Don't get in the middle of a fight.
- Identify escape routes from the house and where to meet outside.
- Identify an adult you trust and tell when something is happening in your house.
- Anger and frustration are okay but violence is not.
- It is okay to feel angry with mom and/or dad. It doesn't mean you don't love them.
- There are safe places for Mom to take you.
- It's okay to feel mixed up about things.
- It is okay to like Dad and at the same time not like him when he is violent and hurting family members.
- You need to keep yourself safe when dad hurts mom.
- There are ways to call for help:
 - Call the police (911).
 - Go to your safe place you have planned about before.
 - Go to a neighbor's home.
 - Keep your younger brothers and sister in a safe place.

