

ManagingCare FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement
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New Domestic Violence Guidelines for Public Child Welfare Agencies

In response to a growing recognition of the relationship between domestic violence and child abuse, public child welfare agencies have developed a wide assortment of programs and policies, including guidelines for policy, protocol and program development.

This issue highlights the *Guidelines for Public Child Welfare Agencies Serving Children and Families Experiencing Domestic Violence* published by the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators and describes several innovative technical assistance opportunities to enhance community response to the overlap of domestic violence and child maltreatment.

Anita St. Onge, who directs the domestic violence program for the Resource Center, has worked in the field of child abuse and domestic violence for the past 25 years and has conducted numerous workshops for child welfare agencies, domestic violence programs, Guardian Ad Litem training, and workshops for attorneys and judges. She was involved in the development of Maine's domestic violence protocols and in drafting legislation dealing with issues of child abuse and domestic violence. To learn more about available resources, contact Anita at 207-780-5851 or at anitas@usm.maine.edu

Kris Sahonchik

Domestic violence is pervasive in child welfare caseloads. More than 30 studies conducted regarding the link between domestic violence and child maltreatment show a 40 percent co-occurrence between these two forms of violence (Appel and Holden, 1998). Furthermore, several studies indicate that the presence of adult domestic violence correlates with an increased risk of physical abuse of children. For example, there is evidence that some adult victims may be more likely to abuse their children than those who do not experience domestic violence (Zorza, 1996; Walker, 1999). It was also found, however, that this risk is reduced once the adult victim achieves safety and that many adult victims, despite ongoing abuse, are effective parents and are known to mediate the impact of their children's exposure to domestic violence (Walker, 1999).

Many child welfare agencies have recognized the need to develop effective interventions and supports for families affected by domestic violence and child maltreatment. A number of states have already implemented comprehensive cross-training initiatives, developed new assessment tools, hired domestic violence advocates, or created specialized domestic violence units within their child protective service agencies.

In 1999, the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administra-

tors (NAPCWA), an affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association, identified the intersection of domestic violence and child maltreatment as a priority in its strategic plan. At the same time, NAPCWA members and staff became involved in the development of *Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice* (commonly referred to as the *Greenbook*), which was published in 1999 by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Following publication of the *Greenbook*, Susan Schechter, a *Greenbook* co-author, proposed development of guidelines specifically aimed at public child welfare agency administrators. Similarly, based on research and the experiences of public child welfare agencies, NAPCWA recognized a compelling need for guidelines to assist public child welfare agencies in finding new ways to intervene and support families and children affected by domestic violence and child maltreatment. In response, NAPCWA formed a Domestic Violence Workgroup, chaired by David Berns, Human Services Director for El Paso County, Colorado, to develop such guidelines. The Workgroup, formed in 1999, consists of child welfare agency administrators, researchers, and representatives from national organizations in the fields of domestic violence, child maltreatment, and the courts.

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New Domestic Violence Guidelines

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NAPCWA recently published *Guidelines for Public Child Welfare Agencies Serving Children and Families Experiencing Domestic Violence* ("Guidelines"). The *Guidelines* provide broad direction to public human service agencies, describing model policies, programs and protocols that address the multiple needs of families and children affected by domestic violence and child maltreatment. They do not, however, direct public child welfare agencies on how to serve families experiencing domestic violence and child maltreatment. Rather, they provide a range of recommendations and best practices which can be adapted to the needs of each community according to federal, state, and local statutes.

Development of the *Guidelines* was welcomed by public child welfare agency administrators. As the *Guidelines* are tested, NAPCWA will monitor their usefulness and update them as new research and practices emerge.

Key Concepts

The *Guidelines*' recommendations incorporate existing research and practice models, focusing on a number of key concepts. First the *Guidelines* reiterate the *Greenbook*'s stance on increasing safety for adult victims and their children, and holding the batterer accountable for abusive behavior.

Differential Responses and Community Based Approaches

Second, they suggest that communities design service responses that provide help to families without opening a child protection case. Child protective services should be involved with families whenever children have been physically, sexually or emotionally abused as a result of being exposed to domestic violence. Although many children suffer when they are exposed to domestic violence, not every child exposed is in need of child protective services. It would be unrealistic and highly intrusive for families if child protection agencies were mandated to investigate all reports of children exposed to such conditions. Rather, the community can work together to offer these children a continuum of services, often referred to as a differential response, contingent upon the level of harm and risk they experience. The *Guidelines* also advocate that child welfare agencies build partnerships with, and direct resources to, underfunded community agencies, as a way of building that continuum of services.

Effective Identification and Assessment

Further, the *Guidelines* address increased safety through effective identification and assessment of domestic violence, accompanied by community-based intervention. Although many agencies now consider domestic violence a factor to be assessed during intake and investigation, the *Guidelines* state that risk assessment is only one step toward best practice. To secure safety, interventions need to be targeted toward removing the risks caused by the batterer while assisting the adult victim in securing safety. This recommendation is based on research which asserts that interventions for adults can reduce risks for children. It is also critical for child protective services to assess the protective factors adult victims used to protect their children, which can vary but are not limited to, contacting police, seeking shelter or obtaining a protection order.

"The CPS community is perfectly placed to ease the burden of domestic violence on battered women and their children by enhancing their response to batterers. These guidelines stress batterer accountability and change as a key aspect of any comprehensive response to the threat domestic violence poses to families and children."

David Mandel, Non-Violence Alliance, Middletown, CT



NAPCWA's Domestic Violence Guidelines

Development and Overview

NAPCWA's Domestic Violence Workgroup, assisted by Susan Schechter and NAPCWA staffers Lien Bragg and Gretchen Test, developed the draft *Guidelines* and sent them to several hundred organizations and individuals for comment. The Workgroup then reviewed approximately 60 sets of comments and revised the draft several times. The final *Guidelines* were published in September 2001 and are currently being distributed nationwide. They contain the following sections:

- The Overlap Between Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment
- Differential Responses for Children and Families Experiencing Domestic Violence
- Increasing Safety for Adult Victims and Their Children: Effective Identification, Assessment and Community-Based Interventions
- Policy and Practice Recommendations for Child Protection Agencies Addressing Domestic Violence
- Desired Outcomes in Child Protection Cases Involving Domestic Violence
- Model Protocols and Practice Guidelines
- Training Curricula
- National Organizations and Resource Centers
- Articles and Resource Manuals

Desired Outcomes

The child welfare field has become much more focused on improving outcomes for children and families, as exemplified by the recently implemented federal outcomes for public child welfare. NAPCWA identified a number of desired outcomes for child protection cases involving domestic violence. They include:

- Families will have access to culturally responsive and appropriate advocacy services and interventions.
- Children will experience enhanced safety, permanency and stability.
- Children will remain in the care of at least one nonoffending parent when safe and possible.
- Economic and social supports will be provided to victims without the opening of child protective services' cases or without bringing them under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court, when possible.
- Children on child protective caseloads will be protected from ongoing exposure to abusive behavior by the batterer.
- Batterers will be held accountable for their abusive behavior.
- Adult victims will experience child protective services in a manner that is nonblaming and supportive so that it enables them to voluntarily seek services and disclose information about the violence.
- If out-of-home placement is required, domestic violence interventions will be offered to parents in a timely and safe manner as part of reasonable efforts to maintain or reunite the children with the family or nonoffending parent.
- Children will not be placed in kinship, foster care, or adoptive homes where there is a documented history of domestic violence unless these homes no longer pose serious risks to the children as determined by a thorough assessment.

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We'd like to hear from you!

Are there topics that you'd like us to address in future issues? Want to find out more about how agencies are tackling the challenges that you face? Let us know, and we'll do our best to help.

Fill out the form below and mail it to:
Patricia Nocera
National Child Welfare Resource Center
for Organizational Improvement
PO Box 15010, Portland, Maine 04112

or fax it to us at: 207-780-5817.

Thanks!

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

In future issues of *Managing Care*, please address the following topic(s):

☐ I'd like more information about the National Child Welfare Resource Center.

My particular area(s) of interest are:

- ☐ outcome measures
- ☐ strategic planning
- ☐ human resource development
- ☐ information systems
- ☐ interagency collaboration
- ☐ quality assurance
- ☐ case review
- ☐ other: _____

New Domestic Violence Guidelines

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Policy and Practice Recommendations

After discussing the overlap of domestic violence and child maltreatment, and describing the need for effective identification and assessment accompanied by a flexible, community-based response, the *Guidelines* list specific practice and policy recommendations. They cover a range of issues, including training, intake, screening, investigation, assessment, case planning, and interventions. In addition, they address issues such as documentation, confidentiality, batterer accountability, cultural diversity, and out-of-home placement. They suggest specific practices such as specialized visitation and safe exchange services, cross-system collaboration, multidisciplinary practice, specialized case consultation, and programs for child witnesses. They advocate use of culturally-responsive, family-centered, community-based practice. Finally, they offer suggestions for agency policy review, supports for workers, and domestic violence representation in decision-making entities such as child fatality review teams and citizen review panels.

Conclusion

Addressing the overlap of domestic violence and child maltreatment, as well as the multiple needs of families who are experiencing violence, provides a unique challenge to public child welfare agencies. Emerging models present promising practices showing that community collaboration can result in better outcomes for children and families. As we learn more from research and model initiatives, refinements and updates to the *Guidelines* will be necessary. However, for public child welfare administrators who are interested in addressing these issues, the *Guidelines* provide an initial framework for program and policy development.

To obtain a copy of the Guidelines: Contact Dena Huff, NAPCWA's Domestic Violence Project Coordinator at (202) 682-0100 or via e-mail at dhuff@aphsa.org (One copy per person – additional copies available for download on APHSA's website, www.aphsa.org).

“These guidelines will be a valuable tool for domestic violence service providers as they work with their CPS agencies.”

Debi Cain, Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board

“These Guidelines provide a road map for public child welfare agencies to lead the discussion with our associates in the domestic violence community, our schools, and our courts to address the most critical need of all—prevention. We must start with that one common goal before we can diminish the growing number of victims of this horrendous national epidemic.”

Ann Burds, West Virginia

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Technical Assistance Available to Address Domestic Violence Issues

National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

The National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues recognizes that the intersection of domestic violence and child maltreatment poses challenges for lawyers, judges, social workers, and court staff. As a result, the Resource Center has developed training and technical assistance focusing on the legal aspects of working with families experiencing domestic violence and child maltreatment. The staff has expertise in both domestic violence and child welfare and has trained throughout the country on these issues. In addition to providing basic information on domestic violence, legal response to domestic violence, and how child protective services workers should confront cases involving domestic violence, the Center has trained participants on dealing with domestic violence in unified family court projects, as well as the impact of domestic violence on children and "failure to protect" issues. The Center is developing training on confidentiality issues and on how various courts involved with families experiencing domestic violence and child maltreatment can collaborate to better meet the needs of these families.

Staff of the Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues are involved in the *Greenbook* efforts and provide technical assistance to localities interested in developing their own *Greenbook* projects. The Center can help craft interagency agreements and protocols governing work in

domestic violence/child maltreatment cases, and facilitate the process that leads to such agreements. The Center provides resources and a national perspective on efforts to create linkages between the domestic violence and child welfare communities. Moreover, the Center hopes to focus on training agency attorneys, parents and children to better recognize and craft solutions for families experiencing violence.

The Resource Center also maintains two listserves where practitioners, judges, and child welfare professionals from all over the country share information about efforts to address the intersection of domestic violence and child maltreatment (among many other topics). **Child-court** revolves around court improvement efforts and the operation of court systems; **Child-case** is a forum for discussing issues arising in individual cases. Both listserves have featured discussions of domestic violence/child maltreatment issues.

For more general information on the work of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Legal and Judicial Issues, please call Mimi Laver at (202) 662-1736. To discuss domestic violence/child maltreatment issues specifically, please call Leigh Goodmark at (202) 662-1758.

The Resource Center is a service of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody

The Family Violence Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges operates the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody. The Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

The Resource Center's mission is to provide access to the best possible source of information and tangible assistance to those working in the field of domestic violence and child protection and custody, and to chart a future in which child protection and custody cases involving family violence are handled in a manner which recognizes the complexity of the legal, cultural and psychological dynamics, and provides protection and relief for all victims in the family.

In the eight years that the Resource Center has been in existence, staff have assisted programs, agencies, and professionals to work together to focus on the needs of all victims in the family through targeted training and technical assistance. The Resource Center has leveraged several resources vital to improving the responses of child protective service agencies to battered mothers and their children, including a specialized information packet on linking child protection and domestic violence workers, and a publication highlighting emerging programs for battered mothers and their children.

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Technical Assistance Available

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Additionally, the work of the Resource Center informed the development of the National Council's publication, *Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice (Effective Intervention)*, which has led to a substantial federal initiative aimed at implementing the provisions of this publication. The Resource Center has been instrumental in distributing *Effective Intervention* and advancing the field through targeted training assistance based on its principles to child protective workers, attorneys, advocates, judges, and others.

The Resource Center also supported the National Council's *First National Summit: Exploring Effective Interventions in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment*, which was held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming in 2000. This conference provided opportunities for judges, advocates, child protection workers and others to network and discuss the many challenges that occur when addressing the intersection of domestic violence and child maltreatment and to conceptualize new ways to promote family safety. The National Council anticipates hosting a second national summit in order to continue the invaluable dialogue and collaborative outreach that began with the first.

For more information about the Resource Center or to request training or technical assistance, please contact an information specialist at 1-800-52-PEACE.

Regional Leadership Forums on Domestic Violence

The National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA), an affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association, has joined with several national organizations to host a series of four regional forums on domestic violence. This effort, a partnership involving the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF), is funded primarily by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, with additional support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

The meetings are designed to bring teams of high-level decision makers together to 1) learn about innovative collaborative approaches for serving families experiencing domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, and 2) develop a state-level action plan to implement such collaboration. National experts and a facilitator assist the teams in developing an action plan. Invitations are sent to the state child welfare agency director, the chair of the state domestic violence coalition (or its equivalent) and a judge or state court administrator who holds a leadership position. States can bring additional partners as needed, to form teams of three to five people. Teams are coordinated by the domestic violence coalition and provided with financial support to cover most travel expenses.

This leadership development initiative grew out of a set of goals related to implementation of the recommendations contained in *Effective Interventions in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice*, commonly referred to as "The Greenbook." A national implementation plan created by NCJFCJ, FVPF and APhSA includes the goal of promoting state level expertise and leadership to improve services and outcomes for families affected by domestic violence and child abuse and neglect.

The first forum was held in August 2001 in Atlanta, involving eight Southeastern states. The remaining forums are scheduled for January 30-31 in Albuquerque (Southwest/West regions); April 2002 in Seattle (West/Northwest regions), and August 2002 in Philadelphia (East/Midwest regions). For more information, please contact Dena Huff, NAPCWA's Domestic Violence Project Coordinator, at (202) 682-0100 or dhuff@aphsa.org.





National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement

As part of its ongoing efforts to work with child welfare agencies to improve their interagency relationships, the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement offers a range of training and technical assistance to states, counties and tribes in the area of domestic violence and child welfare. The technical assistance is designed to meet the needs of individual agencies, and may include: strategic planning, protocol development, and facilitation of efforts to coordinate with state domestic violence coalitions. In addition, the Resource Center can assist agencies in developing legislation and in working with your legislature.

In addition, the Resource Center has worked with a number of consultants who can provide training and technical assistance to meet individual agency needs. One such resource is the Cross Disciplinary Training Project.

The Resource Center is a service of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

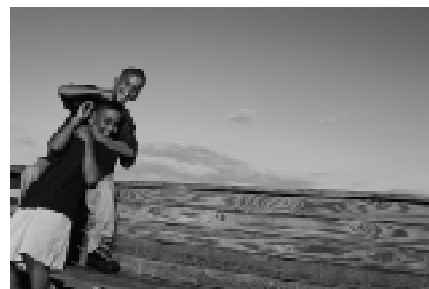
Cross Disciplinary Training Project

Central to the effectiveness of a community-based child welfare system is regional networking across the various programs, services and disciplines that work with children and families. The Cross Disciplinary Training Project is an innovative training approach which successfully promotes communication, cooperation and collaboration among professionals who provide direct social services to children and families. Developed in 1992 through a collaborative process, the training builds bridges between the domestic violence, child welfare and substance abuse systems—systems that historically have been at odds with one another, to the detriment of the families they serve. In addition, the training builds on the experience and expertise of both trainers and participants—focusing on the primary problems that many families face when involved with child abuse and neglect, substance abuse and domestic violence.

Bridge building is accomplished using a two-tiered approach – a three-day 'Training for Trainers,' and delivery of the 18-hour curriculum '*Caring for the Abuse Affected Child*,' by three-person teams of trainers in the communities in which the trainers live and work. The teams consist of a child welfare caseworker, a substance abuse counselor and a domestic violence advocate. The 'Training for Trainers' promotes team building using case studies, role plays, and other techniques to challenge attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes that trainers have about systems other than their own, and allows time to practice delivering parts of the curriculum with teammates.

This dual approach allows practitioners to informally interact and dialogue with colleagues from different disciplines which, in turn, promotes trust and development of relationships – both personal and professional – which are the cornerstone of the project's success. An evaluation of the impact of the training showed that interagency blaming and hostility has been replaced by a sense of shared purpose and a willingness to work together, as well as changes in professional practice and agency policy.

Training teams throughout Maine have delivered the training to hundreds of people including community health nurses, child care providers, substance abuse counselors, mental health practitioners, battered women's and children's advocates, foster and adoptive parents, child welfare personnel, victim witness advocates, police officers, and elementary school personnel. The curriculum is currently being revised for delivery to members of the faith communities, and a session on mental health issues is being developed for inclusion in the curriculum.



Practice Exchange: Supervisors Using Outcome Data

The project staff who developed the information management curriculum and now provides technical assistance on its use would like to know about your successes in encouraging supervisors to use outcome data. Are there strategies you have used that you would like others to know about? Tell us about them, and we will spread the word! Send by e-mail or regular mail to Patricia Nocera, Attn: Outcomes for Supervisors at patn@usm.maine.edu or Patricia Nocera, National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, 1 Post Office Square, P.O. Box 15010, Portland, ME 04112-5010.



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RESOURCES

Addressing Domestic Violence & Child Welfare

Model Protocols and Practice Guidelines

- American Humane Association (1997). *Linking a response: Protocols for a collaborative approach to child abuse and domestic violence*. Contact: American Humane Association, 800.227.4645, www.americanhumane.org.
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- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (1999). *Effective intervention in domestic violence and child maltreatment cases: Guidelines for policy and practice*. Reno, NV. Contact: Family Violence Department, 775.784.6012
- New Hampshire State Office of Victim/Witness Assistance (Undated). *Division for Children Youth and Families: Domestic violence protocol*. Contact: State Office of Victims/Witness Assistance, Department of Justice, State of New Hampshire.
- Oregon State Office for Services to Children and Families (1999). *Services to children and families practice guidelines for cases of domestic violence*. Contact Bonnie Braeutigam at 503.945.6686 or Bonnie.Braeutigam@state.or.us.
- Volpp, L. (1995). *Working with battered immigrant women: A handbook to make services accessible*. Family Violence Prevention Fund, San Francisco, CA. 415.252.8900.

Training Curricula

- Colorado Department of Human Services. (1995) *Crossing the bridge: A cross-training curriculum for domestic violence/child protection workers*. Contact: Colorado Department of Human Services, DAAP, 1575 Sherman, Denver, CO 80203. 303.866.2855.
- Conroy, K. & Magen, R.H. (1997). *Training child welfare workers on domestic violence: Trainer's manual*. New York, NY: Columbia University of Social Work.
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Articles and Resource Manuals

- Appel, A.E. & Holden, G.W. (1998). Co-occurring spouse and child abuse: Implications for CPS practice. *APSAC Advisor*, 11(1), 11-14.
- Aron, L.Y. & Olson, K.K. (1997). *Efforts by child welfare agencies to address domestic violence: The experiences of five communities*. Contact: The Urban Institute, 21000 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037. Publications, 202.261.5687; or orders only, 877.847.7377.
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