

Domestic Violence Protocol for Healthy Marriage Child Welfare Training Grant
The Institute for Families at the University of Denver

All training provided by the Institute for Families at the University of Denver and any sub contractors under this grant, will include the distribution of supplemental information on the assessment of domestic violence.

The current training modules being developed under that grant are:

- ❖ Core Training
- ❖ Engaging Fathers
- ❖ Emancipating Adolescents
- ❖ Domestic Violence
- ❖ Working with Incarcerated Parents
- ❖ Assessing and Developing Relationship Skills

Although some modules are about domestic violence or include information on domestic violence, a list of assessment questions as well as community specific domestic violence resources will be made available at each of the trainings. All of the trainings under this grant are provided to child welfare staff as well as community partners working with child welfare clients. Community partners include: domestic violence, substance abuse, parenting class, mental health, and military service providers. Faith based partners that have expressed interest in providing relationship enhancement/marriage education services to child welfare clients have also been invited to the trainings. Different information will be provided to the community based providers than the faith based providers as the knowledge base on the topic of domestic violence will probably differ greatly. A brief description of domestic violence will be provided to trainees from the faith based community. It is also anticipated that because there are seven training sites in three states with very different child welfare state structures, the knowledge level of the community based providers may vary as well. It is the intention of IFDU to provide information to all trainees about the importance of assessing domestic violence prior to referring any client to relationship enhancement/marriage education services, to provide all trainees with a domestic violence assessment instrument, to provide all trainees with information on domestic violence service providers in their community, and to have possible relationship enhancement/marriage education service providers to gain a basic understanding of the complex issues around domestic violence.

Following is the assessment instrument that will be provided to all trainees. This instrument is adapted from the Administration on Children and Families, Child Protection in Families Experiencing Domestic Violence, Child Abuse and Neglect User Manual Series.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of violent and coercive behavior exercised by one adult in an intimate relationship over another. It is not the same thing as marital conflict. It may consist of physical abuse or more subtle forms of abuse including threats and control. Domestic violence can include physical assault, sexual assault, economic abuse, isolation, psychological assault and attacks against property and pets.

Although most domestic violence victims are female, men may also be victims

Following are some of the warning signs that indicate the possibility of domestic violence.

Women: In general, women who are abused physically are often isolated. Their partners tend to control their lives to a great extent as well as verbally degrade them. For example:

- She mentions she is not able to use the telephone.
- She is forbidden from seeing friends unless he is along
- She has no control over money or household financial matters, he does it all
- She is not allowed to participate in the decision-making process in the home
- She is not allowed to learn to drive or if she does drive, have a car, go to school, or get a job.
- She is limited in her freedom just as a child would be. For example: "Go to the store, get milk and come straight home. It should take you 15 minutes."
- She has poor self-esteem and poor self-concept. She speaks poorly of herself and is unable to make eye contact, always looking away or at the ground when talking.
- She often complains of non-specific aches and pains that are constant and reoccurring which are generally stress-related problems.

Children (primarily boys):

- Serious problems with temper tantrums
- Continual fighting at school or between siblings
- Lashing out at objects, inside or outside the home
- Treating pets cruelly or abusively
- Threatening a younger sister or brother with violence
- Attempting to get attention through hitting, kicking, or choking
- Modeling after dad and exhibiting aggressive behavior to others
- Withdrawing from others (particularly girls)
- Cringing if an arm is raised toward them (particularly girls)

If you believe that someone is the victim of domestic violence, you must first and foremost, listen and believe the victim. You must let the person know that help is available, and that without intervention, the abuse will not stop and it may even escalate. Let the person know that they are not alone.

If you believe that someone is the victim of domestic violence, refer the person to specialized domestic violence counseling. Help the person to seek shelter, advocacy and counseling. Do not attempt to restore the relationship without consultation with a domestic violence expert.

(Adapted from: "What Every Congregation Needs to Know about Domestic Violence: Information for clergy, members of congregations, battered women's programs and human service providers. Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, (www.cpsdv.org) and "Potential Indicators of Domestic Violence", The Community Coalition on Family Violence, Knoxville Tennessee, (www.ccfv.org))

Following is a list of domestic violence resources in your community:

If domestic violence is suspected, an assessment should be completed prior to referring a client for relationship enhancement/marriage education services. Following is a list of questions that should be asked to help you to assess the possibility of domestic violence. The client should be engaged in the assessment process, not “questioned” about the quality of their relationship.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ASSESSMENT

Child Protection in Families Experiencing Domestic Violence, Child Abuse and Neglect User Manual Series: Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Caliber Associates, Bragg (2003)

Types and patterns of abusive tactics		Yes	No
	Does your partner:		
	♦ Prevent you from visiting friends or family?		
	♦ Prevent you from going to school or work?		
	♦ Tell you what to wear, what to do, where you can go, or whom you can talk to?		
	♦ Control the household income?		
	♦ Follow you, “check up” on you, or check the mileage on your car?		
	♦ Telephone you constantly while at work or home?		
	♦ Give you threatening looks or stare when he or she does not agree with something you said or did?		
	♦ Call you degrading names, put you down or humiliate you in front of people?		
	♦ Blame you or tell you that you are at “fault” for the abuse or other problems you are having?		
	♦ Deny or minimize his or her abusive behavior?		
	Has your partner:		
	♦ Ever pushed, kicked, slapped, punched or choked you?		
	♦ Threatened to kill or harm him or herself, you, the children or a pet?		
	♦ Ever threatened you with a weapon? Does your partner have access to a dangerous weapon?		
	♦ Ever been arrested for a violent crime or behaved violently in public?		
	♦ Ever forced you to commit illegal activities, use illegal drugs, or abuse alcohol?		
	♦ Forced you to engage in unwanted sexual activity or practices (e.g. pornography, multiple sexual partners, prostitution)?		
Risks and impact on the adult victim			
	How has your partner’s abusive behavior affected you?		
	Do you suffer from anxiety or depression?		
	Do you have difficulty sleeping, eating, concentrating, etc.?		
	Do you suffer health problems?		

	Have you had to seek medical assistance for health problems resulting from your partner's violence?		
	Have you been physically assaulted during pregnancy?		
	Do you abuse alcohol or other substances?		
	Have you ever been hospitalized for a mental illness? Do you have a mental health diagnosis?		
	Have you ever thought about or tried to hurt yourself or someone else?		
Risks and impacts on children			
	Has your partner:		
	♦ Called your children degrading names or verbally threatened them?		
	♦ Ever threatened to make a report to CPS, take custody of the children, or kidnap the children?		
	♦ Ever asked the children to report your daily activities or to "spy" on you?		
	♦ Ever forced your children to watch or participate in the abuse of you?		
	♦ Physically hurt you in front of the children?		
	For your partner physically discipline or touch the children in a manner that you don't agree with or that makes you uncomfortable?		
	♦ Do your children exhibit problems at school or at home (e.g., sleeping, eating or concentrating difficulties)?		
	♦ Have your children ever intervened in a physical or verbal assault to protect you or to stop the violence?		
	♦ Do your children behave in ways that remind you of your partner?		
	♦ Has a school or daycare center ever contacted you regarding behavioral problems or your children?		
Help seeking and protective strategies			
	Have you:		
	♦ Told anyone about the abuse? What happened?		
	♦ Ever left home because of the abuse? Where did you go and what happened?		
	♦ Ever called the police or 911? What was their response?		
	♦ Ever filed a restraining order or criminal charges? What was your partner's response?		
	♦ Ever used a domestic violence shelter or service? Was it helpful?		
	♦ Fought back? What happened?		
	How do you survive the abuse?		
	What have you tried to keep you and your children safe from your partner?		
	What has made it difficult for you to keep you and your children safe?		
	How will your partner react if he or she finds out you talked with me?		