



Integrated Casework Practice Model

tip sheet

TIPS FOR WORKERS WORKING WITH DADS: IS THERE ROOM FOR FATHERS?

There is a tendency to work less with fathers than with mothers, but we can change this. Here are some things you can do:

- Make finding and reaching out to fathers a part of your routine in every case.
- Keep an open mind if you hear negative things about a man before you meet him. Someone may have had a bad experience with him in the past, but he may have changed. Also, be sure you have room to listen to his side.
- Give him room to express anger. There is a difference between showing anger and making threats.
- If a father is threatening in some way, connect with him by setting limits respectfully and reminding him that you want to work with him in a good way. See if he can respond in a good way by backing off. (If he makes threats to harm you or someone else, that's different. Get help.)

Here are some tips for building strength-based relationships with fathers:

- ⇒ Approach dads in a strength based way by reminding them of how important they are to their children, and how there are some things that only they can do for their kids. "Your kids will carry what you do forever." If he has been harmful or negligent, "you can change things for them by changing your behavior."
- ⇒ Ask a man how he wants his children to remember him 10-15 years from now. Even men who have been toxic to their families have positive visions about what they would like to mean to their kids. It's a good "doorway" for non-defensive self-reflection. You can ask: "How would you like your kids to remember you?" If he describes a positive vision of how he would like his kids to remember him, you can ask: "What can you do to make that happen?" and "How can I help you with that?"
- ⇒ Remind fathers that they are role models to their kids. Boys learn about manhood from their fathers, and girls get a sense of what to expect from men from them. You can use the **"BEING A GOOD ROLE MODEL"** Tip Sheet.
- ⇒ If a father does not live at home with his family and the children's mother is mad at him, use the **"CO-PARENTING WORK"** Tip Sheet, to talk with both parties. If there has been domestic violence, seek consultation to make sure you go ahead safely.
- ⇒ If he is out of the home, but engaged with the kids, it's important for him to be consistent, and to do his best to maintain a cordial and respectful relationship with the kids' mom. The Tip Sheet called **ADVICE TO FATHERS WHO ARE OUT OF THE HOME** may be useful.
- ⇒ If they are uncertain about discipline or appear to be rough or abrupt, the Tip Sheet called **DISCIPLINING CHILDREN** may be useful. It emphasizes the need for self-control, consistency, clear rules, and collaboration with the primary caretaker (the last part is critical).
- ⇒ Talk about the importance of gentle, child-centered play. Even though many men did not have fathers who played with them, it's something that many men want to learn and that can increase their sense of confidence and competence as dads. You can use the **PLAYING WITH CHILDREN** Tip Sheet.
- ⇒ If there are questions about domestic violence, you can use the Tip Sheet called **HELPFUL THINGS TO SAY TO MEN WHO HAVE BEEN VIOLENT WITH THEIR PARTNERS**. If there appears to be high risk violence, you can speak to your supervisor and seek consultation with Specialists from the DV Unit.



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TIPS FOR DADS

IT'S A MATTER OF PRIDE: BEING A GOOD ROLE MODEL

Fathers are models to their children. Through your example, you provide a model of what fatherhood and manhood are all about, and teach many lessons about life, relationships and responsibility. It's about how you treat other people, spend your time and money, and handle the joys and stresses of life. Even when children seem to be ignoring you, they are aware of how you conduct yourself. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

1. **You never stop being a role model.** You may think that being a role model doesn't matter if you are absent. Research shows that when dads are not in the picture, kids wonder about them and may think that they did not measure up in some way. A small positive contribution may make a huge difference. You don't have to be a "super dad".
2. **Actions speak more loudly than words.** If you say one thing, but do another, your child will remember what you do. For example, if you can remain calm, listen, and work on solutions when there's conflict, you teach your child that one can master one's emotions and work out disagreements.
3. **Most mistakes are not forever.** Most of the time, if you acknowledge mistakes and, above all, change your behavior, you can regain trust and respect. You can also show your child that they matter to you.

WHAT ARE SOME ESSENTIALS FOR A GOOD ROLE MODEL?

Relationship with the children's mother. If you can be positive, respectful and work out conflicts and disagreements in good ways, you model positive manhood and respect for adults in general. Harsh criticism, showing contempt, stonewalling, and defensiveness, can hurt children emotionally. Using force with the children's mother can cause fear and lasting hurt to your child. If this has happened, get help. You and your children can bounce back.

Father, husband or stepfather. If you want to have your rules respected, you must follow them yourself. For example, if you want your teens to come home at a decent time, your own habits in this regard are very important. If you hold back your temper when you're mad, it shows that you value self-control and teaches responsible behavior.

Character. If you are polite (to people in stores, when you are driving and when someone is rude to you) you show what being a man is about and highlight the importance of self-control. For a son, it illustrates an example of responsible behavior for men: for a daughter, it helps her have healthy expectations of men.

Work and income. Men have traditionally been expected to be models as providers and wage earners, and that still carries weight despite the fact that most women work. But, it's not about being a "big wallet" guy: having a big job or an expensive car. Consistently providing what you can is important. Also, doing chores in the house or outdoors, and making other contributions, either alone or with the kids, teaches responsibility.

Time. How you spend your time shows your real commitment. Spending time with your family and doing things with them illustrates what being a father is about. Are you managing work hours responsibly? Are you balancing time spent with your buddies with time at home with your family? Remember that you never stop being a role model.

Adapted by F. Mederos from: Rosenberg, J. & Wilcox., W.B. (2006). The Importance Of Fathers In The Healthy Development Of Children. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect.



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TIPS FOR DADS: PLAYING WITH CHILDREN

Many fathers are not aware of it, but playing with kids is very important. It teaches kids many things and has a vital impact on their development. According to research, children who have healthy, fun play with their dads strengthen the following traits:

- They are more independent and more willing to explore the world
- They have more self-control and more self-discipline.
- They have better self-esteem and emotional well-being.
- They have better educational outcomes.
- They socialize better with peers and tend to get in trouble less often.
- They learn to follow reasonable rules.

Above all, gentle, attentive, play that responds to your child's interests and moods shows that you can tune in as a dad. Making play a habit—spending time regularly with your kids—shows caring and love better than a thousand words.

- ✓ **Engage in stimulating and playful activity with infants and toddlers as often as possible.** Physical play enhances motor skills and teaches emotional self-control. If you respond quickly when your child cries or gives other signals, you boost your child's sense of security and build the capacity to accept comfort more rapidly.
- ✓ **Roughhousing in a playful, controlled, way with older toddlers and children** is a way of helping them learn how to handle their strength and how to control aggressiveness. The key is letting children climb over and try to overcome you, with occasional gentle reminders when they become too rough. It's good to tell children they can stop whenever they feel they want to. Also be careful with kids who have been exposed to violence before: roughhousing may be too much for them.
- ✓ **Keep up active physical play as children get older.** Passive activities like watching TV or playing video games are not enough. Playing ball, tossing footballs, playing basketball, hiking or biking are all good activities that maintain the father-child bond, improve physical fitness, and support emotional well-being.
- ✓ **Participate in hobbies and games.** Making models, drawing, crafts, playing cards or board games teach patience and self-control. Praise them when they do well.
- ✓ **Engage in productive activities with your children** such as household chores, washing dishes after dinner, or cleaning up the backyard. Research consistently shows that these shared activities promote a sense of responsibility and a sense of being useful and important in children. It also models positive masculinity.
- ✓ **Read books to your children.** You can read at bedtime or just bring a book when you take them to appointments at doctors' offices. Help out with homework and make sure they get their work done. Activities like this, as well as going to the school to meet with teachers, let your children know that their father cares about their education. That's an important message. Research shows that children benefit strongly from this. It gives them an educational boost.



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TIPS FOR FATHERS: DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

Fathers play an important role as disciplinarians. It is a traditional and accepted role for men in families, though fathers and mothers both share that responsibility. Good discipline is a source of pride for a father and a source of stability for a family. Discipline is challenging: it is a great opportunity to model correct behavior, fairness and firmness. If you want to teach self-control and to be obeyed and respected, you must show self-control and be consistent. Your behavior will influence your children deeply. In particular, boys will get their sense of what being a father is all about from you.

Children need both parents' guidance. Usually, parents develop and agree on a set of rules for reasonable order in the household and for reasonable behavior in relationships between family members and with other people. If there is ongoing disagreement between you and your partner, children will get mixed messages and inconsistent discipline. It will not work well with them. If this is the case, get help.

Remember that your actions speak more loudly than your words. If you say one thing, but do another, children remember what you do. If teens are out too late at night, but you do something similar, then the message is that late hours are OK.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- **Control your emotions/manage your anger:** yelling a lot, screaming, pounding tables, breaking things, making threats or hitting, may quiet children for a while, but they will see you have lost it. The message is that exploding is OK as long as you are the boss. Take time to master your feelings. If you are too angry, wait or talk it out with someone. **Many men struggle with this and learn to speak more calmly to their kids even when they're mad.** You should be able to feel pride in how you handle discipline.
- **Praise good behavior.** Try to do this once a day at least. If you can praise self-control and good judgment, your kids will develop a positive sense of themselves.
- **Set clear rules and enforce them.** It is essential to have agreements with your partner, or if you are a single parent, discuss reasonable rules with a friend or helper. If you didn't have good models when you were growing up, you may need some help to think rules through.
- **Be consistent.** If you treat something as very serious one time, but make a joke about it next time, then you are giving confusing messages that cancel each other out.
- **Do not label your child or use name-calling.** Make clear that you don't like the bad behavior, but that you love your child. Children who are seen as bad kids lose the incentive to behave.
- **Use appropriate consequences.** Time-outs and other consequences—losing TV privileges for a certain (reasonable) time, putting away a toy for a while, having extra chores, and so on—are reasonable responses to misbehavior.
- **Combine rules and limit setting with explanations.** Telling children why rules are what they are, and why they are being punished helps them learn what is and is not acceptable behavior. They will probably not agree, but a reasonable, age-appropriate explanation is important.

Adapted by F. Mederos from: Rosenberg, J. & Wilcox., W.B. (2006). *The Importance Of Fathers In The Healthy Development Of Children*. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect.



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TIPS FOR WORKERS WORKING WITH DADS:

CO-PARENTING WORK: WHEN MOM & DAD DON'T LIVE TOGETHER

What can you do to help engage a non-residential father or mother when the caretaking parent is reluctant to have him or her involved? In the materials below we assume that the father is the non-residential parent. We should always ask if there has been domestic violence in the past, and if there has been domestic violence (including a restraining order) or other issues that indicate acute or severe risk, a consultation should be carried out before proceeding.

IDEAS:

- Build trust slowly—start small.
- Share responsibility.
- Take a problem-solving approach.
- Take each person's concerns and interests into account.
- Be clear on roles, expectations & tasks.
- Expand slowly.

FOR CUSTODIAL PARENT

- What are your concerns about ____ (the other parent)?
- How could this (have him involved with kid/s) benefit your children?
- How could this benefit you? Are there any potential pluses? (What is the starting point? Priorities?)
- What would you need to see to make first step happen?
- Keep on following this process as you move toward more father involvement.

FOR FATHER/NON-RESIDENTIAL PARENT

- Remind the father that visitation is not an opportunity to get information about his ex-partner.
- Education: Explain all that the custodial parent does. She should get credit for her work.
- Education: Talk about supportive co-parenting vs. walking back in as the "emperor." Discuss boundaries and the need to respect her central role.
- What is your vision of fatherhood? Do you want to be involved?
- How could this benefit your children?
- What are your concerns? About her (custodial parent)? About child?
- Are you willing to hear some suggestions about steps you can take to make this happen? (If this involves bringing up issues that she has mentioned, talk about issues as if they were uncovered from a collateral source if possible. This is even more critical if there is a history of domestic violence.)
- What are the steps you can take to make this happen? Clarify this.

SIDEBARS

She may bring up issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, domestic violence, recent instability (employment, homelessness, etc.) on the non-residential parent's part that are problems with respect to his visiting the children. This is an opportunity to go to dad and talk about these issues in the context of fatherhood and of being a good role model for his kid/s. It may motivate him to seek help or to deal with a problem he has. It's a good way to enter the discussion. Also, remember to plan about safety if there are concerns about DV, SA or MH. Seek consultation if you have questions.

Safe and Together™ Principles

1

Keeping child Safe and Together™ with non-offending parent
Safety Healing from trauma Stability and nurturance

2

Partnering with non-offending parent as default position
Efficient Effective Child-centered

3

Intervening with perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to child
Engagement Accountability Courts

10 Things Courts Should Know About Their Local Intervention Programs for Abusive Partners

Civil and criminal courts often include programming for abusive partners in case dispositions. Probation and child protective services also routinely recommend such programs as part of domestic violence case management mandates. While most states have statutes regulating curriculum, facilitator training, and class length and size, programs vary widely across different jurisdictions and agencies.

This can make it difficult for courts to ascertain important information about the programs. The Center for Court Innovation and the Battered Women's Justice Project encourage courts to meet with their local intervention programs for abusive partners to establish a better understanding of the expectations that the court and the programs have of each other, and to enhance offender accountability and

victim safety. Below is a list of some of the most important questions courts should ask, along with some general information based on national best practices. This tool can be a starting-point for further conversations and collaboration among courts, programs, and other criminal justice stakeholders seeking to enhance their collaborative responses to domestic violence cases.

1. Is the program monitored by any state agency or is the program certified?

Most states have an agency tasked with overseeing and certifying programs in line with standards on facilitator training, curriculum, class size, and collaboration with victim advocates. Some states require a program be certified to receive referrals from a court or probation. In states where certification is mandated, the court can review the standards in operation. In states without certification requirements, the court can ask individual programs about issues such as facilitator training and expertise.

2. How long is the program?

Most programs run between half-a-year to a year, with length primarily governed by state standards. Programs may also recommend

additional time based on ongoing risk assessments or program-defined progress.

3. What type of curriculum does the program use and how does it address intimate partner violence?

Programs can vary widely in their use of curricula. Most use educational, cognitive-behavioral, trauma-informed, and/or psycho-educational strategies to address coercive control, the impact of violence on children, and sexual abuse, and to provide skill-building exercises to facilitate healthy intimate partner relationships. Programs should not use couples or individual counseling or any model that blames the victim. Research shows that cognitive-behavioral curricula reduce recidivism in the general criminal population. The program should share its written curriculum with the court.

4. What are the costs for attending and does the program take insurance or use a sliding scale?

Program costs can range from \$15 to \$50 per class and often require an additional intake fee. Many programs have sliding scales and some accept community service for indigent clients. If state standards permit, some programs accept insurance to help minimize participation costs.

5. Does the program collaborate with victim advocates?

The program should have victim safety as its primary goal. It should also have a strong working relationship with a community-based survivor service organization and/or advocates and have protocols governing contact and victim safety.

6. Does the program have a contract the participant must sign?

The program should share its contract with the court to allow the judge and court staff to understand expectations and collaborate on improving compliance.

7. Does the program assess for risk of lethality and/or conduct more generalized risk assessments?

Programs may conduct a validated lethality assessment or ask detailed questions regarding the risk of lethality during the intake process. The program should share its intake form and any risk tools with the court to ensure the court understands what information the program has about the defendant. Risk assessments may be

conducted throughout the duration of the program to ensure accurate assessment. Research shows that programs that respond to risk and needs are more effective in reducing recidivism.

8. Does the program meet regularly with other criminal justice stakeholders?

The program should be part of a community's domestic violence taskforce if it exists and/or meet regularly with referring agencies and survivor services. The program should also work closely with other programs to which their clients may be referred, such as those addressing mental health or substance use. Research shows that programs that work collaboratively with criminal justice stakeholders reduce recidivism.

9. Does the program allow observations?

Programs should allow community members, court staff, and other stakeholders to observe the program to better understand the curriculum and the nature of the interactions between facilitators and defendants. Currently, most programs encourage such visits.

10. What kind of compliance information can the program share?

Most programs gather data about participants and compliance. The program should be willing to send regular compliance reports to the judge or court staff. Some programs have the capacity to send staff to compliance hearings. Information on compliance should be shared with courts in a timely fashion.

The Center for Court Innovation and the Battered Women's Justice Project's Technical Assistance

With support from the Office on Violence Against Women, the Center and the Battered Women's Justice Project provide a variety of technical assistance services, including:

- Assistance building successful, multi-disciplinary planning teams.
 - Intensive, on-site work with individual domestic violence courts in all stages of planning and implementation.
 - Practitioner-to-practitioner guidance, in which staff from the Center and the Battered Women's Justice Project draw on their extensive experience to help jurisdictions learn from each other.
- Site visits to domestic violence courts and enhanced criminal justice projects (including Office on Violence Against Women-designated mentor courts).
 - Guidance with creating strong judicial compliance reviews, promoting victim safety, and developing effective partnerships with other agencies.
 - Model documents, assessment and evaluation tools, and publications of special interest to a domestic violence court audience both nationally and internationally.

In partnership with other Office on Violence Against Women Training and Technical Assistance providers, the Center and the Battered Women's Justice Project have worked with several jurisdictions to increase collaboration between courts and programs for abusive partners. To learn more about how courts and stakeholders can collaborate with these programs to increase offender accountability and victim safety, please contact the Battered Women's Justice Project at technicalassistance@bwjp.org, or Rebecca Thomforde Hauser at the Center for Court Innovation at thomforr@courtinnovation.org.

Partnering with Survivors¹

Partnering with survivors is one of the core principles of the [Safe & Together Model](#), and [Oregon Child Welfare Practices for Cases with Domestic Violence](#). It is not CW and the survivor against the abusive partner. The partnership with the survivor is built on a comprehensive assessment of the survivors' protective capacities and centers their lived experiences. This guide focuses on the [six steps](#) to partnership that are the [responsibility of the professional](#), and when followed, are more likely to create an environment where survivor voice and choice is empowered and planning collaboratively leads to safer outcomes.

Partnering in Six Steps

Step 1: Affirm

Survivors need to know that CW does not blame them (the survivor) for the domestic violence and recognizes that the abusive partner is responsible for the harm caused to the children, to the survivor and to the family functioning by their actions, behaviors, and parenting choice to use power & control.

Step 2: Ask

The survivor is the expert in their personal safety, what strategies have worked in the past and those that have not. Your first questions should be an opportunity for the survivor to describe their experiences, the pattern of domestic violence, and the specific tactics used. Defensiveness can be expected if you begin conversations by first asking about what the survivor did or didn't do in response to the domestic violence, like *"Did you call the police?"* or *"Why didn't you...."* Asking *"Why"* questions can imply judgement.

Focus on asking open-ended questions, such as *"Tell me what the abusive partner's parenting is like;"* or *"Tell me how (the abusive partner) treats you and the kids;"* or *"Tell me how their (the abusive partner) behaviors affects the kids."* Open-ended questions empower the survivor to share their experiences in their own words.

¹ Adapted from Safe & Together Material

Step 3: Assess

A comprehensive assessment makes clear all the ways the survivor has kept themselves safe and protected the children, their full spectrum of efforts to protect, in response to the domestic violence. This comprehensive assessment includes looking for strengths and highlighting protective capacities that may be overlooked, or undervalued, due to gender bias and double standards about the role of a specific parent. In order to assess the survivor's protective capacities, you must complete the first two steps. The survivor's decision-making and protective capacities are in response to the domestic violence, not separate from it.

Step 4. Validate

Let the survivor know that you recognize their continued efforts to provide for the safety of the children within the context of their unique situation. Validation should be connected back to their specific protective capacities and efforts in the context of the domestic violence.

Step 5. Collaborative Planning

The first four steps create the foundation for you to bring your skills, knowledge and expertise to collaborative planning. Collaborative planning centers the safety needs of the child and adult survivor of the domestic violence, responds to the stated needs and desires of the survivor, and shares/offers the worker's knowledge, expertise and access to resources, such as referral to a confidential advocate.

Sep 6. Documentation

Accurate, detailed, written documentation clarifies the abusive partner's pattern of tactics; identifies the [multiple pathways to harm](#) created by the abusive partner's behaviors; and does not mutualize the domestic violence or lump the abusive partner and survivor together.

Optimum documentation also highlights the survivors' strengths and protective capacities; connects decisions and planning to the child safety risk created by the abusive partner's behaviors and parenting choices; and meets any confidentiality requirements. Utilize the [ODHS-DV and the 6 Domains tool](#) and the [Documentation of DV guide](#) for additional best practices.



Safety • Stability • Well Being

Checklist to Promote Perpetrator Accountability in Dependency Cases Involving Domestic Violence

INTRODUCTION

Judges need information and tools to both guide them in holding perpetrators of domestic violence accountable for their abusive behavior and to ensure that efforts to reach perpetrators¹ do not cause unintended consequences or further harm to victims of domestic violence and their children. This *Checklist to Promote Perpetrator Accountability in Dependency Cases Involving Domestic Violence* (*Accountability Checklist*) will help dependency judges intervene with those who use violence in ways that promote accountability and maximize the safety and well-being of children and victim parents. It provides a framework to help the court leverage its authority to hold perpetrators accountable, provide appropriate services, and improve judicial decision-making.

This *Accountability Checklist* complements the *Reasonable Efforts Checklist for Dependency Cases Involving Domestic Violence*² (*Reasonable Efforts Checklist*) by providing specialized information to hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable in child protection cases. Much of the narrative accompanying the *Reasonable Efforts Checklist* is also applicable to this *Accountability Checklist*.

This *Accountability Checklist* will help judges:

- Gather information needed to enhance decision-making on accountability issues;
- Assess the risk posed by perpetrators to lessen perpetrator-generated safety threats to children and victim parents;
- Review and tailor service plans to hold perpetrators accountable in ways that promote safety and compliance with orders;
- Evaluate treatment options to enhance perpetrators' capacity to change;
- Strengthen judicial decision-making about placement and visitation of children to increase the safety of children and victim parents; and

- Craft judicial policies and practices that promote the accountability of perpetrators and the safety of victim parents and children.

DEFINITIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

For purposes of this tool, we define domestic violence as a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that operate at a variety of levels – physical, psychological, emotional, financial, or sexual – that one parent uses against the other parent. The pattern of behaviors is neither impulsive nor “out of control,” but is purposeful and instrumental in order to gain compliance or control. It can include assault, destruction of property, isolation, and acts or threats of abuse against the victim parent, children, and pets. Abuse is likely to increase at the time of separation.

Perpetrators often use court proceedings or threats of court proceedings and non-compliance with court orders to continue control over the victim parent and children. If courts focus exclusively on the legal definitions of domestic violence (usually assault and violation of protection orders) the underlying pattern of abusive behavior may not be apparent. Understanding the underlying pattern of fear, control, intimidation, and psychological abuse is essential to understanding the impact of domestic violence on victim parents and children. These same patterns of coercive control are often evident in the perpetrator's behaviors with child protection and supervised visitation personnel.

Major sources used to compile the information contained in this *Accountability Checklist* include: Lundy Bancroft, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, *The Batterer as Parent*, 6 SYNERGY (Winter 2002); Lundy Bancroft & Jay Silverman, *ASSESSING RISK TO CHILDREN FROM BATTERERS* (2002); Leigh Goodmark, *Achieving Batterer Accountability in the Child Protection System*, 93 KY. L.J. 613 (2004); Leigh Goodmark, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, *REASONABLE EFFORTS CHECKLIST FOR DEPENDENCY CASES INVOLVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE* (2009); Margaret Hobart, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *BATTERER ACCOUNTABILITY: RESPONDING TO CHILD MALTREATMENT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE* (2008); Peter Jaffe, Claire Crooks & Francis Wong, *Parenting Arrangements After Domestic Violence*, 6 J. CTR. FAM. CHILDREN & CTS. (2005); Fernando Mederos, Family Violence Prevention Fund, *ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONNECTION WITH ABUSIVE MEN* (2004).

¹ Statistically, the mother is at far greater risk of being abused by the child's father than he is by her. See BUREAU JUST. STAT., U.S. DEP'T JUST., *FAMILY VIOLENCE STATISTICS ON STRANGERS AND ACQUAINTANCES* 1 (2005), available at <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=828> (finding that females were 84 percent of spouse abuse victims, 86 percent of victims of abuse by a boyfriend or girlfriend, and 58 percent of family murder victims). For the purposes of this publication, victims of domestic violence will be referred to as female, perpetrators as male.

² Available online at <http://www.ncjfcj.org>.

GATHERING INFORMATION

☐ Did the child protection agency (agency) gather information about the perpetrator and his violence from the following sources?

- ✓ The perpetrator
- ✓ The perpetrator's
 - Medical records
 - Substance abuse records
 - Criminal records
 - Probation and parole officers
 - Treatment providers
- ✓ Past partners of the perpetrator
- ✓ Court records
- ✓ Police reports, including previous domestic violence calls and arrest reports
- ✓ Agency reports and reports of child abuse
- ✓ School records and personnel
- ✓ Witnesses to relevant events, including the pattern of coercive control
- ✓ Affidavits in past court cases
- ✓ Victim parent(s)³
- ✓ Children⁴

☐ Did the agency:

- ✓ Thoroughly document findings of abuse of the children and victim parent, including the ongoing pattern of control?
- ✓ Provide language in its report that affirms the perpetrator's role in harming the children and avoids blaming the victim parent?
- ✓ Provide timely and complete documentation of the perpetrator's compliance or lack thereof to the case plan?

ASSESSMENT

Failure to identify domestic violence does not mean that it does not exist. Assessments are snapshots in time. As such, they should be fluid and ongoing to provide a more complete picture. The agency should not rely on one individual assessment, but instead should conduct a series of assessments.

Dangerousness varies widely and may increase or decrease over time. Lack of a criminal record or police involvement does not mean the perpetrator is not dangerous. Continued anger or externalizing of responsibility tends to point to a return to violence. Lack of compliance with the service and treatment plans is an indication of continued or heightened dangerousness. The level of dangerousness decreases only when the perpetrator is compliant and changes behavior.

If the agency or the court finds that a perpetrator is dangerous, all persons and networks in the system working with the family, including the victim parent and treatment providers, must be notified. Treatment

³ It is never appropriate to pressure or threaten children or victim parents to provide information about the perpetrator or his violence.

⁴ *Id.*

providers should be aware of the indicators of dangerousness.

☐ Did the agency screen the family for domestic violence when the case was first opened and at other appropriate intervals?

☐ Is the perpetrator dangerous?⁵

- ✓ Does he blame someone other than himself for his violence?
- ✓ Does he minimize his violence?
- ✓ Does he use or threaten to use a weapon?
- ✓ Does he own a firearm?
- ✓ Does he use drugs or alcohol?
- ✓ Does he ever threaten or try to commit suicide?
- ✓ Does he threaten to harm the victim's children?
- ✓ Does he engage in stalking behavior?
- ✓ Has he ever strangled the victim?
- ✓ Is he excessively jealous of his victims?

☐ Did the agency assess the perpetrator for strengths? This may include:

- ✓ Identifying relatives or individuals in the perpetrator's life who can provide meaningful support and accountability to change the perpetrator's behaviors and attitudes.
- ✓ Determining how to engage the perpetrator's family and community to support his use of non-violence.
- ✓ Inquiring as to factors that may motivate the perpetrator to change.
- ✓ Determining the ways the perpetrator cares for the children.
- ✓ Consulting with the victim parent so the agency may determine what might motivate the perpetrator to change behaviors and what might hold him accountable.

Part of the accountability process for perpetrators includes establishing responsible parenting consistent with safety for the victim parent and children.

☐ Has the agency assessed the perpetrator for fatherhood capacity?

- ✓ What is his attachment to the children?
- ✓ How does he believe the children are affected by his violence?
- ✓ What fears does he have about the children's future?
- ✓ How do the children figure into his decision-making?
- ✓ Has the agency allocated resources to the perpetrator to help him become a better parent?

⁵ Jacquelyn C. Campbell, DANGER ASSESSMENT, Johns Hopkins University, School of Nursing, available at <http://www.dangerassessment.org>.

Research indicates that the most effective way to protect children is to keep their mothers safe. Ensuring the safety of the victim parent requires promoting change in and holding the perpetrator accountable. Change is not synonymous with attending or completing a batterer intervention program (BIP). The key to change is stopping old behaviors and replacing them with respectful new ways of interacting with victim parents and children. Child protection personnel should document and report the perpetrator's controlling and abusive behaviors toward victim parents and children as these behaviors are important indicators of whether change is occurring in the perpetrator.

❑ Can the perpetrator change?

- ✓ Has he stopped the violence?
- ✓ What steps has he taken to establish and maintain a non-abusive pattern of behavior?
- ✓ What methods has he used to respond to conflict and disagreement in a reasonable way?
- ✓ What has he done to demonstrate that he can maintain appropriate and respectful parenting?
- ✓ In what way has he acknowledged the impact of his violence?
- ✓ If the parents are separated, how has the perpetrator demonstrated that he can co-parent without abuse and intimidation?

❑ Has the perpetrator demonstrated that he is serious about changing? For example, did he:

- ✓ Fully comply with the court's orders?
- ✓ Demonstrate improvement in behavior with victim parents, children, and agency staff?
- ✓ Disclose the history of abuse against the victim parent?
- ✓ Recognize that his behavior is unacceptable and make unqualified statements that his behavior was wrong?
- ✓ Recognize the behavior as an intentional choice?
- ✓ Show empathy for the effects of the actions on the victim parent and children?
- ✓ Identify in detail the destructive impact the abuse has had without shifting back to his own emotional injuries, grievances, or excuses?
- ✓ Identify the pattern of controlling behavior and attitudes by naming specific forms of abuse and beliefs that drove his behavior?
- ✓ Replace abuse with respectful behaviors and attitudes?
- ✓ Show willingness to make amends in a meaningful way?
- ✓ Accept the consequences of his own actions?

❑ Are there ongoing assessments regarding substance abuse or mental health issues?

If yes, see the Treatment section of this Accountability Checklist.

SERVICE PLANS

❑ Are the service plans generally appropriate?

- ✓ Does each party, the perpetrator, the victim parent, and the children have their own service plan?
- ✓ Does each item in the plan have a positive effect on the safety of the victim parent and children?
- ✓ Does the service plan for the victim parent avoid provisions or directives that only the perpetrator can be responsible for or held accountable for ensuring?
- ✓ Are the requirements in the plan for the perpetrator available and accessible to the perpetrator?
 - Is the service offered locally?
 - Does the perpetrator have available transportation?
 - Is the service offered in the appropriate language?
 - Is the service culturally appropriate?
- ✓ Are the requirements based on and tied to specific needs?
- ✓ Are the services provided by those knowledgeable about domestic violence?
- ✓ Are the requirements in the plan based upon a careful and accurate assessment of the domestic violence in the home and the impact of the violence on the victim parent and children?

❑ Does the perpetrator's plan consider:

- ✓ The meaning and impact of his exposing the children to the abuse of the victim parent?
- ✓ The degree to which the perpetrator has used the children as instruments of abuse?
- ✓ The extent to which court proceedings are being used by the perpetrator to extend his power and control?
- ✓ The safety risk he poses to the victim parent and children?
- ✓ The willingness and ability of the perpetrator to change?
- ✓ Overlapping forms of maltreatment (domestic violence and child physical and sexual abuse)?
- ✓ The ability of the agency and the court to monitor safety and compliance?
- ✓ How visitation can be done safely?

❑ Does the perpetrator's plan include:

- ✓ Attendance in a BIP?
- ✓ Supervised visitation center services or supervised visitation?
- ✓ Substance abuse or mental health services?
- ✓ Random drug/alcohol testing?

SERVICE PLANS (cont.)

- ✓ Fatherhood classes that include information on the impact of the perpetrator's actions on the children?
- ✓ Probation/parole contacts and compliance?
- ✓ Housing services? Transportation?
- ✓ Employment and training services?
- ✓ Compliance with court orders, including those in other proceedings?
- ✓ Restraint on all physical, psychological, and emotional abuse and intimidation of the victim parent, children, and caseworkers?
- ✓ Requirements that the perpetrator support and facilitate the victim parent's and children's access to treatment and compliance with their plans?
- ✓ Removal of all weapons from his possession and control?
- ✓ Confidential waivers and permission to obtain available information?
- ✓ Educational classes on how violence affects children, and steps to remedy the effects and heal the relationships with the children?
- ✓ Child support, if the children are not living with him?

TREATMENT

Psychotherapy, anger management, and mental health or substance abuse treatments are not acceptable substitutes for a BIP. Family or couples therapy are demonstrated to be ineffective and may jeopardize the safety of the victim parent. The goal of anger management is to reduce emotional feelings and the physiological arousal that anger causes; it does not address the underlying pattern of coercive control present in domestic violence. In some cases, substance abuse or mental health treatment may be appropriate if completed concurrently with a BIP.⁶

Communication between service providers is essential to keep the victim parent and children safe and to hold the perpetrator accountable. The domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health treatment providers need to provide information to the court on the severity of the problems and whether they preclude treatment.

BIPs should focus on interrupting, avoiding, and ending violence and abuse and on the batterer's capacity to change. In jurisdictions where BIPs are not available, caution should be taken to ensure alternative treatments, such as individual counseling, account for and are provided by professionals trained in domestic violence.

☐ Does the BIP (or alternative treatment if unavailable):

- ✓ Concentrate on behavior changes?

- Work to stop violent and abusive behaviors?
- Teach positive alternative skills for non-abusive and responsible relationships?
- ✓ Hold the perpetrator accountable for changing behavior?
- ✓ Assess the need for concurrent substance abuse or mental health treatment?
- ✓ Terminate services for failure to comply or continued use of violence?
- ✓ Have confidential and safety-oriented contacts with victims?
- ✓ Address the impact of the perpetrator's violence on the children and victim parent?

☐ If assessments found either substance abuse or mental health issues:

- ✓ Does the treatment program for substance abuse or mental health issues take into account the perpetrator's use of violence?
- ✓ Is the perpetrator excused from the BIP only when the substance abuse is severe and current? For example, if the perpetrator must be taken to a detoxification program and then to substance abuse treatment, is he being required to start a BIP within one to two months after he has established sobriety?
- ✓ Is the perpetrator being assigned to the BIP to assess whether he can successfully participate in the BIP treatment when there are indications of his ability to function despite his mental health issues?

PLACEMENT AND VISITATION

If the court finds that a parent is a perpetrator of domestic violence, ordering supervised visitation or no contact with the perpetrator should be considered. Visitation should not be allowed if the perpetrator has not acknowledged responsibility for his past harm to the children and for the children's future safety or if the violence continues. There must be some certainty that the children and victim parent will be safe from further exposure to violence. Restrictions on visits, including making them supervised or stopping them altogether, should be considered if the perpetrator fails to comply with his requirements. These may be eased if the interventions are proving successful, the perpetrator's behaviors are changing, and safety permits. If the perpetrator is habitually non-compliant, the court should consider terminating the perpetrator's parental rights if allowed under local law.

If unsupervised visits are deemed safe, relatively short visits (generally not overnight) should be used until observable change has occurred. This reduces the perpetrator's ability to damage the relationship between the children and victim parent; limits the perpetrator's negative influence on the children's behavior and value system; and enhances the

⁶ For a sample batterer intervention program model protocol please refer to Georgia's Model Protocol for Batterer's Classes available at http://www.biscmi.org/other_resources/docs/georgia.html.

PLACEMENT AND VISITATION (cont.)

children's feelings of safety and security while still allowing the children to feel connected to the perpetrator.

❑ Will the children be safe if placed with or allowed unsupervised visits with the perpetrator or his family?

- ✓ What was the level of the perpetrator's violence in the home?
- ✓ To what degree did the perpetrator expose the children to his violence? Were they involved, either directly or indirectly?
- ✓ What is the capacity of the perpetrator to care for the children appropriately?
- ✓ How does the perpetrator understand parenting?
- ✓ Were the children physically or sexually abused by the perpetrator?
- ✓ Are the children still at high risk of harm by having contact with the perpetrator?
- ✓ Does the perpetrator use the children as weapons against the victim parent?
- ✓ Does the perpetrator neglect the children?
- ✓ Does the perpetrator undermine the victim parent's parenting?
- ✓ Has the perpetrator's family been assessed for domestic violence?

❑ Can the perpetrator provide:

- ✓ A sense of physical and emotional safety in the children's current surroundings?
- ✓ Structure, limits, and predictability for the children?
- ✓ An environment that allows for and promotes a strong bond between the children and victim parent and between siblings?
- ✓ A sense that the children are not responsible for the violence?
- ✓ Developmentally appropriate care-taking that meets the children's physiological needs, social needs, esteem, and well-being?

❑ If the children were removed from the home:

- ✓ Must the children remain out of the victim parent's care to remain safe?
- ✓ Is the perpetrator still in the family home?
- ✓ Does the perpetrator's current abuse preclude the victim parent from protecting the children from further harm, either alone or with the help of services?
- ✓ Are the perpetrator's actions coloring the agency's assessment of the victim parent's ability to care for the children?
- ✓ Has a restraining order been considered to remove the perpetrator 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?

- ✓ Can the children safely return home if financial help, housing assistance, food assistance, transportation, child care, counseling, and access to legal services are immediately provided to the victim parent?
- ✓ What clear guidelines, controls, and appropriate interventions have been established for the perpetrator in cases where supervised visitation is granted?
- ✓ Will the victim parent and children be safe if visits occur in a supervised visitation center?
- ✓ Will the victim parent and children be safe if the supervision is done by a third party rather than a supervised visitation center?
- ✓ How will the court determine if current visitation arrangements are causing harm to the children or victim parent?
- ✓ How will the court determine if current visitation arrangements are causing harm to the relationship between the victim parent and children or between siblings?
- ✓ How will the court determine if current visitation arrangements are causing setbacks in the emotional healing of the children?
- ✓ How will the court monitor the visitation?

JUDICIAL PROCESS

Judges play a leadership role in ensuring that the court sends a consistent message that domestic violence will not be tolerated. This can be accomplished by implementing processes and practices that are culturally appropriate, account for perpetrator manipulation, and monitor compliance. Judges should not allow proceedings to become a manipulative tool for the perpetrator.

Courts should share information with other courts and utilize review hearings to promote accountability. If there are concurrent court proceedings, the court must ensure that the orders do not conflict. If the perpetrator is non-compliant, he should be confronted since non-compliance lowers the likelihood of his achieving non-violence. The non-compliance must also be taken into account in safety planning for the victim parent and children.

❑ Is the court sending a consistent message that there is zero tolerance for domestic violence?

- ✓ Is the focus on the safety of the victim parent and children?
- ✓ Is there a focus on the perpetrator's behavior?
- ✓ Is the court sending the message that the abusive behavior is that of the perpetrator, not the victim?
- ✓ Is there recognition that safety planning for the victim parent and children is an integral part of perpetrator accountability?
- ✓ Has the agency attempted to find and work with the perpetrator?

JUDICIAL PROCESS (cont.)

- ✓ Has the perpetrator been brought before the court?
 - ✓ Is the agency working directly with the perpetrator and not through the victim parent or children?
 - ✓ Are the lawyers appearing in court aware of and giving consideration to the growing body of knowledge on domestic violence?
 - ✓ Is the responsibility for changing the abusive and violent behaviors being placed on the perpetrator and not on the victim parent and children?
 - ✓ Does the judicial process enhance the safety of the victim parent, the children, the agency workers, and all service providers?
- ❑ **Does the process allow the perpetrator to receive the services and opportunities needed to move from perpetrator to safe and stable parent and partner in culturally appropriate ways?**
- ✓ Does the perpetrator experience respectful treatment in court?
 - ✓ Does the perpetrator understand the process?
 - Have the orders, including restraining and no-contact orders, been explained in detail?
 - ✓ Does the perpetrator have the capacity to follow court orders and the ability to pay for services when so ordered?
 - ✓ Were court sessions and agency services offered in the perpetrator's primary language?
 - ✓ Is the focus on the behaviors, attitudes, and responsibilities of the perpetrator rather than on shaming or blaming?
 - ✓ Is the perpetrator given an opportunity to demonstrate a capacity to change and rebuild his relationship with the children?
 - ✓ Is the perpetrator prevented from trying to use culture as an excuse for the abusive behaviors?
 - ✓ Is there an understanding of both the positive and negative aspects of the culture, including the perpetrator's positive traditions and positive role models of fatherhood?
- ❑ **If the victim parent is not in compliance:**
- ✓ Was the violation in response to the perpetrator implicitly or explicitly threatening the victim parent or children?
 - ✓ Has there been an incident that made the victim parent or children feel unsafe?
 - ✓ Was the violation an attempt to protect the victim parent, the children, or a third party?
 - ✓ Was the violation an inappropriate response to the perpetrator's non-compliance?
 - ✓ Is it necessary to revise the order to protect the victim parent or children?
 - ✓ Has the court considered the violent context in which the victim parent must make decisions?
- ❑ **Are review hearings being held often and regularly?**
- ✓ Is the order still adequate?
 - ✓ If the victim parent and children are not safe, was the order modified?
 - ✓ Have there been changes in the family structure? Has the perpetrator moved out?
 - ✓ Are there newly discovered needs that must be addressed?
 - ✓ Is there monitoring and consequences for non-compliance?
 - ✓ Are there consequences for each act of violence, each incident of non-cooperation with treatment providers, and each violation of the order?
 - ✓ Are community service obligations imposed for non-compliance?
 - ✓ Is the perpetrator being held in contempt, including incarceration if appropriate?

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Reframing Strategies

Common Worker Issues or Bias in Cases Involving DV	Indicator of a Worker Issue or Bias	Reframing Questions and Statements
Assuming indicators of domestic violence will only be physical violence or signs of physical violence.	<i>"I checked the criminal history and there are no reports of domestic violence."</i> <i>"I screened for domestic violence. She said he/she/they never hit her before."</i>	• What did you learn in your interviews about non-violent ways the abusive partner exercises coercive control? • How did the survivor respond to your questions about emotional abuse, control over finance, etc.? • What did you learn about the survivor's ability to see friends, go to work, or school, have contact with their family? • Does the abusive partner interfere with the survivor's parenting and ability to meet the children's basic needs?
Focusing only on the incident versus the larger pattern of domestic violence.	<i>"They said this had never happened before."</i> <i>"I met with the children afterwards and they didn't have any marks and seem to be fine."</i> <i>"The kids didn't make any disclosure of</i>	• Did you see a history of violence, threats, emotional abuse, control over finances? • What is the abusive partner saying to the children about why they were arrested and are out of the house? • Will the children's lives be destabilized if their parent is arrested or out of the house? • Tell me about the abusive partner's history of respecting court orders or the survivor's wishes. • Do we have any information on how the abusive partner would respond or has responded when the survivor sets boundaries?

	<i>physical violence in the home.”</i>	• What do we know about the pressure the abusive partner is using on the survivor?
Assuming, if the survivor is still with the abusive partner, that they are either choosing the abusive partner over the children or the survivor doesn’t understand the domestic violence.	<i>“She let the abusive partner back in the home.”</i> <i>“She is picking the abusive partner over the children.”</i> <i>“You know he/she/they have a history of domestic violence relationships. I don’t think she gets it.”</i>	• What was the abusive partner’s role in getting back into the house or relationship? • What does the survivor say about other abusive relationships? • What do we know about the survivor’s efforts, in any of their relationships, to be protective? • How has the survivor resisted the domination of their current partner? • Do we know what the abusive partner might do if the survivor didn’t let them back in the house? • Why do you think it is better for the survivor and the children for the abusive partner to be out of the home? Survivors are stalked for an average of two years after separating. • What cultural considerations should we be acknowledging i.e. religious, familial, or spiritual?
Assuming, because the abusive partner is no longer in the home, that they are no longer a safety threat to the children.	<i>“The Court ordered the abusive partner out of the house.”</i> <i>“The abusive partner is in jail so there is no safety threat.”</i> <i>“The survivor said they are going to file for a restraining order and has plans to move.”</i>	• What contact is the abusive partner having with the children? • What do we know about what the abusive partner has done to undermine the survivor’s parenting or authority with the children? • Do we know what contact the abusive partner is having with the survivor? • Do we know if the abusive partner is stalking, i.e., following the survivor, showing up at their work, leaving notes or “gifts,” asking friends or family to contact the survivor? • Do you think the children or survivor worry about the abusive partner coming back? • What worries the survivor about the abusive partner’s response to the divorce or separation?

		• How does the abuser talk to the children during visits about the divorce or separation or arrest? • What connection does the survivor have with family, community, or culture to support them?
Thinking that if the children weren't physically present at the time of an incident that was physically violent that there was automatically no impact on the children.	<i>"The children didn't see anything."</i> <i>"The children were asleep and anyway they are too young to be really negatively impacted by what happened."</i>	• Have there been any disturbances in the children's mood, eating, sleeping, toilet training? • What time of day did this incident happen? • Did it mess up any part of the children's routine? • How have the children responded to their parent being arrested or police at their home? • Were there signs of disturbance that affected children, i.e., holes in walls, broken things, visible bruises or other injuries, trips to the emergency room or doctor, etc.?
Ignoring the strengths of the survivor in homes where there is domestic violence due to gender role bias.	<i>"She didn't call the police."</i> <i>"She isn't going to get a restraining order."</i>	• How does the survivor calm the abusive partner and keep them away from the children? • What have you learned about how the survivor keeps the kids on track despite the violence? • When the abusive partner is being abusive who is making sure the kids are fed, clothed, getting to bed on time, getting to school, going to the doctor? • Who does the abusive partner rely on for support when they are stressed or overwhelmed?

Marginalizing the importance of the abusive partner to the children and the survivor.	<i>"She should just leave him."</i> <i>"He's no good for those kids."</i> <i>"The kids should never have visits with the abusive partner."</i>	• What do the children say about their parent who is the abusive partner? • What does the survivor think about the abusive partner's parenting? • What are the survivor's hopes for the relationship? • Can the survivor ensure stability for the children without the income or support of the abusive partner? • What are the cultural considerations we know about i.e. religious, familial, or spiritual? • What is the response of the survivor's family to the violence or separation? • How would the survivor's culture/church/support system respond to a separation or divorce? • What process helped you attend to your own bias when working with this family?
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Threat of Harm Considerations

Definitions from Rule

413-015-0115

"**Harm**" means any kind of impairment, damage, detriment, or injury to an alleged victim's physical, sexual, psychological, cognitive, or behavioral development or functioning. "Harm" is the result of abuse and may vary from mild to severe.

"**Severe harm**" as defined in ORS 419B.150 means:

- (a) Life-threatening damage; or
- (b) Significant or acute injury to a person's physical, sexual, or psychological functioning.

Physical functioning includes aspects of strength, mobility, freedom of movement, balance, and coordination. The ability to function without limitations in the course of daily life.¹

Cognitive functioning refers to thinking, memory, language, judgment, and the ability to learn new things.²

413-015-1015

Threat of harm includes all activities, conditions, and circumstances that place the child at threat of *severe harm* of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, mental injury, or other child abuse.

Considerations

1. **Rule out other abuse types.** Consider carefully whether the harm has occurred or whether it is threatening to occur. If the harm has actually occurred, a different abuse type may be more appropriate. For example, if the alleged perpetrator has actually caused injuries to the child, then you wouldn't say the harm could happen because it already has.
2. **No descriptors necessary.** Descriptors are not written in statute or rule and are no longer being utilized except as a mandatory field in OR-Kids. Threat of harm is threat of harm. When you are assessing *any* report, you are assessing for all abuse types and any activity, condition, or circumstance that could or have caused a child harm. The abuse type selected at screening is what got the report assigned... your assessment is looking at all the information you gather comprehensively. For example, if there is reason to believe the sibling of an identified victim of sexual abuse is in threat of harm, you are not just looking at whether that sibling is in threat of being sexually abused, you are looking at any activity, condition, or circumstance threatening to harm that child.
3. **Safety threat vs threat of harm.** Be careful not to confuse the presence or absence of a safety threat with the disposition of threat of harm. When writing the safety threshold

¹ <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhanes3/manuals/physical.pdf>

² <https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/cognitive-testing/>

criteria, you are determining whether the child is safe or unsafe at the conclusion of the assessment. When writing a disposition, you are determining whether the threat of harm *ever* existed and making the decision of founded, unfounded, or unable to be determined. The safety decision and disposition do not have to match because they are addressing different issues. For example:

- A child was placed in threat of severe harm because of parent A's out of control substance use disorder. At the conclusion of the assessment, non-offending parent B obtained custody of the child, the safety threat was no longer active, and the child was determined to be safe. The disposition can still be founded for threat of harm against parent A because the child was, *at one point*, likely to be severely harmed while in their care.
 - A report was assigned with allegations of TOH to a child because parent B has been exerting power and control over parent A and was recently arrested for assaulting parent A. For your disposition, you must determine whether parent B's behavior ever placed the child in TOH. At the conclusion of the assessment you must determine whether parent B's behavior continues to cause impending danger by using the safety threshold criteria (observable, severe, vulnerability, imminence, and out-of-control).
4. **TOH and prenatal activities.** When a parent's behavior prior to the birth of their child creates a threat to the newborn, a TOH allegation may be assigned (for example, a child tests positive for harmful substances at birth, or a parent has significant mental health struggles). Although we must carefully consider what happened prior to the birth, our disposition must be based on the threat present after the child is born. Things to consider: How long that behavior has been impacting the parent's functioning? Is the behavior likely to continue? What is the impact of that behavior on parenting? How could the child be severely harmed? A report of neglect may be assigned for concerns about parenting that occur after a child is born.
 5. **Proximal threats.** Sometimes a TOH allegation is assigned when there is a report of abuse to one sibling and there is a threat of harm to the other siblings. For example, one sibling may disclose sexual abuse by a parent and TOH is assigned for the other siblings. While it is important to determine whether any child was sexually abused, each child must be individually assessed to determine whether there is any activity, condition, or circumstance occurring that is likely to place them in any TOH... and not just in threat of harm of being sexually abused.
 6. **Access.** Access must be determined in relation to the past, present, and future. When considering whether there is a TOH, you must consider whether the alleged perpetrator has had, is having, or will have contact with the child, what the contact looked, looks, or will look like, and how that threatening behavior is or is not active during that time.