



DV and Child Welfare: Optimal Practices for Engaging Families Experiencing DV

Sarah Greenwood, DV Intervention Coordinator
Child Safety Program – Oregon Dept. of Human Services
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The image features a red background with two circular video frames. The left frame shows a woman with long dark hair wearing a black top, looking slightly to the right. The right frame shows a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light pink top, looking to the left. A black banner with white text is centered across the middle of the two frames.

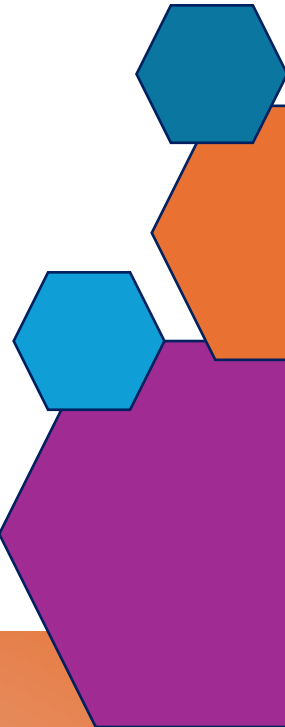
4 MYTHS IN 4 MINUTES:
Domestic Violence

aware

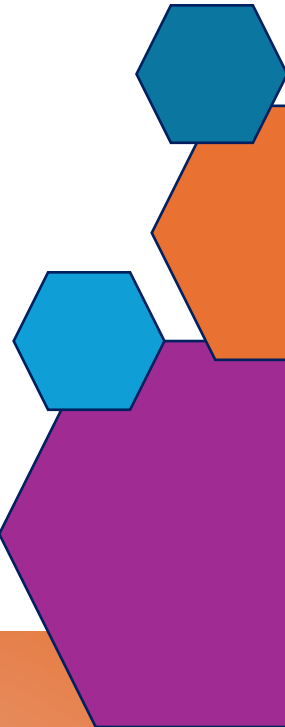
Definition of Domestic Violence

“A pattern of coercive behavior, which can include physical, sexual, economic and emotional abuse, that an individual uses against a past or current intimate partner to gain power and control in a relationship.”

[OAR 413-015-0115](#)

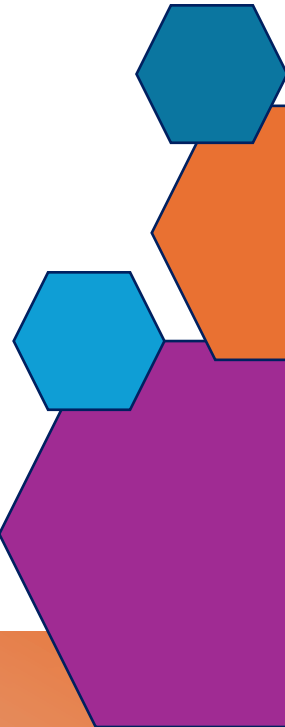


True or False



True or False

The presence of domestic violence DOES NOT automatically create a safety threat to children.





Safe & Together Model

Perpetrator pattern-based approach.

Abusive partner is the source of danger.

Frames domestic violence as a parenting choice.

Multiple pathways to harm concept.

Aligns with the OSM and Vision for Transformation.



Safe & 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

Safe & Together Principle 1

Keeping child safe and together with non-offending parent.

- Safety.
- Healing from trauma.
- Safety and nurturance.

Safe & Together Principle 2

Partnering with the non-offending parent as default position.

- Efficient.
- Effective.
- Child-centered.

Partnering with Survivors

- Default position of the agency.
- Not CW and survivor against abusive partner.
- Survivors are the experts in their personal safety.
- Not dependent on disclosing any domestic violence.
- Hindered by victim blaming.



Victim Blaming

“... someone saying, implying, or treating a person who has experienced harmful or abusive behavior like it was the result of something they did or said, instead of placing responsibility where it belongs: on the person who harmed them.”

Bias and Domestic Violence

Victim Blaming

- Why didn't you just leave?
- Why didn't you call the cops?
- Why did you go back?

Bias and Domestic Violence cont.

Likability

- I'm not going to work any harder than my client does.

Questioning Credibility

- He has injuries, but she doesn't.
- The story keeps changing.

No Longer Mandating DV Services

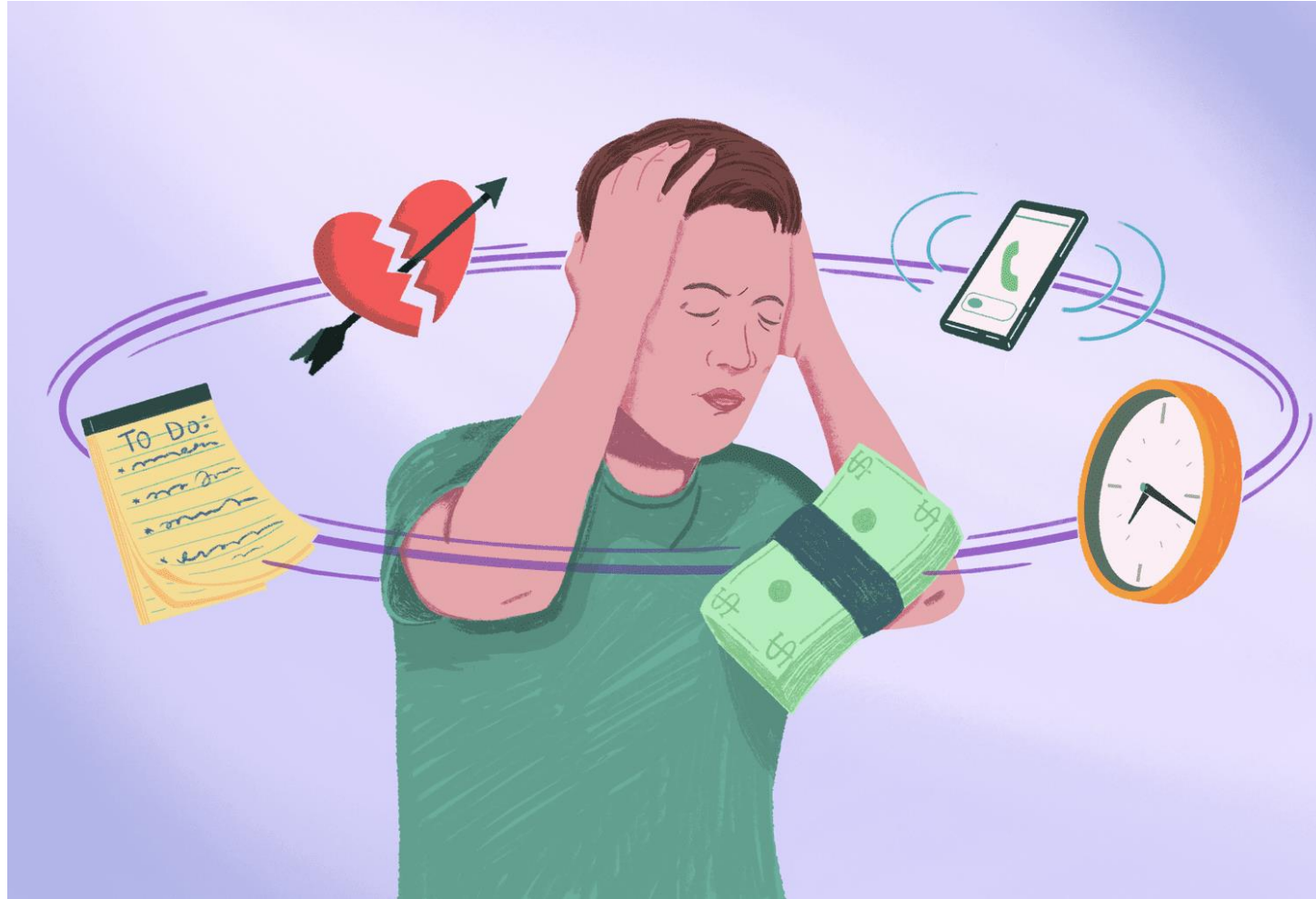
The agency has stopped routinely asking the Dependency Court to order a survivor to engage in “DV services,” including but not limited to:

- Attending DV education classes.
- Participating in survivor support groups.
- Working with a confidential co-located advocate.
- Signing Releases of Information to gather information from the confidential advocate, like attendance, records, etc.

Does Not Mean

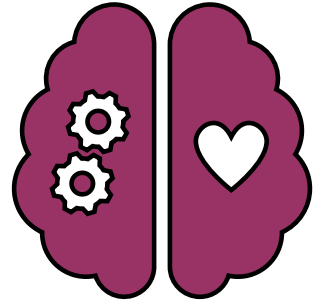
- The agency will stop asking the Court to order a survivor to engage in any services at all.
- The agency will stop offering services to a survivor.
- The agency will never remove a child when domestic violence is a family stress factor and creating a safety threat.

Complexities





The Most Dangerous Time



P People

[Wash. Woman Killed and Daughter, 5, Injured – and Suspect Is Ex Who'd Been Kicked Out of House](#)

A Washington State mother was stabbed to death and her 5-year-old daughter was severely injured in an attack allegedly perpetrated by the...

Apr 19, 2021



Support a Survivor

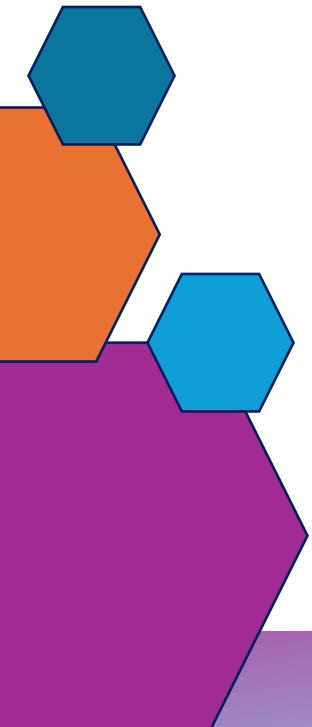
Start by believing.

Listen.

Avoid asking “why” questions.

Affirm the abuse is not their fault.

Offer resources for support and safety planning.



Safe & Together Principle 3

Intervening with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to children.

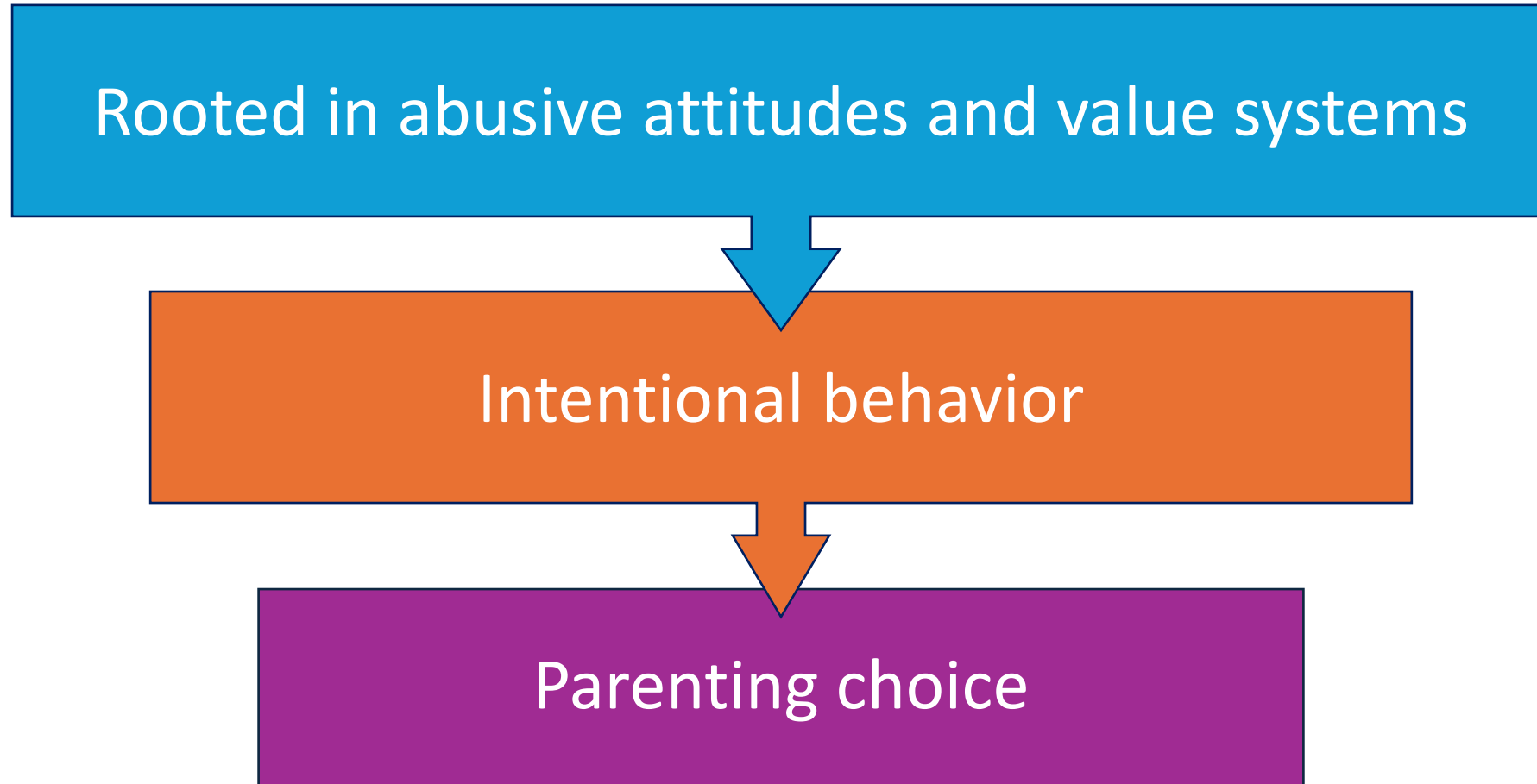
- Engagement.
- Accountability.
- Courts.

We Are Working With People

- Abusive partners are people.
- Deserve to be treated with respect.
- Problem isn't the person, it's the behavior.
- Respect and kindness without collusion.



Motivation of Abusive Partners



Engaging an Abusive Partner

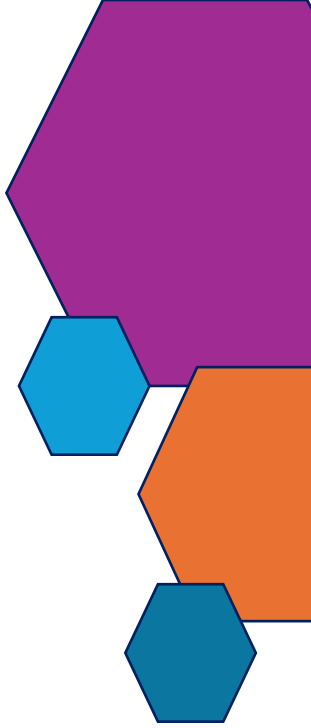
Speak with the survivor first.

Gather collateral information.

Frame as a parenting choice.

Use child-centered responses.

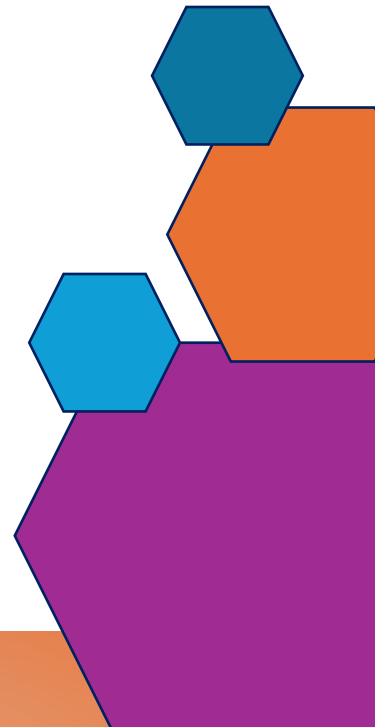
Offer and refer to resources for behavior change.



No Excuse for Abuse

Domestic Violence is not:

- A loss of control.
- Caused by a mental health issue.
- Caused by substance abuse.
- Only due to an abusive partner's trauma.
- An inability to manage anger.



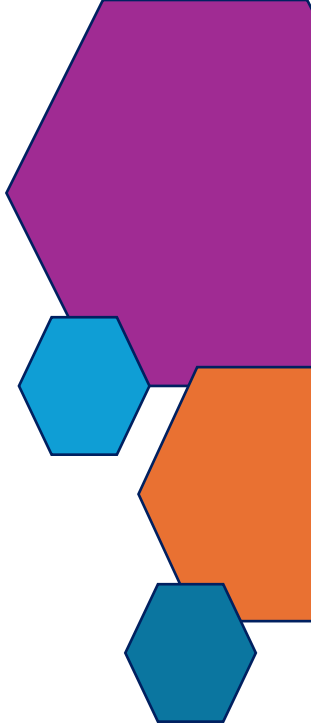
Anger Management

- Anger is the primary problem.
- Primary focus is on managing the emotion.
- Intervention is short term.
- Limited to the specific service.



Batterers Intervention

- Abuse and control are the primary problem.
- Focus is changing beliefs and behavior.
- Intervention is long term.
- Part of a coordinated community response.



Multiple pathways to harm

Perpetrator's Pattern

- Coercive control toward adult survivor
- Actions taken to harm children

Children's Trauma

- Witness of physical abuse
- Seeing, hearing or learning about the violence

Effects on family ecology

- Loss of income
- Housing instability
- Loss of contact with extended family
- School-related and social disruptions

Effect on partner's parenting

- Depression/PTSD/anxiety/substance abuse
- Loss of authority
- Energy goes to obtaining personal safety of children
- Interference with day-to-day routine and basic care

Harm to child

- Behavioral, Emotional, Social, Educational
- Developmental
- Physical Injury

Perpetrator's Pattern

- Coercive control towards survivor
- Actions taken to harm children

Child's Trauma & Safety

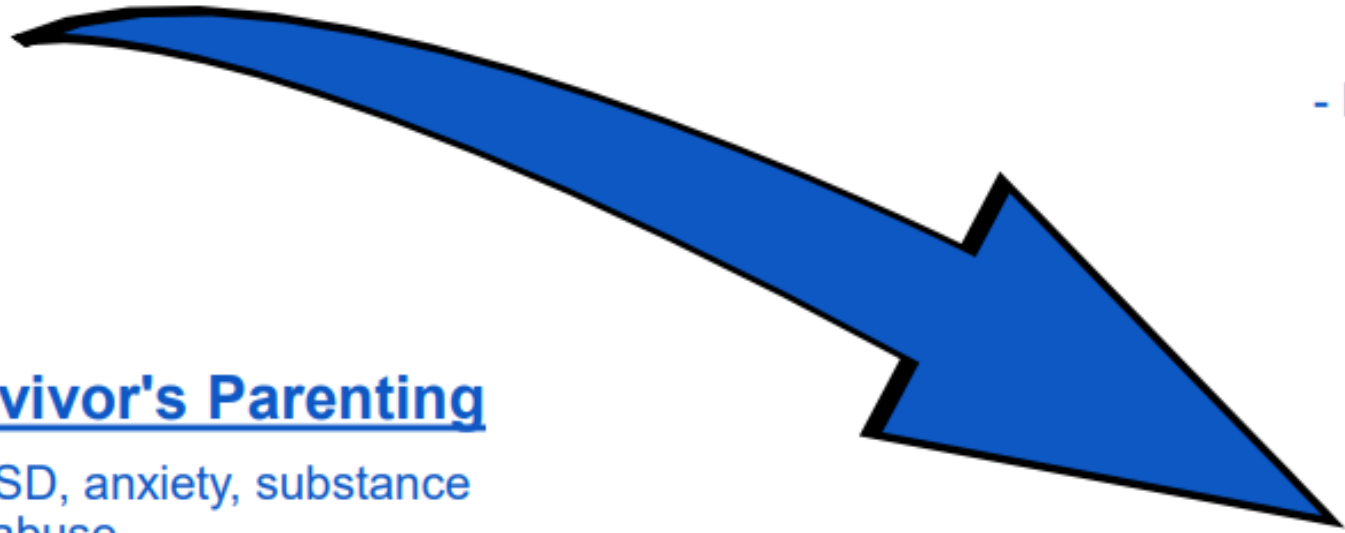
- Victim of physical abuse
- Seeing, hearing, or learning about the violence and/or it's aftermath

Effects on Family Ecology

- Loss of income
- Housing instability
- Loss of contact with extended family
- Educational and social disruption

Effect on Survivor's Parenting

- Depression, PTSD, anxiety, substance abuse
- Loss of authority
- Energy goes to addressing perpetrator instead of children
- Interference with day-to-day routine and basic care



Harm to Child

- Behavioral, emotional, social, educational
- Developmental
- Physical Injury
- Threat of Harm

