

Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court

PARENTING COORDINATION
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

As a Parenting Coordinator, you work with many families where there is high conflict or domestic violence. Distinguishing these two kinds of families can be difficult, but doing so is key to your and their success and the safety of all involved.

It is not uncommon for professionals to fail to identify domestic violence in cases, even where such a history exists. Many parenting time proceedings do not detect document domestic violence (Johnson, Saccuzzo & Koen, 2005; Kernic, Monary-Ernsdorff, Koepsell, & Holt, 2005). There are many reasons for this. First, domestic violence perpetrators have a strong tendency to deny and minimize their behavior. And victims/survivors may be reticent to raise the issue for fear of retribution from the abuser, or they may fear that they will be judged negatively by professionals involved in the case. Saunders, in his overview of the clinical literature on these issues¹ notes that many survivors, especially women, are often subjected to negative stereotypes which impact their credibility, leading to some professionals to disbelieve their allegations of child abuse (Danforth & Welling, 1996; Meier, 2003; Zorza, 1996). As a result, some attorneys advise clients to not raise allegations of domestic violence or child maltreatment.

In addition, a growing body of literature has documented knowledge and expertise gaps in custody evaluators, when it comes to assessing domestic violence and child maltreatment, so the case file may be unlikely to identify these issues even when they are present.²

¹ *Child Custody and Visitation Decisions in Domestic Violence Cases: Legal Trends, Risk Factors, and Safety Concerns*, Authors: Daniel G. Saunders, Ph.D. In consultation with Karen Oehme, Applied Research Brief, VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (October, 2007)

² *Child Custody Evaluators' Beliefs About Domestic Abuse Allegations: Their Relationship to Evaluator Demographics, Background, Domestic Violence Knowledge and Custody-Visitation Recommendations*, Principal Investigator: Daniel G. Saunders, Ph.D., Co-Investigators: Kathleen C. Faller, Ph.D. and Richard M. Tolman, Ph.D., Final Technical Report Submitted to the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (October, 2011)

Mind the Gap: Accounting for Domestic Abuse in Child Custody Evaluations, Authors: Ellen Pence, Gabrielle Davis, Cheryl Beardslee, Denise Gamache, Battered Women's Justice Project, published with support from the U.S. Department of Justice(June, 2012)

Once detected, managing a case that involves domestic violence can be challenging. The Guidelines for Parenting Coordination published by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts describe the difficult role the Parenting Coordinator (PC) may have in cases involving domestic violence:

The alternative dispute resolution process described above as central to the parenting coordinator's role may be inappropriate and potentially exploited by perpetrators of domestic violence who have exhibited patterns of violence, threat, intimidation and coercive control over their co-parent. In those cases of domestic violence where one parent seeks to obtain and maintain power and control over the other, the role of the PC changes to an almost purely enforcement function.³

A key initial function is to understand the type of case involved. We offer these working definitions:

- a) high conflict cases, where the primary issue stems from the inability of the parties to communicate) and,
- b) domestic violence cases, which may involve strong differences between the parties, rooted in a history of coercive control and/or violence, not communication issues.

The Supreme Court of Ohio offers the following resources (a sample Participant Letter, a two-tiered screening tool, and guidelines) to support your work in distinguishing high conflict cases from domestic violence cases, and proceeding in the latter with the safest strategies possible. This document ends with some resources which may be valuable in your work in this area.

Credit and On-Going Resources

The screening tools offered here are adapted from emerging national work conducted by the Battered Women's Justice Project done in partnership with a national work group including Praxis International, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. **This federally funded organization is available for consultation and can be reached at: technicalassistance@bwjp.org.** More information about their Child Custody Differentiation Project, funded by the US Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women can be found at: <http://www.bwjp.org/custody.aspx>

Custody Evaluations When There Are Allegations of Domestic Violence: Practices, Beliefs, and Recommendations of Professional Evaluators, Authors: Michael S. Davis, Ph.D.; Chris S. O'Sullivan, Ph.D.; Kim Susser, JD; Hon. Marjory D. Fields, JD, National Criminal Justice Reference Service, prepared with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, (May, 2011)

³ *Guidelines for Parenting Coordination*, Developed by The AFCC Task Force on Parenting Coordination, May 2005 (page 2)

Sample Participant Letter

Parenting coordination can be an extremely powerful tool that allows you to express your opinions clearly while teaching you new communication skills that will benefit both you and the other party. However, we realize to successfully express your feelings, you first must feel safe and secure during the parenting coordination process. As a result of honestly answering all the questions in this form, we will be better prepared to help you in your situation.

This questionnaire is a tool we use to give you an opportunity to inform us of any fears you may have because of past or present violence, or threats of violence in the family. The information we receive will assist us in providing you with a safe environment for a successful parenting coordination session.

Please think about these questions and write out brief answers for us to look at before your parenting coordination appointment. If you have any fears about filling out these forms, feel free to call our office. We can easily talk about your concerns over the phone, or we can set up a brief meeting before your meeting.

While I will do my best to protect your privacy, unlike in mediation, information shared with parenting coordinators is not confidential.

Thank you for your time in completing this form. We believe that if you and the other party keep an open mind and attempt to work equally toward a solution, your parenting coordination experience can be a successful one that resolves many areas of disagreement.

Very truly yours,

Parenting Coordinator

Initial Screening

Your name: _____

Our goal is to create a process together that everyone can participate in safely and comfortably. The following information will help me in my work with your family.

1. How comfortable are you with interacting with the other party now? (being alone together, talking by phone, e-mailing or texting, meeting face to face public encounters)

2. Do you have any fears about being in the same room or the same building with the other party? If so, please explain your concerns.

3. Would it make you feel more comfortable to discuss your situation in separate rooms?

4. How will I know if the *other party* is angry or upset during the parenting coordination?

5. How will I know if *you* are angry or upset during the parenting coordination?

6. If you begin to feel uncomfortable during parenting coordination, will you be able to ask for a break, or ask to talk to me in private?

7. Do you or the other party ever have problems managing your emotions when you get upset or angry?

8. Is there any reason for you to be afraid of the other party? Do you feel safe around the other party?

9. Is there any reason for the other party to be afraid of you?

10. Did you and the other party live together, and if so, do you still live together?

11. If you are separated, how long have you and the other party been separated?

12. Is there a reason this separation is more permanent than any prior separations?

13. How do you feel about the current status of your relationship with the other party?

If there is anything else you would like to tell me about your situation, please feel free to write it in the remaining space below. Thanks again for your time and consideration.

Practice
Tip

What to look for: Autonomy, control, balance of power, fear, danger, safety, vulnerability, disrespect, manipulation, coercion, intimidation, surveillance, entitlement, contempt for other party or the process

Secondary Screening When Domestic Violence Is Indicated

Practice
Tip

Administer this Secondary Screening privately and only with the party who is expressing genuine fear or concerns for safety. Do not administer it to both parties. Each section concludes with a “What to look for” note. Keep in mind that victim/survivors with high levels of trauma may have difficulty with this tool and need to do it in sections, not all at once.

Your name: _____

1. I need information on several topics including your children, parenting, daily life, emotional, physical and sexual violence. While these topics may be difficult to discuss I need to ask if you are scared to answer these questions for any reason. If you are, please tell me why.

Children/Parenting

2. Do you have any concerns about your children or fears for their safety?

3. Has the other party ever used or threatened to use the children to manipulate, control or monitor you? For example, has the other party ever told you they would take the children and you would never see them again, as a way to control you? Has the other party ever taken the children against a court order?

4. Has the other party ever interfered with your children’s education, health care or medication?

5. Has the other party ever used any type of physical force (hitting, pushing, choking/strangling, kicking etc.) towards you or your children? If yes, please list which behaviors and explain with some detail. If you remember dates include them in your answer.

6. Has the other party ever used child pornography?

7. Do you believe or have you ever suspected, seen or been told by your children or others that the other party had engaged in inappropriate touching/sexual activity with or around the child(ren) or used pornography in their presence?

8. How are your children doing now?

Practice
Tip

What to look for: direct physical or sexual abuse, moral corruption/pornography, intimidation, post-separation violence, children treated as property, denial of children's feelings, boundary violations, minimizing children's needs, lack of empathy for children, drawing children into abuse, grilling children for information, grooming children for sexual activity (boundary violations, inappropriate touching, favoring, etc.)

Autonomy

9. Does the other party make any rules for you to follow? (what you wear, when you come home, where you can go, who you can talk to, what time things must happen, etc.) If so, what are the rules you are expected to follow?

10. Do you ever feel dread that the other partner will find out some piece of information (i.e. someone you talked to, something you bought, somewhere you went, etc.)

11. Is there anything that gets in the way of your doing the things you want or need to do?

12. Has the other party ever physically restrained you, forbidden you from leaving, made you do things you did not want to do or punished you for defying his/her wishes? If so, which of these or other controlling behaviors has the other party done to you?

13. Has the other party followed you, or had someone follow you, ever shown up unannounced, contacted you against your will, or left something for you to find, used gestures, body language or “inside code” language or third party communications in order to scare or intimidate you? If so, which of these behaviors has the other party done to you?

14. Has the other party ever monitored your phone, email, social media (like going on your Facebook page), lowjacked your vehicle (with GPS), or use other technology to know where you were or who were you talking to? If so, which of these has the other party done to you?

15. Has the other party ever interfered with work or school (kept you from going to work or school, called or showed up there, made you miss work or school because of injuries, etc.)? Or has the violence ever affected your children attending school?

16. Has the other party ever interfered with your sleep, health care, birth control or medications?

17. Has the other party previously (even in other relationships) violated court orders or agreements made with authorities regarding protection orders, scheduled visitations/exchanges, past custody orders, or complying with CPS, court, probation or law enforcement directives?

Practice
Tip

What to look for: micro-management of life, rulemaking, monitoring/surveillance, demand for compliance/obedience, disrespect of privacy, expectation of loyalty, privilege and entitlement, insecurity, stalking, hostage taking, disrespect or unruliness to authority

Emotional Issues

18. Does the other party ever play mind games, insult you or put you down, insulted you in public to purposely humiliate you?

19. Does the other party ever get jealous or possessive or accuse you of infidelity?

20. What - if any - weapons does the other party own (guns, knives, bow/arrow, swords, etc.) and have they ever threatened you with any weapon?

21. Has the other party ever destroyed your property, or put your life in danger by driving recklessly or disabling a car.

22. Has the other party ever threatened to keep or harm the children or any other friends or family members if you did not cooperate with them?

23. Has the other party ever said things like they can't live without you, if they can't have you no one can, or that if you leave them they will track you down?

Practice
Tip

What to look for: attacks on sanity, dignity, humiliation/ embarrassment, obsessive jealousy, narcissism, entitlement, blackmail, access to weapons, seemingly innocent acts with hidden meaning, contempt

Physical Violence and Threats

24. Has the other party ever threatened to kill you, him/herself, harm you or the children, harm someone you care about, harm or kill pets? If there were threats, did the other party say how, when or where they would harm you or others? If there were threats, do you believe the other party could act on them?

25. Has the other party ever held a weapon on you or used a weapon to scare you?

26. Has the other party ever used physical force against you or the children? (Hold, pin down, tie up, gag, drag, push, shake, bite, slap, punch, throw an object, kick or stomp, burn, stab or cut) If yes, has any of the violence occurred while you were pregnant?

27. Has the other party ever strangled/choked you? (Please note this behavior can cause serious injury or death up to 72 hours after the event and requires immediate medical attention.)

28. If the other party has been violent or threatening, does it seem that their violence is changing, escalating, or becoming more odd or difficult to predict?

29. What's the worst thing the other party has ever done to you?

30. What's the scariest thing the other party has ever done to you?

31. Have you ever called the police to protect yourself or children from the other party? If you have, has the other party been able to avoid arrest or other consequences? If you never called the police, did you ever consider calling them?

32. Has the other party, ever been convicted of domestic violence or a related offense, or a reduced charge from one of these offenses? If so, can you tell me when, where, what court, and if they are currently on parole or probation.

33. Have you ever had a civil protection order against the other party? If yes, can you tell me when, where and if it is still in effect? To your knowledge have other people (past relationships) had protection orders against the other party?

34. Have you ever stayed with others such as friends, co-workers, relatives or in a shelter to protect yourself, or your children, from the other party? If yes, please tell me when.

35. Has anyone ever suggested that the other party should attend a batterer intervention program or receive help for drug/alcohol abuse? Or has any court ordered any type of counseling?

36. Has the other party ever acted depressed, been described by others as depressed, or been diagnosed or treated for depression? (i.e. irritable, not able to sleep, sad, moody, etc.)

37. Has the other party ever talked about, planned to or tried to kill himself or herself?

38. Does the other party have a history of abusing drugs or alcohol? If yes, is this happening currently?

39. Have you or your children ever required medical care (emergency or at doctor's office) for anything related to the other party's actions?

Practice
Tip

What to look for: safety, risk lethality, use of pornography, inappropriate boundaries, jealousy, and possessiveness

Sexual violence -(It is helpful to anticipate and acknowledge difficulty with this topic.)

40. Has the other party ever interfered with your decision about birth control, safe sex or pregnancy or knowingly exposed you to a sexually transmitted infection (like herpes or HIV?)

41. Has the other party ever made you do sexual things that make you scared or uncomfortable?

Practice
Tip

What to look for: safety, risk, lethality, escalation of violence, control, intimidation, trauma, fear, anxiety. These questions may produce feelings of shame, embarrassment, or confusion.

Parenting Coordinator Danger Factor Worksheet

Data is still emerging about factors that indicate a higher risk for serious injury and death in domestic violence cases. The following risk factors, sometimes called danger or lethality risk factors, have emerged in the research and literature. There is no score that predicts homicide. While the presence of many of these factors together may indicate a more dangerous situation, each of these factors alone is associated with higher risk. *After reviewing the answers and reflecting on observations and conversations with the parties, use this tool to organize information you have about any reported domestic violence factors that indicate a higher risk for escalation or homicide.*

History of Violence and Threats

- Increase in frequency/severity of violence
- Guns: access, recent acquisition, use of guns in violence, threats with guns
- Use or threat to use other lethal weapons
- Threat to kill victim, children or others
- Sexual assault
- Non-fatal Strangulation
- Assault during pregnancy
- Victim believes abuser has capacity to kill
- Stalking
- Child Abuse or abduction
- Highly controlling of victim's activities
- Victim says violence is different, scarier, more bizarre or unpredictable

Abuser's Mental State

- Depression
- Not sleeping
- Suicidal thoughts, threats, plans, attempts
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Major mental illness
- Jealousy, fixation, obsession
- Desperate, nothing to lose
- History of protection orders

Failed or Absent Community Intervention

- Avoidance of arrest for acts of violence

Separation

- Victim ending relationship in a more permanent way than before
- Recent separation

Other

- Unemployment
- Step-children

If you develop concern for the safety of any member of the family please refer that person to a domestic violence program which can provide safety planning, support, and other resources. A list of Ohio's domestic violence programs by county can be accessed at www.odvn.org under Information for Survivors.

Background Information and **Guidelines for Using These Tools**

These tools are offered as a framework to help you distinguish high conflict cases (primarily based in communication issues) from those with domestic violence (issues primarily based in coercive control and violence) and to proceed in an informed and safer manner. There are many more valuable sources of information on this topic, some of which are detailed on the Resource List in this document. It is important to seek in-depth training on domestic violence so that you can implement these tools and apply an advanced understanding to correctly interpret what you are seeing and hearing in cases. The following are some important features of domestic violence and trauma that will help inform your work. Please do consult the excellent resources at the end of this document to further inform your work.

Trauma Impacts on Adult and Child Victims – Our understanding of trauma has grown tremendously in recent years. We know that trauma can directly impact health, mental health, cognition, behavior and how and where information is stored in the brain and how it can be accessed later through memory. Trauma may keep victims in a flight/fight or freeze state of hyper-arousal, or it may create an on-going experience of intrusive memories, dreams, or re-experiencing (flashbacks) of the event(s). Trauma can also create numbing, and an avoidance of any thoughts, feelings or triggers associated with the original trauma. Physical trauma to the head or from strangulation can also create traumatic brain injury, which can compound the victim's ability to remember things and cope with stress (among other impacts.) Asking a person with a trauma history a series of questions about the traumatic events can trigger a flood of overwhelming emotions, or activate other unconscious coping mechanisms such as denying, forgetting, or shutting down emotionally. It will be important to be patient with someone who appears to be surviving trauma, to help them feel a sense of control over any processes they are in, and to allow them to take care of themselves, even if that means ending a meeting or telephone call.

In addition, a history of battering can render survivors uncertain of whom they can trust, if anyone. The abuser may have convinced them that no one will believe them or help them. Other professionals may have had prior involvement with the family and responded in ways that were blaming or otherwise unhelpful. Survivors also carry the ongoing burden of calculating whether they will suffer retaliation from the abuser. For all of these reasons, you may need to spend more time than normal on a case involving someone who has been physically, emotionally and or sexual abused by an intimate partner to build trust and accommodate the process around the impact of trauma.

Domestic Abusers as Parents and Litigants – People who engage in domestic violence have behaviors which range across a spectrum; they are not all the same. Not all abusers are extremely dangerous; knowing which ones are dangerous can be difficult. Most are able to get along with people in work and court settings, and can even be charismatic. You may find that the person accused of violence is quite likable; some batterers can be quite charming, making it difficult for outsiders to appreciate how dangerous they may be. For those with this personality

feature, charisma and charm can be an effective tool in manipulating the victim, as well as court personnel.

The history of violence is relevant because it helps us assess risks and dynamics in the present. Battering behavior is not easily amenable to intervention, much like substance abuse.⁴ If there is a history of violence and coercion, it is most likely these dynamics are current, even if the tactics have changed.

Most abusers are focused on their own needs to the exclusion of others, are rigid, blame others for difficulties they encounter, and deny and minimize their violence and its impact on their families. Domestic violence perpetrators have great difficulty losing their relationships; some become extremely dangerous when they perceive that the relationship may be or really is over. Once the relationship has ended, many abusers escalate other tactics such as stalking, monitoring through technology, getting at the victim through the children and by keeping the court case going as long as possible. Some abusers may use the court process and visitation to create more opportunities for contact with the ex-partner. (Sheeran & Hampton, 1999; McMahon & Pence, 1995; Adams, 1989) or to seek social validation (Doyno et al., 1999). When a victim goes into hiding, court related proceedings may be the abuser's only opportunity to see the victim or get information about her or his life. While most will employ manipulation in all parts of their lives, only a small percentage are violent with people outside their families, such as law enforcement, court officers and others who may be perceived as helping the victim. Without specific interventions (psycho educational groups, strong messages and consequences that support non-violence through family, courts, probation, etc.) they are likely to continue to use power, control and coercion in this and future intimate relationships and with their children.

Individuals who engage in battering and coercive control with their partners are generally deficient as parents. Research indicates that these individuals engage in substantially higher rates of child abuse. Multiple studies have established the high overlap between battering and incest perpetration (Herman, 1981; McCloskey et. al.; Paveza; Sirles and Franke; and Truesdell et. al.). These studies, taken together, indicate that a batterer is about four to six times more likely than a non-batterer to sexually abuse his children. Other studies find that about half of domestic abusers also physically abuse children. As parents they tend to be rigid and have unrealistic expectations of their children. Many tend to intervene in or withhold medical and psychological treatment of their children.

Abusers are likely to employ many manipulative techniques with professionals involved with their families to minimize and deny the abuse and/or its impact. You may see a variety of tactics such as claims that the other parent is engaging in "parental alienation," that anxiety in the child(ren) is caused by the other parent's anxiety, that the other parent is raising abuse claims to get a legal advantage, or that the other parent has Muchausen by Proxy (Bancroft and Silverman, 2002). Abusers may also bring up the other parent's childhood abuse history to discredit any claims of abuse against the children. Because of their tendency to be so focused on their own

⁴ Gondolf, E. Characteristics of Batterers in a Multi-site Evaluation of Batterer Intervention Systems (1996), Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse

needs, it is common for these individuals to believe and claim that they are the real victim in the situation.

Finally, you may see batterers who express a keen interest in their children and may even really step up to parenting responsibilities. It is key to determine the history of parenting by asking what this parent's role has been regarding parenting, education, health care, discipline, recreation, etc. If the participation is different now, it is important to ask, why now?

Separation violence. When an abuser discovers that a relationship is ending or is really over, danger increases. At least three quarters of all homicides occur at this point; emerging fatality reviews are suggesting the number is much higher. An abuser may perceive a relationship is ending after the partner has left, but other acts may signal this as well, i.e. finding out the partner has called a hotline, has talked to an attorney, or has filed for a protection order. Many domestic violence programs confirm the bulk of their work with survivors addresses issues that happen post separation. While many wish that victims would “just leave”, we as practitioners must appreciate that for many, the danger, stalking, harassment will worsen when they do so. To begin to plan to end a relationship and separate, victim/survivors need a safety plan, developed with a domestic violence advocate, which accounts for many aspects of their safety (daily life, moving around the community, finances, legal proceedings, housing, technology, social media, etc.) Violence and coercion certainly do not end with separation; in fact, they may worsen once a victim/survivor tries to end the relationship.

Children Living with Domestic Violence, and Maltreatment: Some argue that violence against a parent is separate and has no relevance to considerations for children in these same families. In addition to what we know about parenting deficiencies common in persons who engage in domestic violence, the acts of violence themselves impact children, whether or not they are directly abused. Children living with domestic violence are impacted, albeit in different ways. A number of researchers and websites, i.e. Jeff Edelson, Peter Jaffe, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, the Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse, and many others have identified these impacts. Among many, children living with domestic violence have significantly higher rates of depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse, delinquency and other negative impacts. From *Trauma and Recovery* (Judith Herman, 1992) – “Chronic childhood abuse takes place in a familial climate of pervasive terror, in which ordinary caretaking relationships have been profoundly disrupted (p. 98).... Sometimes the child is silenced by violence or by a direct threat of murder; more often survivors report threats that resistance or disclosure will result in the death of someone else in the family: a sibling, the non-offending parent, or the perpetrator (p.98).”

It is of note that things change in many ways for children when the abused parent separates from the abusive parent. For one, most children begin unsupervised contact with the violent parent without the presence of the abused parent. The separation *may* reduce their exposure to partner violence, although many abusers will begin new relationships and will carry these behaviors on and abuse new partners. Separation usually means a new kind of contact with the abusive parent, which may also include intense questioning about life with the separated parent (i.e. where she lives, who she sees, etc.) And for some children, there is an increased rate of direct physical and sexual abuse now that the protective parent is not present. In extreme, but well documented

cases, abusers may seriously injure kill children when they cannot directly get to the separated partner, as a way to punish her for leaving.

Post Separation Disclosures of Child Maltreatment: We often hear about disclosures of child maltreatment post separation. This often causes speculation that children are making up allegations because they have been coached, alienated, or because they do not want to see the abusive parent. It is important to understand that children living with domestic violence live with some of the most daunting dilemmas. Many children start talking about their experiences when they calculate that it may finally be safe to tell someone what they have gone through. *Often it is only when they feel they will be protected from the abusive parent, that children take the risk to disclose abuse, especially sexual abuse.*

Responding to Disclosures – Many practitioners – courts, evaluators, therapists, parenting coordinators, advocates, law enforcement and others ask domestic violence survivors and their children to tell us what is happening at home. We do this with the best of intentions: to understand, to respond effectively and in a way that is helpful. What is critical to our work is to understand the huge risks these individuals take to tell us anything about what they have endured. In addition to risking a host of unintended negative consequences in the courts, victims who talk about the abuse are violating a primarily family rule set by the abuser: *do not tell*. When we use the information adult victims and their children disclose to us in order to confront the abuser or in any manner where he or she may find out that the adult or child survivor disclosed abuse, we increase the risk they will be retaliated against, further intimidated, silenced and even harmed.

Using the Screening Tools: The Initial Screening Tool is intended to be used with both parties. The Secondary Screening Tool includes much content from the Domestic Violence Interview Guide⁵, a tool published primarily for Guardians ad Litem and other custody evaluators. The Secondary Screening Tool should *only be administered to the person who appears to be the victim/survivor of domestic violence* – either from the initial screening tool, or other behavioral signs. It would never be appropriate to administer the Secondary Screening Tool to both parties. If you are unsure, it would be better to employ other methods to make the decision about which – if either – party should participate in the Secondary Screening Tool. When using the Secondary Screening Tool, it is important to make a full disclosure about where the information will be kept and who can access it.

Keep in mind that when you engage in this kind comprehensive assessment, you may uncover a long history of violence, threats and coercive control, little or none of which has been reported to the police, medical facilities, or other third parties. This is common, and does not indicate that the reports are not true. In fact, survivors may still conceal much of this information in your interviews with them. Research indicates that there are many obstacles to disclosures for both adults and children who have experienced trauma at the hands of family members.

As you identify cases that involve domestic violence, knowing more about the dynamics of battering in general, and how they play out in this family is key. Once you have a firm understanding, you can begin to level the playing field, resist attempts by the abuser to control

⁵ Battered Women's Justice Project, Minneapolis, Minnesota

the court and parenting coordination process, and pursue the best strategies you can to increase safety for all involved.

Resources

Organizations

(These organizations offer valuable publications, training and/or technical assistance)

- Ohio Domestic Violence Network (Columbus, Ohio), 614-781-9651, www.odvn.org.
Website provides link to find domestic violence programs serving all 88 Ohio counties.
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (Reno, Nevada), (775) 784-6012, www.ncjfcj.org
- Battered Women's Justice Project (Minneapolis, Minnesota), 800-903-0111, www.bwjp.org
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), 1-800-537-2238, www.nrcdv.org and www.vawnet.org
- Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse (Mincava), www.mincava.umn.edu/
- National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health Initiative. (Chicago, Illinois), 312-726-7020
- www.dangerassessment.org – Publications and tools from Dr. Jaqueline Campbell regarding assessing danger in domestic violence cases.
- National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative, www.ndvfri.org

Publications

1. *The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics*
Authors: Lundy Bancroft, with Jay G. Silverman, Sage Publications (2002)
2. *Why Do They Kill* Author: David Adams (2007)
3. *Child Custody and Visitation Decisions in Domestic Violence Cases: Legal Trends, Risk Factors, and Safety Concerns*, Authors: Daniel G. Saunders, Ph.D. In consultation with Karen Oehme, Applied Research Brief, VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (October, 2007)
4. *High Conflict Divorce, Violence and Abuse: Implications for Custody and Visitation Decisions*, Authors: Clare Dalton, Judge Susan Carbon, and Nancy Olesen, Juvenile and Family Court Journal (Fall, 2003)
5. *Child Custody Evaluators' Beliefs About Domestic Abuse Allegations: Their Relationship to Evaluator Demographics, Background, Domestic Violence Knowledge and Custody-Visitation*

Recommendations, Principal Investigator: Daniel G. Saunders, Ph.D., Co-Investigators: Kathleen C. Faller, Ph.D. and Richard M. Tolman, Ph.D., Final Technical Report Submitted to the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (October, 2011)

6. *Mind the Gap: Accounting for Domestic Abuse in Child Custody Evaluations*, Authors: Ellen Pence, Gabrielle Davis, Cheryl Beardslee, Denise Gamache, Battered Women's Justice Project, published with support from the U.S. Department of Justice (June, 2012)
7. *Custody Evaluations When There Are Allegations of Domestic Violence: Practices, Beliefs, and Recommendations of Professional Evaluators*, Authors: Michael S. Davis, Ph.D.; Chris S. O'Sullivan, Ph.D.; Kim Susser, JD; Hon. Marjory D. Fields, JD, National Criminal Justice Reference Service, prepared with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, (May, 2011)
8. *Domestic Violence, Abuse and Child Custody*, Editors: Dr. Mo Therese Hannah and Barry Goldstein, Civic Research Institute, (2010)
9. *Parental Alienation Syndrome and Parental Alienation: A Research Review*, Author: Joan S. Meier, JD, Applied Research Brief, VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (September, 2013)
10. *Use of the MMPI-2 in Child Custody Evaluations Involving Battered Women: What Does Psychological Research Tell Us?*, Author: Nancy Erikson, Family Law Quarterly (Spring, 2005)
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