

SPECIALIZED CHILD WELFARE SUBJECT MATTER

Intimate Partner Violence

21-8 Page 1 of 2

Policy

The Department of Children and Families shall promote a trauma-informed, family-centric approach to families impacted by intimate partner violence (IPV) that offers meaningful and sustainable assistance to families and is safe, respectful, culturally sensitive and responsive to the unique strengths, concerns and needs of the family.

Cross reference: "Intimate Partner Violence Practice Guide."

Indicators of IPV

Some indicators of and risk factors for IPV may include:

- low income or job loss;
- substance misuse;
- pet abuse;
- relationship instability; or
- divorce and separations.

The indicators for IPV, however, are neither universal nor easily recognizable and evidence of IPV may become known over time.

Indicators shall be documented in the case narrative and specifically identified as relevant to suspected or demonstrated IPV.

Assessment of IPV

As part of the DCF's comprehensive assessment of families, in every child protective services investigation and every Family Assessment Response, the Social Worker shall:

- assess all adult family members for behaviors associated with IPV;
- assess all children for exposure to IPV;
- assess levels of trauma exposure and risk;
- work to engage the offender; and
- facilitate intervention and treatment as needed to all family members.

Assessments shall include considerations of language, race, religion and gender.

If the case is transferred for Ongoing Services, the IPV assessment process shall continue throughout the life of the case.

Interviews

Family members shall be interviewed separately whenever possible.

Each household member shall be interviewed, including partners, caregivers and children.

If partners cannot be interviewed separately, the Social Worker shall not specifically ask about IPV at that time.

Children shall not be asked about IPV in the presence of the suspected offender. A subsequent interview shall be scheduled with the children to interview them separately from the suspected offender in a safe location.

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21-8 Page 2 of 2

Identifying Cultural Factors

The Social Worker shall identify the cultural needs of the family including their ethnic background, language, religion, sex and sexual orientation and socioeconomic status. The Social Worker shall take these factors into consideration when tailoring IPV services for the family.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 21-3, "Delivery of Service using a Client's Preferred Method of Communication," 21-13, "Immigration," and the "Immigration Practice Guide."

IPVS – RRG

The Regional Resource Groups' Intimate Partner Violence Specialists (IPVS) shall provide consultation, support and coordination to improve outcomes for children and families impacted by IPV. The IPVS shall utilize trauma-informed, strength-based approaches to support child protection practice, service provision and coordination. This approach shall focus heavily on teaming and supporting staff and may include direct consultation with families. The IPVS shall offer guidance to Social Workers regarding information and resources that can help the entire family system.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 21-6, "Regional Resource Group," and the "Regional Resource Group Practice Guide."

Worker Safety

In cases involving IPV, Social Workers may be at risk. When a DCF employee is concerned about personal safety, he or she shall consult with his or her Supervisor immediately and request a consultation with the IPVS to develop a worker safety plan which shall include the following:

- cultural and ethnic considerations;
 - having a co-worker accompany the Social Worker (may consider a male and female together if a client has issues with a specific gender);
 - being continuously aware of "triggers" that may cause an individual to respond in a violent way; and
 - consideration given to meeting with the suspected offender in the DCF office if there is a high level of risk.
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