



## SAFELY PURSUING CHILD SUPPORT

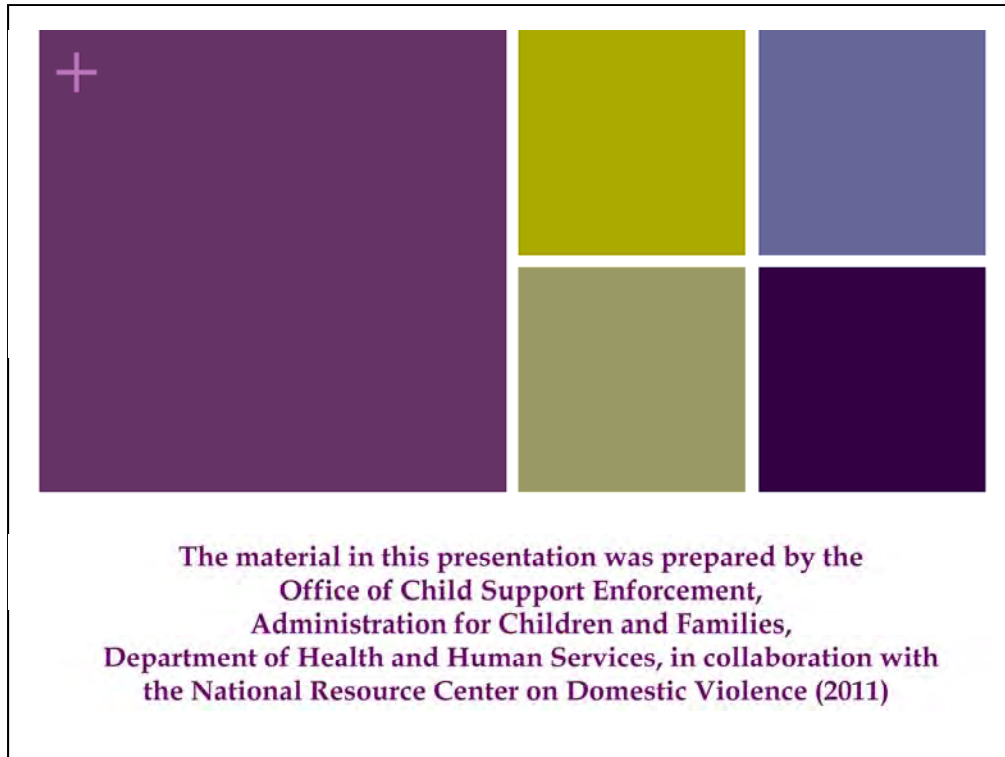
**TIP:** Please also review accompanying Guide for Trainers: *Safely Pursuing Child Support* Training Tools

**TIP:** This training can be framed by referencing the OCSE fact sheet Number 7: Family Violence Collaboration, which can be found at this link and used as a handout:

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/factsheets/child\\_support/family\\_violence\\_collaboration.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/factsheets/child_support/family_violence_collaboration.pdf)

### TALKING POINTS

- As the Office of Child Support Enforcement states in its Family Violence Collaboration fact sheet: “Family-centered strategies must not put women and children at greater risk of violence. Because the child support program serves both parents, often around a crisis point, it has a unique responsibility—and a unique opportunity—to reduce the risk of family violence and help family violence survivors pursue child support safely. Collaborating with programs that address fatherhood, domestic violence, and child welfare can simultaneously reduce family violence, increase father involvement, and improve child support outcomes.”
- This training is designed to help child support workers identify and respond to safety issues that may arise for parents seeking child support services.



#### **TALKING POINTS**

- These training materials were developed under a collaboration between the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement in Washington, DC, and its partner, the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, located in Harrisburg, PA.
- These training materials also draw on the expertise and experiences of child support offices around the country.

## We'll explore...

3

- ◆ Domestic/family violence –  
What is it and why is it important to child support offices?
- ◆ Safely pursuing child support –  
How do you assess and address the safety risks of domestic violence victims?

### TALKING POINTS

- This training first defines domestic violence and explores what we know about the intersection of domestic/family violence and child support.
- Then the training will identify concrete and practical approaches to identifying and responding to safety issues that may arise for parents seeking assistance from child support.

## Where do people get “stuck”?

4

- ✦ “Why doesn’t she just leave?”
- ✦ “She should just think of the kids!”
- ✦ “Why didn’t she tell me?”
- ✦ “What am I supposed to do? Isn’t this someone else’s responsibility?”

### TALKING POINTS

- Talking about it is difficult for a lot of people, and there are a number of places where they get “stuck” or confused. These are some common reactions that all of us have probably heard.

***Why doesn’t she just leave?*** Is a question that is often heard. The reality is that violence and abuse by an intimate partner is more common and complex than many people realize.

- The difficulties of leaving such relationships are real. We know that violence can escalate and become even more dangerous when the victim tries to leave.
- The victim may feel isolated, and cut off from their family, friends and others who might help them.
- Many victims are concerned that if they leave, they may lose their income, their housing, and their family support.

***Why isn’t she thinking about the kids?*** Is another question that is commonly heard.

- In fact, research and a great deal of experience tell us that concern for their children is the reason that many domestic violence victims stay in abusive relationships—out of concern that they and their children will become homeless, or that they will lose the children in a custody battle, or that the children will lose contact with their father. It is also one of the main reasons that they leave—out of concern that the children are being harmed by the abuse.

***Why didn’t she tell me?*** As we’ll explore in more detail later, there are many good reasons that victims might not feel comfortable or safe telling a child support worker about the abuse they are experiencing.

- A key reason is that they may not feel safe telling you. She may be worried that a child support worker will be judgmental or will tell other people.

***What am I supposed to do?*** and ***Isn’t it someone else’s responsibility?*** are questions that you may have asked yourself.

- It’s easy to feel overwhelmed or even scared when dealing with domestic violence, but it is the responsibility of child support workers to know how to identify and respond to domestic and family violence issues, particularly given of our work in father engagement. Identifying clients with domestic violence issues and providing appropriate referrals are important child support responsibilities.
- It is important that we do everything we can to make sure our clients can safely access child support services. This training will help you understand what your role is and give you tools to support you in that role.
- These are all issues we’ll discuss in more detail throughout this training today.

# HEADLINES

5

- ♦ Most domestic violence victims want to pursue child support *if they can do so safely*.
- ♦ Domestic violence issues can come up at any point in the child support process.
- ♦ In order for survivors to do good safety planning, they need accurate and complete information about the child support process.

## TALKING POINTS

- These are the three key take away points from the training. **[READ EACH BULLET ON SLIDE]**
- When referring to individuals who have faced domestic violence in a current or past relationship, the terms “victim” and “survivor” will be used interchangeably. These terms reflect how they are viewed by advocates and victims and survivors themselves.

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

6

- A pattern of abusive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse as well as economic coercion, used against an intimate partner.
- Often involves the use of a combination of tactics of one partner aimed at establishing control over the other.

## TALKING POINTS

- There are a number of terms that are used, sometimes interchangeably, to describe violence between intimate partners, including interpersonal violence, battering and marital violence. **“Domestic Violence”** is the most common and the one that we will be using today. [READ DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON SLIDE]
  - There are several key elements of this definition: Domestic violence typically involves a pattern of abuse, not a single incident, and involves the use of a range of tactics designed to control another person – control who they see, what they do, how independent they are, and what decisions they make. Domestic violence, then, can be distinguished from fights that get out of hand or disagreements between couples.
  - FAMILY VIOLENCE is a term that is sometimes used interchangeably with “domestic violence”, while others use it as a broader term to refer to the three types of violence that occur within families – child abuse, domestic violence (that is, abuse between intimate partners), and elder abuse. As we are addressing adult intimate partner abuse here, we’ll use the term domestic violence from now on.
- TIP:** Trainers can also ask participants to talk about what comes to mind when they hear the term “domestic violence” (and they will likely brainstorm the list on the next slide).
- TIP:** Trainers should also assume that at least some of those being trained have experienced abuse themselves or grown up as children in a home in which their parent was being abused. You can choose to acknowledge that as part of your introduction.

## Not just physical violence...

7

- ♦ Stalking and threats to kidnap, kill, or otherwise harm family, friends, or property
- ♦ Threats to commit suicide
- ♦ Repeated use of degrading or coercive language
- ♦ Controlling access to food or sleep and withholding access to money, credit cards or medical care
- ♦ Withholding immigration documents, threatening deportation
- ♦ Denying contact with friends or family

### TALKING POINTS

- If we just look for physical violence – black eyes and bruises - we will miss a great deal of what constitutes domestic violence.
- For example, stalking is a huge and frightening part of domestic violence for many victims, even after they have left the abusive relationship. Threats to harm or take the children are a key indicator of risk.
- An abuser's threat to commit suicide is often nothing more than a powerful tactic to keep a victim from leaving out of guilt.
- Economic abuse – ruining a partner's or ex-partner's credit, withholding access to money for food or other necessities, sabotaging employment or education – is also common within abusive relationships and can make it economically hard for victims to leave.
- Immigrant victims of domestic violence can have their immigration documents withheld by their abusive partners and be threatened with deportation.
- And as has already been mentioned, another very powerful aspect of domestic violence is an abuser's attempts – often successful – to isolate a partner from family or friends, because someone who is cut off from support, information and resources is easier to control.

## What do we know?

8

- ◆ Approximately 1.5 million women and 834,700 men are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States. Because many victims are victimized more than once, the number of intimate partner victimizations exceeds the number of intimate partner victims annually.(1)
- ◆ The vast majority of domestic violence victims are women abused by a male partner. Females are 84% of spouse abuse victims and 86% of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend.(2)

### TALKING POINTS

- In December 2011, the Centers for Disease Control released findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, “an ongoing, nationally representative telephone survey that collects detailed information on sexual violence, stalking and intimate partner victimization of adult women and men in the United States.”
- Included here are key findings from this important study. **[READ BULLETS ON SLIDE]**
- And as you can see from the second bullet point, data from the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics also confirms that the vast majority of victims of domestic violence – as defined earlier – are females abused by their male partners. **[READ BULLET ON SLIDE]**
- This is the reason – along with the fact that most of the custodial parents that you see are female – that this training typically refers to victims as females.
- However, it is important to stress that all victims of domestic violence—including men abused by their female or male partners and women abused by female partners—deserve support, services and protections.



## What do we know?

9

- ◆ Leaving an abusive relationship does not guarantee the reduction or elimination of violence or risk.<sup>(3)</sup>
- ◆ In fact, leaving may create new risks or increase existing ones (kidnapping, threats against family and friends).<sup>(3)</sup> The rates and seriousness of physical abuse increase during periods of separation or divorce.<sup>(4)</sup>

**TIP:** The full list of cites for all statistics used in the training is found on the SOURCES slides at the end of the PowerPoint.

### TALKING POINTS

- We also know from work by Davies and colleagues that leaving an abusive relationship does not guarantee that violence and abuse will stop.
- Often stalking begins or escalates after a victim has left the abusive partner.
- When a victim leaves or attempts to leave an abusive partner, threats to kidnap the children escalate, as do threats to harm other family members.
- A threat such as “I know where your mother lives” can be very frightening, even more so sometimes than direct threats against the victims themselves.
- And from other studies funded by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control, we know that leaving an abusive relationship may be one of the most dangerous times for a domestic violence victim with the risk of serious injury and death increasing significantly.
- Abuse also occurs during pregnancy and shortly after birth, timeframes when paternity establishment and child support issues also emerge.

## Domestic Violence and Economic Support

10

More than 50% of battered women surveyed in one study stayed with their abusive partners because they did not feel that they could support themselves and their children.<sup>(5)</sup>

### TALKING POINTS

- Research by Sullivan and colleagues tell us that economic dependence on the abusive partner is an important reason that many victims feel trapped in these relationships.
- If the alternative is homelessness and hunger for themselves and their children, leaving is not a viable option for many victims, at least not until they have a plan to support themselves, which can sometimes take years to put into place.
- **This is one of the reasons that child support is so important for so many victims of domestic violence.**

## Domestic Violence and Economic Support

11

- ◆ Women with abusive partners often use welfare as a bridge out of these relationships.<sup>(6)</sup>
- ◆ Between 40-60% of current welfare recipients have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. Up to 25% report that the abuse is a current problem.<sup>(7)</sup>

### TALKING POINTS

- Other research and considerable experience tell us that public assistance, now known federally as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF can be an important economic bridge for many victims out of an abusive relationship. TANF, is called **[INSERT]** in our state.
- Research has consistently shown that a high percentage of welfare/TANF recipients have experience current or past domestic violence.
- As you likely know, the federal welfare reform of 1996 tied receipt of TANF benefits with work requirements and requirements to establish paternity and cooperate with child support enforcement. Medicaid and other assistance programs also require cooperation.

## What is most important to a parent?

- ☐ Housing?
- ☐ Safety/well-being?
- ☐ Food security?
- ☐ Transportation?
- ☐ Support networks?

### TALKING POINTS

- If you had to select the top concern for most parents, which would you choose?

**TIP:** You can ask for a quick show of hands, or just let participants think about these choices.

- In reality, each of these issues can be important to parents, and how pressing each issue feels can change from day to day.
- Although child support isn't on the list, it can impact access to each of these essentials.

## What is on a survivor's mind?

Housing	Protective order	Custody
Employment	Child care	Substance abuse
TANF/Cash assist.	Confidentiality	Counseling
Food security	Transportation	Separating
Health care	Education	Clothing
Child support	Money	Court dates
Visitation	Family	Safety

### TALKING POINTS

- When a domestic violence victim walks into your office, any of these issues might be on their mind. This may affect their decision to raise domestic violence issues with you as well as the options they feel they have available to them.
- In light of this, we now want to talk about how the child support system can not only be effective, but also helpful when working with families that have experienced domestic violence.

Each domestic violence victim's  
circumstances,  
risks and resources  
will be different,  
and may change.

**TALKING POINTS**

- Here is one of the headlines from this training: There is no ONE victim experience.
- Each domestic violence victim's circumstances, risks and resources will be different, and may change.
- As the abusive partner's tactics of abuse change, so will the victim's need for safeguards.
- It is also important to note that there is not a stereotypical victim response: not all victims will express fear or appear vulnerable. Many will express justifiable anger, and incredible resilience and strength.

**HOW DOES CHILD SUPPORT FIT INTO THE PICTURE?....**

## Specific Child Support Risks

15

- ◆ Violent retaliation in response to paternity establishment or enforcement actions
- ◆ Abuser may gain knowledge of a survivor's whereabouts or access to children to whom he poses a threat
- ◆ An abusive ex-partner may re-enter her life
- ◆ Threats to seek custody of children escalate

### TALKING POINTS

- While receipt of child support can be empowering, a victim's involvement in the child support system may increase or exacerbate their risks in a number of specific ways.  
**[READ EACH BULLET ON SLIDE]**
- Certain child support procedures or requirements can pose a risk for custodial parents who are currently being abused by the children's father.
- And as we just mentioned, abuse in a past relationship may become a current problem if, as a result of child support enforcement activities, an abusive ex-partner is located and re-enters the victim's life.
- As we have mentioned earlier, risks of abuse can increase for some victims during times of pregnancy, after the birth of a child, and during times of separation.
- Where there is ongoing contact between a parent and a child, due to court orders or other arrangements, it is expected that safety issues for the family be addressed.

**TIP: Participants can be asked to identify other risks that might arise.** These might include: intimidation during court appearances; demanding or gaining access and visitation that places children or victim at risk; family members may be placed at risk.

Over 90% of women with  
current/former abusive  
partners indicate an interest in  
pursuing child support  
*IF THEY CAN DO SO SAFELY*<sup>(8)</sup>

#### TALKING POINTS

- This important finding from Jessica Pearson and colleagues from the Center for Policy Research in Denver, CO really provides the framework for our work at the intersection of domestic violence and child support.
- Over 90% of domestic violence victims want to pursue child support “if they can do so safely and confidentially.”
- They want their children to receive support from their fathers and they don’t want these fathers to be “excused” from paying child support because they are violent.
- Our challenge then is how to help clients pursue child support safely – identifying the risks that our clients face and responding appropriately.



## Domestic Violence and Economic Support

17

Safety issues can come up  
at any point in the  
child support process.

### TALKING POINTS

- This is another headline from the training. As we stressed earlier, as tactics of abuse change, so will the victim's need for safeguards.
- As a practical matter, what does that mean? **[GO TO NEXT SLIDE]**

## Safely Pursuing Child Support

18

- ◆ Provide information to victims at all stages
- ◆ Create safe and confidential opportunities to disclose
- ◆ Individualize strategy - including “red light” and “yellow light” strategies when appropriate
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality
- ◆ Train staff and build relationships with domestic violence partners

### TALKING POINTS

- We’ll be going over each of these in more detail in a minute, but these are the key elements of a safety-focused approach within the child support context.

**[READ EACH BULLET ON SLIDE]**

# DISCLOSURE

19

Disclosing domestic violence is  
difficult and sometimes  
dangerous – but there are steps  
you can take to facilitate  
disclosure.

## TALKING POINTS

The decision to disclose domestic violence is a difficult one for many domestic violence victims.

There are many reasons why someone would choose not to talk about abuse they are experiencing. What makes disclosing domestic violence hard?

Here's what victims have shared with advocates:

- They may be afraid for their own or their children's safety. An abuser may have made serious threats such as, "If you ever tell anyone, I'll hurt you and the kids." or "I'll make sure you never see the kids again" and has made good on threats in the past.
- They may not feel safe in your office. There may not be enough privacy to talk about the abuse.
- They may have had an experience with another agency that left them feeling unsafe and cautious.
- Or a friend or relative of the abuser may work in your office.
- They may need some time to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- A victim may have many reasons to believe that talking about the abuse can only make their situation worse.
- They may have told a friend who didn't believe them or made them feel that the abuse was their fault.
- They may have told a family member who then told the abuser, and they got hurt.

**Given these realities, what can we do? [NEXT SLIDE]**

## What supports disclosure?

20

- ◆ Messages that say this is a safe, informed place in which to tell and that YOU are a safe, informed person to tell.
- ◆ Victims/survivors understand how and by whom the information will be used.
- ◆ They have repeated opportunities to disclose.
- ◆ They receive respect and validation upon disclosure, and their confidentiality and privacy is respected.

### TALKING POINTS

Let's look at some of these in more detail...

- The first bullet on the slide suggests that we make sure that we communicate that we care about the safety of our clients.
- Are there posters or brochures in our waiting rooms that tell our clients that domestic violence is something we care about and they can talk to us about it?

### [YOU CAN ASK PARTICIPANTS TO THINK ABOUT THEIR OWN OFFICES AND WAITING ROOMS]

- The second step we can take is to make sure that our clients understand how our process works and how information that they share with us, particularly about any abuse they experience, will be shared. We'll talk about this more later in the training.
- As we've discussed, some victims may have had negative experiences disclosing domestic violence in the past or been threatened with increased abuse if they tell anyone, so they are understandably cautious.
- Or they may not have safety concerns when you talk to them at intake, but violence becomes an issue once paternity has been established or enforcement actions begin.
- It is important, then, to provide multiple opportunities for them to tell you about any safety concerns they may have and not just limit your questions to intake.
- Victims have also identified the importance of being reassured that their privacy and confidentiality will be respected, and that they themselves are treated with respect and validation.

## Safely Enforcing Child Support

21

In order to do good safety planning,  
domestic violence victims/survivors need  
*accurate, timely and complete information*  
about their  
*responsibilities*  
and the  
*options, resources and confidentiality*  
protections available to them.

### TALKING POINTS

- While child support workers are not expected to help develop full safety plans for clients - that is the role of advocates - it is important for you to know about safety planning and how important it is for domestic violence victims.
- Safety planning can best be understood as a victim's response to an abusive partner's tactics of control. Safety planning is a process. As an abuser's tactics change, so must the victim's safety plan.
- For example, if an abusive partner begins showing up at work or stalking her, her safety plan needs to be changed.
- Safety plans are short-term – how to get through the day or the week – and long-term – waiting to leave until the kids are out of high school and more independent, or until she is able to complete her GED or finish college.
- But critical to effective safety planning is good information. Within the child support process, that means victims need accurate, timely and complete information about their responsibilities, and the options, resources and confidentiality protections available to them.

## What do clients need to know?

22

- ◆ Parents will be asked to provide information.
- ◆ If the parents are not married, paternity must be established.
- ◆ Attendance at court proceedings, conferences and hearings may be required.
- ◆ Court papers with names/addresses of both parents will be sent to each party.
- ◆ A range of enforcement strategies may be employed.
- ◆ Each step may create or increase risks from abusive partner or ex-partner.

### TALKING POINTS

- Here is a list of the types of specific information that domestic violence victims need to know – whether or not they have told you they are domestic violence victims – in order to make decisions and engage in informed safety planning.

**[READ EACH BULLET ON SLIDE]**

## Addressing Safety Risks (old paradigm)

23

### “Red Light” - “Green Light”

- ◆ TANF applicants/recipients can request a good cause waiver of the cooperation requirements.
- ◆ Victims not receiving TANF could elect to not file for child support.
- ◆ For everyone else, full enforcement would occur.

#### TALKING POINTS

- Historically, there have been what we can think of as two responses to safety risks – a “red light” response or STOP, and a “green light” response or full steam ahead.
- Under “red light” responses, TANF/Medicaid applicants or recipients could request a “good cause” waiver of cooperation requirements, which would stop any child support action.
- Victims not receiving TANF, Medicaid, or other assistance could elect not to file for child support.
- And for everyone else, full enforcement would occur.

## Safely Pursuing Child Support “Yellow Light” Approaches

24

- ◆ **Develop individualized case management and enforcement plans when possible**
  - Identify specific risks facing the client and respond to those specific risks as possible
- ◆ **Ensure client participation in decision-making**
- ◆ **Institute safety and confidentiality procedures**
  - Use the Family Violence Indicator (FVI) and other means to reduce ability of abuser to use child support system to track down victim

### TALKING POINTS

- After the safety risks of domestic violence victims were more fully understood, a “yellow light” approach to pursuing child support was developed.
- Key aspects of this approach are described in the next two slides.
- When domestic violence issues have been disclosed, it is important to explore with the victim when participating in the child support program might pose a risk for them and what steps might be taken to address these concerns.
- For example, if the victim is concerned that the noncustodial parent might find them through court papers or by following them after court hearings, identify the steps that can be taken to protect location information and arrange an escort from the court house.
- If a victim is concerned that enforcement action might trigger retaliation against them or place their children at risk, make sure that they have the time and information to make an informed decision about whether to proceed.
- Explore what steps can be taken to minimize these risks, including providing them adequate notice of upcoming enforcement actions, using the Family Violence Indicator to protect any information that could be used to locate them, and referring to local domestic violence programs that can help them develop a safety plan.



## Safely Pursuing Child Support “Yellow Light” Approaches

25

- ◆ **Use enforcement tools selectively**
  - Understand which enforcement mechanism might increase risk and avoid if possible (if necessary to proceed)
- ◆ **Provide notice to clients prior to taking actions that may pose risk to allow time for victim to design a safety plan**
  - For example, when papers are to be served, when face-to-face meetings are inevitable

### TALKING POINTS

- There will be times that risk cannot be avoided, such as when a particular enforcement action is necessary.
- In this case, providing time for the victim to develop safety measures may be critically important.
- A particularly dangerous time for some domestic violence victims will be the point when the noncustodial parent receives notice of child support actions, including related to paternity, establishment of child support orders, and enforcement of those orders. The noncustodial parent may blame the victim and escalate their threats and abuse in an effort to get them to “stop” the child support enforcement process.
- It is important for victims to know what is happening and when, so they can take appropriate safety measures in the event of such retaliation.

## “Good Cause” Best Practices

26

- Upon receiving a good cause request, halt the child support process until a determination is made.
- Involve the claimant in the GC determination.
- Never contact the NCP to substantiate a GC claim.
- Require minimal amount of documentation.
- Periodically review good cause cases to see if the situation has changed and child support can be pursued safely.
- If good cause is denied, provide ample notice before proceeding and consult to see if individualized enforcement plan should be developed.

### TALKING POINTS

- For some domestic violence victims, it remains too dangerous to establish paternity or pursue child support due to the ongoing danger this would pose to the victim or her children. Even under a “yellow-light” approach, the option for claiming “good cause” remains critically important.
- A client may claim “good cause” for a waiver of a Medicaid, TANF, or cash assistance program requirement to pursue child support when the program requirements make it difficult to escape violence or put the individual or other family members at risk of further domestic violence.
- As child support agencies around the country have increased their understanding of the domestic violence issues faced by their clients, and integrated a domestic violence response into their ongoing policies and practices, the “good cause” best practices listed on this slide and the next have emerged.
- Taking these steps will help ensure that the process of filing for “good cause” is not in itself a danger for the victim.
- Let’s review them... **[READ EACH BULLET ON SLIDE]**

## Improving “Good Cause” Practice

27

- Continue to evaluate and improve processes for informing participants of good cause options.
- Develop mechanism for measuring how many people apply for, are granted, and are denied good cause.
- Consider connecting everyone denied good cause with a domestic violence advocate.

### TALKING POINTS

- And here are some additional steps... **[READ EACH BULLET ON SLIDE]**

# The Family Violence Indicator

28

**A Family Violence Indicator (FVI)  
can be placed on the victim and child to protect  
addresses and other confidential information.**

Should function to automatically block  
a victim's address from appearing on  
pleadings and correspondence and alert  
child support workers to risk.

## TALKING POINTS

- As you know, a Family Violence Indicator (FVI) can be used to block a victim's address from appearing on any pleadings and correspondence.
- The FVI also serves to alert child support workers to risks that might be involved in the case.
- States are required to place an FVI on any person's record in the State Case Registry (SCR) if the disclosure of location data could jeopardize the safety of the party or child in the case.
- The FVI prevents any information from being released from the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) to any state, without a legal override by an authorized person.
- States have different methods of setting the FVI, though in all states the FVI should be set on the people who need protection, not on the perpetrator of family violence.
- It is very important that the FVI be used consistently and appropriately.
- When flags are placed on both parties, this may block a survivor's ability to receive child support.

## Other Strategies to Address Risk

29

- ❑ Require check-in of all visitors/clients
- ❑ Conduct interviews and conferences in private space
- ❑ Keep all outside doors locked or secure
- ❑ Allow survivor to park in well-lit areas near building
- ❑ Have security/sheriff available when requested, including to escort a survivor to and from her transportation
- ❑ Use posters, flyers and web-based information to communicate that you understand and care about safety issues

### TALKING POINTS

- In addition to the approaches we have already discussed, here are additional strategies that child support offices have developed and are recommended as part of an enhanced attention to the safety issues of child support clients.

### [READ EACH BULLET ON SLIDE]

- **[AFTER LAST BULLET]** There have been a number of posters developed for use in TANF and child support offices to help communicate the message that this is a safe place to talk about abuse or violence in your relationship — information about these will be provided in a minute when we talk about resources. These flyers and posters can be placed in waiting rooms and restrooms at your offices.

**TIP:** Domestic violence programs often have palm cards, posters, and other materials designed to raise awareness about domestic violence and describe the help that is available for victims, as well as for their family and friends.

## Making Child Support Work for Domestic Violence Victims

30

- ❑ Universally provide information about potential risks and safeguards at all stages of the process
- ❑ Create safe and confidential opportunities to disclose
- ❑ Build strong partnerships with local and state domestic violence programs and coalitions and engage in ongoing cross-training
- ❑ Gather – and use – data to improve response

### TALKING POINTS

- How do we make child support work for domestic violence victims?
- Universally providing information about potential risks and safeguards at all stages of the child support process, and creating safe opportunities to disclose domestic violence are critically important, as we have stressed throughout this training.

Two additional best practices include:

1. building partnerships with local and state domestic violence experts to assist with ongoing training, but also to help respond to victims ongoing safety and support needs, and
2. gathering data about what is going on in your office to identify and respond to domestic violence issues. This can include the number and types of domestic violence disclosures, the use of the FVI, and the strategies employed by workers to respond to safety concerns.



#### TALKING POINTS

- As many of you know, Family Violence has its own bubble within the bubble chart developed by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, and is integrated into each of these aspects.

# TAKE AWAYS

32

- Survivors of domestic violence need safe access to child support services
- Survivors can face a host of issues and barriers
- Effective and safe service requires an intentional, ongoing and integrated approach
- Providing universal information enhances safety and efficiency
- Domestic violence programs/experts are important partners and resources for you and your clients

## TALKING POINTS

- Finally, another review of the key points we hope that you are taking away from this training.

**[READ EACH BULLET ON SLIDE]**



# SOURCES

33

- (1) Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- (2) Durose, M. R., et al. (2005). *Family Violence Statistics: Including Statistics on Strangers and Acquaintances*. Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- (3) Davies, J. (2008, June). *When Battered Women Stay...Advocacy Beyond Leaving*. Harrisburg, PA: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence, Publication #20.
- (4) Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence - Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Block, C. R. (2004). *Risk Factors for Death or Life-Threatening Injury for Abused Women in Chicago*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

## TALKING POINTS

- Here are full cites for the statistics that were included in the presentation in case you had any questions or were looking for more information.

## SOURCES

34

- (5) Sullivan, C., et al. (1992). After the Crisis: A Needs Assessment of Women Leaving a Domestic Violence Shelter. *Violence and Victims*, 7, 267.
- (6) Lyon, E. (1997). *Poverty, Welfare, and Battered Women: What Does the Research Tells Us?* Harrisburg, PA: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.
- (7) Lindhorst, T., et al. (2007). Longitudinal Effects of Domestic Violence on Employment and Welfare Outcomes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22, 812 – 828. Lindhorst, T., et al. (2008). Screening for Domestic Violence in Public Welfare Offices: An Analysis of Case Manager and Client Interactions. *Violence Against Women*, 14, 5 – 28.
- (8) Pearson, J., & Thoennes, N. (2000). New directions for child support agencies when domestic violence is an issue. *Policy and Practice*, 58, 29-36.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

35

**OCSE** - For additional training resources, including a “We Care About Your Safety” Outreach Card (English and Spanish), a Case Worker Desk Card, and other training resources:

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse)

**National Resource Center on Domestic Violence** - For a special online collection of research, policy and practice information, and other materials related to domestic violence and child support issues:

[www.vawnet.org/special-collections/ChildSupport.php](http://www.vawnet.org/special-collections/ChildSupport.php)

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** - For direct assistance for victims and outreach/public education resources:

[www.thehotline.org/resources/](http://www.thehotline.org/resources/)

### TALKING POINTS

- For additional resources, please use the following web links. [REFER TO SLIDE]



**Thank you!**

**TALKING POINTS**

- Thank you for your participation today. What we do can make a real difference for domestic violence victims who are trying to pursue child support safely.