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**Grafton County Greenbook Project**

**Baseline Evaluation Report:  
Primary Partner and Cross System Goals**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents all baseline data collected for the local evaluation of the Grafton County Greenbook Project. The recommendations contained in *Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice*,<sup>1</sup> known informally as the *Greenbook*, provide a model for improving system response to families when domestic violence and child abuse/neglect co-occur. The Greenbook Project, developed to implement these recommendations, is a five-year federally funded initiative<sup>2</sup> designed to bring together the court system, child protective services, and domestic violence agencies to better address the needs of families experiencing the co-occurrence. Grafton County is one of six Greenbook demonstration sites in the country. The Grafton County Greenbook Project has three primary partners: the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), Grafton County Family Division and District Courts, and the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (Coalition), including the four crisis centers serving Grafton County. Each primary partner (Court, DCYF, and crisis centers /Coalition) formed a team to address individual system's goals, and each team has implemented activities designed to reach its goals.<sup>3</sup> Cross systems goals, or those that require multidisciplinary efforts, were also established.

A significant component of the Greenbook Project is a local evaluation of the Project's success in achieving its goals. The local Greenbook evaluation will compare baseline information—data collected on the status of the key systems prior to implementation—with information collected in the final year of the Project. The Project baseline year is 2001, unless otherwise specified. The Project evaluation design is based on multiple indicators to measure the desired Project outcomes and uses multiple types and sources of data which increases the reliability of measurement. When feasible, baseline statistics were collected for Grafton County as well as the rest of the State for comparison purposes and to assist in determining causation.

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<sup>1</sup> Schecter, S. and Edleson, J. (1999). *Effective intervention in domestic violence and child maltreatment cases: Guidelines for policy and practice*. National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Reno, Nevada.

<sup>2</sup>The Project is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and private foundations: Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. Private foundation funding was granted for the Project's first three years only.

<sup>3</sup> Court-Appointed Special Advocates of New Hampshire (CASA) became involved with the Grafton County Greenbook Project in 2002, but is not technically a primary partner to the Project.

Many types of data pertaining to Project goals are presented in this report, which includes data from the following sources:

- § Crisis center/Coalition data
- § DCYF aggregate data: National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and Bridges data
- § Focus groups and interviews with domestic violence survivors
- § Focus groups and interviews with domestic violence advocates and Domestic Violence Program Specialists (DVPSs)
- § Focus groups with Child Protective Service Workers (CPSWs)
- § DCYF file data
- § *Direct Service Worker Survey* data
- § *Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey* data
- § Court child abuse/neglect file data
- § Court civil domestic violence case file data
- § Interviews with judges and court staff
- § Data from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)
- § *Rural Women's Needs Survey* data
- § Focus groups with domestic violence perpetrators involved with batterer intervention programs

## **BASELINE STATUS OF CRISIS CENTER/COALITION GOALS**

### **The Domestic Violence Program Specialist (DVPS)**

Several indicators were used to assess the goal of increasing the consistent and effective use of the DVPS. Overall, baseline data suggest considerable variation in the practices of the DVPS. Data also suggest a need for improving the process by which referrals were made to the DVPS by DCYF and the way the DVPS contacted clients. In particular, the data suggest that there was a need to improve the manner and process by which DCYF and the DVPS collaborate to insure the safety and well-being of their clients (e.g., increase collaboration around case-specific planning).

### **Collaboration**

To a great extent, the success of Greenbook pivots on its ability to improve collaboration across the three primary partners. Collaboration was measured in a number of ways, including advocates' knowledge of partner systems and the working relationships between and among systems. The results of the baseline evaluation showed that at the start, both knowledge and interactions were generally satisfactory or better. Overall, survey and focus group/interview results indicated that crisis center staff perceived their level of knowledge about the operations of the court system in the moderate to high range at the beginning of the Project. Results of the

*Direct Service Worker Survey*, suggested that advocates believed they were less knowledgeable about the operations of DCYF than they were of the court system.

### **Mandated Referrals**

One way the systems have been compelled to interact is when there is an involuntary referral of a battered woman, by the court or DCYF, to domestic violence services. On the one hand, we found that data from interviews and focus groups with advocates and CPSWs suggested that mandating crisis center services was fairly uncommon in Grafton County in the beginning of the Project.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, data from court and DCYF files indicated that at the start of the Project, approximately 25% to 40% of domestic violence victims who had court-involved DCYF cases were mandated to seek crisis center services. Although some question the utility of this practice due to concerns about safety and because it departs from the empowerment philosophy favored by battered women's advocates, several advocates and victims did acknowledge the potential helpfulness of this approach. Our results, taken overall, suggest that there is not a uniform answer to the question of what constitutes an effective response to a client mandated to seek services. Nationally, there is no research or consensus on the appropriateness of mandating battered women to crisis center services or on best practices in these matters.

### **State Laws**

Another important area identified by many crisis center staff focus group and interview participants was the lack of clarity found in State laws and criteria for categorizing children's exposure to domestic violence as child abuse/neglect. We expect that this may be a priority area as the work of Greenbook progresses and that over time specific guidelines can be provided to staff on this important matter.

### **Education on Children's Exposure to Domestic Violence**

Knowledge, in terms of the research literature, of the effects of domestic violence on children is still evolving. Although research is currently better able to enumerate the potential negative effects of family violence on children, more work is needed on understanding the factors that buffer these effects, such as the age and sex of the child, and the behaviors of the non-offending parent.<sup>5</sup> Thus, keeping current with research is a way for advocates to provide families with services that are based in the best evidence. We found that crisis center staff

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this report, "we" refers to the local research team unless otherwise specified.

<sup>5</sup> For example: Kaufman Kantor, G. & Little, L. (2002). Defining the boundaries of child neglect. When does domestic violence equate with parental failure to protect? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18 (4), 338-355.

expressed opinions and knowledge about how exposure to domestic violence can impact children that indicated familiarity with research and theory. It appeared to be a general practice to educate women about the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children, but in some instances this was dependent on whether the victim initiated the discussion or expressed concerns about a child. Similarly, the crisis center clients we spoke with reported that advocates generally provided them with information about the potential impact of exposure on children.

### **Services to Women and Children**

We expect that as the Project progresses, better service models will be put in place for women and children and that a greater number of children will be served by the crisis centers serving Grafton County residents. Coalition statistics from 2001 indicated there were 33 crisis center clients who were from Grafton County that were under the age of 18. The type of crisis center services provided to the greatest number of children was information and referral services (15 children), followed by crisis counseling (ten children).

Advocates and domestic violence victims who participated in focus groups and interviews reported that children's needs were primarily being addressed by crisis centers through education, support and/or referrals made to mothers, rather than directly working with children. Some form of general counseling was the most common referral for children. Results suggest that safety planning with a focus on both victim and child safety was being addressed by Grafton County crisis centers at the beginning of the Project.

Little is known about the extent to which advocates provide supportive interventions to battered women who are perpetrators of child abuse/neglect due to the lack of available data. As the Greenbook model is further refined, the Coalition/crisis centers should consider examining these practices more closely and to document their efforts.

## **BASELINE STATUS OF DCYF GOALS**

### **Prevalence and Characteristics of Co-occurrence of Child Abuse/Neglect and Domestic Violence**

Data from DCYF file reviews indicated the prevalence of co-occurrence cases in Grafton County was 29%. However, our analysis of NCANDS data for 2001 showed the percentage of co-occurrence cases for Grafton County and the rest of the State was 53%. This percentage is higher than previous DCYF estimates, which is likely due to the fact that for purposes of analysis we excluded children for whom data were missing on the domestic violence variable. Estimates

of co-occurrence rates are expected to shift at the end of the Project as assessment techniques are enhanced.

Over half of the 27 co-occurrence cases examined in file reviews involved children under the age of five and 26% were children under the age of one. Almost all co-occurrence cases involved neglect of a child.

Our analysis showed that in Grafton County and the rest of the State, the substantiation rate<sup>6</sup> was almost three times greater for co-occurrence cases than non-co-occurrence cases and that the difference in rates was statistically significant. However, it is not possible to conclude that there was a causal relationship, i.e., that co-occurrence cases were treated differently solely because of the presence of domestic violence. In fact, the higher substantiation rate may be related to other factors that are correlated with domestic violence. For example, we found that statewide, 51% of the children with domestic violence were reported for physical abuse, as compared to 30% of the children without domestic violence.

### **Recognition of Domestic Violence**

We were hindered in our ability to thoroughly assess DCYF's recognition of domestic violence at baseline because other than descriptions of episodes where children were directly involved in the violent episode, there was very little documentation by the CPSW on all assessment information relevant to domestic violence in the co-occurrence cases. CPSW focus group data were consistent with findings from the file review in that at the start of the Project there appeared to be little depth or consistency in CPSW assessment of domestic violence, including assessment of duration, severity, presence of weapons in the home, resulting injuries to the adult victim or child, and assessment of domestic violence victims' protective capacities. This suggests there is considerable room for improvement in achieving this goal.

One cautionary note is that without DCYF worker discretion regarding access to records, increasingly detailed documentation of domestic violence assessments could increase the risk of harm to domestic violence victims. Since all DCYF reports submitted to the court are currently accessible to all parties to a case, the Project partners should consider how a more comprehensive assessment of domestic violence by CPSWs could be accomplished without negatively impacting victims.

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<sup>6</sup> Allegations of abuse/neglect are "substantiated" if DCYF concludes the allegation to be supported or founded by State law.

## **Understanding Domestic Violence and Other Systems**

*Direct Service Worker Survey* results indicate most of the DCYF workers surveyed had some training in domestic violence and co-occurrence in the last year. The six DCYF workers surveyed reported high levels of knowledge about the Project's other primary partners. Because the response rate was very low for this survey, we cannot generalize these results to draw any conclusions about the amount of training or knowledge levels in the broader population of Grafton County DCYF staff members.

Focus group data suggest the relationship between DCYF and DVPSs in Grafton County was a positive one, with strong collaboration reported by most participants.

Overall, the data suggest CPSWs perceived their level of knowledge of domestic violence and their understanding of the court system and crisis centers to be very good early on in the Project.

### **Response to Domestic Violence**

**Family centered safety and case planning.**<sup>7</sup> DCYF staff participating in the focus groups that we conducted reported they were most comfortable with developing safety plans routinely with children of domestic violence victims, but left safety planning specific to adult victims to others, such as the DVPS.

Data collected on services provided to victims from the NCANDS database indicated that, overall, families with domestic violence received more types of services than other families. The most frequently provided services in co-occurrence cases according to NCANDS were case management (74% of the children in assessments involving domestic violence), day care (42%) and mental health and transportation (37% of the children/families for each).

DCYF file review data on service referrals for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence showed that, typically, three types of services were referred to domestic violence victims. The most common referral was for mental health treatment (62% of the victims).

Interpretation of quantitative data on the number of services provided by DCYF in co-occurrence cases was limited by the fact that we do not know how many and which services each family actually needed, what type of prior or ongoing services they may already have been receiving, or if services were of adequate quality. The crucial issues are that service plans are tailored to the unique needs of individuals and that they are perceived as helpful and meaningful.

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<sup>7</sup> "Safety planning" refers to conversations about safety strategies that take place with all families involved with DCYF. "Case planning" refers to the intervention and services provided only to those families involved in founded assessments.



Data on the number of services provided should be considered in combination with qualitative data from interviews with victims regarding their experiences with DCYF service plans.

Interviews with DCYF-involved domestic violence victims revealed that participants were referred to a variety of services, with varying perceptions as to the effectiveness of those services. Only one participant reported that there was a service she felt she needed but could not get. All seven participants who ever had an open DCYF case were mandated to crisis center services.<sup>8</sup>

DCYF file review data indicated one-half of the domestic violence perpetrators charged with child abuse/neglect were referred to batterer intervention programs.

**Responses to non-offending parents and individualized case plans.** Baseline data from DCYF files, court abuse/neglect files, and focus groups and interviews suggest that non-offending parents rarely had petitions for child abuse or neglect for failure to protect filed against them by CPSWs working in the district offices that serve Grafton County at the beginning of the Project.

An examination of indicators used to assess baseline status on the use of individualized case plans found that a majority of DCYF-involved domestic violence perpetrators had been ordered out of the home and had service plans that were unique and separate from the victim's service plan. These findings suggest baseline practices consistent with DCYF goals.

**Alternative case responses.** Voluntary type cases were rare dispositions for DCYF reports regardless of the presence of domestic violence or the geographical area of the State where a report was assessed, according to 2001 NCANDS data. Consistent with efforts toward avoiding unnecessarily labeling non-offending domestic violence victims as neglectful or abusive, a Greenbook recommendation is that more domestic violence cases will be handled without court involvement. However, this may not be a realistic expectation given the very low percentage of cases where DCYF provides services without court involvement and the current State budget constraints.

**Incidence of out of home placements.** Data from NCANDS, DCYF files, and Family Division abuse/neglect files indicated that in Grafton County, at the start of the Project, between 47% (according to NCANDS) and 70% (according to Family Division files) of the founded

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<sup>8</sup> The high proportion of interviewees mandated to crisis center services was most likely a reflection of how interview participants were recruited (largely through DVPSs) rather than an indication of the proportion of all DCYF-involved domestic violence victims who were ordered to crisis center services.

abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence also involved an out of home placement for the abused/neglected child. While NCANDS data suggest that children from homes where domestic violence was identified were more likely to be placed out of the home than children from homes without domestic violence identified, we cannot infer that the domestic violence caused the out of home placement. As stated previously, DCYF and court file reviews showed that the families with open, court-involved DCYF cases were families with multiple problems in addition to domestic violence.

**Duration of out of home placements.** Data from NCANDS, DCYF files, and Family Division abuse/neglect files showed that in Grafton County, at the start of the Project, between 35% and 68% of the founded abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence who had been placed out of the home were reunified by the time of data collection. According to these data sources, the average duration of these placements for reunified children was between six and 13 months. The proportion of children who had been reunified with parents and the duration of out of home placements varied across data types due to the different time frames between the dates of the child removal and the dates of data collection across different methods.<sup>9</sup> Also, given the limited cross-sectional nature of these data, no conclusions can be drawn on these matters. File review data showed that one-quarter of co-occurrence cases resulted in the termination of parental rights (of the perpetrators of abuse/neglect). Findings showed no apparent correlation between involvement of the DVPS, the likelihood of placement, or the duration of out of home placement.

**Recidivism.** According to our analysis of NCANDS data for 2001, nearly one-half of the children in 2001 co-occurrence cases had one or more prior founded incidents of abuse/neglect.<sup>10</sup>

## **BASELINE STATUS OF COURT GOALS**

### **Information Sharing Among and Between Courts**

Interviews with clerks and judges completed in 2002 revealed that there was not a countywide standardized procedure for sharing case information between Family Division and District Courts. None of the databases for any of the courts was accessible to another court

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<sup>9</sup> For example, the Family Division abuse/neglect cases reviewed could have been opened in 1998 and we reviewed the file in 2004, allowing six years for reunification. In contrast, the DCYF cases reviewed were all opened in 2001 and reviewed in 2004, allowing three years for reunification.

<sup>10</sup> “Founded incidents” were allegations of abuse/neglect found true by the court.

unless they were housed in the same building. Court staff and judges said they were not aware of any formal procedures for tracking cases from one District Court to another, or from one Family Division location to another. All baseline data suggested that the District Court and Family Division did not frequently communicate information across courts. Furthermore, most judges did not view this as problematic.

Data from the Administrative Office of the Courts showed that a sizable proportion of defendants in 2001 civil domestic violence cases had concurrent or prior criminal involvement (68%) but domestic violence case file data indicated that only a small proportion of the cases had documentation to this effect in the file. This is notable because research literature indicates that domestic violence perpetrators with criminal histories, particularly histories of non-family violent crimes, or a history of severe violence within the family, are among the most dangerous<sup>11</sup> and, therefore, these results reinforce the importance of Greenbook Project efforts toward improving information sharing among and between Family Division and District Courts. Because the means for information sharing between and among the four court locations is hampered by limitations in technology (at the time this report is being written), it seems all the more important for paper files to contain detailed and thorough documentation of defendants' prior and concurrent criminal involvement.

### **Court Assessment of Risk of Co-occurrence and Addressing Families' Needs**

Baseline data from court abuse/neglect case files on 17 families indicated that mothers (domestic violence victims) and children in co-occurrence cases were frequently ordered to multiple services. About one-third of the mothers were ordered to participate in crisis center services. In contrast, data obtained from civil domestic violence cases with children in the home suggested that service referrals by the court for adult victims and children in these cases were rare.<sup>12</sup>

As noted previously, data from court files on the number of services ordered is only an indirect measure of how well the court is addressing the needs of families and, in the final

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<sup>11</sup> For example: Massachusetts Department of Social Services' Domestic Violence Unit. (2004). *Accountability and connection with abusive men: A new child protection response to increasing family safety*. San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund; F. Mederos. At the same time, many domestic violence perpetrators who are very violent toward intimate partners have no criminal record.

<sup>12</sup> A service referral from the court is defined as a suggestion (as opposed to an order) as to where an individual could obtain assistance if she voluntarily chose to do so. In 2001, such referrals were not necessarily documented in the civil domestic violence case files.

analysis, should only be considered in combination with qualitative data from interviews with victims regarding their experiences with court-ordered service plans.

### **Accountability for and Monitoring of Violent Behavior of Parents**

Although data were limited, it appeared that the court was already frequently ordering violent parents out of the home instead of children in abuse/neglect cases at the start of the Project.

A review of civil domestic violence case files indicated that a minority (about one-third) of the defendants were ordered to pay child support. These files also indicated defendants were rarely ordered to attend a batterer intervention program (or any other service). Orders for domestic violence perpetrators to attend batterer intervention programs were more frequent in child abuse/neglect cases, but even in these cases, only about one-third of the perpetrators were ordered to batterer intervention.

One measure of improved monitoring of violent behavior of parents identified at the beginning of the Project is the number of compliance reviews conducted by the court in co-occurrence cases. In 2001, the New Hampshire courts did not have a mechanism to allow for compliance reviews in civil domestic violence cases.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, there was no documentation in civil domestic violence case files that compliance reviews were conducted to monitor violent parents' adherence to court orders. The Project will need to consider what is feasible for monitoring or holding domestic violence perpetrators' behaviors accountable in civil cases, given state laws.

### **Court Staff and Judges' Awareness of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse/Neglect**

Results from the *Interagency Survey and Direct Service Worker Survey* suggested most court staff had prior training in the areas of child abuse/neglect, domestic violence, and the co-occurrence but that training and education on co-occurrence issues was not necessarily current or frequent.

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<sup>13</sup> The court can coerce compliance with orders to batterer intervention issued in civil domestic violence cases through its contempt powers, which must be initiated by the plaintiff filing a notice with the court (See New Hampshire District Court Domestic Violence Protocols: <http://www.courts.state.nh.us/district/protocols/dv/index.htm>).

Court staff appeared to have diverse levels of perceived knowledge about DCYF operations, domestic violence program operations, and the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect.<sup>14</sup>

In our interviews with judges regarding services ordered for domestic violence perpetrators, District Court judges said that anger management was recommended or included as part of a negotiated plea much more frequently than batterer intervention, and thus they were more likely to order anger management than batterer intervention in criminal cases. This suggests a need for training for judges (as well as prosecutors and defense attorneys) on the difference between anger management and batterer intervention and the appropriateness of each type of referral for intimate partner violence.

### **Visitation Orders**

Results from interviews with judges indicated visitation decisions were made on a case by case basis and the types of visitation arrangements ordered in domestic violence cases varied widely. Several judges highlighted visitation orders as one of the most challenging aspects of civil domestic violence cases when children are involved.

Twenty-three percent of the final protective orders in cases with children in common denied any visitation between the child/ren and perpetrator. A substantial proportion of visitation orders in final protective orders stated that visits between the domestic violence perpetrator and the child had to be supervised by a third party (42%). In abuse/neglect cases where supervised visitation was ordered for the child and domestic violence perpetrator, none of the court files included any notation that the court explored any designated visitation supervisor's personal or professional training or experience with domestic violence. This may reflect limits in documentation, the court's assumption that DCYF explored supervisors' backgrounds, or it may mean the issue was not addressed by the court.

A majority of visitation orders in abuse/neglect files deferred the specifics of the visitation to another party, most commonly the CPSW or the CPSW and CASA/GAL, as was consistent with court protocol in effect at the time. The Project may want to consider the implications of an increase in the specificity of visitation orders issued by the court in

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<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that self-reported levels of knowledge may be biased. Individuals want to appear knowledgeable to others and/or may not have an accurate sense of their knowledge level. The survey results regarding self-rated levels of knowledge will be more meaningful when compared to the survey results obtained at the end of the Project when groups are re-surveyed.

abuse/neglect cases, namely, a potential decrease in DCYF discretion regarding visitation. It would also require changes to current court protocols and forms.

**Victim perceptions of visitation orders.** Several crisis center clients who participated in focus groups expressed concern about how the court handled decisions regarding domestic violence perpetrators' visitation with children in various types of cases (marital, protective order, and abuse/neglect cases). Concerns centered upon how visitation with someone they and their child/ren were reportedly afraid of would impact their child/ren's emotional well-being. In contrast, most of the court-involved interview participants said they felt the visitation orders issued in the protective orders were specific, detailed, and ensured their child/ren's safety.

**Data limitations.** There are a number of limitations with data from case files, focus groups, and interviews on visitation. One overarching challenge with the data is that because of the wide range of individual family circumstances (including children's ages, emotional health, and quality of relationship with the domestic violence perpetrator, among other factors) it is difficult to identify trends in visitation orders. Case file data on numbers of orders for certain types of visitation will be more meaningful when compared to similar data obtained at the end of the Project. For example, it is impossible to interpret the meaning of the proportion of domestic violence cases where supervised visitation was ordered, because we do not know the proportion of cases where supervised visitation was objectively indicated. Over one-quarter of the domestic violence cases involving children in common to the victim and perpetrator which resulted in final protective orders also had marital cases in the Family Division. These marital cases may have included more details regarding visitation than what was contained in the final orders of protection. Several domestic violence case files stated the defendant shall "comply with conditions specified in marital case."

In regard to the qualitative data from focus groups and interviews, it is important to remember that the sample of participants was non-random and not necessarily representative of all crisis center clients or mothers who petitioned the court for protective orders. The numbers of participants in focus groups and interviews was small, and the number of participants with children in common with their abuser was even smaller. Finally, these were women's perceptions of visitation decisions, and we do not know all aspects of their situations.

### **Court Communication with Victims**

Based on the interviews with judges, there was no existing protocol for court communication with victims on the case status of perpetrators in 2001. The three (out of 11)

court-involved interview participants who were denied a final order of protection stated that they did not understand why it was not granted. A few interview participants noted dissatisfaction with communication from the court in terms of: 1) a timely response to a motion filed; 2) notification of scheduling changes; and 3) language or vocabulary used by the judge that was not understood by the plaintiff.

### **Domestic Violence Victims' Perceptions of the Court**

Most of the focus group and interview participants who had petitioned the court for protective orders were satisfied with the court's decisions and described feeling positive about the process of filing the petition and obtaining a permanent order. Most interview participants were satisfied with the overall court process and reported being treated with sensitivity and respect by court security and court assistants.

A few participants expressed dissatisfaction with court procedures and felt they were not treated with respect by judges. It is important to note that despite asking interview participants to separate their satisfaction with case outcome from satisfaction with case procedures and various court personnel, there was a risk that the case outcome biased the participants' opinion of their experience with the court process and personnel—those denied a final order were all dissatisfied with the “process.” All who reported being satisfied with the court process did obtain a final order.

## **BASELINE STATUS OF CROSS SYSTEMS GOALS**

### **Interagency Collaboration (Crisis Centers, DCYF, Courts, and Batterer Intervention Programs)**

The cross systems goal of increasing interagency collaboration and related goals of increasing effective case collaboration and increasing effective information sharing among the three primary partners and with other organizations were assessed with several types of data. Taken together, the data suggest positive working relationships and interagency collaboration among primary partners at the beginning of the Project. *Interagency Survey* results suggested that in 2001 each of the primary partners had at least weekly contact with other primary partners according to the majority of respondents. There was less frequent contact between primary partners and BIPs.

**Information sharing.** According to results from the *Interagency Survey*, information sharing was the most commonly endorsed reason for contact with the Coalition and the second most common reason given by respondents for contact with DCYF, District Court, Family Division, crisis centers, and BIPS. Many CPSWs, advocates and DVPSs who participated in



focus groups and interviews reported that confidentiality policies were perceived as minor challenges in case-specific collaboration.

### **Service Needs and Challenges in Obtaining Services for Domestic Violence Victims in Grafton County**

Information on service needs of domestic violence victims and community service gaps in Grafton County was obtained from multiple sources. Overall, the results indicated that the biggest gaps in services in Grafton County for families impacted by domestic violence and/or child abuse/neglect were affordable housing or housing assistance, financial assistance, and mental health services. The primary barriers to obtaining wanted services included lack of health insurance (e.g., preventing receipt of mental health services), lack of availability (e.g., subsidized housing), and lack of transportation. Several other gaps in services and barriers to accessing needed services were noted. Concerns about the responses of police officers to victims were raised by several domestic violence victims interviewed.

The NH Department of Health and Human Services employees involved with women receiving TANF benefits that we interviewed reported that less than 5% of their clients have disclosed domestic violence. Based on prior research indicating that a high proportion of women receiving TANF benefits are victims of domestic violence,<sup>15</sup> it appears that the Family Violence Option (FVO) may be under-utilized in New Hampshire. Caution must be used in making generalizations from the interview information, as it is based on three individuals who were asked to simply estimate the proportion of women who have disclosed domestic violence to them. Therefore, further research is needed on the extent of utilization of the FVO and the reasons underlying its possible under-utilization. Lack of use of the FVO has important implications for the practices of domestic violence advocates and DHHS staff regarding informing victims of their options.

### **Recognition and Understanding of Child Abuse/Neglect and Domestic Violence**

Individuals' and agencies' levels of knowledge and awareness of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence, including knowledge of the operations and practices of crisis centers, DCYF, and the court system, were assessed with *Interagency Survey* data, 2001 Coalition data, and 2001 NCANDS data.

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<sup>15</sup> For example: Raphael, J. and Tolman, R.M. (1997). *Trapped by poverty, trapped by abuse: New evidence documenting the relationship between domestic violence and welfare* (Ann Arbor Michigan and Chicago, Illinois: Project for Research on Welfare, Work and Domestic Violence, April 1997.)



Results from the Interagency Survey indicated that, on average, survey respondents perceived themselves as slightly to moderately knowledgeable about the court and DCYF and moderately to very knowledgeable about crisis centers. Almost all respondents reported having many hours of training on child abuse/neglect and domestic violence but several had no training on the co-occurrence.

Individuals' and agencies' levels of knowledge and awareness of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence were also assessed with Coalition and NCANDS data on the number of referrals made to crisis centers and DCYF from community agencies. Statistics from the Coalition indicated that crisis centers serving Grafton County received 847 referrals from other organizations/agencies in the community in 2001. NCANDS data indicated that DCYF received 396 screened in reports of abuse/neglect involving Grafton County residents in 2001. These reports most frequently involved allegations of neglect.

### **Cultural Competency of all Three Systems (Including Issues Related to Race, Ethnicity, Poverty, Rural Area, etc.)**

We assessed the cultural competency of the three primary partners at the start of the Project with statistics on the race/ethnicity of clients and perceptions of domestic violence victims on how they were treated by each primary partner.

The data obtained on the racial/ethnic composition of clients of the primary partners indicated that ethnic/racial composition among clients of DCYF, the Family Division, and crisis centers was essentially consistent with that of the population of the county. There was no apparent overrepresentation of families of color involved with DCYF or the Family Division in Grafton County in 2001 and no under-representation of clients of color among crisis center clients in 2001.

The majority of domestic violence victims in focus groups and interviews who had experience with DCYF, crisis centers, and/or the court reported they were treated with respect and sensitivity by staff and judges. Specific individuals reported negative experiences but only one was apparently related to issues of cultural competency—one person's difficulty understanding the language used by the court pointed to the importance of sensitivity to educational and intellectual differences.

## **Domestic Violence Perpetrator's Perceptions of the Courts, DCYF, BIPs and other Community Services**

We obtained information from domestic violence perpetrators on their experiences with Grafton County court, DCYF, BIPs, and other community services by conducting two focus groups with perpetrators whose victims had children living in the home at the time of the abuse (n=13). Perpetrator focus groups were conducted to gain information to inform Project program activities rather than to assess any specific Project goal. It is important to bear in mind that the focus group participants included men who had been involved with the BIPs for varying lengths of time, ranging from just starting the program to completion of the program. Also, we have no way of knowing whether the reported experiences of focus group participants who were critical of law enforcement or the court were minimizing their violence or attempting to blame others for their current situations.

**Children, custody and visitation.** Participants reported that parenting issues were addressed in BIPs either informally, such as when men bring specific incidents involving their children to sessions, or more formally, such as receiving education on positive discipline techniques. Participants reported that they specifically talked about how children are affected by fighting and violence in the home in BIP sessions. Focus group participants identified behaviors in their children that they attributed to witnessing domestic violence. The behaviors mentioned were consistent with current research and theory. Overall, most participants presented as having an awareness of the impact of violence on children. In a minority of situations, the awareness did not carry over into understanding the rationale behind orders for no contact with children. Some participants made comments indicating they did not understand why a man would be denied visitation with his child/ren based on what he did to his partner. Two men discussed how their awareness of their children's exposure to the domestic violence influenced them to examine their violent behaviors and motivated them to change.

**Perceptions of DCYF and the court.** Only two out of thirteen participants reported they ever had any involvement with DCYF. The two participants reported very different experiences with and views about DCYF, one very positive and one very negative. Each had an open case with DCYF for a period of time. One case resulted in the termination of the participant's parental rights and the other case resulted in reunification.

A few of the participants expressed the feeling that the courts do not hold women accountable for their actions, meaning their contributions to the violence. Some participants

expressed frustration with and confusion around the protective order process. Participants' confusion around what constituted a violation of a protective order suggested a need for simple language on protective orders so they are understandable for perpetrators.

**Perceptions of law enforcement.** Several participants were critical of law enforcement for siding with women over men and for inflating situations. They believed that police officers put ideas and words into victims' heads and convinced victims that incidents were more severe than they truly were. Several victims of domestic violence we obtained information from also expressed concerns about police responses. Taken together, perpetrators' and victims' perceptions were that the police have difficulty identifying a primary perpetrator at times, and perhaps suggest confusion and/or inconsistency in how law enforcement in Grafton County respond to domestic violence.

**Experiences with BIPs.** Participants reported that BIPs helped them in the following ways:

- Identification of emotions
- Confrontation of defenses
- Relational skills
- Peer support
- Cognitive and behavioral strategies for change
- General coping skills and stress management

Issues they said make it difficult to attend BIPs included: denial of one's problems, concerns about the quality of services based on past negative experiences, the cost of the programs, time (work schedules), transportation, and child care issues.

Most of the baseline data provided in this report will be compared to similar types of data collected at the end of the Project for purposes of evaluating the Project's goals. The information presented in this report is intended to provide a snapshot of Grafton County primary partner and cross system practices at the beginning of the Project and to inform the implementation and refinement of the Project's program activities.

## INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the background, initiation, and methodology of the project evaluation. Definitions of key project concepts are detailed in this chapter, and further detailed explanations of core terminology are provided in a glossary appended to this report. This chapter provides information about the various data sources used to measure project goals and about the working definitions established for key project indicators (i.e., the operationalization of project goals).

### Project Overview

Women and children are often victims of violence within the same family. Studies have found that in 30%-60% of families where there is an adult victim of violence, there is also a child victim of abuse.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, public response has been to approach child abuse/neglect and domestic violence as separate and distinct forms of violence with interventions leading to disparate paths for victims within the same family. It is now recognized that there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to addressing these forms of violence, one which coordinates agency responses to families. The recommendations outlined in *Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice*,<sup>2</sup> known informally as the *Greenbook*, provide a model for diverse social systems to change their individual practices and to collaborate in a way that enhances the safety and support of domestic violence victims and abused children. The Greenbook Project, developed to implement these recommendations, is a five-year federally funded initiative<sup>3</sup> designed to bring together the court system, child protective services, and domestic violence agencies to better address the needs of families when domestic violence and child abuse/neglect co-occur. Grafton County, New Hampshire was awarded the federal grant in 2000, and began planning specific Greenbook Project activities in 2001. Grafton County is one of six Greenbook demonstration sites in the

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<sup>1</sup> Edleson, J.L. (1999). The overlap between child maltreatment and women battering. *Violence Against Women*, 5(2), 134-154.

<sup>2</sup> Schechter, S. and Edleson, J. (1999). *Effective intervention in domestic violence and child maltreatment cases: Guidelines for policy and practice*. National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Reno, Nevada.

<sup>3</sup>The Project is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and private foundations: Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. Private foundation funding was granted for the Project's first three years only.

country. A National Evaluation Team is conducting a multi-level, multi-site, comparative evaluation to study across- and within-system change at the six demonstration sites.<sup>4</sup>

### **Grafton County**

Grafton County's rural nature along with its history of collaborative efforts around domestic violence and child abuse/neglect contributed to its selection as a demonstration project site. The Grafton County site is the most rural of the six sites in the country, and therefore provides an opportunity to learn how the implementation of activities related to the *Greenbook* recommendations may vary in rural versus urban communities.

**Collaborative history.** Relevant to the new initiative, Grafton County leaders had already focused attention on battered women and their children. Several local and statewide collaborations were already in place. For example, Grafton County was one of the four rural counties in the State involved in the Domestic Violence Rural Enhancement Project (DVPREP), a collaboration between the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (Coalition). In 1999, the county also had three local domestic violence coordinating councils, formed in 1994 as part of a statewide effort to increase awareness of domestic violence at the community level through the District Court Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Project. In addition, the Court and DCYF worked together in the two years prior to *Greenbook* on the Court Improvement Project—a multi-disciplinary effort to establish guidelines around permanency issues in child abuse/neglect court cases. The Court Improvement Project includes the District and Probate courts, the Family Division, DCYF, and other community agencies working on behalf of children. These are but a few of the collaborative efforts which made Grafton County well poised to demonstrate implementation of activities related to the *Greenbook* guidelines.

### **The Grafton County System Partners**

The Grafton County *Greenbook* Project's primary partners include the Grafton County Family Division and District Court, DCYF, the Coalition, and the four crisis centers that serve

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<sup>4</sup> The other *Greenbook* demonstration sites are: Santa Clara County, California; El Paso County, Colorado; Lane County, Oregon; St. Louis County, Missouri; and San Francisco, California. The National Evaluation Team is a partnership between Caliber Associates (Fairfax, VA), Education Development Center (Newton, MA) and the National Center for State Courts (Arlington, VA). The National Evaluation Team works in partnership with the federal funding agencies and the local sites to assess the effects of implementing *Greenbook* activities on collaboration and system change.

Grafton County.<sup>5</sup> The four crisis centers are: Voices Against Violence in Plymouth, The Support Center at Burch House in Littleton, Women’s Supportive Services in Claremont, and Women’s Information Service in Lebanon. The three DCYF district offices that serve families from Grafton County are located in Littleton, Laconia, and Claremont. The four courts serving Grafton County residents are located in Littleton, Plymouth, Haverhill, and Lebanon.

### **Project Evaluation Overview**

A significant component of the Greenbook Project is a local evaluation of the Project’s success in achieving its desired goals. The local Greenbook evaluation will compare baseline information—data collected on the status of the key systems prior to implementation—with information collected in the final year of the Project. It should be noted that, unless otherwise specified, the Project baseline year is 2001.

**Logic model development.** The local evaluation design builds on logic models developed by Project leadership during the Year One planning phase. Logic models are visual tools that illustrate how a program is supposed to work. The models provide a concise summary of program objectives, activities, expected outcomes, and their interconnections. After a lengthy process, the Project finalized four logic models: one for each of the primary partners and one for the Greenbook “community,” which refers to the Project goals that involve cross-system collaboration. Each logic model specifies goals for the Project that incorporate the original objectives from the *Greenbook*, the federal expectations for all demonstration sites, and the particular needs of Grafton County. The local research partners, in conjunction with the Project staff, used the logic models as a guide in developing the evaluation design by translating key goals into measurable objectives, identifying indicators for those objectives, and then planning a time line for obtaining data on those indicators. The evaluation design was presented to the Executive Committee for final approval in April of 2002.

The logic models were developed as a tool to guide and focus all Project activities with the understanding that Project goals and program activities would likely evolve as the work progressed. Indeed, original goals were revised and prioritized by each of the primary partner teams and the Executive Committee in October 2002. This baseline evaluation report on the

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<sup>5</sup> Court-Appointed Special Advocates of New Hampshire (CASA) became involved with the Grafton County Greenbook Project in 2002, but is not technically a primary partner to the Project.

primary partner and cross system goals is organized around the revised and prioritized goals rather than those specified in the original logic models.

### **Key Definitions**

The following definitions and laws relative to family violence provide the basis for practice by members of the Grafton County Greenbook Project and the Project evaluation.

#### **Domestic Violence**

“Domestic violence, also known as ‘domestic abuse’ and ‘intimate partner violence’, is the establishment of control and fear in a relationship through the use of various forms of abuse. The batterer may use physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, economic oppression, isolation, threats, intimidation, and abuse and/or neglect of children to control his intimate or former intimate partner.<sup>6</sup> Domestic violence may differ in terms of the severity of abuse, but gaining and maintaining control is the primary goal of batterers.”<sup>7</sup> (See also Appendix F – New Hampshire RSA 173-B:1 for the legal definition of domestic violence.)

#### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

An abused child is “any child one who has been (a) Sexually abused; or (b) Intentionally physically injured; or (c) Psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent mistreatment or neglect; or (d) Physically injured by other than accidental means.” (New Hampshire RSA 169-C:3 Definitions.)

Neglect is the failure to provide a child with basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, supervision, or education as required by law. It may involve abandonment or parental/caretaker alcohol and drug abuse as well as other factors.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For simplicity, throughout this report we refer to domestic violence victims with feminine pronouns and domestic violence perpetrators with masculine pronouns. National statistics indicate women represented 85% of domestic violence victims in 1998 (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Crime Characteristics : Summary Findings*: [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict\\_c.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict_c.htm))

<sup>7</sup> State of New Hampshire Governor’s Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence. (2004). *New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families: Domestic violence protocol* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Page 3.

<sup>8</sup> New Hampshire Division For Children, Youth and Families. May, 2003. *A community guide to reporting child abuse and neglect*.

## **Co-occurrence**

The co-occurrence of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence (“co-occurrence”) is defined as any case involving a child experiencing abuse and/or neglect as defined in RSA 169-C and a parent or primary caregiver experiencing intimate partner violence as defined in RSA 173-B, whether or not a petition has been filed in either case. This is the definition formally adopted by the Grafton County Greenbook Project.

In the next section of this chapter we review the methodology for the Greenbook evaluation<sup>9</sup>. Specifically, we detail our approach to conducting the local Greenbook evaluation including a description of each data source and an overview of the methods used for data collection and analysis.

## **Methodology**

A strength of the Greenbook Project evaluation design is that it is based on multiple indicators to measure the desired Project outcomes and uses multiple types and sources of data, which increases the reliability of measurement. However, for some Project goals only one type of data was available to assess Project outcomes, while in other instances several types of data were available to serve as indicators of Project achievement. When feasible, we collected baseline statistics for Grafton County as well as the rest of the State for comparison purposes and to assist us in determining causation. Such comparisons increase our ability to attribute successful outcomes to the effectiveness of the Project rather than other causes such as normal changes over time or inherent differences in Greenbook participants compared to other individuals in the State. Our ability to make meaningful comparisons of differences between Grafton County and the rest of New Hampshire at Project end will certainly be limited by the extent to which protocol and policy reforms are being implemented beyond the borders of Grafton County. For example, Greenbook has sponsored trainings for DCYF attorneys and central intake workers throughout the State.

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<sup>9</sup> Throughout this report, “we” refers to the local research team unless otherwise specified.



### **Crisis Center/Coalition**

Aggregate data reports for calendar year 2001 were obtained from the Coalition's database. All domestic violence crisis centers in the State submit statistics for their agencies to the Coalition, which maintains the data in a Microsoft Access Victim Contact Database.

### **DCYF Aggregate Data**

Most of the aggregate data reported for DCYF were obtained from analysis of data DCYF provided to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) for calendar year 2001. The 2001 NCANDS data contain child-specific information for each report alleging child abuse or neglect that received a disposition (a finding) as a result of an investigation or assessment during the calendar year.<sup>10</sup> The NCANDS data contain the number of approved reports that receive a disposition each year, rather than the number of reports received by DCYF each year. It does not contain any information on reports that have been screened out. There are a number of limitations associated with the NCANDS data, which are detailed in Appendix C-3.

In addition to the NCANDS data, we also obtained aggregate data reports from the DCYF Bridges System. Bridges is New Hampshire's State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

### **DCYF File Reviews**

#### **Selection of Files**

We examined DCYF case files from each of the three district offices serving Grafton County for specific baseline information. Our purpose for abstracting data from DCYF case files is to ascertain if Greenbook implementation will affect changes in child protective service worker practices in cases with the co-occurrence of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence. File reviews will also provide information about Greenbook's impact on the screening and assessment of domestic violence in all substantiated child protection cases. DCYF file reviews will be conducted twice. Baseline data were collected from cases that DCYF substantiated for child abuse and/or neglect in the year 2001. These data will then be compared to cases DCYF substantiated for abuse/neglect in the year 2005.

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Child maltreatment 2001* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003).

The research team examined all cases substantiated for abuse and/or neglect in 2001 based on information provided by supervisors from each district office. From February through July 2003, the research partners reviewed the paper files of every family with any abuse/neglect substantiated by DCYF. In some cases the paper files did not contain the needed information. For these cases research staff also viewed the electronic case file in the Bridges database.

When a family had more than one child abuse/neglect victim, we chose to obtain details of the abuse/neglect on one child only. The one child, a “referent child”, was randomly chosen by selecting the child whose birth date was the nearest in month and day to the month and day the file was being reviewed.

### **DCYF File Review Co-occurrence Sample**

In order to be classified as a co-occurrence case, there had to be evidence in the DCYF file that the child’s primary caretaker was a victim of intimate partner violence within one year of the child being a victim of child abuse and/or neglect that was substantiated by DCYF. There were a total of 94 substantiated cases of abuse/neglect in the three Grafton County DCYF district offices in 2001. Twenty-seven, or 29%, of these cases of child abuse/neglect involved the co-occurrence of abuse/neglect and domestic violence.

### **Family Division Child Abuse/Neglect Files**

Data were abstracted from Grafton County Family Division cases of child abuse and/or neglect to ascertain if Greenbook implementation will affect changes in the court system’s practices in co-occurrence cases. File reviews will provide information about Greenbook’s impact on assessment of service needs, visitation orders, communication with victims, and batterer accountability. Review of paper court records is the only feasible method to gather the desired information as it is not available in any other format.

### **Sample Selection**

In order to obtain a sufficient baseline sample of co-occurrence cases, we examined all abuse/neglect cases that were closed in calendar years 2000, 2001, and 2002<sup>11</sup>. These cases were opened in the years 1996 through 2001. To evaluate Project impact, baseline data will be compared to data obtained in a second file review, to be conducted in 2006. The second file review will examine cases closed in calendar years 2004, 2005, and 2006. In December 2003

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<sup>11</sup> “Closing date” is defined as the date of the last order of the court pertaining to abuse or neglect issues and not, for example, orders related only to financial reimbursement to the county.

through February 2004, we examined all closed cases that were available for on site inspection at each Family Division location in Grafton County and determined whether the case was closed within the target time frame. If the case met the closing date criteria, it was then reviewed for any documentation that the child's primary caretaker was a victim of domestic violence within one year of the child being a victim of child abuse and/or neglect. If there was documentation of domestic violence, we then extracted detailed information from the case file record. We included cases where the court dismissed or did not find any abuse or neglect allegations to be true in order to learn the number and percentage of abuse/neglect petitions against non-offending domestic violence victims that the court dismissed. We excluded all cases transferred in from another court because we did not have access to all the needed information.

### **Court Abuse/Neglect File Review Co-occurrence Sample**

Of the 166 abuse/neglect cases<sup>12</sup> that were closed in the years 2000, 2001 and 2002, we found that 65 (39%) had documentation of domestic violence occurring within one year of the petition for child abuse/neglect. These 65 cases (petitions) involved 22 families. The final baseline sample consists of these 22 families.

Seventeen of the 22 families (77%) had abuse/neglect petitions which were found true by the court.<sup>13</sup> Five of the 22 families (23%) had any and all petitions withdrawn by DCYF or found not to be true by the court.<sup>14</sup> Nine of 17 cases were consent decrees (53%) and the other eight were found true by the court.

### **Family Division Adult Domestic Violence Files**

We abstracted data from 132 domestic violence cases (petitions for protective orders) from calendar year 2001 in order to understand court system practices in civil domestic violence cases at the beginning of the Project. Domestic violence protective order case files provide information on service referrals, visitation orders, and batterer accountability. Data were collected in the late spring through early summer of 2003. Review of paper court records was the

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<sup>12</sup> Court child abuse/neglect "cases" refer to abuse or neglect petitions, as opposed to children or families. One case refers to one petition. One child can have two petitions—one for each parent. One family might have multiple children with multiple petitions pertaining to each child. One co-occurrence case with several children and several caretakers and multiple petitions can therefore skew the proportion of co-occurrence cases, but when we compare baseline data to data collected at the end of the Project, the numbers will be similarly randomly skewed.

<sup>13</sup> "Found true" is specifically defined as the court finding abuse and/or neglect at the adjudicatory hearing.

<sup>14</sup> We considered all 22 families to be co-occurrence cases because although the court did not find the abuse/neglect petitions to be true, DCYF did substantiate allegations of abuse/neglect.

only feasible method to gather the desired information on domestic violence cases, as it was not available in any other format.

### **Sample Selection**

Because of the Project's focus on the co-occurrence, we only reviewed domestic violence cases if there were children in the household of the petitioner. We obtained a list from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) of the total number of petitions filed in each Grafton County Family Division in calendar year 2001 where the petitioner had children living in the household at the time the petition was filed. Information from the AOC also indicated the case disposition: whether the petition resulted in the granting of a temporary protective order or a final protective order (see Appendix A for definitions of temporary and final protective orders). Given the total number of civil domestic violence cases with children in the household in Grafton County in 2001 (N=203), and the fact that cases resulting in final orders contained much more of the information we needed, we decided to review all 2001 cases resulting in final orders with children in the household and to randomly sample cases resulting only in temporary orders. The sample of temporary order cases contains an overrepresentation of cases where the petitioner has children in common with the defendant because we were interested in court practices around visitation between defendants and children. We reviewed a sufficient number of temporary orders in each Family Division location to obtain a 50% sample of all petitions filed in 2001 for each court.

To maintain consistency across methodologies for the Greenbook evaluation, we only included cases involving male perpetrators/defendants. Also, we only included cases involving intimate partner violence and excluded, for example, petitions for protective orders against a sister or a mother-in-law. Because of the lack of information contained in the file, we also excluded those cases that involved emergency protective orders only. (See Appendix D-2 for further details of the sample selection procedures regarding Family Division domestic violence cases.)

## **Sample Description**

The final baseline sample of civil domestic violence cases included a total of 132 cases. These included 57 cases in which the court issued temporary protective orders and 75 cases in which the court issued final protective orders.

### **Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey**

The *Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey (Interagency Survey)* is a self-administered, 24 item, anonymous questionnaire developed by the Greenbook local research partners in conjunction with Greenbook Project staff. The survey was designed to assess levels of knowledge of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence, levels of knowledge of the operations and practices of the Project's three primary partners, and the amount of interagency collaboration. More specifically, the *Interagency Survey* measures individuals' perceived levels of knowledge on these issues, as it asks respondents to describe how knowledgeable they believe they are. To determine actual levels of knowledge, we would have had to administer content examinations, which was not feasible. Limitations of self-reported levels of knowledge are discussed in the presentation of survey results in the chapters that follow.

The survey was given to all members of the Greenbook Advisory Council in October 2001. A total of 37 Advisory Council members completed the survey, which represents 80% of the total Advisory Council membership at the time the survey was administered.<sup>15</sup> This baseline report describes survey responses only for those respondents who work for the court system, DCYF, and crisis centers/Coalition. Ten survey respondents worked for the court system, six for domestic violence agencies or the Coalition, and three for DCYF.

### **Direct Service Worker Survey**

*The Direct Service Worker Survey* is a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire designed by the Greenbook National Evaluation Team (NET) to assess previous training in the areas of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence and to assess the current practices and

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<sup>15</sup> The Grafton County Greenbook Project Advisory Council was appointed in the Spring of 2001. This group initially consisted of 33 of members from Grafton County and statewide organizations that serve battered women and/or abused/neglected children. As the Project has progressed, additional individuals from a variety of disciplines (such as law enforcement, corrections, batterer intervention programs, and health care) were added as requested or identified as interested. The Advisory Council was created to ensure that multiple agencies and perspectives are incorporated into the Greenbook initiative and to take Greenbook information back to their respective agencies or organizations.

policies in primary system agencies. “Direct service workers” are defined as staff members in the primary partner agencies who have the most direct and ongoing contact with families.

To avoid duplication of effort, the local research partners added questions from the *Interagency Survey* to the NET’s *Direct Service Worker Survey*. As a result, we have information on previous training and perceived levels of knowledge of the other systems not only from the individuals who took the *Interagency Survey* in October 2001, but also from an additional 35 individuals who responded to the *Direct Service Worker Survey*. Unfortunately, the *Direct Service Worker Survey* was initially mailed to direct service workers in January 2003. This was 14 months after the local evaluators administered the *Interagency Survey*. The *Direct Service Worker Survey* was mailed to all staff members (direct service workers) employed by the four crisis centers, three DCYF district offices, and four court locations at that time. The NET stopped collecting surveys in July 2003. Because the data collection time frame between our local *Interagency Survey* and the *Direct Service Worker Survey* varies by more than one year, we present the results from each survey separately. Also, it is important to note that the *Direct Worker Survey* was given only to “direct service workers” but the *Interagency Survey* respondents primarily included those in administrative positions.

We do not regard the *Direct Service Worker Survey* results as equivalent to baseline data because the NET administered the survey in the third year of the Project, which was later than the local evaluation. By that time, the Grafton County Greenbook Project had conducted several trainings and implemented other programs that may have affected survey results.

#### ***Direct Service Worker Survey Sampling and Data Collection***

The NET asked Grafton County Greenbook staff to provide it with a list of names and addresses of all primary partner agency staff members who would be considered “direct service workers.” The NET then mailed surveys to all of those individuals. Ten court assistants were mailed surveys and ten surveys were returned (100% response rate). Twenty-three domestic violence advocates were mailed surveys and 17 surveys were returned (74% response rate). Eighteen DCYF workers, including family assessment workers, family service workers, and DCYF attorneys, were mailed surveys and six were returned (33% response rate).

### **Focus Groups with CPSWs and Advocates**

Local research partners conducted focus groups and interviews with child protective service workers (CPSWs) and domestic violence advocates (advocates) in the spring of 2002. The focus groups and interviews explored how CPSWs and advocates view various aspects of their work with parents and children who are affected by domestic violence and/or child abuse and neglect. Participants were asked about current practices and perceptions of their knowledge of, and collaboration with, other systems in providing services to families affected by the co-occurrence.

Focus groups will be conducted again at the final phase of the Project (approximately December of 2005), repeating the protocol with a similar sample of advocates and CPSWs in order to explore changes in practices or attitudes over the duration of the Project.

Four focus groups were conducted with domestic violence advocates from the four domestic violence crisis centers participating in the Project. Three additional focus groups were conducted with CPSWs from the three DCYF district offices that serve families from Grafton County.

Each focus group was approximately one and a half hours long. A set of pre-determined issues were covered in each group, but a rigid structure was not imposed. This approach allowed some variability in the discussion and provided an opportunity for new information to emerge. Although there appeared to be a general consensus on a number of points, caution is needed in generalizing from these results because the groups are not statistically representative samples and the ideas and opinions expressed by participants are not necessarily representative of all advocates or DCYF social workers.

#### **Focus Group Recruitment and Participants<sup>16</sup>**

**Focus groups with child protective service workers.** To recruit DCYF staff members for focus groups, we attended staff meetings at each DCYF district office serving Grafton County, gave an overview of the Project, and invited family assessment workers and family service workers to attend a focus group. A total of 26 participants in the three groups included the following: 12 family service workers, nine family assessment workers, one foster care coordinator, four MSW interns and one DCYF attorney. Participants had a wide range in the

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<sup>16</sup> The majority of focus group participants from DCYF and domestic violence agencies were female, which is consistent with the employee gender distribution in these occupations. The pronoun “she” will be used throughout this report in reference to staff participants to protect the identities of the few male participants.



number of years of experience working for DCYF—from less than one year through 17 years. The majority of participants had worked for DCYF for less than three years.

**Focus groups with domestic violence advocates.** The predominant strategy for participant recruitment among domestic violence service providers was to have the agency director advertise the time and place of the focus group. Groups were then conducted with those advocates who volunteered to participate. A different strategy was required in one crisis center, where letters were mailed to advocates describing the Greenbook Project and the purpose, time, and location of the focus group. Letters asked advocates to contact us if they wanted to participate. Groups were targeted towards any domestic violence advocate (volunteer or paid staff) who typically provided direct services to clients.

A total of 12 advocates attended the four groups, which included volunteers and paid staff, hotline volunteers, court advocates, and outreach coordinators. Of those asked about their tenure in the job as a domestic violence advocate, most reported one to two years of experience. The number of years ranged from less than one year through six years.

#### **Individual Interviews with Domestic Violence Program Specialists<sup>17</sup>**

We interviewed the three Domestic Violence Program Specialists (DVPS) serving Grafton County. Each DVPS working with families in the county was called to request her participation in an individual face-to-face interview. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that were asked of all participants, and they lasted from one to two hours. We found that the DVPSs had been in their current positions from less than one year through four-and-a-half years.

#### **Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Survivors**

The local evaluation team has gathered information from three sub-groups of domestic violence survivors who have children:

- survivors using crisis center services;
- survivors involved with DCYF; and
- survivors seeking protective orders from the Family Division.

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<sup>17</sup> The job of the Domestic Violence Program Specialist (DVPS) predates the Greenbook Project in New Hampshire. The DVPS is a domestic violence advocate employed by the local domestic violence crisis center (funded through the Domestic Violence Rural Enhancement Project) who is placed in each of the DCYF District Offices to enhance collaboration between the two systems and improve services to battered mothers of abused and neglected children. Further information on the DVPS position can be found in Chapter 1, page 26.



Three focus groups were conducted with domestic violence survivors using crisis center services (consisting of a total of 11 women). Eight individual interviews were conducted with survivors involved with DCYF. Eleven individual interviews were conducted with survivors seeking protective orders.

The focus groups and interviews explored survivors' experiences with the court system, the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), domestic violence crisis centers, and other community services. The local evaluation design includes plans for a second phase of interviews with survivors, repeating the process with the same questions at the end of the Project.

### **Focus Groups**

We recruited participants from three of the four domestic violence crisis centers participating in the Project.<sup>18</sup> Eligibility for participation in the focus groups included the following: Any adult mother victimized by an intimate partner who: 1) used a Greenbook-involved crisis center's services; and 2) had children living in her home (as the primary residence) during a period when domestic violence occurred.

**Recruitment of crisis center client focus group participants.** Domestic violence advocates from the three crisis centers informed clients about the focus groups and gave eligible and interested individuals information to contact Greenbook research partners to arrange participation in focus groups. Groups were conducted in January and February of 2003.

**Procedure.** Each focus group was approximately 90 minutes in duration. Participants were given a brief, anonymous questionnaire to fill out at the beginning of each group to obtain background and demographic information. Next, a set of pre-determined issues were covered in each group, but as with the other focus groups, a rigid structure was not imposed. Caution is needed in generalizing from these focus group results for several reasons: The number of participants is very small (eleven); the groups are not statistically representative samples; and the ideas and opinions expressed by participants are not necessarily representative of all domestic violence survivors involved with crisis centers serving Grafton County. We are unable to compare the characteristics of participants to non-participants to determine if they differ in important ways.

**Sample description.** The total number of participants across the three groups was 11. Ages ranged from 23 to 44, with an average age of 34. One participant was African American

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<sup>18</sup> We were unsuccessful in recruiting focus group participants from the fourth crisis center.

and all others were Caucasian. All participants were English-speaking. Education levels varied from completion of grade eight through completion of an advanced degree. The mean education level was “some college.”

Eight of the women had children living at home with them and three had children that were living with someone else. In two cases the children lived primarily with their fathers and in the other case the children were in foster care. At the time of the focus groups, none of the participants were living with the abusive partner for whom they sought help from the crisis center. The majority of participants (seven) reported their current involvement with the crisis center was not the first time they sought help for domestic violence.

Most of the participants were active in the group discussions and appeared forthcoming in sharing their ideas and experiences. Several noted that it was beneficial for them to talk about the issues covered in the group.

#### **Individual Interviews with DCYF-Involved Domestic Violence Survivors**

Individual interviews, instead of focus groups, were conducted with adult domestic violence survivors involved with DCYF. This methodological decision was made because this population of domestic violence survivors was likely to be difficult to recruit in numbers sufficient for participation in focus groups. In all, eight interviews were conducted between January and May of 2003 and all but one took place in the home of the interviewee. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that were asked of all participants. The interviews lasted approximately one hour.

**Recruitment of DCYF-involved interview participants.** We attempted to recruit interview participants through word of mouth and written information distributed by Grafton County DCYF workers and DVPSs. DCYF workers and DVPSs were asked to deliver letters to their adult clients (ages 18 and older), informing them about our study and inviting them to contact us to schedule an interview at a convenient time, date and location. Eligibility for participation was limited to adult women (mothers) who were involved with DCYF and who had been victims of domestic violence. DCYF workers and DVPSs explained to women that the interview was completely separate from their involvement with DCYF.

In actuality, one interviewee was recruited through a local crisis center. The other seven interviewees were recruited through the DVPSs working in two of the three DCYF district offices that serve Grafton County. Staff turnover interfered with recruitment of any interviewees

at the third district office, with the result being that most interviewees (five) were recruited via one particular DVPS. We do not know how many letters were distributed to women by their CPSW, but none of the interviewees who contacted us stated that they learned about the study through a CPSW.

This sample is limited in size, highly self-selective, and potentially biased. Possibly, women were motivated to participate because they had some grievance to communicate. The reported experiences of these eight women with DCYF, crisis centers, and/or the courts may be unique and not reflective of the experiences of all women involved with these systems.

**DCYF-involved interview sample characteristics.** All eight interviewees were Caucasian, English-speaking women. Their ages ranged from 29 to 44, with a mean age of 35. Their education levels ranged from “some high school” to “some college.” Four women had graduated from high school; three had completed some college courses. The number of children women had ranged from one child to four children. Three of the women had all their children currently placed in foster care. Two of these women reported their DCYF case plans involved reunification with their children. The other woman’s parental rights had been terminated. All of the other interviewees’ children were living with them.

The majority (five) of the women were no longer living with, or in relationships with, the partners who abused them. These ex-partners include three ex-boyfriends and two ex-husbands. Of the other three women who were in relationships at the time of the interviews, one was cohabiting with and two were married to an abusive partner.

### **Individual Interviews with Domestic Violence Survivors Petitioning the Court for Protective Orders (Court-involved Interview Participants)**

The purpose of conducting interviews with domestic violence victims who petition the court for protective orders was to learn about victims’ perceptions of the court’s handling of their cases. In addition to learning about various aspects of victims’ experiences with the court system, we asked women about community services needed and utilized (for their self or their children); community services’ accessibility and effectiveness; visitation orders; and experiences with crisis center services and DCYF.

Individual interviews, instead of focus groups, were conducted with domestic violence victims involved with the court because this population of domestic violence survivors was likely to be difficult to recruit in numbers sufficient for participation in focus groups.

**Recruitment of court-involved interview participants.** We began attempts to recruit mothers filing for protective orders in March of 2003 by approaching women as they departed the court after their final hearing. After many months without any interview volunteers, we enlisted the assistance of all court assistants in Grafton County Family Division locations in recruiting interviewees. A court assistant at each Family Division was asked to distribute a flyer to all women filing for protective orders who had children in the home. The one page flyer included: a) a brief description of the Greenbook Project and the interviews; b) a section for women's contact information; and c) an envelope addressed to Greenbook with prepaid postage. Court assistants were asked to introduce the Greenbook Project with a short scripted statement prior to giving women the flyer. The written description of the interviews distributed to women specified that we would not contact them until after their final hearing had taken place.

We also contacted the three directors of crisis centers whose clients use Grafton County courts for protective orders and asked if staff would be willing to hand out the flyers to eligible women and to post flyers in the shelters for women to see. All agreed to do so.

In all, 11 interviews were conducted between January and July of 2004. Most of the interviews took place in the home of the interviewee; two interviews took place in a crisis center shelter where the interviewee was staying, and two took place in a restaurant. The interviews consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions that were asked of all participants. The interviews lasted approximately one hour.

**Sample characteristics of court-involved interview participants.** Of the 11 interview participants, all but one was Caucasian and all were English-speaking. Their ages ranged from 22 to 41, with an average age of 31. Their education levels ranged from "some high school" to "some college." Two participants had graduated from high school; six had completed some college courses. The number of children participants had ranged from one child to three children. Five participants did not have any children in common with the man they filed for a protective order on (the defendant) and the other six had at least one child in common with the defendant. At the time of their interviews, three participants were legally married to the defendant, six were cohabitating, and the other two did not live with the defendant. Four of 11 participants had obtained prior protective orders against the defendants that they most recently filed on.

### **Interviews with Judges**

Individual interviews were conducted with seven judges in May and June of 2002. The interviews explored current practices of the District Court and Family Division in Grafton County, such as visitation decisions in co-occurrence cases, frequency of orders to batterer intervention programs, and mechanisms to hold violent parents/partners accountable.

Interviews will be conducted again at the final phase of the Project (2005 or 2006), repeating the protocol with judges in the county in order to explore changes in practices or perceptions over the duration of the Project.

#### **Recruitment**

Each of the judges in the county was mailed a letter that introduced the Greenbook Project, informed him or her of our interview plans, and explained the interview's purpose. A week later, judges were telephoned to request their participation in face-to-face interviews. Only one judge in the county did not participate due to scheduling conflicts.

#### **Interview Approach**

Judicial interviews consisted of a series of open-ended questions about the operations of the courts. Questions were adjusted according to whether the judge primarily sat in District Court or the Family Division. A set of pre-determined questions were covered in each interview, but a rigid structure was not imposed. This approach allowed some variability in the discussion, permitting new information to emerge. Judicial interviews took approximately one hour to complete.

#### **Sample Description**

Those interviewed included three judges from the Family Division and four judges from the District Court. Except for the two judges who were members of Greenbook's Executive Committee, all but one judge sitting in Grafton County Family Division and District Court in May 2002 were interviewed. All of the judges interviewed had been on the bench for at least ten years, with judicial experience ranging from ten to 30 years. Most of the judges interviewed sat part-time in Grafton County, with schedules ranging from one day a month to two or three days per week.

### **Court Staff Interviews**

Information about each of the courts was also obtained from court staff, including court clerks and court assistants. This resulted in a total of six interviews, as some court staff worked in more than one court.

#### **Recruitment and Interview Approach.**

Clerks and court assistants working in Grafton County District Courts and Family Division locations were telephoned to request an interview which focused on court technology as well as some court practices. Interviews consisted of a set of open-ended questions and took place in December and January of 2001/2002.

### **Focus Groups with Domestic Violence Perpetrators Involved with Batterer Intervention Programs**

Two focus groups were conducted with domestic violence perpetrators in order to learn about their experiences with the court system, child protective services, and batterer intervention programs (BIPs). Perpetrators were asked about barriers to participation in BIPS, gaps in community services, education they have received on parenting and the effects of domestic violence on children, and areas for improvement in services.

#### **Recruitment and Participants**

The two focus groups were conducted in July of 2003 and September of 2004.<sup>19</sup> Groups consisted of adult men with the following characteristics: a) they had abused an intimate partner; b) the victim's minor children were living with her (as their primary residence) during the period she was being abused; and c) they were attending (or had attended) a batterer intervention program.

The directors of two BIPs serving Grafton County residents agreed to provide information about the focus groups to eligible participants and assisted us in arranging times to conduct groups with those who were interested.

A total of 13 perpetrators participated in the two focus groups. Each group was approximately one and a half hours long and each was held at the BIP location with existing program group members who fit the eligibility criteria described above. Participants were given a brief, anonymous questionnaire to fill out at the beginning of each group to obtain background

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<sup>19</sup> The 14 month span between focus groups is due to the difficulty we experienced in recruiting group participants.

and demographic information. Next, a set of pre-determined issues was covered in each group but a rigid structure was not imposed.

Caution must be used in drawing any conclusions from the findings from these focus groups as there were a small number of participants and they were obtained from existing BIP groups which may have biased responses. However, in both groups, it seemed that as the group progressed, participants appeared to become increasingly comfortable and forthright in their responses.

**Sample description.** The 13 participants' ages ranged from 22 to 46, with an average age of 36. Twelve participants were white, non-Hispanic and one was African American. Participants' education levels ranged from some high school through a graduate degree. At the time of the focus group, nine participants were living with the victims of the violence that led to their involvement with the BIP. Seven participants were married and five were living with a partner. The 13 participants had a total of 31 children living in their homes, with an average of 2.6 children in each man's home. Seven men had biological children that lived somewhere else.

### **Analysis of all Focus Group and Interview Data**

Focus group sessions were audio taped and transcribed. Individual interviews were either audio taped or notes were taken and responses were summarized, with the exception of certain key quotes that were recorded verbatim. The interview and focus group data were analyzed with a computer software program designed for qualitative data analysis (QSR Nudist, Nvivo). This program allows synthesis of the information obtained by sorting and categorizing the content of the focus groups and interviews. Trends, patterns, and recurrent themes were then identified. In presenting the findings, specific quotations from the transcripts of the focus groups and interviews (when available) were used to illustrate the points discussed.

### ***Rural Women's Needs Survey and Interviews with Employees of Social Services***

Because Grafton County is the most rural site participating in the national Greenbook Project, the local Project aims to learn about issues that may be unique or intensified for victims living in rural areas. One of these issues may be the lack of access to needed services. The Project aims to identify the areas where supportive community services are lacking in the county. The *Rural Women's Needs Survey* was developed by the local research partners to gather information about

perceived service gaps, social support, and obstacles to services. Informal telephone interviews were also conducted with several employees of social service agencies serving Grafton County residents in order to learn their views on service gaps in the community for battered women and their children.

### ***Rural Women's Needs Survey (Rural Survey)***

**Sample and recruitment.** The *Rural Women's Needs Survey* was targeted towards the population of women living in rural communities in Grafton County who are likely to be most in need of community services, such as financially disadvantaged women. Because of the difficulty reaching this population to recruit survey respondents, we asked key individuals for assistance in distributing the self-administered survey. We contacted individuals working in agencies that served rural towns and were likely to come into contact with mothers. We asked them to distribute the surveys to adult women (18 years and older) with whom they interacted.

Specifically, we contacted the following agencies that serve Grafton County residents: the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC), New Hampshire Health and Human Services, Division of Family Assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF) and child support offices; town welfare offices, Head Start, and Planned Parenthood. Seven individuals were contacted in March 2003 and seven were contacted in August 2004 to request assistance with the distribution of the survey.

A total of 255 surveys were mailed to 14 individuals, who agreed to either leave them in a prominent place for women to take or to hand them to women they came into contact with through the course of their work. The survey included a cover sheet explaining that completion of the survey was voluntary and that to ensure anonymity, respondents should not write any identifying information on the survey or return envelope. The cover sheet described the Greenbook Project and explained the purpose of the survey. The cover letter also specified that the survey was independent of the agency or individual they received the survey from and that whether or not they choose to respond to the survey had no bearing on their business with that agency/individual. Participants were informed that the choice to participate did not affect their access to services. We also asked individuals distributing the survey to relay this information verbally when they invited women to respond to the survey. We provided self-addressed stamped envelopes for survey respondents to mail their completed surveys directly to the Greenbook office.



**Sample description.** We received a total of 43 completed surveys over a period of one and a half years (March 2003-October 2004). Nine of the survey respondents (21%) reported they were victims of domestic violence in the past five years. These nine victims' ages ranged from 18 to 53, with an average age of 28. Five were single (56%), two were married and two were divorced. Respondents had an average of 1.5 children per household. None of the domestic violence victims reported receiving TANF in the past year, three reported receiving social security, SSI or disability income (33%), and five (55%) reported receiving other state aid (such as food stamps, Healthy Gold for children, or Medicaid) in the past year.

Among the 34 respondents who had not been victims of domestic violence in the past five years, ages ranged from 20-60, with an average age of 32. Compared to the domestic violence victims, a much lower proportion of the non-victims were single: Eight were single (24%), 19 were married (56%), four were divorced, two were separated, and one was widowed. Similar in proportion to the nine domestic violence victims, these 34 non-victims had an average of 1.7 children per household. Also similar in proportion to the domestic violence victims, two of the non-victims reported receiving TANF in the past year, eight reported receiving social security, SSI or disability income (23%), and 20 (58%) reported receiving other state aid in the past year.

### **Interviews with Employees of Social Services**

In addition to requesting assistance with distribution of the survey, seven individuals (from WIC, DHHS, and town welfare offices) were asked to share their opinions and experiences with services in the community and the difficulties people face in accessing existing services to supplement what we learned from victims (in focus groups and interviews), DCYF staff and crisis center staff (in focus groups), and from the *Rural Women's Needs Survey*. Interviews were conducted over the telephone, consisted of pre-determined questions asked of each interviewee, and generally lasted less than 15 minutes.

### **Organization of Remainder of this Report**

The next section of this report presents baseline data for the crisis centers/Coalition. The third section of the report presents baseline data for DCYF, followed by presentation of baseline data for the court. The final section presents baseline data for the cross system goals. The

appendix provides definitions of key terms used throughout the report and provides further details on data collection and analysis.

Some of the data we collected informs multiple goals for more than one primary partner. In such cases, the pertinent results are not repeated but instead, the reader is referred to the pages of the baseline report where the data is initially reported.

Most of the qualitative data presented in this report have previously been disseminated in method-specific reports, and therefore, they are summarized with fewer details than the original reports contain. Specifically, this pertains to focus group and interview data, with the exception of interviews with women filing for protective orders, focus groups with domestic violence perpetrators, and interviews with key community members. (See Appendix E for a listing of all previously disseminated Greenbook evaluation reports. All survey, interview, and focus group questions are available upon request.)

## CHAPTER 1

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS CENTERS/COALITION

This chapter reports all baseline data for the Project goals of the four local crisis centers that serve the Grafton County catchment area and the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (Coalition). We first describe the Coalition and the target population that crisis centers serve. The remainder of this chapter is organized around the Greenbook Project goals of the crisis centers/Coalition. (See Appendix B-1 for listing of Crisis Center goals.) Each crisis center/Coalition goal is presented along with all of the types of data used to assess that goal. Data are summarized and discussed at the end of each goal-specific section.

The following types of data pertain to crisis center/Coalition activities and Project goals:

- § Focus groups with domestic violence survivors using crisis center services
- § Individual interviews with domestic violence survivors involved with DCYF
- § Individual interviews with domestic violence survivors who have filed for protective orders
- § Individual interviews with DVPSs
- § Focus groups with other domestic violence advocates
- § Focus groups with CPSWs
- § DCYF file data
- § Coalition data
- § *Interagency and Direct Service Worker Survey*
- § Court child abuse/neglect file data

Note that an overview of each type of data and methods used to collect the data is provided in the previous, introductory chapter. For other details on methodology, and specifics on the computation of particular statistics, please see the Appendix.

#### **The Coalition**

The Coalition is a private, nonprofit statewide organization whose 14 member programs provide direct services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. (Twelve of the programs serve domestic violence victims: 11 serve both victims of domestic violence and victims of sexual violence and one serves victims of domestic violence only. The other two exclusively serve victims of sexual violence.) Because the Project site is a rural county served by multiple crisis centers, the Coalition is serving as a Project partner in order to help represent the multiple agencies. The four crisis centers are: Voices Against Violence in Plymouth, The Support Center at Burch House in Littleton, Women's Supportive Services in Claremont, and Women's

Information Service in Lebanon.<sup>20</sup> The crisis centers provide comprehensive direct services to victims, including 24 hour crisis lines, emergency shelter, and court and social services advocacy. The primary goals of crisis centers are to provide services to victims of domestic and sexual violence and to prevent future violence by providing community outreach and education. Crisis centers operate according to an empowerment model and the principle of client self-determination: Crisis center advocates provide support and information to victims to empower them to make decisions about their own lives.

Since 1998, the Coalition and its member programs have had a fully computerized data information system that allows for the tracking of and reporting on multiple variables.

### **Victims and Children Served by Crisis Centers**

**Victims served.** According to statistics obtained from the Coalition, the total number of Grafton County residents who used crisis center services due to domestic violence in calendar year 2001 was 614<sup>21</sup>. This amounts to an average of 153 clients for each of the four crisis centers that serve Grafton County residents. The number of non-Grafton County residents who used crisis center services due to domestic violence was 7,569. The eight domestic violence crisis centers serving clients outside of Grafton County had an average of 946 clients each.

**Client contacts**<sup>22</sup>. The 614 Grafton County victims of domestic violence had a total of 5,401 contacts with crisis centers in 2001, with an average of 8.8 client contacts per victim. The 7,569 non-Grafton County victims had a total of 48,402 contacts with crisis centers, with an average of 6.4 client contacts per victim.

The large difference in numbers of crisis center clients from Grafton County versus those outside of Grafton County reflects the rural nature of Grafton County and the small populations in the towns Grafton County crisis centers serve. The number of client contacts per victim was greater for Grafton County. Although they serve a smaller population of victims, the crisis centers in Grafton tend to work with clients for longer periods of time, overall, than the higher

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<sup>20</sup> Women's Supportive Services (WSS) primarily serves clients from Sullivan County, however the DVPS employed at WSS works with the DCYF district office that serves clients from Grafton County.

<sup>21</sup> These numbers underestimate the total number of clients served by crisis centers because the residence of many clients was missing/unknown.

<sup>22</sup> "Client contacts" are any "incident" of contact with a client. One contact may be a five minute phone call or a one hour face-to-face meeting.

volume crisis centers in other areas of the State.

**Children of clients.** The total number of children of all victims<sup>23</sup> served by the four crisis centers involved with Greenbook was 1,301. For those victims for whom data were available, the average number of children was two. Less than one tenth of one percent of the victims had no children. For the eight domestic violence crisis centers serving the rest of the State, the total number of children of all victims was 8,067. For those victims for whom data were available, the average number of children was two. Approximately ten percent of all victims served had no children.

**Children who stayed in crisis center shelters.** In 2001, 34 children and 80 adults stayed at the four crisis center shelters serving Grafton County. In the rest of the State, 234 children and 259 adults stayed at crisis center shelters.

## CRISIS CENTER/COALITION GOALS

### ✓ **GOAL 1: INCREASE CONSISTENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM SPECIALIST (DVPS)**

One of the Project goals of the crisis centers/Coalition, as well as DCYF, is to increase the consistent and effective use of the DVPS. Some background on the history of the DVPS project is helpful in understanding and interpreting the baseline data. According to the DVPS Project Memorandum of Understanding, the DVPS project is a collaboration between the Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), and the Coalition. DVPSs are employed by crisis centers and are stationed 20 hours a week in DCYF district offices. The DVPS is co-supervised by the crisis center director and DCYF district office supervisor. The original project began in 1998 as the New Hampshire Domestic Violence Rural Enhancement Project and was comprised of five crisis centers and associated district offices exclusively serving rural communities. The DVPS project has since expanded significantly in size and has evolved in its vision. At the time of this report, there are DVPSs working with every DCYF district office in the State (12).

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<sup>23</sup> We do not know if these were victims of domestic violence or victims of sexual assault, as crisis centers in New Hampshire serve both populations and data specific to domestic violence victims' children were not available. However, given that the vast majority of victims served by crisis centers were victims of domestic violence, one can assume the total numbers of children primarily refer to domestic violence victims.

### **Baseline Status of the DVPS in Grafton County**

The DCYF district offices serving residents of Grafton County were among the first offices in the State to implement the DVPS position. The three DCYF district offices that serve clients from Grafton County are located in Littleton, Laconia and Claremont. In the year 2001, there were a total of ten DVPSs in the State—one in each of the three district offices serving Grafton County and seven others in other parts of the State.

We identified several indicators to assess the goal of increasing the consistent and effective use of the DVPS. The next section of this report presents the baseline data which will be compared to data obtained at the end of the Project to determine if changes are evident in the implementation of the Greenbook goals for the DVPS position.

#### **Prevalence of DCYF-DVPS Referrals and Contacts**

We identified four indicators to estimate the impact of Greenbook on the proportion of DCYF referred cases contacted by the DVPS. We must use approximate indicators to examine the number of referrals DCYF made to the DVPS because actual data are not available on the total number of referrals made by DCYF social workers to the DVPS. Missing from that tally is information on DCYF clients who chose not to contact the DVPS. Indicators used to measure the goal concerned with better utilization of the DVPS include the following: 1) the number of client contacts for DVPSs; 2) the number of individual clients for DVPSs; 3) the average number of contacts per client for DVPSs; and 4) the number of new clients for DVPSs relative to the number of referrals made by DCYF. For each of these indicators, an increase in the numbers from baseline to the end of the Project might suggest that a greater proportion of DCYF referred cases are receiving services from DVPSs. These baseline statistics, obtained from the Coalition, are shown in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1. Coalition Data: 2001 DVPS Clients, Contacts, and Referrals from DCYF**

<b>Calendar Year 2001</b>	<b>Grafton County (3 DVPSs)</b>	<b>Non-Grafton (7 DVPSs)*</b>
<b>The number of individual clients for DVPSs</b>	160 total 107 new clients average per DVPS= 36	431 total 369 new clients average per DVPS= 52
<b>The number of client contacts for DVPS</b>	660 average per DVPS= 220	1,011 average per DVPS= 144
<b>The average number of contacts per client for DVPSs</b>	4	2
<b>The number of referrals from DCYF to DVPS</b>	136 average per DVPS= 45	277 average per DVPS= 39
<b>Estimated* proportion of DCFY referrals that became new clients for DVPSs</b>	65%	84%

\*Estimated percentage is based on subtracting the number of referrals from other DHHS agencies (e.g. JPPO) from the total number of new clients and using that number to calculate the percentage relative to the number of DVPS referrals. (See Appendix B-2 for details.)

As shown in the table above, the three Grafton County DVPSs had 107 new clients from DCYF in 2001. According to the DVPS statistics, the average number of contacts was fairly brief—four contacts per client—in comparison with the average number of contacts crisis centers had with clients (8.8). Grafton DVPSs received 136 referrals from DCYF during the year. We estimate that 65% of the victims referred by DCYF to the DVPS became new DVPS clients. A ‘new client’ could involve one contact with a DVPS or numerous contacts.

An important caution is that we cannot draw any conclusions about the utilization of the DVPS in Grafton County by comparing Grafton DVPS numbers to the rest of the State because two of the DVPS positions in district offices outside Grafton County were implemented in July of 2001, whereas all other DVPS positions existed by January of 2001. Therefore, the statistics reported for 2001 for each DVPS cover different time frames.

**Types of DVPS Contacts**

Another indicator of progress toward the goal of increasing the consistent and effective use of the DVPS is the various types of services the DVPSs provide on behalf of DCYF referred clients. Table 1-2 shows data obtained from the Coalition.

**Table 1-2. Coalition Data: Types of Contact DVPSs Have With Clients and Others**

<b>Calendar Year 2001</b>	<b>Grafton County (3 DVPSs)</b>	<b>Non-Grafton (7 DVPSs)*</b>
<b>Client advocacy with outside agencies (number of contacts)</b>	197 average per client=1.2	145 average per client=.36
<b>Number of referrals DVPS made to Crisis Center*</b>	153 average per client= 1	374 average per client=.9
<b>Number of consultations DVPS provided to DCYF</b>	802	313

\* These are referrals the DVPS makes to crisis center services above and beyond what the DVPS provides, e.g., a DVPS refers a client to a support group at the crisis center. Different DVPSs provide different services. For example, some DVPSs may refer a client to another advocate for court advocacy and other DVPSs may provide that service themselves.

As displayed in the first row of Table 1-2, Grafton County DVPSs make roughly one collateral contact per client. They also make one referral to crisis center services per client on average. The numbers of consultations shown in row three seem to indicate that DVPSs in Grafton County provide a considerable number of consultations to DCYF relative to the rest of New Hampshire.

**DCYF File Review Data on the Number of Referrals Made to the DVPS**

We also obtained data from DCYF case files on the number of referrals DCYF made to DVPSs. According to our review of all court-involved DCYF abuse/neglect cases which were opened in 2001, nine of the 21 co-occurrence cases had documentation that the domestic violence victim was referred to the DVPS (43%).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix B-2 for discussion of discrepant numbers of referrals from DCYF to the DVPS found in DCYF files versus the Coalition DVPS statistics.



## **Focus Group and Interview Data on the Types of Services Provided by the DVPS**

Coalition statistics give information about the quantity of services provided by the DVPS, but it is also important to have a qualitative perspective on the types of services provided by the DVPS. We learned about the nature, scope and quality of services provided by DVPSs in Grafton County from the perspective of DVPSs and DCYF-involved domestic violence victims through individual interviews.

The three DVPSs we interviewed were asked multiple questions about their work with child protective service workers (CPSWs) and DCYF cases, including the frequency and nature of training and collaboration with CPSWs on cases. The DCYF-involved domestic violence survivors we interviewed were asked about several areas including the following: 1) the types of contacts they have had with the DVPS; 2) the types of crisis center services they have received; and 3) the types of service referrals by the DVPS. (See also: *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003 and *Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2001.)

**Results.** None of the DVPSs reported providing any formal training to the DCYF staff on domestic violence issues. They said they did provide information in a less structured way, such as in individual meetings with social workers or sometimes during staff meetings. Case consultation and ongoing collaboration on the development of client service plans between the CPSW and the DVPS were described as uncommon by two out of the three DVPSs. All DVPSs reported providing the following services:

- information and referrals to clients and DCYF staff;
- courtroom advocacy for protective orders;
- safety planning with victims; and
- education and peer support counseling with victims.

Two of the three DVPSs provided emotional support during child abuse/neglect hearings. The other DVPS did not believe it was good practice for her to attend abuse/neglect hearings due to concerns about being pulled in as a party to the proceedings. The DVPSs also differed in their views and practices regarding accompanying CPSWs on home visits with clients. When asked which services they provide most frequently, all of the DVPSs said it depends on the client and varies greatly from client to client.

The description of DVPS services as highly variable and individualized was also made by DCYF-involved clients we interviewed. Seven of the eight DCYF-involved women we

interviewed worked specifically with a DVPS. DCYF-involved interview participants had varying levels of involvement with the DVPS and the local crisis centers and various perceptions as to the utility of services received. Most commonly, participants met individually with the DVPS. Most of the participants also attended crisis center support groups. Participants felt the DVPS assisted them with their DCYF cases through provision of emotional support as well as concrete advice. With the exception of two participants who did not view themselves as victims of domestic violence, all participants perceived DVPS and crisis center services as very helpful.

✓ **Summary and Discussion of Goal 1: Utilization of the DVPS at the Start of the Project**

Baseline data on the DVPS will become meaningful primarily in comparison to the data obtained at the end of the Project. At that point we will attempt to determine whether changes in practice are suggested by new statistics on the numbers and descriptions of DVPS services. Baseline data suggest that there is room for improvement in the number of referrals DCYF makes to the DVPSs, in the number of contacts DVPSs have per client, and in the amount of collaboration between DVPSs and CPSWs regarding client service plans. From interview data, DVPSs appeared primarily to work individually with clients but DVPS services appeared to be flexible, individualized, and include referrals to other crisis center services.

✓ **GOAL 2: ENHANCE VICTIM –CENTERED SAFETY PLANNING AND ENHANCE CHILD-CENTERED SAFETY PLANNING<sup>25</sup>**

A second goal of the crisis centers/Coalition is to enhance safety planning with crisis center clients, focusing on the safety of the adult victim as well as her children. We developed two indicators, using different types of data, to examine progress toward this goal: 1) the number of safety plans completed with victims and 2) qualitative descriptions of crisis center practices related to safety planning. Crisis center data on the number of safety plans completed with victims were not available for the year 2001. We hoped to collect these data through the Greenbook participating crisis centers beginning in 2002, but data were unavailable for two of the four crisis centers and the 2002 data from one crisis center was reportedly unreliable.

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<sup>25</sup> “Safety planning” refers broadly to the development of safety plans, which commonly identify protective strategies and safe places for victims and children in emergencies. Safety plans are individually tailored and usually include the gathering of important documents, methods of accessing money and transportation, and other steps that would increase physical safety.

Therefore, we do not have a baseline number of safety plans to report. However, we did collect qualitative data from focus groups and interviews with advocates and domestic violence survivors using crisis centers regarding their perceptions on safety planning. (See also, previous reports: *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003 and *Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2001, for comprehensive reports on these data.)

### **Interview and Focus Group Data**

The following is a summary of information obtained from four focus groups with advocates (n=12), DVPS interviews (n=3), three focus groups with victims involved with crisis centers (n=11); and individual interviews with DCYF-involved victims (n=8).

**Advocate interviews and focus groups.** Overall, the advocates described safety planning with domestic violence victims as a fairly standardized, routine practice in all four crisis centers. They all reportedly have protocols they follow for safety planning with adult victims. The protocols were described as a series of questions that clients are asked as well as materials that are distributed (e.g., emergency cards with various numbers and individualized safety plan forms). Advocates said that they ask about children and incorporate children into safety plans even if they do not do any safety planning with children directly.

**Victim interviews and focus groups.** The victims we spoke to echoed what advocates reported: All participants in the focus groups of clients using crisis center services and interviews with DCYF-involved clients stated that crisis center advocates have discussed safety plans with them. They also all indicated that in some way, directly or indirectly, their children's safety was addressed by the crisis centers.

### ✓ **Summary and Discussion of Goal 2: Victim-Centered and Child-Centered Safety Planning**

One cannot draw definitive conclusions based on the focus group and interview data given the small, non-random sample. Results do suggest, however, that safety planning with a focus on both victim and child safety was being addressed by Grafton County crisis centers at the beginning of the Project.

✓ **GOAL 3: INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF CHILD WELFARE AND JUDICIAL SYSTEM—ROLES, SERVICES, ISSUES AND PROCEDURES**

Another crisis center/Coalition goal is to increase crisis center staff's knowledge and awareness of the policies and practices of DCYF and the court system, so that crisis center staff can more effectively advocate for clients who are involved with these other systems and so that they can more effectively collaborate with other systems on behalf of clients when appropriate. We used two methods to assess levels of knowledge and awareness. The first method was by conducting a survey, and the second method was by conducting focus groups and interviews.

### **Survey Data**

The local *Interagency Survey* and the National Evaluation Team's *Direct Worker Survey* provided data on crisis center advocates' perceived knowledge of the other Project partners. (See Introduction for overview of methods for each survey.)

#### **Sample Characteristics**

***Interagency Survey.*** Six of the 37 Advisory Council members who responded to the *Interagency Survey* in October 2001 reported they worked in domestic violence agencies. The six individuals reportedly have worked for domestic violence agencies from one year through 20 years, with an average of 10.8 years. The responses of these six individuals to questions regarding previous training and perceived levels of knowledge are reported below. (See also prior report on these data: *Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey: Summary of Responses*, January 2002.)

***Direct Service Worker Survey.*** Seventeen domestic violence advocates responded to the National Evaluation Team's *Direct Service Worker Survey* in the Spring of 2003. Overall, the seventeen individuals had less experience in the field of domestic violence than the respondents to the *Interagency Survey*, with a range of less than one year through 10 years and an average of 2.6 years working for domestic violence agencies. Responses to *Direct Service Worker Survey* questions regarding previous training and knowledge of other systems are reported below.

#### **Survey Results**

**Perceived knowledge about the court.** Both surveys asked respondents: "How knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the operations, roles and responsibilities of the court system on a scale of 1-10?" (A rating of 1 represented 'not at all' and 10 represented

‘very much’.) On the *Interagency Survey* (n=6), most respondents considered themselves moderately to very knowledgeable about court operations. The range of scores was 5 through 9, and the average was 7. The *Direct Worker Survey* (n=17) yielded very similar results, with ratings ranging from 4 through 9 and the average across respondents was also 7.

**Perceived knowledge about DCYF.** Both surveys also asked respondents “How knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the operations, roles and responsibilities of DCYF on a scale of 1-10?” On the *Interagency Survey* (n=6), most respondents considered themselves very knowledgeable about DCYF operations. The range of scores was 6 through 10, and the average was 8. The *Direct Worker Survey* (n=17) yielded slightly different results in that more respondents rated themselves as only slightly knowledgeable about DCYF. The respondents’ ratings ranged from 3 through 10 and the average across respondents was 6. Lower self-reported levels of knowledge found in *Direct Worker Survey* results may be due to the fact that overall these respondents had less experience in the field than those who took the *Interagency Survey*, as described previously.

The *Direct Worker Survey* also asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed (on a scale of 1 - 4, with 1 being ‘strongly disagree’ and 4 being ‘strongly agree’) with the following statement: “Staff at your agency are knowledgeable about the procedures of child protection services.” We collapsed the four response categories into two (agree versus disagree) to simplify analysis. Among those who responded to this question, 93% (15) said they agreed that staff at their agency are knowledgeable about the procedures of child protection services.

### **Focus Group Data**

We also obtained information on advocates’ perceived knowledge of the two other primary partners from four focus groups with advocates (n=12) and three interviews with DVPSs (n=3). In the groups and interviews, very few participants identified knowledge deficits. However, some advocates did report a desire for training on DCYF operations and procedures and others said they would like to learn more about legal procedures.

√ **Summary and Discussion of Goal 3: Crisis Center Staff Knowledge and Awareness of Child Welfare and Judicial Systems at the Start of the Project**

Overall, survey and focus group/interview results indicate that crisis center staff perceived their level of knowledge about the operations of the court system in the moderate to high range at the beginning of the Project. Survey results, particularly the *Direct Worker Survey*, suggest that advocates believed they were less knowledgeable about the operations of DCYF than they were about court. It is important to note that self-reported levels of knowledge may be biased as individuals naturally want to present themselves in a positive light. The survey results regarding self-rated levels of knowledge will be more meaningful when compared to the survey results obtained at the end of the Project when groups are re-surveyed.

√ **GOAL 4: IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO INVOLUNTARY REFERRALS FROM COURT AND/OR DCYF**

Another goal of the crisis centers/Coalition is to identify effective responses to victims who are mandated by the court and/or DCYF to participate in crisis center services. The Greenbook working definition of mandated services is: “Mandated services are services in which a victim of domestic violence is mandated to seek crisis center services as part of a case plan and/or court order. These services can include shelter, support groups, and contact with a DVPS or advocate for the purpose of safety planning and education. Victims also can be mandated to seek civil protective orders.”<sup>26</sup>

To help inform Greenbook program activities directed toward this goal, as well as to assess any changes in practices related to involuntary referrals, we have collected both quantitative and qualitative data on involuntary referrals to crisis centers. Quantitative information on the frequency of court and DCYF mandates to crisis center services was obtained from both Family Division child abuse and/or neglect files and DCYF files. (See introductory chapter for overview of file review methodologies and Appendix C-2 and D-3 for details of data analysis.) Data on the number of units of service or types of services that crisis centers provided to clients mandated to utilize their services were generally not available.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> This definition was developed by Greenbook Project staff as a working definition for discussion of practices around involuntary referrals.

<sup>27</sup> One crisis center did track the number of mandated referrals/involuntary referrals to the agency starting in 2002. The crisis center reportedly did not receive any mandated referrals in the entire year.

### **Data from Court Abuse/Neglect Files**

Of the 17 court-involved co-occurrence cases in Grafton County Family Division that we reviewed, seven cases (41%) had documentation that the domestic violence victims were court ordered to participate in some crisis center/domestic violence service.<sup>28</sup> Two of the domestic violence victims were already involved with a crisis center when the child abuse/neglect case was opened.

### **Data from DCYF files**

Nine of the 21 DCYF co-occurrence cases opened in 2001 had documentation that the domestic violence victims were referred to crisis center services (43% of court-involved co-occurrence cases). We attempted to determine whether the referral was an actual mandate from the court or DCYF or whether it was only a recommendation, with no consequences associated with a lack of follow-through. Of the nine cases that referenced crisis center services for the domestic violence victim, five had some documentation in the file that local crisis center services were mandated or encouraged by the CPSW (24% of court-involved co-occurrence cases).<sup>29</sup>

Discrepant percentages calculated from court files versus DCYF files may indicate that the court is more likely than DCYF to mandate crisis center services or it may be an artificial difference based on the data available. Specifically, DCYF files may be less likely to contain written documentation of a mandate to crisis center services despite the fact that one was made.

### **Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews**

We believed it was important to learn the perceptions of advocates and CPSWs who work directly with domestic violence victims on the issue of mandated services. In DVPS interviews (n=3), focus groups with advocates (n=12; four groups), and focus groups with CPSWs (n=26; three groups) we asked participants to share their views on and experiences with mandated referrals. (See also, *Results From Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2002.)

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<sup>28</sup> All court orders to services that specifically referenced domestic violence were considered a court order to crisis center/domestic violence services. For example, an order to attend “domestic violence counseling” and an order to attend a “domestic violence group or some other form of individual therapy to understand the dynamics of domestic violence” were considered orders to crisis center services, whereas an order for mental health counseling without reference to domestic violence was not considered an order to crisis center services.

<sup>29</sup> Crisis center services were considered to be “mandated” if either of the following were true: 1) The CPSW case plan included recommendations/or reference to the domestic violence victim meeting with the DVPS or seeking crisis center services; or 2) A reference was made to a court order for the domestic violence victim to meet with a DVPS or seek crisis center services.



**Staff views.** Staff participants reported that in their experience, domestic violence victims are rarely mandated to seek domestic violence services in Grafton County. Most of the participants did not believe that mandating victims to domestic violence services is beneficial due to potential safety issues for the mandated victim, as well as other crisis center clients, and the belief that only voluntary help-seeking can facilitate change. Some participants, however, noted that in certain cases mandating domestic violence services can be helpful for victims. Advocates discussed specific types of services that hold potential value for involuntary clients, specifically, a small number of individual meetings with an educational focus.

**Victim perceptions.** It was also important to learn the perspective of domestic violence victims on mandated crisis center services. We asked the eight DCYF-involved interview participants if they had ever been court-ordered or told by DCYF that they must go to a crisis center or meet with an advocate. For participants who had such experiences, we inquired about whether they thought the mandates were helpful for them or would be helpful for others. (See also, *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.)

All participants who ever had an open case with DCYF (n=7) were mandated to seek crisis center services. There was a wide variety in the services they reported receiving. All participants attended individual meetings with advocates. One woman met with an advocate only “once or twice” prior to the time of the Greenbook interview, while others had ongoing relationships with advocates for years. Four participants had attended crisis center support groups, and one said she was about to begin attending a group. One participant had stayed at a crisis center shelter.

Only one participant said meeting with an advocate was not useful. All other involuntary crisis center clients reportedly perceived their experience with the crisis center to be positive—ranging from the more neutral description of “interesting” through the more affirming: “very helpful.” Overall, participants’ opinions of whether the court/DCYF should order victims to seek services fell into two categories: 1) it is beneficial for victims; or 2) it depends on the victim and the specific situation—it may be beneficial for some but not for others.



√ **Summary and Discussion of Goal 4: Effective Responses to Involuntary Referrals from the Court and/or DCYF at the Start of the Project**

While these data only show baseline perceptions and practices rather than the effectiveness of responses to involuntary referrals, the available data may prove useful as the Project works to identify or define “effective” responses. Data from interviews and focus groups with advocates and CPSWs suggested that mandating crisis center services was fairly uncommon in Grafton County in the beginning of the Project. Data from court and DCYF files indicated that at the start of the Project approximately 25% to 40% of domestic violence victims who had a court-involved DCYF case were mandated to seek crisis center services. The baseline data also indicated that most advocates, DVPSs, CPSWs, and some domestic violence victims do not believe it is useful to order a victim to seek crisis center services if she does not wish to do so. However, several advocates, CPSWs, and victims did say that in some situations it may be helpful for a victim, and most of the victims we spoke to who were mandated to crisis center services said the services had been very helpful for them. These results, taken overall, suggest that there is not a clear-cut answer applicable to every domestic violence victim in regard to the question of what constitutes an effective response to a client mandated to seek such services.

√ **GOAL 5: INCREASE CRISIS CENTER STAFF’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EXPOSURE ON CHILDREN**

Another crisis center/Coalition goal is to increase crisis center staff understanding of the policies and practices of the impact of domestic violence exposure on children so that crisis center staff can more effectively work with mothers to address their children’s needs and/or make appropriate referrals for children. We used both surveys and focus groups/interviews to assess staff levels of understanding at the beginning of the Project.

***Interagency and Direct Service Worker Survey Data***

**Training received.** The Grafton Greenbook *Interagency Survey* asked respondents: “Have you had any training on the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children?” If the response was yes, individuals were then asked how many hours of training they had and what year it occurred. Of the six respondents who worked for domestic violence organizations, all reported having had some training on the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children.

The number of hours ranged from ten to over 100 hours, with an average of 52 hours. (See also, *Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey: Summary of Responses*, January 2002.)

The NET *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents: “In the past 12 months, how many hours of training have you received on the impact of domestic violence on children?” The 17 survey respondents’ answers ranged from no training through 20 hours. The average was five hours. Six of 17 (35%) reported having no training at all on the impact of domestic violence on children. The lower amounts of training reported in response to the *Direct Service Worker Survey* reflect a difference in the time frame the question asked respondents to consider (lifetime versus 12 months).

Overall, the results are not surprising. The survey data show a direct relationship between years of experience and amount of training (e.g., the greater the experience, the more training received about the impact of domestic violence on children).

### **Focus groups and Interviews with Advocates**

In addition to survey data on previous training on the impact of domestic violence on children, we also obtained qualitative data from focus groups (n=12; four groups) and interviews (n=3) with advocates. In an effort to assess perceived levels of understanding of the impact of domestic violence on children, we asked advocates to describe the effects of domestic violence on children and to describe what they tell clients about the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children. (See also, *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2002.)

**Advocate perceptions on exposure to domestic violence.** We found that domestic violence advocates generally reported a belief that exposure to domestic violence has a variety of negative consequences for children. One advocate stated she believes exposure to domestic violence is so detrimental that it should be considered child abuse.

Several advocates said one notable problem was that exposure to domestic violence diminishes a child's self-esteem. Another problem they identified in children exposed to domestic violence is intense anger. Other advocates discussed aggression in boys as a common behavioral problem for children exposed to domestic violence. Several advocates said that negative role-modeling of an intimate relationship contributes to the cycle of violence and that children exposed to domestic violence frequently grow up to be domestic violence perpetrators and/or victims.

When asked to describe what they tell clients about the impact of domestic violence on children, participants reported that there is no standardized approach for talking with domestic violence victims about their children. According to participants, all crisis centers serving Grafton County possess written materials containing statistics about children who grow up in violent homes. Some advocates said they believe it is inappropriate to initiate discussion about children if a client does not bring it up first, while other advocates stated they always raise any concerns they have about the children with clients.

### **Domestic Violence Victim Perceptions**

We also asked domestic violence victims who participated in three focus groups (n=11) to tell us about what had they learned from the crisis center staff on the impact of domestic violence on children.

Nine of the 11 focus group participants said they have discussed the effects of domestic violence on children with crisis center staff. The two who said they had not discussed this topic with an advocate said they have previously read information about the impact of domestic violence on children, and one did not have custody of her children at the time she was receiving crisis center services. Some women reported that crisis center staff had given them written materials about the impact of domestic violence on children, which they have found to be useful.

### **v Summary and Discussion of Goal 5: Crisis Center Staff's Understanding of the Impact of Domestic Violence Exposure on Children at the Start of the Project**

In summary, crisis center staff expressed opinions and knowledge about how exposure to domestic violence can impact children that indicated familiarity with research and theory. It appeared to be a general practice to educate women about the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children, but in some instances this may have been dependent on whether the victim initiates the discussion or expresses concerns about a child. Similarly, the victims we spoke with reported that advocates generally provided them with information about the potential impact of exposure on children.

✓ **GOAL 6: IMPROVE CRISIS CENTER STAFF’S RECOGNITION, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT, INCLUDING DELINEATION OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING POLICIES**

Another crisis center/Coalition goal is to increase crisis center staff recognition, understanding, and response to child abuse/neglect. This is a broad goal with many components, including the delineation of child abuse/neglect reporting policies. We used both surveys and focus group/interview methods to assess staff levels of understanding of child abuse/neglect at Project baseline.

**Survey Data**

**Knowledge of co-occurrence.** Both the *Interagency Survey* and the *Direct Service Worker Survey* assessed perceived knowledge of co-occurrence. Specifically, both surveys asked respondents, “Overall, how knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the overlap between domestic violence and child abuse/neglect on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being ‘not at all’ and 10 being ‘very much?’

On the *Interagency Survey* (n=6), all respondents considered themselves highly knowledgeable about the overlap between domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. The range of scores was 9 through 10, and the average was 9.1. The *Direct Service Worker Survey* (n=17) yielded different results, in that scores ranged from 4 to 10, with an average of 7. Lower levels of knowledge of co-occurrence issues reported in response to the *Direct Service Worker Survey* may be due to the fact that, overall, these respondents had less experience in the field than those who took the *Interagency Survey*.

**Prior training on child abuse/neglect.** The *Interagency Survey* asked respondents: “Have you had any training on the prevalence of child abuse, the effects of child abuse on children, or the root causes of child abuse?” If the response was yes, individuals were then asked how many hours of training they have had and what year it occurred. Of the six respondents who worked for domestic violence organizations, all of them reported having had some training on child abuse. The number of hours ranged from eight to over 100 hours, with an average of 39 hours.

**Number of hours of training.** The *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents: “In the past 12 months, how many hours of training have you received on child maltreatment?” The 17 survey respondents’ answers ranged from no training at all through 12 hours. The average was 3.4 hours. The much lower amounts of training reported in response to the *Direct Service Worker Survey* reflect a difference in the time frame the question asked respondents to consider (12 months versus a lifetime). A notable finding was that nine respondents reported they had no training at all in the past year on child maltreatment (53%).

**Recognition of child abuse/neglect.** In addition, the *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed (on a scale of 1 - 4, with 1 being ‘strongly disagree’ and 4 being ‘strongly agree’) with the following statement: “Your agency trains its staff regularly to understand, recognize and respond to child maltreatment.” Of the 17 advocates who responded, the range of responses was from a low of 1 to a high of 4. We collapsed the four response categories into two (agree versus disagree) to simplify analysis. Seventy-six percent of the respondents (13) said they agreed that their agency trains staff regularly to understand, recognize, and respond to child maltreatment.

**Mandatory reporting policies.** The *Direct Service Worker Survey* also asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following: “Your agency’s policies include directions for staff about making mandatory reports to child protection services.” Of the 17 advocates who responded, the range of responses was from a low of 3 to a high of 4. In other words, 100% of respondents (n=17) said they agreed that their agency’s policies include directions for staff about making mandatory reports to child protection services.

#### **Data from Focus Groups with Advocates and DVPS interviews**

Another indicator of advocates’ baseline functioning in regard to the goal of improving crisis center staff recognition, understanding and response to child abuse and neglect is advocates’ descriptions of practices in identifying and reporting child abuse/neglect to DCYF. In the four focus groups (n=12) and three DVPS interviews, we asked all participating advocates about their experiences with child abuse and neglect issues, including reporting abuse/neglect to DCYF. (See also, *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2002.)

Many domestic violence advocates who participated in the focus groups said they had reported child abuse or neglect to DCYF. All participants said that advocates are mandated reporters and they were aware of the necessary steps to take if they suspected child

abuse/neglect. They may also receive guidance from their agency directors or DVPSs. On a related matter, advocates were inconsistent as to whether they pursued or received follow-up information from DCYF after the suspicion of abuse had been reported.

Advocates described negative aspects of involving DCYF in a victim's life (e.g., potential loss of decision making power) as well as positive aspects (e.g., accessing needed services). Most participants agreed that State laws and related criteria for categorizing children's exposure to domestic violence as child abuse and/or neglect were gray areas. The result is that the implications for their reporting obligations were ambiguous. For example, there was uncertainty among participants as to whether physical injury of the child or mere risk of physical injury or emotional disturbance must be present in order to be deemed reportable abuse/neglect.

✓ **Summary and Discussion of Goal 6: Crisis Center Staff's Recognition, Understanding, and Response to Child Abuse/Neglect at the Start of the Project**

Data from the two surveys provided conflicting information on the extent to which advocates received training on child abuse/neglect. However, the *Direct Service Worker Survey* indicated that a large majority of advocates believed that the crisis center trains staff on child abuse and neglect issues, including policies about making mandatory reports. Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews with advocates were congruent with survey responses which suggest that advocates were regularly trained on issues of child abuse/neglect and reporting policies. However, when *recent* training was specifically assessed, only about one-half of the respondents had received any training in the past year about child abuse/neglect.

An important area identified by many participants was the lack of clarity found in State laws and criteria for categorizing children's exposure to domestic violence as abusive. As noted previously, participants were unclear about whether physical injury of the child or mere risk of physical injury or emotional disturbance must be present in order to be deemed reportable abuse/neglect.

√ **GOAL 7: ENHANCE SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTIONS TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WHOSE CHILDREN ARE ABUSED OR NEGLECTED (BY SELF OR PARTNER)**

A major goal of the crisis centers/Coalition is to enhance supportive interventions to domestic violence victims and their abused/neglected children. At the time of the Project initiation, there were no baseline indicators for this goal because the Project first had to define “supportive interventions” before we could assess change over the life of the Project. However, we did obtain information from the four focus groups with advocates (n=12) and three interviews with DVPSs on the frequency with which they served domestic violence victims who had abused/neglected a child and how they responded in these cases. (See also, *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2002.)

According to interview and focus group participants, advocates rarely worked with victims who were also offending parents. Of the three DVPSs interviewed, two said they never had cases where the domestic violence victim was physically abusing her children. Only one DVPS said that she had worked with domestic violence victims who had neglected their children. Advocates in focus groups reported limited experience with domestic violence victims who were abusive of children. In one group, participants said that any such client would be encouraged to work specifically with the DVPS.

The apparent rarity of domestic violence victims who were abusive of their children may have been a function of the small sample of focus group and interview participants or it may be that it was, in fact, not common in the population of victims who sought crisis center services at the start of the Project. It is also possible that advocates were not aware of clients’ abuse or neglect of their children.

√ **GOAL 8: LINK CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TO APPROPRIATE SERVICES**

Another crisis center/Coalition goal is to link children of domestic violence victims to appropriate services. Two indicators to assess this goal are: 1) the number of children served by crisis centers; and 2) qualitative data from focus groups and interviews regarding the types of referrals/services for children provided by crisis centers.

## Number of Children Served By Crisis Centers

We obtained data from the Coalition on the number of Grafton County residents served by crisis centers in 2001 who were under the age of 18.<sup>30</sup> In Grafton County, 33 children (ages 0-17) were served by crisis centers for help related to domestic violence (as opposed to sexual assault or other crimes). In the rest of the State, 377 children were served by crisis centers for help related to domestic violence.

Table 1-3 shows the types of crisis center services provided to the 33 Grafton County children. There were a total of 238 contacts with clients under the age of 18, with an average of 7 contacts per child served.

**Table 1-3. 2001 Coalition Data: Crisis Center Services Provided to Grafton County Residents Ages 0-17**

Type of Crisis Center Service	Number of Individuals*	Number of Contacts
Crisis Counseling	10	32
Crisis Hotline	4	10
Shelter/Safe Home	4	53
Information and/or Referral**	15	49
Emergency Legal Advocacy	2	8
Personal Advocacy	6	18
Transportation	5	24
Childcare	8	34
Temporary Restraining Order Assistance	2	4
Protective Order Assistance	2	6
Group Treatment	0	0

\* One individual could have received more than one type of service

\*\*Includes general and specific, in-person and phone information and/or referrals

As shown in Table 1-3, the type of crisis center services provided to the greatest number of children was information and referral services (15 children), followed by crisis counseling (ten children), and then childcare. The greatest number of contacts were provided to children who

<sup>30</sup> Data on Grafton County residents differs from data on crisis centers serving Grafton County for two reasons: 1) One crisis center serving Grafton County residents primarily serves residents from another county; and 2) the residence of many 2001 crisis center clients was missing or unknown, so the numbers are considered underestimates. For example, the number of children who were Grafton County residents who stayed in crisis center shelters (four children) is much smaller than the number of children who stayed in the four crisis centers serving Grafton County in 2001 (34), as reported on page 22 of this chapter.



stayed in shelters/safe homes (53 contacts for four children) followed by children who received information and referrals. Three clients under the age of 18 from Grafton County contacted crisis centers for teen dating violence in 2001.

### **Focus Group and Interview Data on Types of Services and Referrals Provided to Children**

The following section provides a summary of what we learned about services and referrals for children from four focus groups with advocates (n=12), three focus groups with victims (n=11), and individual interviews with victims who have filed for protective orders (n=8). (See also, *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2002 and *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.)

### **Focus Group and Interview Data**

**Types of referrals/services for children provided by crisis centers.** By far the most frequent referrals for children made by crisis center staff were for mental health counseling. Several advocates stated they almost always recommended to victims that they consider counseling for their children and that they frequently referred victims to child mental health agencies or school counselors. In all the focus groups and interviews with clients, the only referral for children ever mentioned was for mental health counseling. Many participants in the focus groups of victims said advocates asked them if they (the client) thought their children might need counseling and then helped them find counselors.

The only “service” provided to children by crisis centers that we heard about from crisis center clients were therapeutic activities for children, such as expressing feelings through drawing, which were sometimes facilitated while victims attended the crisis center’s support group.

### √ **Summary of Goal 8: Link Children Exposed to Violence to Appropriate Services**

According to advocates and domestic violence victims who participated in focus groups and interviews, children’s needs were primarily being addressed by crisis centers through education, support and/or referrals made to mothers. Some form of general counseling was the most common referral for children.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

All baseline data reported in this chapter will be compared to similar types of data collected at the end of the Project for purposes of evaluating the eight Project goals of the crisis centers/Coalition. The information presented in this chapter is intended to provide a snapshot of crisis centers involved with Greenbook at the beginning of the Project.

### Status of Goals at Baseline

#### **The Domestic Violence Program Specialist (DVPS)**

The goals identified as central to the work of Greenbook cut across systems and entail an examination of knowledge and practices that are critical to the well-being of battered women and their children. The DVPS position, in particular, is the centerpiece of Greenbook work. Baseline data suggested considerable variation in the practices of the DVPS. Data also suggested a need for improving the process by which referrals were made to the DVPS by DCYF and the way the DVPS contacts clients. In particular, the data suggested that there was a need to improve the manner and process by which DCYF and the DVPS collaborate to insure the safety and well-being of their clients (e.g., increase collaboration around case-specific planning).

#### **Collaboration**

To a great extent, the success of Greenbook pivots on its ability to improve collaborations across the Project's three primary partners. We chose to measure collaboration in a number of ways, including knowledge of partner systems and the working relationships between and among systems. The results of the baseline evaluation showed that at the start, both knowledge and interactions were generally satisfactory or better. Overall, survey and focus group/interview results indicated that crisis center staff perceived their level of knowledge about the operations of the court system in the moderate to high range at the beginning of the Project. Results of the *Direct Service Worker Survey*, suggested that advocates believed they were less knowledgeable about the operations of DCYF than they were of the court system.

#### **Mandated Referrals**

One way the systems have been compelled to interact is when there is an involuntary referral of a battered woman, by the court or DCYF, to domestic violence services. On the one hand, we found that data from interviews and focus groups with advocates and CPSWs suggested that mandating crisis center services was fairly uncommon in Grafton County in the

beginning of the Project. On the other hand, data from court and DCYF files indicated that at the start of the Project, approximately 25% to 40% of domestic violence victims who had court-involved DCYF cases were mandated to seek crisis center services. Although some question the utility of this practice due to concerns about safety and because it departs from the empowerment philosophy favored by battered women's advocates, many advocates and victims did acknowledge the potential helpfulness of this approach. Our results, taken overall, suggested that there was not a uniform answer to the question of what constitutes an effective response to a client mandated to seek services. Nationally, there is no research or consensus on the appropriateness of mandating battered women to crisis center services or on best practices in these matters.

### **State Laws**

Another important area identified by many staff participants was the lack of clarity found in State laws and criteria for categorizing children's exposure to domestic violence as child abuse/neglect. We expect that this may be a priority area as the work of Greenbook progresses and that over time more specific guidelines can be provided to staff on this critical matter.

### **Education on Children's Exposure to Domestic Violence**

Knowledge, in terms of the research literature, of the effects of domestic violence on children is still evolving. Although research is currently better able to enumerate the potential negative effects of family violence on children, more work is needed on understanding the factors that buffer these effects, such as the age and sex of the child, and the behaviors of the non-offending parent.<sup>31</sup> Thus, keeping current with research is a way for advocates to provide families with services that are based in the best evidence. We found that crisis center staff expressed opinions and knowledge about how exposure to domestic violence can impact children that indicated familiarity with research and theory. It appeared to be a general practice to educate women about the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children, but in some instances this may have been dependent on whether the victim initiated the discussion or expressed concerns about a child. Similarly, the clients we spoke with reported that advocates generally provided them with information about the potential impact of exposure on children.

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<sup>31</sup> For example: Kaufman Kantor, G. & Little, L. (2002). Defining the boundaries of child neglect. When does domestic violence equate with parental failure to protect? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18 (4), 338-355.

## **Services to Women and Children**

We also expect that as the project matures, better service models will be put in place for women and children and that more children will be served by the crisis centers serving Grafton County residents. Coalition statistics from 2001 indicated there were 33 crisis center clients who were from Grafton County that were under the age of 18. The type of crisis center services provided to the greatest number of children was information and referral services (15 children), followed by crisis counseling (ten children). Advocates and domestic violence victims who participated in focus groups and interviews reported that children's needs were primarily being addressed by crisis centers through education, support, and/or referrals made to mothers. Some form of general counseling was the most common referral for children.

### **Needs for Improved Data Collection**

We found that data on some Project goals were unavailable. We highlight these items so that Project partners may consider taking steps toward changing data collection procedures.

#### **Number of Reports Crisis Centers Make to DCYF<sup>32</sup>**

The Greenbook evaluation design included collecting data on the number of reports of abuse/neglect that crisis centers make to DCYF over the duration of the Project. This is one of several indicators of the goal of improving crisis center staff recognition, understanding, and response to child abuse/neglect. Although the Coalition had data on the referrals that crisis centers made to outside agencies, these data did not appear to be a valid reflection of reports to DCYF. For example, according to the statistics available, just two individuals were reported to DCYF by crisis centers serving Grafton County in 2001. Some of the crisis centers did not have a category for DCYF reports but may have instead coded reports to DCYF as referrals to "social services." All of the crisis centers had different categories of agency referrals, resulting in inconsistencies in categorizing service referrals across the State (at least in 2001).

#### **Number and Types of Referrals Crisis Centers Make Specifically for Children**

We were aware that the crisis centers did not record the number and types of referrals crisis centers make for children of clients when the evaluation was designed. It may be important for crisis centers to capture such information if they choose to focus on families.

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<sup>32</sup> DCYF uses the term "referrals" to describe reports of child abuse/neglect but we use the term "report" to distinguish it from other types of service referrals.

### **Number of Involuntary Referrals Crisis Centers Receive From Court/ DCYF**

The Greenbook evaluation design included collecting data on the number of clients who were mandated to crisis center services beginning in 2001. Unfortunately, only one of the four crisis centers was able to report the number of involuntary referrals received for 2002, and in that instance, no referrals had been made. It may be useful for crisis centers to capture such information as the Coalition and others examine the issue of mandated services.

Related to this issue, little is known about the extent to which advocates provide supportive interventions to battered women who are perpetrators of child abuse/neglect. As the Greenbook model is further refined, the Coalition should consider examining these practices more closely and document their efforts.

## **CHAPTER 2 DIVISION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

This chapter reports on all baseline data for the Project goals of the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). We first provide some background on DCYF and the families it serves. Next, general statistics on DCYF 2001 co-occurrence cases are presented. The rest of the chapter is organized around DCYF's Greenbook Project goals (see Appendix C-1 for a complete list of DCYF goals). Each DCYF goal is presented along with the indicators and all types of data used to assess that goal. Data are summarized and discussed at the end of each goal-specific section. In the final section of this chapter overall baseline findings on DCYF are reviewed.

Unlike the other Project primary partners, DCYF has a statewide computerized database containing numerous details on clients, case practices, and outcomes (the Bridges System). Consequently, there is substantially more descriptive quantitative data presented in this chapter than in other chapters for which similar data was not available. In addition to DCYF aggregate data (NCANDS and Bridges Data), the following types of data pertaining to DCYF are presented in this chapter:

- § Focus groups with domestic violence survivors using crisis center services
- § Individual interviews with domestic violence survivors involved with DCYF
- § Individual interviews with DVPSs
- § Focus groups with other domestic violence advocates
- § Focus groups with Child Protective Service Workers (CPSWs)
- § DCYF file reviews
- § *Direct Service Worker Survey* data
- § Court child abuse/neglect files

An overview of each type of data and the methods used for data collection are provided in the introductory chapter. For other details on methodology and specifics on the computation of particular statistics, please see the appendix.

### **OVERVIEW OF DCYF**

DCYF's mission is to assist families in the protection, development, permanency, and well-being of their children and the communities in which they live. DCYF is the agency mandated by law to assess allegations of child abuse and neglect and to provide services for abused children and their families. The child protection system in New Hampshire is state

administered with 12 local community DCYF offices located throughout the State. The three DCYF district offices that serve families from Grafton County are located in Littleton, Laconia and Claremont. Two of the district offices serving Grafton County—Claremont and Laconia—also serve families from other counties (Sullivan and Belknap Counties, respectively).

## DESCRIPTION OF DCYF 2001 CASES

Descriptive information on DCYF cases from calendar year 2001 was based on data obtained from NCANDS and DCYF file reviews. (See introductory chapter, pages 6-7, for description of these data.) Examination of NCANDS data permitted a comparison of Grafton County to the rest of New Hampshire. DCYF file review data provided more detailed information on Grafton County co-occurrence cases.

### 2001 NCANDS Data

**Total number of assessments.** In 2001, DCYF completed 8,426 assessments on allegations of child abuse/neglect in New Hampshire<sup>33</sup>. These assessments involved 10,109 children. Excluding assessments/children whose county of residence was unknown or missing from the database, there were 538 children from Grafton County involved in 396 assessments of abuse or neglect in 2001. In the rest of the State, there were 8,725 children involved in 8,030 assessments.<sup>34</sup>

**Number of founded assessments.** The number of assessments resulting in a finding of abuse and/or neglect (“founded assessments”) for New Hampshire in 2001 was 780. The founded assessments involved 994 children, which is equivalent to a 9.8% substantiation rate for assessments completed in 2001. Excluding assessments/children whose county of residence was unknown or missing from the database, there were 34 founded assessments, involving 48 children from Grafton County. In the rest of the State there were 525 founded assessments involving 787 child victims of abuse/neglect. The substantiation rate for children from Grafton County was similar to that of the rest of the State (8.9%).

**Specific types of abuse/neglect reported.** Table 2-1 shows the number of children involved in reports of specific types of abuse or neglect. Examination of the table shows that the

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<sup>33</sup> NCANDS counts the number of assessments completed in the year 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Data on the county the child resides in was missing for 846 children.

most common type of child abuse/neglect reported both in Grafton County and the rest of the State was neglect, with 58% of all assessments involving neglect allegations. Reports of sexual abuse were most likely to be founded, compared to other types of abuse/neglect reports. For both Grafton County and the rest of the State, reports of physical abuse had the lowest substantiation rate (4 out of 175 children referred). The most likely reason for the latter is related to the high standards of proof required under state law for physical abuse.

**Table 2-1. NCANDS 2001: Type of Abuse Reported and Number of Children with Founded Assessments**

<b>A. GRAFTON COUNTY RESIDENTS</b>				
<b>Type of Abuse Reported</b>	<b>Number of Children*</b>	<b>Percentage of All Reports (n=538)**</b>	<b>Number of Children in Founded Assessments</b>	<b>Percentage Within Abuse Type Founded</b>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	175	33%	4	2%
<b>Neglect</b>	313	58%	25	8%
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	104	18%	17	16%
<b>Psychological or Emotional Abuse</b>	16	3%	2	13%
<b>B. NON-GRAFTON COUNTY RESIDENTS</b>				
<b>Alleged Abuse/Referral Type</b>	<b>Number of Children *</b>	<b>Percentage of All Reports (n=8,725)**</b>	<b>Number of Children in Founded Assessments</b>	<b>Percentage Within Abuse Type Founded</b>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	2,969	34%	133	4%
<b>Neglect</b>	5,080	58%	487	10%
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	1,378	16%	180	12%
<b>Psychological or Emotional Abuse</b>	311	4%	31	10%

\*One child could potentially have more than one type of abuse/neglect and thus appear in more than one row.

\*\*Excluding children for whom information on county of residence was missing



**Prevalence of co-occurrence.** We obtained information on DCYF co-occurrence cases from the 2001 NCANDS database. Table 2-2 shows the number of children who had domestic violence identified during their assessment of abuse/neglect.<sup>35</sup>

**Table 2-2. NCANDS 2001: Number of Children with Domestic Violence (DV) Identified During Assessment**

County of Residence	Total Number of Children in Assessments	Number and % of Children with DV Identified in Assessment*	Total Number of Children with Founded Assessments	Number and % of Children with Founded Assessments with DV Identified in Assessment*
Grafton County	538	119/538 (29%)	48	19/48 (53%)
Non-Grafton County	8,426	1,826/8426 (28%)	787	324/787 (53%)

\*excluding assessments with missing data on the domestic violence variable and county variable

The percentage of co-occurrence cases in Grafton County and the rest of the State (53%) was higher than reported in other New Hampshire DCYF reports, which is likely due to the fact that, for purposes of analysis, we excluded children for whom data were missing on the domestic violence variable. (See Appendix C-3 for details and rationale.)

**Co-occurrence and substantiation.** The percentage of children for whom domestic violence was identified was much greater among children with founded assessments than the percentage among all children assessed for abuse/neglect—53% versus 29%—for both Grafton County and the rest of the State. We also examined whether children in families where there was domestic violence were more likely to have their case be founded than cases without domestic violence. We found that, according to the 2001 NCANDS data, they were more likely to have allegations of abuse/neglect to be found true. Table 2-3 shows the proportion of children for whom domestic violence was identified who had founded cases compared to the proportion of children who did not have domestic violence identified.

<sup>35</sup> In NCANDS, the domestic violence variable is defined as “violence between caretakers” that is identified at any point during the assessment. Domestic violence is recorded by the CPSW on the assessment-close screen.

**Table 2-3. NCANDS 2001: Association Between Substantiation of Abuse/Neglect and Identification of Domestic Violence**

<b>County of Residence</b>	<b>Number and % of Children in Assessments with Domestic Violence</b>	<b>Number and % of Children in Assessments without Domestic Violence</b>
<b>Grafton</b>	19/ 119                      16%	17/ 297                      6%
<b>Non-Grafton</b>	324/ 1,826                      17%	296/ 4,828                      6%

\*Numbers of children in each column do not total 48 for Grafton and 787 for the rest of the State due to missing data on the domestic violence variable.

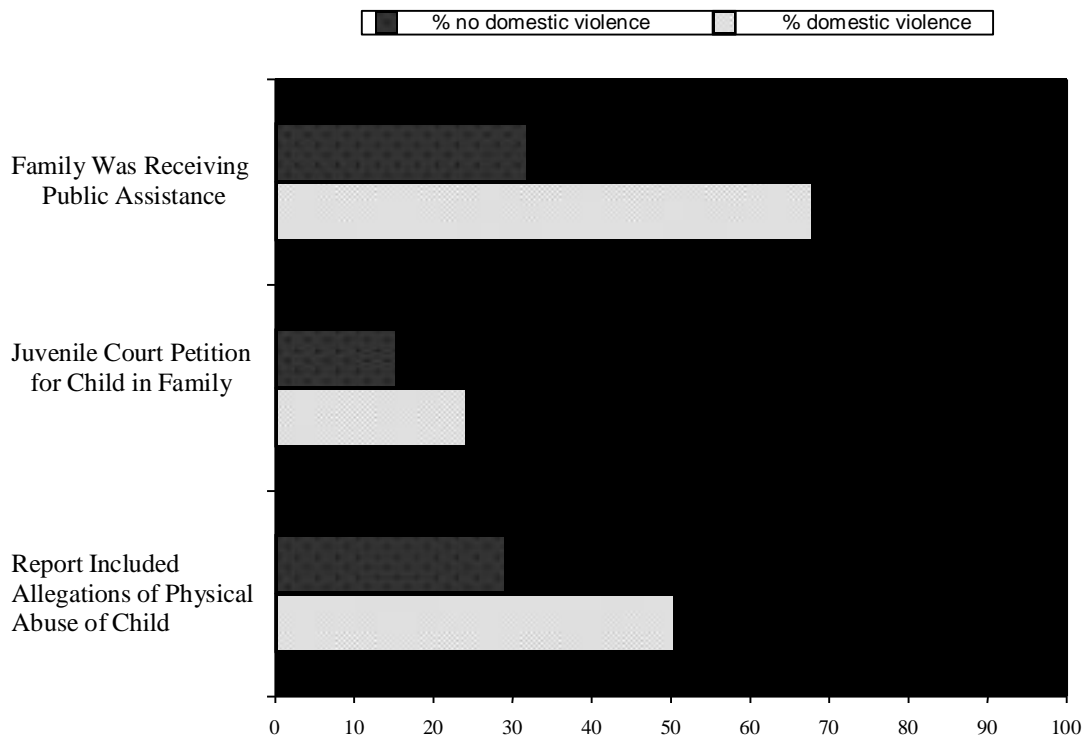
In Grafton County and the rest of New Hampshire, the substantiation rate was more than two times greater for co-occurrence cases than non-co-occurrence cases, and these differences are statistically significant (see Appendix C-3). Even though these findings suggest that cases involving domestic violence were more likely to be substantiated, we do not know if the finding of abuse/neglect specifically pertained to the domestic violence or whether cases involving domestic violence were also more likely to involve other significant problems and/or more severe abuse allegations than cases without domestic violence.

**Correlates of domestic violence and abuse/neglect cases.** To better understand the complexity of co-occurrence cases, we conducted further examination of the association between domestic violence identified by caseworkers and several risk factors shown to be correlated with domestic violence in prior research. Statewide, the NCANDS data showed a trend for children from families with domestic violence to be more likely to have behavior problems, to have had a caretaker abusing alcohol and/or drugs, to have had a caretaker with an emotional disturbance, to have had a juvenile court petition, to have been in a family receiving public assistance, and to have been reported as victims of physical abuse. Some caution is needed in generalizing from the data because several of the factors found to be associated with domestic violence appear grossly underestimated in the 2001 NCANDS data. For example, the data indicate that only 3% of all children involved in abuse/neglect assessments for 2001 had a caretaker abusing drugs and less than 2% of all children had a caretaker with an identified emotional disturbance.

NCANDS data on certain variables appears to be more accurate in regard to other factors, which may be more easily corroborated, such as the number of children supported by public assistance, and the number of children with juvenile court involvement, and the number of

children whose initial reports included allegations of physical abuse. The relationship between these three factors and domestic violence is shown in Figure 2-1.

**Figure 2-1. NCANDS 2001: Selected Correlates of Domestic Violence**



For example, among the children with domestic violence identified during their assessment, 68% of their families were receiving financial assistance. Among their counterparts without domestic violence identified during their assessment, about half as many (32%) were receiving financial assistance. Perhaps most remarkable is that over one-half of the children with domestic violence were reported for physical abuse, as compared to 30% of the children without domestic violence.

**Types of abuse/neglect co-occurring with domestic violence.** We also obtained information on the specific types of abuse/neglect that co-occurred with domestic violence from the 2001 NCANDS data. Table 2-4 shows the percentage of children for whom domestic violence was identified in the family within each type of abuse/neglect.

**Table 2-4. NCANDS 2001: Association Between Co-occurrence and Specific Types of Abuse/Neglect**

<b>A. GRAFTON COUNTY</b>					
<b>Abuse Type</b>	<b>Total Number of Children with Founded Assessments*</b>	<b>Number of Children with DV Identified</b>	<b>Percentage of Children with DV Identified Within Type of Abuse**</b>	<b>Number of Children with Missing Data on DV</b>	<b>Percentage of Children with DV Including Children with Missing Data</b>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	4	2	(2/2) 100%	2	(2/4) 50%
<b>Neglect</b>	25	14	(14/20) 70%	5	(14/25) 56%
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	17	2	(2/11) 18%	6	(6/17) 12%
<b>Psychological or Emotional Maltreatment</b>	2	2	(2/2) 100%	0	(2/2) 100%
<b>B. NON-GRAFTON COUNTY</b>					
<b>Abuse Type</b>	<b>Total Number of Children with Founded Assessments*</b>	<b>Number of Children with DV Identified</b>	<b>Percentage of Children with DV Identified Within Type of Abuse**</b>	<b>Number of Children with Missing Data on DV</b>	<b>Percentage of Children with DV Including Children with Missing Data</b>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	133	94	79%	14	(94/149) 71%
<b>Neglect</b>	427	194	57%	88	(194/515) 45%
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	180	23	18%	55	(23/ 235) 13%
<b>Psychological or Emotional Maltreatment</b>	31	21	75%	3	(21/34) 67%

\* One child could potentially have more than one type of abuse/neglect and thus appear in more than one row.

\*\*Excluding those with missing data on the domestic violence variable

Table 2-4, columns four and six, shows the percentages of co-occurrence cases within abuse types calculated with and without the children who had missing data on the domestic violence variable. For example, looking at column six which shows the percentage of co-occurrence cases including children with missing data, one can see that in Grafton County, two

of four assessments with founded dispositions for physical abuse involved domestic violence. Sexual abuse cases were the only types of cases with less than one-half involving the co-occurrence of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence. This was true for children from Grafton County as well as those from the rest of the State.<sup>36</sup>

### **Data from DCYF File reviews: Overview of Co-occurrence Cases**

We also obtained general information regarding co-occurrence cases in Grafton County from DCYF file reviews. (See introductory chapter for overview of DCYF case file review methodology.) DCYF file review data pertains to families who were involved with one of the three DCYF district offices serving Grafton County. However, two of the district offices serving Grafton County also serve other counties. This is one reason that the statistics obtained from NCANDS and from the file reviews differ.<sup>37</sup> (See Appendix C-2 for a breakdown of district office and county of residence for the co-occurrence cases identified in DCYF file reviews.)

There were a total of 94 substantiated cases of abuse/neglect in the three district offices serving Grafton County in 2001. Twenty-seven, or 29%, of these cases of child abuse/neglect involved the co-occurrence of abuse/neglect and domestic violence (co-occurrence cases).

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<sup>36</sup> The lower rates of domestic violence identified for sexually abused children according to NCANDS should not lead one to conclude that domestic violence and sexual abuse do not co-occur. There may be other reasons for the lower rates of co-occurrence of domestic violence and sexual abuse, such as the fact that many DCYF sexual abuse cases involve non-caretaker or out-of-home perpetrators, making it less likely for domestic violence between caretakers to be explored or identified.

<sup>37</sup> Other reasons for the difference in results of NCANDS analysis versus file review data include: 1) inherent limitations of file review data, which depends entirely on how well information is documented; and 2) NCANDS data reports on the number of children whereas file review data is reported according to the number of families.

**Documentation of domestic violence in the files.** To determine if a family experienced the co-occurrence of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence, we read through all paper files and, in some cases the computerized file, for documentation of domestic violence occurring within one year of the abuse/neglect referral. Table 2-5 shows the various types of documentation of domestic violence found in files and the number and percentage of cases that had the documentation. In many of the co-occurrence cases, 59%, domestic violence was referenced in the intake or initial referral. This was the most common documentation of domestic violence found in the case files. Some cases had other types of documentation (not shown in table below), such as a Guardian *ad Litem* (GAL) report or a Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) report referencing domestic violence.

**Table 2-5. DCYF File Data: Documentation of Domestic Violence**

<b>Documentation</b>	<b>Number and Percentage (N=27)</b>
Initial referral (intake summary) referenced domestic violence	(16) 59%
Domestic violence victim disclosure (not necessarily to CPSW)	(7) 26%
Copies of police reports of domestic violence (or reference to information from police regarding domestic violence)	(6) 22%
Reference to victim’s receipt of crisis center services	(4) 15%
Mental health evaluation referenced domestic violence	(4) 15%
Reference to existing domestic violence protective order	(3) 11%

**Types of DCYF involvement in co-occurrence cases.** Six of the 27 co-occurrence cases were classified as “founded, problem-resolved” (22%), meaning that the CPSW found the abuse/neglect to be true, but determined that the family had sufficient awareness and resources to maintain the safety of the child without ongoing DCYF oversight or involvement. “Founded, problem-resolved” cases are closed at the conclusion of the assessment. These case files contained little detailed information. The other 21 co-occurrence cases were “founded, court-

involved,” meaning the CPSW filed a petition of abuse/neglect against the perpetrator/s with the court and there was some period of ongoing court oversight as to compliance with the DCYF service plan. Analysis of DCYF file data in the remainder of this chapter often focuses on the 21 court-involved cases because of the limited DCYF involvement in the “problem-resolved” cases.

**Types of child abuse/neglect in co-occurrence cases and other cases.** We collected data on the types of abuse/neglect founded by DCYF for the referent child in each case reviewed.<sup>38</sup> Table 2-6 shows the types of substantiated abuse/neglect in cases without domestic violence and in co-occurrence cases. Columns four and five show the types of abuse/neglect in co-occurrence cases only, separating out the cases that were closed as “problem-resolved” from the cases that had ongoing DCYF and court involvement.

**Table 2-6. DCYF File Data: Types of Child Abuse/Neglect**

	ALL FOUNDED CASES (N=94)		CO-OCCURRENCE CASES (N=27)	
	Cases with No DV (n=67)	Co-occurrence Cases (n=27)	Problem-Resolved (n=6)	Court-Involved (n=21)
Type of Abuse/Neglect	Number (% of non- DV Cases)*	Number (% of Co- occurrence Cases)*	Number (% of Problem- Resolved Cases)*	Number (% of Court- Involved Cases)*
Physical abuse	12 (18%)	8 (30%)	3 (50%)	5 (24%)
Sexual abuse	23 (34%)	0	0	0
Neglect (any type)	40 (60%)	25 (93%)	4 (66%)	21 (100%)
Neglect (failure to supervise)	22 (33%)	8 (30%)	0	8 (38%)
Neglect (failure to provide)	11 (17%)	11 (41%)	1 (11%)	10 (48%)
Neglect (failure to protect)	4 (6%)	5 (19%)	0	5 (24%)
Neglect (other)	12 (18%)	10 (37%)	6 (100%)	4 (19%)

\*Percentage does not add up to 100 because some cases had more than one type of abuse/neglect.

Almost all co-occurrence cases involved the neglect of a child. The percentage of neglect (any type) cases among co-occurrence cases was much higher (93%) compared to cases where domestic violence was not identified (60%). This was also true for neglect due to failure to

<sup>38</sup> As noted in the introductory chapter description on DCYF file review methods, when a family had more than one child abuse/neglect victim, we chose to obtain details of the abuse/neglect on one randomly selected child only.

provide. As previously discussed, the percentage of physical abuse cases was higher for co-occurrence cases (30%) relative to non-domestic violence cases. There were not any co-occurrence cases involving sexual abuse (although we found there were two child victims of sexual abuse from Grafton County in the NCANDS data). Other forms of neglect in co-occurrence cases included “threatening and menacing behavior,” “abandonment,” and/or substance abuse. Two of the co-occurrence cases involved physical abuse only; 19 of the co-occurrence cases involved neglect only; and six involved both physical abuse and some form of neglect (not shown in Table 2-6).



**Perpetrators of child abuse and/or neglect.** Data were collected from all substantiated abuse/neglect case files on the perpetrator in terms of his/her relation to the child victim. Table 2-7 shows the child abuse/neglect perpetrator’s relation to the child victim in cases without domestic violence and in co-occurrence cases. Data are considered separately for situations in which the disposition was “problem-resolved” versus “court-involved.”

**Table 2-7. DCYF File Data: Relationship of Child Abuse/Neglect Perpetrator to Child Victim**

Child Abuse/Neglect Perpetrator	ALL FOUNDED CASES (N=94)		CO-OCCURRENCE CASES (N=27)	
	Cases with No DV (n=67)	Co-occurrence Cases (n=27)	Problem-Resolved (n=6)	Court-Involved (n=21)
	Number (% of non-DV Cases)*	Number (% of Co-occurrence Cases)*	Number (% of Problem-Resolved Cases)	Number (% of Court-Involved Cases)*
Both biological parents	13 (19%)	7 (26%)	1 (16%)	6 (29%)
Biological father	25 (37%)	15 (56%)	5 (83%)	10 (48%)
Biological mother	33 (49%)	18 (66%)	2 (33%)	16 (76%)
Step-father	6 (22%)	3 (11%)	0	3 (14%)
Step-mother	0	0	0	0
Boyfriend of biological parent	5 (19%)	0	0	0
Girlfriend of biological parent	0	1 (4%)	0	1 (5%)
Other primary caretaker**	4 (6%)	0	0	0
Other***	12 (18%)	0	0	0

\*Percentage does not sum to 100 as some cases had more than one perpetrator.

\*\* “Other primary caretaker” includes male and female caretakers who are not biological parents, step-parents or partners of biological parents, e.g., grandparents.

\*\*\*The category of “other” includes non-caretakers and/or non-household members, e.g., siblings

It can be seen that the most frequent identified perpetrator of abuse/neglect was the child’s biological mother, for both co-occurrence cases (18 of 27; or two thirds of co-occurrence cases) and other cases (33 of 67; or about one-half of non-co-occurrence cases). However, compared to cases not involving domestic violence, a greater proportion of biological fathers were the perpetrators of child abuse/neglect in co-occurrence cases (56% versus 37%). In 17 of the 27 co-occurrence cases, only one perpetrator of abuse/neglect was identified. Nine sole perpetrators were biological mothers and eight sole perpetrators were biological fathers or stepfathers. All nine co-occurrence cases identifying the child abuse/neglect victim’s mother as

the sole perpetrator of child abuse/neglect were neglect cases. Four of these involved medical neglect, two involved failure to provide proper care and supervision, and two involved neglect due to the mother’s substance abuse.

Comparing the problem-resolved cases to those cases which had ongoing DCYF and court involvement, one sees that there was a greater proportion of biological fathers who were the perpetrators in the problem-resolved cases (83% versus 48%). Biological mothers were the perpetrators of abuse/neglect in a greater proportion in court-involved cases than in problem-resolved cases (76% versus 33%). There is no simple explanation for this finding because the numbers involved are small and one must take into account other factors that may be relevant to the case, such as the category of abuse or neglect.

**Characteristics of Family Members in Co-occurrence Cases**

**Victims of domestic violence.** Twenty-six of the adult domestic violence victims in DCYF 2001 co-occurrence cases were female (96%), and one was male. Most domestic violence victims were mothers of the child abuse/neglect victims (89%); two were girlfriends of the child victim’s father, and one domestic violence victim was the child’s biological father.

As shown in Table 2-8, the average age of the domestic violence victims was 29. Consistent with the demographic characteristics of New Hampshire, all were white, non-Hispanic. The adult domestic violence victim was the current spouse or partner of the domestic violence perpetrator in 85% of the cases.

**Table 2-8. DCYF File Data: Characteristics of Domestic Violence Victims, Domestic Violence Perpetrators, and Child Abuse/Neglect Victims**

	<b>Domestic Violence Victim</b>	<b>Domestic Violence Perpetrator</b>	<b>Children in Victim’s Household (N=61)</b>
<b>Age</b>	Range: 18-44 years; Average: 29 years	Range: 18 -55 years; Average: 31 years	Range: less than one year through 17 years; Average 6 years
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	100% white, non-Hispanic	96% white, non-Hispanic	100% white, non-Hispanic*
<b>Relation to Domestic Violence Perpetrator</b>	14 boyfriend-girlfriend (52%); 9 married (33%); 2 divorced (8%); 2 unknown		

\*referent child only (n=27)

**Domestic violence perpetrators.** As shown in Table 2-8, the average age of the perpetrators of domestic violence was 31 years. Nearly all were white, non-Hispanic.

**Victims of child abuse/neglect in co-occurrence cases.** There were a total of 61 children in the households of cases with co-occurring domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. The average number of children per family was two, with a range of one through four children. On average, children in co-occurrence households were about six years of age. Over one-half of the 27 co-occurrence cases involved children under the age of five years and a quarter were children under the age of one year (seven cases). We only gathered information on the sex and race/ethnicity of the child randomly chosen as the referent child. Of these 27 children, there was an equal distribution by gender. Of the 25 case files that contained information on race/ethnicity, all referent children were white, non-Hispanic.

**Relationship between domestic violence perpetrator and child abuse/neglect victim.** We also examined the relation between the domestic violence perpetrator and abuse/neglect victim at the time the domestic violence occurred, for court-involved and non-court-involved co-occurrence cases. Across all co-occurrence cases, almost two-thirds (17 of 27) of the domestic violence perpetrators were the child victim's biological father, and about a quarter were the boyfriend of the child's mother.

**Children's involvement in domestic violence incidents.** In several cases (14), we could not determine whether or not the children were directly involved in the domestic violence incident/s from the documentation in the case file. Among the 13 cases with sufficient documentation to make such a determination, most (11 of 13) did entail direct involvement of at least one of the children in the domestic violence incident. However, such details may have only been provided when they were believed to represent potential threats of harm to the child. For example, in one case the police report said the father was holding the baby when the mother shoved him. In another case, the child telephoned "911" while witnessing her father assault his girlfriend and the child was assaulted by her father as a result. A third case involved an infant who was in the car with his parents when his father grabbed the steering wheel away from the mother who was driving, resulting in an accident.

## v **Summary of Background Data on Grafton County 2001 DCYF Cases**

According to NCANDS 2001 and a review of DCYF files of abuse/neglect substantiated in 2001, the prevalence of domestic violence in families where there was child abuse/neglect in Grafton County was between 29% and 53%. The type of child abuse/neglect that most frequently co-occurred with domestic violence was neglect, followed by physical abuse, and least common, sexual abuse. The percentage of neglect cases among co-occurrence cases was much higher than for cases where domestic violence was not identified, and this is particularly true for neglect due to failure to provide. Assessments where domestic violence was identified were more likely to be substantiated for abuse and/or neglect than those without domestic violence. They were also more likely to involve physical abuse allegations. In general, the percentage of physical abuse cases was higher for co-occurrence cases.

DCYF file review data showed that the most frequently identified child abuse/neglect perpetrator in co-occurrence cases was the child victim's biological mother, but only slightly more than biological fathers (66% versus 56%). If only one abuse/neglect perpetrator was identified, it was equally likely to be the biological mother as the biological father. DCYF file review data indicated that the majority of domestic violence perpetrators were biological fathers of child abuse/neglect victims.

Families with domestic violence experienced significantly more risk factors and differed from other families in that children may have been more likely to have had behavior problems, and to have had a juvenile court petition. There were higher rates of caretaker substance abuse and emotional disturbances, public assistance, and physical abuse of children.

Children tended to be pre-schoolers, and although data were limited, 11 of 25 cases indicated that there was direct involvement of the child/ren in the domestic violence incident.

In the next section, we consider the baseline status of DCYF Greenbook Project Goals.

## DCYF GOALS

DCYF's multiple Project goals overlap in various ways, with some broad goals encompassing other more specific goals. DCYF's goal of increasing the recognition, understanding, and response to domestic violence is broad and over-arching, encompassing three distinct sub-goals:

- A) Increase child protection system recognition of domestic violence
- B) Increase child protection system understanding of domestic violence
- C) Increase child protection system response to domestic violence

A) The recognition of domestic violence encompasses three of DCYF's goals, which are all related to assessment and are as follows:

- 1. Improve assessment of domestic violence
- 2. Improve assessment of the impact on children regarding children's exposure to domestic violence
- 3. Improve assessment of parental protective efforts

B) The understanding of domestic violence is related to a fourth DCYF goal: Increase knowledge and awareness of domestic violence and court system: roles, services, issues and procedures.

C) Improving the response to domestic violence encompasses the remaining DCYF goals. These specific goals, in abbreviated form, are:

- 1. Increase the consistent and effective use of the DVPS
- 2. Enhance family-centered safety and case planning
- 3. Implement separate service plans for victims and perpetrators
- 4. Establish criteria for an alternative response
- 5. Reduce incidence and duration of out of home placements
- 6. Reduce recidivism of child abuse/neglect in co-occurrence cases

In this section, baseline data relative to DCYF goals are presented in the following order: First, we present data related to the recognition of domestic violence, the three goals this encompasses, and all indicators identified to assess those goals. Second, we present data related to understanding domestic violence. Third, we present data related to DCYF's response to domestic violence, the goals this encompasses, and all indicators identified to assess those goals.

✓ **GOAL A-1: RECOGNITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: IMPROVE ASSESSMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

DCYF plans to improve its assessment of domestic violence in abuse/neglect cases. We identified several indicators to evaluate change in DCYF's assessment of domestic violence:

- The number of DCYF co-occurrence cases (e.g., if assessment improves, we would expect to see a rise in the number of cases identified as co-occurrence cases).
- Changes in CPSWs' descriptions of how they assess domestic violence from the beginning to the end of the Project.
- Changes in DCYF-involved domestic violence victims' descriptions of how their CPSW assessed domestic violence from the beginning to the end of the Project.
- Increasingly thorough documentation in abuse/neglect case files regarding domestic violence, including documentation of the history, frequency, and severity of domestic violence, the impact of the domestic violence on children, parental protective efforts and domestic violence perpetrators' presence in the home.

The next section presents baseline data related to each of the above indicators of DCYF assessment of domestic violence.

**Data From DCYF File Reviews on the Number of Co-occurrence Cases**

We reviewed the 94 founded cases of abuse/neglect in the three district offices in 2001. Twenty-seven, or 29%, of these cases of child abuse/neglect involved the co-occurrence of abuse/neglect and domestic violence (co-occurrence cases).

Documented evidence of screening for domestic violence was present in three of 27 cases. All three cases contained documentation that the CPSW questioned the child abuse/neglect victim about violence between his/her caretakers. It should be noted that none of the files included documentation that the CPSW questioned the adult victim about domestic violence. However, the lack of documentation of screening or assessment of domestic violence does not necessarily mean that it did not occur. It may simply be that the screening or assessment was not documented.

**Data From Focus Groups with CPSWs on Assessment of Domestic Violence**

The three focus groups conducted with CPSWs (n=26) provided one indication of DCYF assessment procedures at the beginning of the Project. All CPSWs were asked if they assess for the presence of domestic violence in their cases and if so, how and how frequently.

According to the focus group participants, CPSWs used a variety of approaches in the assessment of domestic violence, including reliance on child reports, information from law enforcement, observation of warning signs, direct questioning of adult victims, and utilization of

the DVPS. There was no single assessment protocol upon which all staff relied. Several CPSWs acknowledged the limitations of some of these approaches. One barrier for CPSW identification of domestic violence is the reportedly guarded responses of women who fear losing custody of their children. For example, when asked about the prevalence of domestic violence in families in their caseloads, CPSWs estimated it was present in about 20-35% of their cases. Several said this was probably an underestimate given the challenges involved in identifying domestic violence based (in part) on victims' fears of disclosure. (See also, prior report: *Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2001.)

### **Data From Interviews with DCYF-Involved Victims on Assessment of Domestic Violence**

The eight individual interviews we conducted with DCYF-involved domestic violence victims provided another indication of DCYF assessment procedures at the beginning of the Project. We asked interviewees if their CPSW inquired about domestic violence. Most had difficulty recalling whether the CPSW asked about domestic violence during the assessment. The majority of participants reported that either the CPSW did ask them about domestic violence or the CPSW already had obtained the information from another source. Challenges in CPSW assessment of domestic violence were highlighted by participants who talked about the discrepancy between CPSWs' and victims' own appraisals of risk, making it difficult to determine whether risk is minimized or inflated. For example, two participants whose initial referrals were partially related to a specific domestic violence incident said the CPSWs did not believe their descriptions of the extent of their partners' violence. In both cases, the CPSWs believed the abusers were more violent and/or dangerous than the participants did. Another woman said the CPSW never asked and she never talked about it with the CPSW because until recently the participant thought her husband's behaviors toward her were "just normal living." She said she did not think she was in an abusive relationship or see herself as a victim of domestic violence. (See also, prior report: *Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.)

The next set of indicators was utilized to examine the level of detail in the documentation of domestic violence in the file. A more detailed and thorough documentation of various aspects of domestic violence may indicate a more detailed and thorough assessment of domestic violence.

## **Data from DCYF File Reviews: Incorporation and Documentation of Domestic Violence History in Overall Risk Assessment**

The documentation of domestic violence history in abuse/neglect case files might include a description of the following characteristics of domestic violence: duration, severity, presence of weapons in the home, and resulting injuries to the victim and child. In co-occurrence cases, one might expect to find such documentation of domestic violence history in the Family Assessment of Safety (FAS), a form which CPSWs must complete for each assessment they conduct.<sup>39</sup>

We were able to locate the FAS in 21 of the 27 co-occurrence cases. Among these 21 FASs, only three provided documentation of domestic violence (11%). None of the FASs included information on dates of first domestic violence incidents, the extent of physical injury to the domestic violence victim or to the child (as result of the domestic violence), the frequency of domestic violence, or any documentation of the assessment of future risk of domestic violence to the adult victim or to child. Very little information was provided on whether weapons were involved in the domestic violence (two cases discussed weapon use). Among the 27 co-occurrence cases, there were five with FASs that had a check mark in the domestic violence box but no further details about domestic violence were in the FAS narrative.

We examined other documentation in the files as well, and found that overall, there was very little documentation by CPSWs on the history of domestic violence in the co-occurrence cases.

### **✓ GOAL A-2: RECOGNITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: IMPROVE ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT TO CHILDREN REGARDING CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

#### **Data from DCYF File Reviews**

**Impact assessment of children.** Improving the assessment of the impact of children's exposure to domestic violence is another DCYF goal that falls under the umbrella of improving the recognition of domestic violence. Assessment of the impact of the domestic violence on children includes assessing the physical threat to the child due to the domestic violence, as well as the threats to and impact on the child's psychological health and level of functioning.

Two of the 27 co-occurrence case files reviewed contained some, but minimal, documentation of the impact of the domestic violence on children. One assessment simply stated:

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<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that DCYF discontinued use of the FAS form in December of 2001 due to its underutilization.



“The domestic violence incident traumatized the children” and another stated the children in the family “have issues related to a traumatic childhood.”

**Incorporation and documentation of domestic violence history in overall risk assessment.** As mentioned in the previous section, the 27 co-occurrence case files reviewed contained very little documentation regarding the extent of physical injury the domestic violence caused to the child and none included any documentation of future risk of domestic violence to the adult victim or to the child. However, it is possible that events that directly involved the child (discussed above) may have been factored into assessments of the child’s safety.

**Inclusion of assessment of domestic violence perpetrator presence in FAS.** CPSW assessment of the domestic violence perpetrator’s presence in the home is viewed as another aspect of the overall assessment of risk and impact of the domestic violence on a child in a family where there is co-occurrence.<sup>40</sup> In examining CPSW assessment of domestic violence perpetrator presence, we did find some documentation in the FAS narratives which noted the living situation/whereabouts of the domestic violence perpetrator vis-à-vis the adult victim and children (three cases). In 15 cases (56%) there was some other documentation in the file that indicated the domestic violence perpetrator was no longer in the child’s home (or the domestic violence victim’s home).

√ **GOAL A-3: RECOGNITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: IMPROVE ASSESSMENT OF PARENTAL PROTECTIVE EFFORTS**

A third Project goal for DCYF pertaining to the assessment of domestic violence is to improve CPSWs’ assessment of parental protective efforts in co-occurrence cases. We identified two indicators to assess progress toward this goal: 1) the documentation of an assessment of parental protective strategies in DCYF co-occurrence case files; and 2) CPSWs’ descriptions of their assessment of parental protective efforts in co-occurrence cases.

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<sup>40</sup> We recognize that where the domestic violence perpetrator lives does not necessarily, or in and of itself, indicate the level of risk to the adult victim or children.

### **Data from DCYF File Reviews: The Documentation of Assessment of Parental Protective Strategies in Co-occurrence Cases**

We found documentation of a domestic violence victim's protective strategies in only one case file out of 27. The FAS stated the "mother has removed herself and her children from dangerous conditions, obtained a protective order, and has started divorce proceedings."

### **Results from Focus groups with CPSWs: CPSW Descriptions of Assessment of Parental Protective Efforts in Co-occurrence Cases**

CPSWs who participated in the three focus groups we conducted (n=26) were asked: How do you determine the capacity of and efforts to protect children made by parents who are victims of domestic violence? Overall, DCYF focus group participants did not have a standard or formal method by which they specifically assessed the protective capacity of parent-victims in domestic violence cases. The conventional practice was to focus the assessment of safety on the risk to children in a manner consistent with the perceived mission of the agency, rather than on the mother's risk appraisal or the broader protective efforts of abused mothers. Typically, the descriptions of DCYF staff respondents suggested that protective efforts were narrowly defined as overt actions by the mother, such as obtaining a protective order or leaving the abuser. (See also, prior report: *Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2001.)

### **v Summary of Goals A1-A3: DCYF Recognition and Assessment of Domestic Violence**

We were hindered in our ability to assess DCYF workers' recognition of domestic violence at baseline because other than descriptions of episodes where children were directly involved in the violent episode, there was very little documentation by the CPSW on all assessment information relevant to domestic violence in the co-occurrence cases. At the beginning of the Project there was no single assessment protocol for domestic violence used by DCYF staff. There appeared to be minimal assessment of the impact of domestic violence on children and limited assessment of the protective capacity of parents. Data from file reviews is limited in that one cannot determine whether the documentation in the case file represented CPSW practice with clients or simply CPSW practice regarding documentation.

## ✓ **GOAL B: INCREASE DCYF UNDERSTANDING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The second component of DCYF's overarching goal of increasing the recognition, understanding, and response to domestic violence is to increase DCYF staff members' understanding of domestic violence. This broad aim encompasses the more specific DCYF goal of "Increasing DCYF staff knowledge and awareness of the domestic violence and court systems: roles, services, issues and procedures."

We used four methods to assess levels of knowledge and awareness of domestic violence and other primary partner systems. These included a survey, Coalition statistics (discussed in the preceding chapter), DCYF file reviews, and focus groups.

### **DCYF Staff Perceived Knowledge of Domestic Violence, Crisis Centers, and Court System Roles and Operations**

Results from the National Evaluation Team's *Direct Worker Survey* provided a measure of the amount of training DCYF staff had on domestic violence, as well as a measure of DCYF staff's perceived level of knowledge of domestic violence and of the other Project partners (See Introduction for overview of methods for the survey).<sup>41</sup> Six DCYF staff members responded to the National Evaluation Team's *Direct Service Worker Survey* in the spring of 2003. The response rate to the *Direct Worker Survey* for DCYF staff members was only 33% (eighteen individuals were mailed the survey). The six individuals who responded to the survey have worked for DCYF from two to four years. The average was three years.

### **Survey Results**

**Previous training on domestic violence.** The *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents: "In the past 12 months, how many hours of training have you received on domestic violence?" The six survey respondents' answers ranged from no training through 24 hours of training. The average was 10 hours. Only one person said s/he had no training on this topic. Responses to a question about training on the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect were about the same as those in regard to training on domestic violence.

**Reported knowledge of co-occurrence.** The *Direct Worker Survey* also asked respondents: "Overall, how knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the overlap between domestic violence and child abuse/neglect on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not at all and

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<sup>41</sup> Only three of the local *Interagency Collaboration and Understanding Survey* respondents were employed by DCYF and therefore, these results are not reported.

10 being very much?” Responses ranged from 7 through 10, with an overall average rating score of 8.

**Reported level of knowledge of the other primary partners.** The *Direct Worker Survey* asked respondents: “How knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the operations, roles and responsibilities of the court system on a scale of 1-10?” and “How knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the operations, roles and responsibilities of domestic violence programs on a scale of 1-10?” Respondents rated themselves as highly knowledgeable about the court system, with the responses ranging from 9 to 10. They also rated themselves as quite knowledgeable about domestic violence agencies, with responses ranging from 7 to 10 and an overall average rating of 8.

### **Cross-System Collaboration: Data from Focus Groups and Interviews**

Although the *Direct Service Worker* survey, Coalition data, and file review data provide quantitative measures of DCYF staff knowledge of domestic violence, crisis centers, and court system roles and operations, it is also informative to know how DCYF staff members and DVPSs viewed cross-system collaboration. Focus group and interview results provided a general overview of CPSWs’ knowledge of crisis centers’ roles, services, issues and procedures based on CPSWs’ reported amount and type of collaboration with DVPSs and crisis centers.

In the three focus groups with CPSWs (n=26) and three interviews with DVPSs conducted at the beginning of the Project, we asked CPSWs and DVPSs to share their perceptions on the amount and types of collaboration between DCYF and crisis centers. (See also prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September, 2002.) CPSWs reported little direct collaboration with local crisis centers, citing the fact that most of the collaboration between CPSWs and crisis centers was done through the DVPSs. One crisis center serving families from Grafton County does not have a DVPS, and CPSWs reported having little experience with this crisis center.

Overall, the perception of the relationship between DCYF and DVPSs was a positive one, with strong collaboration reported by most participants. Most CPSWs reported they routinely and automatically referred clients to the DVPS anytime there was a question of domestic violence. Many participants reported that confidentiality policies and philosophical differences were minor issues, but ones which were perceived as challenges by participants in case-specific collaboration.

## ✓ **Summary of DCYF Staff Understanding of Domestic Violence, Crisis Centers and Court System at Baseline**

*Direct Service Worker Survey* results indicate most of the DCYF workers surveyed had some training in domestic violence and co-occurrence in the last year. These DCYF workers reported high levels of knowledge about the Project's other primary partners. Because the response rate was very low for this survey, we cannot generalize these results to draw any conclusions about the amount of training or knowledge levels in the broader population of Grafton County DCYF staff members.

Focus group data suggest the relationship between DCYF and DVPSs in Grafton County was a positive one, with strong collaboration reported by most participants.

In sum, the data suggest CPSWs perceived their level of knowledge of domestic violence and their understanding of the court system and crisis centers to be very good early on in the Project. Coalition statistics reviewed in the previous chapter suggested that CPSWs in district offices serving Grafton County made many referrals to the DVPS. DVPSs in the Grafton County district offices provided many consultations to DCYF. However, DCYF file review data showed that there was room for improvement in the proportion of DCYF-involved domestic violence victims who were referred by CPSWs to the DVPS.

## ✓ **GOAL C: IMPROVE DCYF RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Another component of DCYF's overarching goal of increasing the recognition, understanding, and response to domestic violence is to improve DCYF response to domestic violence. The remainder of this chapter focuses on DCYF goals pertaining to child protective services' response to co-occurrence cases. We used a variety of data (e.g., file reviews, focus groups, and interviews) to measure responsiveness, as well as several indicators of system personnel's behaviors. For example, one indicator of an improved response to co-occurrence cases is a decrease in the number of petitions for abuse/neglect against non-offending parents in co-occurrence cases. This indicator originates from Recommendation 22 in the *Greenbook* that states:

“Child protection services should avoid strategies that blame a non-abusive parent for the violence committed by others.” (p. 66)

Other sections of the *Greenbook* state further that child protection services should:

“...offer support to battered women in a respectful way that does not label them unnecessarily as neglectful.” (p. 63)

We defined a “non-offending parent” as a parent whose only abuse/neglect allegation was neglect due to her failure to protect the child from the domestic violence perpetrator.

### **Responses to the Non-Offending Parent**

#### **Data from DCYF File Reviews: Petitions Filed on Domestic Violence Victims**

We examined whether domestic violence victims had neglect petitions filed that were specifically due to the failure to protect a child from exposure to domestic violence. As shown in Table 2-6 (p. 55), five co-occurrence cases involved petitions of neglect due to the failure to protect. In all five of these cases the petitions were filed on the child’s biological mother for neglect/failure to protect, and in all cases she was the domestic violence victim. Two of these five neglect petitions focused on substance abuse and failure to protect due to severe intoxication/impairment. One petition related to a child repeatedly being sexually abused by different male friends of the mother (none of them were the domestic violence perpetrator). In the remaining two cases, the neglect petitions specifically related to failure to protect a child from an abusive father and both also referenced the failure to protect a child from domestic violence. For example, one stated: “You failed to take preventative action following [the father’s] assault on you.” The other stated, in addition to other allegations: “...the children witnessed domestic violence while in your care.” In both cases, petitions of physical abuse were filed on the father. (See also, pages 60-63 for a summary of the DCYF file review data on the types of abuse/neglect petitions filed by DCYF in the co-occurrence cases from 2001 and the relation of the abuse/neglect perpetrators to the child victims.)

#### **Data from Family Division Child Abuse/Neglect Files: Petitions Filed on Non-offending Parents**

In several cases, the actual copy of the petition of abuse/neglect was not present in the DCYF files we examined. All court abuse/neglect case files reviewed contained DCYF abuse/neglect petitions. We examined these to determine the number of petitions which were brought against non-offending parents in our sample of 22 families. (See introduction, pages 7-8 for court abuse/neglect file review methodology.)

Out of the 22 families, there was one neglect petition filed against a non-offending parent. The court found the allegations to be true in that case.

**Data from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews: Petitions Filed Against Domestic Violence Victims**

We asked CPSWs in three focus groups (n=26) to tell us how often they believed they filed neglect petitions against domestic violence victims due to failure to protect. We also asked DVPSs (n=3) how often they encountered this situation.

According to the focus group and interview participants, neglect petitions for failure to protect, solely on the basis of exposure to domestic violence, did occur but were rare in Grafton County. Participants believed that when such situations did arise, they occurred mostly because there were additional family factors or concerns about the abused mother's parenting abilities. (See also, prior report: *Results from Focus groups and DVPS interviews*, September 2002.)

✓ **Summary of DCYF Responses to Non-Offending Parents**

Baseline data from DCYF files, court abuse/neglect files, and focus groups and interviews suggest non-offending parents rarely had petitions for child abuse or neglect for failure to protect filed against them by CPSWs working in the district offices that serve Grafton County at the beginning of the Project. Participants reported that when such situations did arise, they occurred mostly because there were additional family factors or concerns about abused mothers' parenting abilities.

✓ **GOAL C-1: RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: INCREASE THE CONSISTENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF THE DVPS**

DCYF and the crisis centers/Coalition share a commitment to the goal of increasing the consistent and effective use of the DVPS. A description of the DVPS position, and the baseline data to assess this goal, were provided in the crisis center/Coalition chapter, pages 26-31. For example, we estimated that about two-thirds of the victims referred by DCYF to the Grafton County DVPSs became new DVPS clients. We also concluded that at the start of the Project, there was considerable variation in the practices of the DVPS. Data suggested there was potential for improving the process by which referrals were made to the DVPS by DCYF and, also, potential for improving the process by which the DVPS contacted clients.

√ **GOAL C-2: RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ENHANCE FAMILY-CENTERED SAFETY AND CASE PLANNING**

The broad goal of improving DCYF's response to domestic violence also encompasses the goal of enhancing family-centered safety and case planning. The three aspects of family-centered safety and case planning that our indicators attempt to evaluate include assessment, CPSW safety planning with domestic violence victims, and the number and types of services provided to families.

### **Assessment**

It is assumed that better assessment would lead to better safety and case planning. Enhanced family-centered safety and case planning might manifest itself in co-occurrence cases with an improved assessment of domestic violence, including:

- assessment of the history of domestic violence;
- assessment of non-offending parental protective strategies; and
- assessment of domestic violence perpetrator presence in the home.

As described in the first section of this chapter on the recognition/assessment of domestic violence, we examined DCYF co-occurrence cases and obtained information in regard to each of the above identified indicators of improved assessment. We also asked CPSW focus group participants how they assessed parental protective strategies (see pages 71 for results).

### **Safety Planning**

#### **Data from Focus Groups and Interviews**

To obtain one measure of the types of safety planning that CPSWs provide to domestic violence victims, in three focus groups (n=26) CPSWs were asked what types of safety planning they did in cases involving domestic violence. They were also asked a series of follow-up questions about safety planning specific to children of domestic violence victims. (See also, prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2002.)

Participants' responses suggested that most CPSWs did not conduct safety planning with adult domestic violence victims, but rather they assumed the DVPS would do so. Some CPSWs reportedly viewed safety planning with adult victims as incompatible with their role in protecting



children. Participants suggested that it is difficult to do safety planning with victims who are fearful of disclosing the extent of the domestic violence to someone they view as an adversary with the authority to remove their children.

In contrast, DCYF workers reported that they routinely conducted safety planning with children. While the language used and other specifics reportedly varied depending on the child's age and cognitive capacity, the same topics seemed to be covered routinely in safety discussions with children.

### **Service Provision**

One aspect of case planning we assessed was the number and types of services provided to victims of domestic violence as part of their involvement with DCYF. Progress toward the goal of enhancing family centered case planning might appear as an increase in services provided to domestic violence victims and/or co-occurrence families. A change in the number of services provided by DCYF in co-occurrence cases at the beginning versus the end of the Project may indicate an improved response to families' needs, but it is a very indirect measure. We do not know how many and which services each family actually needed, what type of prior or ongoing services they may already have been receiving, or if services were of adequate quality. The crucial issues are that service plans are tailored to the unique needs of individuals and that they are perceived as helpful and meaningful. Data on the number of services provided should only be considered in combination with qualitative data from interviews with victims regarding their experiences with DCYF service plans.

With that caveat in mind, the next section of this report presents data on services provided to victims from the NCANDS database and from DCYF file reviews.

#### **NCANDS Data on Services Provided**

NCANDS provides information on DCYF cases involving children who are residents of Grafton County as well as cases involving children residing in the rest of the State. (See introductory chapter for overview of NCANDS data and Appendix C-3 for details regarding the 2001 NCANDS data.) Unfortunately, for many of the services provided by DCYF that were recorded in the NCANDS database, the data did not specify to whom services were provided. We can only distinguish between "family" services and "child specific" services. "Family" services could have been provided to any family member and "child specific" services were

provided to the child abuse/neglect victim. 2001 NCANDS services data, therefore, provides us with an imperfect measure of the type and amount of services specifically provided to domestic violence victims, but it is the only data available on services provided which allows us to compare Grafton County to the rest of the State.

We examined the types of services and frequency of services provided to families in co-occurrence cases and non-co-occurrence cases.<sup>42</sup> Table 2-9, shows the number of children for whom various types of services were provided by DCYF.<sup>43</sup> (See Appendix C-3 for definitions of each of these services.)

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<sup>42</sup> “Co-occurrence cases” in regard to the NCANDS data refer to children from families where domestic violence was identified during the assessment of allegations of abuse and/or neglect.

<sup>43</sup> NCANDS services data does not include services DCYF did not pay for, such as services covered by a client’s health insurance. The numbers, therefore, underestimate the actual amount of services provided.

**Table 2-9. NCANDS 2001: Services Provided to Families with Assessments Completed in 2001**

Type of Service	County Of Residence	All Children with Founded Assessments	Children with Founded Assessments with Domestic Violence	Children with Founded Assessments without Domestic Violence
<b>Case Management</b>	Grafton	26 (54%)	14 (74%)	7 (41%)
	Non-Grafton	490 (62%)	234 (72%)	155 (52%)
<b>Counseling</b>	Grafton	11 (23%)	6 (32%)	2 (12%)
	Non-Grafton	221 (28%)	117 (36%)	54 (18%)
<b>Day Care</b> (child specific)	Grafton	10 (21%)	8 (42%)	0
	Non-Grafton	154 (20%)	8 (25%)	46 (16%)
<b>Education and/or Training</b>	Grafton	0	0	0
	Non-Grafton	10 (1%)	6 (2%)	2 (.7%)
<b>Employment</b>	Grafton	0	0	0
	Non-Grafton	0	0	0
<b>Health-Related and Home Health</b>	Grafton	10 (21%)	5 (26%)	2 (12%)
	Non-Grafton	133 (17%)	61 (19%)	43 (15%)
<b>Home-Based</b>	Grafton	9 (19%)	4 (21%)	2 (12%)
	Non-Grafton	65 (8%)	37 (11%)	17 (6%)
<b>Housing</b>	Grafton	0	0	0
	Non-Grafton	0	0	0
<b>Information and Referral</b>	Grafton	23 (48%)	6 (32%)	10 (59%)
	Non-Grafton	302 (38%)	90 (28%)	142 (48%)
<b>Legal</b>	Grafton	0	0	0
	Non-Grafton	8 (1%)	0	8 (3%)
<b>Mental Health</b>	Grafton	19 (40%)	7 (37%)	7 (41%)
	Non-Grafton	271 (34%)	143 (44%)	72 (24%)
<b>Respite Care</b>	Grafton	6 (13%)	4 (21%)	0
	Non-Grafton	620 (79%)	224 (69%)	45 (15%)
<b>Disability services</b> (child specific)	Grafton	0	0	0
	Non-Grafton	2 (.3%)	0	1 (.3%)
<b>Substance Abuse Treatment</b>	Grafton	0	0	0
	Non-Grafton	25 (3.2%)	15 (5%)	6 (2%)
<b>Transportation</b>	Grafton	14 (30%)	7 (37%)	3 (18%)
	Non-Grafton	226 (29%)	126 (39%)	53 (18%)
<b>Family Preservation</b>	Grafton	15 (31%)	7 (37%)	6 (35%)
	Non-Grafton	199 (25%)	100 (31%)	63 (21%)

\*excluding cases with missing data on domestic violence and county variables

Generally, one might expect to find that more services were provided to families where there was domestic violence than families where there was not domestic violence. Data shown in the table above does show that a larger percentage of co-occurrence cases received the following services: Case management, counseling services, day care services, health-related and home health services, home-based services, respite care services, transportation, and family preservation services. This is evident both in Grafton County and the rest of the State. There were 20% more mental health services provided to families with domestic violence than without domestic violence in the rest of the State, but co-occurrence cases from Grafton County were provided mental health services in fairly equal proportion to non-co-occurrence cases (37% and 41%). NCANDS does not provide a clear distinction in the definitions of counseling versus mental health services (see Appendix C-3), and it seems likely the terms were used interchangeably by CPSWs in documenting services.

The expected pattern of service provision was reversed for information and referral services. In both Grafton and the rest of the State, a greater proportion (about 20%) of families without domestic violence received information and referrals. It is unclear why this might be the case.

It is notable that the following services were rarely provided—if at all—in both Grafton County and the rest of the State: educational and training services, employment services, housing services, legal services, and substance abuse services. For most of these we believe the lack of service provision related either to the lack of DCYF resources or the general lack of service availability in the State, as opposed to lack of need for these types of services. The very low rate of substance abuse services provided may also have been a function of financial responsibility. Substance abuse services are frequently covered by Medicaid or private health insurance and, therefore, in those instances, the services were not recorded in NCANDS.

**Total number of services provided.** In order to learn about the total amount of services provided in each case, we constructed an additive scale by combining the 16 service variables shown in the previous table. The ‘services scale’ score thereby provided a count of the total number of these services each child/child’s family received. Scores had a possible range of 0-16. Table 2-10 shows the total number of different types of services provided in cases with and without domestic violence.

**Table 2-10. NCANDS 2001: Total Number of Different Types of Services Provided to Children/Families**

<b>County</b>	<b>Founded Assessments</b>	<b>Founded Assessments with Domestic Violence</b>	<b>Founded Assessments without Domestic Violence</b>
Grafton County	<b>Range:</b> 1 to 8 <b>Average:</b> 3	<b>Range:</b> 1 to 8 <b>Average:</b> 4	<b>Range:</b> 1 to 6 <b>Average:</b> 2
Non-Grafton County	<b>Range:</b> 1 to 9 <b>Average:</b> 3	<b>Range:</b> 1 to 9 <b>Average:</b> 3	<b>Range:</b> 1 to 9 <b>Average:</b> 2

As expected, families in co-occurrence cases were, on average, provided slightly more services than non co-occurrence cases. This was evident to a greater extent in Grafton County than in the rest of the State. For Grafton County residents, the average total number of services each child/child’s family received in co-occurrence cases was four and in cases without domestic violence, the average number was two. The difference in the mean services scale scores between Grafton County families with domestic violence compared to families without domestic violence was not statistically significant.<sup>44</sup>

**Data from DCYF File Reviews on Services Provided**

We also examined DCYF co-occurrence case files for information on the number and types of service referrals made for domestic violence victims and perpetrators. Because referrals differ from actual receipt of services, we were unable to determine how many and what types of services were actually received by clients.

A review of all (94) 2001 founded cases of child abuse/neglect in the three district offices serving Grafton County revealed 27 cases (29% of all substantiated cases) that involved

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<sup>44</sup> Using a T-test comparison of means

domestic violence in the past year. (See introductory chapter, pages 6 - 7, for DCYF file review methodology.)

**Service referrals for domestic violence victims.** Among the 21 court-involved co-occurrence cases,<sup>45</sup> the total number of different types of service referrals per domestic violence victim ranged from none through five, with an average of three types of service referrals per victim. Table 2-11 shows the number of domestic violence victims referred to various types of services along with the percentage of the total domestic violence victims referred to that service.

**Table 2-11. DCYF File Data: Cases with Documented Referrals to Other Services by Referral Type**

<b>Referral Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Mental health treatment (outpatient)	13	62%
Parenting classes	10	48%
Psychological evaluation	10	48%
Home-based family therapy	9	43%
DVPS	9	43%
Crisis center support group	4	--
Parenting assessment/evaluation	4	--
Alcohol/drug assessment/ evaluation	3	--
Alcohol/drug treatment (outpatient)	2	--
Psychiatric evaluation	1	--
Marriage/couples counseling	1	--
Alcohol/drug treatment (inpatient)	1	--
Crisis center shelter	1	--
Mediation	1	--

N = 21. Numbers and percentages do not sum to 21 and 100% because individuals may have been referred to multiple services. Percentages corresponding to numbers less than five are not shown as they can be misleading.

As shown in Table 2-11, the most common service referral for domestic violence victims found in case files was for mental health treatment: 62% of victims were referred for mental health treatment. The next most common referrals were for parenting classes and psychological

<sup>45</sup> As described on page 55, 21 of the 27 co-occurrence cases were “founded, court-involved,” and six were classified as “founded, problem-resolved.” “Problem-resolved” cases are closed after the assessment is complete and no services or referrals are typically provided by DCYF.

evaluations (48% of victims referred to each). Referrals to DVPSs and home-based family therapy were other common referrals for domestic violence victims.<sup>46</sup>

It is important to note that several clients (at least five) were already receiving mental health or substance abuse treatment when their DCYF case was opened in 2001 and two victims were already involved with a domestic violence crisis center. It is also important to remember that one limitation of this file review data is that services may have been referred but not documented in the paper file.

**Referrals to batterer intervention programs.** We also collected data on the number of domestic violence perpetrators referred to batterer intervention programs (BIPs) as part of their case plans with DCYF<sup>47</sup>. DCYF file data indicated that among the 21 court-involved co-occurrence cases, six (29%) domestic violence perpetrators were referred to batterer's intervention. In nine of the 21 co-occurrence cases, there were not any findings of child abuse or neglect against the domestic violence perpetrator and, therefore, DCYF would have no enforcement authority behind a referral to a BIP for those nine domestic violence perpetrators. Among the remaining 12 "applicable" cases, those for whom there was a finding of abuse/neglect against the domestic violence perpetrator, one-half were referred to a BIP.

#### **Interviews with DCYF-Involved Domestic Violence Victims**

In interviews with DCYF-involved domestic violence victims (n=8), participants were asked about the types of referrals and services they received as a result of their DCYF involvement and if they thought services received were helpful. (See also, prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.)

**Referrals and services.** Two interviewees reported their greatest need at the time DCYF became involved in their lives was substance abuse treatment. Both were court ordered to complete inpatient substance abuse treatment programs followed by outpatient treatment and participation in Alcoholics Anonymous. Other services included in interviewees' case plans included parenting classes (four interviewees); psychiatric evaluations (two interviewees); mental health treatment/counseling (two interviewees); home-based family counseling (two interviewees); and anger management (two interviewees). All seven interviewees who had ever

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<sup>46</sup> Of the nine cases that referenced crisis center services for the domestic violence victim, five had some documentation in the file that local crisis center services were mandated or encouraged by the CPSW (24% of court-involved co-occurrence cases).

<sup>47</sup> NCANDS does not contain information on batterer intervention programs.

had an open DCYF case were mandated by DCYF or the court to obtain services from their local domestic violence crisis centers.<sup>48</sup> Only one participant reported that there was some service she felt she needed but could not get: A parenting support group.

**Effectiveness of services.** Women had varying and individualized descriptions of the effectiveness of services to which DCYF referred them. For example, of those who received home-based family therapy, one woman reported that it was the most helpful service DCYF provided, while the other described it as unprofessional and ineffective. One woman said the service which was most helpful for her was a psychiatric evaluation and consequent antidepressant medication. Another woman said the only service she benefited from was a parenting class/support group. Both participants referred to substance abuse treatment said they were currently sober and drug free and had been for several months.

#### √ **Summary of Goal C-2: Enhance Family Centered Safety and Case Planning**

The results of our focus groups and interviews suggest that agency staff implemented safety planning in a manner they believed to be consistent with the primary mission of their agencies at the beginning of the Project. DCYF staff participating in focus groups reported they were most comfortable with providing safety plans routinely to children of domestic violence victims, but left safety planning specific to adult victims to others, such as the DVPS.

Data collected on services provided to victims from the NCANDS database and from DCYF file reviews indicated that, overall, families with domestic violence received more types of services than other families. The most frequently provided services in co-occurrence cases according to NCANDS were case management (74% of the children in assessments involving domestic violence), day care (42%) and mental health and transportation (37% of the children/families for each).

DCYF file review data on service referrals for victims of domestic violence showed that, typically, domestic violence victims were referred to three types of services. The most common referral was for mental health treatment (62% of the victims). Quantitative data on the number of services provided should only be considered in combination with qualitative data from interviews with victims regarding their experiences with DCYF service plans. Interviews with

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<sup>48</sup> The high proportion of interviewees mandated to crisis center services was most likely a reflection of how interview participants were recruited (largely through DVPSs) rather than an indication of the proportion of all DCYF-involved domestic violence victims who were ordered to crisis center services.



DCYF-involved domestic violence victims (n=8) revealed that participants were referred to a variety of services, with varying perceptions as to the effectiveness of those services. Only one participant reported that there was a service she felt she needed but could not get. All seven participants who ever had an open DCYF case were mandated to crisis center services.

DCYF file review data on service referrals indicated that one-half of the domestic violence perpetrators charged with child abuse/neglect were referred to BIPs. Ideally, we will see an increase in services ordered for domestic violence perpetrators at the end of the Project as compared to the beginning.

✓ **GOAL C-3: IMPLEMENT SEPARATE SERVICE PLANS FOR VICTIMS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS EMPHASIZING PERPETRATOR ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESPONSIBLE PARENTING**

Another initial DCYF goal for the Project was to implement separate service plans for victims and perpetrators. DCYF has determined, however, that formal separate service plans cannot be achieved due to State statute and, though less of an issue, to the agency's current case management information system. All DCYF reports to the court are accessible to all family members (through discovery). Therefore, domestic violence perpetrators can gain access to victims' service plans, making the idea of separate service plans meaningless. DCYF is committed to the concept of individualized case plans for family members and therefore, the revised goal is to "Implement individualized case plans for all family members."

Though it was not possible to evaluate this goal by independently assessing all family members; needs to determine if DCYF case plans were individualized, we examined court abuse/neglect files to determine the number of co-occurrence cases in which service plans appeared to address separate needs of the domestic violence victims and perpetrators.<sup>49</sup>

**Data from Family Division Abuse/Neglect Files on Case Plans**

Among the 17 families with child abuse or neglect found true by the court, 13 had DCYF service plans that appeared to address the needs of both victims and perpetrators, in that the victim of domestic violence and the perpetrator of domestic violence were each referred/ordered to different types of services. In one case the domestic violence perpetrator was incarcerated and

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<sup>49</sup> Copies of DCYF service plans, and the recommendations made by the CPSW to the judge for each court hearing on an abuse/neglect case, were more consistently available for review in Family Division paper files than in DCYF paper or computer files.

in another state and, therefore, was excluded from these particular results. Among those families to whom the question applied, the majority (13 of 16) had “individualized” service plans. The three cases we categorized as not having individualized service plans were cases in which the domestic violence perpetrator had an ongoing relationship with either the domestic violence victim or her children but he was not referred/ordered to any type of services.

Two other indicators related to service plans for domestic violence perpetrators which are of importance in co-occurrence cases are the number/proportion of perpetrators required to attend batterer intervention programs, discussed previously, and the number/proportion of perpetrators ordered to leave the home, discussed in the section that follows.

**Orders to remove perpetrators from the home.** We also examined court child abuse/neglect files to determine the number of cases in which DCYF requested an order from the court to remove the perpetrator from the home and restrict contact between the perpetrator and children. More frequent use of this method of increasing children’s safety, rather than placement of children out of the home, might indicate an individualized response to co-occurrence cases, holding perpetrators accountable and enabling non-offending parents to retain physical custody of their children.

In about one-half (eight of 17) of the families with child abuse or neglect found true by the court, removal of the domestic violence perpetrator from the home was an option. In the other nine cases, the domestic violence perpetrator either never lived in the home or, in one case, the physical environment of the house was considered unsafe for children. In the cases in which it was an option, a majority (six of eight) of the domestic violence perpetrators were ordered out of the home. In the other two cases, the child was removed because the domestic violence victim was found to be either physically abusing or neglecting a child.

V **Summary of Goal C-3: Implement Separate Service Plans for Victims and Perpetrators Emphasizing Perpetrator Accountability for Responsible Parenting**

An examination of indicators used to assess baseline status for the use of individualized case plans found that a majority of DCYF-involved domestic violence perpetrators had been ordered out of the home, and had service plans that were unique and separate from the victim’s service plan. Notably, these baseline findings suggest practices already consistent with DCYF goals.

✓ **GOAL C-4: ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR AN ALTERNATIVE CASE RESPONSE FOR FAMILIES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, VOLUNTARY CASES**

Another DCYF goal is to establish criteria for an alternative case response for families experiencing domestic violence. An alternative case response is defined as a non-standard course of action taken by the CPSW in planning, managing, and overseeing compliance with the DCYF case plan. One example is the provision of voluntary services to families. Another example is cases identified as “founded, services only,” or “B cases” (Before Court). So-called “B cases” are DCYF cases where abuse or neglect is identified by DCYF and there are sufficient grounds to proceed to court, but the family agrees to work with DCYF and receive services without any court involvement.<sup>50</sup> We will compare the proportion of Grafton County co-occurrence cases that are treated as “founded, services only” at the beginning of the Project to the proportion of those cases at the end of the Project.

We obtained data from NCANDS and Bridges on the number of founded assessments that became cases without court involvement. (See Appendix C-3 for details of data analysis.) Table 2-12 shows the number and proportion of assessments completed in 2001 that received DCYF services without court involvement. Less than one-half of one percent of all referrals in Grafton County and less than one percent of all referrals in the rest of the State resulted in the disposition “founded, services only.” Of the two Grafton County referrals, one had no documented indication of domestic violence and the other was unknown/missing.

**Table 2-12. NCANDS 2001: Number and Proportion of Assessments that Received Services without Court Involvement**

County	All Referrals*	All Assessments: Founded, Services Only	Founded, Services Only with Domestic Violence	Founded, Services Only without Domestic Violence
Grafton	483	2 (.004%)	0	1
Non-Grafton	7,223	59 (.008%)	24	18**

\*Referrals can include more than one child. Numbers do not include referrals with missing data on the county variable

\*\*Data on domestic violence was missing or unknown for 18 referrals

<sup>50</sup> Regardless of DCYF’s findings on reported abuse/neglect allegations, many families that do not require ongoing DCYF involvement are referred to community agencies that provide supportive services.

√ **Summary of Goal C-4: Establish Criteria for an Alternative Case Response for Families Experiencing Domestic Violence, Including, But Not Limited To, Voluntary Cases**

Voluntary type cases were rarely occurring dispositions for DCYF referrals regardless of the presence of domestic violence or the geographical area of the State where a referral was assessed. Consistent with efforts toward avoiding the unnecessary labeling of non-offending domestic violence victims as neglectful or abusive, a Greenbook Project recommendation is that more domestic violence cases will be handled without court involvement. However, it may be difficult to demonstrate substantial changes for this goal given the very low percentage of cases where DCYF provided services without court involvement and the current tight fiscal climate in the State.

√ **GOAL C-5: REDUCE INCIDENCE AND DURATION OF OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS FOR ABUSED/NEGLECTED CHILDREN OF ABUSED WOMEN**

Consistent with Greenbook aims and DCYF's central concerns with children's safety and well-being, it is believed to be in the best interest of children for them to remain with their non-offending parents whenever possible. Therefore, we obtained baseline data on the number and duration of out of home placements in co-occurrence cases from the NCANDS database, DCYF files, and Family Division child abuse/neglect files.

## Incidence of Out of Home Placements

### NCANDS Data

Analysis of NCANDS data for New Hampshire showed that of the 10,109 children with assessments completed in 2001, just 892 (8.8%) were removed from their homes.<sup>51</sup> Table 2-13 shows the number and percentage of children in founded assessments who were placed out of the home, for children from families where domestic violence was identified during the assessment and children from families where domestic violence was not identified during the assessment.

**Table 2-13. NCANDS 2001: Number and Percentage of Children Placed Out of Home**

County	All founded assessments	Founded assessments with domestic violence*	Founded assessments without domestic violence*
<b>Grafton</b>	19 (40%)	9 (47%)	4 (24%)
<b>Non Grafton</b>	283 (36%)	131 (40%)	91 (31%)

\*excluding children with missing information on the domestic violence and county variable

Of the 48 children with founded assessments in Grafton County, a total of 19 were removed from home (40%). Of the 19 children in co-occurrence cases, nine children were placed (47%). Among the 17 founded assessments without domestic violence, four children were placed (24%). Among all founded assessments, shown in column two, the percentage of children removed from home in the rest of the State was similar overall to the percentage of children removed in Grafton County. Comparing children with domestic violence in their family to children without domestic violence in their family, the proportion of children placed out of the home was much higher for children whose assessments identified domestic violence than for those without domestic violence. This was especially true for Grafton County (47% versus 24%), but was also evident in the rest of the State. The fact that substantially more children were placed out of the home when domestic violence had been identified should be noted.<sup>52</sup> However, there may have been factors other than domestic violence that account for the greater rate of out of

<sup>51</sup> This includes any removal after the assessment was completed. See Appendix C-3 for further details on calculations of incidence and duration of out of home placements.

<sup>52</sup> The numbers of children placed out of the home in Grafton County are too small to validly examine whether this difference in percentages is statistically significant.

home placement for these children, such as the severity of the child abuse/neglect (e.g., see prior discussion of domestic violence correlates, p. 55).

Due to certain limitations with the NCANDS data, the numbers of out of home placements shown above are likely to be underestimates (see Appendix C-3 for details).

#### **DCYF File Review Data**

DCYF file data on placements for cases of abuse and/or neglect founded in 2001 indicated that almost two-thirds of the co-occurrence cases involved an out of home placement for at least one child in the family (17 of 27 co-occurrence cases; 63%). Among non-co-occurrence cases, about one-half (35 of 65; 54%) involved an out of home placement for at least one child.

#### **Family Division Child Abuse/Neglect File Review Data**

Family Division child abuse/neglect files for co-occurrence cases closed in the years 2000, 2001, and 2002 were reviewed. We found that a majority, 70% (12 of 17), of the co-occurrence cases involved an out of home placement for at least one child in the family. A total of 20 children were removed from these 12 families. None of the Family Division files or DCYF files contained any documentation that an out of home placement was directly due to the domestic violence.

### **Duration Of Out Of Home Placements**

Another selected indicator of an improved response to domestic violence is the duration of out of home placements among children removed from home in cases of co-occurrence. It was hypothesized that Greenbook Project activities, designed to increase support for domestic violence victims and enable children to remain safely at home, could impact the duration of out of home placements in these cases. Data on the duration of out of home placements were obtained from the NCANDS database, DCYF files, and Family Division child abuse/neglect files.

#### **NCANDS/Bridges Data**

We could only obtain information on the duration of out of home placements for those children who had returned home. The duration of out of home placements was calculated using NCANDS data on the date of removal and Bridges data on the date of return. This data from

Bridges was collected in December 2003, and therefore children reunified with their parents after 12-10-03 are not included in this analysis.

For the entire State, according to 2001 NCANDS and Bridges, there were 194 children with founded cases who were removed from home and who were reunified as of 12-10-03. (See Appendix C-3 for details on NCANDS and Bridges data analysis.) Table 2-14 shows the range in the length of time children in Grafton County and the rest of the State were placed out of the home for children with domestic violence in their family and for those without domestic violence.

**Table 2-14. NCANDS 2001: Average and Median<sup>53</sup> Duration of Out of Home Placements for Children with Assessments Completed in 2001 and who were Reunified by 12-10-03.**

<b>County</b>	<b>Children in All Founded Assessments (N=176)</b>	<b>Children in Founded Assessments with domestic Violence (N=78)</b>	<b>Children in Founded Assessments without Domestic Violence (n=57)</b>
<b>Grafton</b>	<b>Range:</b> 7 to 895 days (30 months) <b>Average:</b> 339 days (11 months) <b>Median:</b> 360 days (12 months) <b>n=13</b>	<b>Range:</b> 16 to 895 days (30 months) <b>Average:</b> 377 days (12.5 months) <b>Median:</b> 386 days (13 months) <b>n=7</b>	<b>Range:</b> 7 to 327 days (11 months) <b>Average:</b> 167 days (5.5 months) <b>Median:</b> 167 days (5.5 months) <b>n=2*</b>
<b>Non - Grafton</b>	<b>Range:</b> 2 to 1,163 days (39 months) <b>Average:</b> 456 days (15.2 months) <b>Median:</b> 388 days (13 months) <b>n=163</b>	<b>Range:</b> 3 to 1,110 days (37 months) <b>Average:</b> 412 days (14 months) <b>Median:</b> 326 days (11 months) <b>n=71</b>	<b>Range:</b> 2 to 1,163 days (39 months) <b>Average:</b> 450 days (15 months) <b>Median:</b> 402 days (13 months) <b>n=55*</b>

\*Numbers do not total 194 because we excluded children with missing data from the analysis

<sup>53</sup> The median is a better summary of the midpoint of a group of data when there are outliers, as is the case with this data: A few children with exceptionally long out of home placements will pull the average duration way up, or a few children with exceptionally short placements can pull the average duration way down.

The median duration of out of home placements for all founded cases in Grafton County was similar to the median duration for the rest of the State: 12 months and 13 months, respectively. In Grafton County, among the 13 children placed out of the home (and reunified as of 12-10-03), the average length of placement was 11 months. For the seven Grafton County children with founded assessments where domestic violence was identified, the average length of placement was 12.5 months. For Grafton County, the number of children in founded assessments with domestic violence versus without domestic violence are very small (seven and two, respectively). We cannot make any generalizations from such a small number of cases, despite the appearance that on average, children in families with domestic violence remained in placement about twice as long as children in families without domestic violence. This pattern was not evident for the rest of the State, however.

As shown on page 90, according to the NCANDS data, there were a total of 19 children with founded cases who were placed out of the home. Six of these 19 were still in placement as of 12-10-03. Therefore, 32% of the children who were removed from home were still in placement for two years or more. Two of these were children with domestic violence in the family; two were children without domestic violence in the family; and two were children with unknown or missing information regarding domestic violence in the family.

#### **DCYF File Data**

We also obtained data on the length of time children were placed out of the home from DCYF files for cases of abuse and/or neglect founded in 2001. We only collected this data for co-occurrence cases and only for those children who were reunified with parents by the date of the file review. DCYF file reviews took place between February and July of 2003.

We found that nine of the 17 referent children who were placed out of the home were reunified with their parents by the time of the file review (54% of those placed). These nine children had placements lasting from one month to 24 months, with an average of eight months. The other eight children were still in placement or had been permanently removed from their parents' care. Of these eight, five children's parents' parental rights were terminated. In other words, 24% of the 21 court-involved 2001 co-occurrence cases in Grafton County resulted in the termination of parental rights.



### **Family Division Abuse/Neglect File Data**

Family Division child abuse/neglect files that were closed in the years 2000, 2001, and 2002 provided another source of data for examining the duration of placements. We only collected this data for co-occurrence cases and only for those children who were reunified with parents by the date of the file review. Court file reviews took place between December 2003 and February of 2004.

We found that seven of the 20 children in families involving the co-occurrence who were placed out of the home were reunified by the time of the file review (35%). These children had placements lasting from one month to 18 months, with an average of six months. The other 13 children were still in placement or had been permanently removed from their parents' care. Of these 13, eight children's parents' parental rights were terminated (four families). Twenty-four percent (four of 17) of the co-occurrence cases in the sample of Family Division cases resulted in the termination of parental rights.

### **Out of Home Placements and DVPS Referrals**

In a further consideration of what an improved response to domestic violence might involve for DCYF, we examined whether referring a domestic violence victim to the DVPS had any impact upon the likelihood of out of home placement for a child or the duration of a child's out of home placement. To explore this question, we used data from DCYF file reviews.

#### **Data from DCYF File Reviews**

**Incidence of out of home placements.** Our analysis showed that of the nine cases with documentation that the domestic violence victim was referred to the DVPS, six of the nine (66%) involved removing a child from the home and three did not. Of the 18 cases that did not have any documentation that the domestic violence victim was referred to the DVPS, 11 of the 18 (61%) involved removing a child from the home and seven did not. Although the numbers of children within each category are quite small, a referral to the DVPS did not seem to be associated with a decreased likelihood of out of home placement in 2001 co-occurrence cases. The percentage of children placed out of the home was actually somewhat higher for those cases where a referral to the DVPS was documented. It may be that cases where a referral was made to the DVPS involved more severe domestic violence and/or more problematic families, but small numbers make such inferences unreliable. Also, it is important to note, a referral to the DVPS did not

necessarily mean that the victim received services from the DVPS. We could not determine the outcome of referrals from the file review data.

**Duration of out of home placements.** We also used the DCYF file data to examine whether referring a domestic violence victim to the DVPS might have an impact upon the duration of a child's out of home placement (see section on duration of out of home placements, page 91, for description of how duration of placements was calculated).

The duration of placements was only calculated for those children who had been reunified with parents. Among the six children who were placed whose parent was referred to the DVPS, five were still in placement at the time of the last file review data collection, in the summer of 2003. The other child was in placement for 18 months. For the group of 11 children who were placed and whose parent was never referred to the DVPS (according to documentation in the file), four children were still in placement at the time of the last file review data collection. The other eight were reunified and the average duration of placement was six months.

✓ **Summary of Goal C-5: Reduce Incidence and Duration of Out of Home Placements for Abused/Neglected Children of Abused Women**

**Incidence.** Data from NCANDS, DCYF files, and Family Division abuse and neglect files indicated that in Grafton County, at the start of the Project, between 47% (according to NCANDS) and 70% (according to court file data) of the founded abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence also involved an out of home placement for the abused/neglected child.<sup>54</sup> While NCANDS data suggested that children from homes where domestic violence was identified were more likely to be placed out of the home, we cannot infer that the domestic violence caused the out of home placement. DCYF and Court file reviews indicated that the families with open, court-involved DCYF cases were families with multiple problems in addition to domestic violence.

**Duration.** Data from NCANDS, DCYF files, and Family Division abuse and neglect files indicated that in Grafton County at the start of the Project, between 35% and 68% of the children in founded abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence who had been placed out of

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<sup>54</sup> The difference in percentages of out of home placements between NCANDS data and the file review data may be due to the fact that NCANDS data is on children and the DCYF and court file data is on families, because one family may have multiple children but only one child placed out of the home.

the home were reunified by the time of data collection. According to these data sources, the average duration of placements for reunified children was between six and 13 months. The proportion of children who had been reunified with parents and the duration of out of home placements varied across data types due to the different time frames between the dates of the child removal and the dates of data collection across different methods.<sup>55</sup> Also, given the limited cross-sectional nature of these data, no conclusions can be drawn on these matters. File review data indicated 24% of co-occurrence cases resulted in the termination of parental rights.

In addition, the findings showed no apparent correlation between the involvement of the DVPS, the likelihood of placement, or the duration of out of home placements.

**V GOAL C-6: REDUCE RECIDIVISM OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN CASES WHERE THERE IS THE CO-OCCURRENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

The final DCYF goal discussed in this chapter is to reduce recidivism of child abuse and neglect in cases where there is a co-occurrence. DCYF undoubtedly strives to reduce recidivism in all abuse/neglect cases, but if the Project succeeds in its goal to improve DCYF’s response to domestic violence, one might expect less recidivism in cases involving domestic violence in Grafton County at the end of the Project. We obtained an estimate of the baseline number of repeat cases of child abuse/neglect in families where there was domestic violence from the 2001 NCANDS data on prior victims. “Prior victims” are defined as children with “a previous founded incident of maltreatment.”<sup>56</sup> Table 2-15 shows the number and percentage of prior victims for all founded assessments and for children in families where domestic violence was identified.

**Table 2-15. NCANDS 2001: Prior Victims**

	<b>Number and percentage of prior victims among all children with founded assessments*</b>	<b>Number and percentage of prior victims among children in families with domestic violence*</b>
<b>Grafton</b>	25 out of 48 (52%)	9 out of 19 (47%)
<b>Non-Grafton</b>	490 out of 787 (62%)	216 out of 324 (67%)

\* excluding cases with missing information on County variable and domestic violence variable

<sup>55</sup> For example, the Family Division abuse/neglect cases reviewed could have been opened in 1998 and we reviewed the file in 2004, allowing six years for reunification. In contrast, the DCYF cases reviewed were all opened in 2001 and reviewed in 2004, allowing three years for reunification.

<sup>56</sup> Previously founded abuse/neglect cases remain on file with DCYF for at least seven years, so this NCANDS data captures all founded abuse/neglect allegations since 1994.

Nearly one-half of the children in co-occurrence cases (47%) previously had a founded incident of abuse/neglect. The proportion of children who had previous histories of child abuse or neglect was similar for co-occurrence cases and non-co-occurrence cases. In Grafton County, the percentage of prior victims was slightly lower in assessments where domestic violence was identified than in assessments where domestic violence had not been identified, but the trend was reversed for children outside of Grafton County, where the percentage of prior victims was slightly higher in co-occurrence cases.

√ **Summary of Goal C-6: Reduce Recidivism of Child Abuse/Neglect in Co-Occurrence Cases**

NCANDS data on recidivism in 2001 cases will be compared to NCANDS data on recidivism in 2005 cases. Nearly one-half of the children in 2001 co-occurrence cases previously had a founded incident of abuse/neglect.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Relative to other key systems, i.e., the courts and domestic violence service providers, the major emphasis of the *Greenbook* recommendations are directed at reforms in child protective services' responses to families in which there was a co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. In New Hampshire, DCYF has adopted numerous and comprehensive goals in response to the Greenbook guidelines. In this chapter, we first provided an overview of DCYF and examined NCANDS data and DCYF files to determine the extent of the co-occurrence and the characteristics of related child abuse/neglect cases. Next, the baseline status of DCYF's Greenbook goals was reviewed using multiple data sources.

### **Co-occurrence of Child Abuse/Neglect and Domestic Violence**

#### **Prevalence and Characteristics**

Previous reports on the prevalence of co-occurrence cases have suggested that domestic violence occurs in about one third of the referrals assessed by DCYF. This is consistent with our finding that the rate for Grafton County in 2001 was 29%. However, our analysis of 2001 NCANDS data showed that the percentage of co-occurrence cases statewide (53%) was higher than previously reported and this is likely to be due to the fact that, for purposes of analysis, we excluded children for whom data were missing on the domestic violence variable. Estimates of co-occurrence rates are expected to shift at the end of the Project as assessment techniques are enhanced.

Over half of the 27 co-occurrence cases examined in our file reviews involved children under the age of five and 26% were children under the age of one. Almost all co-occurrence cases involved neglect of a child.

#### **Substantiation**

Our analysis showed that in Grafton County and the rest of the State, the substantiation rate was almost three times greater for co-occurrence cases than non-co-occurrence cases and these differences are statistically significant. However, it is not possible to conclude that there is a causal relationship, i.e., that these types of family situations were treated differently solely because of the presence of domestic violence. In fact, the higher substantiation rate may be related to other factors that are correlated with domestic violence. Our analyses showed that among all children in the State, for those with domestic violence identified in the assessment,

there was a trend for the children to have been more likely to have had behavior problems, to have had a caretaker abusing alcohol and/or drugs, to have had a caretaker with an emotional disturbance, to have had a juvenile court petition, to have been in a family receiving public assistance, and to have been reported as a victim of physical abuse. Perhaps most notable is the finding that 51% of the children with domestic violence were reported for physical abuse, as compared to 30% of the children without domestic violence.

### **Status of Goals at Baseline**

#### **Recognition of Domestic Violence**

As noted above, we were hindered in our ability to thoroughly assess DCYF's recognition of domestic violence at baseline. Other than descriptions of episodes where children were directly involved in the violent episode, there was very little documentation by the CPSW on all assessment information relevant to domestic violence in the co-occurrence cases. CPSW focus group data were consistent with findings from the file review, in that at the start of the Project there appeared to be little depth or consistency in CPSW assessment of domestic violence and/or domestic violence victims' protective capacities. This suggests there is considerable room for improvement in achieving this goal.

One cautionary note is that without DCYF worker discretion regarding access to records, increasingly detailed documentation of domestic violence assessments could increase the risk of harm to domestic violence victims. Since all DCYF reports submitted to the court are currently accessible to all parties to a case, the Project partners should consider how a more comprehensive assessment of domestic violence by CPSWs could be accomplished without negatively impacting victims.

#### **Understanding Domestic Violence and Other Systems**

*Direct Service Worker* Survey results indicated that most of the DCYF workers surveyed had some training in domestic violence and co-occurrence in the last year. The six DCYF workers reported high levels of knowledge about the Project's other primary partners. Because the response rate was very low for this survey, we cannot generalize these results to draw any conclusions about the amount of training or knowledge levels in the broader population of Grafton County DCYF staff members.

Focus group data suggested the relationship between DCYF and DVPSs in Grafton County was a positive one, with strong collaboration reported by most participants.

In sum, the data suggested CPSWs perceived their level of knowledge of domestic violence and their understanding of the court system and crisis centers to be very good early on in the Project.

### **Response to Domestic Violence**

**Increasing consistent and effective use of the DVPS.** A description of the DVPS position and the baseline data to assess this goal were provided in the crisis center/Coalition chapter. We concluded that at the start of the Project there was considerable variation in the practices of the DVPS. Data also suggested a need for improving the process by which referrals were made to the DVPS by DCYF and the way the DVPS made contacts with clients. In particular, the data suggested a need to improve the manner and process by which DCYF and the DVPS collaborated to insure the safety and well-being of their clients (e.g., increase collaboration around case-specific planning).

**Family centered safety and case planning.** DCYF staff participating in the focus groups that we conducted reported they were most comfortable with developing safety plans routinely to children of domestic violence victims, but left safety planning specific to adult victims to others, such as the DVPS.

Data collected on services provided to victims from the NCANDS database indicated that, overall, families with domestic violence received more types of services than other families. The most frequently provided services in co-occurrence cases according to NCANDS were case management (74% of the children in assessments involving domestic violence), day care (42%) and mental health and transportation (37% of the children/families for each).

DCYF file review data on service referrals for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence showed that, typically, three types of services were referred to domestic violence victims. The most common referral was for mental health treatment (62% of the victims).

Interpretation of quantitative data on the number of services provided by DCYF in co-occurrence cases is limited by the fact that that we do not know how many and which services each family actually needed, what type of prior or ongoing services they may already have been receiving, or if services were of adequate quality. The crucial issues are that service plans are tailored to the unique needs of individuals and that they are perceived as helpful and meaningful.

Data on the number of services provided should be considered in combination with qualitative data from interviews with victims regarding their experiences with DCYF service plans.

Interviews with DCYF-involved domestic violence victims revealed that participants were referred to a variety of services, with varying perceptions as to the effectiveness of those services. Only one participant reported that there was a service she felt she needed but could not get. All seven participants who ever had an open DCYF case were mandated to crisis center services.

DCYF file review data indicated one-half of the domestic violence perpetrators charged with child abuse/neglect were referred to batterer intervention programs.

**Responses to non-offending parents and individualized case plans.** Baseline data from DCYF files, court abuse/neglect files, and focus groups and interviews suggested non-offending parents rarely had petitions for child abuse or neglect for failure to protect filed against them by CPSWs working in the district offices that serve Grafton County at the beginning of the Project.

An examination of indicators used to assess baseline status for the use of individualized case plans found that a majority of DCYF-involved domestic violence perpetrators had been ordered out of the home and had service plans that were unique and separate from the victims' service plans. These findings suggest baseline practices were consistent with DCYF goals.

**Alternative case responses.** Voluntary type cases were rare dispositions for DCYF reports regardless of the presence of domestic violence or the geographical area of the State where a report was assessed, according to 2001 NCANDS data. Consistent with efforts toward avoiding unnecessarily labeling non-offending domestic violence victims as neglectful or abusive, a Greenbook recommendation is that more domestic violence cases will be handled without court involvement. However, this may not be a realistic expectation given the very low percentage of cases where DCYF provided services without court involvement and the currently tight State budget constraints.

**Incidence of out of home placements.** Data from NCANDS, DCYF files, and Family Division abuse and neglect files indicated that in Grafton County, at the start of the Project, between 47% and 70% of the founded abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence also involved an out of home placement for the abused/neglected child. While NCANDS data suggested that children from homes where domestic violence was identified were more likely to be placed out of the home, we cannot infer that the domestic violence caused the out of home



placement. DCYF and court file reviews showed that the families with open, court-involved DCYF cases were families with multiple problems in addition to domestic violence.

**Duration of out of home placements:** Data from NCANDS, DCYF files, and Family Division abuse and neglect files showed that in Grafton County, at the start of the Project, between 35% and 68% of the founded abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence who had been placed out of the home were reunified by the time of data collection. According to these data sources, the average duration of these placements for reunified children was between six and 13 months. The proportion of children who had been reunified with parents and the duration of out of home placements varied across data types due to the different time frames between the dates of the child removal and the dates of data collection across different methods. Also, given the limited cross-sectional nature of these data, no conclusions can be drawn on these matters. File review data indicated 24% of co-occurrence cases resulted in the termination of parental rights.

Findings showed no apparent correlation between involvement of the DVPS, the likelihood of placement, or the duration of out of home placements.

**Recidivism.** According to our analysis of NCANDS data for 2001, nearly half of the children in 2001 co-occurrence cases previously had one or more founded incidents of abuse/neglect.

All baseline data reported in this chapter will be compared to similar types of data collected at the end of the Project for purposes of evaluating DCYF's Project goals. The information presented in this chapter is intended to provide a snapshot of DCYF district offices involved with Greenbook at the beginning of the Project.

## **CHAPTER 3 COURT SYSTEM**

This chapter reports all baseline data for the Project goals of the court system. We first provide some background on the court system in Grafton County and the families that it serves. The remainder of the chapter is organized around the Greenbook Project goals of the court. (See Appendix D-1 for a list of the court goals.) Each court goal is presented along with all types of data used to assess that goal. Data are summarized and discussed at the end of each goal-specific section.

The following types of data pertaining to the court are presented in this chapter:

- § Family Division child abuse/neglect file data
- § Family Division civil domestic violence case file data
- § Individual interviews with judges and court staff
- § Focus groups and interviews with domestic violence survivors
- § DCYF file data
- § DCYF aggregate data
- § *Interagency and Direct Service Worker Survey* data
- § Data from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

An overview of each type of data and methods used to collect the data are provided in the introductory chapter. For details on methodology and specifics on the computation of particular statistics, please see the Appendix.

### **Grafton County Court System**

The courts involved with the Grafton County Greenbook Project include the Grafton County Family Division and the District Courts. Grafton County District Courts have jurisdiction over criminal misdemeanors, including criminal domestic violence cases. The Grafton County Family Division has jurisdiction over all family related cases, including child abuse/neglect and civil proceedings involving domestic violence (protective orders). Probate and Superior Courts are not involved with the Grafton County Greenbook Project.

The four District Court locations serving Grafton County residents are in Littleton, Plymouth, Haverhill and Lebanon. The Family Division is co-located with each District Court.

### **Grafton County Family Division Domestic Violence Cases**

Background information regarding Family Division cases involving domestic violence was obtained from Family Division civil domestic violence case files—protective orders—and

child abuse/neglect case files. First, we present background information on 2001 protective order cases in which there were children living in the household of the petitioner. Next, we present background information on child abuse/neglect cases that also involved domestic violence. (See introductory chapter for overview of methodology and the appendix for details of analyses.)

### Family Division Domestic Violence Cases

**Sample description.** The baseline sample of civil domestic violence cases with children in the household included 132 cases. Table 3-1 provides descriptive data on the domestic violence victims, perpetrators and children in the victim’s household for the 132 cases we reviewed.

**Table 3-1. Domestic Violence Case File Data: Characteristics of Petitioners, Defendants and Children in the Household**

	<b>Petitioners/Domestic Violence Victims</b>	<b>Defendants/Domestic Violence Perpetrators</b>	<b>Children in Victim’s Household (N=254)</b>
<b>Age</b>	Range: 18-51 years; Average: 32 years	Range: 19 -57 years; Average: 35 years	Range: less than one year through 18 years; Average 6.5 years
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	98% white, non-Hispanic	95% white, non-Hispanic	<i>Not collected</i>
<b>Relation to Domestic Violence Perpetrator</b>	46 married (35%); 16 divorced (12%); 31 cohabiting (24%); 9 separated (7%); 30 boyfriend-girlfriend (22%).		<i>Not collected</i>

All petitioners were female because this was one of the criteria for inclusion in the sample. Their average age was 32 and 98% were white, non-Hispanic. About one-third of the domestic violence victims were married to the perpetrators of domestic violence, but more often the defendants were non-marital partners, who were either cohabiting or non-cohabiting with the domestic violence victims. All perpetrators of domestic violence were male. Their average age was 35 and 95% were white, non-Hispanic. The 132 cases in the sample involved 254 children, equally divided by gender. The number of children within victims’ households ranged from one through five, with an average of two children per household.

**Temporary orders and final orders.**<sup>57</sup> Our sample of 132 cases included 57 cases in which only temporary protective orders were issued and 75 cases in which temporary and final protective orders were issued. Among the 57 “temporary order only cases,” the following reasons for the absence of a final protective order were documented in the file:

- The protective order was dropped by the victim or dismissed by the judge because the victim did not appear for the final hearing (48 cases)
- A final order of protection was denied by the judge (seven cases)
- The final order was not issued because of some other situation, e.g., a case was transferred to another court (two cases)

Of the 75 cases in which temporary and final orders were issued by the court, 29% were later withdrawn by the victim.

**Documentation of co-occurrence.** We reviewed the civil domestic violence case files to determine if there was any documentation indicating the domestic violence perpetrator or victim had abused or neglected a child in the domestic violence victim’s household. We found references to child abuse/neglect in only four cases out of 132 (3%). Only one case included documentation of a concurrent abuse/neglect court case. Three case files did not contain enough specific information to determine if there was a substantiated case of abuse/neglect and/or when the abuse occurred. For example, in one case the domestic violence petition narrative referenced a history of the defendant’s abuse of the petitioner’s children but there was no reference to a DCYF or court case.

### **Child Abuse/Neglect Cases Involving Domestic Violence**

**Sample description.** We reviewed 166 abuse/neglect cases<sup>58</sup> that were closed in the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 and found that 65 (39%) had documentation of domestic violence occurring within one year of the petition for child abuse/neglect. These 65 cases (petitions) involved 22 families. The final baseline sample consists of these 22 families.

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<sup>57</sup> See Appendix A for definitions of temporary and final protective orders.

<sup>58</sup> Court child abuse/neglect “cases” refer to abuse or neglect petitions, as opposed to children or families. One case refers to one petition. One child can have two petitions—one for each parent. One family might have multiple children with multiple petitions pertaining to each child. One co-occurrence case with several children and several caretakers and multiple petitions can therefore skew the proportion of co-occurrence cases, but when we compare baseline data to data collected at the end of the Project, the numbers will be similarly randomly skewed.

Seventeen of the 22 families (77%) had abuse/neglect petitions which were found true by the court.<sup>59</sup> Five of the 22 families (23%) had any and all petitions withdrawn by DCYF or found not to be true by the court.<sup>60</sup> Nine of 17 cases were consent decrees (53%) and the other eight were found true by the court. (See introductory chapter pages 7-8 for overview of court file review methodology. See Appendix D-3 for details on how statistics were calculated and for a breakdown of abuse/neglect cases per Family Division location.)

Table 3-2 presents descriptive statistics on victims of domestic violence, perpetrators of domestic violence, and child victims of abuse and/or neglect in these court abuse/neglect files.

**Table 3-2. Court Abuse/Neglect File Review: Characteristics of Domestic Violence Victims, Domestic Violence Perpetrators, and Child Abuse/Neglect Victims**

	<b>Domestic Violence Victim</b>	<b>Domestic Violence Perpetrator</b>	<b>Child Victims of Abuse/Neglect (n=30 children from 17 families)</b>
<b>Age</b>	Range: 17-45 years; Average: 30 years	Range: 21-49 years Average: 34 years	Range: less than one year through 15 years Average: 7 years
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	100% white, non-Hispanic	100% white, non-Hispanic	100% white, non-Hispanic
<b>Relation to Domestic Violence Perpetrator*</b>	8 married, living together (40%); 6 separated (30%) 5 boyfriend-girlfriend (25%); 1 ex-boyfriend-girlfriend; 2 unknown		Biological father: 18 children (64%) No biological/legal relation: 10 children (36%)  Unknown: 2 children
<b>Relation to Child Abuse/Neglect Perpetrator*</b>			Biological mother (only): 10 children (33%) Biological father (only): 3 children (10%) Mother and Father: 10 children (33%) Mother's partner only: 5 children (17%) Mother and her partner: 2 children

\*At the time child abuse/neglect was initially reported to DCYF

<sup>59</sup> "Found true" is specifically defined as the court finding abuse and/or neglect at the adjudicatory hearing.

<sup>60</sup> We considered all 22 families to be co-occurrence cases because although the court did not find the abuse/neglect petitions to be true, DCYF did substantiate allegations of abuse/neglect.

All 22 victims of domestic violence in the co-occurrence cases were female.<sup>61</sup> Their average age was 30, and of those for whom data were available, all were white, non-Hispanic (four missing). The majority of domestic violence victims were current or former marital partners of domestic violence perpetrators. All perpetrators of domestic violence were male. Their average age was 34 and of those for whom information was available, all were white, non-Hispanic.

Seventeen families had abuse/neglect petitions found true by the court. There were 30 children in these families, averaging seven years of age, with a nearly equal number of girls and boys. The domestic violence perpetrator was the biological father for two-thirds of child abuse/neglect victims.

Four children were victims of physical abuse, 26 children were victims of neglect, and two children were victims of both physical abuse and neglect<sup>62</sup> (not shown in table). Perpetrators of child abuse/neglect were most commonly the child's mother only or both the mother and father.

**Documentation of domestic violence in the files.** To determine if a family had experienced the co-occurrence of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence, we read through everything in the paper files and noted documentation of domestic violence occurring within one year of the abuse/neglect petition. Table 3-3 shows the various types of documentation of domestic violence found in files and the corresponding number and percentage of families' case files. For the five families with dismissed petitions, the paper record contained little other than the DCYF petition for abuse/neglect and therefore, some of the percentages in the table below are based on 17 families and others are based on 22 families.

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<sup>61</sup> In contrast to the population of civil domestic violence petitioners, for whom we purposely excluded male petitioners, there were not any male victims of domestic violence in the abuse/neglect cases we reviewed.

<sup>62</sup> According to what was found to be true by the court.

**Table 3-3. Court Abuse/Neglect Files: Documentation of Domestic Violence**

<b>Documentation</b>	<b>Number and Percentage</b>
DCYF petition for abuse/neglect referenced domestic violence	15/22 68%
CPSW report to the court referenced domestic violence (e.g., reports for case review hearings, permanency report)	12/17 71%
Domestic violence case docket number (existing or prior petition filed for a protective order) listed on the front of the file	3/22 13%
Other documentation referencing domestic violence	6/17 35%

The majority of files had more than one of the above types of indications of domestic violence. As shown in rows one and two of the table, there were 15 cases for which the DCYF abuse/neglect petitions (including supporting affidavits) referenced domestic violence but only 12 cases which had other CPSW reports to the court that referenced domestic violence. The three cases where domestic violence was referenced in the petition but not in any other reports were those that were dismissed by the court or withdrawn by DCYF. “Other” types of documentation referencing domestic violence included: Court Appointed Special Advocates’ (CASA/GAL) reports, copies of police reports, and community mental health center reports referencing domestic violence.

#### ✓ **Summary of Background Data on Family Division Co-occurrence Cases**

File review of a sample of 2001 civil domestic violence cases in which children lived in the household of the victim indicated that only 3% were co-occurrence cases. The low rates, which differ from many previous estimates, suggest that there was little documentation in domestic violence case files regarding children beyond their existence and their ages.<sup>63</sup>

File review of a sample of court abuse/neglect files indicated that 39% of the abuse/neglect petitions involved domestic violence. These petitions involved 22 families for whom DCYF substantiated some child abuse and/or neglect allegation and there was documentation of contemporaneous domestic violence in the home. The court dismissed abuse/neglect petitions pertaining to five of the 22 families. The most common type of child

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<sup>63</sup> Previous studies found co-occurrence rates of 30%-60% (Edleson, 1999). We do not necessarily mean to imply that there should be more documentation regarding children in civil domestic violence case files, but wish to point out that file data on civil protective orders do not yield an accurate estimate of the prevalence of co-occurrence.

abuse/neglect co-occurring with domestic violence in the other 17 families was neglect. The domestic violence perpetrator was most typically the child's biological father but the child abuse/neglect perpetrator was most typically the child's biological mother or, equally likely, both the child's mother and father.

The remainder of this chapter presents baseline data as it pertains to the court's Greenbook Project goals.



## COURT GOALS

### V **GOAL 1: INCREASE INFORMATION SHARING AMONG CIVIL, CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE COURTS**

One of the goals for the court is to increase information sharing among and between the courts. Progress toward this goal will be assessed with qualitative interview data from judges and court assistants and quantitative data from case files.

#### **Data from Interviews with Judges and Court Assistants**

In order to understand the courts' information sharing mechanisms and procedures at the beginning of the Project, judges and court staff were asked about procedures for information sharing among and between the Family Division and District Courts in the county. (See also, *Results from Interviews with Judges and Court Staff*, November 2002.)

According to the clerks and judges interviewed, as of the summer of 2002, there was not a countywide standardized procedure for sharing case information between courts. None of the databases for any of the courts was accessible to another court unless they were housed in the same building. Court staff and judges said they were not aware of any formal procedures for tracking cases from one District Court to another, or from one Family Division location to another. Participants reported that parties were required to disclose other court cases or outstanding orders on court forms and that court staff usually found out about other pending cases through discussions with the parties. Some of the court staff said they knew about pending cases in other courts involving the same parties only because they worked in more than one court. Procedures for linking cases across Family Division and District Courts varied across specific courts.

The predominant judicial perception on information sharing between courts was that it was not a problem and that the responsibility for bringing forward information on other cases at the time of a hearing was up to the parties, not the court system. Several judges reported that information on outstanding court orders for cases in other courts was usually provided to them either by court staff or parties in the courtroom.

### **Data from Child Abuse/Neglect Files**

Another indicator of information sharing among and between Family Division and District Courts at the start of the Project is the number of contacts between and among Family Division and District Courts, as documented in child abuse/neglect files and civil domestic violence files.

We examined the child abuse/neglect files for documentation of concurrent or prior criminal charges against the domestic violence perpetrator and documentation of related communication among and between the District Court and Family Division. We collected this information only from the cases in which the court found the abuse/neglect to be true (17 families). There was some indication of a concurrent criminal case involving the domestic violence perpetrator in 13 of the families (76%). Nine perpetrators had been charged with assault related to domestic violence and three had other charges (e.g., assault of a police officer, receiving stolen property, or alcohol related offenses). The nature of the concurrent case could not be determined for one domestic violence perpetrator.

**Family Division awareness of prior/concurrent criminal cases.** There was some indication of a prior criminal case involving the domestic violence perpetrator in nine of the families (53%). Four perpetrators had been charged with assault related to domestic violence and four had other charges. The nature of the prior criminal case could not be determined for one domestic violence perpetrator. Documentation of concurrent and/or prior criminal cases was found in various places in the court records such as, CASA/GAL reports, DCYF reports, and/or therapist reports. One can assume that the judge read these reports and, therefore, was aware of concurrent or prior criminal cases. It is impossible, however, to know definitively whether this information was known by the judge or factored into his/her decision-making in the abuse/neglect case. We categorized case files as ‘containing any indication that the court was aware/considered the concurrent or prior criminal case’ only if:

- Any court orders referenced the criminal charge (e.g., “[domestic violence perpetrator] needs to follow the conditions of his probation”) (n=6);
- there was a copy of the criminal complaint and/or District Court order in the file (n=1); or
- docket numbers of criminal case/s were listed on the front of the abuse/neglect file (n=2).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Some cases contained more than one type of indication that the court was aware of/considered the concurrent or prior criminal case.

Using these criteria, we found there were seven families for whom the court was aware of a prior or concurrent criminal case. This was 54% of the 13 families for whom there was some indication of a concurrent criminal case involving the domestic violence perpetrator. In other words, in six (or 46%) of the families where the domestic violence perpetrator had a concurrent criminal case, the abuse/neglect file contained no documentation indicating the court's awareness of the criminal case. Of course, it is possible that the court was aware of the criminal case but the file simply did not contain documentation to that effect.

### **Data from Civil Domestic Violence Case Files**

**Contacts with District Court.** We examined the 2001 civil domestic violence case files for documentation of concurrent or prior criminal charges against the defendant and documentation of related communication among and between the District Court and Family Division.

Of the 132 domestic violence cases reviewed, 13 cases (10%) had documentation of at least one contact between the Family Division and District Court. We categorized the following types of documentation as "contact" between the courts:

- Copies of criminal complaint charges and findings, bail conditions, etc. (1 case)
- Any reference to docket numbers of criminal cases, either in the file or on the front of file (10 cases)
- Any reference in judges' orders to a criminal case and the consequent conditions imposed by the District Court (3 cases)

(See Appendix D-2 for further details regarding the definition of "contact.") Of the 13 cases in which there was any documentation of contact between the courts, the greatest number of contacts was two, and the average number of contacts between courts was one.

**Documentation of concurrent or prior criminal behavior in domestic violence case files.** Eight civil domestic violence case files (6%) contained documentation of criminal involvement on the part of the domestic violence perpetrator, such as a transport order to/from a Grafton County correctional facility in the file, but there was not any documentation in the file indicating communication between District (or Superior) and Family Court, nor any documentation that the Family Division was aware of nature of the crime.

There were seven cases with some documentation in the file that the defendant was involved in a concurrent domestic violence criminal case (5% of 132). There were also seven

cases with some documentation in the file that the defendant was involved in another type of criminal case concurrent to the domestic violence petition (5% of 132).

There were nine cases with some documentation of prior domestic violence criminal involvement (7% of 132) and there were eight cases with some documentation of prior other criminal involvement (6%). Several defendants had documentation of both concurrent and prior criminal cases.

**Actual concurrent or prior criminal cases.** We obtained data from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) on criminal charges against defendants in the sample of 2001 civil domestic violence cases. We obtained information on the number of prior or concurrent criminal charges for each defendant in the domestic violence cases that resulted in final protective orders. Of 60 final order cases with no indication of any prior/concurrent criminal charges in the paper file, 41 of these had at least one prior criminal case according to the AOC data (68%). The range in the number of prior criminal cases was one through 12 and the average number was 2.5.<sup>65</sup> This was a much larger percentage of prior or concurrent criminal involvement than the civil domestic violence case file documentation suggested (68% versus 7%).

#### V **Summary of Goal 1: Information Sharing Between Courts at Baseline**

File review data are limited by the fact that a lack of documentation regarding inter-court communication does not necessarily mean no communication occurred. With this limitation in mind, baseline data suggested the District Court and Family Division did not frequently communicate information across courts. Interview data indicated there was not a countywide standard procedure for sharing case information between courts. Procedures for linking cases across Family Division and District Courts varied across court locations. Child abuse/neglect case file data indicated that a large proportion of the perpetrators of domestic violence had some type of concurrent criminal case (76%) and that the court was aware of the criminal case—as defined by the presence of certain documentation in the case file—in roughly one-half of those cases. Data obtained from the AOC indicated that a sizable proportion of defendants in 2001 domestic violence cases had concurrent or prior criminal involvement (68%) but domestic

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<sup>65</sup> Numbers of criminal cases include cases resulting in a variety of dispositions: guilty, not guilty, etc.

violence case file data indicated that only a small proportion of the cases had documentation to this effect in the file.

✓ **GOAL 2: IMPROVE ASSESSMENT OF RISK OF CO-OCCURRENCE, AND THEN ADDRESS NEEDS**

A second goal of the court system is to improve the assessment of the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect in order to better address the needs of the family. Improved assessment of the risk of co-occurrence will be examined at the end of the Project based on whether a new assessment tool or procedure has been developed and implemented.

Addressing the needs of families experiencing the co-occurrence (or at risk for the co-occurrence) is a broad goal, to be measured with the following three indicators:

- An increased number of referrals/orders to supportive services for women and children
- A decreased proportion of out of home placements and a decrease in duration of out of home placements for children in families where there is the co-occurrence
- An increase in the number of orders for a violent parent to be removed from the home rather than a child in abuse/neglect cases

Many of these indicators stem from the recommendations for court practices provided in the *Greenbook*. For example, two *Greenbook* recommendations are to keep the non-abusive parent and child together whenever possible and for the court to prioritize removing an abuser before removing a child from a battered mother. Several of these indicators are also indicators for DCYF goals. When pertinent, we reference the prior presentation of the data in the DCYF chapter and repeat a brief summary of the results in this chapter.

### **Number of Referrals/Orders to Supportive Services for Women and Children**

Two indicators of how well the court is addressing the needs of families experiencing the co-occurrence are the number of orders for supportive services and the number of referrals to services for women and children in families experiencing the co-occurrence.<sup>66</sup> A change in the number of services ordered/referred by the court in co-occurrence cases at the beginning versus

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<sup>66</sup> A service referral from the court is defined as a suggestion (as opposed to an order) as to where an individual could obtain assistance if she voluntarily chose to do so. In 2001, such referrals were not necessarily documented in the civil domestic violence case files.

the end of the Project may indicate an improved response to families' needs, but it is a very indirect measure. We do not know how many and which services each family actually needed, what type of prior or ongoing services they may already have been receiving, or if services were of adequate quality. The crucial issues are that service plans are tailored to the unique needs of individuals and that they are perceived as helpful and meaningful. Quantitative data on the number of services provided should only be considered in combination with qualitative data from interviews with victims regarding their experiences with court ordered service plans.

With that caveat in mind, the next section of this report presents the numbers of orders for supportive services to domestic violence victims and child victims in child abuse/neglect cases and the number of referrals to services to victims in protective order cases at the start of the Project.

#### **Data from Child Abuse/Neglect Files**

**Number of orders to supportive services for domestic violence victims.** In our sample of 17 cases of abuse/neglect found true by the court, all mothers were ordered to obtain at least one service. Fourteen of the 17 mothers were found to be perpetrators of child neglect and/or physical abuse.<sup>67</sup> The average number of different types of services ordered for each mother was five, and the range was from two to nine types of services. Table 3-4 shows the number and percentage of mothers in co-occurrence cases who were ordered by the court to seek each type of service.

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<sup>67</sup> Twelve mothers were found to have neglected their child/ren and two mothers were found to have physically abused and neglected their child/ren.

**Table 3-4. Child Abuse/Neglect Case File Data: Services Ordered for Mothers<sup>68</sup>**

<b>Referral Type</b>	<b>Number of Mothers</b>	<b>Percent (n=17)</b>
Home-based family therapy	12	71%
Parent aide	12	71%
Mental health treatment (outpatient)	10	59%
Psychological evaluation	9	53%
Transportation	7	41%
<b>Crisis center/domestic violence services</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>41%</b>
Parenting classes	6	35%
Psychiatric evaluation/medication	5	29%
Alcohol/drug treatment (inpatient)	4	-
Marriage counseling	3	-
Alcoholics Anonymous	2	-
Alcohol/drug assessment/evaluation	1	-
Alcohol/drug treatment (outpatient)	1	-
Anger management	1	-
“Assertiveness training”	1	-
Family therapy	1	-
Mediation	1	-
No court-ordered services	0	-

*Note:* n = 17. Numbers and percentages do not sum to 17 or 100 because individuals may have been referred to multiple services. Percentages on numbers less than five are not shown.

Home-based family therapy and parent aide services were the most frequently mandated services for mothers. Outpatient mental health treatment was the next most frequently ordered service, followed by psychological evaluations. Seven of 17 mothers (41%) were ordered to some crisis center/domestic violence service.<sup>69</sup> Four of these orders specified that the woman attend a crisis center support group. Of the 10 mothers who were not mandated to seek domestic

<sup>68</sup> All mothers in the court child abuse/neglect file review sample are domestic violence victims.

<sup>69</sup> “Crisis center/domestic violence services” include court orders to “domestic violence counseling,” a crisis center support group, and one order that states the mother: “shall attend a domestic violence group or some form of individual therapy to understand the dynamics of domestic violence.” Orders to attend “assertiveness training” and general mental health counseling with no specific reference to domestic violence and were not considered an order to domestic violence services.

violence services, at least two were already involved with a crisis center according to documents in the file (e.g., one CASA/GAL report stated the mother attended a weekly support group at the crisis center).

**Number of orders to supportive services for child abuse victims.** In the sample of 17 cases of abuse/neglect found true by the court, there were 30 children who were victims of abuse and/or neglect. The average number of different types of services ordered for each child victim was two, and the range was from none to four types of services. Table 3-5 shows the number and percentage of child victims in co-occurrence cases who were ordered by the court to seek each type of service.

**Table 3-5. Child Abuse/Neglect Case File Data: Services Ordered For Child Victims**

Referral Type	Number of Children	Percent of Child Abuse/Neglect Victims (n=30)
Mental health treatment (outpatient)	28	93%
Psychological evaluation	11	37%
Medical/nutritional (including psychiatric medication)	6	20%
Daycare	5	16%
Family therapy	5	16%
Home-based family therapy	5	16%
No court-ordered services	2	-
Early intervention	1	-
Developmental assessment	1	-
Learning and speech evaluation	1	-
Special education program	1	-

*Note:* Numbers and percentages do not sum to 30 or 100 because individuals may have been referred to multiple services. Percentages on numbers less than five are not shown.

Almost all child victims were court-ordered to participate in outpatient mental health treatment (93%). We attempted to determine if any services ordered for children were specifically ordered to address children’s exposure to domestic violence. We categorized a service as being “specific to domestic violence” only if the court order for that service referenced exposure to violence, such as one order which stated: “All children shall be provided with age appropriate counseling to address the effects of the violence they have witnessed.” Another



example is an order which stated the child: "...shall be enrolled in counseling with a counselor familiar with the effects of domestic violence on children."

Defining services as specific to domestic violence in this manner, we found that seven children (from four families) had services ordered specifically to address issues of domestic violence. The seven children were all ordered to receive mental health counseling. Domestic violence specific services were ordered in four out of 17 co-occurrence cases (24%).

#### **Data from Domestic Violence (Protective Order) Cases**

**Number of referrals to supportive services for domestic violence victims.** We obtained information on the number of referrals to supportive services for domestic violence victims in protective order cases from our review of 132 domestic violence cases.<sup>70</sup> We found that in four cases (3%), a petitioner was referred to a specific service. In three cases, the petitioner was referred to a crisis center advocate and in the other case the petitioner was recommended to obtain counseling. The final order stated: "Plaintiff advised that continuing to expose the children to violence may be neglect or abuse leading to the removal of the children. Plaintiff encouraged to obtain counseling to avoid abusive relationships."

**Number of referrals to supportive services for children of domestic violence victims.** Three of the 132 domestic violence cases contained documented referrals for children (2%). Three petitioners were referred to child mental health counselors on behalf of their children.

#### **Proportion of Out of Home Placements**

Another indicator of how well the court is addressing the needs of families experiencing the co-occurrence is the proportion of children placed out of the home in co-occurrence cases. Data from NCANDS, DCYF files, and Family Division abuse and neglect files indicated that in Grafton County, at the start of the Project, between 47% and 70% of the founded abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence also involved an out of home placement for the abused/neglected child.<sup>71</sup> Even the low end of the estimated placement rate in co-occurrence

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<sup>70</sup> In this section, a "referral" is defined as any suggestion or recommendation for services made by a judge in the temporary or final protective order.

<sup>71</sup> The difference in percentages of out of home placements between NCANDS data and the file review data may be due to the fact that NCANDS data is on children and the DCYF and court file data is on families, because one family may have multiple children but only one child placed out of the home.

cases (47%) was higher than the statewide placement rate among all 2001 substantiated DCYF cases, which was 37%.<sup>72</sup> Although NCANDS data suggested that children from homes where domestic violence was identified were more likely to be placed out of the home than those without domestic violence, we cannot infer that the domestic violence caused the out of home placement. DCYF and court file reviews showed that the families with open, court-involved DCYF cases were families with multiple problems in addition to domestic violence. (See previous chapter for detailed results on incidence and duration of out of home placements in co-occurrence cases from each data source.)

### **Number of Orders for the Domestic Violence Perpetrator to be Removed From the Home**

We examined court child abuse/neglect files to determine the number of cases in which the court issued an order to remove the perpetrator from the home and restrict contact between the perpetrator and children. More frequent use of this method of increasing children's safety, rather than placement of children out of the home, might indicate an improved response to co-occurrence cases, holding perpetrators accountable and enabling non-offending parents to retain physical custody of their children.

Among the 17 families with child abuse or neglect found true by the court, there were eight families for whom removal of the domestic violence perpetrator from the home could have been an option. In the other nine cases, the domestic violence perpetrator either never lived in the home or, in one case, the physical environment of the house itself was considered dangerous for children. Of the eight "eligible" cases, six of the domestic violence perpetrators were ordered out of the home. In the other two cases where the child was removed, the domestic violence victim was found to be either physically abusing or neglecting the child/ren.

### **√ Summary of Goal 2: Improve Assessment of Risk of Co-occurrence, and Then Address Needs**

Indicators of an improvement in the court's addressing the needs of families experiencing the co-occurrence include an increase in referrals/orders to supportive services, a decrease in incidence and duration of out of home placements in child/abuse neglect cases, and an increase in the number of orders for abusers to be removed from the home.

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<sup>72</sup> ACF/Children's Bureau. (2002). *New Hampshire child and family services review data profile*.

### **Orders to Supportive Services**

Data from court abuse/neglect case files on 17 families indicated the average number of different types of services ordered for each mother (domestic violence victim) was five, and the range was from two to nine types of services. Seven of 17 were ordered to some crisis center/domestic violence service. The average number of different types of services ordered for each child victim was two, and the range was from none to four types of services. We found that seven children out of 30 had services ordered specifically to address issues of domestic violence and all were for mental health counseling. Civil domestic violence case files indicated that service referrals from the court for victims petitioning the court for protective orders (and their children) were rare in 2001.

### **Proportion of Out of Home Placements**

Data from NCANDS, DCYF files, and Family Division abuse and neglect files showed that in Grafton County, at the start of the Project, between 47% and 70% of the founded abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence also involved an out of home placement for the abused/neglected child. Findings on out of home placements are discussed at length in the previous chapter.

### **Number of Orders for Violent Parents to be Removed From Home**

Baseline findings in regard to the proportion of DCYF-involved domestic violence perpetrators ordered out of the home suggested that the court was already frequently ordering violent parents out of the home instead of children when possible at the start of the Project.

v **GOAL 3: IMPROVE MONITORING OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR OF PARENTS AND INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**

A third goal of the court system is to improve the monitoring of violent behavior of parents and increase accountability for violent behavior. Progress toward this goal will be assessed with several indicators based on data from court domestic violence case files, child abuse/neglect case files, and interviews with judges and court staff. Findings from file review data are discussed below, and these findings are based on examination of the following:

- Communication between District Court and Family Division
- Violent parents' compliance with child support orders
- Court orders for violent parents to attend batterer intervention programs
- Communication between batterer intervention programs and the courts
- Compliance with orders to batterer intervention programs
- Neglect/failure to protect petitions against non-offending parents that are found true by the court

### **Court File Data**

#### **Communication Between District Court and Family Division**

One indicator of improved monitoring of violent parents is an increase in communication between criminal and family court. We obtained data on the number of contacts Family Division has with District Court from domestic violence case files and child abuse/neglect case files, as discussed previously. Overall, baseline data suggested that the District Court and Family Division did not frequently communicate information across courts. Data obtained from the AOC indicated that a sizable proportion of defendants in 2001 domestic violence cases had concurrent or prior criminal involvement, but file review data indicated that only a small proportion of the cases have documentation to this effect in the file. Child abuse/neglect case file data showed that a large proportion of the perpetrators of domestic violence had some type of concurrent criminal case (76%) and that the court was aware of the criminal case—as defined by the presence of certain documentation in the case file—in roughly one-half of those cases (see previous section).

#### **Compliance with Child Support Orders**

Another indicator of increased accountability for violent parents is an increase in violent parents' compliance with child support orders. To assess this, we collected information on the number of cases where there was documentation of non-compliance with child support orders

issued in domestic violence (protective order) cases.<sup>73</sup> (See introductory chapter for an overview of domestic violence case file review methods.)

Out of 96 domestic violence cases involving children with biological and/or legal relations with the plaintiff and defendant, 28 cases (29%) had court orders for the perpetrator/defendant to pay child support to the victim. Of these 28 cases, four cases had documentation that the perpetrator did not comply with child support orders (14%). In all four cases there were motions filed by the domestic violence victim regarding a lack of payment.

### **Orders for Violent Parents to Attend Batterer Intervention Programs**

Another indicator of increased accountability for violent parents is an increase in the number of violent parents that were court-ordered to participate in batterer intervention programs (BIPs). We examined the status of this indicator based on baseline data we collected on orders to BIPs from court domestic violence case files and from child abuse/neglect case files.

**Data from domestic violence case files.** We reviewed a total of 132 domestic violence (protective order) cases heard in 2001, but we recorded the number of orders for domestic violence perpetrators to attend batterers intervention programs in the final order cases only (n=75; 57 petitions were withdrawn, dismissed or denied). Six of the 75 cases (8%) included orders for the perpetrator to attend a batterer intervention program. Five cases included orders for the perpetrator to attend mental health counseling (7%) and one case included orders for the perpetrator to attend substance abuse treatment.

Of the 75 cases resulting in final orders, 84% did not contain any documentation on orders/referrals for the domestic violence perpetrator to participate in any types of services.

**Data from child abuse/neglect case files.** There were 17 co-occurrence cases in the sample of abuse/neglect files. Of the 17 domestic violence perpetrators, 15 were identified (by the court and DCYF) as perpetrators of child abuse/neglect. Four of these perpetrators were ordered by the court to attend a BIP. Two perpetrators were out of the State or incarcerated, and therefore, 31% of “relevant” perpetrators were ordered to an intervention program.

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<sup>73</sup> We examined files for documentation of non-compliance because civil protective order cases do not contain documentation of compliance.

## **Communication Between Family Division and BIPs and Compliance with Court Orders to BIPs**

We also examined the baseline status of communication between Family Division and batterer intervention programs regarding perpetrator compliance with court orders to participate in BIPs. We recorded the number of contacts between BIPs and the Family Division documented in case files. Court “contact” with a BIP included letters from BIPs in the file, letters from BIPs to perpetrators’ attorneys, or documented communication between a BIP and child protective service worker (CPSW).

**Data from child abuse/neglect case files.** As stated previously, four domestic violence perpetrators (out of 13) were ordered to attend a BIP. In all four cases there was documentation of at least one contact between the BIP and the court, including communication/contact through the CPSW.<sup>74</sup> Two case files contained documentation of one contact, one case file documented two contacts, and one had five contacts with a BIP. Given these contacts, all four perpetrators appeared to be compliant with court orders to participate in a BIP.<sup>75</sup>

**Data from domestic violence case files.** As stated previously, six of the 75 final protective orders (8%) included orders for the perpetrator to attend a BIP. In two of the six cases involving an order to attend a BIP, there was documentation of contact between the BIP and court in the form of letters from the BIP to the court as to the perpetrator’s enrollment status and the number of sessions attended. While only two out of the six cases contained documentation of compliance with the court order, the other four cases did not contain documentation of non-compliance to participate in a BIP.

### **Compliance with Orders to BIPs**

An increase in accountability for violent behavior might be indicated by an increase in the number of violations of court orders to batterer intervention that are ‘prosecuted’ (i.e., a motion for contempt is filed by the domestic violence victim and a hearing takes place). However, none of the files reviewed for this baseline report (domestic violence files or

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<sup>74</sup> If a CPSW report stated the domestic violence perpetrator completed a BIP but there was no copy of a letter in the court file or specifics regarding how the CPSW knew this information, we still considered that the BIP must have had some contact with the CPSW for the CPSW to make that statement of compliance in a court report. Therefore we categorized it as “one contact.”

<sup>75</sup> In one abuse/neglect case a judge ordered the domestic violence perpetrator to comply with psychologist recommendations that he “attend a BIP” and five months later a different judge excused the perpetrator from further participation in the BIP with no explanation in the file.

abuse/neglect files) contained any definitive indication of a violation of a court order to batterer intervention, so there could not be any documentation of prosecution of such a violation.

### **Number of Compliance Reviews**

One measure of improved monitoring of violent behavior of parents identified at the beginning of the Project is the number of compliance reviews conducted by the court in co-occurrence cases. In 2001, the New Hampshire courts did not have a mechanism to allow for compliance reviews in civil domestic violence cases.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, there was no documentation in civil domestic violence case files that compliance reviews were conducted to monitor violent parents' adherence to court orders.

### **Neglect/Failure to Protect Petitions Against Non-Offending Parents Found True**

A decrease in the proportion of petitions of neglect due to failure to protect against non-offending parents in co-occurrence cases found true by the court is another indicator that the court is holding the perpetrator, rather than the victim, accountable for the violent behavior. As noted in the previous chapter, baseline data from court and DCYF files, and focus groups and interviews with CPSWs and DVPSs, suggested non-offending parents rarely had petitions for child abuse or neglect for failure to protect filed against them by CPSWs working in the district offices that serve Grafton County.

### **Interview Data**

Interviews with judges (n=7) and court staff provided information on other indicators related to Goal 3: the court's communication with batterer intervention programs, mechanisms for monitoring violent parents at the start of the project, and procedures used when there is a violation of a court order to participate in a BIP. Court staff were asked about the court's communication with batterer intervention programs. Judges were asked several questions about ordering batterer intervention programs, mechanisms for monitoring perpetrators' compliance, and procedures used when there was a violation of a court order for batterer intervention. (See also: *Results from Interviews with Judges and Court Staff*, November 2002.)

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<sup>76</sup> The statute does provide for a variety of "other relief" at a final hearing, including batterer's intervention. The court can coerce compliance with orders to batterer intervention issued in civil domestic violence cases through its contempt powers, which must be initiated by the plaintiff filing a notice with the court (See New Hampshire District Court Domestic Violence Protocols: <http://www.courts.state.nh.us/district/protocols/dv/index.htm>).

### **Communication between Court and BIPs**

According to the court staff interviewed, the amount and types of communication between batterer intervention programs (BIPs) and the court system varied across courts and across intervention programs. It was reported that all Family Divisions and some District Courts had little to no communication with batterer intervention programs, while some District Courts did receive reports from intervention programs.

### **Orders to Participate in BIPs**

All Family Division judges interviewed said that they rarely, if ever, ordered batterer intervention in civil domestic violence cases because there was no mechanism to monitor compliance or enforce the order. Family Division judges reported that they did frequently order batterer intervention programs for domestic violence perpetrators in child abuse/neglect cases, where DCYF monitors the violent parent's compliance with the order.

All District Court judges interviewed said that in criminal cases it was rare for them to order defendants into batterer intervention programs or anger management unless it was recommended by the prosecution or it was part of a negotiated plea, which it often was. All District Court judges said that anger management was recommended or included as part of a negotiated plea much more frequently than batterer intervention. They reported that batterer intervention and/or anger management (terms used interchangeably by most of the judges) were more likely to be ordered for repeat offenses and for more severe violence than for first time offenses or less severe violence.

### **Monitoring Participation in BIPs**

Judges varied widely in their responses to questions concerning the monitoring of participation in batterer intervention for those convicted of criminal assault. Some District Court judges stated there were fairly standardized procedures in place to monitor domestic violence perpetrators after ordering an intervention program. Suspended or deferred jail time was used as the threatened consequence to hold domestic violence perpetrators accountable to complete batterer intervention or treatment programs that were ordered in criminal cases. Others said there were no standard procedures and that this was an area the court system needed to improve upon. Still others said the court, as an independent judiciary, should not be monitoring people because this is a function of the executive branch (e.g., Department of Corrections) and they reported that prosecutors routinely brought forward motions for contempt when domestic violence



perpetrators did not comply with orders to participate in intervention programs.

√ **Summary of Goal 3: Improve the Monitoring of Violent Behavior of Parents and Increase Accountability for Violent Behavior**

We identified several indicators to measure how the court monitored violent behavior of parents and held them accountable for violent behavior at the start of the Project, using court file data and interview data from judges and court staff. Baseline data suggested that the District Court and Family Division did not frequently communicate information across courts in 2001. About one-third of defendants with children in common with the plaintiff were ordered to pay child support in the final protective orders. A very small number of these defendants' domestic violence case files (four) contained evidence of non-compliance. Information on child support orders and compliance obtained from domestic violence files is limited by the fact that issues related to child support may have been addressed in marital cases involving the domestic violence plaintiff and defendant, rather than in the domestic violence case. Of the 54 domestic violence files resulting in final orders where there were children in common, 16 or 29% of these files referenced a concurrent or prior marital case.

Among all 75 final order domestic violence cases reviewed, only 8% included orders for the perpetrator to attend a batterer intervention program. Almost none of these files had any documented orders or service referrals for the domestic violence perpetrator. Interviews with judges reinforced the finding that batterer intervention was rarely ordered in domestic violence (civil) cases: All Family Division judges interviewed said they rarely, if ever, ordered batterer intervention in domestic violence cases (protective order petitions) because there was no mechanism to monitor compliance or enforce the order. Family Division judges reported that they did frequently order batterer intervention programs in child abuse/neglect cases, where DCYF monitored the violent parent's compliance with the order. However, data from child abuse/neglect case files indicated that less than a third of "relevant" perpetrators were ordered to an intervention program. In sum, in 2001, batterer intervention was ordered in a minority of all types of Family Division cases.

When batterer intervention was ordered in abuse/neglect cases, the rate of compliance with court orders was 100%, according to data from court files. However, the conclusions are based on only four cases. Data from interviews with court staff indicated all Family Divisions

and some District Courts had little to no communication with batterer intervention programs, while some District Courts did receive reports from intervention programs. There was not a standard practice in place regarding BIP-court communication. None of the Family Division files reviewed contained any documentation regarding violations of court orders to batterer intervention and there was not any documentation in any civil domestic violence file regarding compliance reviews for monitoring violent parents' compliance with court orders because New Hampshire statute did not allow compliance hearings for civil orders to BIPs in 2001.

Baseline data from court and DCYF files, and focus groups and interviews with CPSWs and DVPSs, suggested non-offending parents rarely had petitions for neglect/failure to protect filed against them in the DCYF district offices serving Grafton County. Only one petition of neglect/failure to protect was filed against a non-offending parent in 2001, and it was found true by the court.

v **GOAL 4. INCREASE COURT STAFF'S KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF THE CO-OCCURRENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT: ROLES, SERVICES AND ISSUES; AND OF OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES (SUBSTANCE ABUSE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES, HOUSING, ETC.)**

Another court goal is to increase court staff's knowledge and awareness of the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. This includes knowledge and awareness of other agency/staff roles, services provided, and issues related to co-occurrence. We used two methods to assess baseline levels of knowledge and awareness. The first method was a survey and the second was interviews with judges.

### **Survey Data**

The local *Interagency Survey* and the National Evaluation Team's *Direct Service Worker Survey* both provided data on court staff's prior training on and perceived levels of knowledge of co-occurrence and the other Project partners. (See Introduction for overview of methods for each survey.)

### **Sample Characteristics**

*Interagency Survey.* Ten of the 37 Advisory Council Members who responded to the *Interagency Survey* in October 2001 reported they worked for the court. The ten individuals

reportedly had worked for the court from less than one year through 20 years, with an average of 11.7 years. (See also, *Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey: Summary of Responses*, January 2002.)

**Direct Service Worker Survey.** Ten court assistants from the Family Division and District Courts responded to the National Evaluation Team's *Direct Service Worker Survey*. The ten individuals reportedly had worked for the court from three years through 32 years, with an average of 14 years.

## Survey Results

**Training received on primary partner operations.** The Grafton Greenbook *Interagency Survey* asked respondents if they had ever received training on the operations and regulations of DCYF and if they had ever received training on the operations and regulations of domestic violence programs (two separate questions).<sup>77</sup> Of the ten court respondents, four said they never had any training on the operations and regulations of DCYF, while six said they had some prior training on this topic. One respondent said s/he has never had any training on the operations and regulations of domestic violence programs, while nine said they have had some prior training on this topic.

**Perceived levels of knowledge about DCYF.** The *Interagency Survey* and the *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents: "How knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the operations, roles and responsibilities of DCYF on a scale of 1-10?" (A rating of 1 represented 'not at all' and 10 represented 'very much.')

On the *Interagency Survey* (n=10), there was a wide range in responses, from those who reported they were not very knowledgeable about DCYF (a rating of 2) through those who reported they were very knowledgeable (a rating of 10). The average rating was 6. The *Direct Service Worker Survey* (n=10) yielded similar results, with ratings ranging from 3 through 9, and an average of 6.

**Perceived levels of knowledge about domestic violence programs.** The *Interagency Survey* and the *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents: "How knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the operations, roles and responsibilities of domestic violence programs on a scale of 1-10?" On the *Interagency Survey* (n=10) there was a wide range in

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<sup>77</sup> If the response was yes, individuals were then asked how many hours of training they had received. So few respondents reported the number of hours of training that we chose not to report it here.

responses, from a low of 3 to a high of 9, for an average of 7. The *Direct Service Worker Survey* (n=10) yielded similar results, with ratings ranging from 4 through 9 and an average of 6.

**Training received on child abuse/neglect.** The *Interagency Survey* asked respondents if they had ever received training on the effects of child abuse/neglect on children, the root causes of child abuse or the prevalence of child abuse in Grafton County, using three separate questions. If they said yes to any one of them, they were considered to have had training on child abuse/neglect. All ten respondents reported they had some training on child/abuse neglect issues (100%).

The *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents: “In the past 12 months, how many hours of training have you received on child maltreatment?” The ten survey respondents’ answers ranged from no training to 15 hours. The average was three hours. Seventy percent (n=7) reported having no training at all on child maltreatment in the last year.

**Training received on domestic violence.** The *Interagency Survey* asked respondents if they had ever received training on the effects of domestic violence on children, the root causes of domestic violence, the effects of domestic violence on adult victims, or the prevalence of domestic violence in Grafton County, using four separate questions. If they said yes to any one of them, they were considered to have had training on domestic violence. All ten respondents reported they had some training on domestic violence (100%).

The *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents: “In the past 12 months, how many hours of training have you received on domestic violence?” The ten survey respondents’ answers ranged from no training to 28 hours. The average was five hours. Sixty percent (n=6) reported having no training at all on domestic violence in the last year.

**Training on co-occurrence.** The *Interagency Survey* asked respondents if they had ever received training on the relationship between domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. Of the nine individuals who responded to the question, seven said they had received training on the relationship between domestic violence and child abuse/neglect and two said they did not (22%).

The *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents: “In the past 12 months, how many hours of training have you received on the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment?” The ten survey respondents’ answers ranged from no training to eight hours. The average was one hour. Eighty percent (n=8) reported having no training at all on the co-occurrence in the past year.

In addition, The *Direct Service Worker Survey* asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed (on a scale of 1-4, with 1 representing ‘strongly disagree’ and 4 representing ‘strongly agree’) with the following statement: “The court participates in education/training on the dynamics of the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment.” We collapsed the four response categories into two (agree versus disagree) to simplify analysis. Of the eight individuals who responded to this question, 100% agreed that the court participated in education/training on the dynamics of the co-occurrence. (The average response was 3.5.)

**Perceived knowledge of co-occurrence.** Both surveys asked respondents: “Overall, how knowledgeable would you describe yourself about the overlap between domestic violence and child abuse/neglect on a scale of 1-10?” On the *Interagency Survey* (n=10) there was a wide range in responses, from a low of 3 to a high of 9, for an average of 7. The *Direct Service Worker Survey* (n=10) yielded similar results, with ratings ranging from 4 through 9 and an average of 7.

### **Interviews with Judges**

We obtained some information on judges’ perceived knowledge of co-occurrence issues and knowledge of the other two primary partners from interviews with seven judges. Judges’ perceived knowledge was indirectly inferred by asking judges what they believed would be useful areas for further education in the area of family violence. (See also, *Results from Interviews with Judges and Court Staff*, November 2002.)

Interview results suggested that District Court and Family Division judges’ training interests and needs varied. Some, particularly District Court judges, believed they have had sufficient training in the areas of domestic violence and child abuse. One judge stated the judiciary is inundated with training on domestic violence. Others, particularly Family Division judges, believed they could benefit from training on existing community services, monitoring domestic violence perpetrators, batterer intervention programs, and additional training on the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. One judge stated the judiciary rarely had opportunity for training on issues pertaining to the co-occurrence.

√ **Summary of Goal 4: Court Staff Knowledge and Awareness of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse/Neglect at Baseline**

*Interagency and Direct Service Worker Survey* results indicated that court staff were more apt to have had prior training on domestic violence programs than on the operations of DCYF. The results also showed that training and education on co-occurrence issues was not necessarily current or frequent.

Depending on their years of experience, court staff appeared to have diverse levels of perceived knowledge about DCYF operations, domestic violence program operations, and the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. Training needs identified by judges in interviews also suggested wide variation in perceived levels of knowledge.

√ **GOAL 5: INCREASE CLEAR, DETAILED VISITATION ORDERS TO INCREASE SAFE VISITATION IN CO-OCCURRENCE CASES**

Another goal of the court system is to increase clear, detailed visitation orders to increase safe visitation in co-occurrence cases. We identified several indicators to assess this goal:

- the number of orders for supervised visitation in domestic violence cases;
- the specificity of visitation orders;
- domestic violence victims' perceptions of visitation orders; and
- judges' perceptions of visitation orders in co-occurrence cases.

We obtained information on visitation orders from court files, interviews with domestic violence victims, and interviews with judges.

**Abuse/Neglect Case File Data**

In the 17 families where there was domestic violence and founded abuse/neglect, there were 35 children. Visitation with the domestic violence perpetrator was relevant for 22 of the 35 children (twelve families). Visitation was not relevant for seven children because they had no biological or legal relation to the domestic violence perpetrator. It was not relevant for six other children because there was no out of home placement for the child or separation between the child and domestic violence perpetrator.

**Number of Children in Cases with No Visitation, Supervised Visitation, and Regular/Unsupervised Visitation**

Table 3-6 shows the number of children involved in abuse/neglect cases in which the court ordered no visitation, supervised visitation, or regular/unsupervised visitation with the domestic violence perpetrator. Visitation orders change over the duration of a case and therefore, Table 3-6 shows the number of children in cases with no visitation, supervised visitation, and regular (unsupervised) visitation ordered in different abuse/neglect hearings. (For definitions of each type of hearing, see Appendix A.) The number of children that percentages are based on changes in each section of the table due to variations in the duration of the cases. For example, there were 22 children involved in preliminary hearings but only 11 children involved in five or more case reviews (Case Review Hearing 5).

**Table 3-6. Court Abuse/Neglect File Data: Number of Children with Orders for No Visitation, Supervised Visitation, and Regular Visitation with Domestic Violence Perpetrators (12 Families)**

Type of Hearing/ Point in the case	No Visitation	Supervised Visitation	Regular/Unsupervised Visitation
<b>Preliminary</b> (n=22)	13 59%	4 18%	5 23%
<b>Adjudicatory</b> (n=22)	3 14%	11 50%	8 36%
<b>Dispositional</b> (n=22)	3 14%	11 50%	8 36%
<b>Case Review Hearing 1</b> (n=18)	5 28%	7 39%	6 33%
<b>Case Review Hearing 2</b> (n=18)	1 6%	12 66%	5 28%
<b>Case Review Hearing 3</b> (n=18)	0 --	8 44%	10 56%
<b>Case Review Hearing 4</b> (n=15)	2 13%	3 20%	10 67%
<b>Case Review Hearing 5</b> (n=11)	1 9 %	2 18%	8 73%

As shown in the table above, more than half of the children in co-occurrence cases with legal/biological relation to the domestic violence perpetrator were involved in cases in which no

visitation with the perpetrator was ordered in the preliminary hearing. Nearly one-half of the children involved in cases in which the perpetrator was allowed any visitation at the time of the preliminary hearing (n=9) had orders for supervised visitation. Most of the children had some visitation with the perpetrator from the time of the adjudicatory hearing forward. At the time of the dispositional hearing, half of the children were involved in cases in which supervised visitation was ordered and three children (14%) were involved in cases where the perpetrator was denied any visitation.

### Data from Civil Domestic Violence Cases

We examined visitation orders issued in temporary protective orders and in final protective orders for all domestic violence cases involving children who had legal/biological relations with both the domestic violence victim and perpetrator ('children in common'). The number of temporary orders for cases with children in common in the sample was 92 and the number of final orders for cases with children in common was 54.<sup>78</sup>

#### Number of Orders for Supervised Visitation

Table 3-7 shows the number of cases in which no visitation was ordered between the children and the domestic violence perpetrator, the number of cases in which supervised visitation was ordered, and the number of cases in which regular/unsupervised visitation was ordered.

**Table 3-7. Domestic Violence Case File Data: Number of Orders for Visitation and Supervised Visitation with Domestic Violence Perpetrators**

Type of Hearing/ Point in the case	No Visitation	Supervised Visitation	Regular/Unsupervised Visitation
<b>Temporary Order</b> (n=92 orders)	82 89%	3 3%	7 8%
<b>Final Order</b> (n=54 orders)	12 22%	18 33%	24 44%

<sup>78</sup> Cases which resulted in final protective orders included temporary orders and final orders. Four temporary orders made no reference to visitation at all.



A small proportion of the temporary orders in cases with children in common allowed any visitation for the perpetrator. In 89% of the temporary orders, or 82 cases, the temporary order read “no visitation until final hearing.” Three of the ten cases allowing any visitation required the visitation to be supervised. About three quarters of the final orders allowed visitation between the domestic violence perpetrator and his child/ren, but one third contained orders for supervised visitation.

We also noted whether there were any conditions upon which visitation was contingent in the court orders (not shown in the table above). We found that only one of the ten temporary orders allowing visitation had some conditions tied to the visitation. The order stated that in order to transition from day visits to overnight visits, the perpetrator must be sober for visits, must address substance abuse issues in counseling and present proof to that effect to the domestic violence victim (child’s mother). It also stated the perpetrator’s parents must attend one counseling session with the domestic violence victim and perpetrator and that the perpetrator must get an opinion in writing from his counselor that it is appropriate for him to have overnight visits with the child.

A large majority of the final orders for cases with children in common allowed visitation. Among orders allowing for visitation between children and the domestic violence perpetrators, 33% stipulated that the visitation be supervised by a third party.

We found that there were conditions tied to continued visitation in eight of the 42 orders where some visitation was allowed between the perpetrator and child/ren (11%). Six visitation orders included the requirement that the perpetrator must be sober for visits; one order stated the perpetrator must complete counseling or substance abuse treatment prior to visiting with the child/ren; and one order simply said that visitation should be consistent with the divorce stipulation.

### **Specificity of Visitation Orders: Abuse/Neglect Case File Data**

Another indicator we identified to help assess the court's progress in increasing clear, detailed visitation orders is the specificity of visitation orders in abuse/neglect cases in terms of time, date, location, procedures for getting a child from one caretaker to another (exchange processes), and names of supervisors.<sup>79</sup>

As stated previously, in the 17 families where there was domestic violence and founded abuse/neglect, there were 35 children. Visitation with the domestic violence perpetrator was relevant for 22 of the 35 children (12 families). Table 3-8 shows the number of children who the court wrote visitation orders for that included specific details regarding frequency, location, time of day, exchange processes and names of supervisors (where applicable). The numbers of children the percentages are based on in the table below vary depending on the duration of the case and how many children were allowed any visitation at all. Note that Table 3-8 shows the number of children (not orders/cases) with orders that specified each element in both unsupervised visitation and supervised visitation orders. In regard to exchange processes, we distinguish between unsupervised and supervised visitation. In regard to the specification of the name of a supervisor, we obviously examined this for children with supervised visitation only.

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<sup>79</sup> We decided to not to examine whether visitation orders specified holiday arrangements (as originally planned) because we only found orders pertaining to holiday arrangements in one case, as a one-time order immediately before the Thanksgiving holiday. Discussion of holiday arrangements in visitation orders would be highly dependent on the time of year the orders were written and we had too few cases in our sample to control for this variation.

**TABLE 3-8. Court Abuse/Neglect Case File Data: Number of Children With Visitation Orders Containing Specific Information**

Type of Hearing/ Point in the case (n=number of children allowed any visitation)	Frequency	Location	Time of Day	Exchange Process – Unsupervised visits	Exchange Process – Supervised visits	Name of supervisor
<b>Preliminary</b>	2 (22%) n=9	1 (11%) n=9	0 n=9	0 n=5	0 n=4	2 (50%) n=4
<b>Adjudicatory</b>	2 (11%) n=19	4 (21%) n=19	3 (16%) n=19	1 (12%) n=8	0 n=11	0 n=11
<b>Dispositional</b>	0 n=19	1 (5%) n=19	0 n=19	0 n=19	0 n=11	0 n=11
<b>Case Review Hearing 1</b>	4 (31%) n=13	1 (8%) n=13	0 n=13	0 n=13	0 n=7	4 (57%) n=7
<b>Case Review Hearing 2</b>	5 (29%) n=17	3 (18%) n=17	2 (12%) n=17	2 (4%) n=5	2 (16%) n=12	7 (58%) n=12
<b>Case Review Hearing 3</b>	6 (33%) n=18	4 (22%) n=18	2 (11%) n=18	2 (20%) n=10	2 (25%) n=8	6 (75%) n=8
<b>Case Review Hearing 4</b>	4 (26%) n=15	3 (20%) n=15	2 (13%) n=15	2 (17%) n=12	2 (66%) n=3	2 (66%) n=3
<b>Case Review Hearing 5</b>	4 (36%) n=11	3 (27%) n=11	2 (18%) n=11	1 (11%) n=9	1 (50%) n=2	0 n= 2

Overall, the visitation orders were not specific on the elements examined. For most of the visitation characteristics examined, only a minority of the children’s orders contained any details regarding that characteristic. For example, only one out of 19 children had a visitation order in the dispositional hearing that specified frequency, location, or time of day for visits to occur. Most visitation orders reviewed in abuse/neglect files deferred the specifics regarding visitation to another party, such as the CPSW or a child’s mental health counselor. For example, court orders stated: “Supervised visitation as deemed appropriate by DCYF”; “Visitation parameters to be recommended by child’s counselor”; “Visitation may be expanded by CPSW at her discretion”; or “Location of visits to be determined by [the child’s aunt].” Several court orders stated visitation conditions were “...at the discretion of DCYF, CASA and in consultation with child’s therapist.” (These types of orders were coded as not specific regarding the elements examined.) It should be noted that 2001 court abuse/neglect protocols and forms were designed to leave decisions about visitation to the discretion of DCYF and CASA.

**Supervisors of supervised visitation.** When supervisors were specified by the court in orders for supervised visitation, they were either: “Supervised Visitation Center” or “Parent Aide.”<sup>80</sup>

None of the court files included any notation that the court explored any designated visitation supervisor’s personal or professional training or experience with domestic violence. One order stated that visitation could be supervised by either the domestic violence perpetrator’s father or a parent aide without any indication in the file that the court explored the domestic violence perpetrator’s father’s personal experience with domestic violence. (As with all file review data, the court may in fact have explored this man’s background but we could not find indication of it documented in the case file.)

Another court order rejected DCYF’s recommendation that the father’s (domestic violence perpetrator) girlfriend cease supervising the visitation between a child and the father given a past history of domestic violence by the father against this girlfriend. The judge accepted all of DCYF’s other recommendations regarding the case but specifically denied this one.

We also noted whether there were any conditions that visitation between the domestic violence perpetrator and child were contingent upon in abuse/neglect cases. We found that there were various types of conditions tied to visitation. These included completion of an anger management program; participation in counseling; participation in a batterer intervention program; and “contingent upon child therapist’s recommendation.”

### **Specificity of Visitation Orders: Civil Domestic Violence Case File Data**

We also examined the specificity of visitation orders in domestic violence cases involving children in common. As stated previously, we reviewed 92 temporary protective orders in cases with children in common. Ten of these orders allowed visitation with the domestic violence perpetrator, and seven allowed unsupervised visitation. We reviewed 54 final protective orders and 42 of these allowed visitation with the domestic violence perpetrator. Twenty-four allowed unsupervised visitation. The table below shows the number of orders for unsupervised visitation which include specific details regarding frequency, location, time of day, location of visits, exchange process, and location of exchanges.

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<sup>80</sup> If the court order included multiple contingencies we did not categorize it as “specific”, e.g, orders that read: “visit to be supervised by [dad] or [aunt] or at DCYF’s discretion.”

**Table 3-9. Domestic Violence Case File Data: Number of Visitation Orders Containing Specific Information –Unsupervised Visitation Only**

Did order specify:	Temporary Orders	Final Orders
	Unsupervised Visits (n=7)*	Unsupervised Visits (n=24)
Time (of day)	3	16 (66%)
Frequency	3	16 (66%)
Location of visits	2	9 (38%)
Exchange processes	5	18 (75%)
Location of exchange	4	18 (75%)

\* Percentages are not calculated for temporary orders because of small numbers

The majority of final protective orders included specific details on each of the elements examined except for the location of visits. The most commonly specified location of exchange was the local police department.

**Specificity of supervised visitation orders.** We also collected information on the specificity of orders for supervised visitation, shown in Table 3-10.<sup>81</sup>

**Table 3-10. Domestic Violence Case File Data: Number of Visitation Orders Containing Specific Information –Supervised Visitation Only**

Did order specify:	Temporary Orders	Final Orders
	Supervised Visits (n=3)	Supervised visits (n=18)
Exchange processes	0	1
Name of supervisor and/or location of visits	3	17 (94%)
Payment for services	1	4

Most final orders did not include details regarding exchange processes or payment for services but nearly all did specify who should supervise the visits.

### **Interviews and Focus Groups with Domestic Violence Victims**

Another way to understand the court’s progress toward its goal of increasing clear, detailed visitation orders to increase safe visitation in co-occurrence cases is to learn domestic violence victims’ perceptions of visitation orders issued to them by the court. We conducted

<sup>81</sup> We did not collect data on whether supervised visitation orders included the time of day, frequency of visits, or location of the exchange.

three focus groups with domestic violence victims who utilized crisis center services (n=11), and 11 interviews with victims who had utilized the court to seek an order of protection.<sup>82</sup> Of the 11 women participating in the focus groups, only a few had experiences with courts in Grafton County. Thus, information on focus group participants' experiences with the courts is limited to only a few individuals. Also, in the focus groups we did not specifically ask about visitation but participants brought up the issue in a broader discussion about their perceptions of the court system. In interviews with women who filed for protective orders we specifically asked participants a series of questions about visitation orders issued by the court. We present focus group and interview results separately.

### **Data from Focus Groups on Visitation**

An issue that came up in two of the focus groups' discussions regarding the court was visitation. Three participants expressed concern about how the court handled decisions about the domestic violence perpetrators' visitation with children. These participants talked about how they were afraid of their children's father, their children were afraid of their father and did not want to see him, and the court ordered visitation nonetheless. Women also spoke about the struggle they had forcing their children to attend visits in order to comply with court orders that were against the wishes of their children and themselves. All agreed that the court should not compel children to visit with a parent when this goes against the wishes of the children. Some participants talked about how they believe if they are afraid of a man, he should not have any visitation with their children. (See also: *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.)

### **Data from Interviews with Women who Filed for Protective Orders on Visitation**

Of the 11 women interviewed, four did not have any children in common with the defendant and one had an 18-year-old-son. Therefore, in these five cases visitation orders were unnecessary. The remaining six interview participants had at least one child in common with the defendant. Of these six, five were granted a final protective order and one final order was denied by the judge.

We asked the relevant interview participants what they thought about the terms of visitation specified by the judge in the judge's orders (temporary and final orders). We then asked whether they thought the visitation orders were specific, whether they thought the orders

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<sup>82</sup> In our interviews with victims involved with DCYF we did not ask about court visitation orders.

ensured their child's safety, whether they thought the orders ensured their own safety, whether they felt supervised visitation was necessary, whether supervised visitation was ordered, and who the supervisor was.

**Specificity of orders.** Five of the six participants said they felt the visitation orders were specific and detailed. One participant, who said she did not believe the temporary order was specific enough, said the defendant accompanied the person who was designated to pick up the children at the plaintiff's home. Although he remained in the car, he was on the street in front her home, thereby violating the temporary order. She thought the order should have specified that he could not be in the car that was transporting her children from her home.

**Safety.** Five of the six participants said they believed the visitation orders ensured the child's safety. One who did not believe the visitation orders written in the final protective order ensured her child's safety explained that she requested supervised visitation but the judge did not grant it. She felt supervision was necessary due to the defendant's history of alcohol and drug abuse, the fact that she had no idea where he was living, and because the child had a serious medical condition for which the defendant reportedly did not have proper emergency medical training. None of the six participants felt their safety was in danger due to the visitation orders. They all reported that the visitation orders ensured their own safety.

**Supervised visitation.** Supervised visitation was ordered in three cases (in the final protective order). One participant who requested supervised visitation did not get it. Another woman said in the weeks following the final hearing, she no longer felt supervised visits were necessary and planned to return to court to get the visitation orders changed. In all three cases where supervised visitation was ordered, a supervised visitation center was designated to supervise visits.

### **Interviews with Judges**

Judges were asked several questions specifically about visitation in cases involving domestic violence (abuse/neglect cases, civil protective order cases, and criminal cases involving domestic violence). (See also: *Results from Interviews with Judges and Court Staff*, November 2002). Several judges highlighted visitation orders as one of the most challenging aspects of civil domestic violence cases when children are involved. Judges reported that visitation decisions were made on a case by case basis, with no visitation protocols and few standard

procedures other than judges saying some type of visitation was almost always granted to the abusive party. The exceptions to this were one judge who never allowed visits on *ex parte*/temporary protective orders, and two other judges who said they frequently denied all visitation on temporary orders.

The types of visitation arrangements ordered in domestic violence cases reportedly varied greatly. Some of the information judges reportedly focused on in making visitation decisions included severity of the violence, history of previous violence, and the extent to which the child was exposed to the domestic violence or was a direct victim of physical abuse. When ordering supervised visitation, several judges said the parties were ordered to use a visitation center. Most judges reported that there was not a standardized format for writing orders for supervised visitation centers.

#### √ **Summary of Goal 5: Increase Clear, Detailed Visitation Orders to Increase Safe Visitation in Co-occurrence Cases**

We obtained information on visitation orders from Family Division abuse/neglect files, domestic violence case files, interviews with domestic violence victims and interviews with judges.

##### **Abuse/Neglect File Data**

Overall, the visitation orders in abuse/neglect case files were not specific on the elements examined. For most of the visitation characteristics we examined, only a minority of the children's orders contained any details regarding that characteristic (e.g., frequency of visits, time of day for visits, and exchange processes). A large majority of visitation orders in abuse/neglect files deferred the specifics of the visitation to another party, most commonly the CPSW and/or the CPSW and CASA, as was consistent with court protocol in effect at the time.

In abuse/neglect cases where supervised visitation was ordered for the child and domestic violence perpetrator, none of the court files showed any indication that the court explored any designated visitation supervisor's personal or professional training or experience with domestic violence.

##### **Domestic Violence File Data**

The majority of visitation orders in domestic violence cases (final protective orders) included specific details on each of the elements examined except for the location of visits. Still,



one-quarter to one-third of the cases' visitation orders contained no specifics as to these elements. Nearly one-half of all cases (42%) which allowed any visitation at all between the domestic violence perpetrator and the child/ren in the final protective order stipulated that visits must be supervised.

In cases where supervised visitation was ordered, most final orders did not include details regarding exchange processes or payment for services but nearly all did specify who would supervise the visits.

### **Data from Focus Groups**

Several focus group participants expressed concern about how the court handled decisions about the domestic violence perpetrators' visitation with children. These participants talked about how they were afraid of their children's father, their children were afraid of their father and did not want to see him, and the court ordered visitation nonetheless.

### **Data from Interviews with Women who Filed for Protective Orders**

Most of the interview participants (five of six) said they felt the visitation orders were specific and detailed. Most of the participants (five of six) said they believed the visitation orders ensured the child's safety. Supervised visitation was ordered in three cases (in the final protective order). One participant who requested supervised visitation did not get it. In all three cases where supervised visitation was ordered, a supervised visitation center was designated to supervise visits.

None of the six participants felt their safety was in danger due to the visitation orders. They all reported that the visitation orders ensured their own safety.

Focus group results and individual interview results appear contradictory, with focus group members expressing mostly dissatisfaction and interviewees expressing mostly (though not entirely) satisfaction with visitation orders. This is likely due to differences in how focus group members and individual interviewees were questioned about visitation, with the focus group members perhaps being more likely to initiate discussion of their experience with visitation decisions only if it was particularly negative.

### **Interviews with Judges**

Judges reported that visitation decisions were made on a case by case basis, with no visitation protocols and few standard procedures other than judges saying some type of visitation was almost always granted to the abusive party. The types of visitation arrangements ordered in

domestic violence cases reportedly varied greatly. When ordering supervised visitation, several judges said the parties were ordered to use a visitation center. Several judges highlighted visitation orders as one of the most challenging aspects of domestic violence cases when children are involved.

✓ **GOAL 6: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH VICTIMS REGARDING COURT PROCESSES (IN BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES)**

One of the court's goals is to improve communication with victims regarding court processes. Interviews with judges and focus groups and interviews with domestic violence victims who had been involved with the court provided an indication of the court's communication with victims at the start of the Project.

**Data From Judges on Court Communication with Victims**

In our interviews with four District Court judges, we asked if there is a consistent protocol used by the court in criminal cases for notifying victims of changes in case status, court proceedings, victim rights, batterer intervention compliance, or changes in bail conditions. (See also: *Results from Interviews with Judges and Court Staff*, November 2002.) Responses were split between judges stating they were not sure if there was a protocol for court communication with victims, and those who stated there was no protocol because it is the prosecutor's role. Several judges did say that they routinely asked the prosecution if whatever is being proposed for plea bargain arrangements or bail conditions had been discussed with and approved by the victim. Some judges also said that whenever the victim was present in court they requested her input on all plea bargains or guilty findings. One judge stated that he did not change bail conditions unless s/he had the victim's input.

The most common opinion expressed by judges was that the court's role was to work with the prosecutor or police to ensure that they were doing their job in keeping victims informed about all aspects of the case.

**Data From Domestic Violence Victims on Court Communication with Victims**

We conducted three focus groups with domestic violence victims who had utilized crisis center services (n=11), and 11 interviews with victims who have utilized the court to seek an

order of protection.<sup>83</sup> In the focus groups we asked participants if they felt they were kept informed of all relevant information by the court (e.g. the status of the perpetrator's bail conditions.) In interviews with women who filed for protective orders we did not specifically ask participants if they were kept informed of all relevant information by the court but we did ask them whether they felt they understood what happened in the final hearing. We present focus group and interview results separately.

### **Data from Focus Groups**

Of the 11 women participating in the focus groups, only a few women had experiences with courts in Grafton County. Thus, information on this indicator is limited to only a few individuals. Of these, the consensus was that the court did not keep women informed as to the status of cases. One woman simply stated, "No, not by the court" when asked if she was kept informed of the status of her case. Another said hearings on violations of protective orders had been postponed as abruptly as 30 minutes before they were supposed to take place. She said "someone" from court telephoned her to say: "Oh, by the way, it's postponed." A third woman also said "No," that she had "a really hard time with that and [the DVPS] actually had to intervene." (No further details were provided on this matter.) One other woman said her lawyer kept her well-informed of the status of the criminal case against her abuser so it was not necessary for the court to do so.

### **Data from Interviews With Women Filing for Protective Orders**

Most of the 11 interview participants responded that they understood what happened in the final hearing (eight of 11), but three said they did not. One participant could not understand why the judge would not allow her to introduce new information in the final hearing that she did not include in her initial petition. Another woman said she "didn't have a clue" how the amount of child support was determined. She reported that the vocabulary used by the judge to explain the process to her was incomprehensible and she felt there was no one else in the court that could explain it to her.

Other women said they eventually understood what happened in the final hearing, but because of the anxiety they experienced due to the process of seeking a protective order, they felt confused and slow to absorb information until it was explained to them afterward (by an attorney or crisis center advocate).

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<sup>83</sup> In our interviews with victims involved with DCYF we did not ask about court visitation orders.

The three participants who were denied a final order of protection stated that they did not understand the reason. One interviewee stated that she planned to drop the protective order because the visitation arrangements were too burdensome. She did not appear to be aware she could petition the court to change the visitation order.

Three of the women interviewed raised issues related to communication from the court when talking more generally about their overall level of satisfaction with the court process. They each expressed a different concern. One woman stated she filed a motion to drop a protective order three weeks prior and she had not yet received any response from the court. This woman also stated she felt the judge did not use “regular words” and that she was confused by the language used during the hearing and in the final orders.

Another woman stated she was distressed and confused by the fact that the defendant left court after the final hearing without being given a copy of the final protective order. Four days later she called the police because she saw the defendant on her street and the police said they had not received a copy of the final protective order either. When she called the court she reportedly was told the final orders were mailed to the police. She questioned why the court could not fax a copy to the police so they had it immediately.

A third interview participant said she was frustrated that her final hearing time and date were reportedly changed at what she perceived was the last minute. She said she received notice of the date change one day before it was scheduled to occur and this meant she was without childcare and other supports she had planned for the original date. (Note: New Hampshire statute provides defendants in civil domestic violence cases the right to an immediate hearing—within three to five business days—upon request. This may have impacted the interview participant.)

#### ✓ **Summary of Goal 6: Court Communication with Victims**

Interviews with judges and focus groups and interviews with domestic violence victims who have been involved with the court provided an indication of the court’s communication with victims at the start of the Project. Based on the interviews with judges, at the start of the Project, there was no existing protocol for court communication with victims on the case status of perpetrators. Rather, it was routine practice for judges to ask for a victim’s input if she was present in court, or to ask prosecution/police whether they had discussed matters with victims before making orders or changes in orders.

Of the 11 women participating in focus groups, only a few had experiences with courts in Grafton County. Of these, the consensus was that the court did not keep women informed as to the status of cases. In interviews with women filing for protective orders most said that they understood what happened in the final hearing but three said they did not. Three participants who were denied a final order of protection did not understand the reason for the denial. A few participants noted dissatisfaction with communication from the court in terms of: 1) a timely response to a motion filed; 2) notification of scheduling changes; and 3) language used by the judge.

#### V **INCREASE THE PERCEPTION AND REALITY OF COURTS AS PROBLEM SOLVING, HELPFUL ORGANIZATIONS**

We assessed baseline status relative to the court system's former goal<sup>84</sup> of increasing the perception and reality of courts as problem solving, helpful organizations through domestic violence victims' descriptions of their experiences with the court system. Descriptions were obtained primarily from interviews with domestic violence survivors petitioning the court for protective orders (court-involved interview participants). Some information also came from focus groups of victims using crisis center services (three groups; n=11) and interviews with DCYF involved victims (n=8), but only a minority of these participants had experience with courts in Grafton County. (See also, *Results From Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.) This section on participants' experiences with the court system is divided according to their case type. First we consider child abuse/neglect cases, followed by protective order cases.

##### **Child Abuse and Neglect Cases: Reported Satisfaction With Court's Decisions**

Of the eight interviews with DCYF-involved domestic violence victims, three had child abuse/neglect cases in the Grafton County Family Division.<sup>85</sup> These three participants said they were not satisfied with the court's decisions. Their dissatisfaction stemmed from disagreement

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<sup>84</sup> In the process of prioritizing the Project goals, the court team determined that this is more of a mission statement than a goal.

<sup>85</sup> None of the eleven "court-involved" interviewees had abuse/neglect cases.

with judges' orders regarding visitation between their child/ren and their domestic violence perpetrators and, in one case, from the court's decision to terminate her parental rights.

### **Domestic Violence Protective Order Cases**

#### **Reported Satisfaction With Court Procedures and Decisions**

**Focus group results.** Most of the focus group participants who had petitioned the court for protective orders were satisfied with the court's decisions regarding protective orders and described feeling positive about the process of filing the petition and obtaining a permanent order. One woman reported she was frustrated with the domestic violence perpetrator's ability to obtain a protective order against her because he had a long criminal record that included past violent behavior. Others expressed the wish that protective orders remained in effect for more than one year.<sup>86</sup>

**Interview results.** In individual interviews with court-involved victims (n=11), we asked participants how satisfied they were with the overall court process, on a scale of 1-5, with 1 representing 'very dissatisfied' and 5 representing 'very satisfied.' We also asked interviewees to elaborate on why they felt the way they did about the court process.

Responses ranged from 1 to 5, with an average of 3.5. The majority of participants (six out of 11) were satisfied with the overall court process (five were "very satisfied" and one was "somewhat satisfied"). These participants stated that everything went very smoothly, they were treated kindly and fairly by judges and court staff, and that the entire process of obtaining an order of protection was simple and efficient.

Of the five women who were not satisfied with the overall court process, three were not granted final protective orders. This dissatisfaction with the case outcome may have distorted their views of the court procedures.

Two participants who expressed dissatisfaction had issues with the scheduling or timing of hearings. One woman was frustrated that the defendant was 40 minutes late and the court waited for him to arrive, and the other was frustrated that she had to wait two hours on the day of her hearing reportedly because the court was behind schedule. A third participant was very dissatisfied because she said the judge ordered everyone out of the courtroom except her and the

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<sup>86</sup> New Hampshire law states that all final protective orders must be for a fixed period of time not to exceed one year. A protective order may be extended upon motion of the plaintiff, prior to the expiration of the order. The court can then issue an order extending the original order, which remains in effect for an additional year.

defendant. She therefore felt she was being deprived of emotional support and said it was awkward and stressful to sit in the courtroom alone with the defendant.

In addition to asking court-involved participants how satisfied they were with the overall court process, we asked them how satisfied they were with the outcome of the case on a scale of 1-5. Responses ranged from 1 through 5, with an average of 3.6 (seven were satisfied; four were not satisfied). Of the four participants who reportedly were not satisfied, three had petitions for protective orders denied in final hearings and one was dismayed at what she believed was a paltry amount of child support granted.

### **Perceptions on Court Staff and Court Security**

We asked court-involved interview participants (n=11) if they believed the judge, court staff, and court security officers treated them in a sensitive and respectful manner. All but one participant stated they were treated very well by court security and court assistants. The one participant who stated she was not treated with respect appeared particularly angry about not being granted a permanent protective order. She could not give examples of why she felt dissatisfied other than to say the court assistant would not notarize a statement she had written about the defendant's alleged harassment of her.

All other court-involved interview participants stated that court assistants were helpful and respectful. Some of the other phrases participants used to describe court assistants were: "the patience of a saint"; "didn't talk down to me"; "treated me like a person and explained everything really well"; "very kind and soft-spoken", and "knows her job perfectly." Interview participants had less to say about security officers except that they were polite and respectful.

When focus group participants were asked if they felt they were treated in a respectful manner by the court staff, responses ranged from "No, not at all" to "Yes, very much."

### **Sense of Safety in the Court**

We asked court-involved interview participants (n=11) whether they felt safe in the courthouse and/or the courtroom. All but one woman said she felt safe in the courthouse and/or in the courtroom. The one participant who said she did not feel safe reported that the security officer left the courtroom several times, leaving her alone in the room with the defendant. Several participants mentioned that having an attorney with them in court was what made them feel safe rather than threatened by the defendant.

## **Perceptions on Judges**

There was a wide variety of responses regarding how participants perceived they were treated by judges. The majority of court-involved interview participants said they were treated in a sensitive and respectful manner by the judge (six of 11) but five said they were not. Three of the five were unhappy with the judge primarily because s/he did not grant a final order of protection. These participants made comments such as: “s/he didn’t listen very well” or “s/he cut me off and would not let me speak.” Of the two participants who were granted final orders but still reported they were not treated with respect/sensitivity by the judge, one reported the judge’s non-verbal language made it appear that s/he was annoyed and did not want to be there. The other participant said the judge was “crass” and “arrogant” toward her.

The majority of participants reported they felt the judge treated them in a respectful and sensitive manner and made comments such as: “yes, completely respectful”; “yes, s/he was very relaxed and that helped make me feel relaxed and not intimidated”; “s/he helped me feel very comfortable”; “s/he didn’t just issue orders but also explained why s/he made the decisions s/he did”; “very fair and thorough”; and “s/he seemed genuinely concerned.”

## √ **Summary of Victim’s Perceptions of the Court**

We assessed baseline status relative to the court system’s mission to increase the perception and reality of courts as problem solving, helpful organizations through domestic violence victims’ descriptions of their experiences with the court system. Most of the focus group and interview participants who had petitioned the court for protective orders were satisfied with the courts' decisions regarding protective orders and described feeling positive about the process of filing the petition and obtaining a permanent order. The majority of interview participants were satisfied with the overall court process.

All but one interview participant (out of 11) stated they were treated very well by court security and court assistants. All but one interview participant said they felt safe in the courthouse and/or in the courtroom. The majority of court-involved interview participants said they were treated in a sensitive and respectful manner by the judge (six of 11) but five said they were not. Three of the five were unhappy with the judge primarily because s/he did not grant a final order of protection.



## CHAPTER SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Greenbook's achievement of goals for the court will be measured, in part, by comparing the baseline data examined in this chapter to similar types of data collected at the end of the Project. The information presented in this chapter is intended to provide a snapshot of Grafton County Family Division and District Courts at the beginning of the Project. For example, file review data from Family Division civil domestic violence cases showed documentation of child abuse/neglect in only four cases out of 132 (3%). However, it is unlikely that the true co-occurrence rate among this population was this low given that most research finds co-occurrence rates to be between 30%-60%.<sup>87</sup> More likely, this low percentage indicated there was little documentation in domestic violence case files regarding the children in the household.

### Status of Goals at Baseline

#### Information Sharing Among and Between Courts

Interviews with clerks and judges completed in 2002 revealed that there was not a countywide standardized procedure for sharing case information between courts. None of the databases for any of the courts were accessible to another court unless they were housed in the same building. Court staff and judges said they were not aware of any formal procedures for tracking cases from one District Court to another, or from one Family Division location to another. All baseline data suggested that the District Court and Family Division did not frequently communicate information across courts. Furthermore, most judges did not view this as problematic.

Data from the Administrative Office of the Courts showed that a sizable proportion of defendants in 2001 domestic violence cases had concurrent or prior criminal involvement (68%) but domestic violence case file data indicated that only a small proportion of the cases had documentation to this effect in the file. This is notable because research literature indicates that domestic violence perpetrators with criminal histories, particularly histories of non-family violent crimes, or a history of severe violence within the family, are among the most

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<sup>87</sup> Edleson, J.L. (1999). The overlap between child maltreatment and women battering. *Violence Against Women*, 5(2), 134-154.

dangerous<sup>88</sup> and, therefore, these results reinforce the importance of Greenbook Project efforts toward improving information sharing among and between Family Division and District Courts. Because the means for information sharing between and among the four court locations is hampered by limitations in technology (at the time this report is being written), it seems all the more important for paper files to contain detailed and thorough documentation of defendants' prior and concurrent criminal involvement.

### **Court Assessment of Risk of Co-occurrence and Addressing Families' Needs**

Baseline data from court abuse/neglect case files on 17 families indicated that mothers (domestic violence victims) and children in co-occurrence cases were frequently ordered to multiple services. About one-third of the mothers were ordered to participate in crisis center services. In contrast, data obtained from civil domestic violence cases with children in the home indicated that service referrals by the court for adult victims and children in these cases were rare. Between 47% and 70% of the founded abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence also involved an out of home placement for the abused/neglected child. Rates of placement in co-occurrence cases were higher than rates of placement for abuse/neglect cases without domestic violence (see previous chapter). It does appear, however, that the court was frequently ordering violent parents out of the home instead of children, when possible, at the start of the Project.

Data from court files on the number of services ordered is only an indirect measure of how well the court was addressing the needs of families. We do not know how many and which services each family actually needed, what type of prior or ongoing services they may already have been receiving, or if services were of an adequate quality. Nor do we know if services had been ordered/referred but not documented. The crucial issues are that service plans are tailored to the unique needs of individuals and that they are perceived as helpful and meaningful. Quantitative data on the number of services provided should only be considered in combination with qualitative data from interviews with victims regarding their experiences with court-ordered service plans.

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<sup>88</sup> For example: Massachusetts Department of Social Services' Domestic Violence Unit. (2004). *Accountability and connection with abusive men: A new child protection response to increasing family safety*. San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund; F. Mederos. At the same time, many domestic violence perpetrators who are very violent toward intimate partners have no criminal record.

## **Monitoring of and Accountability for Violent Behavior of Parents**

Although data were limited, it appeared that the court was already frequently ordering violent parents out of the home instead of children in abuse/neglect cases at the start of the Project.

Improved monitoring of violent behavior of parents and increasing accountability for violent behavior hinges largely upon communication and information sharing among and between courts, which appeared to be inconsistent in 2001.

A review of domestic violence case files indicated that a minority (about one-third) of the defendants with children in common with the plaintiffs were ordered to pay child support. These files also indicated defendants were rarely ordered to attend a batterer intervention program (or any other service). Orders for domestic violence perpetrators to attend batterer intervention programs were more frequent in child abuse/neglect cases, but even in these cases, only about one-third of the perpetrators were ordered to batterer intervention.

In 2001, the New Hampshire courts did not have a mechanism to allow for compliance reviews in civil domestic violence cases. Consequently, there was no documentation in civil domestic violence case files that compliance reviews were conducted to monitor violent parents' adherence to court orders. The Project will need to consider what is feasible for monitoring or holding domestic violence perpetrators' behaviors accountable in civil cases, given state laws which allow orders for batterer intervention to be included in final protective orders but provide no mechanism for the court to ensure compliance.<sup>89</sup> Compliance reviews may be more feasible and equally important for District Court to conduct in criminal cases of assault of intimate partners.

## **Court Staff and Judges' Awareness of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse/Neglect**

Results from the *Interagency Survey and Direct Service Worker Survey* suggested most court staff had prior training in the areas of child abuse/neglect, domestic violence, and the co-occurrence but that training and education on co-occurrence issues was not necessarily current or frequent.

Court staff appeared to have diverse levels of perceived knowledge about DCYF operations, domestic violence program operations, and the co-occurrence of domestic violence

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<sup>89</sup> The court can coerce compliance with orders to batterer intervention issued in civil domestic violence cases through its contempt powers, which must be initiated by the plaintiff filing a notice with the court (See New Hampshire District Court Domestic Violence Protocols: <http://www.courts.state.nh.us/district/protocols/dv/index.htm>).

and child abuse/neglect. It is important to note that self-reported levels of knowledge may be biased. Individuals want to appear knowledgeable to others and/or may not have an accurate sense of their knowledge level. The survey results regarding self-rated levels of knowledge will be more meaningful when compared to the survey results obtained at the end of the Project when groups are re-surveyed.

In our interviews with judges regarding services ordered for domestic violence perpetrators, District Court judges said that anger management was recommended or included as part of a negotiated plea in criminal cases much more frequently than batterer intervention, and thus they were more likely to order anger management than batterer intervention. This suggested a need for training for judges (as well as prosecutors and defense attorneys) on the difference between anger management and batterer intervention and the appropriateness of each type of referral for intimate partner violence.

### **Visitation Orders**

Results of interviews with judges indicated visitation decisions were made on a case by case basis and the types of visitation arrangements ordered in domestic violence cases varied widely. Several judges highlighted visitation orders as one of the most challenging aspects of domestic violence cases when children are involved.

Twenty-three percent of the final protective orders in cases with children in common denied any visitation between the child/ren and perpetrator. A substantial proportion of visitation orders in final protective orders stipulated that visits between the domestic violence perpetrator and the child had to be supervised by a third party (42%). In abuse/neglect cases where supervised visitation was ordered for the child and domestic violence perpetrator, none of the court files included any notation that the court explored any designated visitation supervisor's personal or professional training or experience with domestic violence. This may reflect limits in documentation, the court's assumption that DCYF explored supervisors' backgrounds, or it may mean the issue was not addressed by the court.

A large majority of visitation orders in abuse/neglect files deferred the specifics of the visitation to another party, most commonly the CPSW or the CPSW and CASA/GAL. The Project may want to consider the implications of the goal of increasing the specificity of visitation orders issued by the court in abuse/neglect cases, namely, a potential decrease in

DCYF discretion regarding visitation. It would also require changes to current court protocols and forms.

**Victim perceptions on visitation orders.** Some crisis center focus group participants expressed concern about how the court handled decisions regarding the domestic violence perpetrators' visitation with children in various types of cases (e.g., marital, protective order, and child abuse/neglect). Concerns centered upon how visitation with someone they and their child/ren were reportedly afraid of would impact their child/ren's emotional well-being. In contrast, most of the court-involved interview participants said they felt the visitation orders issued in the protective orders were specific, detailed, and ensured their child's safety.

**Data limitations.** There are a number of limitations with the visitation data from case files, focus groups, and interviews. One overarching challenge with the data is that because of the wide range of individual family circumstances (including children's ages, emotional health, and quality of relationship with the domestic violence perpetrator, among other factors) it is difficult to identify trends in visitation orders. Case file data on numbers of orders for certain types of visitation will be more meaningful when compared to similar data obtained at the end of the Project. For example, it is impossible to interpret the meaning of the proportion of domestic violence cases where supervised visitation was ordered, because we do not know the proportion of cases where supervised visitation would have been objectively indicated. Also, over one-quarter of the domestic violence cases involving children in common with the victim and perpetrator which resulted in final protective orders also had marital cases in the Family Division. These marital cases may have included more details regarding visitation than what was contained in the final order of protection. Several domestic violence case files stated the defendant shall "comply with conditions specified in marital case...."

In regard to the qualitative data from focus groups and interviews, it is important to remember that the sample of participants was non-random and not necessarily representative of all crisis center clients or mothers who petitioned the court for protective orders. The numbers of participants in focus groups and interviews was small, and the number of participants with children in common with their abuser was even smaller. Finally, these were women's perceptions of visitation decisions, and we do not know all aspects of their situations.

### **Court Communication with Victims**

Based on the interviews with judges, there was no existing protocol for court communication with victims on the case status of perpetrators in 2001. The three (out of 11) court-involved interview participants who were denied a final order of protection stated that they did not understand why it was not granted. A few interview participants noted dissatisfaction with communication from the court in terms of: 1) a timely response to a motion filed; 2) notification of scheduling changes; and 3) language or vocabulary used by the judge that was not understood by the plaintiff.

### **Domestic Violence Victims' Perceptions of the Court**

Most of the focus group and interview participants who had petitioned the court for protective orders were satisfied with the court's decisions and described feeling positive about the process of filing the petition and obtaining a permanent order. Most interview participants were satisfied with the overall court process and reported being treated with sensitivity and respect by court security and court assistants.

A few participants expressed dissatisfaction with court procedures and felt they were not treated with respect by judges. It is important to note that despite asking interview participants to separate their satisfaction with case outcome from satisfaction with case procedures and various court personnel, there is a risk that the case outcome biased the participants' opinion of their experience with the court process and personnel--those denied a final order were all dissatisfied with the "process." All who reported being satisfied with the court process did obtain a final order.

## CHAPTER 4

### CROSS SYSTEMS GOALS

This chapter reports all baseline data for the Project's cross systems goals. Cross systems collaboration and the coordination of responses to families experiencing domestic violence and child abuse/neglect are foundation principles of the *Greenbook*, and therefore, most of the Greenbook Project goals could be considered cross systems goals. However, in developing the logic models for the Grafton County Greenbook Project, individual systems were deemed chiefly responsible for the accomplishment of particular goals and, consequently, those goals were considered goals for that system. Project goals that clearly concern all three primary partners, or any combination of primary partners and other community groups, were categorized as cross systems goals.<sup>90</sup> (See Appendix F for a list of the cross system goals.)

The following types of data pertaining to cross systems goals are presented in this chapter:

- DCYF aggregate data (NCANDS and Bridges Data)
- Focus groups and interviews with domestic violence victims
- Individual interviews with Domestic Violence Program Specialists (DVPSs)
- Focus groups with other domestic violence advocates
- Focus groups with Child Protective Service Workers (CPSWs)
- DCYF file reviews
- *Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey* data
- Court child abuse/neglect files
- Coalition data
- *Rural Women's Needs Survey* data
- Focus groups with domestic violence perpetrators involved with batterer intervention programs (BIPs)

The remainder of this chapter is organized around each of the cross systems goals. Each goal is presented along with all types of data used to assess that goal. Data are summarized and discussed at the end of each goal-specific section. An overview of each type of data and methods

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<sup>90</sup> The following three cross system goals will not be evaluated until the end of the Project and they are therefore not included in this chapter: 1) Make recommendations for revisions to selected policies and procedures to enhance child and adult safety; 2) Make community groups aware of changes in service delivery; 3) Make recommendations regarding any and all funding issues regarding supportive intervention for families experiencing the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect.

used to collect the data is provided in the introductory chapter. For other details on methodology and specifics on the computation of particular statistics, please see the Appendix.

## CROSS SYSTEM GOALS

### ✓ **GOAL 1. INCREASE INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION (CRISIS CENTERS, DCYF, COURTS AND BATTERER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS)**

The Greenbook Project aims to increase collaboration and coordination among service providers in responding to families where there is domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. The cross systems goal of increasing interagency collaboration (crisis centers, DCYF, courts, and batterer intervention programs) is broad and overarching, encompassing two other cross systems goals:

- Increase effective case collaboration among the three primary partners and with other organizations as appropriate
- Increase effective information sharing among the three primary partners and with other organizations as appropriate.

Because each of these goals relates to interagency collaboration, all research designed to assess collaboration and information sharing—at the case specific level and the more general level—is presented in the section that follows. Several indicators were developed to assess interagency collaboration. Data obtained on some of the indicators were presented in detail in previous chapters of this report. Information on collaboration between DCYF and crisis centers can be found in Chapter 1: Crisis Center/Coalition Goals, pages 26-31. Other indicators to assess collaboration include the following:

- *Interagency Survey* data on the frequency and nature of collaboration among crisis centers, DCYF, the courts, and batterer intervention programs (BIPs)
- Primary partner staff members' descriptions of collaboration and information sharing



### ***Interagency Survey Data on the Frequency and Nature of Collaboration***

The *Interagency Survey* was designed to gather quantitative information about the amount of interagency collaboration among the Project's primary partners and BIPs at the start of the Project. The survey was administered in October 2001. It assessed the reported frequency of contact between various agencies/individuals and the reported nature of those contacts. (See also, prior report: *Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey: Summary of Responses*, January 2002.)

*Interagency Survey* respondents who worked for the one of the primary partners or a BIP were asked about the frequency of contact between their organizations and each of the primary partners and BIPS in the past six months. Survey respondents were asked to report interagency contact that took place specifically in the course of responding to domestic violence and/or child abuse/neglect. In reporting frequency of contact, respondents could choose from either *none at all*, *1-2 times total*, *monthly*, *weekly* or *daily*.

Table 4-1 shows the number and percentage of survey respondents who reported that their organizations had contact with the organizations listed. For example, the first cell in the far right hand column of Table 4-1 indicates that one respondent reported that his/her organization had daily contact with the New Hampshire District Courts in the last six months.

**Table 4-1. Interagency Survey Data: Frequencies of Contact Among Primary Partners and BIPs by Number of Respondents\***

Frequency of Contact in the Last 6 Months					
Organization (n=number of respondents)	None	1-2 Times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
New Hampshire District Courts (n=10)	0	1	2	6	1
Grafton County Family Division (n=9)	1	0	2	4	2
Grafton County domestic violence crisis centers (n=13)	2	0	3	5	3
NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (n=13)	2	0	5	6	0
NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (n=16)	1	1	4	7	3
Batterers Intervention Programs (n=17)	5	4	4	4	0

\*Responses of those who work for a particular organization were excluded in calculating frequency of contact with that organization. For example, court personnel were excluded from analysis of the frequency of contact with district courts. As a result, the number of respondents varies in each row in Table 4-1.

In order to learn about the nature of interagency interaction among primary partners and BIPs at baseline, respondents were also asked to describe the reason for the interaction with other organizations. They were asked to describe the primary purpose of interagency contact by selecting from several choices, which included:

- sending or receiving referrals
- sharing information
- providing or receiving training
- sharing resources

Respondents were asked to check more than one category if it applied to any of the interagency contact.

**Contact with Primary Partners.** As shown in Table 4-1, the most frequently reported amount of contact with each of the Project primary partners in the past six months was weekly contact. For each primary partner, a few individuals reported having daily contact. Those reporting daily interagency contact with the Family Division or District Court (n=3) were from DCYF or crisis centers. Those reporting daily interagency contact with DCYF (n=3) were all

from the court. Those reporting daily contact with crisis centers were from DCYF or the court (n=3). (See Appendix G-3 for further details on frequency of interagency contact reported by respondents from specific organizations.)

For the courts, crisis centers and DCYF, the most frequently endorsed reason for interagency contact was for sending or receiving referrals.

**Batterer intervention programs.** No individuals reported daily contact with BIPs. Thirty percent reported no contact at all in the last six months (5 of 17). These five individuals were from the court or domestic violence agencies. Those who reported weekly contact with BIPs (n=4) were from DCYF or the court.

### ***Interagency Survey Data on Information Sharing***

Information sharing was the most commonly endorsed reason for contact with the Coalition and was the second most common reason given by respondents for contact with the other organizations.

Caution must be used in drawing conclusions from results of the *Interagency Survey* because the survey was administered to a small, non-random sample who may not have responded in the same manner as other individuals working for primary partner organizations.<sup>91</sup>

### **Primary Partner Staff Members' Descriptions of Collaboration and Information Sharing**

In addition to quantitative information about the amount of interagency collaboration among the Project's primary partners obtained from the *Interagency Survey*, we also obtained qualitative information on interagency collaboration from three focus groups with CPSWs (n=26), four focus groups with domestic violence advocates (n=12), and three interviews with Domestic Violence Program Specialists (DVPSs) conducted at the beginning of the Project. (See also prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2002.)

**Perceptions on collaboration between DCYF and crisis centers.** In focus groups and interviews CPSWs and DVPSs were asked to share their perceptions on the amount and types of collaboration between DCYF and crisis centers. CPSWs reported little direct collaboration with local crisis centers, citing the fact that most of the collaboration between CPSWs and crisis

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<sup>91</sup> Survey respondents were asked to rate how confident they were in accurately responding to questions about their organization's interactions with other organizations. The majority were either 'very confident' or 'moderately confident.' Therefore, there was no indication that respondents did not know how frequently or for what purpose their organization interacts with other organizations.

centers occurred through the DVPSs. One crisis center serving families from Grafton County does not have a DVPS, and CPSWs reported having very little contact with this crisis center.

Overall the perception of the relationship between CPSWs and DVPSs was a positive one, with strong collaboration reported by most participants. Most CPSWs reported they routinely and automatically referred clients to the DVPS whenever there was a question of domestic violence. Many participants reported that confidentiality policies and philosophical differences were minor issues, but ones which were perceived as challenges by participants in case-specific collaboration.

**Perceptions on collaboration between the court and DCYF and the court and crisis centers.** To gather baseline information about their collaboration with the court system,<sup>92</sup> in the focus groups with CPSWs and domestic violence advocates participants were asked to share their experiences with the court system and to share their thoughts on what might improve collaboration between their agencies and the court system.

Overall, participants reported a positive working relationship with the courts in Grafton County. Domestic violence advocates reported that the courts in Grafton County consistently referred individuals filing protective orders to crisis centers. Many stated that the court's handling of cases involving domestic violence and child abuse/neglect depended largely on the specific judge sitting on the case. Both domestic violence advocates and CPSWs reported that they believed there was a great deal of inconsistency in judicial decisions in criminal and civil domestic violence and child abuse/neglect cases. CPSWs and advocates made suggestions about how collaboration could be improved, such as by increased judicial awareness of community services and confidentiality restrictions among service providers. Participants also suggested ways for the court system to respond to domestic violence cases that, in their opinion, would increase safety for women and children. For example, it was suggested that judges consistently ask about children and their exposure to domestic violence during protective order hearings. (See also, prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September 2002.)

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<sup>92</sup> Because some of the DCYF district offices and crisis centers within Grafton County also serve clients outside of the county, some participants' experiences with the courts may pertain to courts and judges outside of Grafton County.

√ **Summary of Goal 1. Increase Interagency Collaboration (Crisis Centers, DCYF, Courts and Batterer Intervention Programs)**

Several types of data were used to assess the cross systems goal of increasing interagency collaboration and related goals of increasing effective case collaboration and effective information sharing among the three primary partners and with other organizations. The *Interagency Survey*, focus groups, and interviews provided a snapshot of the amount and types of collaboration among primary partners and other organizations at the beginning of the Project.

Taken together, the data suggest positive working relationships and interagency collaboration among primary partners at the beginning of the Project. *Interagency Survey* results suggest that in 2001 each of the primary partners had at least weekly contact with other primary partners according to the majority of respondents. There was less frequent contact between primary partners and BIPs.

Baseline data will be more meaningful in comparison with results from the second *Interagency Survey* and second round of focus groups and interviews to be conducted at the end of the Project. In the final evaluation, the goal of increasing effective information sharing will also be evaluated by examining the extent to which agreement has been reached among Greenbook primary partners as to what constitutes “effective” information sharing.

## ✓ **GOAL 2. INCREASE BATTERER ACCOUNTABILITY**

A second cross systems goal is to increase batterer accountability. Two initial indicators of progress toward this goal include: 1) an increase in the number of referrals to BIPs; and 2) an increase in number of court orders for domestic violence perpetrators to attend parenting education classes.<sup>93</sup>

### **Orders and Referrals to Batterer Intervention Programs**

#### **Court Orders for Domestic Violence Perpetrators to Attend BIPs**

We obtained data on the number of referrals to BIPS from the court from Family Division files: civil domestic violence case files and child abuse/neglect case files. (See introductory chapter for case file review methodology.)

**Data from civil domestic violence case files.** We reviewed a total of 132 civil domestic violence cases heard in 2001 and recorded the number of orders for domestic violence perpetrators to attend BIPs in the cases that resulted in final protective orders (n=75; 57 petitions were withdrawn, dismissed or denied). Six of the 75 cases (8%) included orders for the perpetrator to attend a BIP. Five cases included orders for the perpetrator to attend mental health counseling (7%) and one case included orders for the perpetrator to attend substance abuse treatment.

Of the 75 cases resulting in final orders, 84% did not contain any documentation on orders/referrals for the domestic violence perpetrator to participate in services. In 2001, the New Hampshire courts did not have a mechanism to monitor compliance with orders to services in civil domestic violence cases

**Data from child abuse/neglect case files.** There were 17 co-occurrence cases in the sample of abuse/neglect files.<sup>94</sup> Of the 17 domestic violence perpetrators, 15 were identified (by the court and DCYF) as perpetrators of child abuse/neglect. Four of these perpetrators were

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<sup>93</sup> We had also planned to assess batterer accountability by examining the number of enrollments to BIPS (defined as attending one or more appointments) and the number of domestic violence perpetrators who complete BIPs in Grafton County. However, only one BIP was able to provide us with those statistics for the year 2001 and therefore, we chose not to include them in the baseline report.

<sup>94</sup> The 17 cases were those in which domestic violence was indicated in the file and one (or more) petition for abuse/neglect was found true by the court.

ordered by the court to attend a BIP. Two perpetrators were out of the State or incarcerated, and therefore, 31% of “relevant” perpetrators were ordered to an intervention program.

### **DCYF Referrals to BIPS**

We also collected data on the number of domestic violence perpetrators referred to BIPs by DCYF (regardless of whether it was ordered by the court). DCYF file data indicated that among the 21 court-involved co-occurrence cases in the baseline sample, six (29%) domestic violence perpetrators were referred to batterer intervention. In nine of the 21 co-occurrence cases, there were not any findings of child abuse or neglect against the domestic violence perpetrator and, therefore, DCYF would have no enforcement authority behind a referral to a BIP for those nine perpetrators. (See DCYF chapter, pages 60-63 for details regarding the types of findings of abuse/neglect made in co-occurrence cases and who the identified perpetrators were.) Among the remaining 12 “relevant” cases, those for whom there was a finding of abuse/neglect against the domestic violence perpetrator, half were referred to a BIP.

### **Court Orders to Parenting Education Programs**

We also obtained data on the number of court orders to parenting education programs from Family Division civil domestic violence case files and child abuse/neglect case files.

#### **Data from Civil Domestic Violence Case Files**

Of the 132 civil domestic violence (protective order) cases from 2001 that we reviewed, none of the domestic violence perpetrators was ordered to attend parenting education.<sup>95</sup>

#### **Data from Child Abuse/Neglect Case Files**

Of the 17 domestic violence perpetrators (not necessarily the child abuse/neglect perpetrator) in our sample of abuse/neglect cases, five were ordered to parenting education classes (30%). Ten of the domestic violence perpetrators were not biologically or legally related to the child abuse/neglect victim. Of the seven domestic violence perpetrators who were related to the child victims, 71% were ordered to parenting education classes.

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<sup>95</sup> In 2001, New Hampshire courts did not have statutory authority to order parenting education classes in civil domestic violence cases and no mechanism to monitor compliance.

## √ **Summary of Goal 2: Increase Batterer Accountability**

Data on service orders/referrals from court abuse/neglect case files and DCYF case files indicated that between roughly one-third and one-half of domestic violence perpetrators charged with abuse/neglect were referred to BIPs at the start of the Project. Data obtained from civil domestic violence cases showed that just 8% of the final protective orders included orders for the perpetrator to attend a BIP. Almost none of these files had any documented orders or service referrals for the domestic violence perpetrator. There were no orders for domestic violence perpetrators with children to attend parenting education classes.

In contrast, data from Family Division abuse/neglect files indicated that a high percentage (71%) of domestic violence perpetrators, who were legally or biologically related to the child abuse/neglect victim, were ordered to attend parenting education.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE COURTS, DCYF, BIPS AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES**

In order to learn the perspective of domestic violence perpetrators on their experiences with Grafton County court, DCYF, BIPs, and other community services, we conducted two focus groups with perpetrators whose victims had children living in the home at the time of the abuse (n=13). Perpetrator focus groups were conducted to gain information to inform Project program activities rather than to assess any specific Project goal.<sup>96</sup> (See introductory chapter for details on participant recruitment and sample description.)

#### **Perpetrator Focus Group Results**

##### **Group Process Overview**

Most participants were active in the group discussions but one or two men in each group were notably quiet, answering direct questions but otherwise remaining silent. Both groups followed a similar pattern in that initially participants appeared somewhat guarded but were much less so by the end of the group. Initially, participants self-presented as having benefited from the group intervention program, and often focused on gains they had made. However, once

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<sup>96</sup> Other Project sites across the country have conducted (or plan to conduct) focus groups with this population and some results from Grafton County may contribute to the National Evaluation regarding perpetrators' experiences with the primary partners.



we introduced the subjects of the court, criminal penalties, and custody decisions, specifically pertaining to justice and fairness, many participants' responses became more emotional and uncensored. In each group, several participants expressed frustration with what they perceive as a "lopsided" system, with preferential treatment given to women by law enforcement, state laws, and the courts. It is important to note that the following results describe participants' perceptions of their experiences with various systems, and we do not know all aspects of their situations. Therefore, caution must be used in interpreting results.

### **Entry Into the System**

The focus group participants were recruited from BIPs that have rolling admissions, so at the time of the focus group each participant had been attending the BIP for different lengths of time. Their involvement with the program ranged from three weeks to having completed the program. Some participants had previously attended BIPs and several stated they previously attended anger management classes. Some had extensive histories of violence toward intimate partners and others reported the incident that led them to the BIP was their first offense.

Ten out of 13 participants (77%) stated they were court-ordered to participate in the BIP due to criminal assault charges.<sup>97</sup> This includes orders to attend a BIP in lieu of incarceration, in addition to incarceration, and as part of one's parole or probation. One participant was required to attend the BIP by DCYF due to a neglect petition. The other two participants reported they were voluntarily attending the BIP.

**Voluntary and involuntary BIP participants.** We asked participants if they thought different types of perpetrators had different types of issues and needs that would be best served by separate BIP groups. Specifically, we asked them if men who were mandated to attend a BIP were distinct from voluntary clients and if first offenders were distinct from offenders with histories of severe violence.

Overall, most participants said that every man's needs and issues were unique and that someone's personality or attitude was more important (in determining whether he fit in with the group) than how he was referred to the BIP or what he was referred for. For example, one participant said the program: "...covers all aspects of [violence], the physical, the emotional, so it

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<sup>97</sup> Four participants said the reason they were ordered to participate in the BIP was due to an assault of a non-household member (three physical assaults and one sexual assault), so their experiences may be unique. However, at least two of these men had also been violent with intimate partners in the past (by their reports).

doesn't matter what you're in for....everybody is in here for something...we are not in here for being nice.”

Participants reported that individuals vary as to whether they take the program seriously, are honest with the group and themselves, and whether they hold themselves accountable for their own actions as opposed to blaming others. One group reported they recently had a man in the program who “played the victim the whole way through.” They felt he was holding back the group, and “retarding everything this group stood for.”

One participant commented that often voluntary clients did not remain in the program for long and others agreed. A few participants who were court-ordered into the program stated that when they first started the program they could not see how it would benefit them but at some point they started finding it useful and instead of feeling coerced to attend, they looked forward to sessions.

### **Children, Custody and Visitation**

**Parenting skills and awareness and understanding of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children.** We asked focus group participants how BIPs address issues related to parenting and the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children.<sup>98</sup>

In one group, education on parenting and/or the impact of witnessing domestic violence on children was described as informal and driven by specific incidents that men introduced in the program sessions. For example, a participant stated: “once in a while we get on the subject of parenting...if we come here and one of us had yelled at our kids and we want to share it with the group maybe we'll get it started on being a parent.” The other focus group described the BIP as providing education on parenting in what sounded like a more structured way, such as providing written materials pertaining to children and teaching positive discipline techniques (e.g., how to use ‘time outs’ appropriately).

Participants reported that in BIP sessions they specifically talked about how children are affected by fighting and violence in the home. In one focus group, participants stated that children's exposure was not something they were lectured about from the BIP leader, but instead the way the topic was addressed was described as:

“It's you talking about how kids must feel in that situation. We usually figure it out....we not only scare our partners but we scare our children....”

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<sup>98</sup> Because the focus group participants attended BIPs that did not have set beginning and ending dates, it might be difficult to have pre-determined curricula on parenting which is covered at a certain point in the program.

The discussion in the second focus group suggested that education on the effects of witnessing violence was more formalized than it sounded in the first BIP. In the second focus group, members said the program taught them that witnessing violence teaches children to become violent. In both focus groups, participants identified behaviors in their children that they attributed to witnessing domestic violence. The behaviors mentioned were consistent with current research and theory. Some behaviors they mentioned included aggressive behavior, acting disrespectful toward their mother (the domestic violence victim) just as their father had, poor school performance and social withdrawal. One participant talked about how he has seen positive changes in his son since he has attended the BIP and become sober. He reported,

“...the calmness in the house spills over to him, the violence in the house also spills over to him; terrifies him.”

Others said that attending the BIP helped their relationships with their children. Participants said the program helped them to be more patient, more empathic, and to not raise their voice with children. Some participants said their children, as a consequence, are less fearful of them and/or appear to want to spend more time with them.

Two participants discussed how the awareness of their children’s exposure to the domestic violence impacted the participants in terms of examining their violent behaviors and motivating them to change. For example, one participant stated:

“It would just kill me to lose my kids and all that, but turning around and seeing my son standing there in the door, I didn’t feel like I deserved to have him then.... My son, witnessed me going through my little temper tantrum and being an ass and turning around and seeing him standing there looking at me made me feel like a monster.”

Another participant described how one day his young son drew two pictures of the participant. One consisted of a lot of scribbles but the other was a smiling face. His son told him the scribbled picture was how the participant looked before he started attending the BIP and the smiling face was how he looked after he had been attending a while. The participant reported that his son’s comments led to a “turning point” for him and it increased his motivation to continue with the BIP and make changes in his behavior.

**Custody and visitation issues.** Only two participants had personal experience with the court issuing custody or visitation orders due to a domestic violence case (civil or criminal).<sup>99</sup> One participant described that the final protective order stated he could not have any contact with his children. He perceived this as unfair to him because he was not violent toward the children and he did not think the incident which led to the protective order was severe enough to warrant the lack of contact with his children. He reported that his wife and her lawyer exaggerated the severity of the violent incident that led to the protective order and he felt he was powerless to defend himself because it was her word against his, with no way of proving that she was embellishing.

The other participant who had experience with custody orders issued by the court said he had a history of violence in various relationships. When he assaulted his son's mother, she obtained full custody and she "would not let him see [his son] for about a year." He stated he "applied for two court dates and they wouldn't let me because I made too much money—I had to come up with a certain amount of money to get to court and I wasn't able to."<sup>100</sup>

Both participants felt that the court's decisions were unjust. Other participants made comments indicating they did not understand why a man would be denied visitation with his children based on what he did to his partner. They stated that if the violence was not directed at the children there should not be any repercussions regarding visitation and/or custody. One participant stated the "system as a whole is pretty well geared for battered women..." Others stated: "I think sometimes the courts are more biased toward women than they are towards men when it comes to custody, they tend to side with women more." Another stated: "The State in general will tell you that they don't like to take children away from mothers."

**Child support.** Two participants said they thought the amount of child support they were responsible for paying was too high and they felt frustrated and defeated. For example, one participant explained:

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<sup>99</sup> One other participant stated his ex-wife wanted him to have supervised visitation because of his alcoholism but he said it was not related to domestic violence. Three other participants stated they were able to negotiate custody or visitation arrangements with their children's mothers, either prior to the court hearing or separate from the court altogether.

<sup>100</sup> In custody or divorce cases, if the case is considered closed, the court charges a filing fee to re-open the case. The fee is \$72.00. If the person indicates that they are unable to pay the fee, they are given a Motion to Waive the Filing Fee and a Financial Affidavit to complete. If the case is still pending, meaning there have not been final orders issued, there is no fee.

“I came down from jail, I was representing myself and I asked for a court hearing, I was trying to lower my child support cause they were still charging me \$180.00 week while I was in jail so I was trying to lower that because I was going to be up there for two years and if you do the math, that’s like \$25,000 that I owe right now. And they would not lower my child support, they let it all accrue and took my driver’s license...I am a carpenter and when I got out of jail I had no job, no driver’s license, no money, and no way to get to work, so they basically made it impossible for me to do anything, the only way that I was going to get ahead was to go back to jail, do something illegal or shoot myself...”

Another participant said he thought the federal guidelines were unfair—especially for men with several children and those with seasonal employment. On the other hand, two participants reported that they were able to successfully petition the court to reduce child support payments when they experienced financial hardship.

### **Experiences With Other Primary Partners**

**Perceptions of DCYF.** Only two out of thirteen participants reported they had ever had any involvement with DCYF. The two participants reported very different experiences and views about DCYF. Each had an open case with DCYF for a period of time. One case resulted in the termination of the participant’s parental rights and the other case resulted in reunification. The participant who lost his parental rights felt very angry with DCYF. He reported that DCYF “...tore my family apart.” He stated that he did not understand how DCYF and the court could terminate his rights when they never filed an abuse or neglect petition against him (according to him). He reported that his attorney did a terrible job representing him.<sup>101</sup>

It was clear that domestic violence was only one issue among many that his family was dealing with, including mental illness, substance abuse, special needs children, and the fact that the participant was convicted of sexual assault of a non-family member. He reported that DCYF was involved with his family for several years.

The other participant reported a very different experience with DCYF. He said the police called DCYF when they responded to a domestic violence call at his home and arrested him for assault. The police told him that if he was willing to work with DCYF, they would not file the arrest warrant with the court, thereby protecting his privacy. He agreed to work with DCYF. He agreed to move out of the family home for a period of time and to attend a BIP as part of a consent decree with DCYF in order to keep the case out of court. His family was referred to

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<sup>101</sup> We do not know if the attorney was hired by the participant or appointed by the court.

home-based family counseling which he also attended after a period of time. He felt the family counseling was very helpful for his family. He perceived the individual that worked with them as very supportive and said that he now feels he has a much better relationship with his children than he did before, because of both the family counseling and the BIP.

He stressed that the opportunity to obtain help without being stigmatized (by keeping the incident out of the court) was very important for him and his family. He stated he thought most perpetrators should be given a similar opportunity.

**Perceptions of the court.** Participants' experiences with the court in regard to custody, visitation, child support, and child protective services were discussed in previous sections. Participants were asked to talk about other experiences with the court and to share their perceptions on how the court handled their case/s. Note that participants' comments about "the court" may more accurately be categorized as comments about state laws, but we do not have enough details to distinguish between the two.

A few of the participants expressed the feeling that the courts do not hold women accountable for their actions, meaning their contributions to the violence. For example, one participant reported that his girlfriend punched him repeatedly so he pushed her across the room to get her away from him. The police arrested both of them. He said: "We were both arrested for the same charge and both had a checkered past." He reported that the outcomes of their hearings were that she received a \$100 fine and he was incarcerated for two years. Other men agreed: "The women, they don't have to go to anger management classes.... They get left alone. I mean, it takes two...where's the second party?"

One participant said that judges should consider extenuating circumstances in determining an offender's penalties, such as whether the victim contributed to the perpetrator's violence.

Some participants expressed frustration with the protective order process. One participant said: "the restraining order process is quite a tool for your partner to control you." To which another responded: "Yeah, try getting your stuff back." This led to a discussion of some of the provisions of restraining orders that they thought were "ridiculous" but which many seemed not to understand properly or were confused about.

## **Perceptions of Law Enforcement**

Several participants were critical of law enforcement. Some participants reported they do not believe that police officers hold women accountable for their contribution to the violence.

For example, one participant stated:

“...in my victim's [police] statement, she basically wrote out a statement that incriminated her more than it incriminated me. What she did, she whacked me in the head with a big glass ashtray. Her statement to the police that night was not incriminating to me and I still got arrested, and then when they tried to make it to a felony, she gave a statement to a prosecutor that totally contradicted the statement she gave to the cops that night so my felony charge went back down to a misdemeanor without even asking for it....”

In both groups most of the men agreed that when there was an “argument” between a man and woman, the police only arrest the man. Two participants did have experiences where the police arrested their partner and themselves. A few participants said they thought the police inflate situations. One participant stated the police “tend to go after domestic violence [charges] when it’s not really an assault....” Three participants talked about how they believed that police officers put ideas and words into victims’ heads and convinced victims that incidents were more severe or different than they truly were. For example, one participant stated:

“...and the cops when they get there they sit there and nag and nag for her to say he hit the person when he really didn’t.”

Another stated:

“I was kind of upset when they [the police] were trying to put more stuff in her head than what really happened. They were trying to add to it to make it more dramatic. It was dramatic enough.”

## **Perceptions of Batterer Intervention Programs**

Participants described BIPs as helpful to them in many ways. The following is a list of the benefits that were mentioned by multiple participants:

- Participants said the BIP helped them to identify and deal with their emotions in non-harmful ways. They described that the program helps them recognize the underlying feelings that they experienced as anger and that contributed to violent acts and controlling behaviors. For example, one participant stated that in the past if he felt someone was disrespectful to him he would feel angry, but the BIP helped him recognize that underneath



the anger were feelings of hurt, sadness, and rejection. Others agreed with this participant who stated the program helped him to identify and “deal with those little feelings underneath the anger.”

- Participants said the program helped them take responsibility for their actions because the group members hold each other accountable (in addition to the BIP leaders). Group members confront each other if they believe someone is not taking responsibility for himself, such as if he is rationalizing or justifying negative behaviors or attitudes. One participant described it as “in your face reality.” Several participants said that this straightforward feedback from the whole group helps them keep the focus on themselves, as opposed to blaming others, and this helped them grow.
- Participants said the program gave them tools to improve their relationships. They said the BIP helped with many types of “...relational issues. It’s not only about the violence; it’s also about a lot of other emotions you share with your partner: Emotional withholding, financial withholding, male privilege, listening skills....”
- Participants in one group said the BIP provided them with support in that they can call other group members between meetings if they need to. Participants said it has helped them to diffuse a potentially violent situation by talking with a peer.
- Participants said the program has taught them cognitive and behavioral strategies for calming down when angry. For example, participants said the program taught them to develop “safety plans” for what to do to prevent aggressive or controlling behaviors. They said the program has helped them identify and recognize their personal physical cues to anger or other emotions that can trigger anger and violence. Some participants said the program has helped them identify the types of thoughts that escalate their anger (“negative self-talk”) and to replace these with the types of thoughts that diminish it (“positive self-talk”). Some final examples of behavioral strategies for calming down that were mentioned by participants were breathing techniques and counting. They said they use these to interrupt automatic responses and allow time to stop and think about consequences before acting out of anger.
- Finally, participants said the program helps them with general coping skills and stress management. For example, participants stated the program “helps you deal with other problems in life and gives you ideas for how to deal with things differently,” and that the program “gives you tools to get around things that are hard for you.”

**Barriers to participation in BIPs.** We asked participants to talk about any difficulties they experienced when first starting to attend the BIP in order to learn about barriers to participation. Participants mentioned psychological barriers and concrete barriers. Psychological barriers mentioned included: 1) being in “denial” as to the seriousness of one’s issues and need for help; and 2) prior negative experiences with court ordered services preventing one from



believing a BIP could be useful. The concrete barriers included: 1) the cost of the BIP (one participant stated: “money is the big issue with everyone”); 2) time—participants said it was difficult to make the time to attend the meetings every week and work full-time; 3) transportation; and 4) child care issues.

### **Other Services**

Participants were asked if they were receiving any other services at the time of the focus group. Few men reported receiving any other services. The most common service was mental health treatment (three participants). One participant reported his child was receiving mental health treatment and one reported he was receiving substance abuse treatment.

Three out of the 13 participants reported histories of alcoholism concurrent to the violence against intimate partners. When these men talked about changing their violent behaviors, all three reported their sobriety was a key factor in addition to what they learned from the BIP.

### **Summary and Discussion of Batterer Focus Group Results**

Two focus groups were conducted with 13 fathers who were attending batterer intervention programs (BIPS). Participants were asked about their experiences with Grafton County courts, DCYF, BIPs, and other community services.

Ten out of 13 participants (77%) stated they were court-ordered to participate in the BIP due to criminal assault charges.<sup>102</sup> One participant was required to attend the BIP by DCYF due to a neglect petition and the other two reported they were attending voluntarily.

Participants reported that individuals vary as to whether they take the program seriously, are honest with the group and themselves, and whether they hold themselves accountable for their own actions as opposed to blaming others. However, they did not seem to feel that one’s attitude or success with the program varied according to how one was referred to the BIP and/or what one was referred for. They commented that often voluntary clients’ attendance was short-lived.

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<sup>102</sup> Four participants said the reason they were ordered to participate in the BIP was due to an assault of a non-household member (three physical assaults and one sexual assault), so their experiences may be unique. However, at least two of these men had also been violent with intimate partners in the past (by their reports).

**Children, custody and visitation.** In one focus group, education on parenting and/or the impact of witnessing domestic violence on children was described as informal and driven by specific incidents that men introduce in the program sessions. The other group described the BIP as providing education on parenting in what sounded like a more structured way. Participants reported that in BIP sessions they specifically talked about how children are affected by fighting and violence in the home. In both groups, participants identified behaviors in their children that they attributed to witnessing domestic violence. The behaviors mentioned were consistent with current research and theory.

Two participants discussed how the awareness of their children's exposure to the domestic violence impacted the participants in terms of examining their violent behaviors and motivating them to change.

Only two participants had personal experience with the court issuing custody or visitation orders due to a civil or criminal domestic violence case. Some participants made comments indicating they did not understand why a man would be denied visitation with his child/ren based on what he did to his partner. Although most participants presented as having an awareness of the impact of violence on children, for some of the participants this did not appear to carry over into understanding the rationale behind orders for no contact with children.

Some participants said they thought the amount of child support they were responsible for paying was too high, but others reported they were able to petition the court to reduce child support payments when under financial strain.

**Experiences with DCYF and the court.** Only two out of thirteen participants reported they ever had any involvement with DCYF. The two participants reported very different experiences with and views about DCYF. Each had an open case with DCYF for a period of time. One case resulted in the termination of the participant's parental rights and the other case resulted in reunification.

A few of the participants expressed the feeling that the courts do not hold women accountable for their actions, meaning their contributions to the violence. Some participants expressed frustration with the protective order process. Their discussion of provisions of protective orders suggested some participants did not fully understand them or were confused about them. We do not know where they obtained their information from—the court, the police,

or elsewhere—but their confusion suggested a need for simple language on protective orders so the stipulations are understandable for perpetrators.

**Experiences with other services.** Participants reported that BIPs helped them in the following ways:

- Identification of emotions
- Confrontation of defenses
- Relational skills
- Peer support
- Cognitive and behavioral strategies for change
- General coping skills and stress management

Issues they said make it difficult to attend BIPs included: denial of one's problems, concerns about the quality of services based on past negative experiences, the cost of the programs, time (work schedules), transportation, and child care issues.

Few men reported receiving other services concurrent with attending the BIP. Several participants were critical of law enforcement. A few participants said they thought the police inflate situations. They believed that police officers put ideas and words into victims' heads and convinced victims that incidents were more severe or different than they truly were. It is interesting that several victims of domestic violence we obtained information from also expressed concerns about police responses (see page 183 of this chapter). Taken together, their perceptions are that the police have difficulties in identifying a primary perpetrator at times, and perhaps suggest confusion and/or inconsistency in how law enforcement in Grafton County respond to domestic violence.

It is important to bear in mind that the focus group participants included men who had been involved with the BIPs for varying lengths of time, ranging from just starting the program to completion of the program. Also, we have no way of knowing whether the reported experiences of focus group participants who were critical of law enforcement or the court were minimizing their violence or attempting to blame others for their current situations.

v **GOAL 3. INCREASE COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN PREVENTION AND SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES**

Another broad cross systems goal is to increase community capacity to engage in prevention and supportive intervention for families. This long term goal involves the more intermediate cross systems goal of developing strategies to reduce service gaps for families experiencing child abuse/neglect and domestic violence. We used several methods to gather information on service gaps and obstacles to obtaining services in Grafton County:

- focus groups and interviews with domestic violence victims
- focus groups and interviews with CPSWs, crisis center advocates, and DVPSs
- informal interviews with social service agency staff
- *Rural Women's Needs Survey*

Because it is not expected that the Greenbook Project will expand community services over the duration of the Project, the information presented below was gathered primarily to inform the Project's program activities and not to evaluate change in community capacity to engage in prevention and intervention.<sup>103</sup>

**Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims**

We conducted focus groups with domestic violence victims involved with crisis centers serving Grafton County (three groups; n=11), individual interviews with DCYF-involved victims (n=8), and individual interviews with victims filing for protective orders in Grafton County Family Division locations ("court-involved" victims; n=11). Focus group and interview participants were asked to share their views on gaps in community services.

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<sup>103</sup> In the final evaluation we will examine whether any steps have been taken to plan for reducing service gaps, such as presenting information on Grafton County community needs to appropriate authorities (e.g., the state legislature and/or appropriate County representatives).

The list below incorporates every deficient service or resource mentioned by participants:

- affordable legal assistance
- affordable housing
- support groups for children exposed to domestic violence
- timely financial assistance
- affordable mental health treatment for adults and children
- affordable parenting support groups
- inpatient substance abuse services
- quality supervised visitation centers
- affordable job training programs

(See also, prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.)

Court-involved interview participants were asked what services they had received in the last five years, what services they wanted but did not obtain, and why they were not able to obtain those services.

The most common services received in the past five years by the 11 court-involved victims were crisis center services (9 women); financial assistance (9 women); legal assistance (8 women); mental health services for their children (8 women), and mental health services for themselves (6 women).

The most commonly reported service that was wanted but not obtained was housing assistance or subsidized housing (reported by 7 participants). One participant reported she did not know how or where to get housing assistance in the area. Another said she could not afford subsidized housing because she owed money to a former landlord and therefore she was not eligible for housing assistance. Others cited long waiting lists—several women stated they have been waiting for nearly two years to obtain subsidized apartments.

Each of the following types of services were reportedly wanted but unavailable to two or more of the interview participants:

- mental health services for self or children
- education for self
- child care or day care
- medical care/health care
- legal assistance
- child support assistance

**Obstacles to obtaining community services.** Eight court-involved interview participants stated they had problems obtaining some wanted service/assistance in the past five years. The most frequently reported problems were (in this order): affordability; long waiting lists (all for housing); lack of transportation; lack of child care; and lack of information—not knowing where or how to obtain a certain service/type of assistance.

**Victims' perceptions of obstacles to obtaining crisis center services.** Focus group participants (n=11) and DCYF-involved interviewees (n=8) were asked to discuss obstacles specific to obtaining crisis center services. The following issues were identified:

- lack of child care
- fear of the abuser hurting children or self
- feelings of shame
- denial of one's victimization
- hopelessness
- lack of trust in social services and other institutions

#### **Focus groups and Interviews with DVPS, CPSWs and advocates**

We conducted four focus groups with domestic violence advocates (n=12), three focus groups with CPSWs (n=26), and three individual interviews with DVPSs. These focus group and interview participants were asked to share their views on gaps in community services for domestic violence victims and their children.

**Perceptions of needed community services.** Availability and access to mental health services were the most frequently identified gaps in community services. A variety of obstacles to mental health treatment, including affordability and the lack of qualified mental health providers—particularly child mental health providers—were cited by both domestic violence advocates and CPSWs. Other insufficient community resources identified by participants included housing and financial assistance. Several participants said Grafton County is deficient in all types of supportive services.

**Special issues faced by abused women in rural areas.** Participants identified a variety of challenges that women who live in sparsely populated communities face, including lack of public transportation, heightened safety concerns due to extreme isolation and prevalent gun ownership, inaccessibility of law enforcement due to small and part-time local police departments as well as lengthy driving distances, and rural norms of self-sufficiency and

independence. (See also prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews*, September, 2002.)

### **Key Informant (Social Service Agency Staff) Interviews**

Seven individuals from Women Infants and Children (WIC), the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and town welfare offices were asked to share their opinions and experiences with services in the community and the difficulties domestic violence victims face in accessing existing services.

Surprisingly, the individuals we spoke with said they rarely came into contact with victims of domestic violence—as far as they knew. When asked to estimate the frequency of their contact with domestic violence victims, responses ranged from “never” through “less than once a month.” Some said they were aware of domestic violence in the lives of “less than 5%” of their clients. It was interesting to learn that the DHHS employees involved with women receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits reported that less than 5% of their clients have disclosed domestic violence as an issue, given the “Family Violence Option.”<sup>104</sup> We had expected that those we interviewed would report a higher proportion of domestic violence among their clients, as there are studies that indicate that more than half of the women who receive welfare have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives.<sup>105</sup>

The individuals we spoke with said they rarely came into contact with families where child abuse/neglect is a problem. Therefore, the group of individuals we informally interviewed was not as experienced with the service needs of families experiencing the co-occurrence as we had hoped. Nonetheless, we asked their views on the services domestic violence victims and their children need and whether those services were available in Grafton County.

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<sup>104</sup> Domestic violence victims receiving benefits through TANF have the option of being exempt from the five year lifetime limit on TANF benefits, can request special considerations from the New Hampshire Employment Program, and can obtain exceptions to the work requirements and mandatory child support pursuit requirements.

<sup>105</sup> Raphael, J. and Tolman, R.M. (1997). *Trapped by poverty, trapped by abuse: New evidence documenting the relationship between domestic violence and welfare* (Ann Arbor Michigan and Chicago, Illinois: Project for Research on Welfare, Work and Domestic Violence, April 1997.)

The most common response was the need for affordable housing—permanent and/or temporary housing/shelter. Everyone we spoke with reported that housing assistance was one of the most frequent needs of clients. Other services that interviewees stated domestic violence victims need include the following:

- financial assistance and food
- employment counseling
- child care
- transportation
- mental health treatment

**Service availability.** According to the interviewees, the two main reasons that individuals are not able to access needed services are: 1) the service is not available/does not exist (i.e., affordable housing, child care, and mental health services); and 2) lack of transportation. Several interviewees reported that low-income, subsidized, or simply affordable housing is scarce in Grafton County. Access to affordable housing is made more difficult, according to those we interviewed, due to victims often having bad credit from the past and/or little work experience. Others cited the lack of short term shelters in the county. It is notable that one WIC employee and two town welfare directors/office workers we spoke to were not aware of the local crisis center shelters.

The next most commonly mentioned obstacle to accessing services, is also a service gap in itself, and that is the lack of transportation—individuals in rural areas reportedly have difficulty keeping appointments with service providers to learn about or receive services. As one interviewee stated: “You have to drive 45 minutes for anything ...and if your car doesn’t work that’s a long trip.” She went on to describe that most of her clients’ vehicles are “20 years old.”

### ***Rural Women’s Needs Survey Data***

The *Rural Women’s Needs Survey* asked respondents what type of services they wanted in the past five years, what type of services they received in the past five years, and what prevented them from obtaining the services they wanted but never received. The survey also asked for background information on respondents, including whether they had been in a relationship where they were “pushed, shoved, grabbed, slapped, beaten, hit or otherwise hurt by your partner in the relationship” in the past five years.

Of the 43 women (all mothers) who responded to the *Rural Survey*, nine reported they were victims of domestic violence in the past five years (21%). In the section that follows,



service needs and obstacles to obtaining services for these nine respondents are summarized and compared to service needs and obstacles to obtaining services for the other 34 respondents.

### **Domestic Violence Victims**

**Service use by domestic violence victims.** Fifty-five percent (5/9) of the domestic violence victims reported that they called the police due to the violence. Four of the seven victims who responded to the question reported they obtained a protective order against their abusers (57%). Three of the nine victims reportedly had obtained some type of crisis center service(s) (33%). These included crisis hotline services (two respondents), crisis center support groups (three respondents), shelter (two respondents), and court advocacy (three respondents).

Food pantry services were the most commonly reported type of service received by the nine domestic violence victims (6/9 or 66%). Other services or types of assistance reportedly received in the past five years by at least one-third (three out of nine respondents) included mental health services for themselves (4/9 or 44%), parenting education (3/9 or 33%), other education for themselves (4/9 or 44%), child care (3/9 or 33%), and medical care (4/9 or 44%).

**Services wanted but not obtained by domestic violence victims.** There were two types of services or assistance that more than two respondents reportedly had difficulty obtaining (or were unable to obtain): Housing placement or subsidized housing (four respondents, 44%) and financial assistance (three respondents, 33%). None of the victim respondents said they wanted crisis center services but could not obtain them.

**Obstacles to services reported by domestic violence victims.** Respondents reported that housing assistance was not obtained due to long waiting lists and/or earning too much to be eligible for assistance but earning too little to find decent, affordable housing. Lack of transportation and lack of health insurance were also cited by several respondents as obstacles to obtaining desired services.

### **Respondents Who Did Not Report Histories of Domestic Violence**

**Service use.** Medical or health care services were the most commonly reported type of service received by the 34 respondents who did not report histories of domestic violence (18 or 53%). The two next most common services received by this group were parenting education (10 or 30%) and mental health services for their children (10 or 30%).

**Services wanted but not obtained.** There were two types of services or assistance that more than 20% (n=7) of the respondents who did not report domestic violence reportedly had

difficulty obtaining (or were unable to obtain): Child care (seven respondents, 21%) and financial assistance (seven respondents, 21%).

**Obstacles to services.** Respondents reported that financial assistance was not obtained due to difficulty getting information needed to learn who to contact and what to do, and stringent eligibility criteria and lengthy waiting period for Medicaid. Several respondents stated that affordable child care was scarce. A lack of transportation and lack of health insurance were also cited by several non-victims as obstacles to obtaining desired services.

### **Comparison of Victims to those Who Did Not Report Domestic Violence**

Child care, medical care, and parenting education were some of the most commonly used services in the past 5 years for both domestic violence victims and those who did not report domestic violence. Victims differed from the other respondents in that a much higher proportion of the victims reported they used food pantry services and a higher proportion of the victims reported they wanted housing assistance but could not obtain it. Among both groups of respondents, several reported that financial assistance was difficult to obtain. Also among both groups of respondents, several reported that the lack of health insurance and lack of transportation were obstacles to obtaining wanted services.

### **Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence**

Interview and focus group responses to the broad question: “What is the one thing that you think should be changed to improve the way women who have experienced violence or abuse by a partner are treated by the “system” (including the courts, child welfare, and domestic violence agencies)?” yielded results pertinent to the goal of increasing community capacity to engage in prevention and supportive intervention for families. The most common response to this question among focus group and interview participants who were victims of domestic violence was to improve law enforcement responses to victims. Over half (six of eleven) of the court-involved interview participants stated the police response was the one thing they would like to see change. Concerns about police responses were also mentioned in focus groups and by a *Rural Survey* respondent who was a victim of domestic violence. The *Rural Survey* respondent reported that she had called the police due to domestic violence and she added the following: “the police made it worse. I will not call the police again if this happens. They treated me worse than my boyfriend (abuser) did.” Comments made in interviews with court-involved victims included statements that the police response was very slow, that police officers were

disrespectful, that a police officer made a victim feel ashamed for pressing charges, and two victims stated the responding police officers were friends with the abusers and joked around with them or minimized the seriousness of their violence. In a focus group women stated some police were disrespectful, that there was great inconsistency across police departments, and that police needed additional training in responding to domestic violence.

### **Coalition Data**

A separate goal, but one which is related to increasing community capacity to engage in prevention and supportive intervention, is the former Project goal of improving access to crisis center services.<sup>106</sup> One indicator of improved access to crisis center services is the proportion of long term (versus short term) services provided by crisis centers. While an imperfect measure of service accessibility in and of itself, increased access to crisis center services may result in a greater proportion of clients participating in crisis center support groups relative to the overall number of clients served by crisis centers. Increased access to crisis center services may also result in an increase in the average number of client contacts per victim.<sup>107</sup> We examined data obtained from the Coalition to determine the proportion of clients participating in support groups and the number of client contacts per victim served in 2001.

Coalition data for 2001 indicated that the total number of Grafton County residents who used crisis center services due to domestic violence in calendar year 2001 was 614.<sup>108</sup> Thirty-three individuals participated in crisis center support groups, which is 5% of all Grafton residents served by crisis centers. There was an average of 8.8 client contacts per victim.

In the rest of the State, a total of 7,596 clients used crisis center services due to domestic violence in 2001. Three hundred and fifty-seven individuals participated in support groups, which is 5% of all non-Grafton residents served by crisis centers. There was an average of 6.4 client contacts per victim.

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<sup>106</sup> In the process of prioritizing the Project goals, the Crisis Center/Coalition Team determined that this goal would not be a focus of the Team's work.

<sup>107</sup> "Client contacts" are any "incidents" of contact with a client. One contact may be a five minute phone call or an hour long face-to-face meeting. More details on and discussion of the numbers of client contacts are presented in Chapter 1, page 25.

<sup>108</sup> The number of crisis center clients is likely to be an underestimate because the residence of many clients was missing/unknown.

√ **Summary of Results Pertaining to Goal 3: Service Needs and Challenges in Obtaining Services for Domestic Violence Victims in Grafton County**

Information on service needs of domestic violence victims and community service gaps in Grafton County was obtained from multiple sources. Overall, the results indicated that the biggest gaps in services in Grafton County for families impacted by domestic violence and/or child abuse/neglect were affordable housing or housing assistance, financial assistance, and mental health services. The primary barriers to obtaining wanted services included lack of health insurance, lack of availability (e.g., subsidized housing), and lack of transportation. Several other gaps in services and barriers to accessing needed services were noted. Concerns about the responses of police officers to victims were expressed by several domestic violence victims interviewed.

We examined Coalition statistics as a quantitative indicator of ease of access to crisis center services at the start of the Project. The data suggested a very small proportion of the total number of crisis center clients participated in support groups (5%) for Grafton residents and non-Grafton residents. In 2001, crisis centers serving Grafton County residents had more client contacts per victim on average (8.8) than crisis centers serving non-Grafton residents.

√ **GOAL 4. INCREASE THE RECOGNITION AND UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES IN THE COMMUNITY**

Another cross systems goal is to increase knowledge and awareness of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence among individuals and agencies in the community. This includes increasing the knowledge of the operations and practices of crisis centers, DCYF, and the court system. We used several methods to assess levels of knowledge and awareness: *Interagency Survey* data on perceived levels of knowledge, Coalition data on the number of referrals from other agencies/organizations received by crisis centers, and NCANDS data on the number of reports of child abuse/neglect received by DCYF.

## Interagency Survey Data

We obtained information on perceived levels of knowledge of the primary partners and co-occurrence issues through the *Interagency Survey*. Of the 37 Advisory Council members who responded to the survey, 18 worked for non-primary partner agencies/organizations. These individuals worked for agencies in the community that directly or indirectly served families. These included, for example, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), law enforcement, mental health agencies, and schools. The 18 individuals had worked in their agencies/organizations or similar agencies/organizations from less than six months through 30 years, with an average of 10.4 years. The responses of these 18 individuals to questions regarding previous training and perceived levels of knowledge are reported below. (See also, prior report on these data: *Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey: Summary of Responses*, January 2002.)

### Survey Results

**Perceived knowledge.** Results suggested most respondents considered themselves between slightly and moderately knowledgeable about the operations, roles and responsibilities of the court, the operations, roles and responsibilities of DCYF, and of the overlap between domestic violence and child abuse/neglect.

Most respondents considered themselves between moderately and very knowledgeable about crisis centers' operations.

**Training.** The number of hours of training on child abuse/neglect ranged from none to 100 hours, with an average of 60 hours (n=17). Two respondents reported never having received any training on child abuse.

The number of hours of training on domestic violence ranged from none to 200 hours, with an average of 135 hours (n=17). Two respondents reported no training on domestic violence.

The number of hours of training on the overlap of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect ranged from none to 60 hours, with an average of 17 hours (n=17). Five respondents (30%) reported never having received training on the co-occurrence.

### Coalition Data on Referrals from other Agencies

Another indicator of an increase in the recognition and understanding of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect among individuals and agencies in the community is an increase in the number of referrals crisis centers receive from other agencies in the community. We obtained data from the Coalition on the number of referrals each domestic violence crisis center in the State received from other agencies in calendar year 2001, which is shown in Table 4-2.<sup>109</sup> (See Appendix G-2 for details on how numbers were calculated and for limitations of 2001 Coalition data on referral sources.)

**Table 4-2. 2001 Coalition Data: Number of Referrals From Other Agencies to Crisis Centers**

	Referrals
<b>Crisis Centers Serving Grafton County Residents (n=4)</b>	847
<b>Crisis Centers Serving Non-Grafton County Residents (n=8)</b>	3,879

Eight percent of the referrals to crisis centers serving Grafton County were from the court (64) and seven percent were from DCYF (56). Twenty-nine percent of the referrals to crisis centers serving non-Grafton County residents were from the court and four percent were from DCYF.

### NCANDS Data on Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect

Another indicator of an increase in the recognition and understanding of child abuse/neglect among individuals and agencies in the community is an increase in the number of referrals (reports of abuse/neglect) DCYF receives. We obtained data on the number of approved reports of abuse/neglect in 2001 from the 2001 NCANDS database.<sup>110</sup> Table 4-3 shows the

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<sup>109</sup> For many 2001 domestic violence victims the referrals source was “unknown” or “none specified.”

<sup>110</sup> NCANDS data track the number of assessments that receive a disposition each year, rather than the number of reports of abuse/neglect so the data did not include reports that have not been approved (i.e., those that were screened out).

number of reports of abuse/neglect assessed by DCYF for Grafton and non-Grafton County residents in 2001.

**Table 4-3. NCANDS 2001: Number of Approved Reports (Screened-In) of Abuse/Neglect and the Number of Children Involved**

	<b>Reports*</b>	<b>Number of children**</b>
<b>Grafton County</b>	396	538
<b>Non-Grafton County</b>	8,030	8,725

\*The county variable is missing for 846 children

\*\*One referral can involve many children

Table 4-4 (on the next page) shows the types of abuse/neglect reported in assessments completed in 2001 for Grafton and non-Grafton County residents. It also shows the numbers and percentages of children whose abuse/neglect reports were founded by DCYF. The most commonly reported issue was neglect, followed by physical abuse, for both Grafton and non-Grafton residents. Consistent with many other reports and studies on child protective services, the results show that the majority of allegations, regardless of county, involve neglect, followed by physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment.<sup>111</sup> Only a small proportion of all allegations are founded (e.g., 9.8% statewide in 2001), and when substantiations do occur, certain types of allegations are more likely than other types to be founded, such as sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment. Although these two abuse types appear to be less common than others, the fact that they are more often substantiated may be due to the severity of those cases which present themselves to DCYF.

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<sup>111</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Child maltreatment 2001* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003).

**Table 4-4. NCANDS 2001: Types of Abuse/Neglect Reported**

<b>Grafton County</b>				
<b>Alleged Type of Abuse</b>	<b>Number of Children Referred*</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Children Referred (n=538)**</b>	<b>Number of Children with Founded Assessments</b>	<b>Percentage of Children with Founded Assessments within Abuse Type</b>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	175	33%	4	2%
<b>Neglect</b>	313	58%	25	8%
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	104	18%	17	16%
<b>Psychological or Emotional Maltreatment</b>	16	3%	2	13%
<b>Non-Grafton County</b>				
<b>Alleged Type of Abuse</b>	<b>Number of Children Referred*</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Children Referred (n=8,725)**</b>	<b>Number of Children with Founded Assessments</b>	<b>Percentage of Children with Founded Assessments within Abuse Type</b>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	2,969	34%	133	4%
<b>Neglect</b>	5,080	58%	487	10%
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	1,378	16%	180	12%
<b>Psychological or Emotional Maltreatment</b>	311	4%	31	10%

\* One child could potentially have more than one type of maltreatment and thus appear in more than one row.

\*\*Excluding children for whom information on county of residence was missing

**V Summary of Goal 4. Increase Recognition and Understanding of Child Abuse/Neglect and Domestic Violence Among Individuals and Agencies in the Community**

Another cross systems goal is to increase the knowledge and awareness of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence among individuals and agencies in the community. This includes increasing knowledge of the operations and practices of crisis centers, DCYF, and the court system. We used several methods to assess levels of knowledge and awareness:

*Interagency Survey* data on perceived levels of knowledge, Coalition data on the number of referrals from other agencies/organizations received by crisis centers, and NCANDS data on the number of reports of child abuse/neglect received by DCYF.



Results from the *Interagency Survey* indicated that on average survey respondents perceived themselves as slightly to moderately knowledgeable about the court and DCYF and moderately to very knowledgeable about crisis centers. Almost all respondents reported having many hours of training on child abuse/neglect and domestic violence but several had no training on the co-occurrence. On average respondents perceived themselves as slightly to moderately knowledgeable about the co-occurrence. It is important to note that these survey respondents are not necessarily representative of most Grafton County professionals who work with families. All survey respondents were part of the Greenbook Advisory Council in October 2001 and therefore, these individuals were likely to have particular interest and/or experience with domestic violence and/or child abuse/neglect. Also, they had many years of experience in their respective fields (the average was 10 years).

Statistics from the Coalition indicated that crisis centers serving Grafton County received 847 referrals from other organizations/agencies in the community in 2001. NCANDS data indicated that DCYF received 396 approved reports of abuse/neglect involving Grafton County residents in 2001. These reports most frequently involved allegations of neglect. Statistics from the Coalition and NCANDS for the year 2001 will be compared to statistics obtained at the end of the Project.

√ **GOAL 5. INCREASE CULTURAL COMPETENCY OF ALL THREE SYSTEMS (INCLUDING ISSUES RELATED TO RACE, ETHNICITY, POVERTY, RURAL AREA, ETC.)**

The final cross systems goal discussed in this chapter is to increase the cultural competency of the three primary partners.<sup>112</sup> Two types of data were obtained to assess progress toward this goal: 1) quantitative data from NCANDS, crisis centers, and court and DCYF case files on the racial/ethnic composition of families served by each of the primary partners and 2) qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with domestic violence victims regarding their perceptions of how they were treated by primary partner systems. As the courts and DCYF primarily provide involuntary services, an overrepresentation of families of color involved with DCYF and/or the Family Division might indicate a lack of fairness or efficacy in working with

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<sup>112</sup> “Cultural competency” is broadly defined in the *Greenbook* as policies and practices that are culturally responsive and effective.

families from diverse backgrounds. In contrast, because crisis centers provide voluntary services, an underrepresentation of clients of color might suggest cultural barriers to accessing crisis center services.

**DCYF Client Race/Ethnicity**

We obtained information on the racial/ethnic composition of Grafton County DCYF clients from NCANDS 2001 and from DCYF file reviews.

**NCANDS data.** Table 4-5 shows the racial/ethnic composition of children with assessments disposed of in 2001. Census data for the year 2000 indicates 96% of the Grafton County population and New Hampshire state population was white.<sup>113</sup> According to NCANDS data, the proportion of children of color involved with DCYF in 2001 was roughly equivalent to the proportion of children of color in the State and county populations, with a very slight overrepresentation of children of color. These data are limited in that a large proportion of the children had missing information on the race/ethnicity variable: 43% of the children from Grafton County were of unknown race/ethnicity.

**Table 4-5. 2001 NCANDS Data: Racial/Ethnic Composition of all Children with Assessments Disposed of in 2001**

<b>Number of Children and Percent of Total Children in Assessments*</b>			
	<b>White, non-Hispanic</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>Missing Data on Race/Ethnicity</b>
Grafton	290 (94%)	18 (6%)	230 (43%)
Non-Grafton	5,131 (92%)	434 (8%)	3,160 (36%)

\*of those with data available on race/ethnicity and county

Table 4-6 shows the racial/ethnic composition of children in the 2001 assessments with identified domestic violence (co-occurrence cases). As shown in the table, the proportion of children of color involved in 2001 co-occurrence cases was essentially equivalent to the proportion of children of color in the State and county populations.

<sup>23</sup> 2000 Census Data compiled by New Hampshire Office of State Planning, State Data Center (<http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/DataCenter/Race/documents/Staterace.doc>)

**Table 4-6. 2001 NCANDS Data: Racial/Ethnic Composition of Children with Assessments with Domestic Violence Identified (Co-occurrence Cases)**

<b>Number of Children and Percent of Total Children in Assessments*</b>			
	<b>White, non-Hispanic</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>Missing Data on Race/Ethnicity</b>
Grafton	14 (100%)	0	5 (26%)
Non-Grafton	263 (93%)	21 (7%)	40 (12%)

\*of those with data available on race/ethnicity, county, and domestic violence

**DCYF file data.** According to the review of co-occurrence cases substantiated in 2001 in the three district offices serving Grafton County (n=27), all child abuse/neglect victims and domestic violence victims were white, non-Hispanic and 96% of the domestic violence perpetrators were white, non-Hispanic.

**Race/Ethnicity of Cases Heard in Grafton County Family Division**

**Abuse/neglect cases.** According to our review of Family Division abuse/neglect cases involving domestic violence (n=22 families), all of the child abuse/neglect victims, domestic violence victims, and perpetrators for whom data was available were white, non-Hispanic. The race/ethnicity of family members was not determinable for four of the families.

**Civil domestic violence cases.** Table 4-7 shows the racial/ethnic composition of domestic violence victims and perpetrators in the sample of civil domestic violence cases heard in 2001 (n=132). Based on the 2000 census data previously noted, the proportion of men of color involved in 2001 civil domestic violence cases was essentially equivalent to the proportion of men of color in the county population (5% versus 4%).

**Table 4-7. Court File Data: Race/Ethnicity of Domestic Violence Victims and Perpetrators in 2001 Civil Domestic Violence Cases**

	<b>Domestic Violence Victim</b>	<b>Domestic Violence Perpetrator</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	98% white, non-Hispanic (118); 2 Hispanic, 1 Asian; 11 unknown	95% white, non-Hispanic (121) 3 Hispanic, 1 Asian, 2 African American; 4 unknown

### Crisis Center Client Race/Ethnicity

We obtained data from three of the four crisis centers serving Grafton County on the racial/ethnic composition of clients served in 2001.<sup>114</sup> According to crisis center data, the proportion of victims of color served by crisis centers in 2001 was roughly equivalent to the proportion of women of color in the State population (four percent).<sup>115</sup>

**Table 4-8. Crisis Center Data: Percent of Total 2001 Clients by Race/Ethnicity**

	<b>White, non-Hispanic</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other, non-White, non-Hispanic*</b>
<b>Crisis Center 1</b>	98% (563)	1% (6)	1% (7)
<b>Crisis Center 2</b>	95% (121)	4% (5)	1% (2)
<b>Crisis Center 3</b>	94% (114)	4% (5)	2% (2)
<b>Total Three Crisis Centers</b>	97%	2%	1%

\*Includes African-American, Native American/Eskimo, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander

### Victim Perceptions of Primary Partners

We obtained information from domestic violence victims on their experiences with the primary partners from three focus groups with crisis center clients (n=11) and from individual interviews with DCYF-involved victims (n=8) and court-involved victims (n=11). Participants were asked if they felt they were treated with respect and sensitivity by judges and by staff members of each system, and to describe their levels of satisfaction with primary partner agencies. Focus group and interview participants' ages ranged from 22 to 44 and their education levels varied widely—from 8<sup>th</sup> grade through a graduate degree. Two participants were African-American and the rest were white, non-Hispanic. (See introductory chapter for further details on demographic characteristics of domestic violence victims interviewed.)

**Victim perceptions of crisis centers.** All but two focus group/interview participants had experience with Grafton County crisis centers (n=28). Nearly all participants reported overwhelmingly positive experiences with crisis centers. Five qualities of crisis

<sup>114</sup> We were not able to obtain the data from one of the crisis centers involved with Greenbook. Many of the 2001 crisis center victims' race/ethnicity was unknown/missing.

<sup>115</sup> One crisis center that serves Grafton County residents primarily serves residents from Sullivan County.

centers/advocates that participants repeatedly identified as helpful included: flexible; non-judgmental; non-authoritarian; supportive; and consistently available. (See also prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.)

Two participants said they were not treated with respect by all crisis center staff. One participant stated there was one specific staff member who the participant perceived as blaming. The participant stated the advocate dismissed her safety fears and accused the participant of neglecting her children. This participant stated that other staff members at the crisis center had been supportive of her. One other participant said she felt crisis center staff were unavailable and unsupportive. She stated she felt particularly frustrated with what she perceived as a lack of assistance with transportation.

**Victim perceptions of DCYF.** Fourteen focus group/interview participants had experience with DCYF district offices that serve Grafton County. There was a perfect correspondence between participants' satisfaction with DCYF services and the DCYF case outcomes (e.g., termination of parental rights versus reunification or founded versus unfounded assessments), which highlights one reason to use caution in drawing conclusions from these results. For example, of the four court-involved interviewees who ever had involvement with DCYF, all four stated they were treated in a sensitive and respectful manner by DCYF staff. All four had assessments which were unfounded.

Other participants' negative comments about DCYF primarily involved differences between the CPSWs and participants' assessment of risk to their selves and/or their children or differences between the CPSWs and participants on the need for services. Although less frequently mentioned, participants expressed concerns about DCYF including: CPSW turnover, CPSW unavailability, and CPSW life experience in terms of raising children. (See also prior report: *Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims*, October 2003.)

**Victim perceptions of the court.** Fifteen focus group/interview participants had experience with courts that serve Grafton County. Their perceptions of the court are reported in the court chapter (pages 146-149), in the section on the court system's mission to increase the perception and reality of courts as problem solving, helpful organizations. We found that most of the focus group and interview participants who had petitioned the court for protective orders were satisfied with the court decisions regarding protective orders and described feeling positive

about the process of filing the petition and obtaining a permanent order. The majority of interview participants were satisfied with the overall court process.

All but one court-involved interview participant (out of 11) stated they were treated very well by court security and court assistants. The majority of court-involved interview participants said they were treated in a sensitive and respectful manner by the judge (six of 11) but five said they were not. Three of the five were unhappy with the judge primarily because s/he did not grant a final order of protection. One participant reported the judge used language that she did not understand, stating: “Why can’t they use normal words?” She reported she also found it difficult to comprehend language used in the final order of protection.

✓ **Summary of Goal 5. Increase Cultural Competency of all Three Systems (Including Issues Related to Race, Ethnicity, Poverty, Rural Area, etc.)**

We assessed the cultural competency of the three primary partners at the start of the Project with statistics on the race/ethnicity of clients and perceptions of domestic violence victims on how they were treated by each primary partner.

The data obtained on the racial/ethnic composition of clients of the primary partners indicated that ethnic/racial diversity among clients of DCYF, the Family Division, and crisis centers was essentially consistent with that of the population of the county. There was no apparent overrepresentation (to speak of) of families of color involved with DCYF or the Family Division in Grafton County in 2001 and no underrepresentation of clients of color among crisis center clients in 2001.

The majority of domestic violence victims who participated in focus groups and interviews and who had experience with DCYF, crisis centers, and/or the court, reported they were treated with respect and sensitivity by staff and judges. Specific individuals reported negative experiences but only one was seemingly related to issues of cultural competency—one person’s difficulty understanding the language used by the court pointed to the importance of sensitivity to educational and intellectual differences.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports all baseline data for the Project's cross systems goals. Cross systems collaboration and the coordination of responses to families experiencing domestic violence and child abuse/neglect are foundation principles of the *Greenbook* recommendations. Grafton County Greenbook Project goals that clearly concern all three primary partners, or any combination of primary partners and other agencies, were deemed cross systems goals. Baseline status of cross systems goals was reviewed using multiple data sources.

### Status of Cross Systems Goals at Baseline

#### **Interagency Collaboration (Crisis Centers, DCYF, Courts, and Batterer Intervention Programs)**

The cross systems goal of increasing interagency collaboration and related goals of increasing effective case collaboration and increasing effective information sharing among the three primary partners and with other organizations were assessed with several types of data. The *Interagency Survey*, focus groups, and interviews provided a snapshot of the amount and types of collaboration among primary partners and other organizations at the beginning of the Project. Taken together, the data suggest positive working relationships and interagency collaboration among primary partners at the beginning of the Project. *Interagency Survey* results suggested that in 2001 each of the primary partners had at least weekly contact with other primary partners according to the majority of respondents. There was less frequent contact between primary partners and BIPs.

**Information sharing.** According to results from the *Interagency Survey*, information sharing was the most commonly endorsed reason for contact with the Coalition and the second most common reason given by respondents for contact with DCYF, District Court, Family Division, crisis centers, and BIPS. Many CPSWs, advocates and DVPSs who participated in focus groups and interviews reported that confidentiality policies were perceived as minor challenges in case-specific collaboration.

#### **Batterer Accountability**

**Orders/referrals for domestic violence perpetrators to attend BIPs.** Data on service orders/referrals from court abuse/neglect case files and DCYF case files indicated that between roughly one-third and one-half of domestic violence perpetrators charged with abuse/neglect were referred to BIPs at the start of the Project. Data obtained from civil domestic violence cases

showed that a very small percent of the final protective orders included orders for perpetrators to attend BIPs.

#### **Orders/referrals for domestic violence perpetrators to attend parenting education.**

Data obtained from civil domestic violence cases showed that there were no orders for domestic violent perpetrators with children to attend parenting education classes. In contrast, data from Family Division abuse/neglect files indicated a high percentage (71%) of domestic violence perpetrators who were legally or biologically related to the child abuse/neglect victim were ordered to attend parenting education.

As discussed in the court chapter of this report, the frequency of orders for domestic violence perpetrators to attend BIPs or parenting education in civil domestic violence cases is impacted by the lack of mechanisms to monitor or enforce orders in these cases. The Project should consider whether it is feasible to expect an increase in the frequency of orders to BIPs or any other services over the life of the Project given the authority and role of the Family Division in civil domestic violence cases.

#### **Service Needs and Challenges in Obtaining Services for Domestic Violence Victims in Grafton County**

Information on service needs of domestic violence victims and community service gaps in Grafton County was obtained from multiple sources. Overall, the results indicated that the biggest gaps in services in Grafton County for families impacted by domestic violence and/or child abuse/neglect were affordable housing or housing assistance, financial assistance, and mental health services. The primary barriers to obtaining wanted services included lack of health insurance (e.g., preventing receipt of mental health services), lack of availability (e.g., subsidized housing), and lack of transportation. Several other gaps in services and barriers to accessing needed services were noted. Concerns about the responses of police officers to victims were raised by several domestic violence victims interviewed.

The DHHS employees involved with women receiving TANF benefits that we interviewed reported that less than 5% of their clients have disclosed domestic violence. Based on prior research indicating that a high proportion of women receiving TANF benefits are victims of domestic violence,<sup>116</sup> it appears that the Family Violence Option (FVO) may be

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<sup>116</sup> For example: Raphael, J. and Tolman, R.M. (1997). *Trapped by poverty, trapped by abuse: New evidence documenting the relationship between domestic violence and welfare* (Ann Arbor Michigan and Chicago, Illinois: Project for Research on Welfare, Work and Domestic Violence, April 1997.)



under-utilized in New Hampshire. Caution must be used in making generalizations from the interview information, as it is based on three individuals who were asked to simply estimate the proportion of women who have disclosed domestic violence to them. Therefore, further research is needed on the extent of utilization of the FVO and the reasons underlying its possible under-utilization. Lack of use of the FVO has important implications for the practices of domestic violence advocates and DHHS staff regarding informing victims of their options.

**Access to crisis center services.** Domestic violence victims participating in focus groups and interviews reported several potential obstacles to accessing crisis center services, most of which could be categorized as psychological (e.g., feelings of shame or denial of one's victimization). They did identify the lack of child care as one concrete obstacle to participating in crisis center services.

Increased access to crisis center services may result in a greater proportion of clients participating in crisis center support groups relative to the number of overall crisis center clients. Increased access may also result in an increase in the average number of client contacts per victim. 2001 Coalition data suggested a very small proportion of the total number of crisis center clients participated in support groups (5%) for Grafton residents and non-Grafton residents. In 2001, crisis centers serving Grafton County residents had an average of 8.8 client contacts per victim.

### **Recognition and Understanding of Child Abuse/Neglect and Domestic Violence**

Individuals' and agencies' levels of knowledge and awareness of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence, including knowledge of the operations and practices of crisis centers, DCYF, and the court system, were assessed with *Interagency Survey* data, 2001 Coalition data, and 2001 NCANDS data.

Results from the Interagency Survey indicated that, on average, survey respondents perceived themselves as slightly to moderately knowledgeable about the court and DCYF and moderately to very knowledgeable about crisis centers. Almost all respondents reported having many hours of training on child abuse/neglect and domestic violence but several had no training on the co-occurrence. On average, respondents perceived themselves as slightly to moderately knowledgeable about the co-occurrence. It is important to note that the survey respondents were not necessarily representative of most Grafton County professionals who work with families because all respondents were part of the Greenbook Advisory Council. These individuals,

therefore, were likely to have particular interest and/or experience with domestic violence and/or child abuse/neglect. Also, they had many years of experience in their respective fields (the average was 10 years).

Individuals' and agencies' levels of knowledge and awareness of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence were also assessed with Coalition and NCANDS data on the number of referrals made to crisis centers and DCYF from community agencies. An increase in the number of reports of child abuse or an increase of referrals to crisis centers from other agencies may indicate something other than an increase in community groups' understanding of abuse/neglect and/or domestic violence (e.g., an increase in prevalence) but the data provides us with one source of information to be compared to statistics obtained at the end of the Project. Statistics from the Coalition indicated that crisis centers serving Grafton County received 847 referrals from other organizations/agencies in the community in 2001. NCANDS data indicated that DCYF received 396 approved reports of abuse/neglect involving Grafton County residents in 2001. These reports most frequently involved allegations of neglect.

#### **Cultural Competency of all Three Systems (Including Issues Related to Race, Ethnicity, Poverty, Rural Area, etc.)**

We assessed the cultural competency of the three primary partners at the start of the Project with statistics on the race/ethnicity of clients and perceptions of domestic violence victims on how they were treated by each primary partner.

The data obtained on the racial/ethnic composition of clients of the primary partners indicated that ethnic/racial composition among clients of DCYF, the Family Division, and crisis centers was essentially consistent with that of the population of the county. There was no apparent overrepresentation (to speak of) of families of color involved with DCYF or the Family Division in Grafton County in 2001 and no underrepresentation of clients of color among crisis center clients in 2001.

The majority of domestic violence victims in focus groups and interviews who had experience with DCYF, crisis centers, and/or the court reported they were treated with respect and sensitivity by staff and judges. Specific individuals reported negative experiences but only one was apparently related to issues of cultural competency—one person's difficulty understanding the language used by the court pointed to the importance of sensitivity to educational and intellectual differences.

**Poverty.** In New Hampshire and particularly, rural New Hampshire, which is exemplified by much of Grafton County, we believe the relevant issue is not an overrepresentation of minority families but of poor families. Domestic violence victims who are served by State systems may be more likely to be individuals lacking in financial resources and who are further handicapped in their ability to escape violence by a lack of affordable legal assistance, affordable housing, financial assistance, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and affordable job training programs.

### **Domestic Violence Perpetrator's Perceptions of the Courts, DCYF, BIPs and other Community Services**

We obtained information from domestic violence perpetrators on their experiences with Grafton County court, DCYF, BIPs, and other community services by conducting two focus groups with perpetrators whose victims had children living in the home at the time of the abuse (n=13). Perpetrator focus groups were conducted to gain information to inform Project program activities rather than to assess any specific Project goal. It is important to bear in mind that the focus group participants included men who had been involved with the BIPs for varying lengths of time, ranging from just starting the program to completion of the program. Also, we have no way of knowing whether the reported experiences of focus group participants who were critical of law enforcement or the court were minimizing their violence or attempting to blame others for their current situations.

**Children, custody and visitation.** Participants reported that parenting issues were addressed in BIPs either informally, such as when men bring specific incidents involving their children to sessions, or more formally, such as receiving education on positive discipline techniques. Participants reported that they specifically talked about how children are affected by fighting and violence in the home in BIP sessions. Focus group participants identified behaviors in their children that they attributed to witnessing domestic violence. The behaviors mentioned were consistent with current research and theory. Overall, most participants presented as having an awareness of the impact of violence on children. In a minority of situations, the awareness did not carry over into understanding the rationale behind orders for no contact with children. Some participants made comments indicating they did not understand why a man would be denied visitation with his child/ren based on what he did to his partner. Two men discussed how

their awareness of their children's exposure to the domestic violence influenced them to examine their violent behaviors and motivated them to change.

**Perceptions of DCYF and the court.** Only two out of thirteen participants reported they ever had any involvement with DCYF. The two participants reported very different experiences with and views about DCYF, one very positive and one very negative. Each had an open case with DCYF for a period of time. One case resulted in the termination of the participant's parental rights and the other case resulted in reunification.

A few of the participants expressed the feeling that the courts do not hold women accountable for their actions, meaning their contributions to the violence. Some participants expressed frustration with and confusion around the protective order process. Participants' confusion around what constituted a violation of a protective order suggested a need for simple language on protective orders so they are understandable for perpetrators.

**Perceptions of law enforcement.** Several participants were critical of law enforcement for siding with women over men and for inflating situations. They believed that police officers put ideas and words into victims' heads and convinced victims that incidents were more severe than they truly were. Several victims of domestic violence we obtained information from also expressed concerns about police responses. Taken together, perpetrators' and victims' perceptions were that the police have difficulty identifying a primary perpetrator at times, and perhaps suggest confusion and/or inconsistency in how law enforcement in Grafton County respond to domestic violence.

**Experiences with BIPs.** Participants reported that BIPs helped them in the following ways:

- Identification of emotions
- Confrontation of defenses
- Relational skills
- Peer support
- Cognitive and behavioral strategies for change
- General coping skills and stress management

Issues they said make it difficult to attend BIPs included: denial of one's problems, concerns about the quality of services based on past negative experiences, the cost of the programs, time (work schedules), transportation, and child care issues.

Few men reported receiving other services concurrent with attending the BIP. Some of the barriers to participation in BIPs may explain why few BIP participants were receiving other services (e.g., lack of time and money).

Most of the baseline data reported in this chapter will be compared to similar types of data collected at the end of the Project for purposes of evaluating the Project's cross system goals. The information presented in this chapter is intended to provide a snapshot of Grafton County cross system practices at the beginning of the Project and to inform the development and implementation of the Project's cross system program activities.

## APPENDIX A GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED THROUGHOUT REPORT

**Assessment:** A process by which the CPS agency determines whether the child and/or other persons involved in the report of alleged maltreatment is in need of services.\*  
Assessments should be concluded no later than 60 days from the receipt of the abuse/neglect report by the District Office.

**Founded Report:** A report made pursuant to abuse/neglect for which DCYF finds probable cause to believe that the child who is the subject of such report is abused or neglected.\*\*

**Probable Cause:** Facts and circumstances based upon accurate and reliable information, including hearsay, that would justify a reasonable person to believe that a child subject to a report under this chapter is abused or neglected.\*\*

**Unfounded Report:** A report made pursuant to abuse/neglect for which DCYF finds that there is no probable cause to believe that the child is abused or neglected.\*\*

### DCYF Assessment Outcomes

**Founded, Problem-Resolved:** DCYF found a preponderance of evidence indicating that a child has been abused or neglected but determined that the family had sufficient awareness and resources to maintain the safety of the child without ongoing DCYF oversight or involvement. The family had no further DCYF involvement after the assessment is closed.

**Founded, Court-Involved:** DCYF found a preponderance of evidence indicating that a child has been abused or neglected and filed a petition of abuse/neglect against the offending caretaker/s with the court. The court found the allegations in the petition to be sustained by the evidence and DCYF opened a case on the family.

**Founded, Services Only:** DCYF found a preponderance of evidence indicating that a child has been abused or neglected but did not file a petition of abuse/neglect with the court. Instead the family agreed to work with DCYF and received services without any court involvement.

**Voluntary Case:** DCYF did NOT find a preponderance of evidence indicating that a child had been abused or neglected but a family agreed to work with DCYF and received services without any court involvement.

**Substantiated Assessment:** A type of assessment disposition that concludes that the allegation of abuse/neglect or risk of abuse/neglect was supported or founded by State law.\*

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\* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Child Maltreatment 2001* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003).

\*\* TITLE XII: Public Safety and Welfare: Chapter 169-C; Child Protection Act; Section 169-C:3 (<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/xii/169-c/169-c-3.htm>).

**Temporary Protective Order:** Upon a showing of immediate and present danger or abuse, the court may enter temporary orders to protect the plaintiff with or without actual notices to the defendant. Temporary orders remain in effect until final orders are made by the court. The defendant has a right to request a hearing on temporary orders within five days of a written request to the court. Otherwise the court schedules a hearing on the temporary orders within 30 days of the filing of a petition or within 10 days of service of process upon the defendant, whichever occurs later. \*\*\*

**Final Protective Order:** Upon a showing of abuse of the plaintiff by a preponderance of the evidence, the court shall grant such relief as necessary to bring about a cessation of abuse including protective orders restraining the defendant from any and all contact with the plaintiff. Final protective orders remain in effect for one year. The orders may be extended by order of the court upon motion by the plaintiff, showing good cause, with notice to the defendant.\*\*\*

### Hearings in Abuse/Neglect Cases

**Preliminary Hearing:** A hearing to determine, based on offers of proof, whether reasonable cause exists to believe that a child has been abused and/or neglected. Under the current statute (RSA 169-C:8), the preliminary hearing is required to be set not less than 24 hours, nor more than 7 days, after return of service of the petition.\*\*\*\*

**Adjudicatory Hearing:** “The adjudicatory hearing, or trial, is the stage at which the court determines, by a preponderance of the evidence, whether or not the allegations in the petition that a child has been abused and/or neglected are sustained by the evidence. The date and time of the adjudicatory hearing shall be within thirty (30) days of the filing of the petition. A finding of true is the legal basis for continued court and agency intervention and marks the start of the twelve month period that parents are afforded to correct the conditions that led to the finding.”\*\*\*\*\*

**Consent Order (or Consent Decree):** A written agreement entered into among or between the parties regarding the facts and the disposition in a neglect or abuse case, and approved by the court. “An adjudicatory hearing, or trial, may be waived, pursuant to RSA 169-C:17, I, and a consent decree filed with the court. The court's approval of a consent decree that includes a finding of true will have the same force and effect as if the court had determined at an adjudicatory hearing that a child had been abused and/or neglected and had entered a finding of true.”\*\*\*\*\*

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\* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Child Maltreatment 2001* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003).

\*\*\* TITLE XII: Public Safety and Welfare: Chapter 173-B; Protection of Persons from Domestic Violence; Section 173-B:4 and 173-B:5 (<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/xii/173-b/173-b-4.htm>).

\*\*\*\* New Hampshire District Court Improvement Project in cooperation with the Family Division and New Hampshire Probate Court. (2003). *Protocols relative to abuse and neglect cases and permanency planning*.

**Dispositional Hearing:** A hearing held after a finding of abuse or neglect to determine what dispositional order should be made on behalf of the child. “If the court finds that a child has been abused and/or neglected, it will conduct a dispositional hearing. The purpose of this hearing is to review the social study submitted by DCYF and to identify a specific plan which will outline what each parent must do to correct the conditions that led to the finding of abuse and/or neglect. A hearing on final disposition must be held, pursuant to RSA 169-C:18,VII, within thirty (30) calendar days of a finding of abuse and/or neglect. The finding may be a court finding or a consent order that includes a finding.”\*\*\*\*

**Review Hearing:** “At a review hearing, the court will comprehensively review the status of a case and examine the progress made by the parties since the conclusion of the dispositional hearing or last review hearing. A review hearing also provides an opportunity for the court to correct and revise the case plan. The purpose of a review hearing is to ensure that a case progresses so that a child spends as short a time as possible in temporary placement. Review hearings must be scheduled by the court and held within three months and nine months of the dispositional hearing. The court is also strongly encouraged to conduct a review hearing within six months of the dispositional hearing. The 6-month review hearing may be a "paper review," i.e., a review by the court of written reports submitted by DCYF and the other parties.”\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\* New Hampshire District Court Improvement Project in cooperation with the Family Division and New Hampshire Probate Court. (2003). *Protocols relative to abuse and neglect cases and permanency planning.*



**APPENDIX B-1**  
**CRISIS CENTER/COALITION GOALS**

1. Increase consistent and effective use of the Domestic Violence Program Specialist (DVPS)
2. Enhance supportive interventions to victims of domestic violence whose children are abused or neglected (by self or partner)
3. Enhance victim-centered safety planning and enhance child-centered safety planning
4. Increase knowledge and awareness of child welfare and judicial system—roles, services, issues and procedures
5. Increase domestic violence program staff's understanding of the impact of domestic violence exposure on children
6. Improve domestic violence program staff's recognition, understanding and response to child abuse/neglect, including the delineation of child abuse/neglect reporting policies
7. Link children exposed to domestic violence to appropriate services
8. Identify effective responses to involuntary referrals from court and/or DCYF

## **APPENDIX B-2 2001 COALITION STATISTICS**

### **General Information on Crisis Centers**

The reported total number of victims from Grafton County served by crisis centers in 2001 is an underestimate due to the fact that data on the victim's town of residence was missing/unknown for many clients (per phone conversations with Gary Palmer, Attorney General's Office and Pamela English, the Coalition).

Because the Crisis Centers in New Hampshire serve victims of sexual assault in addition to victims of domestic violence, we calculated the total number of victims served and client contacts by counting only the victims listed in the "domestic violence" category. We included both "primary" and "secondary" domestic violence victims.

### **Crisis Centers and Children**

In calculating the number of children in households of victims served by crisis centers, we were unable to determine, from the data available to us, whether the victims were domestic violence victims or victims of sexual assault or other crimes. The number of children was calculated per crisis center, so "Grafton County" numbers represent the four crisis centers serving Grafton County but the victims and children may not actually reside in Grafton County. (Data on number of children per town or county was not available.)

The number of children in the household of victims was frequently missing/unknown. For example, for the Grafton County crisis centers, the number of children was unknown for 62% of the clients. With such a large proportion of the data missing or unknown, we view the total number of children as a considerable underestimate.

### **Number of Children who Stayed in Grafton County Crisis Center Shelters**

There were a total of 34 children and 80 adults who stayed in crisis center shelters serving Grafton County. The following is a breakdown of the number of children who stayed in each of the crisis center shelters in 2001:

- Voices Against Violence: 8
- Women's Information Service: 2
- Women's Supportive Services: 23
- The Support Center: 1

### **DVPS Statistics**

There are several considerations to bear in mind when looking at the 2001 DVPS statistics. First, the year 2001 was relatively early in the DVPS Project and at that time, the Project was still revising its data gathering practices. A new DVPS data collection form was implemented in

January 2004, for which DVPSs received training and clarification as to how it should be filled out. This suggests there may have been inconsistencies across individual DVPSs in the past (e.g., in 2001) as to how they interpreted the data collection form categories.

A second consideration is that the DVPS statistics are highly dependent on the DCYF district offices in which they work and anecdotal information indicates that in 2001 there were vast differences across district offices in terms of how the CPSWs worked with the DVPSs. This relationship between CPSWs and the DVPS may vary across district offices in the state for several reasons, including the length of time the DVPS position has been implemented at the district office, the individual personalities of DVPSs and CPSWs, the overall culture of the district office, the level of acceptance of the new collaboration, and the physical setting of the office (e.g., where the DVPS is physically located in reference to the CPSWs), to name a few.

Third, because DVPSs are advocates employed by crisis centers, which are independent agencies with certain unique practices and policies, individual DVPSs provide different services. For example, some DVPSs would advocate for a client in court, while others might refer the client to the agency court advocate.

### **Estimated Proportion of DCYF Referrals that Became New Clients**

The number of new DVPS clients includes clients referred from all DHHS agencies, such as the Department of Financial Assistance and Juvenile Parole and Probation Office, as well as from DCYF. In order to estimate the proportion of DCYF referrals that became new clients, we subtracted the number of referrals the DVPS received from other—non-DCYF—DHHS agencies from the total number of new DVPS clients. We then divided the resulting revised number of new clients by the number of DCYF referrals to determine an estimate of the proportion of new referrals that became DVPS clients. In effect, this turned every non-DCYF, DHHS referral into a new client, which seems improbable. Therefore, our estimate of DCYF referrals that become clients is most likely an underestimate.

### **Discrepancy Between DCYF File Data and Coalition Data on Number of Referrals From DCYF to the DVPS**

The number of referrals from DCYF to DVPSs in 2001 according to the DVPS statistics (136) is much higher than the number of referrals found in DCYF case files (nine). There are a few possible explanations for this. First, the DVPS statistics include referrals for all DCYF assessments, which would include unfounded as well as founded cases, whereas in the file review we only examined founded cases of abuse/neglect. There are many more assessments than founded cases, as shown on page 54 of the DCYF chapter. According to the NCANDS data, roughly 9% of the assessments completed in 2001 were founded. Also, a limitation of DCYF file data is that paper records can be incomplete and/or a referral made to the DVPS may not have been documented in writing. Therefore, the referral would be missed using the file review methodology.

**APPENDIX C-1**  
**DCYF GOALS**

1. Increase child protection system's recognition, understanding and response to domestic violence
2. Increase consistent and effective use of Domestic Violence Program Specialist
3. Implement separate service plans for victims and batterers emphasizing batterer accountability for responsible parenting
4. Enhance family centered safety and case planning
5. Improve assessment of impact to children regarding children's exposure to domestic violence
6. Improve assessment of domestic violence
7. Improve assessment of parental protective efforts
8. Increase knowledge and awareness of domestic violence and judicial system: roles, services, issues and procedures
9. Establish criteria for an alternative case response for families experiencing domestic violence (including, but not limited to voluntary cases)
10. Reduce incidence and duration of out of home placements for abused/neglected children of abused women
11. Reduce recidivism of child abuse and neglect in cases where there is the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect

**APPENDIX C-2  
DCYF FILE REVIEW DATA**

**Sample Description**

We read through all cases of child abuse/neglect that were substantiated in 2001 in the three district offices. District office supervisors assisted us in identifying all 2001 substantiated cases. There were a total of 94 substantiated abuse/neglect cases, and 27 had documentation of domestic violence occurring within one year of the abuse/neglect.

The majority, 20 cases or 74% of the sample, of the co-occurrence cases come from the Claremont district office. Four co-occurrence cases were from the Laconia district office (15%) and 3 from Littleton (11%).

**County of residence.** Out of the 27 co-occurrence cases, 10 children resided in Grafton County (37%), 3 in Belmont County, and 14 in Sullivan County at the time of the initial referral for abuse/neglect.

**Table C-1. Types of DCYF Involvement: Co-occurrence Cases and Other Cases**

	<b><u>Founded, Problem-Resolved</u></b>		<b><u>Founded, Court-Involved</u></b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Co-occurrence Cases (n=27)</b>	6	22%	21	78%
<b>Non-Co-occurrence Cases (n=67)</b>	29	43%	38	57%

The percentage of founded cases closed after the assessment (no court involvement) is much higher for cases which did not involve domestic violence (43% as opposed to 22%). This is partially due to the eight cases which did not involve domestic violence, where the abuse/neglect perpetrator was not a household member (e.g., the perpetrator was a cousin or a visiting grandfather).

## **APPENDIX C-3 NCANDS DATA**

### **General Notes on NCANDS Data**

- NCANDS data track the number of assessments that receive a disposition each year, rather than the number of reports that come in each year. Each of the reports were determined to be credible reports and this data does not include reports that have been screened out. It is therefore more appropriate to call them ‘assessments’. One assessment can involve several children.
- Grafton county numbers are based on the residence of the child, as opposed to district office. There were many cases with missing data on the county variable.
- Cases with missing data on the county of residence variable or the domestic violence variable were excluded, because there is no way of determining the meaning of the missing data on the domestic violence variable. For NCANDS 2001, the domestic violence variable was based on information from the Bridges assessment close screen. According to Bernard Bluhm, DCYF Administrator, this screen gave assessment workers the choice between “Yes,” “No,” “unknown,” and “N/A” in the section that asked about domestic violence. Since a missing value could mean “no”, “yes” or “unknown”, we decided the cleanest approach would be to exclude all children with missing data on the domestic violence variable from analysis. This method will inflate the percentages of co-occurrence, but by excluding the children with missing data on the domestic violence variable, the co-occurrence rate for Grafton County and for New Hampshire is closer to the rate found in other studies across the nation (e.g., Edleson, 1999).
- Unless otherwise specified, in discussion of NCANDS data, each “case” or “assessment” refers to one child (“unique victims”). Counts of “unique victims” count each child only once regardless of how many times the child was referred during 2001.

**NCANDS definition of domestic violence.** “Incidents of inter-spousal physical or emotional abuse perpetrated by one of the spouses or parent figures upon the other spouse or parent figure in the child victim’s home environment.”

**NCANDS Data on the Percentage of Founded Assessments in Co-occurrence Cases**

We used Chi-Square Tests to determine if the higher proportion of children with founded assessments among co-occurrence cases compared to cases without domestic violence was due to random chance or is statistically significant. Results (shown in the table below) indicate that the difference is statistically significant for both Grafton County and the rest of the State.

**Table C-2. Chi-Square Tests on the Different Substantiation Rates for Co-occurrence Cases and Cases Without Domestic Violence.**

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (1-sided)
<b>Grafton</b>	Pearson Chi-Square	11.275	1	.001		
	Continuity Correction	10.017	1	.002		
	Likelihood Ratio	10.212	1	.001		
	Fisher's Exact Test				.002	.001
	Linear-by-Linear Association	11.248	1	.001		
	N of Valid Cases	416				
<b>Non-Grafton</b>	Pearson Chi-Square	211.460	1	.000		
	Continuity Correction	210.088	1	.000		
	Likelihood Ratio	189.696	1	.000		
	Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
	Linear-by-Linear Association	211.428	1	.000		
	N of Valid Cases	6,654				

**NCANDS Services data**

Services are classified either as those that are provided to the “family” or those provided to the “child” victim of maltreatment. “Family” means that the specific child OR the parents OR another child in the family might have received the service as a consequence of the report of maltreatment. “Child” means that the specific child maltreatment victim directly received the service.

Another limitation of NCANDS services data is that two of the services tracked in the data set refer to services the child or family received only during the assessment phase, defined as 90 days (or less) from the initial referral. These services include Case Management and Family Preservation Services. Fortunately, other services are tracked for the full year 2001. However, if a child was referred to DCYF in December 2001, he/or she may appear to have received less services than another child who was referred in January 2001 simply because the case was open

for more months prior to the completion of the 2001 NCANDS data report, which was March 2002.

The services: 'Family Preservation Services' and 'Case Management' include services provided only within a 90 day period--they extend from the opening of the referral to the next 90 days. The begin time is when the referral is approved to be assessed.

All of the other services we examined indicate that the 'service begin date' has to be on or after the referral date, therefore, any service open after the referral date and before the NCANDS report was finalized (March 2002) that has been generated are indicated. There is no guarantee that all services provided during the life of a case will be documented. So, rates of service provision based on NCANDS are a bit of an underestimate.

### **NCANDS Services Definitions**

Service definitions below were obtained from the NCANDS *Detailed Case Data Component Glossary*.

**Case Management Services:** Services or activities for the arrangement, coordination, and monitoring of services to meet the needs of children and their families. Time frame extends from the open date of the referral to the next 90 days; service is provided to the "family."

**Family Preservation Services:** Services or activities that are typically designed to help families alleviate crises that might lead to out-of-home placement of children; maintain the safety of children in their own homes; support families preparing to reunify or adopt; and assist families in obtaining services and other supports necessary to address their multiple needs in a culturally sensitive manner. Time frame extends from the open date of the referral to the next 90 days; service is provided to the "family."

**Counseling Services:** Services or activities that apply the therapeutic processes to personal, family, situational or occupational problems in order to bring about a positive resolution of the problem or improved individual or family functioning or circumstances. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the "family."

**Day Care Services:** Services or activities provided in a setting that meets applicable standards of State and local law, in a center or in a home, for a portion of a 24-hour day. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the "child."

**Educational and Training Services:** Services provided to improve knowledge or daily living skills and to enhance cultural opportunities. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the "family."



**Employment Services:** Services or activities provided to assist individuals in securing employment or acquiring of learning skills that promote opportunities for employment. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Health-Related and Home Health Services:** Services to attain and maintain a favorable condition of health. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Home-Based Services:** In-home services or activities provided to individuals or families to assist with household or personal care activities that improve or maintain adequate family well-being. Includes homemaker services, chore services, home maintenance services and household management services. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Housing Services:** Services or activities designed to assist individuals or families in locating, obtaining or retaining suitable housing. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Information and Referral Services:** Services or activities designed to provide information about services provided by public and private service providers and a brief assessment of client needs (but not a diagnosis and evaluation) to facilitate appropriate referral to these community resources. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Legal Services:** Services or activities provided by a lawyer, or other person under the supervision of a lawyer, to assist individuals in seeking or obtaining legal help in civil matters such as housing, divorce, child support, guardianship, paternity and legal separation. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Mental Health Services:** Services to overcome issues involving emotional disturbance or maladaptive behavior adversely affecting socialization, learning, or development. Usually provided by public or private mental health agencies and includes residential services (inpatient hospitalization, residential treatment, and supported independent living) and non-residential services (partial day treatment, outpatient services, home-based services, emergency services, intensive case management and assessment. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Respite Care Services:** Services involving temporary care of the children to provide relief to the caretaker. May involve care of the children outside of their own home for a brief period of time such as overnight or for a weekend. Not considered by the state to be foster care or other placement. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Special Services –Disability:** Services for persons with developmental or physical disabilities, or persons with visual, or auditory impairments, or services or activities to maximize the potential of persons with disabilities, help alleviate the effects of physical, mental or emotional disabilities and to enable these persons to live in the least restrictive environment possible. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “child.”

**Substance Abuse Services:** Services or activities designed to deter, reduce, or eliminate substance abuse or chemical dependency. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

**Transportation:** Services or activities that provide or arrange for travel, including travel costs for individuals in order to access services or obtain medical care or employment. Any service open after the referral date, up through the time the NCANDS report was generated; service is provided to the “family.”

#### **NCANDS Data: Number of Out of home placements**

To calculate the number of out of home placements for Grafton County and the rest of the state, we used the NCANDS’ variable: *removal date*. If a removal date was listed for the child, we coded the child as having been placed out of the home. We only counted placements of children with founded assessments, because throughout this report, our definition of a ‘co-occurrence case’ includes founded or substantiated abuse/neglect.

Many of the children in the 2001 NCANDS database had report dates (initial referral dates) in 2000. Some of these children had removal dates in 2000 while others had removal dates in 2001. We expect the same thing will occur when we look at the Time 2 NCANDS dataset. In NCANDS, “Removal Date” retrieves the earliest removal date from the child’s home removal history screen where the removal date is greater than or equal to the referral date (so even if the referral date was 2000, if removal date is 2001 then this is the first removal since the referral began).

In the NCANDS “*unique child*” dataset, which is what we examined in order to avoid counting children more than once, there are many more children who were placed out of the home than children who were founded/substantiated as abused/neglected. We were informed that this is probably because a child can (and often does) have multiple referrals - some are unfounded, some are incomplete, and one may be founded. Children coded with unfounded abuse/neglect most likely had one other referral that was founded at some point. It was not possible to link a specific referral with a specific finding and a specific placement as a result of that finding (and not a previous finding/report) without using the NCANDS *duplicate child*’ file which would have resulted in counting “cases” twice, which we did not want to do. Given that we only examined founded assessments in regard to out of home placements, one limitation with this data is that we will fail to capture some of the out of home placements— among those children with unfounded assessments but were placed out of the home because they

had some founded abuse/neglect at some point in the past. Therefore the number of out of home placements is likely to be an underestimate.

### **NCANDS Data: Duration of Out of Home Placements**

In order to calculate the duration of out of home placements for children in the 2001 NCANDS dataset, we had to supplement this dataset with information from Bridges from subsequent years, since many of the children removed from home in 2001 remained in placement at the end of the data collection/entry period for NCANDS.

We did this by giving the child identification numbers from 2001 NCANDS for children who were placed out of the home to a DCYF staff member with access to the Bridges aggregate data. She then generated a list of all children that had been returned home as of 12-10-03 according to the Bridges data: 529 children. Only 194 of these 529 had founded cases according to the NCANDS data, so only these 194 were included in our analysis of the duration of out of home placements. Out of the 194 children, 18 had missing data on the county variable and 43 had missing data on the domestic violence variable, which left us with 132 children for purposes of our analysis.

For these 132 children, we calculated the number of days they had been in placement as of 12-10-03. The date is an arbitrary cut off point, and is based on the date DCYF staff queried the Bridges database for this data.

### **“Founded, Services Only” Cases**

To determine the number of families who received DCYF services without court involvement we combined data from NCANDS and data from Bridges, with the assistance of a DCYF staff member with access to Bridges aggregate data. The DCYF staff member used an Access query to return unique referral identification numbers from Bridges, the county and domestic violence indicator from the NCANDS file, then queried against Bridges tables to pull the disposition description. Excluding referrals with missing data on the county variable, there were 61 “founded services only” cases in the data set given to us by DCYF. Eighteen referrals had missing information on the domestic violence variable or were “unknown”.

## **APPENDIX D-1 COURT GOALS**

1. Increase information sharing among civil, criminal and juvenile courts
2. Improve assessment of risk of co-occurrence, and then address needs
3. Improve monitoring of violent behavior of parents and increase accountability for violent behavior
4. Increase court staff's knowledge and awareness of domestic violence and child abuse and neglect: roles, services and issues; and of other community services (substance abuse, children's services, housing, etc)
5. Increase clear, detailed visitation orders to increase safe visitation in co-occurrence cases
6. Improve communication with victims regarding court processes (in both civil and criminal cases)

**APPENDIX D-2**  
**FAMILY DIVISION DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES (PROTECTIVE ORDERS)**

**Sample Selection**

Domestic violence case files for calendar year 2001 from all four Family Division locations were reviewed. For each court location we reviewed all final order cases with children in the household. Because of the large number of temporary cases with children in the household across the four courts (N=131), combined with the fact that these cases contained only a small proportion of the types of information we were gathering, we decided to sample these cases in the two larger volume courts: Plymouth and Lebanon. In Plymouth and Lebanon we obtained a 50% sample of temporary order cases with children in common. We did this by picking files randomly from all sections of the shelf where domestic violence case files for 2001 are housed, and continued in this manner until we reached a number that represented 50% of the cases according to the numbers of total domestic violence cases with children in the household that we obtained from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

Because the total number of temporary order cases was much smaller in Littleton and Haverhill Family Divisions (n=25), we abstracted data from all temporary order cases with children in the household, in addition to all final order cases (excluding male victims, non-intimate partner perpetrators, and cases with emergency orders only). This was to ensure that we would have an adequate number of cases from each Family Division location.

The number of cases from each Family Division location and the number of cases involving children in common to the victim and perpetrator is as follows:

- Plymouth: 48 cases; 39 cases with children in common
- Lebanon: 37 cases; 28 cases with children in common
- Haverhill: 19 cases; 11 cases with children in common
- Littleton 28 cases; 18 cases with children in common

Table D-1 provides further details on the number of temporary and final order cases from each Family Division location, with and without children in common.

**Table D-1. 2001 Domestic Violence Protective Order Cases Included in Baseline Sample**

	<b>Plymouth</b>			<b>Lebanon</b>		
	Children In Common	Children Not in Common	Total	Children In Common	Children Not in Common	Total
<b>Temporary Only</b>	14	4	18	13	1	14
<b>Final Order Issued</b>	25	5	30	15	8	23
<b>Total</b>	39	9	48 36% of total sample	28	9	37 21% of total sample

	<b>Haverhill</b>			<b>Littleton</b>		
	Children In Common	Children Not in Common	Total	Children In Common	Children Not in Common	Total
<b>Temporary Only</b>	5	5	10	10	5	15
<b>Final Order Issued</b>	6	3	9	8	5	13
<b>Total</b>	11	8	19 14% of total sample	18	10	28 21% of total sample

## Re: Goal 1: Increase Information Sharing

**Definition of “contact” between Family Division and District Court.** We did not categorize the following as "contacts" between Family and District Court:

- Department of Safety Records Searches
- Records Search Reports
- Notices of Return of Firearms

We did not consider these to be indicators of contact between Family Division and District Court because they each pertain to situations in which an individual requests the return of his firearm/s at the expiration of a protective order. The records search is requested by the Family Division. The NH Gunline conducts the search, and contacts the District Courts for certain information in the process. Indirectly, there is communication between the District Court and Family Division, but only through a third party and, more importantly, it takes place after the final protective order is issued. This type of contact, therefore, does not inform the case but rather, is incidental to it.

**Data from domestic violence cases: Concurrent criminal cases.** There were seven cases with some documentation in the file that the defendant is involved in a concurrent domestic violence criminal case (5% of 132). In five out of these seven cases, the documentation is only according to the petitioner, e.g. it is written in her petition narrative. There were seven cases with some documentation in the file that the defendant is involved in another type of criminal cases concurrent to the domestic violence petition (5% of 132). The other types of criminal cases included: one sexual assault of a minor, two cases of violation of a domestic violence protective order, two unknowns and two “criminal mischief.” Four of these are based only on the petitioner’s statement.

**Data from domestic violence cases: Prior criminal cases.** There were nine cases with some documentation of prior domestic violence criminal involvement (7% of 132); In seven of these nine cases the only documentation is the petitioner’s statements. There were eight cases with some documentation of prior other criminal involvement (6%) (one drug possession, three violations of restraining orders; three unknown, one simple assault). All eight of these are based only on petitioner allegations, e.g. the petitioner’s paperwork states that the defendant is on probation, but there was no other documentation of prior crimes, such as case docket numbers or communication between courts.

**Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) data.** We obtained a list of criminal cases dating prior to calendar year 2001 from Gary Fowler, AOC. We counted all unique docket numbers with unique case types. That is, if the same docket number was repeated and associated with the same case type each time, we only counted that as one prior case. If the same docket number was repeated but was associated with different case types, we considered them separate cases. Obviously, if different docket numbers each had a different case type associated with it, we counted them as separate cases. Numbers include cases resulting in a variety of dispositions.

**Re: Goal 2: Domestic Violence Case File Data on Service Referrals to Domestic Violence Victims**

In eight cases there was documentation that the domestic violence petitioner developed a safety plan with a crisis center advocate. In five cases, there was documentation that the domestic violence petitioner met with a crisis center advocate prior to the judge granting a request to drop the protective order. Only three of these 13 cases included documentation in the file that the court required/strongly encouraged the petitioner to meet with an advocate or develop a safety plan. In the other ten cases it could not be determined whether the petitioner initiated these services on her own or if she was referred by the court. Therefore, we did not categorize these ten as referrals made by the court.



**APPENDIX D-3**  
**FAMILY DIVISION CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT CASE FILE REVIEW**

**Sample Characteristics**

The 166 abuse/neglect cases closed in 2000, 2001 and 2002 included cases that were: a) found true by the court; b) cases not found true by the court; and c) cases dismissed by the court.

We did not record information on the case disposition if there was not any documentation of domestic violence, so we cannot calculate the rate of co-occurrence for founded cases versus the rate of co-occurrence for cases that were dismissed/not founded.

Cases were reviewed in all four Grafton County Family Division locations as follows:

- § Haverhill: 17 cases—9 co-occurrence (53%)
- § Lebanon: 28 cases—7 co-occurrence (25%)
- § Plymouth: 95 cases—41 co-occurrence (43%)
- § Littleton: 26 cases—8 co-occurrence (31%)

For purposes of the file review of abuse/neglect cases, if the abuse/neglect was found true at the preliminary hearing but not true at the adjudicatory hearing, it was considered not to be found true.

**APPENDIX E**  
**PREVIOUSLY DISSEMINATED GREENBOOK EVALUATION REPORTS**

*Interagency Understanding and Collaboration Survey: Summary of Responses, January 2002.*

*Results from Focus Groups and DVPS Interviews, September 2002.*

*Results from Interviews with Judges and Court Staff, November 2002*

*Results from Focus Groups and Interviews with Domestic Violence Victims, October 2003*

**APPENDIX F  
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATUTES**

**NH RSA 173-B:1**

TITLE XII  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE CHAPTER 173-B  
PROTECTION OF PERSONS FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Section 173-B:1

**173-B:1 Definitions.** – In this chapter:

I. "Abuse" means the commission or attempted commission of one or more of the following acts by a family or household member or current or former sexual or intimate partner and where such conduct constitutes a credible threat to the plaintiff's safety:

- (a) Assault or reckless conduct as defined in RSA 631:1 through RSA 631:3.
- (b) Criminal threatening as defined in RSA 631:4.
- (c) Sexual assault as defined in RSA 632-A:2 through RSA 632-A:5.
- (d) Interference with freedom as defined in RSA 633:1 through RSA 633:3-a.
- (e) Destruction of property as defined in RSA 634:1 and RSA 634:2.
- (f) Unauthorized entry as defined in RSA 635:1 and RSA 635:2.
- (g) Harassment as defined in RSA 644:4.

**NH RSA 169-C:3**

TITLE XII  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE CHAPTER 169-C  
CHILD PROTECTION ACT

Section 169-C:3

**169-C:3 Definitions.** When used in this chapter and unless the specific context indicates otherwise:

I. "Abandoned" means the child has been left by his parent, guardian or custodian, without provision for his care, supervision or financial support although financially able to provide such support.

II. "Abused child" means any child who has been:

- (a) Sexually abused; or
- (b) Intentionally physically injured; or
- (c) Psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent mistreatment or neglect; or
- (d) Physically injured by other than accidental means.

**APPENDIX G-1  
CROSS SYSTEMS GOALS\***

1. Increase effective information sharing among the three primary partners and with other organizations as appropriate
2. Increase batterer accountability
3. Increase effective case collaboration among the three primary partners and with other organizations as appropriate
4. Increase community capacity to engage in prevention and supportive intervention activities for families
5. Increase interagency collaboration (domestic violence, child protection, courts, batterers intervention)
6. Develop strategies to reduce service gaps for families experiencing child abuse and neglect and domestic violence
7. Make recommendations for revisions to selected policies and procedures to enhance child and adult safety (Court Improvement Project's Protocols Relative to Abuse and Neglect Cases, District Court Domestic Violence Protocols, Batterers Intervention Standards, Supervised Visitation Program Standards, Structured Decision Making Policies and Procedures, NH Coalition Program Standards.)
8. Increase community groups' recognition and understanding of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence
9. Make community groups aware of changes in service delivery
10. Make recommendations regarding any and all funding issues regarding supportive interventions for families experiencing co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect
11. Increase cultural competency of all three systems (including issues of race, ethnicity, poverty, rural area, etc.)
12. Present recommendations to appropriate entities re: rural access obstacles

**NOTE:** The prioritization of Goals 1-5 was approved by the Executive Committee on 10/10/02

**\*Revised 4/11/03**

## **APPENDIX G-2 COALITION DATA**

### **Referrals from Other Agencies**

Statistics were obtained from the “Referrals By Crime Category” reports for the four crisis centers serving Grafton County and the same type of report for the entire state (for domestic violence). The number of referrals from agencies in the community was calculated by adding all referrals except those that were categorized as “friend/relative,” “unknown,” “phone book,” “repeat caller,” a specific individual name, “employer,” “internet,” “national hotline,” “literature,” “media,” “none specified,” or “self.” The total number of referrals from community agencies to the four crisis centers serving Grafton County was subtracted from the State total in order to determine the number of referrals from agencies in the community to crisis centers in the rest of the State.

Data on referral sources is limited by the fact that different crisis centers used different categories for referral sources. For example, the category of “social services” could have included referrals from DCYF and mental health providers for one crisis center but another crisis center had “DCYF” and “mental health” as separate categories. Also, some people wrote in a mental health provider’s name, for example, “Jane Smith” as the referral source rather than note that she was a mental health provider. Therefore, statistics on the number of referrals crisis centers received from certain types of organizations like DCYF and Court in 2001 should be regarded with caution.

**APPENDIX G-3  
INTERAGENCY SURVEY DATA**

**Interagency Survey Data on Frequency of Interagency Contact Among and Between the Project Primary Partners and BIPs**

Tables G:1 - G:6 show the frequency of interagency contact among and between the Project primary partners, as reported by *Interagency Survey* respondents who worked for the primary partners or BIPs.

**Table G:1. Frequency of Interagency Contact with the NH District Court in the Past Six Months Reported by Survey Respondents from Domestic Violence Agencies, DCYF, and BIPs**

<b>Frequency of Contact in the Last 6 Months</b>					
<b>Organization (n=number of respondents from that type of organization*)</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>1-2 Times</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Daily</b>
Domestic Violence Agencies (n=5)	0	1	1	3	0
NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (n=3)	0	0	0	2	1
Batterers Intervention Programs (n=2)	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

\*Those who responded to the question

**Table G:2. Frequency of Interagency Contact with the Family Division in the Past Six Months Reported by Survey Respondents from Domestic Violence Agencies, DCYF, and BIPs**

<b>Frequency of Contact in the Last 6 Months</b>					
<b>Organization (n=number of respondents from that type of organization*)</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>1-2 Times</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Daily</b>
Domestic Violence Agencies (n=5)	0	0	2	2	1
NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (n=3)	0	0	0	2	1
Batterers Intervention Programs (n=1)	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

\*Those who responded to the question

**Table G:3. Frequency of Interagency Contact with DCYF in the Past Six Months Reported by Survey Respondents from the Domestic Violence Agencies, the Court, and BIPs**

Frequency of Contact in the Last 6 Months					
Organization (n=number of respondents from that type of organization*)	None	1-2 Times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Domestic Violence Agencies (n=6)	1	0	2	3	0
Court (n=8)	0	1	1	3	3
Batterers Intervention Programs (n=2)	0	0	1	1	0
Total	1	1	4	7	3

\*Those who responded to the question

**Table G:4. Frequency of Interagency Contact with the Coalition in the Past Six Months Reported by Survey Respondents from DCYF, the court, and BIPs**

Frequency of Contact in the Last 6 Months					
Organization (n=number of respondents from that type of organization*)	None	1-2 Times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (n=3)	0	0	1	2	0
Court (n=8)	2	0	3	3	0
Batterers Intervention Programs (n=2)	0	0	1	1	0
Total	2	0	5	6	0

\*Those who responded to the question

**Table G:5. Frequency of Interagency Contact with Crisis Centers in the Past Six Months Reported by Survey Respondents from DCYF, the court, and BIPs**

Frequency of Contact in the Last 6 Months					
Organization (n=number of respondents from that type of organization*)	None	1-2 Times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (n=3)	0	0	1	1	1
Court (n=8)	1	0	1	4	2
Batterers Intervention Programs (n=2)	1	0	1	0	0
Total	2	0	3	5	3

\*Those who responded to the question

**Table G:6. Frequency of Interagency Contact with BIPs in the Past Six Months Reported by Survey Respondents from Domestic Violence Agencies, DCYF, and the Court**

Frequency of Contact in the Last 6 Months					
Organization (n=number of respondents from that type of organization*)	None	1-2 Times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Domestic Violence Agencies (n=6)	3	2	1	0	0
NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (n=3)	0	0	1	2	0
Court (n=8)	2	2	2	2	0
Total	5	4	4	4	0

\*Those who responded to the question