

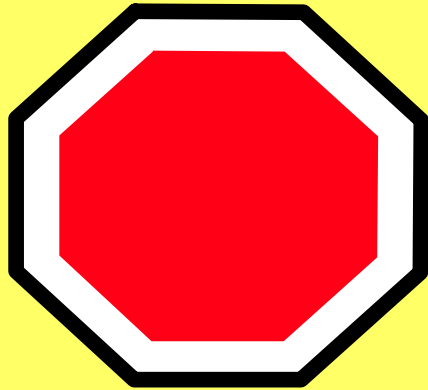
Screening and Documenting Coercive Control



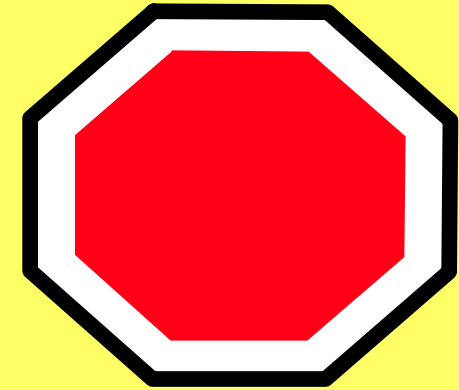
**Preparing for Effective Interventions to Families
Living Domestic Violence**

Credits

- The development of this training was made possible by the Grafton County Greenbook Project, funded by the Office on Violence Against Women, US Department of Justice grant #2004-WE-AX-KO35.
- Research and outline by Beth Collins, Domestic Violence Specialist (DVS).
- Editing and presentation layout by Kathy Jones, DVS.
- Special thanks to Ruth Houtte, Michelle Rosenthal, and the DCYF Training Coordinators for their guidance in developing this training series.



IMPORTANT!



“The most effective method to protect children in domestic violence cases is to:

- hold the perpetrator accountable**
- and partner with the adult victim.”**

--NH Division for Children, Youth and Families:
Domestic Violence Protocol, Second Edition, 2004, Pages 1-2



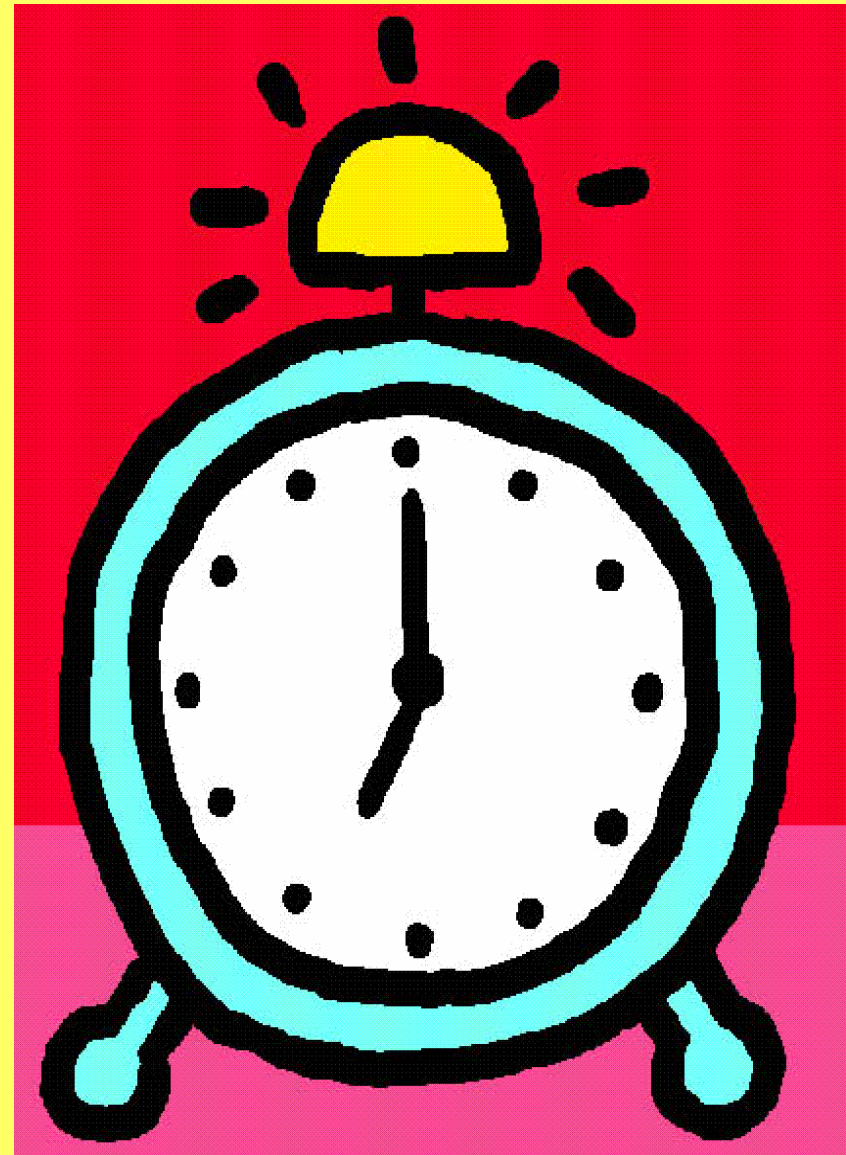
Part I: Screening for Coercive Control

When Domestic Violence and Child Protection Merge:
Best Practice Series for CPSWs

Part 4 of 6

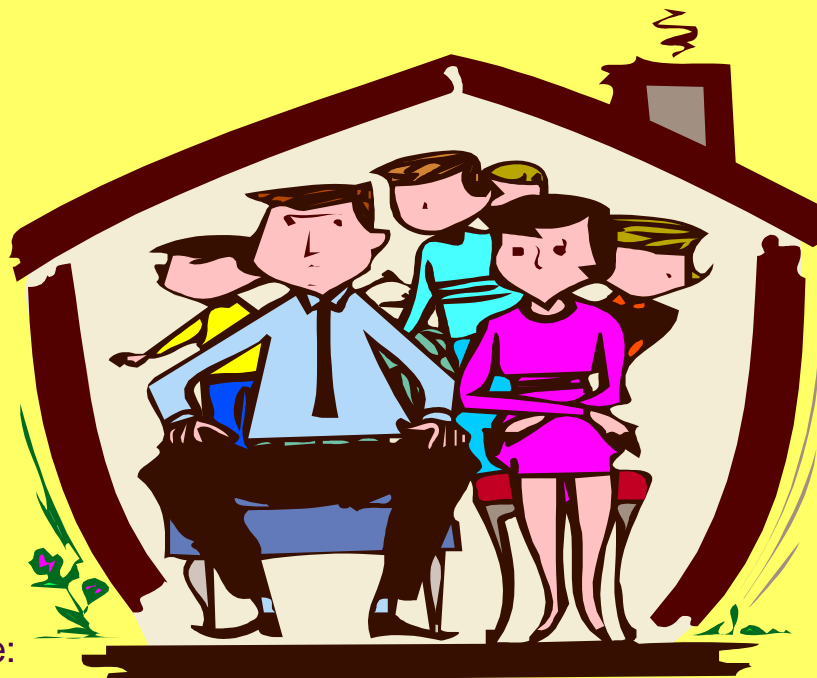
When to Screen?

- ***Every*** assessment
- ***Ongoing*** assessment through family service
- ***Particularly in cases labeled “Mutual DV”***
- ***Continuously*** until CPSW is able to identify pattern of coercive control



Why Screen?

- ❌ **Coercive control harms the entire family**
 - Proper identification/response = resilience/healing
- ❌ **Incorrectly labeling = inappropriate case plan**
 - Police reports/arrests ≠ accurate picture of control
 - All violence is NOT equal
 - Different in intent
 - Different in results



Why screen both parties?

- Identify risk to children
- Safety plan
- Accountability
- Assess for safe contact
- First-hand observation

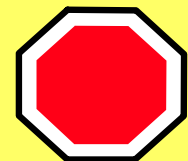


- Assess appropriate goals, services and referrals
- **Best practice**
- **Reasonable efforts**



Interview Preparation

- Consult with DVS to determine *likely* adult victim
- Schedule *separate* interviews:
 - First with likely victim
 - Then with likely perpetrator
- One party resisting separate interviews may be indicative of the perpetrator
 - Separate interviews are necessary!



Preparing for Future Partnerships

- Share with both parties:
 - Your role
 - Purpose of interview
 - How info is documented and used
- Demonstrate familiarity with coercive control tactics and effects
- For greatest alliance/cooperation
 - Treat both parties with respect
 - Even when not forthcoming with details



Preparing for Present Accountability



- The interview is a natural consequence of coercive control
- Clear communication around boundaries and expectations
- Find/use collateral sources as much as possible

Interviewing Tips

- Avoid inflammatory words (“rape,” “violence”)
- Interview progression--ask ?’s about:
 1. The relationship
 2. Decision-making and access to resources
 3. Coercive tactics and behaviors
 - Follow disclosures with ?’s for specific detail
 4. Fear
 - Are you afraid of your partner?
 - Is your partner/child afraid of you?





Part II: Determining the Coercive Controller



Behaviors During Interviews



Adult Victim prone to:

- Blame self for relationship tension
- Share or take responsibility for fights
- Defend partner

Or, if not feeling safe:

- Seem disinterested
- Be vague, avoid ?'s or leave gaps in story

Batterer prone to:

- Change topic
- Ask ?'s or 'interview' you
- Seem disinterested or accusatory
- Be vague, avoid ?'s, leave gaps in story
- Label partner as 'crazy' or 'bad parent'
- Try to 'sell' themselves and win you over



Attitudes and Beliefs

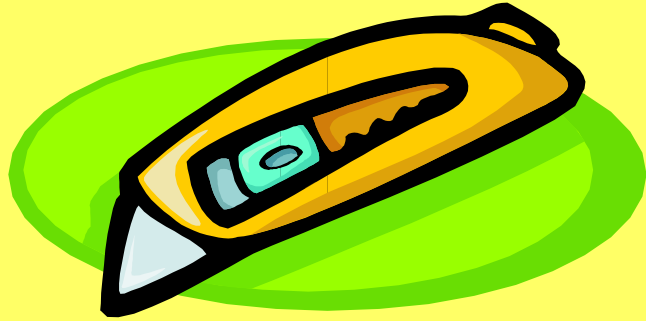


Adult Victim prone to:

- Resignation
- Surrendered hopes
- Understand partner's feelings and perspective
- Specific fears

Batterer prone to:

- Deny/minimize own use of coercive control
- Blame partner, life stresses, substances
- Entitlement
- Vague fears



Reported Injuries



Adult Victim prone to:

- Use of force that is not smart/effective as attack
 - Biting partner on torso or arm, scratching face
- Try to equalize the perceived threat
 - May hold or use a weapon/object as weapon

Batterer prone to:

- Use terrifying violence
 - Strangulation is common as terror is high
- Use covert violence
 - Injuries to body parts not seen (back of head, covered by clothes)
 - Where victim won't show (breasts, genitals)



Intent and Effects of Behaviors



Adult Victims

- Force is *spontaneous and intermittent*
- With the ***intent*** to:
 - Defend/escape/de-escalate attack
 - Preemptively minimize
 - Retaliate
- ***Effect*** on partner:
 - Defensive injuries

Batterers

- Coercion and force is *intentional and consistent*
- With the ***intent*** to:
 - Get own way
 - Intimidate/punish
 - Restrict independence
 - Provoke
- ***Effects*** on partner:
 - Injuries, terror, fear of independent action, self-doubt, self-blame

After Identifying Coercive Controller

Interview Closing = Safety Planning



With Adult Victim:

- Identify social supports
- Identify past successful protective actions
- Anticipate partner's expected reaction
- Give DV crisis center contact information
- Plan for safe future contact with CPSW

With Batterer:

- Clearly identify concerning behaviors
- Identify alternative response to anger or fear
- Present safety actions, framed in self-interest
- Ask for agreement with a non-abusive 'contract'



Part III: Documenting Interviews

When Domestic Violence and Child Protection Merge:
Best Practice Series for CPSWs

Part 4 of 6

Documenting Coercive Control



- Be precise and descriptive
 - Avoid euphemisms or vague terms
- Link the batterer's actions to harm done to children
- Link batterer's abusive behaviors as source of risk to children—not victim
- Articulate expectations for changed behavior

Documenting Protective Efforts

- Fully identify protective strategies
- Document safety plan *without* specific details
- Lay groundwork for future referrals
 - Strengths-based relationship w/victim
 - Detailed documentation



Neutrality: Obscuring the Source of Risk

- Not a question of ‘siding’ with one parent or another
- Responsibility to advocate for the child’s best interest

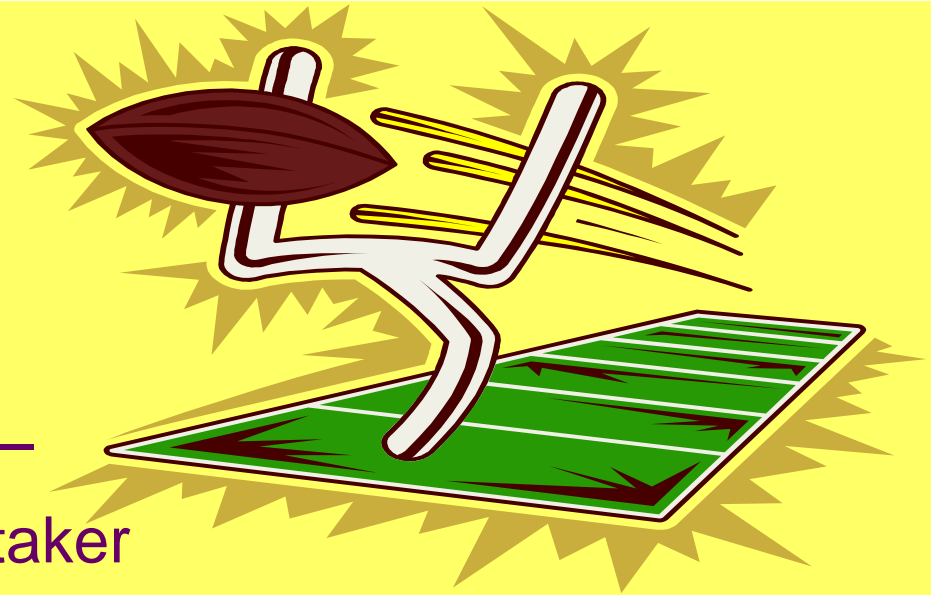


A ‘neutral’ position ignoring coercive control puts children at continued risk



CPSW Goals: Post-Interview

- Identify the batterer's—
 - Performance as a caretaker
 - Pattern of control, including extent of violence
 - Interference of adult victim's parenting
 - Harm to children
- Describe scope of adult victim's protective efforts
- Develop separate service and safety plans for the batterer and victim.



DVS Goals: Post-Interview



- Help CPSWs:
 - Identify coercive control and effects on family
 - In collateral reports
 - Information from interviews
 - Process ‘bizarre’ forms of abuse and think of safety options
- Support victims through DCYF process

Join us next time for...

Batterer Accountability



**Working with Perpetrators of Coercive Control
to Improve Child Welfare**

When Domestic Violence and Child Protection Merge:
Best Practice Series for CPSWs

Part 4 of 6

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