

Webinar 5
Building Trauma-Informed, Family-Centered Services for Parents and Children

Building Trauma-Informed Services for Children, Youth and Parents Impacted by Domestic Violence
Webinar Series

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National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health

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Improve program, organizational & systems capacity to respond to the needs of domestic violence (DV) survivors & their children

By providing training, support & consultation to advocates, mental health and substance abuse providers, legal professionals & policymakers

www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org

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Coming into the present moment,
calming, centering with our breath



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Today's Webinar

- Reflection about working with children, youth, and parents
 - Starting with ourselves
 - Where are our programs/organizations at?
- Practical ways to begin bridging services for adult survivors who are parenting and their children
- Enhancing family-centered programming

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Reflections on Working with Children, Youth & Parents Experiencing DV

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Framing Conversations

- Examining our own values, beliefs, and lived experiences in thinking about child & family inclusive services
- What do we bring to this work?
- What are the challenges or barriers?
- What kinds of individual and team or program-based supports would be helpful?

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How does a survivor-defined advocacy model align with providing support to survivors who are parenting?

Working with Children, Parents & Families: What are the challenges?

- Who are we most strongly identified with?
 - Our own experiences, roles within the organization, and training can affect how we relate to children and to parents
 - Do we have safety concerns?
 - Do we have concerns about the quality of the attachment relationship and caregiving for a particular child?
- How do we see our role with the survivor who is parenting?

Where are our programs at?


- Do we have policies and practices in place that are child, youth & family inclusive?
- What kinds of services do we provide for children, adolescents, and families in our program?
- How coordinated or separate are our services for adult survivors and their children?
- Do we offer parenting supports to survivors?
- In what ways are staff supported in this work?

From a trauma-informed and family-centered perspective

- Acknowledging how DV and other trauma experiences may impact children, survivors, *and* parenting
- Thinking developmentally about children's and families' needs
- Structuring our approach and services to support and strengthen the parent-child relationship

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We begin with a shift in our thinking...



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From *survivor-defined* and *child-centered* advocacy to...

A family-centered mindset

- How do we define “family”?
- What would family-centered services look like?
- If we use what we've already got?
- Expanding services & programming

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Bringing the parent-child relationship into focus...



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What if... all advocates embraced a family-centered approach?

“How can I use this task to better support parent-child relationships?”

Ann Brickson, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

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Redefining “ownership” for who responds and how we respond to child and family-related matters.

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Practical Strategies for Bridging Services for Adult Survivors & their Children

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What we ask and offer

- Crisis calls
- At intake/entry to services
- General inquiries about how children are doing
 - What’s going well?
 - Any worries, concerns that parents may have
- Support with explaining court-related processes (such as custody and visitation arrangements)

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Accessing and entering services

- How do we handle the intake and orientation process?
 - Are children “invisible”?
 - Separated from their parents?
 - Is it family-centered?

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**Best Practice Considerations:
Intake**

- Children are present with adult survivor for the orientation to the shelter or services
- Thinking developmentally about children's and families' needs
- Acknowledging what may be difficult about the transition

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**Best Practice Considerations:
Intake**

- Finding out what supports may be helpful for adult survivors and their children
- Offering information about how DV may impact children and how parents can support their children's resilience


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**Creating welcoming, family-
inclusive environments**

- Is the space conducive for parents with children ranging in age from infants to adolescents?
- Does the design support parents' and other caregivers' supervision of younger children and safety?
- Do families see themselves reflected in the setting?


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Pause to reflect, comment, ask questions...



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Mountain Meditation




Adapted from Nhat Hanh, Thich (2012). *A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles*. Plum Blossom Books.

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**Best Practice Considerations:
Staff and Agency Supports**


- Hiring policies and practices in place that support interest and experience in working with children, parents, and families
- Reducing role isolation for children's advocates
- Institutional memory, orientation, and practices in place for child and family inclusive programming
- Ongoing training, reflective supervision, and consultation

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Enhancing Family-Centered Programming


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Child & Family Safety Planning

- Physical & emotional safety
- Understanding “flight” “fight” “freeze” responses to traumatic experiences
- Consider children’s developmental stage and capacities
- How much of the survivor-parent’s plan gets shared?
- Handling mismatches in parents’ perceptions of safe people and places and children’s perception

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Honoring and supporting family choice and voice

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**Best Practice Considerations:
Parent-Child and Family Activities**

How advocates can support families:

- Ways to include parents and children
- Building on positive experiences and memories from family's past
- Envisioning hopes and dreams for parents and children, and being together as a family

Additional resource:

- <http://promising.futureswithoutviolence.org/files/2012/08/reclaiming-parenting-and-strengthening-activities.pdf>

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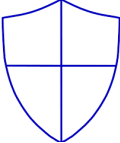
**Best Practice Considerations:
Parent-Child and Family Activities**

- Inclusion of families in the planning
- Opportunities to promote fun, family bonding and strengthening parent-child relationships
- Creating safe spaces with ground rules
- Flexibility around the activity so that everyone is successful!

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Making A Family Shield

- Each member contributes
 - Who we are
 - What's special about our family
 - What we are proud of
 - Favorite things to do as a family
- Family-based activity
- Endless variations!



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**Best Practice Considerations:
Handling Family Conflicts**

- Maintaining a trauma-informed lens
- Opportunities for practicing non-violent communication, recognizing feelings and needs, and respecting different perspectives
- Supporting the protective parent to talk about/ “be with” feelings and resolve arguments and fights
 - “Bigger, stronger, wiser and kind!”

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Enhancing Children’s Self-Regulation and Relaxation Skills

- Advocates can teach skills to parents and children together
- Muscle Relaxation Script
 - Ideas for how to use and adapt this one



<http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/asdbloodwork/parent/musclensing.php>

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**Best Practice Considerations:
Programming and Services**

- In offering group-based services
 - Think developmentally about children’s needs
 - Incorporate a trauma-informed lens
 - Staffing and cultural considerations
 - Transparency and coordination between survivor and child groups

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Make your own sand garden



From Shapiro, L & Sprague, R. (2009). *The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook for Kids*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

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Tools for Organization-Guided Process to Build Trauma-Informed, Family-Centered Services and Supports

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Assessing Program Readiness

- Core values, beliefs and philosophies
- Staff hiring and supports
- Physical environment
- Program practices
- Community partnerships

Amy Torchia, Vermont Network & Futures Without Violence
@ <http://promising.futureswithoutviolence.org/program-readiness/>

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Creating Accessible, Culturally Relevant, Domestic Violence and Trauma-Informed Services and Organizations (ACDVTI)

- Organizational Commitment & Infrastructure
- Staff Support
- Physical, Sensory & Relational Environment
- Intake
- Program & Services
- Community Partnerships
- Feedback and Evaluation

ACDVTI Tool © NCDVTMH, Revised *draft* August 2014
Applying to Parent, Child-and-Family-Centered Services

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Other reflections and questions...



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Next in this Series

Webinar 6
Responding to the Needs of Children & Families Impacted by DV

November 12, 2014

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