

Coordination with Child Welfare

Session 3-Part 2: Client and System Advocacy

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Today's webinar

- **Brief overview** of child welfare
- **Client based advocacy** within the child welfare system
- **System based advocacy** to enhance the child welfare response to domestic violence
- **Practical tools** in the Colorado Domestic Violence Practice Guide for Child Protective Services




Carmen Hubbs



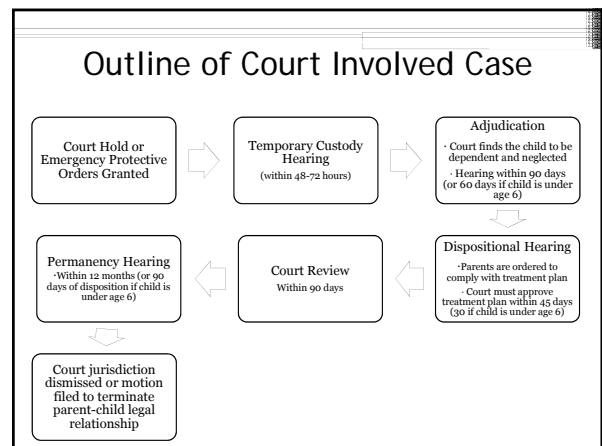
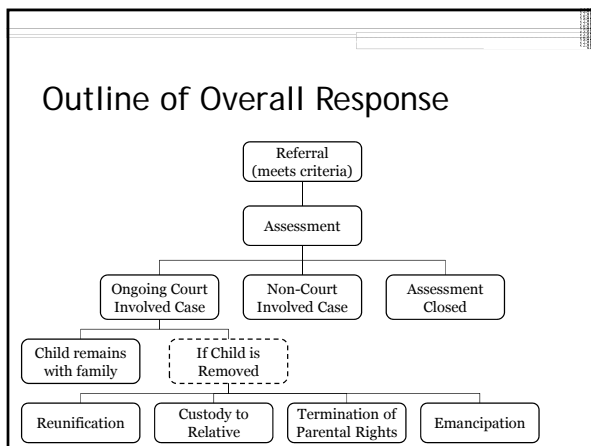
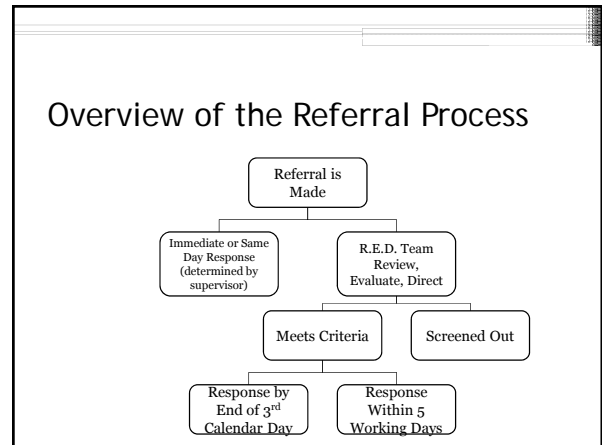
Megan Burch

Colorado Child Welfare System

Coordination with Child Welfare



Child Welfare
Impacting the future of a child



Coordination with Child Welfare

- The child welfare system experiences many challenges with domestic violence
- Through partnership with child welfare, our role as domestic violence advocates can provide insight into the pattern of coercive control, the impact on children and safety planning
- These opportunities can occur on an individual case level, as well as a system level, to strengthen the overall response to domestic violence

Client Based Advocacy

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Client Based Advocacy

- For some domestic violence advocates, client based advocacy may be our only experience with the child welfare system
- Throughout the entire process, there are some methods of support that we can consistently offer.
 - Accompanying a victim to any meetings with child welfare or any court dates
 - Providing general information to caseworkers about domestic violence and the impact on children

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

- As mandated child abuse/neglect reporters, we make reports that we know may be putting a victim parent and their child in danger
- It is critical that when we make these reports that we are able to provide information that will assist child welfare in planning for safety for that family
- We can partner with a victim parent to provide the following information when making a report:
 - Pattern of coercive control and potential safety risks for the victim parent and/or children as a result of child welfare involvement
 - Safety strategies of the victim parent and additional supports the victim parent may have
 - How the perpetrator's behavior is impacting the child

Advocacy in the Assessment Process

- In this stage, caseworkers are looking to identify potential risks for the child and areas of strengths/safety with the family.
- We can work with victim parents to help identify the following to the caseworker:
 - Pattern of coercive control and the impact of the perpetrator's behavior on the children
 - Victim's safety strategies (current and past)

We can also partner with the victim parent to discuss the following issues with the caseworker:

- Potential risks to the victim with the involvement of child welfare and risks of specific information being put into the Dependency and Neglect petition
- Developing language in the petition that places the accountability with the perpetrator's behaviors

Family Services Plan

- Caseworkers are required to develop a Family Services Plan (also referred to as a treatment plan) with the family within 30-45 days of the filing of the Dependency and Neglect Petition
- Plans are intended to address the risk factors to the children that resulted in the opening of the ongoing case. The following components are included:
 - **Objectives**-behavior change
 - **Action Steps**-specific actions to be taken to achieve the change in behavior
 - **Measurement of Success**-how parents will demonstrate they have completed actions and achieved the objective
- Timeframes are also developed regarding the anticipated completion of each objective

Family Service Plan Advocacy

- Advocates could partner with child welfare to provide input on the development of the Family Services Plan.
- If a plan has already been developed, advocates can still have discussions with caseworkers about the content of the plan, as the plans can be modified.
- Partnership with a caseworker could include:
 - Exploring services that would be beneficial for the victim parent, or the feasibility of the victim parent participating in services.
 - Assisting the caseworker in maintaining focus on the perpetrator's behavior and developing language around that.

Advocacy and Perpetrator Accountability

- At times, our role as advocates may be to provide education around perpetrator behaviors and explore options for perpetrator accountability
- Encourage caseworker to make connections with any law enforcement entity involved in the case, such as the District Attorney's Office, probation, parole, etc.
- Provide information on options for supervised visitation, therapeutic visitation or safe exchanges in your community
- Assist caseworker brainstorm other people involved with the family that may be willing to make reports on the perpetrator's behavior to reduce need for the victim or children reporting

Offender Treatment Standards

- Caseworkers may be unfamiliar with the Domestic Violence Offender Management Board (DVOMB) treatment standards
- Advocates can partner with caseworkers to provide information regarding common questions or concerns. Examples of this include:
 - The difference between anger management and domestic violence treatment
 - The restriction for couple's and/or family counseling and the rationale behind that
 - The Multidisciplinary Treatment Team (MTT) process

System Based Advocacy

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Child Welfare System Assessment

- The previous webinar discussed the importance of agency assessment with collaboration opportunities
- We need to consider where a county child welfare office is in their capacity for coordination and plan our goals accordingly

Starting Slowly

- Reexamine the list of allies among child welfare staff and reach out
- Requesting training opportunities from child welfare staff regarding child abuse/neglect reporting and/or overall processes
- Offer to attend a child welfare staff meeting to discuss the services your agency provides

Networking Opportunities

- County Child Protection Teams (CPT)
- Child Protection/Human Services Resource Fairs
- County Domestic Violence Coordinating Councils
- Collaborative Management Program-HB1451

Training Opportunities

- Caseworkers must complete a specific number of training hours each year.
- Inquire with your county child welfare office to see if they have a training coordinator and partner with them on developing training opportunities. If your county does not have a training coordinator, start with an identified ally as a first step.
- Training for child welfare staff can range from dynamics of domestic violence, the impact on children, to partnership with victim parents and perpetrator accountability

Advanced Opportunities

- Positive collaborations between your agency and the county child welfare office can result in enhanced opportunities for partnership.
- These opportunities could include:
 - General consultation on domestic violence cases through case staffings/mappings
 - Consultation on language in Family Service Plans
 - Co-location of a domestic violence advocate with their agency

Closing Thoughts

- Developing relationships with child welfare is a process
- Coordination with child welfare needs to allow for flexibility
- Take time to recognize small victories during the process of coordination with child welfare



Questions or Comments?

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Useful Resources

- Colorado Department of Human Services
 Domestic Violence Practice Guide for Child Protective Services
 Shortcut link: tiny.cc/5ce66w
- David Mandel and Associates
 Safe and Together Model
www.endingviolence.com

Practical Tools in the Domestic Violence
Practice Guide for Child Protective Services

- Appendix E: Interviewing the Adult Victim-p.103-104
- Appendix F: Interviewing the Children-p.105
- Appendix G: Interview the Perpetrator-p.106-107
- Appendix H: Sample Domestic Violence Case Documentation-p.108
- Appendix G: Sample Adult Victim Family Service Plan Language-p.109
- Appendix J: Sample Perpetrator Family Service Plan Language-p.111-116

Thank you for your
participation!



- CCADV recognizes the powerful and complex role that Child Welfare can have in survivors' lives.
 - We are committed to assisting survivors by providing advocates with information to enhance partnerships with local Child Welfare agencies.
- Please contact us for information, brainstorming, and support! Beth Collins - ecollins@ccadv.org