

Safe and Together™ model

Case Planning with Batterers in Child Welfare Cases

The following are items that could be part of case or safety plan with a domestic violence perpetrator involved with child welfare. This list is suggestive but not exhaustive. Other items, not included here, might also be useful for promoting the safety and well being of the children and family.

Each item below is accompanied by a brief description of the item's purpose and a suggestion for evaluating achievement of the item. Please note the overall emphasis of the items is on behavior change, not simply on the completion of a program.

The effective development of a case plan starts with a thorough assessment of the perpetrator's pattern of coercive control and actions taken to harm the children. This baseline helps determine the focus of behavior change expectations and provides the best chance for determining real behavior change.

Any interventions with perpetrators ideally occur in conjunction with partnership with the domestic violence survivor around safety and well being.

1. No further physical violence towards any member of the household (includes pets).

Purpose: To set clear boundaries around future violence. To end physical harm and fear of further violence for all members of the household.

Success: No reported violence by any member of household, extended family members or other witnesses, and no observed indication of violence, i.e. bruises. No new arrests.

2. No further intimidating behavior towards any member of household. This includes verbal threats, defined or undefined, destruction of property, throwing objects, punching walls, etc.

Purpose: To end climate of fear and increase the feeling of safety in the household.

Success: No reported intimidating or threatening behavior. No reported or observed damage to household, especially holes in wall, etc. Worker will look for missing or broken objects in household. Household members will be interviewed for presence of threats or intimidating behavior.

3. All weapons will be removed from the premises including guns, bows and arrows, shotguns, hunting rifles. The weapons will need to be sold or given to law enforcement for safekeeping.

Purpose: To reduce likelihood that identified weapons will be used to assault or intimidate members of the household.

Success: Batterer will produce bill of sale or receipt from police.

4. Seek out an evaluation and comply with recommendations of domestic violence counseling to address issues of coercive control and abuse. Anger management, family, couples' or regular individual counseling will not be accepted as treatment in domestic violence cases. The treatment will have as its goals:

- a. The cessation of violent, abusive and controlling behaviors towards the adult partner.**
- b. The cessation of violent and abusive behaviors toward any children in the home.**
- c. Education about the effects of violence, abuse and controlling behaviors on family members.**
- d. The development and implementation of behavior change plan to prevent further abuse and violence.**
- e. Collateral contact with the adult victim and the referring agencies for exchange of information about the purpose and limitations of the counseling; the batterer's pattern of abuse and violence and other relevant information about the batterer.**

Purpose: To engage batterer in appropriate counseling with the goal of ending coercive control and physical violence over family. To obtain a professional evaluation of a client's motivation to change abusive behavior, and his understanding of the impact of his abusive behaviors.

Success: Completion of required evaluation and (when recommended) counseling sessions. Reports from victim and children that abusive behavior has ended. Victim reports of greater safety and freedom. Commonly recommended lengths of counseling range from six months to one year. Actual length of counseling determined on an individual basis.

5. Will not use physical discipline with children.

Purpose: To create clear boundaries around discipline in order to prevent child abuse.

Success: No bruises or other indications of physical discipline. No reports from anyone in the family of further physical discipline.

6. Will be able to acknowledge a majority of past abusive and violent behavior towards partner and children, which will include:

- a. **Detailing the abusive nature of specific actions, physical and non-physical**
- b. **Display an understanding of the impact of these behaviors on his partner, children and himself**
- c. **Display an ability to discuss his own abusive actions without blaming others or outside circumstances for his behavior**
- d. **Be able to demonstrate non-abusive, non-violent behavior when in prior similar circumstances he would have become violent or abusive.**

Purpose: The batterer will be able to demonstrate to others, including DCF workers and family members, non-abusive behavior and a sense of responsibility for his own abusive behavior.

Success: Can do the above things.

7. When necessary, the batterer will seek and follow recommendations of substance abuse evaluation/actively engage in a program of recovery.

Purpose: While substance abuse does not cause domestic violence, it co-occurs with domestic violence in many batterers. Substance abuse, when suspected, must be addressed through a separate evaluation and counseling process from the domestic violence. Active substance abuse may increase the batterer's dangerousness and/or inhibit his ability to benefit from domestic violence counseling.

Success: The batterer will complete recommended evaluation. When there is an identified substance abuse problem, the batterer remains clean and sober. The substance abuse evaluator indicates no need for substance abuse treatment.

8. When necessary, the batterer seek and follow recommendations for mental evaluation/will stay involved with any mental health counseling, and follow doctor's recommendations, including taking prescribed medications.

Purpose: While mental health issues (e.g. depression, PTSD) do not cause domestic violence, they can co-occur with domestic violence in batterers. Untreated mental issues may increase the dangerousness of the batterer and/or hinder his ability to engage in domestic violence counseling.

Success: The batterer will complete recommended evaluation. When recommended, the batterer will maintain recommended mental health treatment regimen, e.g. counseling sessions, medications.

9. The batterer will not deny partner access to phone, vehicle or other forms of communication and transportation.

Purpose: The batterer cannot isolate the adult victim/children from access to friends, family, and employment by controlling communication and transportation.

Success: The victim/children report access to existing communication and transportation resources. Social worker observes access to existing communication and transportation resources.

10. The batterer will share with partner all relevant information to income and family financial circumstances. When access has been limited, the perpetrator will be expected to address this issue.

Purpose: This expectation is intended to reduce the batterer's financial control over his partner and the family.

Success: The batterer provides the victim with pay stubs and information on bank accounts and other assets. Provides access to joint financial resources.

11. The client will disclose to partner all information relevant to child abuse and domestic violence, including prior arrests, open cases with other children with DCF, probation.

Purpose: In order to maintain control or avoid negative consequences, batterers will often lie or withhold information from his partner. By requiring him to share information about his prior criminal history, current criminal justice involvement, domestic violence and/or child abuse history the batterer will provide the partner with information relevant for her risk analysis and safety planning and demonstrate a willingness to be more honest and less manipulative about past behavior.

Success: The partner reports that the batterer has shared with her all known information about his prior criminal history, current criminal justice involvement, domestic violence and/or child abuse history.

12. If the couple is separated, there is a no contact order or there has been a pattern of isolation or stalking, no unwanted or unexpected visits to partner's home or office (can include her family or other identified relatives).

Purpose: Batterers regularly attempt to pressure or coerce a partner who has left to return to him. This behavior can be very threatening and lead to physical violence.

Success: No reports of threatening or harassing behaviors.

13. Respect all existing court orders, including protective, restraining, custody and visitation and child support orders.

Purpose: Batterers often defy court orders. Including "respect all existing court orders" in child protection expectations underscores the importance of those orders to the safety and well-being of the children and emphasizes the need for the client to comply with other court orders as a condition of complying with child welfare

and/or juvenile/family court.

Success: All reports (partner, other courts) indicate that the batterer is complying with all existing court orders.

14. In lieu of formal child support order, the batterer will maintain financial support for his children regardless of whether he resides with them or not.

Purpose: To reduce the batterer's ability to control or coerce his partner through financial pressure. To articulate the expectation that the batterer will provide for the basic needs of his children regardless of the status of his relationship with their mother.

Success: The social worker verifies that the batterer is maintaining his financial support of his children.

15. The batterer will support all reasonable efforts to provide his child(ren) with appropriate services including childcare, healthcare (e.g. well-baby visits). The batterer will not interfere with the other parent's efforts to seek out services for themselves and the children.

Purpose: To articulate the expectation that the batterer will provide support for the physical and emotional needs of his children regardless of the status of his relationship with their mother. To prevent isolation of mother and children from necessary services.

Success: The partner/children report access to services.