



<b>POLICY TITLE:</b>		<b><i>Domestic Violence</i></b>	
 		<b>CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY</b>	
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>Original Effective Date:</b>	<b>Last Revision:</b>
Brenda Donald	<b>August 26, 2019</b>	November 1, 2006	August 19, 2013

<b>I. AUTHORITY</b>	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission, and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws and regulations including, but not limited to, provisions in Titles 4 and 16 of the DC Official Code, and the LaShawn A. v. Bowser Implementation and Exit Plan (December 17, 2010).
<b>II. APPLICABILITY</b>	All Agency employees and contractors.
<b>III. RATIONALE</b>	<p>There is a high co-occurrence of domestic violence in child abuse and neglect cases. As indicated in the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges' <a href="#"><i>Child and Family Service Review Outcomes: Strategies to Improve Domestic Violence Responses in CFSR Program Improvement Plans</i></a>, a child may be directly harmed in a domestic violence assault, inadvertently, or as a result of intervening or emotionally through exposure. In homes where there is domestic violence, however, children are more likely to experience neglect. Domestic violence has also been linked to degradation of family functioning, housing instability, mental health and substance abuse issues, loss of family income, criminal justice involvement, and other co-occurring issues with child welfare. Domestic violence can exacerbate pre-existing family problems and interfere with the child's and non-offending caregiver's ability to access resources.</p> <p>Many victims of domestic violence exhibit protective behaviors towards their children. While the primary focus of the child protection intervention in domestic violence cases is the ongoing safety and well-being of children, families dealing with domestic violence require immediate and on-going child welfare assessment, safety planning for the non-offending partner, and survivor-informed case planning. Child welfare agencies must have policies and practices that reflect a commitment to meeting child needs, reducing the impact of domestic violence on child safety and well-being, engaging the non-offending partner to support the parent-child relationship, and holding the offending partner accountable for the abusive behavior.</p> <p>Intervention with offending partners to improve outcomes and safety with families may include collaboration with criminal and civil court, law enforcement, neglect filings, behavioral-based case plans, efforts to support the offender in having a nurturing parenting relationship with the child(ren), and referrals to the appropriate services.</p>

<p><b>IV. POLICY</b></p>	<p>It is the policy of CFSA to take action to ensure the safety and well-being of children impacted by domestic violence by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognizing offending partners' patterns of assaultive and coercive behavior.</li> <li>2. Understanding and addressing the impact domestic violence has on child and family functioning.</li> <li>3. Engaging offending partners and holding them accountable for the physical, emotional and mental harm they inflict (or risk inflicting) on children.</li> <li>4. Having expectations that offending partners can become safe, nurturing, and responsible parents.</li> <li>5. Supporting the protective capacities of non-offending caregivers to increase their own safety and the safety, well-being and permanency of their children.</li> <li>6. Reducing the risk factors of abuse and neglect to the child, and supporting the child and parents in healing.</li> <li>7. Exploring and addressing substance abuse, mental health issues, and other contributing factors to the domestic violence situation.</li> <li>8. Working with families in culturally sensitive ways.</li> <li>9. Working collaboratively with community partners, providers, and systems to achieve family goals.</li> <li>10. Acknowledging the expertise of non-offending partners on dynamics of their family and their relationship with offending parents or partners.</li> </ol> <p>CFSA shall ensure that case plans for the domestic violence non-offending partner are individualized and appropriate based on their strengths and needs and the offending partner's pattern of coercive and/or abusive behaviors. These case plans involve only action steps over which the non-offending partner has control, which do not increase the risk of danger from the offending partner and do not revictimize the survivor, and which are necessary for the safety of the children or the non-offending partner.</p> <p>Referrals for services will be made only if the non-offending partner indicates interest and/or the case specific child welfare assessment indicates that such services are necessary for the safety and well-being of the non-offending partner and the children.</p> <p>CFSA shall consider a wide range of appropriate interventions with offending partners to reduce their risk to the family and others. Interventions may include behavior-based case plans, coordination and collaboration with law enforcement, probation agencies and courts, and referrals to specific services that target offending partners and support them in their role as parent.</p> <p>CFSA shall not substitute service referrals, such as anger management classes, for other co-occurring issues. Case plans shall address domestic violence specifically and recognize the offending partner's behaviors being at the root cause of the family's domestic violence issues.</p>
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<b>V. CONTENTS</b>	<b>A.</b> Initial Assessment <b>B.</b> Office of Well Being Consultative Services <b>C.</b> Ongoing Safety Assessment and Progress Monitoring <b>D.</b> Confidentiality and Documentation of Client Information
<b>VI. SECTIONS</b>	<b>Section A: Initial Assessment</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CFSA shall ensure that domestic violence screenings are completed for every open CPS investigation, ongoing in-home case, and ongoing permanency case. Such assessments shall occur at periodic intervals throughout the life of a case and shall be completed for reports/cases that do not necessarily include allegations of domestic violence.</li> <li>2. If domestic violence has occurred between the child's parent-figures within the last 12 months, CFSA shall work with the non-offending partner to create a realistic <a href="#">safety plan</a> appropriate for the offending partner's pattern of behavior and the non-offending partner's circumstance, including providing information about different community options available through the <a href="#">DC Victim Hotline</a>, <a href="#">DC SAFE</a>, the DC Superior Court, and law enforcement, and making appropriate service referrals and connections to community providers.</li> <li>3. Services recommended for the non-offending partner shall address the specific needs of the non-offending partner and the safety and well-being of the children.</li> <li>4. Services recommended for the offending partner shall address the specific behaviors that impact child safety and well-being.</li> </ol>
	<b>Section B: Office of Well Being Consultative Services</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The CFSA Domestic Violence Specialist in the Office of Well Being (OWB) shall provide consultation to social workers who suspect domestic violence is present or on cases with domestic violence complexities that exceed the social worker's own clinical expertise.</li> <li>2. If determined that further support and engagement is warranted, then OWB Domestic Violence Specialist and the assigned social worker shall co-facilitate an interview with the non-offending partner.</li> <li>3. A co-facilitated interview with the offending partner may occur if it is recommended by the domestic violence specialist and if engagement does not compromise the safety of the non-offending partner and children.</li> <li>4. OWB shall provide the non-offending partner and offending partner with educational materials and shall refer them to appropriate services and ensure the ongoing worker is made aware of the referrals.</li> </ol>
	<b>Section C: Ongoing Safety Assessment and Progress Monitoring</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If it becomes evident that a non-offending partner and his or her children are in imminent danger, the police shall be contacted immediately. Social worker, supervisory staff and the OWB shall be notified immediately thereafter.</li> </ol>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. CFSA shall regularly assess the extent to which the offending partner's behaviors continue to put the non-offending partner and child at risk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings shall be incorporated into regular and routine case planning activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. CFSA shall make efforts to obtain consent from the family, including the non-offending partner, the offending partner and children in order to assess and follow-up on treatment and progress.</li> <li>4. The domestic violence safety plan shall be regularly reviewed and updated.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Section D: Confidentiality and Documentation of Client Information</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confidentiality of client information shall always be maintained unless ensuring the safety of the children requires disclosure.</li> <li>2. CFSA shall inform the non-offending partner of the limitations to confidentiality between non-offending partners and CFSA.</li> <li>3. If requests for information are made by law enforcement, court or other party involved in litigation, CFSA's Office of the General Counsel must be consulted before any information is released.</li> <li>4. The non-offending partner's actual location, or any information about their whereabouts, shall never be shared with the offending partner. Any documentation of the non-offending partner's location (including shelter) shall be made in a contact note in FACES.NET and labeled as "Confidential".</li> <li>5. The documentation that supports court ordered referrals for both non-offending and offending partners will include case planning goals that are specific to addressing domestic violence.</li> </ol>

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