



Domestic Violence



Tips on recognizing domestic violence and steps to help client victims

Practice Value

Domestic violence threatens the safety of both children and adults. When domestic violence is present in a client family, CFSA takes special steps to intervene and reduce risk. Social workers should:

- Strive to increase the safety of parent victims as a priority strategy.
- Employ non-coercive, supportive, empowering strategies.
- Respect the rights of victims to direct their own lives.
- Secure appropriate services through battered women's programs, batterer treatment programs, and the criminal justice system.
- Acknowledge and respect perpetrator potential for healing, reform, and healthy relationship skills.

Office of
Clinical Practice

Sylvia Pauling-Williams
Domestic Violence Specialist
400 6th Street, Room 4009

Phone: 202-727-3526
Email: syliva.pauling@dc.gov

Definition of Domestic Violence in DC Law

District of Columbia Law ST 16-1001(5): *The term “intrafamily offense” means an act punishable as a criminal offense committed by an offender upon a person to whom the offender is related by blood, legal custody, marriage, having a child in common, or with whom the offender shares or has shared a mutual residence; or with whom the offender maintains or has maintained a romantic relationship not necessarily including a sexual relationship. A person seeking a protection order under this subparagraph shall reside in the District of Columbia or the underlying intrafamily offense shall have occurred in the District of Columbia.*

Some Indicators of Domestic Violence

- Unexplained physical injuries
- Lack of appropriate sexual boundaries
- Delay in seeking medical/professional attention
- Lack of access to transportation, identification, money, and other basic resources
- Guarded interactions
- Chaotic family structure
- Custody dispute
- No control over finances
- Overly submissive, apologetic, or non-assertive
- Partner refusal to practice birth control

Referral Process for Client Victims

- 1 The social worker completes the Domestic Violence Intervention Referral Form (DVIRF) on the CFSA Intranet. For help in locating and/or completing the form, call the Domestic Violence Specialist, 202-727-3526.
- 2 The social worker forwards the form to the Domestic Violence Specialist in the Office of Clinical Practice, sylvia.pauling@dc.gov or 400 6th Street, Room 4009.
- 3 The Domestic Violence Specialist consults with the social worker, reviews his/her assessment of the client's situation, and informs the social worker of referrals for services.
- 4 The Domestic Violence Specialist documents assessment information and service referrals in FACES.
- 5 The social worker monitors client use of services and coordinates with the Domestic Violence Specialist to assess client progress and modify or update the safety plan.