

Dynamics of Family Violence & Considerations for Child Welfare Cases Webinar

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TEXAS COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

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**WHO IS THE TEXAS COUNCIL ON
FAMILY VIOLENCE?**

Objectives for Today

Importance of understanding dynamics of domestic violence

How family violence might show up in your courtroom

Responding to family violence dynamic in the courtroom



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Disclaimers & Terminology

Take care of yourself during the presentation.

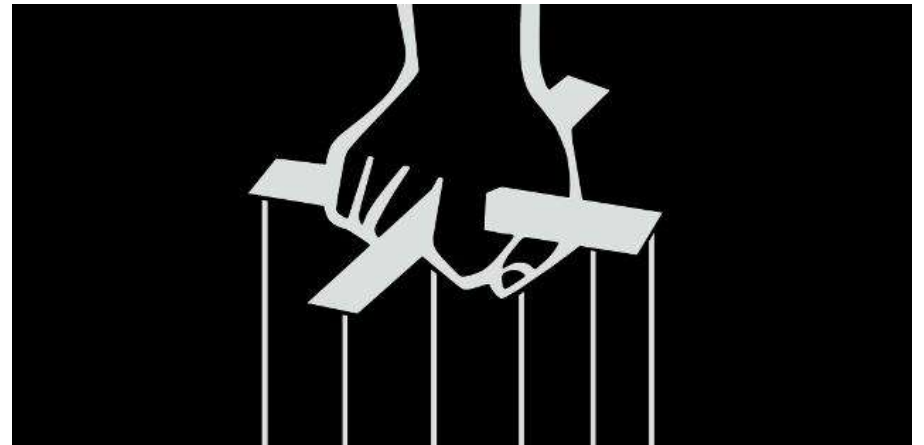
Every case of violence is unique.

Victim vs Survivor

He vs She

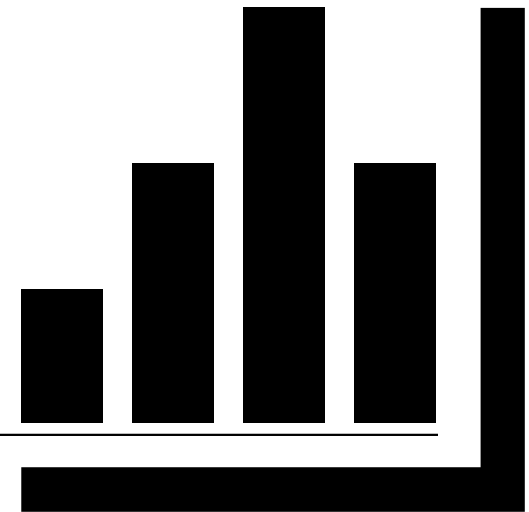
Coercive Control

A strategic course of conduct in which violence, sexual coercion, intimidation, isolation, and control are used to dominate and exploit a partner and deprive the partner of basic rights and resources, *especially dignity, autonomy, and liberty.*

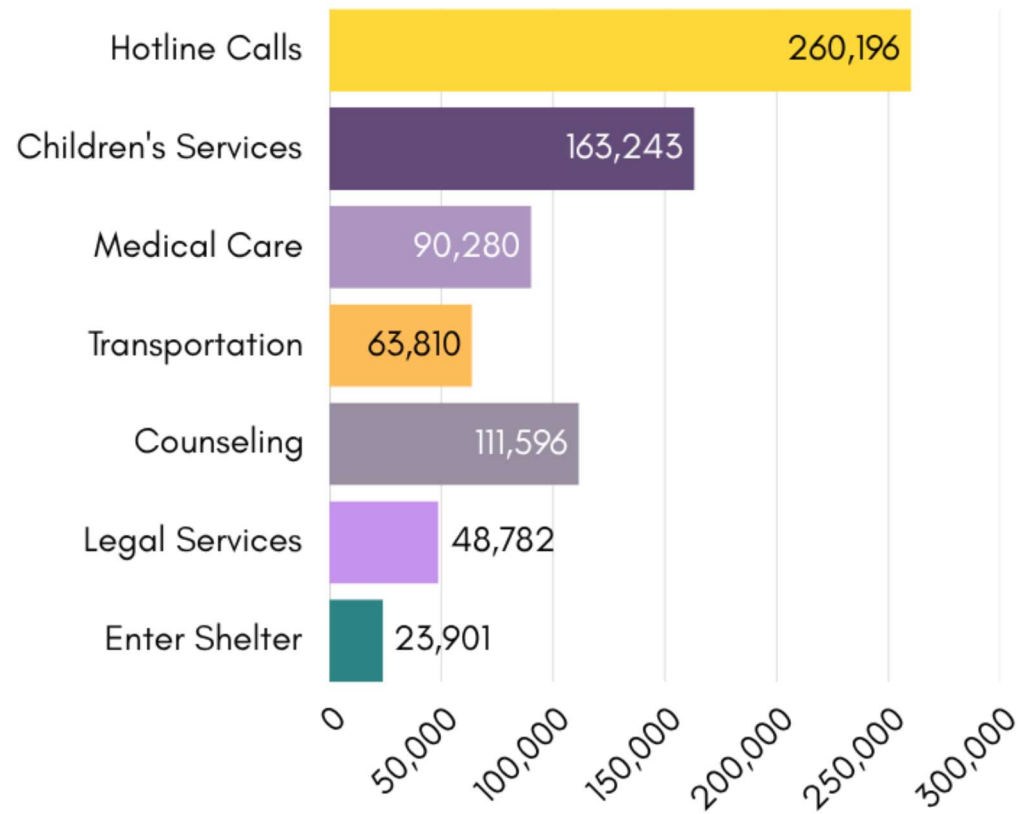


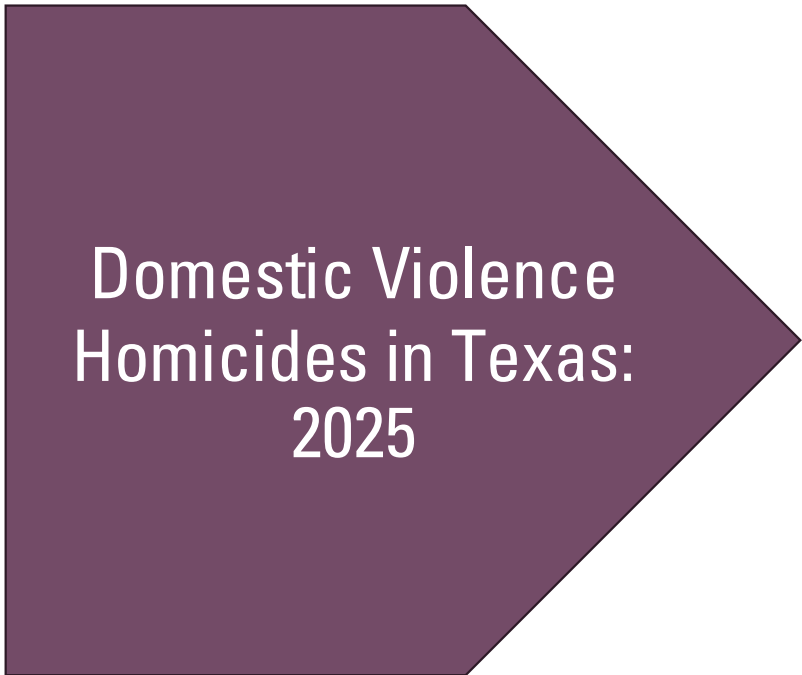
Importance of Understanding DV - Prevalence

- More than 1 in 3 women and more than 1 in 6 men reported experiencing contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking victimization by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.
- In 2024, NDVH received 742,430 contacts from people seeking help. 30,841 of those were from Texas. The following types of abuse were identified:
 - 94% identified emotional / verbal abuse
 - 67% identified physical abuse
 - 39% identified economic / financial abuse
 - 13% identified technology-facilitated abuse
 - 17% identified sexual abuse



FY25 Service Contacts





Domestic Violence Homicides in Texas: 2025

160 Texans were killed by
their intimate partners

45 counties in Texas
experienced at least one
or more homicide due to
intimate partner violence

136 female-identified victims

24 male-identified victims

9 LGBTQIA+

15 additional deaths of
victim's families, friends,
or bystanders

Risks for Intimate Partner Homicide

Strangulation: Key Predictor

- Strangulation is a severe predictor of future intimate partner homicide (IPH). **78%** of offenders in DVHRT cases had a history of strangling their victim.
- Strangulation is often used by abusers as a tool of **coercive control**, instilling fear in victims and preventing them from feeling safe enough to reach out for help.
- Survivors who have been strangled are **750% more likely** to be killed by their abuser.



Risks for Intimate Partner Homicide

Stalking: Last Chance

- Stalking, particularly by current or former intimate partners, is a significant risk factor for intimate partner homicide (IPH).
 - Recent updates to **Texas Penal Code 42.072** provide enhanced protections for victims by allowing stalking charges based on actions that make victims feel "terrified or intimidated."
 - The law permits juries to evaluate a stalker's actions from the perspective of a **reasonable person in the victim's circumstances**.
 - Stalking behaviors often escalate after victims report incidents, emphasizing the need for strong judicial oversight and safety planning.
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Risks for Intimate Partner Homicide

Firearms: Leading Factor in IPH

- In 2024, 114 people were shot and killed by an abusive partner with a firearm.
 - Roughly 70% of all IPHs were related to firearms.
 - A significant portion of offenders were **prohibited possessors** of firearms but still managed to retain access.
 - Firearm access dramatically increases the risk of lethal outcomes in domestic violence cases.
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Domestic Violence:

Not Just for Family Court

Economic Stability

Employment

Housing

Healthcare

Immigration

Privacy

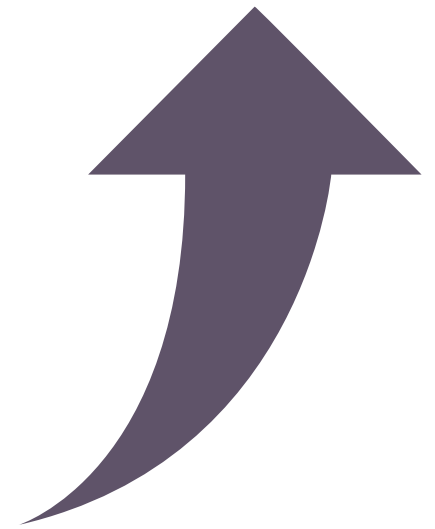


'Why Doesn't She
Just Leave?'

INCREASED RISK OF LETHALITY

[HTTP://DVONLINEGUIDE.ORG/EN/DV-STATISTICS/204-KNOW-MORE/DOMESTIC-VIOLENCE-101/305-WHY-DO-VICTIMS-STAY](http://dvonlineguide.org/en/dv-statistics/204-know-more/domestic-violence-101/305-why-do-victims-stay)

Women who leave their
abusive partners are at a 75%
greater risk of being killed
than those who stay



WHY I STAYED

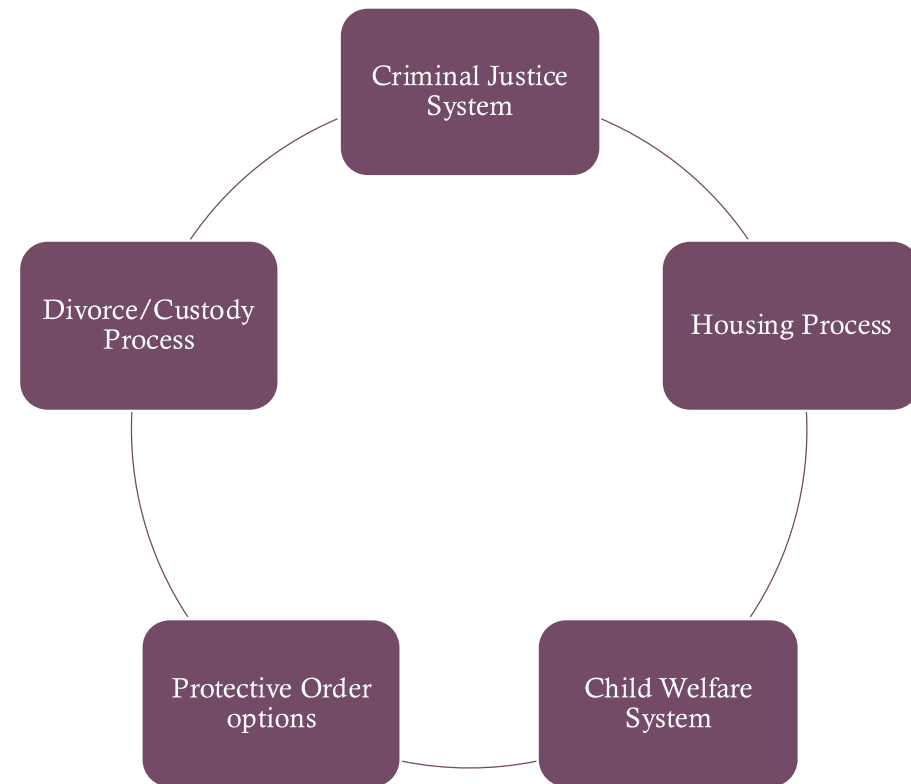
Fear of an escalation of the violence.

Lack of real alternatives for living - housing, employment, financial support.

Belief that she caused the violence.

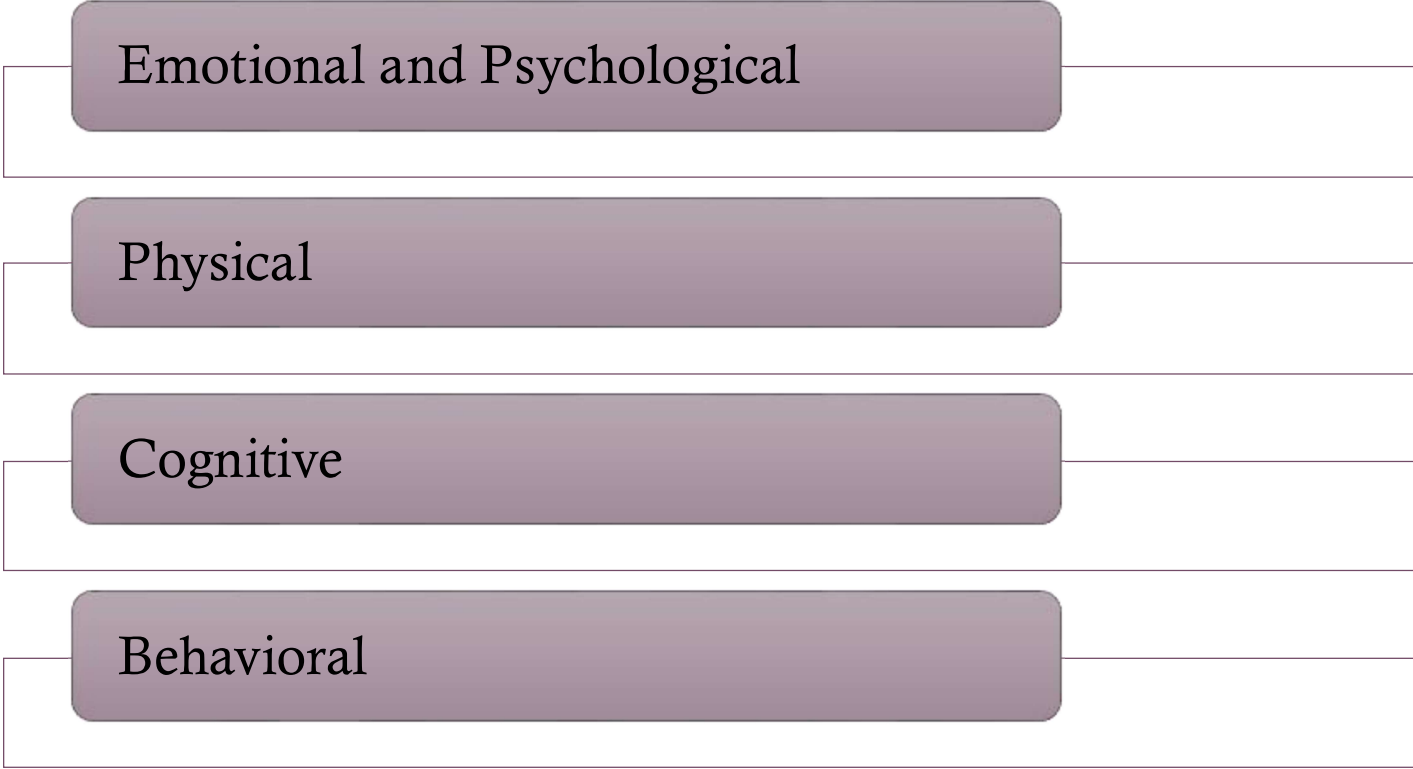
Values - both cultural and religious - that say keep family unit together at all costs.

Immobilization by psychological and/or physical trauma.





What Does Trauma Look Like?



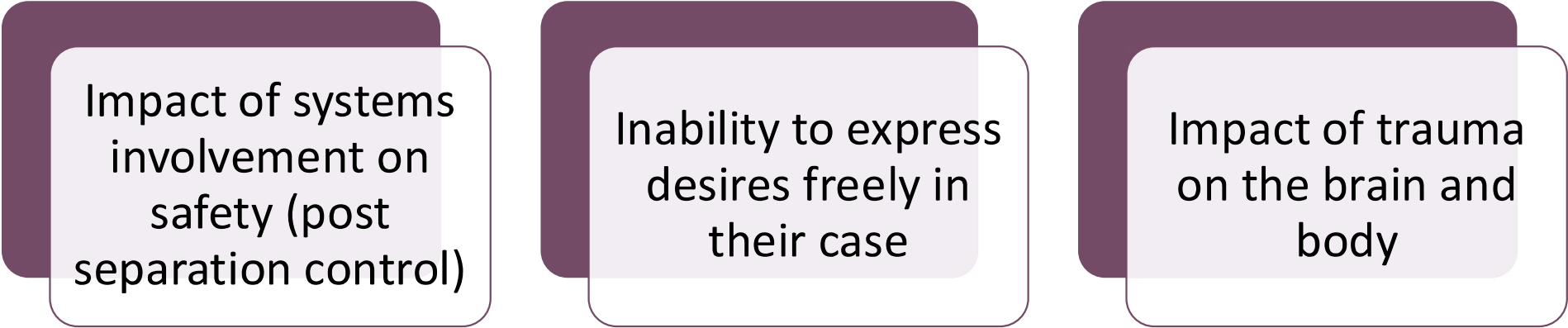
Emotional and Psychological

Physical

Cognitive

Behavioral

How Might a Survivor Show Up in the Courtroom?



Impact of systems involvement on safety (post separation control)

Inability to express desires freely in their case

Impact of trauma on the brain and body

How Those Who Use Violence Exploit Trauma



- Distort it as indicative of weakness or mental illness
 - Imply that it impacts their parenting abilities
 - Undermine their credibility
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Control Tactics Common in Court Settings

Intimidation

Isolation

Stalking Behaviors

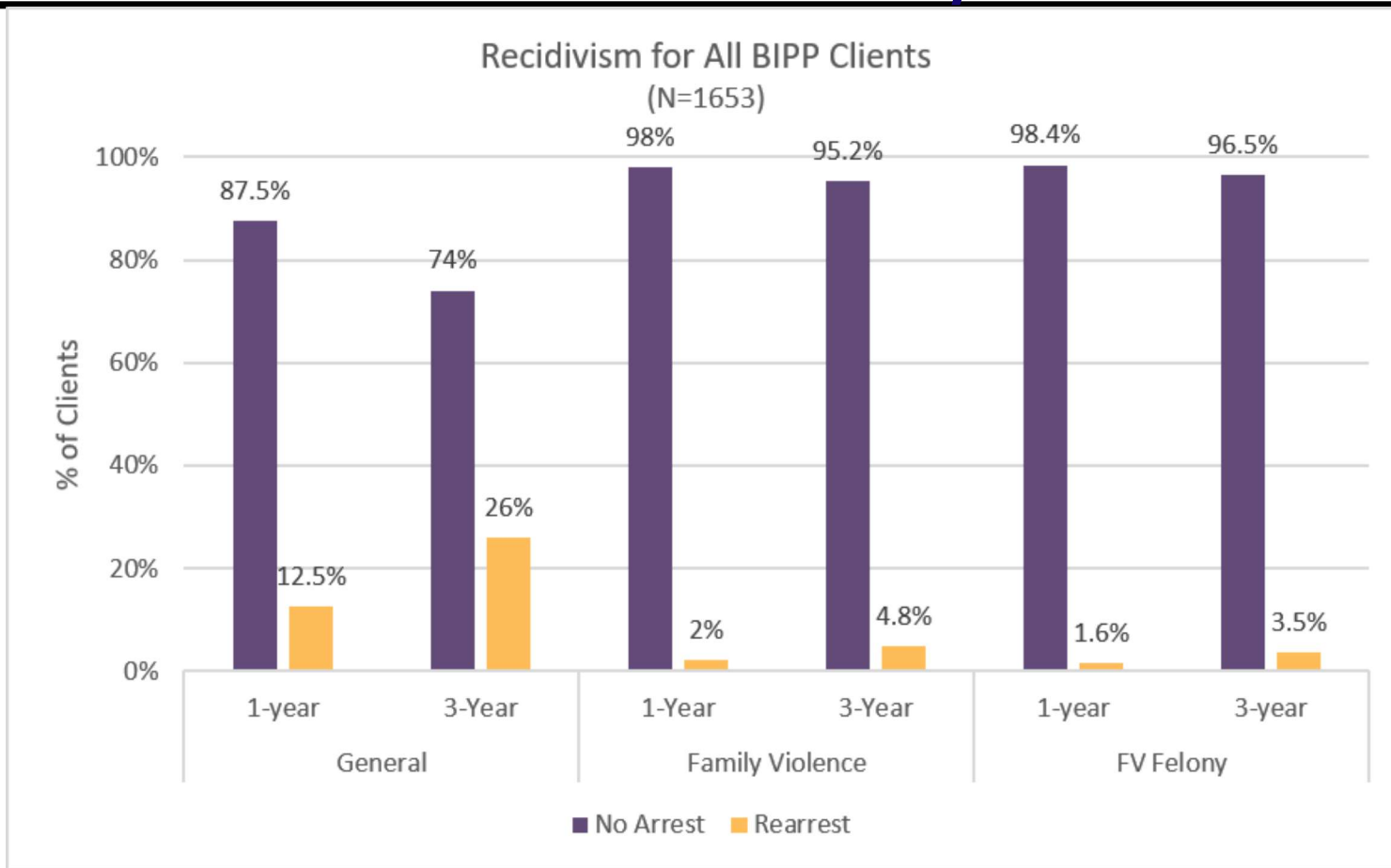
Nonverbal Communication

Litigation Abuse

Practical Application: Appropriate Referrals

BIPP	Theory: Intimate partner violence is a pattern . BIPP addresses / challenges the need to control a partner, which is premeditated (not reactionary). IPV is shaped and supported by societal, familial, and cultural norms.	Identifies and addresses underlying attitudes and beliefs that lead to violence and control.	State accredited by TDCJ-CJAD and audited every 1-3 years.
Anger Mgmt.	Theory: Therapeutic techniques and exercises that address excessive and uncontrollable anger and reduce triggers and degrees.	Addresses an individual's anger in specific situations and general anger.	Unregulated.

BIPP Efficacy



See next slide for citation.

BIPP Efficacy

- “Program completion is associated with significantly better outcomes across all measured recidivism indicators. Completers were less likely to be rearrested in general and far less likely to reoffend in a family violence context.”
- “These differences suggest that successful program engagement may play a meaningful role in reducing both overall and family violence-related recidivism, particularly in the long term.”

Boots, D., & Bray, T. (2025). *The Efficacy of Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs*. The Institute for Urban Policy Research at The University of Texas at Dallas. <https://tcfv.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Efficacy-of-Battering-Intervention-and-Prevention-Programs.pdf>



Impacts on Child, Family, & Social Well-Being

15.5 Million Children

- Live in a home where IPV has occurred at least once in the last year
- 7 million of those children witnessed severe violence

By Age 17

- Over 1/3 of America's children will have been exposed to IPV

Over Half

- (56.8%) of children exposed to IPV had also themselves been mistreated at some point in their life

30-60% of IPV
Perpetrators

- Also abuse children in the household

Domestic Violence Fatalities & Children

128

- Children lost at least one parent in those homicides

124

- Children died from abuse/neglect in 2025

41

- Of the families who suffered a child fatality included a parent actively using domestic violence

60

- Of the families who lost a child had a documented history of family domestic violence
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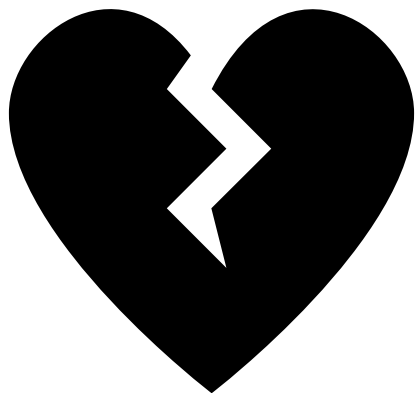
Custody Outcomes: Not What You Think

- Initial Review of Court opinions in over **15000** cases
- Quantitative study of **4,338** of those
- Mothers alleged abuse in **2,189** of those cases



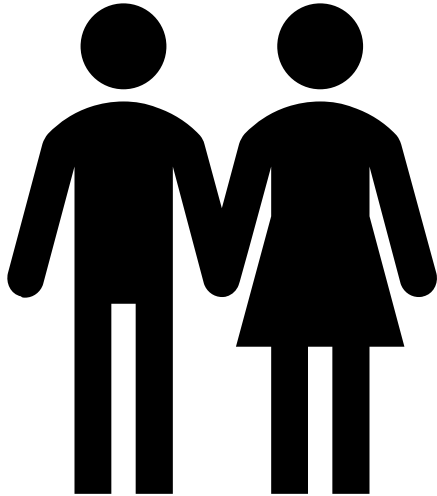
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Case Example: Eva and Isaiah



- Background: During an argument between Eva and Isaiah while Isaiah was driving, the altercation turned physical with Eva pulling on Isaiah's arm and Isaiah hitting her to get her arm off. Eva's 2yo was in a car seat in the back. As the altercation escalated, Eva pulled a pocketknife out of her purse and stabbed Isaiah in the leg, causing the car to wreck.
 - Eva was arrested. Isaiah was treated for the wound to his leg. The child remained safe in her car seat, but frightened in the totaled vehicle.
 - CPS got involved and child was removed from Eva. Removal affidavit echoed the LE report, which noted that the incident arose from mutual combat when the couple engaged in domestic violence, and ultimately ended in assault caused by Eva.
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Case Example: Playground



- Background: 4yo Evan was seen playing alone, with no adults nearby, on a playground in a large gated apartment complex. There was a gate to the complex, but it had not worked since Evan's family moved in, and there was constant foot traffic in and out.
 - A neighbor noticed Evan by himself and was walking outside to investigate when Evan fell off the climbing apparatus and hit his head on the metal base. This same neighbor had seen Evan alone on the playground on multiple occasions.
 - CPS was called and an investigation was opened for neglectful supervision.
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Practical Application: Response to the Presence of Domestic Violence

Ask specific questions about:

- Finances
- Decision-making
- Connection to support network
- Conflict resolution



A SAFER FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING DOMESTIC ABUSE



For any SAFeR Related questions, please email: NLCCDV@bwjp.org
More detailed worksheets available at www.bwjp.org

SAFeR Model Court Order

LIMIT OR MONITOR ABUSIVE PARENT'S ACCESS TO CHILD OR VICTIM PARENT:

- Limit methods of communication (no in-person, telephonic or social media contact)
- Prescribe frequency and methods of communication (email only, text only, etc.)
- Restrict length and/or content of communication (1-page, 10-minutes, scope, etc.)
- Limit access to sensitive information (addresses, account numbers, SSNs, records)
- Issue and enforce no contact orders and orders for protection
- Require neutral exchange locations (school, place of business, etc.)
- Require third party exchanges (professional, friend, family member, etc.)
- Restrict visitation to designated location (grandparent's home, public park, church)

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SAFeR Model Court Order

LIMIT OR MONITOR ABUSIVE PARENT'S ACCESS TO CHILD OR VICTIM PARENT:

- Restrict visitation to a geographical area (25-mile radius, in town, state, or country)
- Condition visitation on having third party present (professional, friend, family)
- Restrict what can happen during visitation (no alcohol or drugs, no weapons, etc.)
- Establish benchmarks for unsupervised access (no abuse, no threats, no violations)
- Condition access on compliance with established terms (sobriety, **BIP**, car seat, etc.)
- Appoint a post-visitation safety monitor to ensure visits are safe and go as planned
- Periodically monitor and conduct risk and danger assessments
- Define consequences for non-compliance with access restrictions

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SAFeR Model Court Order

MONITOR AND ENFORCE ABUSIVE PARENT'S COMPLIANCE WITH PARENTING PLAN:

- Review previous DV-related orders at permanency/status hearings
- Establish schedule for abusive parent to demonstrate compliance with plan
- Set automatic consequences for non-compliance with parenting plan
- Appoint a compliance monitor at abusive parent's cost
- Hold abusive parent accountable for unjustified, unexcused, intentional violations

REQUIRE ABUSIVE PARENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVENTIONS and/or SERVICES

- Refer abusive parent to batterer intervention for assessment and proper services
- Refer abusive parent to parenting after violence for assessment/proper services

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Q & A





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