CHAPTER 1
ABOUT THE
CWCS TRAINING CURRICULUM

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**Purpose of the chapter**

The information in Chapter 1 provides background primarily for the trainer/facilitators. It is not necessary to explain this information in detail to participants.
CWCS CURRICULUM ORIGINS IN MINNESOTA PROJECT

The Collaborating for Women and Child Safety (CWCS) training curriculum is designed to serve as the basis for collaborative work in rural and tribal jurisdictions on the interrelated issues of domestic violence and child maltreatment. This curriculum is part of a Minnesota statewide project to develop, implement, and evaluate local rural county and tribal interagency practice protocols for responding to families in which both women and children are victims of violence within the same family unit. Local teams comprised of child and youth advocates, battered women’s advocates, county child protection workers, child abuse service program staff, and other criminal justice professionals are being asked to come together and work collaboratively to achieve the project’s goals. These teams are being guided and supported by regional community specialists as the collaborative groups work toward coordinated community responses.

GOALS OF THE MINNESOTA PROJECT

- Enhance the safety of women and child victims of domestic violence in rural Minnesota through coordinated community response
- Increase services to battered women with children
- Improve access to services for women and child victims in rural Minnesota
- Develop, implement, and evaluate local interagency protocols for responding to families that are characterized by the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment or potential child maltreatment

OBJECTIVES OF THE CWCS TRAINING

- Provide in-depth information for multiple disciplines about violence against women in intimate relationships, and child maltreatment and childhood exposure to domestic violence
- Provide information and instruction on best collaborative practices with families in which violence against women and child maltreatment co-exist
- Provide guidelines and instruction on interagency protocol development with emphasis on the importance of interagency teams
- Provide guidance in developing goals for collaborative practice and objectives for reaching the goals
- Provide background and training for evaluating the implementation of protocols and projects
INTENDED AUDIENCE

The training sessions are intended for local area (county and/or tribal-based) multi-agency collaborative teams consisting of at least one representative of each of the following:

- County child protection workers
- Community-based domestic violence program staff
- Abused children's program or visitation center (parenting-time) center staff
- Tribal social services and/or law enforcement personnel

In addition to these central team components, local areas may also choose to include representatives of:

- Juvenile, family, and criminal court services personnel including probation and guardians ad litem
- Law enforcement
- Mental health and treatment service providers

In some cases these teams may already exist as child abuse teams, domestic violence coordinating councils, or child abuse prevention councils. In other instances, this may be a new or different interagency team.

BASIC FORMAT OF CWCS TRAINING

- The training sequence consists of four days totaling 24 to 28 hours. Participants are invited to attend an initial two-day training session, with two follow-up one-day training sessions occurring at three-month intervals after the initial core training.
- Training is provided by an inter-disciplinary team of trainers representing the major disciplines involved.
- Space for the training should allow groups to break into small discussion groups.
- Multiple presentation methods are used including lecture, case study, small group, and audio-visual materials.

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SOCIAL & POLITICAL CONTEXT

The child welfare system in the United States is in the midst of a major re-examination of how best to provide long-term safety to abused and neglected children. Prominent among the variety of issues driving this reform are reductions in public support of social welfare programs in general, evidenced in welfare reform, and recognition that the child protection agencies are often overwhelmed by the large number of reports coming in each year. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System received 2.9 million reports of alleged child maltreatment from state child protection agencies in 1994. State agencies substantiated over 1 million of these reports. Overall, these data indicate a 14% increase in reports and a 27% increase in substantiated cases in the five years from 1990 to 1994 (NCCAN, 1996).

Many child welfare reform efforts have demonstrated a shift away from problem-focused practice in favor of strengths-based practice and increased collaboration with existing community-based services in the private non-profit sector. Greater interaction with community-based programs has led some child welfare systems to re-examine their approaches to protecting children. Alternative or differential response and neighborhood-based agencies are examples of new approaches.

One result of this interaction has been increased recognition of other victims of violence in the home, particularly battered mothers. Traditionally, child protective services have depended upon mothers, as most often the primary caregivers, to be the stalwarts of safety for children. Yet as child welfare workers, along with the general public, have become more aware of domestic violence, they have uncovered increasing numbers of assaulted mothers among their child protection caseloads.

Recent reviews of more than 35 studies conducted during the past two decades have revealed that in about half the families in which a child is being abused, the mother is also being assaulted (Appel & Holden, 1999; Edleson, 1999). Most often these studies have collected data for other purposes, only incidentally mentioning the overlap of child abuse and mother assaults in the same homes, and providing little more than an indication that it is significant.

Estimates of the number of children who are not abused but witness adult domestic violence vary from 3.3 million (Carlson, 1984) to 10 million (Straus, 1992). A growing body of research has shown that these child witnesses are likely to exhibit a host of developmental problems including behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and physical difficulties (Edleson, 1999). Increasingly, this literature has shown that problems associated with witnessing assaults on one’s mother are distinct from the effects of the child’s own victimization. But among children who have witnessed abuse, also being a victim adds additional risk for emotional and behavioral problems (Rossman, 2000).

Increased awareness of the danger in families where multiple forms of violence exist has raised questions concerning the extent to which informal and formal
systems of help improve the safety of abused children and their battered mothers. Informal sources such as family, friends, and neighbors have been found useful in enhancing battered mothers’ safety. For example, women have received material assistance, emotional support, and protection from informal sources (Lampert, 1993). Bowker’s (1993) study of battered women found that they turned first to informal networks for help and when those failed to stop violence they turned to formal systems. How formal systems respond to these situations can seriously affect both children’s and their mothers’ safety. For example, common practice in child protection is to require mothers to obtain an order for protection excluding the abusive adult from the home. However, it has been suggested that orders for protection may be counter-productive because they can result in increased violence by perpetrators who are angry at being excluded from their residences (Attorney General’s Task Force on Family Violence, 1984).

HISTORY OF THE MINNESOTA PROJECT

Over the past decade, Jeffrey Edleson of the University of Minnesota has worked with Susan Schechter of the University of Iowa to begin a national policy discussion of how to respond to families in which both children and their mothers are being assaulted. A conference in June 1994 at Wingspread in Wisconsin, jointly sponsored by the Johnson Foundation and Ford Foundation, brought together national leaders in child protection, family preservation and domestic violence intervention for three days of discussion and debate about the best ways to respond. Schechter and Edleson’s briefing paper for this Wingspread Conference, titled “In the Best Interest of Women and Children,” has been widely circulated and cited in child welfare reform efforts nationally.

The conference, briefing paper, and many other projects around the country have generated a number of follow-up meetings, publications, new practice protocols and pilot programs aimed at building collaboration among these diverse service sectors. Among the meetings and publications have been those sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), the Children’s Safety Network, Edna McConnel Clark Foundation, and the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. In the past five years, several publications have been released that pull together much of the research, policy, and practice insight on the complex issue of co-occurring child maltreatment and domestic violence. For example, the NCJFCJ has published two important documents that serve as groundwork for this curriculum project: Family Violence: Emerging Programs For Battered Mothers and Their Children (1998) and Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence & Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice (1999). In May 1999, Child Maltreatment, the journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children published a special focus issue titled “Interventions and Issues in the Co-Occurrence of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence,” and in late 1999 the David and Lucile Packard Foundation

During this same period many jurisdictions around the country have piloted exciting collaborative ventures. These many meetings, conferences, publications, and ground breaking service efforts have generated a great deal of interest and action, and serve as the basis for this curriculum. Equally important are the contributions of more than four dozen collaborative programs across the country that have been working over the past decade to develop ways of serving the victims of family violence more effectively.

In Minnesota, we were invited to contribute this curriculum to another such collaborative effort. Our project is a statewide, multi-agency effort to assist rural and tribal communities to better address the needs of battered women and their children. This training curriculum is one part of the total project funded by a grant from Violence Against Women Office of the Department of Justice, under their Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program, to the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services (MCCVS), which contracted with the Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse (MINCAVA) to develop the training curriculum.

We hope this curriculum and the protocol development segment of this project will be useful to the communities in Minnesota that are beginning to work together in innovative and collaborative ways, across long-standing boundaries, to better serve and protect both child and adult victims of family violence.

**DEVELOPMENT & USE OF THE MINNESOTA CWCS CURRICULUM**

For those in Minnesota who were not part of the original project and those outside of Minnesota, there are a number of issues to consider before using this curriculum or segments of it. Each is discussed briefly here in order to communicate the context in which this training was implemented and to help you decide how this curriculum may be useful to you.

**Context**

This curriculum was developed by staff of MINCAVA in collaboration with the regional community specialists who conducted the Needs Assessment (see Appendix). The training was conducted within a specific context that may or may not be transferable to your situation.

First, some of the material is particular to the language, laws, and social service practice norms in Minnesota. Some language and concepts may not be completely transferable to another state or jurisdiction.

Second, the training was conducted over the course of a year with the considerable facilitation of four regional rural community specialists hired through the grant and managed/supervised by the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women.
These specialists were an integral part of the project since they were responsible for contacting local stakeholders, conducting a needs assessment, and then facilitating local team meetings before and after each of the training sessions in that region. When groups came to the training they had already begun work on the issues addressed in the training. They worked together and met as teams both inside and outside the training sessions themselves. Thus, whatever processes or discussions were going on for a particular team were brought into the training and those that developed within the training could be continued afterward.

We believe it is very important to this process that teams who work together in a certain geo-political area also attend the training together. The training and work outside the training become mutually reinforcing.

**Collaborative, multidisciplinary teams**

“What do you mean by collaboration?”

This is a question that has come up several times in the work in Minnesota.

Another question is: “How is this different from other task forces or collaborations already underway in our community?”

It is important to begin this discussion right from the very beginning, with definitions. The term “collaboration” is so often used in community service, government, law enforcement and not-for-profit sectors today that we often jump into such an endeavor with the false assumption that “we all know what we’re talking about,” only to find out, months down the road, there was not a clear shared understanding about what collaboration means to this group and what the purpose of collaboration is. Loretta Frederick, a member of our team and legal counsel for the Battered Women’s Justice Project, said:

> Collaboration means improving our performance, our functioning, our ability and capacity to do our jobs by sharing the problem with one another. We need to recognize that it is only as a collective of perspectives that we can do our jobs better, serve families better. [Collaboration]…is cross-informative. Our roles cannot be, are not carried out in a vacuum. They interact with others’ roles; our actions and reactions are in response to those around us. In this way [our work] is systemic. Collaboration is the process of learning from another and valuing, respecting our uniqueness at the same time.

In their book *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey*, Michael Winer and Karen Ray (1994, Wilder Foundation) define collaboration in slightly different terms, still emphasizing that the whole of the collaboration is more than the sum of its parts:

> Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone (p. 22).

While these definitions may be helpful, they still don’t answer the question of how this collaborative project is different from others. This particular collaborative
project is different because we are not only asking that people get together and talk, which is something that often is the only activity of a collaborative effort, but that the groups also make a concerted effort to change the way they look at domestic violence, battered women, and the children living in homes and families where battering is occurring. That is the measure by which we should judge the success of our collaborations. They have to do with changing our attitudes and understanding, changing the way we interact with each other as professionals, and, most important, changing the way we respond to domestic violence and child maltreatment.

**Community readiness**

“Are we ready to take this on?”

The question can be difficult to answer. For many communities, a different answer would be forthcoming from each sector. Sometimes one segment of the community is ready to get together and engage in dialogue, while another segment is not ready or is even adamantly opposed to collaboration. We have found a great deal of variation across the state of Minnesota in terms of readiness to collaborate on this difficult issue. Each community collaborative needs to identify what factors are operating in their community that may help or hinder the development and maintenance of collaboration for women and child safety. We have included some tools and some of our own experiences to assist you and your community in determining your level of community readiness.

**Process & product**

An issue we have dealt with continuously in this project is the balancing of process and product. For some of us and some of the local teams, it has been important to begin by simply meeting together and getting to know one another in ways that may not have previously happened. For others, having more concrete goals or producing a tangible product such as drafting a new inter-agency practice protocol has been more helpful. Each team has had to determine its own most effective working style.

Here are some of the areas your team(s) may wish to consider, presented in the order you will most likely have to work through in your collaborative effort as we did in ours. This training manual does not attempt to cover them in depth. While these activity or process areas are certainly not comprehensive, nor discrete, each one has some distinctive qualities.

**Developing relationships and building trust** We have found that even the most well-intentioned and knowledgeable professionals have to make an effort to come together for the purposes of developing personal relationships and building trust. It is not enough to train child protection workers about domestic violence and domestic violence workers about child maltreatment and mandated reporting. Professionals may have a great deal of information and knowledge but still not be willing to connect with others outside the professional discipline. Distrust
has blossomed in an era of scarce resources. In addition, a single controversial and/or high profile case in an area can put all of the county child protection workers and/or all of the battered women’s advocates on edge, making them wary of future interactions. Such situations have a tendency to outlive the professionals involved in a particular case and taint cross-agency interactions for years to come.

**Engaging in dialogue** Professionals need to learn not only about the content of the issues, but also about the many and varied political and philosophical differences inherent in this work. Everyone involved in the collaboration must get to a point where enough understanding of roles and enough respect and trust are developed that honest and open discussion can occur. Cases having both domestic violence and child maltreatment, or the potential for both, are extraordinarily complex, with legal issues added to the usual mix of politics and philosophies. For growth to occur, people need to be willing to take risks and to feel uncomfortable at some stages.

**Deciding on common goals** Along the way, the collaborative team needs to decide on a set of common goals. This curriculum and the project’s philosophy has been framed largely around one central assumption or core principle:

> In a family where there are children and there is domestic violence, the safety and well-being of the child is directly connected to the safety and well-being of the adult victim.

Through the process of developing a list of common goals, the teams arrived at the conclusion that they wanted to help gain and maintain safety for all victims in the family and accountability for the violent perpetrators. With those as core goals, the teams were then able to make decisions about how the agencies, individually and collectively, could define concrete objectives to meet their goals.

**Reviewing case studies together** The multi-agency teams involved in this project also felt that it was invaluable to spend time reviewing and processing cases together. This could be done using hypothetical cases or non-current cases from other jurisdictions. This way all the parties involved could spend time talking about what they did do or would do in response to the case. It allows professionals from varying disciplines, who have different roles, to discuss and critically analyze issues from their perspectives. This process helps raise biases and underlying philosophies to the surface for discussion.

**Developing a working memorandum of understanding, & then protocols** Teams in this project were encouraged to develop a working memorandum of understanding (MOA) and/or agreements to collaborate. In some cases this began with fairly simple agreements to meet on a regular basis to continue discussions. For others these memoranda became increasingly formalized to the point of the development of protocols. At the time of this writing, several of the local area teams, some which have worked together for nearly two years, have written protocols that they are now implementing. Evaluation of their implementation is being undertaken as well.
Plan for setbacks  Throughout this process another common theme has been recurring setbacks. Such setbacks come in the form of staff changes, snowstorms, or heated legislative sessions. They may come in the form of department restructuring, layoffs, or budget freezes. Another source of problems in meeting objectives and goals may be the need for an agency to implement another project or program near the same time. As the adage promises, “there is nothing so constant as change,” and resolve is needed to continue moving forward. In the Minnesota project it was the four regional community specialists who kept the projects going whenever they could despite these changes. Without their constant support, little progress would have been made.

Trainer capacity
Another important aspect of our training in Minnesota has been the trainers and the community specialists who actually facilitated the training. There are many ways to deliver material in a training session, from straight didactic lecture to high experiential role-plays. It has been our experience that the issues involved in the overlap of child maltreatment and domestic violence and the interactions among social service providers and advocates are complex and controversial. It is not enough that domestic violence advocates learn about legal definitions of child maltreatment, or that child protection social workers know how one obtains an order for protection. We have found that the training needs to include a lot of time for processing of role-plays, case studies, or enacted scenarios. And, a lot of discussion time is needed for people to have the opportunity to work through their differences.

Trainers should have depth of knowledge in their particular content area, but they should also have begun to go through the same sort of process you will be asking the training participants to go through. They need to have struggled with the same issues in practice and engaged in cross-disciplinary dialogue. Trainers who have experienced conducting training and have the ability to engage people and facilitate discussion will be the most helpful. The trainers need to be comfortable with disagreement and have the skills necessary not only to manage it within training sessions but to make it productive. Many of us have a natural tendency to ignore conflict or try to smooth it over in an effort to make everyone feel comfortable. In these trainings, we recommend that discomfort, conflict, and critique need to be used in a manner that allows for growth of the participants. We are asking people to shift their traditional/comfortable paradigms at least a little. We acknowledge that defenses can get very strong because we are asking people to evaluate what they have done in practice; we are challenging them to look at situations differently than they have done. Thus, trainers need to be flexible to work with the various attitudes and issues that will very likely arise when conducting these trainings.
Implementation timeline

Following is a timeline outlining the process and progress of the Minnesota Women and Child Safety Project.

**Spring 1999**
- Application was made to the Violence Against Women Office, Office of Justice Programs.

**Winter 2000**
- Funding was awarded to Minnesota Center Against Crime Victim Services, the state-level fiscal agent for the grant.
- Project staff began researching and drafting the *Collaborating for Woman and Child Safety* curriculum for cross-training local collaborative teams composed of staff of domestic violence, child protection, and abused children programs in several rural counties of the state.
- Rural specialists were hired and began needs assessment and development of local multi-disciplinary teams in targeted communities.

**Summer 2000**
- Draft of curriculum circulated to the grant team members representing domestic violence, child protection, and abused children’s programs.
- Feedback was incorporated into the training curriculum.
- Trainers representing child protection, domestic violence programs, and abused children’s programs were hired.
- Regional training sessions were scheduled.

**Fall 2000**
- MINCAVA staff met with the rural specialists and trainers for two days of consultation on delivery of the curriculum and the agenda for the regional trainings.
- Two-day cross-trainings were held in three of the regions.
- Each local team participating in the project received copies of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges publications: *Emerging Programs for Battered Women and Their Children* (1998), and *Effective Interventions in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice* (1999).
- Each training participant also received a copy of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation’s *Future of Children: Children and Domestic Violence* (1999).
- Trainings were attended by nearly 100 people, most members of the local collaborative teams. Their teamwork was facilitated by the rural specialists both before and after the training.
- Throughout the development and pilot-testing process, the curriculum/training team met in person or via conference call to discuss each delivery of the training.
- Rural specialists compiled the participants’ evaluations of the training, which they passed along to the curriculum authors.
Feedback was incorporated into revisions of the curriculum and training agenda.

**Winter 2001**
- Final trainings were held in February and March 2001 in remaining regions.
- Throughout this phase of curriculum development, the entire project team met via conference call to discuss each delivery of the training.
- Rural specialists continued to compile the participants’ evaluations and gather feedback from local teams.
- An evaluation workshop for staff of the grant’s model demonstration projects was held in February 2001.

**Spring 2001**
- Development of a third day-long training session took place, with the same trainers, specialists, and curriculum authors taking part.
- Discussions during meetings as well as feedback from the training participants indicated a need for an experiential approach for the remaining trainings. A follow-up day-long training session was developed.
- These training sessions were held during May and June 2001 in all four regions.
- Application was made to Office of Justice Projects for funding to continue project additional 18 months.

**Summer 2001**
- Training sessions on project evaluation were developed during July and August 2001, and held in late August and September.
- Many staff of this project were involved as the Department of Human Services (DHS) began work to develop statewide guidelines for child protection workers.

**Fall 2001**
- Significant effort was directed toward writing, editing, organization, consultation, and careful documentation of all of the training earlier delivered under this grant
  - Chapters of the curriculum had to be revised and updated to reflect the content and process of the training as it was actually delivered.
  - Consultants were hired to provide formal review of the curriculum. Materials were sent to them for review in December 2001.
  - Continuation funding awarded for two model/demonstration sites, continued community-organizing work of the DV specialists, and completion of curriculum and its distribution.
  - DHS published *Guidelines for Responding to the Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment*.

**Winter-Spring 2002**
- Work continued on final writing and editing of curriculum.
- Training was conducted for child protection workers on DHS guidelines for CPS response.
Rural specialists continued work to support local area teams to develop multidisciplinary protocols.

**Summer–Fall 2002**
- Substantial amount of materials were coded and put on the project Web site (www.mincava.umn.edu/rural).
- Web site was launched in October 2002.
- Regional rural DV specialists interviewed battered women and tested protocols.

**Winter–Spring 2003**
- Final editing of curriculum completed.
- Several protocols implemented.