

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL SYSTEM RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & CHILD MALTREATMENT

Purpose of the chapter *page 116*

Objectives for participants *page 116*

Training outline: Sections 1–9

- 1 MULTI-SYSTEM RESPONSE TO ABUSE & VIOLENCE:
THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER *page 117*
- 2 DIFFERENT SYSTEMS ... DIFFERENT HISTORIES *page 119*
- 3 AGENCY/PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE & CULTURE *page 121*
- 4 CHILD PROTECTION: CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESENT
SYSTEM *page 125*
- 5 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM RESPONSES *page 130*
- 6 ABUSED CHILDREN PROGRAMS (MINNESOTA) *page 133*
- 7 OTHER SYSTEMS INVOLVED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND/OR CHILD MALTREATMENT CASES *page 134*
- 8 (ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY) FACILITATED CASE
DISCUSSION *page 137*
- 9 (ACTIVITY) CASE STUDY: SANDRA & SAM *page 138*

Purpose of the chapter

Each part of the chapter includes information pertaining to system specific-responses to child maltreatment and domestic violence based on the history, mission, and philosophical foundations of each discipline. Further, the chapter discusses alternative responses to the “traditional” approaches used in each system in order to facilitate cross-system understanding and collaboration.

Objectives for participants

- Develop an understanding of a set of diverse cultural and social issues that impact how we think about and respond to domestic violence.
- Understand the responses of the child protection systems to reports of child maltreatment.
- Become familiar with the process of alternative or differential response.
- Understand what is available to the adult victim/survivors of domestic violence.
- Become familiar with the needs of children who are maltreated and with the services available to meet those needs.
- Develop skills in assessing the needs of a family in which there has been domestic violence and there is a potential for child maltreatment.
- Develop skills in strengths-based practice with battered women and their children.
- Determine areas of agency-specific practice that could be changed in order to better serve the needs of battered women and their children.
- Recognize and define the roles and responsibilities each agency and/or practitioner in situations where there is both domestic violence and child maltreatment.

CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 1

MULTI-SYSTEM RESPONSE TO ABUSE AND VIOLENCE: THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER

Training note For background reading and resources for this chapter see pages 42–54.
For Section 1 background material, see page 42.

Contents of Section 1

Directed discussion activity: Multi-system involvement 117

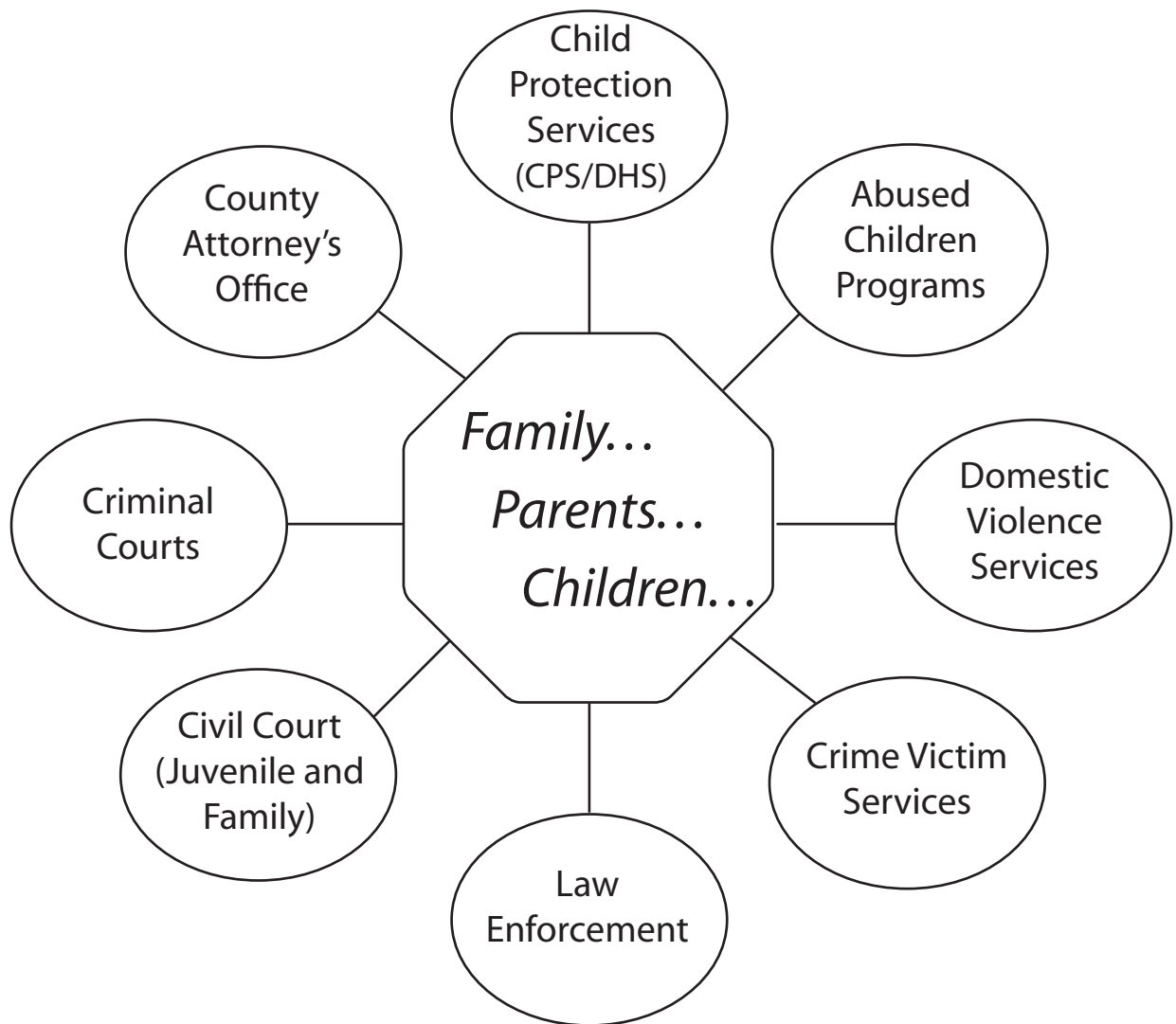
Multi-system involvement model 118

Discussion (15 minutes):

MULTI-SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

- Display the model provided on page 97 on an overhead or board to illustrate the complexity of situations in which both child maltreatment and domestic violence occur.
- Encourage participants to provide examples of situations they are familiar with where four or more systems were involved with the family.
- Ask participants to think about ways that systems sometimes come into conflict with one another even though each has good intentions for their interventions.
- Explain why safety is important to consider within multiple systems and understand how each works and interacts with the family.

MULTI-SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT MODEL



CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 2

DIFFERENT SYSTEMS ... DIFFERENT HISTORIES

Training note In preparation for training Section 2, please review background reading on pages 43–44.

Contents of Section 2

Different systems ... Different histories (discussion) 119–120

Brainstorm and discussion (20 minutes):

DIFFERENT SYSTEMS ... DIFFERENT HISTORIES

- Using a large white board or paper, make two columns.
- Write the headings “Child maltreatment services” at the top of one column and “Domestic violence services” at the top of the other.
- Ask participants to compare and contrast these different service areas by listing characteristics of each service area. These characteristics might include such categories as history, funding, philosophy, mission, etc.
- Discuss the list generated by the participants and add others from the lists on the next page if needed.

Characteristics of services to maltreated children:

- Charged by governmental bodies with protecting the welfare of children
- History: Laws against cruelty to animals in place before those against child maltreatment
- Social welfare movements of the early 20th century
- Henry Kempe's battered child syndrome highlights physical abuse (1960s)
- National legislation mandating CPS (1970s)
- Managed and funded by large government agencies at county or state level
- Mandated services and case plans
- Traditionally clients are involuntary and may be reluctant or resistant
- Cases adjudicated in juvenile and/or family courts
- Current philosophy of family preservation and permanency planning (short timelines)
- Child focused/centered; may focus on the best interests of the child potentially to the exclusion of the interests of the mother; "failure to protect"

Characteristics of services to battered women:

- Resurgence of the women's movement in 1970s
- Grassroots organizations founded on feminist principles mobilize to develop legislation to fund and formed battered women's shelters and safe homes
- Woman-focused advocacy organizations
- Belief that violence in intimate relationships is a social problem, not an individual pathology or a private couple/family problem
- Little governmental mandate until passage of the Violence Against Women Act (1994)
- Non-profit, private, community based
- Emphasis on voluntary involvement, empowering women and supporting women in their decisions
- Prosecution in the criminal court

CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 3

AGENCY/PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE & CULTURE

Contents of Section 3

Agency culture (activity) 122

Understanding agency/professional culture 123

Activity (30 minutes):

AGENCY CULTURE

■ *Purpose of this activity:*

By extending the concept of culture to agencies, this activity helps participants identify their own roles and the roles of their agencies in intervening with families. Participants will explore the culture of each different agency and how it is perceived by other agencies. Through understanding the wide range of concepts signified by the words listed below, we can more effectively build toward collaborative work.

■ *Introduce the activity:*

Language is a vital component of any culture. In this exercise we are using the term “culture” to mean “the knowledge people use to generate and interpret social behavior” (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972, p. 8). Through our professional and personal cultures we view and interpret the world. We all generate meanings for words in our language, and those meanings have everything to do with the cultural/professional “lens” we use when we do our work.

■ Distribute the handout and worksheet called **Understanding Agency/ Professional Culture**.

■ On the board or flipchart, write 8 terms that you will be using in this activity. Choose from the suggested terms below (or use others that you deem useful to discuss) and have participants copy the terms in the lefthand column of their worksheets:

Family	Battered woman	Safety
Family preservation	Court	Plan
Empowerment	Victim	Child
Perpetrator	Protection	Alternative or
Offender	Choice	differential response
Order for protection	Failure to protect	

■ Ask participants to break into small groups with each group including people from different professional capacities. Ask participants then to “put on a pair of their most ‘pure’ agency-culture glasses,” as explained in the handout, and through those lenses view each term and write down a definition from the perspective of their role at their agency. Advise them, for this exercise, not to let the mixed-discipline audience blur their agency-specific focus.

■ When all have finished, participants are to discuss the exercise in their small groups. Before reporting back to the large group, all should have a chance to present their definitions as well as the implications those definitions have on decisions and behaviors in their professional roles.

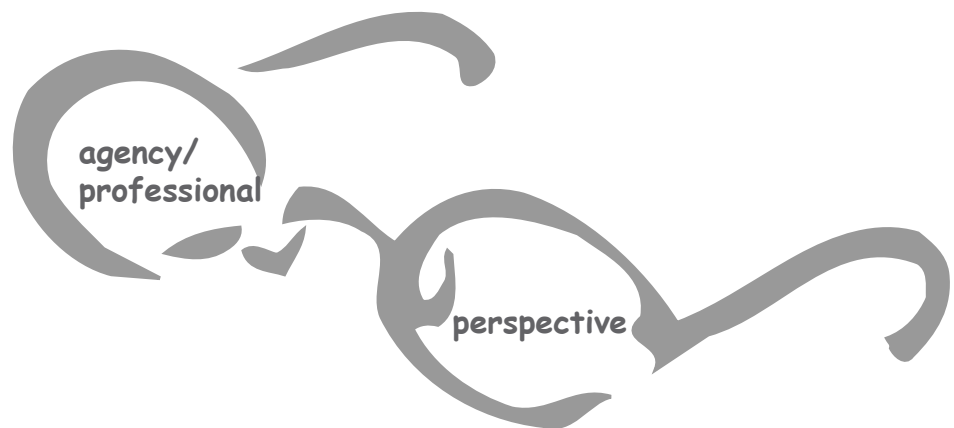
UNDERSTANDING AGENCY/PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

Language is a vital component of any culture, including the professional or agency culture of our work.

In this discussion we are using the term “culture” to mean “the knowledge people use to generate and interpret social behavior” (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972, p. 8). Through our professional and person cultures we view and interpret the world. We all generate meanings for words in our own professional language and those meanings have everything to do with the professional “lens” we wear when we do our work.

Much of the way we do our work is related to the education, practice mode, history, and culture of our profession. Often we are so involved in a particular discipline and its paradigms that we begin to see our way of understanding an issue as the only way. We can become more open to new perspectives by first understanding our own beliefs and identifying what we believe to be the beliefs of other professions. That’s what this exercise is designed to help us do.

- For this exercise, you need to put on your most “pure” pair of professional/culture glasses. Through these lenses, define each of the terms on the worksheet as you would in your role as a child protection worker, domestic violence advocate, child advocate, police officer, or whatever your professional role is in situations of domestic violence or child abuse and neglect.
- Write your definitions next to the terms.
- Consider what implications those definitions have on your decisions and behaviors in your professional role.
- When everyone has had a chance to finish, discuss your definitions in small groups with each group including people from differing professional capacities—in other words, each small group will be a multi-agency or multi-disciplinary group.



WORKSHEET—UNDERSTANDING AGENCY/PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

Write the name of the professional group you identify with and your job description in the space given. This professional area represents the lens through which you will view and define each term. In the righthand column, write a definition of each term as you see it from your point of view. When finished, share your answers with your group composed of people from other professions or disciplines. Discuss differences and similarities that arise. After 15 minutes, groups will be asked to report back to the large group.

My profession is _____

My job is _____

Terms to define	Definition as I see it ...
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 4

CHILD PROTECTION: CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESENT SYSTEM

- Training note*
- In preparation for presenting Section 4, review the background reading on pages 44–48.
 - Presentation time: 30 minutes.

Contents of Section 4

Present child protection system: “Best interest of children” 126

CPS responses may include 126

Defining alternative or differential response 126

Flexible interventions 126

Why alternative or differential response? 127

National findings on alternative or differential response 127

Minnesota reform efforts 127

Assumptions of alternative or differential response 127

Program developments 127

Types of CPS assessments 128

Families most appropriate for alternative or differential response 128

Guidelines for alternative or differential response 128

Alternative or differential response outcome indicators 128

Principles of Adoption and Safe Families Act (AFSA) 128

Concurrent planning under Minnesota law 129

*Presentation
outline*

Present child protection system: “Best interest of children”

- Charged by governmental bodies with protecting the welfare of children
- Managed and funded by large government agencies at county or state level
- Mandated services and case plans (involuntary and often reluctant, resistant clients)
- Cases adjudicated in juvenile and/or family courts
- Current philosophy of family preservation and permanency planning (short timelines)
- Child focused/centered; may focus on the best interests of the child potentially to the exclusion of the interests of the mother; “failure to protect”

CPS responses may include:

- Screen and investigate reports
- Open cases when necessary
- Work with parent(s) on case plan
- Refer for services as needed
- Arrange foster care and adoption if needed
- Provide family preservation services
- Provide concurrent permanency planning
- Alternative or differential response

Defining alternative or differential response:

- Replacing the traditional investigation and determination concerning child maltreatment with a family assessment and support services when needed.
- Responding to families who have child maltreatment concerns with a strength-based, holistic approach that enhances family stability and child safety.

Flexible interventions

- Enhancing the match of intervention to the presenting maltreatment
- Investigative response
- Alternative or differential response

Why alternative or differential response?

- Increasingly prescriptive protocols
- Added neglect mandates
- Historically one available approach
- Unintended results of investigative approach
- Community confusion

National findings on alternative or differential response

- Diversion rate to the alternative or differential response track is consistently high (> 50% of reports that go to assessment)
- Child safety not jeopardized; ratings of child safety often reached in shorter period of time
- Reduced placement duration
- Satisfaction improved
- Repeated reports decreased overall
- Services delivered more quickly

Minnesota reform efforts

- Ramsey County Family Support Program
- Hennepin County Family Options Program
- Child Welfare Reform Project in Olmsted County
- 1999 alternative response law

Assumptions of alternative or differential response

- Families *want to address threats* to their children's safety
- Family *strengths* keep children safe
- Successful interventions *make use of family strengths*

Program developments


- Children are no less safe
- Assessment of safety and risk still required
- Separate procedures required
- Strength-based training

Types of CPS assessments

- High risk
- Moderate risk
- Low risk

Families most appropriate for alternative or differential response are those struggling with:

- child supervision issues
- educational neglect
- domestic violence
- minor physical abuse
- unmet basic needs
- chemical addiction
- emotional abuse



Families characterized by combinations of these issues are 50–70% of the child protection caseload

Guidelines for alternative or differential response

- No licensed childcare facilities are part of alternative or differential response
- No substantial child endangerment can have alternative or differential response
- Alternative or differential response is voluntary, must be agreed to by family
- Reports may move between investigative and alternative or differential approaches as needed

Alternative or differential response outcome indicators

- Subsequent maltreatment reports
- Change in risk level to child(ren)
- Stability of family
- Family, agency, and community satisfaction
- Alternative or differential response provides an opportunity to minimize the confrontational experience, enhance cooperation, and strengthen the family's ability to take care of itself

Principles of Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)

- Child safety is paramount
- All children need permanence
- Child and family well-being
- Be inclusive (family, culture and community)

Concurrent planning under Minnesota law

- Applies only to families where children have been removed from their parent's custody and placed in kinship foster care, traditional foster care, or a group facility
- Mandates child welfare agencies to develop alternative permanency plans while simultaneously making reasonable efforts toward a child's reunification with family
- Says that permanency hearings need to be held within:
 - 6 months for children under 8 years
 - 12 months for older children
- Mandates prompt decisive action on permanent custody decisions and termination of parental rights if deemed necessary

CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 5

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM RESPONSES

Training note

- In preparation for presenting Section 5, review the background reading on pages 49–52.
- Presentation time: 20 minutes.

Contents of Section 5

Philosophical framework 131

Assistance for victims and their children 131

Public education and outreach 132

Philosophical framework: Empowering women, supporting autonomy

- Grass-roots organizations founded on feminist principles
- Non-profit, private, community based
- Woman-focused individualized advocacy
- Domestic abuse as gender-based: Primarily directed at women by men
- Emphasis on voluntary involvement, empowering women who have been victimized, providing information on options, supporting women's autonomy in their decision-making as they prioritize those options
- Prosecution in the criminal court for batterers
- Political movement that promotes social change and advocates for systems change to enhance safety of battered women and their children

Assistance for victims and their children

- Shelter & safety—safe shelter for women and children
 - Half of those living in shelters are children
 - St. Paul, Minnesota, one of the first in country
 - Network of 21 shelters and safe-house/refuge programs now operating in Minnesota under the “Day One” Project (1-866-223-111)
 - Support and operate some supervised visitation (parenting time) programs
- Advocacy – principles of advocacy and the role of the advocate for women
 - Legal advocacy
 - Advocacy for systems change/social change
 - Individual advocacy on behalf of women and on behalf of children
- Support and education
 - Individual and group support for battered women
 - Individual and group support for their children
 - Re-education for male batterers
- Treatment and therapeutic interventions provided by social workers, counselors, psychologists:
 - Adult victims
 - Adult perpetrators/batterers
 - Children
 - Group vs. individual
 - Couple and/or family therapy controversial, not recommended

Public education and outreach

- Provided to general population as well as to marginalized and underserved populations
- Conducted to raise public awareness of the prevalence and dynamics of abuse
- To raise awareness of the impact of battering behaviors on children
- To promote social change and community action on issues related to violence, abuse, and oppression
- To inform policy and policy makers
- To educate other service professionals such as law enforcement, guardians ad litem, teachers, and child protection workers

CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 6

ABUSED CHILDREN PROGRAMS (MINNESOTA)

Training note

- In preparation for presenting Section 6, review background reading on pages 52–53.
- Presentation time: 10 minutes.

Contents of Section 6

Administration of abused children programs (Minnesota) 133

Service recipients 133

Types of programs 133

Presentation outline

Administration of abused children programs (Minnesota)

- Initially administered by the Department of Corrections, but moved to the Department of Children, Families and Learning
- In 2002, moved to Department of Public Safety under Crime Victim Services
- Funds provided to more than 50 programs across the state
- Approximately half the counties in Minnesota have programs serving victims of child maltreatment

Service recipients

Abused children programs provide services to:

- Victims of child abuse
- Children in crisis and their non-offending parents and siblings
- Children who have witnessed adult violence

Types of programs

- Programs may be freestanding, but most programs exist within agencies or are collaborative programs of multiple agencies
- Child visitation/safety centers
- Children programs within battered women sexual assault service agencies
- Therapeutic services for child victims

CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 7

OTHER SYSTEMS INVOLVED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND/ OR CHILD MALTREATMENT CASES

- Training note*
- In preparation for presenting Section 7, review the background reading on pages 53–54.
 - Presentation time: 10 minutes

Contents of Section 7

Law enforcement 135

Minnesota’s trifurcated court system 135

Juvenile court

Family court

Criminal court

Guardians ad litem (GALs)

*Presentation
outline*

Law enforcement

- First responders to incidents of abuse and violence
- Their initial response and reporting is very important
- Often involved in reports of child maltreatment as well
- Often conduct the first interviews with victims and perpetrators
- Important to have involved at least in consultative manner
- May be involved in a coordinated community response, criminal justice initiative, or other partnership with domestic violence programs

Minnesota's trifurcated court system

■ Juvenile court

- Established in early 20th century
- Deals with three main areas where minors are involved:
 - delinquent children
 - children who are “status offenders” such as runaways, truants, and the ungovernable
 - abused, neglected, or abandoned children
- Has authority to terminate parental rights
- Provides maximum protection for children from social and health services
- Provides protection for children receiving care within social and health services
- Philosophy of preservation of the family whenever possible
- Must balance parental rights with child safety

■ Family court

- Has the authority over issues of marital dissolution
- Handles issues of divorce settlements
- Has oversight for child custody hearings
- Has moved toward use of family/couple mediation whenever possible

■ Criminal court

- Holds the perpetrators of domestic assault accountable
- Has authority to convict and sentence according to state laws
- Probation
- Use parole/probation to leverage compliance with court-determined mandates

■ Guardians ad litem (GALs) or court-appointed special advocates (CASAs)

- To be appointed to protect the interests of a minor in any court proceedings heard in juvenile court that allege a child's need to protection or services.

- May also be appointed to court proceeding taking place under the jurisdiction of family court where hearings on separation, divorce, custody or parenting time (visitation) take place and there is a concern that the child may be a victim of some form of child maltreatment.
- Until recently these services were provided by a loosely organized network of providers with a wide range of expertise, quality, and salary.
- Change is underway to develop consistent standards, training, accountability, and oversight.
- Goals of developing state managed system include:
 - Provide well-trained, effective GAL advocates for all abused and neglected children in Minnesota court systems.
 - Create and manage a statewide system that ensures consistency, quality, cost effectiveness, professionalism, accountability, and yet a flexible response.
 - Promote competent, professional, ethical framework that is compensated fairly and is adequately trained and supervised.
- Until this system is in place, concerns about GALs continue.

CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 8

Contents of Section 8

Alternate activity: Facilitated case discussion 137

Alternate activity (45 minutes):

If your training agenda provides time, this activity can be included.

FACILITATED CASE DISCUSSION

- Select a case study from the training resources in Appendix F of this manual or bring another case dealing with domestic violence and children. Cases should not be more than one page in length.
- Provide a copy of the case study to each participant.
- Divide the large group into smaller mixed groups each having at least two people who identify as child protection workers and at least two who identify as working in a battered women's/domestic violence program. You may also have others such as law enforcement or children's advocates in each group.
- Ask participants to read the case and discuss it in their small groups for 20 minutes using the "Case Discussion Questions" as a guide.
- Bring back to large group for discussion of the questions.
- If desired, use an ecosystems map (see example in training resources) to illustrate the situation as participants describe it and discuss the interface with multiple systems.
- Ask: *What barriers would there be to cross-agency collaborations in this case?*
- Ask: *What opportunities do you see for cross-agency collaborations in this case?*

CHAPTER 4 TRAINING OUTLINE—SECTION 9

Contents of Section 9

Activity: Case study—Sandra & Sam	139
Case study handout (Part 1)	140
Case study handout (Part 2)	141
Additional information for use by trainers/facilitators	144
Continuation of discussion questions	150

Activity (1 hour):

CASE STUDY—SANDRA & SAM

- Learning objectives
 - Recognize that there are many professional perspectives on one story of family violence.
 - Begin to understand multiple points of view from the perspectives of those involved.
 - Learn to ask the questions to get the information you need about situations (assess).
 - Experience discussion of complex issues of collaboration in situations such as this.
- Each participant should have the two handouts for the case study:
 - Case study handout (Part 1): Sandra & Sam**
 - Case study handout (Part 2): Sandra & Sam continuation**
- Advise participants to read **Case study handout (Part 1)**, which provides initial case information and discussion questions, during the lunch break (or otherwise give them time to read the materials).
- Explain to participants that they will be working with the professionals in their local teams. They will then come back after lunch to work further with the case to answer the questions.
- They may also refer to handouts for Chapter 3, “Overview of Violence & Abuse in Families.”
- They can call upon the trainers for further information about the case.
- You can provide more information about the situation by referring to adapted Ganley & Schechter on **Case study handout (Part 2)**, and from the additional case study notes for trainers/facilitators on pages 144–149.
- Ask participants to reconsider the scenario and review their original answers as they gain new information.
- Ask participants if there were any differences in their answers that were dependent upon the professional roles of the team’s members.
- During discussion you might also ask:
 - Did your answers change when you got more information?
 - If your answers changed with new information, why did they? If your answers did not change, why not?
 - Would your answers be different if the victims were members of ethnic minority groups in your community? If so, how would your answers be different?

**Case study handout (Part 1)
Sandra & Sam**

A woman calls the hotline of the county child protection agency in late December to report that her next-door neighbor has had a new man living with her in the duplex for the past eight weeks. The caller reports that in the past three weeks the couple has been constantly hollering and fighting, and she has seen her neighbor's three young children running from the duplex during the fights.

The caller said that the night before she heard her neighbor screaming, "Please stop hurting me! Put that knife away!" While this was happening, the caller had noticed that the neighbor's children were in the backyard, huddled together by the garbage can and recycling bins. Further, she reported that the children did not have on any outdoor clothing despite the freezing weather. About 40 minutes after the fight started (30 minutes after the children were seen outside), the police arrived, and within 15 minutes the police left the duplex with the man. The children then ran back into the house, but only after the police had left the area.

From Ganley & Schechter (1996)

Initial discussion questions

- Is there domestic violence going on in this situation? If so, what specific details led you to that conclusion?
- Who is (are) the victim(s)? Who is (are) the perpetrator(s)?
- What other information would you need to determine whether this was domestic violence?
- Is there evidence of child maltreatment? If so, would you consider this enough information to warrant a child protection investigation? (*Note: It has already been reported to CPS agency.*)
- What is the nature of the risk to the child(ren)?
- Who is responsible for the harm to the child(ren)?
- What other information would you need to answer the questions in order to determine whether or not there is child maltreatment?

Case study handout (Part 2)
Sandra & Sam continuation

The family was referred by intake to a CPS caseworker for further assessment following a report to the hotline by a neighbor about an incident. The assessment worker interviewed mother, children, neighbors, and boyfriend, and gathered information from the police reports and criminal background check.

The mother, Sandra, is 28 years old with three children (ages 8, 7, and 6); they had recently moved into the community and lived in the complex for about a year. She said that the night of the reported incident, her ex-boyfriend, Sam, assaulted her. She had told him that he could no longer live with her. Sam grabbed her and slammed her against a wall, screaming, “No bitch is going to tell me what I can and can’t do.” He grabbed a knife and threatened to cut her face. Neighbors called the police, complaining about the noise and her scream. The police talked briefly to her and to Sam and then arrested him when he became verbally and physically threatening to them. He was charged with misdemeanor domestic violence and resisting arrest. The police took him into custody and left quickly, saying they had other calls. They said they would contact Sandra the next day to get a more complete report, but did not.

On Sandra’s instruction, the oldest child had taken his two siblings to the backyard when the fighting first began. Sandra was afraid the oldest child might be hurt if he tried to come to her for help, and she didn’t want the children harmed. Since it was December and snowing outside, the children had gotten very cold waiting for the fight to calm down. Sandra thought they had gone to the neighbor’s house, but they remained in the backyard. Sandra was very concerned that her youngest child might have frostbite and took her to the doctor later that night. Both of the younger children had colds at the time and Sandra worried that their being outside might have made them worse.

Sandra reported she had been married previously for five years. Her ex-husband divorced her for another woman, saying she “spent too much time caring for the babies.” Her ex-husband pays child support to the child support enforcement office in the amount of \$150 per month for three children. He no longer sees the children since he remarried and moved to the other coast. With the support of her own family and friends and a special state program for mothers, Sandra completed her training as a nursing assistant two years ago. She received her home health care certificate six months ago.

Two years after her divorce, Sandra met Sam at a club during a birthday party for her girlfriend. He courted her intensely for three months and appeared to be interested in her three children, taking them on outings when she had to work. He showered her with small gifts and expressions of love. Sam talked her into letting him move in with the family, saying he would pay half the rent and help her with the children.

Within three months of his moving in, the relationship went bad. Sam’s intense love turned to

Continued ...

Case study handout (Part 2)
Sandra & Sam continuation

intense jealousy, and he would go into rages, attacking property and Sandra. He terrified the children, but never struck them. She reported that Sam ran up bills, ignored the children, and became more demanding of her time. She asked him to leave many times. He refused, saying, “It’s my house and you can’t make it without me.” His tirades drove away her friends. Her family had become absorbed in problems of their own with her father’s death and her mother’s severe depression.

After one assault during which Sam blackened Sandra’s eye, she called a domestic violence hotline and got the first of a series of protection orders. Sam would move out when the order was served and then return, laughing and saying the police wouldn’t enforce the protection order. She would call the police, and he would disappear before they arrived, showing up a week later and pushing his way back to the house.

In the past, Sandra had received a broken wrist when Sam twisted her arm. She also has recurring lower back pain from the time Sam threw her against a wall. She gets migraine headaches that her doctor says are due to stress.

With the help of a victim’s advocate, she had relocated to this community a year ago. She had not seen Sam for almost a year until he suddenly stepped into the duplex the other night. Now she has not seen him since the arrest, but she knows he will return and does not know what to do.

At first Sandra told the caseworker that she still loved him and thought he had changed. Then she admitted that she knew he had not changed and she was afraid. Sandra said she was tired of going to the shelter, and that she could not move the children again. She liked her current job at the nursing home, had finally found stable childcare and had now found private short-term health aide work on weekends that allowed her to bring her children with her. Sandra said she did not know about domestic violence programs in town and that she missed her advocate from the last community.

Sandra is terrified of losing the children. She reluctantly admitted that she’d had a drug problem as a teenager but had never touched it since then. Sam always said that the state would take her children from her because she is an “unfit mother.” She was also afraid that if anyone found out about her past drug history, she might lose her home health license. She feels isolated and still has not made friends because work and the children take all of her time. She has not maintained contact with past friends because she does not want Sam to pester them about her whereabouts.

The children expressed tremendous fear of Sam and worry about their mother. The oldest child is very proud that he has learned to call 911 so that he “can get the police to stop Sam.” He is upset that his mom told him to leave with the other children that night. He said, “There was no phone in the backyard and we were so cold. My sister kept crying. When the police came, we stayed outside so they wouldn’t take us from Mom. That happened one time before.” The 7-year-old said Sam isn’t so bad and he took them to ball games and “it was Mom’s fault for getting him mad.”

Continued ...

Case study handout (Part 2)
Sandra & Sam continuation

Sam says he loves Sandra very much and had been a father to those children since they were babies. Sam says Sandra probably has a drug problem. He reports that when he would come home, she would be gone and the children would be propped up in front of the TV eating canned spaghetti. “You don’t give kids cold spaghetti,” he said. Sam says Sandra is not a bad mom, but she just needs help. He says Sandra moved away from her family and friends probably because of grief over her dad’s death and her mom’s drinking. He says he and Sandra had some problems in the past, but “all couples do.”

Sam reported that he went to an anger management class while Sandra was gone. He said he did not move here until he was ready to do better. He said they were doing fine since he moved back with her and even talked about the marriage. Sam said the incident was exaggerated, that they just had a minor fight and he got loud and some nosey neighbor called. He reports Sandra had gone to work without feeding the kids, “expecting me to do it. I had gone out for a beer with friends after work. I did not do anything to her and these cops come in pushing me around and I pushed back. That’s why I got arrested. The children were at the neighbor’s. They weren’t even there.”

Police report indicates the following: Signs of abrasions observed on Sandra, furniture turned over in apartment, Sam had been drinking, Sandra was crying and saying she was afraid of him, no evidence of drug use by Sandra, and Sam assaulted a police officer. Criminal records check indicates no prior arrests in this state. Sam has been in this state for only three weeks.

Case was adapted with permission from

Ganly, A. & Schechter, S. (1996). *Domestic Violence: A national curriculum for child protection services*. San Francisco, California: Family Violence Prevention Fund

Additional information for use by trainers/facilitators

Case study—Sandra & Sam

Training note These six pages of notes are for the trainer’s use only. They help to present the case material in multiple ways that the trainer can use to become very familiar with the case.

In the course of discussing the questions on the first handout of the case study, the groups may be allowed to ask for more information about the situation. Below are the answers to several questions that may be asked of you when the small groups are discussing this case. You may use this to answer their questions and/or discuss the entire case when processing at the end of the small group portion of the activity.

Q1 What do we *know* from the initial report?

- ✓ A report was made to the CPS “hotline.”
- ✓ A neighbor made the CPS report. (We do not know if this is the same person who called the police. We do not know for sure who called the police.)
- ✓ A “new man” has been living in the duplex for the past eight weeks.
- ✓ There has been fighting for the past three weeks and a neighbor reports the children have run from the duplex during fights.
- ✓ At last night’s fight the children were huddled outside in freezing weather without coats for 30 minutes before police arrived.
- ✓ Police arrived and left 15 minutes later with the man, and then the children returned to the building.

Q2 Who was “involved” in the scenario at this point?

- ✓ Woman
- ✓ Man (who has been there only for the past eight weeks)
- ✓ Children (boy 8; boy 7; girl 6)
- ✓ Neighbor(s) (maybe more than one? unknown)
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Child protection report screener

Q3 Who were the man and the woman, and what is their relationship to each other and the children?

- ✓ Woman is Sandra (age 28) who is the divorced single mother of the three children.
- ✓ Man is Sam. He is Sandra's ex-boyfriend, and not the father of any of the children.
- ✓ They had been apart for the past year and had no contact until about two months ago when Sam showed up and forced his way into her duplex. Sandra moved with her children to this city about a year ago to get away from Sam.

Q4 What happened the night of this incident?

4a According to Sandra:

That night she says her ex-boyfriend, Sam, assaulted her. She had told him he could no longer live with her and the children. Sam grabbed her, slammed her against a wall, and screamed, "No bitch is going to tell me what I can and can't do!" He grabbed a knife and threatened to cut her. During the fight she yelled, "Stop hurting me!" And she pleaded with him to put the knife down. At Sandra's instruction, the oldest child, her oldest son, had taken his two younger siblings outside to the backyard when the fighting began. Sandra said she was afraid the oldest son might get hurt if he tried to come to her aid. And she did not want the children to be harmed. Neighbors called the police complaining about the noise and her screams. The police arrived and talked briefly to her and to Sam. They then arrested Sam after he became verbally and physically threatening to the officers. The police took him into custody and left with him quickly, saying they had two other calls to get to. They told Sandra they would contact her the next day to finish the report. (Sandra says they never did call her back.) After they left with Sam, the children came back into the house.

4b The police report says:

Police were called to the address on the night of Dec. 28 at 7:14 p.m. There they found a man and a woman who had been arguing and fighting. Officers observed signs of abrasions on Sandra. Sandra, a 28 y.o. female was crying and saying she was afraid of him and he had threatened her with a knife and thrown her around. There was no evidence that Sandra had been drinking. There was furniture overturned in the apartment. Sam, male age 30, had been drinking and there was smell of alcohol on his breath. Sam denied allegations and resisted arrest. He was arrested and charged with misdemeanor domestic assault, threatening an officer, and resisting arrest. Criminal background check that was conducted indicated no outstanding warrants, no orders for

protection, and no prior arrests in this state. (Sam had been in the state for only eight weeks.) He was held overnight and released.

4c Sam says:

The incident was exaggerated. He says they had a fight just like all couples, and he got a bit loud and some nosey neighbor called the cops. He reports that Sandra had been drinking and had gone to work without feeding the kids, instead expecting Sam to do it. “I had gone out for a beer with friends after work. You know, a man deserves a beer every once in a while. I did not do anything to her and these cops come in pushin’ me around and I pushed ’em right back! That’s why I got arrested. Those children ran out and to the neighbors. They weren’t even there. Me and Sandra can work this thing out ourselves.”

Q5 What happened when the children came back in?

Sandra says the children were cold and the youngest was visibly shaken. The children had stayed in the backyard in freezing temperatures and light snow. They had become very cold waiting for it to be safe to come back inside. Sandra thought they had gone to a neighbor’s house (who they sometimes stayed with), but they had remained in the yard for about 45 minutes. The two younger children were sick with colds at the time, and Sandra was afraid the youngest might have suffered frostbite, and had taken her to the doctor to get her checked out.

Q6 What is Sandra’s background?

- ✓ Sandra is 28 years old.
- ✓ She was married previously for five years to the father of the three children.
- ✓ Her ex-husband divorced her “for another woman,” and said “it was because I was spending too much time caring for the babies.” While her “ex” pays child support of \$150/month through child support enforcement, he no longer sees the children since he remarried and moved to the West Coast.
- ✓ While living at her previous location, with support of family and friends Sandra made use of a special state program for single mothers. She had started nursing studies prior to her marriage, and with the help of this program she completed training as a nursing assistant two years ago. She received her home health care certificate six months ago after having moved to this state.
- ✓ She is currently working in a nursing home and was able to get some additional weekend work in private homes that allowed her to bring her children with her when she needed to.

- ✓ The youngest child is in a stable day care setting and will begin kindergarten next year. The two boys are in second and third grades at the local elementary school.
- ✓ Sandra is terrified that she could lose custody of her children.
- ✓ She reluctantly admitted to having had a drug problem as a teenager, and that Sam always used that against her. And she is afraid that her past juvenile drug problem could jeopardize her health care license. But she said she has not used any drugs for the past 11 years, since before her marriage and long before she had her children.
- ✓ She says also that she feels isolated in this new city and that there are people she really misses. She still has not met many people because she is either working or taking care of the children all the time. She does not maintain contact with old friends because she does not want Sam bugging them for information on her whereabouts.

Q7 Is there a history of domestic violence?

- ✓ Sandra says that while her first marriage wasn't great, her husband wasn't abusive, though he was at times "a bit neglectful."
- ✓ She met Sam two years after her divorce, at a club during a birthday party for one of her girlfriends.
- ✓ He courted her for three months, appeared to take an interest in the children, taking them on outings when she had to work, etc. , and he showered her and the kids with small gifts and spoke of his love for her. Sam talked her into his moving in with the family, though she was initially reluctant, and he said he would split the rent and could help her with the children.
- ✓ After about three months, things went bad. She said Sam's intense love turned into intense jealousy. He would burst into rages, and attack both property and Sandra. She says his rages terrified the children, but he never laid a hand on them. "He knew better than that," she said.
- ✓ Then, she reports, he ran up large bills, ignored the children, and became very demanding. She asked him many times to leave. But he always refused, saying, "This is my house and you can't make it without me!"
- ✓ His tirades had driven her friends away. Meanwhile, her family, who had been supportive at times, were absorbed in problems of their own due to her father's death from cancer and her mother's severe depression.
- ✓ There had been some minor assaults and lots of verbal "stuff" that went on for a while. Then, after one assault in which Sam blackened Sandra's eye, she decided to call a domestic violence hotline, which led to a series of orders for protection (OFPs) in that county. Sam would move out when

the order was served, and then later return, laughing and saying the police wouldn't really enforce those protection orders. She would call the police, and he would take off before they arrived, and then show up again a week or so later, again pushing his way back in, either making threats or being charming and sweet.

- ✓ In the past, Sandra has received black eyes, a broken wrist, bruises and abrasions, and she continues to experience recurring lower back pain after Sam threw her against a wall 18 months ago, before she left him and moved here. She has also seen a doctor for migraines and the back pain. He told her he thinks the migraines are from the stress she's under, though he didn't specifically ask about domestic violence and she didn't think it was worth bringing up.
- ✓ With the help of a victim's advocate, Sandra relocated to this community, hoping that Sam would not be able to find her. She had not seen him for almost a year when he appeared and pushed his way back into her life.

Q8 What do the children have to say about the situation?

- ✓ When the case worker talked with the children, they express a lot of fear of Sam and worry about their mother.
- ✓ The 8-year-old is very proud that he has learned to call 911 and take care of the little kids. Now he "can get the police to stop Sam!" He is upset that his mom told him to leave with the others that night because "there is no phone in the backyard. And we were so cold. Then Sherry [age 6] just cried and cried. When the police came, we stayed outside so they wouldn't take us away from Mom. That happened once before, when we lived in Dullesville, that was in Illinois. Sometimes, Mom does drink too much, but not near as much as Mrs. Jones [one of the child care providers used by Sandra in Illinois]."
- ✓ The 7-year-old boy said, "Sam isn't so bad really. He takes us to ball games sometimes, and anyway, it's Mom's fault for getting him mad."
- ✓ The 6-year-old girl didn't say much but drew pictures of a house, with a tree and sunshine and flowers, and a family with a woman and three children.

Q9 What is Sandra thinking about this situation now?

- ✓ Sandra has not seen Sam since his arrest this week (a few days ago). She says she is afraid and confused, and does not know what to do.
- ✓ With the help of a victim's advocate, Sandra had relocated to this community, hoping that Sam would not be able to find her. She had not seen him for almost a year when he appeared and pushed his way back into her life. At first she told the caseworker that she still loved him, and that maybe he

had changed. But then she admitted that she just hoped he had changed, and that she knew he really hadn't, and she was afraid of what he could do to her and the children.

- ✓ Sandra says she has tried "everything," even moving to a whole new state and starting over, and she doesn't think she can get away from him.
- ✓ She is tired of going to shelters (as she did in her old community) and she just couldn't pick up and move the children again. She likes her job and things were finally going well, at least until Sam showed up again.

Q10 What else does Sam say about things in general?

- ✓ Sam tells the caseworker that he loves Sandra very much and he feels like a father to the kids. He says that Sandra has a drinking problem and probably a drug problem as well. He reports that when he would come home from work or whatever he was doing, Sandra would be out and the kids would be in front of the TV eating cold, canned spaghetti. Sam added that he doesn't think Sandra is a bad mom, but she could use some help. He says that Sandra moved away from Dullesville because of her grief over her dad's death and her mom's drinking and other family problems. He knows he and Sandra have had problems in the past, but that all couples have conflicts.
- ✓ He says he was heartbroken when Sandra left. He reports that he went to an anger management class during the time they were apart. He said he didn't move here until he was ready to do better. Sam says Sandra was glad to see him when he came and let him right in. He says they haven't really had problems since he moved back in and they'd been talking about marriage up to the night of the last incident.

Continuation of discussion questions

Case study—Sandra & Sam

Training note

- In this second part of the case study activity, the Sandra & Sam case will be used again for a discussion by participants about what they see as gaps in the services and issues of effective service provision and effective collaboration across systems.
- Give participants time to consider the four questions below and then facilitate a discussion around their answers.
- If you wish, include additional questions from the suggestions on pages 151–152.

1 What interventions do you think are necessary for this family group?

For the children:

For the woman:

For the man:

2 With whom would you collaborate in order to take the measures you think are necessary for the family group?

3 How can you achieve the best practice in order to take measures you think are necessary for the family group?

4 Would the decisions or measures be different if the victim(s) were (are) Native American? Southeast Asian refugees? Latino migrant laborers? Others? If so, how would the decisions or measures be different?

*Additional
questions that
you can use*

Risk and protective factors

What are the concerns and risk factors for Sandra? For the children? For others?

What strengths and resources appear to be available? What are Sandra's strengths?
What are the children's strengths?

In what ways does Sandra demonstrate her care for and protection of the children?

Children's perspective

What are the kids seeing and thinking? What do you think is going on with them? What impact is this having on them? Consider their developmental ages (6, 7, and 8 years old).

Examples: Parents divorced
Mom is abused
Grandfather dies, grandmother depressed; no contact
with extended family
Dad moved away, has new girlfriend/wife
Moved in and out of shelters
Moved to new town, new neighborhood, new school
Each child has a different role, different reaction

Informal and formal system involvement

Who is involved? What did each do? What else might they have done or what might they have done differently?

Examples of who is "involved" or could be involved:

Neighbor
Police
Hotline worker/CPS screener
Caseworker (assessment): this person interviews mother,
children, boyfriend, neighbors, and gathers information
from police reports and criminal check
Residents of "new community"
Child support enforcement
Ex-husband/father
Sandra's family (father's death, mother's depression)
Friends
State program (training and employment)
Job (nursing assistant)
In the old community: domestic violence advocate, police and
courts (series of OFPs), shelter
Doctor/health care system

Where are the possibilities or opportunities for collaborative efforts between agencies? What are the barriers to collaboration?

How might this scenario be different for women and children of color? Women who are homeless or poor? Others?

How might response to this scenario differ in a rural versus an urban community?

What would be the central elements of a case plan that would fit the following principles:

- Protect the safety of both the children and their mother
- Hold the perpetrator of violence accountable
- Empower the mother to take steps that she needs to in order to deal with the situation
- Provide supportive intervention to the children