

Observations of ways caseworkers have supported survivors of domestic violence:

- Caseworkers have an understanding of the impacts of trauma on adults.
- Caseworkers have an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence
- Caseworkers understand the many barriers a survivor may face in leaving an abusive partner and does not fault a survivor who may choose to stay for a number of reasons, including: lack of affordable housing, fear of abuse escalating if she leaves, fear of losing custody of children, lack of financial resources.
- Caseworker is able to identify ways a parent has protected the children while experiencing abuse from her partner.
- Case worker is aware of local programs, services and resources which serve survivors and their children and makes referrals as appropriate when survivor is ready
- Caseworker seeks support from his/her supervisor or a DV expert when faced with challenges related to dynamics of DV that require guidance
- Caseworker does not mandate the survivor to get a protective order without first safety planning with the survivor to problem-solve what will keep her the safest
- Caseworker understands that children who have witnessed/experienced DV often heal more effectively from that trauma when kept in the care of the non-offending parent (when possible)
- Caseworker avoids joint FDMs or shared FDM notes which include both survivor and abuser information
- Caseworker does not share survivor information with the abuser or those in his party
- Caseworker does not knowingly place children in the care of a perpetrator of DV
- Caseworker understands that survivors often require more support with basic needs if choosing to leave abusive partner, including bus passes, subsidized housing, DV grant, and other resources which promote her economic independence and safety.
- Caseworker is aware that a survivor needs to decide herself that she wants to leave the relationship.
- Caseworker is aware of potential challenges a child and survivor may have when the child visits the abusive parent.
- Case worker does not recommend unsupervised visits with the abusive parent
- Caseworker advocates for a safe third party location if children are in survivor's care and having visits with abuser so that abuser does not know of survivor's living location.
- Caseworker does not assign a safety service provider to the survivor who has any relationship or current contact with the abuser
- When children are removed from parents care, the case worker creates clear, documented conditions expected of the survivor and abuser (independently of one another) so there is transparency and clear expectations for each parent.
- Case worker uses language that is affirming of the survivors strengths.
- When there is known DV, case worker immediately refers the survivor to a DV advocate who the survivor can choose to engage with or not.
- Caseworker is vocal in court hearings about the importance of confidentiality for survivor, including as it pertains to where survivor is living.
- Caseworker lets survivor know her rights to safety within the DHS system; i.e. avoiding joint FDMs, request for housing information to be kept confidential from abuser.