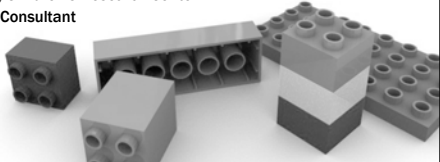


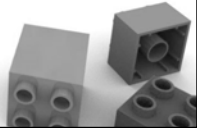
Enhancing Safety for Children and Battered Mothers in Child Protection: Engagement, Assessment, and Decision Making

Dan Cowan, Annie E. Casey
Raelene Freitag, Children's Research Center
Shellie Taggart, Consultant



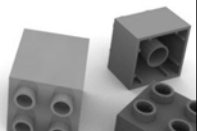
Domestic violence in CPS

- **Historically, CPS assessment limited**
 - Did DV incident(s) occur?
 - Were the children present?
 - What did the non-offending parent do in response?
- **Problems with the approach**
 - DV is pattern of behavior
 - Children are exposed in many ways
 - Lack of understanding of responses of BW
 - No focus on the violent partner



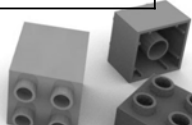
Domestic violence in CPS

- **Limited assessment led to**
 - NOP having to do certain things (go to shelter, get a restraining order, have him arrested)
- **Problems with the approach**
 - Can ↑ danger or risk to battered mothers, linked to safety of children
 - No accountability for offending parent
 - Traumatized children
 - Short-term solutions




Improved DV Assessment Framework

Dangerousness of Offender	NOP Help-Seeking and Access to Resources
Children	Community




Dangerousness of Offender

<p>Recent escalation of violence</p> <p>History of violence</p> <p>Access to, threats with, and use of weapons</p> <p>Threats of homicide or suicide</p> <p>Violations of restraining orders</p> <p>Threats of violence if she leaves</p> <p>Obsessive jealousy</p> <p>Extreme isolation</p> <p>Extreme or bizarre violence</p>	<p>Recent instability</p> <p>Monitoring and stalking</p> <p>Extreme or untreated depression</p> <p>Substance abuse</p> <p>Sexual violence</p> <p>Situations in which he fears he will lose his partner (i.e. CPS Intervention)</p>
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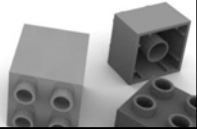
Non-offending Parent (NOP)

- **Prior help-seeking behaviors**
- **Access to resources**
- **Networks of support**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Mental health (depression, PTSD)**
- **Ability and willingness to safety plan**



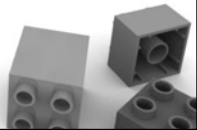
Children

- Ages
- Functioning (what is the impact of witnessing?)
 - Academic performance
 - Behaviors



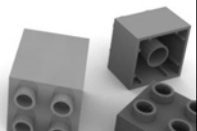
Community response

- Police and courts
- Schools
- Doctors
- Shelters and support for BW
- Batterer Intervention
- Supervised Visitation
- CWV services



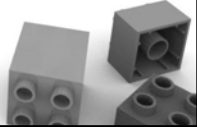
Advantages

- **Strength-based:** Explored NOP help-seeking, encouraged partnering with NOP
- **Family centered:** NOP and child safe together
- **Child focused:** Impact on child
- **Accountability** for offender
- **More accurate assessment** of danger/risk



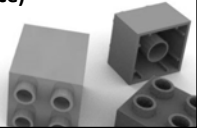
Challenges

- Lack of training and support for CPS workers
- Fear of working with offender
- Lack of attention to variations among men who use violence and among children exposed



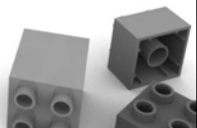
Improved DV Assessment

- Impact of exposure on children
 - Proximity, frequency, severity, chronicity of exposure
 - Age at which exposure began
 - Time since most recent exposure
 - Multiple forms of violence (domestic violence, child abuse, community violence)



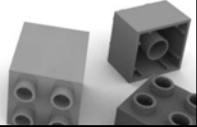
Improved DV Assessment

- Concept of resilient children
 - At least one consistent and supportive adult (often the NOP)
 - Child's individual temperament
 - Opportunities for healing and success
 - Supportive community, including systems responses



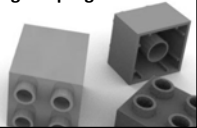
Improved DV Assessment

- **Protective capacities**
 - Prior acts of protection of children
 - Nurturing and attachment
 - Understanding of how exposure to DV impacts children
 - Network of support
 - Concrete resources



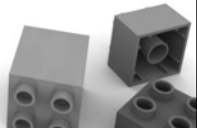
Improved DV Assessment

- Offending Parent capacity to change
- Accepts responsibility for abusive/violent behavior
 - Demonstrates or can be engaged around empathy for the children
 - Identifies cultural norms against family violence
 - Leave the home and stays away (or accepts partner and child leaving, with no escalation of abuse or effort to pursue them)
 - Engages in BI and demonstrates “working the program”
 - Substance abuse or mental health services

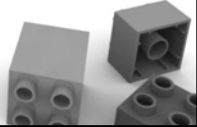


Improved DV Assessment

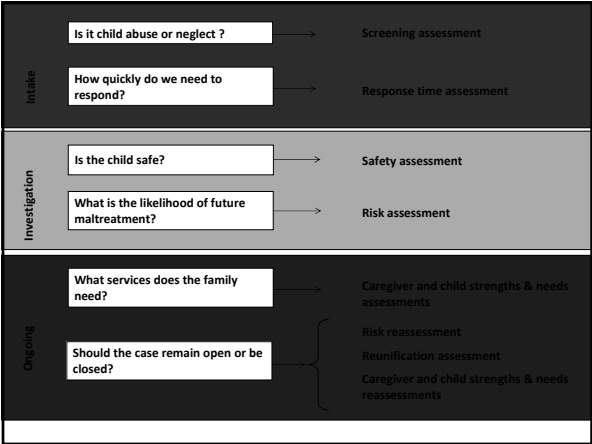
- **Supportive systems**
 - CPS—Family Meetings, Team Decision Making, teams of workers
 - DV in partnership with CPS
 - Family engagement
 - Signs of Safety approach
 - Differential engagement of offenders
 - Evidence-based approaches and tools

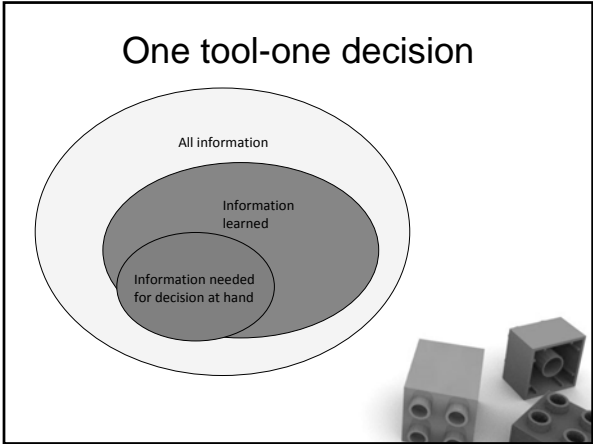


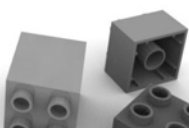
Structured Decision Making



- ## SDM Objectives
- Greater consistency in decision making (Reliability)
 - Use tools that are based on research (Validity)
 - Provide equitable treatment for sub-populations (Fairness)
 - Assessments that are useful for staff (Utility)
 - Promotes positive outcomes (Impact)
- 





- ### Limitations
- Focus is on **WHICH** information to gather, not on **HOW** to gather it
 - Focus is on information needed to **MAKE KEY DECISIONS**, not on comprehensive awareness of content areas.
- 

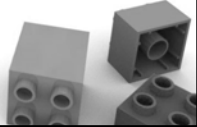
Team DecisionMaking (TDM)



Team Decision Making (TDM) Meetings

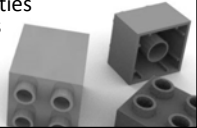
A facilitated meeting *with* family members and their supports, community representatives, the case worker and supervisor for all placement-related decisions

A systematic way to engage with families around the most critical child welfare decisions



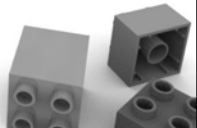
TDM Core Values

- A Group can be more effective in making good decisions than an individual
- When families are included in decision-making, they are capable of identifying their own needs and strengths
- Families are experts on themselves
- Members of the family's own community add value to the process by serving as natural allies to the family and as experts on the communities resources



TDM Meeting Types

- All Removal Situations
 - Considered Removal
 - Emergency Situations
- All Change of Placement Situations
- All Permanency Decisions
 - Reunification
 - TPR
 - Other Permanency Decisions



TDM Key Elements

For ALL Critical Decisions

- Involving child removal, change of placement and reunification/other permanency plan

Facilitator

- Not a case-carrying social worker or line supervisor
- Trained, skilled and immediately accessible

Data Collection

- Info on who attended, location and recommendations linked to child & family outcome data

Community Representatives

- Especially in child removals

Held BEFORE the child's move

occurs

- Or by next working day in cases of imminent risk
- Always before the initial court hearing in cases of removal

Springboard for an "Icebreaker"

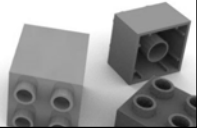
Meeting

- Meeting between the birth and foster parent to focus on child's needs while in placement



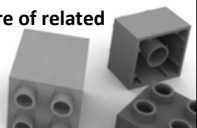
Minimum Standards for DV TDMS

- No violation of court orders
- Do No Harm – no increase in danger to children
 - Therefore no increase in danger to mothers
- Pre-TDM planning conversation with NOP
- Pre-meeting Safety Check-in
- Separate TDMS when results depend on mother's safety plan
 - Adult survivor TDM first in most cases
- Partner with NOP to create safety and plan for intervention with offending parent
- Be prepared to interrupt/stop meeting
- Postpone meeting if necessary

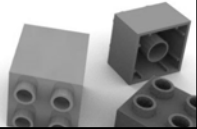


Pre-TDM Check-In

- Share safety ground rule
 - TDMS are a place of physical and emotional safety for all who participate.
- Are there any court orders prohibiting contact between you and anyone else here?
- Are you feeling like you can safely participate in this TDM?
- Is there anything we should be aware of related to your personal safety before the meeting starts?



What does it look like in practice?



Successful child protection

