



SEC
Social Enterprise
for Canada

Supervised Parenting Time Services
A Bridge to your Family's Future

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
(Best Practices 8.1)

RATIONALE: Supervised Parenting Time Centres take appropriate actions, when necessary, to ensure the safety of all participants and to provide safe environments that are free from abusive behaviour.

STANDARD:

- Domestic violence (also known as DV, domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV)) is a pattern of behaviour which involves the abuse (physical, emotional, mental, sexual, financial, verbal) by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating or within the family.
- Supervised Parenting Time Centres are never neutral about abuse.
- Centres do not tolerate abusive behaviour (physical, emotional, mental, sexual, financial, or verbal) directed toward any Centre personnel or participant.
- Centres have written policies and procedures in place with respect to working with situations involving domestic violence. These policies maintain the safety and well-being of all participants and personnel, while remaining sensitive and responsive to issues related to domestic violence.
- Staff and volunteers receive training about domestic violence. Training includes a component on understanding how DV impacts families using Supervised Parenting Time services.
- Centres have the right to decline cases where the Centre does not feel the physical, mental and/or emotional safety and security of any person involved can be assured.

POLICY 1 – SERVICE DELIVERY IN CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

The Centre provides service to families where domestic violence is an issue, whether it involves allegations, a pending charge or a conviction, in a way that best supports the safety and well-being of all participants and personnel.

PROCEDURES:

Intake:

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Supervised Parenting Time Program

17705 Leslie Street, Suite 11, Newmarket, L3Y 3E3

Tel: 1-866-243-9925 Fax: 905-953-8241



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The Coordinator or other staff who performs the intake is responsible for the following:

- Asking the questions in the Additional Intake Questions from ISAID.
- Requesting and obtaining all of the Orders and reports pertaining to the alleged or convicted perpetrator of the domestic violence, including probation and parole, bail, criminal record check, peace bonds, Partner Assault Response (PAR), etc. to assist in determining the specific safety issues and concerns.
- Emphasizing that Centre staff cannot promise to hear and record everything that is said, cannot be advocates for one party or another, and cannot enforce orders.
- Explaining that what is said at intake will be recorded and that reports containing these statements can be requested/ subpoenaed by either of the parties, their lawyers or the court.
- Including a clause in the Service Agreement stating that a party will notify the Centre if they have any contact with the police or court regarding DV that starts after they have begun service with the Centre.
- Allowing a shelter/support worker or other necessary support person to attend the intake interview with the victim at the Coordinator's discretion.
- Asking about any safety concerns that the party may have.
- Determining if the visiting child(ren) witnessed the violence and if they have been or will be witnesses in any criminal proceeding or an ongoing investigation. If so, the Centre can decide to delay service pending the trial.

Providing Service:

- Domestic violence files are clearly flagged as such to alert Centre personnel.
- Alternate safety precautions are put in place at any point during service, as needed.
- Staff exercise additional caution when recording or reporting information to avoid revealing particular locations or names.
- If staff become aware that a child has disclosed personal/identifying/locating information to the visiting party during a visit/exchange, they inform the residential party at the end of the visit/exchange.
- When a surety is required, they may attend the Centre if approved by all parties. If they are not approved, the parties are instructed to seek Independent Legal Advice (ILA).

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- Victims of domestic violence are permitted to be accompanied to the Centre by a personal or professional support person during pick up and drop off of the child at the Centre.
- Any threat uttered by a party in a DV situation is taken very seriously by the Centre and reported to the appropriate authorities and party/ies.
- The Centre develops collaboration and communication with other community agencies directly involved with domestic violence including the Victim/Witness Assistance Program.
- The Centre develops a protocol for working with DV shelters in the community
- The Coordinator provides staff with support and the opportunity to debrief after an incident.
- The Centre reserves the right to review a family file at the conclusion of any criminal proceedings to determine the family's on-going needs and continued eligibility for the program.

Working with the Police:

- In general, it is not the Centre's role to report breaches of criminal orders. However, if the Centre judges that someone is put at risk of harm because of a breach, the Centre should report the breach to the police and notify the party who is at risk. If a Centre has first-hand knowledge of a breach of a criminal court order that potentially poses a risk to the child/ren, the Centre reports this to the Children's Aid Society as well.
- The Centre develops a protocol with police around cases involving domestic violence. Consideration should be given to having the police on standby if a situation with a DV family is anticipated where someone's safety might be endangered.

POLICY 2 – TRAINING OF STAFF FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SITUATIONS

The Centre recognizes the impact that domestic violence has on children and their families and strives to deliver safe and child-focused service in these cases through specialized training and education for staff.

PROCEDURES:

- The Coordinator arranges for staff/volunteers to meet with a local Violence Against Women organization or to receive specific training from a VAW organization for the purpose of gaining an understanding of the field and

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dynamics of DV, including providing service to visiting parties who are victims of DV.

- The Centre includes multicultural issues related to DV in training discussions.
- The Centre has a resource library and training module/materials on domestic violence.
- The Coordinator shares best practices with staff/volunteers. It is important for Centre staff to be able to make decisions based on the issues of each individual case, however, best practices provide consistent explanations for why and how decisions are made and what actions are to be taken by staff.
- Personnel whose lives have been touched personally by DV need to be aware of the special challenges that this poses for them in regards to neutrality and professionalism. The Coordinator monitors and supports staff in this situation.
- Attempt to arrange for the police/security personnel to accompany the victim to/from their car if there is a concern about safety
- When recording, avoid doing so in a way that identifies locations or names e.g. 'visit cancelled because grandma died and going to funeral in Montreal' vs. 'visit cancelled due to a death in the family'
- The Coordinator will be aware of the implications of sharing with CP or VP the reason for cancellation. Do not reveal reasons for cancellation to the other party if doing so would put someone's safety at risk e.g. If the victim is moving.
- If staff become aware that a child discloses personal/identifying/locating information to the VP during a visit/exchange, inform the CP at the end of the visit/exchange

BEST PRACTICES:

- Coordinators should consider joining Domestic Violence committees in their local community.

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