

# Multi-Service Agencies: When Survivors and Perpetrators Are Both Your Clients



Policy for serving victims and perpetrators of domestic violence if both are current clients at the organization prior to the reported domestic violence

## I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to set forth procedures and guidelines for all service providers working with refugees, asylees, asylum seekers and immigrants, where the entire family is a client of the organization and domestic violence is reported by one or more family member.

## II. DEFINITIONS:

- A. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: the commission or attempted commission of one or more of the following acts by a family or household member, current or former sexual/intimate partner where such conduct constitutes a credible threat to the victim's safety: assault or reckless conduct, criminal threatening, sexual assault, interference with freedom, destruction of property, unauthorized entry and harassment.
- B. PERPETRATOR: An individual who commits an act of domestic violence as defined above.
- C. VICTIM: An individual who is subject to an act of domestic violence as defined above.

## III. POLICY:

All employees at the agency will follow to the fullest extent possible without violating any existing rules, regulations, confidentiality requirements, and contractual obligations the guidelines specified below while providing services to families where domestic violence is reported.

Initial Assessment: If information involving domestic violence is reported to case worker by one member in the immigrant family, the caseworker will be required to immediately report the information to their supervisor. Individual assessments of both partners will then be conducted separately by caseworker to assess for the following:

- Domestic Violence
- Determining victim and perpetrator
- Safety issues involving providing a safety plan

Based on the information provided in the assessment of both partners, separate caseworkers will be assigned to each individual. Caseworkers will provide the following:

**Victim:**

- Create a detailed safety plan
- Ensure confidentiality (given that perpetrator is a client too)
- Education involving dynamics of DV
- Impact of DV on self and family
- Local DV laws
- Legal options available for e.g. restraining order, consent order etc.
- Collaboratively develop a work plan
- Make referrals for local DV services, medical care, mental health services and social services
- Immigration status
- Continue follow-up

Other appropriate assistance will be provided based on individual need and availability.

**Perpetrator:**

- Ensure confidentiality laws within agency
- Explain local DV laws and consequences
- Create response plan
- Impact on immigration status and employment
- Impact on family well being
- Explain caseworkers role in ensuring family safety
- Make referrals for mental health services
- Continue follow up

Other appropriate assistance will be provided based on individual need and availability. In response to potential domestic violence situations the agency will strictly follow its emergency protocols in implementing safety plans for the client and staff involved. These plans may include, when appropriate, advising co-workers and front desk personnel of the situation; setting up procedures for alerting security and/or the police; temporary/permanent relocation of the client; addressing telephone, fax, e-mail or mail harassment; and providing a photograph of the perpetrator and/or a copy of any existing court orders to security personnel.

The agency will not support or tolerate acts of domestic violence perpetrated by or against any clients while they are currently receiving services at the agency. The agency will also not tolerate any acts of domestic violence perpetrated by clients on any employees in the agency offices, facilities, work sites, vehicles or while conducting agency business. This includes the display of any violent or threatening behavior by a

perpetrator (verbal or physical) that is likely to result in physical or emotional injury or otherwise places a client's or staff's safety at risk.

#### **IV. AGENCY RESPONSE:**

Domestic violence occurs between people of all racial, economic, educational and religious backgrounds, in heterosexual and same-sex relationships, and between couples living together or separately, married or unmarried. Domestic violence can affect adversely the well being and productivity of victims, as well as their families. Effect of domestic violence in immigrant families, impact future self sufficiency, and family well being.

The agency will provide employees, and volunteers with a copy of this policy and a state domestic violence brochure. As part of general orientation, each recently hired employee shall be provided with a copy of this policy and state brochure. Staff will also be encouraged to participate in domestic violence training as provided.