

# **Engage to Protect: Foundations for Supervised Visitation and Exchange**

## **Engaging with Battered Women in Supervised Visitation Centers**

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Praxis International, Inc.

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We cannot begin to adequately thank the women who participated in focus group discussions and helped us explore the many facets and needs related to safety after leaving an abusive partner. We dedicate this work to them, and to the children, mothers, and fathers who everyday enter the doors of a visitation center. May our contribution help expand the possibilities of nonviolence and harmony for each family.

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NOTE: We recommend reading the following related papers in the *Engage to Protect* series: “Recognizing and Understanding Battering,” Ellen Pence and Jane Sadusky, 2009; and “Engaging with Men Who Batter,” Maren Hansen-Kramer, Julie Tilley, Beth McNamara, and Jane Sadusky, 2009.

### The Evolution of an Engaged Practice

*Engaging with battered women...* This discussion requires that we begin by defining “battering” and acknowledging that to use the words “battered women” can be controversial. It is nevertheless a crucial distinction for visitation centers that follow the Guiding Principles of the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program (Supervised Visitation Program).<sup>1</sup> To “protect” and to have “equal regard for the safety of children and adult victims” require that a visitation center understand battering, which is distinctive from other forms of domestic violence for the variety of coercive tactics, the level of fear it produces for adult victims and their children, and its potential lethality. And while men and women both use violence in intimate relationships, *battering* has been and remains most characteristic of men’s use of violence in heterosexual relationships.<sup>2</sup> While there will be exceptions, in paying attention to battering, a visitation center is primarily working with men who batter and women who are the targets.

*Battering* has been largely submerged under the broad category of domestic violence, a term which has come to include many kinds of violence and behaviors within relationships between intimate partners. While we do not present a full exploration of the distinction here, we provide a definition and a link to a more thorough discussion.

**Battering** is an ongoing use of intimidation, coercion, violence, and other tactics **intended to control and dominate** an intimate partner. It involves patterns of physical, sexual, and

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<sup>1</sup> The Guiding Principles were developed over a three-year period by a national steering committee, with coordination and guidance from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. They include: (1) Equal Regard for the Safety of Child and Adult Victims; (2) Valuing Multiculturalism and Diversity; (3) Incorporating an Understanding of Domestic Violence into Center Services; (4) Respectful and Fair Interaction; (5) Community Collaboration; and, (6) Advocacy for Child and Adult Victims. See *Guiding Principles – Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program* (December 2007), published by the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women; available at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org).

<sup>2</sup> Few heterosexual women have the combination of physical strength, social support, and historical privilege to dominate a male partner with violence, coercion, and intimidation. Battering can occur in same-sex relationships, although there has been little specific research on intimate partner violence in lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender relationships (LGBT). See the work of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs at [www.ncavp.org](http://www.ncavp.org).



emotional abuse. In severity it ranges from intimidation by pushing, shoving, and restraining (e.g., a “bear hug”) to stalking over a period of many years; to making a victim live in constant fear of harm to herself, her children, or her family; to the extreme domination and physical violence of “**intimate terrorism**” (Johnson); and to killing her or her children or other family members or friends...It is not the same as hitting someone in a marriage.<sup>3</sup>

### A shift in perspective and practice

Since 2002, the Supervised Visitation Program (SVP) has provided many communities with an opportunity to support supervised visitation and safe exchange that addresses battering and other forms of domestic violence. The SVP is grounded in the recognition that the process of separating from and leaving an abusive partner can increase rather than diminish danger for victims of battering and their children, and batterers often use visitation and exchange of children as an opportunity to inflict additional emotional, physical, and/or psychological abuse.

The SVP encourages an understanding of the ways in which coercion and control underpin domestic violence. It requires that the visitation and exchange services provided through its grants reflect an understanding of the dynamics of battering and other forms of domestic violence and the impact of domestic violence on children. It links supervised visitation and exchange with a wider community response by requiring grantees to include visitation programs, courts, and domestic violence advocacy agencies in their projects. Grantees have participated in wide-ranging discussions about how to build supervised visitation and exchange services that focus on the safety of adult and child victims of battering. This collective work has encouraged an understanding of supervised visitation and safe exchange as critical post-separation services for battered women and their children. It has also led to a shift in perspective and practice for many visitation centers, as supported by the following key components.

- The Guiding Principle of “advocacy for child and adult victims”

Visitation centers that value advocacy for adult and child victims recognize that it is not the center's role to advocate for individuals or to act as domestic violence advocates within the overall scope of the center's work. However, it is the center's responsibility to ensure that victims have direct access to trained advocates and a range of supportive services. By exploring victims' circumstances and experiences with battering and providing accurate information about what advocacy is and how it can address their individual needs, the center lays the groundwork for linking victims with advocacy services.

- The Guiding Principle of “equal regard for the safety of child(ren) and adult victims”

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<sup>3</sup> Definition from “Recognizing and Understanding Battering,” Ellen Pence and Jane Sadusky, 2009, in the *Engage to Protect* series. This discussion of battering draws on the following work: Ellen Pence and Shamita Das Dasgupta, “Re-examining ‘Battering’: Are All Acts of Violence Against Intimate Partners the Same?” 2006, Praxis International; Ellen Pence and Michael Paymar’s experience conducting education groups with men who batter (*Education Groups for Men Who Batter: The Duluth Model*, Springer, 1993); Evan Stark’s articulation of “coercive control” (*Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*, Oxford University Press, 2007); and Michael Johnson’s attention to the sharp and crucial distinction between what he terms “intimate terrorism” and “situational couple violence” (as set forth in the following and subsequent publications: “Patriarchal Terrorism and Common Couple Violence: Two Forms of Violence Against Women in U.S. Families,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57 (May 1995): 283-294.



Under this principle, safety of children and adult victims is a center's highest priority. Paying equal regard requires building a comprehensive understanding of the nature, dynamics, and impact of battering into all aspects of center services. The needs of adult victims are visible and acknowledged in all center practices. A center that has equal regard for adult and child victims recognizes its unique position in protecting them from actual violence or from a batterer's attempts to use the center to continue the abuse. The principle of equal regard challenges the longstanding assumption of neutrality as the only standpoint for a visitation center. Neutrality in effect reinforces battering and abuse by not taking a clear stand against the coercion, control, and harm.<sup>4</sup>

- The Guiding Principle of “respectful and fair interaction”

Treating all family members with respect and fairness does not mean that the center is neutral toward the violence perpetuated by a batterer or that the center will overlook controlling or threatening behavior. Because of the power imbalance inherent in a relationship where one partner has been violent and coercive to the other, fairness cannot be achieved through simplistic notions of sameness or impartiality. Centralizing fairness and respect requires that visitation centers not favor one side over the other, while permitting centers to protect one or more parties from another.

A visitation center that has equal regard for a battered woman's safety will be fair and respectful to the father of her children. However, it will not act as though nothing has happened in his violence towards her. It will provide a valuable neutral *space* for visitation or exchange while taking a clear stand against violence and abuse. It will take care to submit factual reports that make visible any safety concerns, in clear terms related to the safety needs of each person. The visitation center will better fulfill its potential to use its relationships with court and community interveners, and its unique relationship with each family member, to help lessen the harm caused by the violence and maximize the possibility that each family member can live without ongoing fear, intimidation, or violence.

- A visitation center's role in contributing to safety for adult and child victims over time

*Safety* is the protection of children and adult victims of battering from continued physical, sexual, and emotional harm, coercion, and threats.<sup>5</sup> A visitation center can have a distinctive place in promoting and influencing safety over three distinct time periods: the two hours a family is physically present in the facility, the two years over which separation unfolds, and the twenty-plus years of ongoing parenting until early adulthood. “2 hours – 2 years – 20 years” are not precise periods of time, but symbolic, and a useful cue to remembering that safety changes over time and circumstances.

A safe visit or exchange is undeniably critical and important to everyone involved and visitation centers have historically been organized to pay attention to safety exclusively in this context. Through the work of the Supervised Visitation Program, many centers have

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<sup>4</sup> The issue of neutrality in supervised visitation is far more complex than this brief statement. See “On Safety's Side – Protecting Those Vulnerable to Violence: Challenges to Notions of Neutrality in Supervised Visitation Centers,” Martha McMahon and Ellen Pence, Praxis International, 2008 (available at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org)).

<sup>5</sup> The articulation of safety over time reflects the work of the Michigan and California sites of OVW's Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Exchange Grant Program – Demonstration Initiative.

recognized that they can also have a unique connection with each family member over the period that separation, divorce, custody, and visitation issues are being resolved. A center can help a batterer get through the volatile period of separation and help weaken his opportunity and inclination to abuse. Whether by legal decree and/or the reality of having children in common, most battered women end up having to navigate parenting around their former partner until children reach adulthood, regardless of the severity of abuse they experienced. A visitation center can help support safety over this time period by the relationships it builds, regardless of whether it is part of a family's life for six months or several years. In addition, beyond its role with any one family, a visitation center contributes to ending battering and domestic violence by its ongoing participation in a wider community response and its links with domestic violence advocacy programs, the courts, and other collaborating partners.

### **Defining “engaged”**

To be “engaged” means to be involved and connected in an intentional, thoughtful way (to advocate means “to plead the cause of another”).

We can all think of a time that we have used a service that had a big influence on our well-being. It could be access to health care or a certain kind of medical treatment. It could be making an insurance claim after a traffic accident or securing day care tuition assistance or unemployment compensation or financial aid. What did you have to do to receive that service? What was most important to that agency about your experience? How were you welcomed and introduced to that service and what was required of you? What was positive and helpful? What was negative and discouraging? Were you connected with someone who clearly explained the expectations and consequences of different actions and decisions? Were you treated ‘like a name’ or ‘like a number’? Was the agency engaged with you or were you processed in and out as though you were interchangeable with the next body in line?

A visitation center that encourages an engaged practice is one that is active in building meaningful relationships with people in an intentional, thoughtful way. **To engage with battered women is a process that is different in approach and skills than that used to engage with the men who batter them, although both practices share a core definition.**

In the domestic violence field, it has long been recognized that protecting battered women and their children requires active engagement with women around their specific circumstances and needs. Visitation centers are in the unique position of working with the whole family, whereas most agencies and organizations responding to domestic violence intervene with one parent or the other. Centers have a valuable opportunity to go beyond guarding women and children. They can engage with women around safety and they also have an opportunity to engage with men around safety and change.



## The Framework

This discussion presents a framework for working with mothers who have been battered. The framework is summarized in Appendix 1. Meeting the goals rests on the approach, as made possible by workers' knowledge and skills in key areas.

### Goals

#### 1. Foster safety for mothers and their children

The primary goal is safety: her safety and her children's safety. A visitation center can create an environment that does not allow the battering to continue and that makes it possible to de-escalate or diffuse risk to her or the children. This attention to safety is both immediate, during the specific time period of a visit or exchange, and over the period of separation and ongoing contact with the center. This attention to safety also provides a foundation for ongoing safety. The center's consistent message to battered women, whether a custodial mother or not, is that it will act with her to keep her and children safe, rather than acting on her "case."

To foster safety, visitation centers must ensure that their interventions do not strengthen his power and control over her and the children or reinforce his denial of the abuse or blaming of her for his actions. To "engage to protect" means that a visitation center creates an environment that counters her experience with battering.

#### 2. Counteract the experience of battering

To counteract the experience of battering requires that a visitation center anchor its programs and services in recognition of and understanding battering and its impact on women. From this essential foundation it can develop the approaches and necessary skills in workers to respond safely in ways that do not reinforce the coercion, intimidation, and control that characterize battering.

"My job was to make her ugly." That statement, made by a participant in a batterers' intervention program, speaks to one of the most potent impacts of battering on women. A batterer wants interveners – whether police, prosecutors, judges, or visitation center workers – to see her as flawed, incompetent, "crazy," or whatever negative qualities will most influence them to see him as the victim and the one entitled to their attention and support.

*Living with a batterer means that a woman is rarely free to speak.* She is continually being told what to think and what to say. He often defines things for her. There is little dialogue and rarely an exchange of ideas or opinions where her standing has as much validity as his. Many battered women have had the experience of being severely abused – physically, emotionally, or sexually – when they have spoken up at the wrong time, i.e., a time that they were not permitted to speak. To counteract the pervasive domination and coercion of battering, visitation centers can create an environment that allows women to speak freely, supports dialogue, and listens to them. Listening to battered women does not mean agreeing with everything they say or following every request. It means supporting a battered woman's



voice and her right to speak up without belittlement or punishment. This is essential if a visitation center is to meet the goal of fostering safety. In order to mitigate any ongoing abuse the center must know what is happening to her and her children. Her information and knowledge is central to figuring out what is the best and safest course of action.

*Living with a batterer means that a woman can never live up to his expectations.* She cannot count on being quiet enough, quick enough, or capable enough. The children are rarely quiet enough, the house is rarely clean enough, the food hot enough or cold enough. Whatever the focus of his expectations, she can only occasionally meet them and never adequately meet them, regardless of how hard she tries. Whether and when she can meet his expectations is unpredictable. To help counteract this constant erosion of her self-worth and trust in her capabilities, visitation centers can examine their expectations of battered women and the purpose and assumptions behind them. Is she expected to be quiet, calm, agreeable, and easy to work with? Is she expected to always present the children on time and cheerful and clean? Is she expected to appreciate the center? Is she expected to be “motherly” enough if she is a visiting parent? Contrite enough for “losing” her children? This is not to say that a visitation center cannot have expectations for women using its services. It is to say that a center must step back and examine such expectations. Are the expectations necessary to foster safety? Do the expectations account for how each woman’s social standing and life experience impacts her ability to meet those expectations? Are the expectations rooted in assumptions about domestic violence and about what makes a “good mother”? When a worker believes “I would never let a man do that to me” or “she should have gotten those children out of there a long time ago,” those are powerful expectations that are difficult to live up to.

*Living with battering means that a mother’s relationship and authority with her children is constantly undermined* (Appendix 2). Among the most intimate connections and relationships in a woman’s life are those with her children. Because a batterer cuts his partner’s ties to all relationships outside of her relationship with him and cannot allow her to have any interest stronger than her interest in him, he persistently attacks and erodes her relationship with her children. He does this by:

- 1) Using excessive and coercive discipline and demanding that his partner discipline the children in the same way. E.g., refusing to feed a child who has disobeyed an order or who forgot to do a chore.
- 2) Undermining the relationship between the children and their mother. E.g., telling the children their mother is stupid and mocking her in front of them.
- 3) Isolating the children from their mother and the mother from her children. E.g., playing favorites; physically isolating children from their mother by successfully obtaining joint or sole custody.
- 4) Using the children to control his partner. E.g., telling her, “if you don’t do what I say, this kid is going to get it.”
- 5) Using the children to hurt his partner. E.g., encouraging the children to disparage their mother or call her names; allowing or encouraging the children to physically attack their mother.
- 6) Hurting the children to hurt his partner. E.g., beating or humiliating the children; or, in a final exercise of this tactic, killing the children, but not their mother.





Once the center is involved in the separation process – and it is very much involved once the court issues a visitation or exchange order – a batterer is likely to try and manipulate all circumstances to his advantage and to make her appear to be the less cooperative parent. As decisions are made by courts about “parenting time” or “co-parenting” arrangements, a batterer wants those decision-makers to see her as the parent who lies, is late, is taking his parenting time, not following the rules, acting out, and not considering his rights. The visitation center needs to make sure that its interventions – from its reactions to her to its documenting and reporting practices – do not strengthen his efforts to undermine her relationship and authority with her children.

Visitation centers working with non-custodial battered mothers often encounter the following situation: knowing that the mother is planning to have dinner or lunch or celebrate something with the children, the father feeds them before the visit so that the children will be full and uninterested in what she has planned. It is mean, controlling, and manipulative. He is sending a message to her that he can control her relationship with the children even when the visitation center is involved. He is sending a message to the children that he can easily override what their mother has planned. He is deliberately undermining her parenting authority. Such actions are a continuation of the abuse and control that characterize the battering.

When their mother is being battered, children have complex relationships with her and there is much that needs to be done to undo the harm caused by their father’s actions. **At a minimum, a visitation center should not cause further harm.** Ideally, a center would be in a position to support each mother to repair the harm and explore what that means for her and her children. The damage caused to the mother-child relationship plays out in visitation centers in many ways, such as when children do not want to visit the non-custodial parent; when mothers and children disagree about something related to the visit or exchange, such as bringing home a certain toy or staying longer with their father; when children say or do something about the mother, e.g., refuse to interact with a visiting mother or criticize her. In these moments, centers are in a position to proactively strengthen and support a mother and children’s resilience. A center can counteract the erosion of the mother-child relationship by developing a safety-oriented partnership with her and preparing workers to help her talk with and restore her relationship with her children.

All professionals who work with battered women are encouraged to do safety planning with women. Whether that professional is a public health nurse, a child protection worker, a probation officer or a school social worker, helping women think through their safety needs and measures is becoming a standard protocol. Visitation center workers should introduce the notion of safety planning at the beginning of their work with women and then as an ongoing process helping women address specific situations or changes that might pose increased risk as they use the center. Remember: risk is not static and the period of time people use visitation services can be volatile, with safety needs changing very rapidly. The domestic violence partner in the collaboration can help a center establish safety planning practices. Centers are encouraged to read *Safety Planning for Battered Women* by Jill Davies to understand its application in different contexts. Centers are also encouraged to provide women with resources such as the Family Violence Prevention Fund’s *Supervised Visitation Programs: Information for Mothers Who Have Experienced Abuse*<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> *Safety Planning with Battered Women: Complex Lives/Difficult Choices*, Jill Davies, Eleanor Lyon, and Diane Monti-Catania, Sage Publications, 1998. The Family Violence Prevention Fund’s publication is available through its website, [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org).

## Approach

- **Continually gauge and account for the risk of harm to a mother and her children.**

A visitation center needs to create the center's safety plan, meaning what the center is going to do to keep each individual battered woman and her children as safe as possible. This requires paying attention to her unique safety concerns and what needs to be in place before, during, and after each visitation or exchange. Has he made threats or attempts to abduct the children? Has he ever tried to kill her? Did the violence and abuse increase in frequency and/or severity before the separation that led to visitation or exchange? Does she have a safe and reliable way to get to the center? Has he enlisted other family members or friends to watch her or intimidate her?

Circumstances, risks, and safety needs change over time. A static plan based on information gathered at a family's first appointments will not support safety over time. A safety "plan" cannot be words that get written down on a form and put in a file. It must be a living plan that shifts and changes over time as needs and risks change. Continually gauging risk requires paying attention in an intentional, thoughtful way, from the first contact and orientation. It requires building a relationship with each mother that maximizes communication. It requires frequent "check-ins" about how the visits or exchanges are going and about how things are going in general in her life. Has she filed for divorce after a period of separation? Is a final divorce action scheduled? Has she lost her job? Has he lost his job? Has he been arrested? Is he talking about moving away or leaving the country? Has he been trying to contact her in between scheduled visitations? Is he refusing to discuss adjusting the visitation or exchange schedule to a day or time that works better for her and the children? Is he saying things such as, "you'll never get the kids" or "you'll pay for this"? It requires a loop of checking in pre- and post-visit or exchange and adjusting and revising the center's services and safety plan according to changing needs.

- **Develop a problem-solving, safety-oriented partnership with her.**

Acting from a framework of engagement, the center's message to battered women is "We will act *with* you to keep you and your children safe; you will not be just another case we act on. Our goal is to help you and your children stay safe and help you restore well-being."

A safety-oriented partnership runs counter to the batterer's intent: "My job was to make her ugly." Partnership acknowledges her right to speak, contribute, and shape solutions. To help counter the ways women have experienced battering, partnership cannot be in name only. Partnership must be genuine, nonjudgmental, and compassionate in order to counter a batterer's efforts to continue the abuse through the visitation center. It requires that a visitation center consider a woman's actions, concerns, and feelings in the context of the battering she has experienced and is experiencing. It requires preparing workers to act with battered women in ways that encourage and help them to best support safety for themselves and their children, not by telling them what to do or how to do it, but via choices, information, resources, and acting with them to develop the center's plan for their safety. A problem-solving, safety-oriented partnership will not leave a woman saying "they didn't listen" or "I felt like I was a bother to them" or "they don't spend any time with me; my job is to just deliver the kids." At the same time, this partnership does not mean providing

individual advocacy. The center must be linked to a strong advocacy program to be assured that victims of battering have ongoing access to domestic violence advocates who can take on a role that a center cannot assume.

While a visitation program does not act as an individual advocate, this does not require that it take a hands-off approach to helping women. When battered women are ignored, isolated, and marginalized by a human service agency such as a visitation center, it becomes more likely that workers will inadvertently collude with batterers and allow them to deny or minimize their own behavior, blame or demonize their partners, or portray themselves as the victims. Developing problem-solving partnerships with battered women helps limit the isolation and marginalization that reinforces collusion.

- **Connect mothers and their children with advocacy.**

Advocacy for children and adult victims is one of the Supervised Visitation Program's Guiding Principles. Again, we are saying that it is not the role of a visitation center to speak for a battered woman or act on her specific court case (this is the appropriate role of the advocacy program partner in a community collaboration). We are saying that a center can take steps that greatly strengthen her efforts to keep herself and her children safe.

First, a center can begin by learning what she and her children need, keeping abreast of those needs as they change over time and working with her to make connections with advocacy that will help meet them. Does she have a connection with community-based advocacy for battered women? Does she have a connection with advocacy that supports her cultural identity? Does she have an attorney or legal advocate? Does she understand how the courts and other systems intervening in her life work?

Second, providing information and educating women about how systems work and how a case proceeds – not her specific case, but a case involving domestic violence, divorce, and custody – is not providing advocacy. If she understands the process and then wants help, this is when she must get connected with individual advocacy. The importance of the visitation center helping to make that connection relates to the goal of counteracting her experience with battering. A common batterer's tactic is to scare a woman into not leaving him by claiming that bad things will happen in court, e.g., "I'll tell the court you had an abortion." By providing correct information about how the process works, a center helps equip her to make decisions about how to proceed and the kind of advocacy that will be most useful to her.

Finally, visitation centers can and should pursue changes in their community as part of fostering safety for battered women and their children. The Supervised Visitation Program requirement of working in partnership as centers, courts and advocacy programs is intended to improve systemic response to battered women as a group. In this context, visitation centers have a responsibility to work with community partners to ensure that skilled advocacy services exist for battered women and their children, both during times of immediate crisis and over the long period of post-separation; provide the resources and services necessary community-wide to foster safety; and build a community environment and coordinated response that rejects battering and holds batterers accountable for the harm they

have caused. It is important for visitation centers to support the systems advocacy work of domestic violence advocacy programs in these ways.

- **Account for her social position and life experiences.**

Each mother using a visitation center – and each worker in that center – comes from a neighborhood, a community within the larger community, and a family; and with a set of values, customs, and beliefs about parenting, child rearing, marriage, and divorce. Melting everyone into one pot of universal experience or one universal person with a one-size-fits-all response serves no one well.

While everyone who comes through the doors of a visitation center – mothers, fathers, children, workers – lives in one world, they do not have the same experience of that world. In order to develop a partnership for safety with a mother, a center needs to understand what shapes her experience of the world. People’s lives are complex and influenced by many facets of culture and identity.<sup>7</sup> Flexibility is essential in accounting for an individual’s social position and life experience.

When a mother has seven children whom the court says she must bring to the visitation center, how will a center adapt to make supervised visitation work? When she speaks a language other than English? When she is unemployed or a low-wage worker without reliable transportation or flexible hours? If she is an immigrant to the United States, is she connected with anyone outside of her husband or her husband’s family? To what extent and in what ways are aspects of her culture and identity used by her partner to reinforce his battering? If she is being battered and has lost custody of her children to the man who is battering her, how has he portrayed her and how has he used her response to or impact of the battering against her?

Because aspects of culture and identity can be used to reinforce battering, the primary goal of safety for battered women and their children requires a thoughtful response. Is this a concern that impacts safety? Or, is it a concern that reflects a cultural practice? Or, is it a matter of parenting style? Or, is it ‘all of the above’? In order to answer such questions, visitation center staff needs the knowledge and skills to engage with people who have cultural beliefs, values, customs, and practices that differ from their own.

### **Knowledge and Skills: Workers are prepared to...**

- ✓ **Problem-solve with her and not *for* her.**

Battered women’s needs for problem-solving around their own and their children’s safety vary, both from person to person and across time for any one woman. The depth of that need varies as well according to each woman’s unique circumstances and risk of harm.

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<sup>7</sup> *Culture* is the complex, dynamic frame of reference shared by a group of people and reflected in customs, art, beliefs, spirituality, language and institutions. *Identity* includes aspects of how we see ourselves in the world (and how others may see us) that are intertwined with culture: i.e., as we define our identity by such characteristics as rural, urban, gay, straight, farmer, factory worker, teacher, believer, skeptic, working class, middle class, wealthy, poor, documented, undocumented.

To be in a position of supporting a safety-oriented partnership that acts with women and not for them requires preparation and attention. The practice of problem-solving with women in this way, along with a similar approach with men, can help both parents develop the possibility of safe ongoing parenting without outside intervention.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Strategies***

- Emphasize a problem-solving, safety-oriented partnership from the beginning.

The message should be clear to women from their earliest contacts with the visitation center onward: “We will work with you to keep you and your children safe; you will not be just another case that comes before us. Our goal is to help you and your children stay safe and help you restore your well-being. At the same time, we cannot take action on your specific legal case, but we will make sure you are connected with advocates in the community who can do that.” Make it clear that she is not just a ‘delivery wagon’ or ‘transport,’ carrying her children to visitation or exchange and disappearing as quickly as possible. Build a regular practice of checking in with her around the visits or exchanges and her interactions with the center. Provide a contact and process that she can use at any time to raise concerns about her safety and her children’s safety.<sup>9</sup>

- Establish and maintain ongoing dialogue with battered women about the impact of the center’s interactions.

In dialogue with women, ask questions such as: How can we adapt to your life’s conditions to make this safer/easier for you? Can we get you connected with someone to help with this issue? If we take this action, what are the implications of this for you and your children? Find out what is happening for women as a result of the visitation center’s actions. Are her safety needs acknowledged and visible? Are she and her children getting the support they need to restore what was lost in their relationship because of the battering? To what extent does she feel that the visitation center is there to help? Have decisions affecting her safety been made that she was unaware of or never consulted about?

Work with women to tease out how various issues in the visitation center are related to her and her children’s safety and well-being. A center cannot assume that risks will be obvious or clear outside of the context that only she and her children can provide. For example, when one woman’s husband was happy with her behavior – i.e., she was doing what he wanted her to do – he would feed the children well and provide special treats. When he was not happy – i.e., when she did not do what he wanted her to do – the children did not get fed at all. When she first came to the visitation center she requested that he not bring food. In working with her, she and the center

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<sup>8</sup> See “Fathering After Violence: Working with Abusive Fathers in Supervised Visitation,” Juan Carlos Areán, with contributions by Fernando Mederos, 2007, Family Violence Prevention Fund (available at [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)) and the discussion in “Engaging with Men Who Batter in Supervised Visitation Centers” in the *Engage to Protect* papers.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion about check-ins and other ways of learning from visitation program participants and others about a center’s practices, see “Informing the Practice of Supervised Visitation,” Melanie Shepard, Jane Sadusky, and Beth McNamara, in the *Engage to Protect* papers.

landed on an approach that addressed the father's use of food as a tactic of battering. She would provide snacks that the center would have available for the children. When the father found out that he could not bring and control the snacks, he wanted the center to say that the children could not eat anything during the visit. The center reassured the mother and the children that they would not be punished with control of food while at the center. They would be able to eat if they were hungry and she would not have to worry about their father withholding food from them.

Stay connected and check-in with battered women routinely and frequently about what is happening in and around visits and exchanges. Has he left the center angry, embarrassed, or making threats of any kind? What is happening with her and the children? Has something changed in their circumstances or her plans related to the separation? What does his behavior mean to her? If his behavior has raised the possibility of the center terminating services, what would that mean for her and her children? Will that be the safest course of action?

- Connect women with advocacy.

A meaningful referral to advocacy means that a center goes beyond merely providing the usual phone number or brochure. It includes such things as asking and learning what battered women and their children need, making calls to link a victim with an advocate or agency, transporting her to the advocacy program, and providing space in the center for advocates to meet with women. A visitation center attuned to women's advocacy needs uses posters, brochures, or other material that explains the advocacy available in the community. It makes available material that addresses post-separation and advocacy questions and resources.

Visitation center staff will be better equipped to connect women with advocacy when they do not work in isolation. A center's staff and its community partners need ongoing communication with each other in order to make certain that they can identify and support meaningful resources and referrals. Cross training between visitation center staff and battered women's advocates will strengthen relationships and understanding of each other's roles and programs, as well as contribute to a common understanding of battering. A center can invite advocates and battered women from the community to review its practices and identify points where connections to advocacy can be strengthened.

- ✓ **Help her to talk with and restore her relationship with her children.**

Battered women typically deal with intervening systems and agencies in fragmented, compartmentalized ways. Interveners tend to split mothers off from their children and prioritize or even pit one need over another. To foster safety and counteract battering, however, requires a response that protects children and their mothers together and supports a mother to talk with and restore her relationship with her children. Because of their involvement with each family member, visitation centers are in a unique position to support resilience and reconnection for battered mothers and their children.

Children who live with battering come through the doors of a visitation center with complex, intertwined feelings of fear, anger, disinterest, and love. They may not want to be anywhere near their father or they may be eager to see him and blame their mother for their separation from him. If they are visiting a mother who has lost custody, they may be intensely angry at her or grieving and confused about why she has been taken from them, or they have been taken from her. They may be annoyed that their routines with friends, sports, and after-school activities are interrupted by visitation and take their annoyance out on their mother. They may be afraid for their mother or angry at her or both. They may have many conflicting feelings about what has happened in their lives and what this new routine known as visitation or exchange will demand of them.

Helping children talk with their mothers and mothers talk with their children about these complex feelings and fears is a key aspect in countering the experience of battering. Acknowledging and strengthening the positive aspects of a mother and child's life together helps remove the wedge that the batterer has driven between them.

### ***Strategies***

- Stay flexible.

No single approach to helping a mother restore her relationship with her children will work for everyone. Experiences vary greatly and centers must stay flexible.

- Ask about, reinforce, and help expand a mother's strengths and protective strategies.

It is easy for workers to assume that a mother has done little to protect herself or her children, particularly if she has stayed with an abusive partner in the past or left and returned several times. Yet most women have worked hard to parent, provide for, and protect their children, often under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

Women actively pursue a variety of strategies, including attempts to prevent physical violence, staying, and leaving the relationship. Staff must be prepared to talk with women about how they have tried to resist the battering, identify protective strategies they have tried, and find out how the various strategies worked for them.

Help elevate a mother's status with her children by treating her with respect. Let children know that she is taking care of them and keeping them safe, and coming to the visitation center is part of that. Create opportunities for women and children to rebuild their relationship and create new memories. Make their experience with the center – from its physical environment to the activities within – as respectful, relaxed, and supportive as possible. Offer suggestions for ways that mothers and children can reconnect after a visitation or exchange; or, during a visit if she is a non-custodial mother.

- Establish routines of listening to and learning from mothers and children.

Check in with mothers and children after visits or exchanges. This might be done separately or together or a mix of settings.

Use your problem-solving partnership with mothers and consult with them: How is it going for your children? What might the children need for visitation or exchange to be and feel safer? What ideas do you have? What do you think would help? Here are some approaches; what do you think would work best?

Understand the lack of status and voice children can have and work to counter that. Talk with children and ask similar questions: How is it going? What ideas do you have about how visitation or exchange could work differently? How does it make you feel less afraid? How does it make you feel more afraid? What ideas do you have? What do you think would help? Here are some approaches; what do you think would work best?

- Help women and children understand what they have experienced in living with battering.

For a mother to talk with and begin to restore her relationship with her children she must know that she is not to blame for the violence and abuse. For children to talk with and begin to restore their relationship with their mother they must know that neither they nor their mother is to blame for the violence and abuse. Assist mothers and children in undoing the negative beliefs and attitudes learned from the abuser, particularly around the authority and capabilities of women and mothers. Help them link with support outside of the visitation center that will help them heal.

Children need permission to love both parents; acknowledge and reinforce that with children. Helping them reevaluate and reframe what their mother has been through does not require disparaging their father or denying their care and affection for him.

- Be proactive and well-prepared.

This includes solid knowledge about the nature of battering and its impact on the mother-child relationship; an understanding of post-separation battering and how tactics can shift, particularly with respect to children; and, skill in listening and encouraging dialogue. It includes clear communication between staff and supervisors. A proactive and well-prepared staff – even in the smallest center with two or three workers – knows that they can count on each other and do not have to ‘go it alone.’ They are free to ask for help in figuring out how to best support a mother and her children to talk with each other and restore their relationship.

Use role plays, scenarios, and discussions to prepare staff to recognize battering, particularly as manifested in supervised visitation and exchange settings, practice ways of talking with and building a safety-oriented partnership with battered women, and exploring different approaches to supporting mothers and children to restore their relationships.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> One example is “Will You Hold My Child,” a drama production and accompanying guided discussion on intervening in domestic violence cases involving children, produced by Praxis International ([www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org)). Visitation centers and their community partners have used this tool to help explore and establish a common understanding of battering, its impact on the mother-child relationship, and ways of strengthening battered women’s survival strategies and resilience.





✓ **Stay connected with her and helpful to her when she is emotionally upset in response to the battering.**

“My job was to make her ugly.” How does a visitation center avoid perpetuating that batterer’s “job”?

A woman who lives with battering is often on a constant emotional seesaw as she tries to navigate safety for herself and her children and respond to someone who can be relentless with hyper-critical, belittling, and insulting comments about her appearance, intelligence, and parenting. In a single day she might be short-tempered, withdrawn, tearful, fragile, angry, depressed, and belligerent. She might also laugh at a coworker’s joke and feel happy about her daughter’s success at a track meet. Almost any group of battered women who gather to talk about their lives describe the experience of living with battering as “crazy-making.”

When they seek help from intervening human service agencies, battered women often go from a seesaw to a tightrope in trying to manage their emotions. If a woman is crying too much or is too short-tempered she is “too upset” or “unstable.” If she is angry or belligerent and fought back she’s not a “real battered woman.” Many interveners carry the image of a stereotypical universal battered woman in their heads – a certain combination of meekness, passivity, and bruises – and try to wedge every woman who has experienced violence at the hands of her partner into that category. Such responses also leave women feeling diminished and disrespected.

Being battered by someone you love is an incredibly intense and complex emotional experience and a woman brings it all with her when she comes to a visitation center. She may be relieved and scared at the same time about being on her own. She may be frustrated and shocked that a court has sent her and her children to the visitation center after the violence that was used against them. Her behaviors and attitudes about the visitation center may run back and forth along a continuum of relief and complete cooperation to disbelief and defiance. A woman might be hostile, angry, resentful, or withdrawn. She might put up roadblocks to the visitation, such as being late for visits or exchanges, canceling, calling in sick, or insisting that the children do not want to see their father. The center might see her actions as resistant toward the center when she is actually resisting the tactics that have been used to control her. The center and its staff must recognize what ongoing abuse and violence do to women and place their interactions with them in that context.

### ***Strategies***

- Understand interactions with battered women in the context of battering.

Always ask: How could her behavior in this situation relate to the battering she has experienced? Perhaps she is resisting a new visitation schedule because it makes getting to and from her new job very difficult and she knows that he has figured that out. He only asked for the change when he learned through the financial statement she had to file with family court that she had started a new job.



Problem-solve with her about how she can respond to the batterer, the situation, and her interactions with her children related to him. Help her address ongoing parenting issues in a practical way as she may need to make the best of the situation, given the nature of the visitation order and the court's likely direction toward unsupervised contact between her children and their father.

- Allow her to have basic human emotions without labeling them a psychological problem.

It is easy to explain away intense emotions as some kind of pathology, but in the context of the violence and abuse she has experienced and continues to experience her emotions might be entirely reasonable. In addition, many women who have tried to seek help have not been heard; instead of a response to the battering they found themselves with one or more diagnoses. Women who do have some form of mental illness are particularly vulnerable to be “made ugly” by a batterer. Nearly every basic human emotion they express in relation to the battering will be interpreted only through the lens of their illness.

- Educate women about battering and its effects.

Women need permission to feel and express anger, fear, sorrow, and powerlessness, but also need to recognize when and where it is safe to do so. They have a long experience judging when it is safe to do so in their relationship with their battering partner. They have far less experience in gauging when and where to express such emotions as they interact with various interveners.

A visitation center can acknowledge to her that battering produces feelings of great anger, fear, sorrow, and powerlessness in women. It needs to go beyond acknowledgement, however, to connect women with advocacy that can help them better understanding battering and its effects. For example, batterers isolate women, so centers and their community partners can help women understand and normalize the emotions related to that isolation. Batterers damage the relationship between a mother and her child, so centers and their partners can help women survive the intense emotions around their relationships with their children.

- ✓ **Engage with people who have cultural beliefs, values, customs, and practices (including parenting) that differ from a worker's own.**

There is no such thing as culturally neutral supervised visitation and exchange. Everything a visitation center does has cultural dimensions and impact, from the physical design and décor to communication styles to values and attitudes about women and men, parents and children, marriage and divorce. A center cannot say that this visit is influenced by culture, but that exchange is not; or say that this family has a culture, while this family does not. Everyone who enters a visitation center, whether program participant or worker, is a cultural being, familiar with her/his own behavior, art, beliefs, language, institutions, age, class, music, race, religion, ethnicity, food, and other aspects of identity that have developed in relation to specific social and political contexts. A visitation center cannot truly engage with those using its services unless it steps out of that familiarity and recognizes its cultural



assumptions, dimensions, and impact. Workers need to be aware of how their own experiences of the world shape how they interact with each father, mother, and child and not let their own beliefs, values, and customs get in the way of understanding each person's situation and needs.

To illustrate this complexity, a worker at a roundtable discussion of visitation center practices described the following situation. A father who was originally from Persia was visiting his children at the center. He was biting into a sandwich and then placing pieces of the chewed food in his nine-month-old son's mouth. "This is how we eat," he told a visitation monitor when she asked what he was doing. "Mothers chew up the food and then feed it to the children. This is how our mother always fed us so that we could eat whatever the family was eating; we have no baby food." The staff person reacted with disgust to what the father was doing and after the visit she asked the children's mother about it. The mother was from Russia and was repulsed by the practice, which her husband had done at home with all of their children. She asked the center to not allow him to feed the baby in this way during the visits. Is this a safety or control issue that the center should address with the father? Or, is it a parenting style issue that needs to be handled some other way?

The worker's reaction cannot dictate the response, although it is legitimate for her to raise the question: "Is this okay? How should our center respond?" The visitation center must begin by finding out what this action really means to the mother. Has food been used to control her or the children; has he ignored, degraded, or ridiculed her concerns in the past? Or, does her objection reflect a difference in tradition, without carrying the meaning of her children's father trying to exercise power over her through the children? Is she frightened by the practice or annoyed by it? Many parents of many cultures bite off bits of food and give them to their children. Perhaps it just seems "unsanitary" to her and something she would never do. The center can use connections it has developed in the Persian community. "We're trying to figure something out at our center. Is this a common way of feeding very young children?" Make a decision out of all this information, with fostering safety for the mother and her children as the deciding factor.

### ***Strategies***

- Establish a practice of "cultural humility."<sup>11</sup>

Establish a practice of self-assessment, study, reflection, and advocacy partnerships that prepares visitation center staff to engage with people with different cultural beliefs, values, customs, and practices. If left to good intentions, without specific attention to assumptions and practices, workers will be largely adrift. The Supervised Visitation Program has produced and published a number of documents to help visitation centers

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<sup>11</sup> "Cultural humility" became the framework that the Chicago Demonstration Initiative used in exploring aspects of culture in visitation center practices. The strategies included here are drawn in large part from the experiences of the centers involved in that project (Apna Ghar, Branch Family Institute, and Mujeres Latinas en Acción), as described in "A Discussion of Accounting for Culture in Supervised Visitation Practices: The City of Chicago, Illinois Demonstration Site Experience," December 2005 (available at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org)).

build a positive, respectful response to the background, circumstances, and cultures of their community and the families they serve (Guiding Principle 2).<sup>12</sup>

- Structure time and flexibility into all interactions.

Time and flexibility are essential in order to build trust and relationships, understand what has happened in someone's life, and explain supervised visitation or exchange and the center's procedures in a way that makes sense to parents, particularly when the concept is entirely beyond their experience.

- Learn about the communities the center is located in and serves.

Do center workers know the basic demographic and census information for its service area? Does the visitation center know and have a relationship with human service agencies that work with various culturally distinct communities, particularly around domestic violence issues?

Invite diverse community organizations to walk through the center's space and procedures and provide a critique. Ask them to arrive at the center, complete an orientation, and walk through the space as if they were a parent who would be using the center. Welcome their insights and recommendations about how to make the center and visitation a more culturally respectful experience. Does the center feel welcoming, a place where they can interact with their children freely and safely?

Expand the visitation center's understanding of different communities' experiences with the courts, police, Social Security, welfare, the medical field, and other intervening institutions, both currently and historically. Where centers do not have a shared cultural identity or social position with parents and children, they must take extra care to become aware of families' individual and community histories. For example, it is easy for someone to believe that institutional racism does not exist if they have not experienced it.

- Establish a process for ensuring language accessibility.

Language accessibility requires both an established process and flexibility. Hiring bicultural and bilingual staff from the communities represented in a visitation center's service area is an essential element. Recruiting and training a pool of interpreters in the most commonly spoken languages is another aspect, with particular attention to preparing interpreters to understand the issues and their role related to cases involving domestic violence. Interpreters working in legal, medical, and educational settings can be good candidates.

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<sup>12</sup> For example, the standards and practices section for Guiding Principle 2, Valuing Multiculturalism and Diversity (see reference at Note 1); the work of the Chicago Demonstration Initiative; and, the work of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, including "Concepts in Creating Culturally Responsive Services for Supervised Visitation Centers" and "Ozha Wahbeganniss" (available at [www.dvinstitute.org](http://www.dvinstitute.org)).



- Build workers' skills in listening, dialogue, and communication.

A basic ability to talk with and listen to people helps build an engaged practice in a very fundamental way. It is a foundation from which to connect with someone on human level and learn about a person's history, culture, beliefs, values, and expectations. A visitation worker who is hesitant or uncomfortable communicating with people will find it difficult to build the kinds of relationships that support visitation services that are truly helpful to mothers, fathers, and children.

- Examine every aspect of a center's design and the implied and explicit messages about who is welcome and how they are valued.

For example, a non-threatening location (e.g., alongside health care offices, a shopping plaza, or community center) can be important in conveying respect, along with careful consideration of the placement and use of such security measures as uniformed guards and metal detectors. Formality in how people are addressed is also part of how a visitation center can welcome people and show respect, such as using Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms, or Usted, Señor or Señora.

When there is a gap between the center staff's background and that of the parents using the center, invite community members to help review the center's location, space, furnishings, magazines, art work, orientation appointments, and visitation and exchange procedures. Invite parents to help inform an understanding of the center's design and impact, via focus groups, questionnaires, or other avenues.

- Be alert to how aspects of culture and identity can be used to reinforce battering, as well as counter it.

*In each culture, there are values, traditions, and practices that facilitate abusive and coercive relationships, and there are also values, traditions, and practices that support and promote functional and respectful relationships. It is important for SV [supervised visitation] staff to become knowledgeable about these aspects of different cultures and be able to use protective resources of diverse cultures in their interventions with men and with families in general.<sup>13</sup>*

A visitation center can provide space for visiting parents and children to share meals and move about, including dancing and sports. It can work with fathers and mothers to accommodate families' faith observances, such as time for prayer, acceptable foods, holidays, and rituals. It can provide opportunities for extended family to be involved, as broadly defined by some parents and children to include a wide circle of relatives, close friends, and godparents. Any one of these actions can work to strengthen safety for a battered mother and her children. Any one of these actions can work to help a battering father become a nurturing parent and repair the harm to his children. Any one of these actions can also be used as a tactic of battering, to coerce or further isolate a mother. Visitation centers face the challenge and responsibility of figuring out what is safe for a

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<sup>13</sup> "Fathering After Violence: Working with Abusive Fathers in Supervised Visitation," Juan Carlos Areán, with contributions by Fernando Mederos, 2007, Family Violence Prevention Fund (available at [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)).

battered mother and her children, apart from specific restrictions in court orders or related to sexual abuse issues. The understandable temptation is to say no to any of the possibilities listed above, as many centers have done. Yet that blanket “no” ultimately serves no one well and constricts a visitation center’s unique position to help expand the possibilities of nonviolence and harmony for each family.

## **Building and Sustaining a Framework of Engagement**

Engagement starts at the front end of a center’s relationship with each mother who comes through the door. What kind of discussion, explanation, guidance, atmosphere, and tone is being built from the first contact onward? What kind of relationship is being built? Do mothers know that your goals are to foster safety and counteract the experience of battering? How do mothers know that you are committed to building a problem-solving, safety-oriented partnership with them? How do workers know that these are the goals and approach?

Engagement is sustained to the degree that it is built into the center’s infrastructure. Sustaining a framework of engagement requires building it into the key methods by which human service agencies such as visitation centers organize and coordinate their work. Is the framework of engagement stated in the visitation center’s **mission** statement? Is it reflected in the **philosophy** and **language** used to describe the center’s role and relationships? Is the framework visible in the visitation center’s **policy**? Do the center’s **administrative practices** – its forms, documentation, reporting, case management – reflect the framework’s goals and approaches? What kinds of **resources** support the framework? What kinds of **training** do workers receive to help them develop the necessary knowledge and skills? Is the framework reflected in the **linkages** or connections between and across workers and between the center and its community partners? Is the framework of engagement included in a stated expectation of the visitation center’s **accountability**, both to its workers and to those using its services?

## **Appendices:**

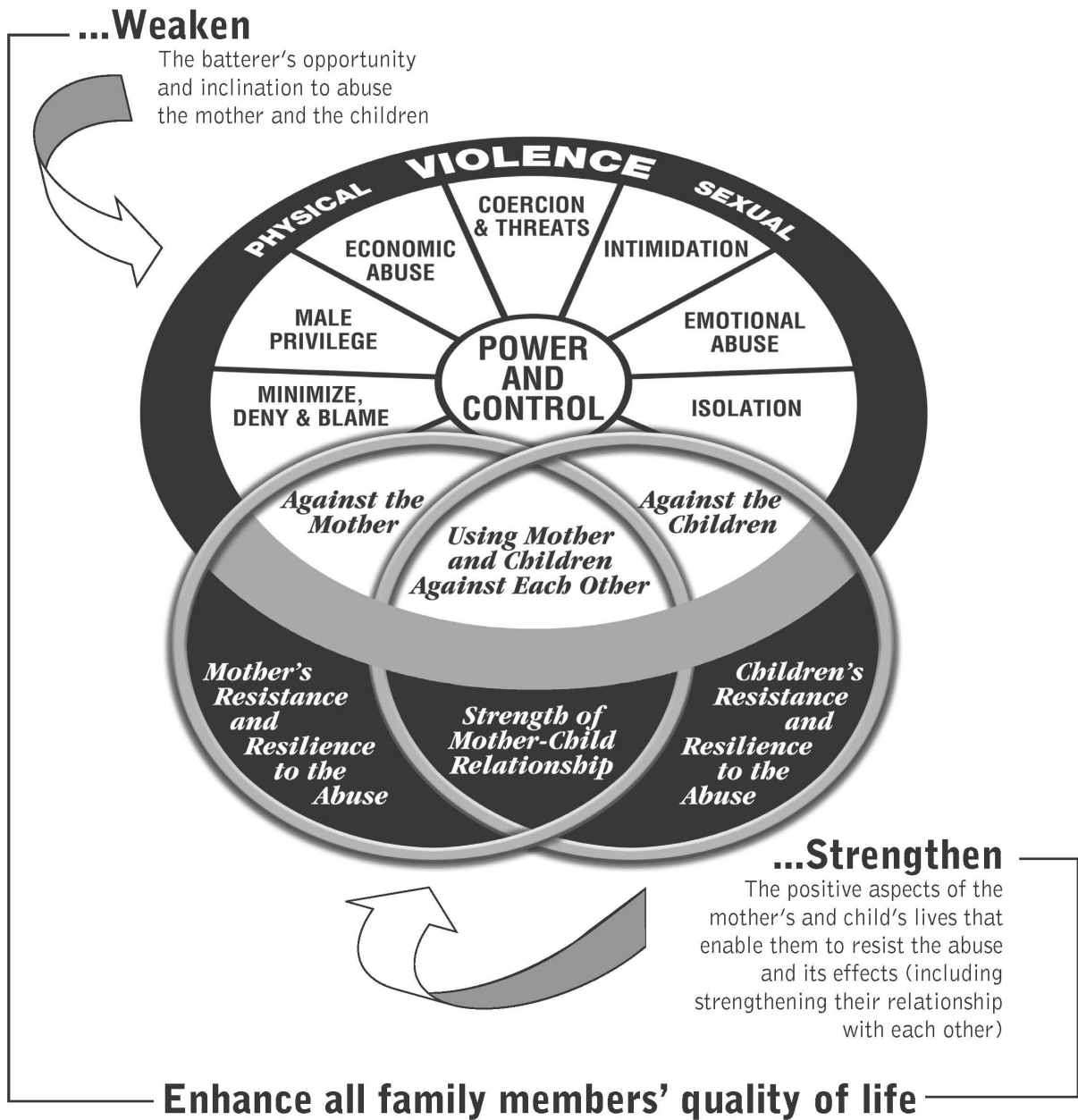
1. Engage to Protect: A Framework for Working with Women and Men in Supervised Visitation Centers
2. Power and Control Wheel Adaptation: Domestic Violence Cases Involving Children

**Engage to Protect:  
A Framework for Working with Women and Men in Supervised Visitation Centers**

*To be “engaged” means to be involved and connected in an intentional, thoughtful way*

Engaging with mothers who are being battered	Engaging with fathers who batter
<p><b>Goals:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster safety for mothers and their children.</li> <li>2. Counteract the experience of battering.</li> </ol> <p><b>Approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually gauge and account for the risk of harm to a mother and her children.*</li> <li>• Develop a positive, problem-solving, safety-oriented partnership with her.</li> <li>• Connect mothers and their children with advocacy.</li> <li>• Account for her social position and life experiences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge and Skills: Workers are prepared to...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Problem solve <u>with</u> her and not <i>for</i> her.</li> <li>✓ Help her to talk with and restore her relationship with her children.</li> <li>✓ Stay connected with and helpful to her when she is emotionally upset in response to the battering.</li> <li>✓ Engage with people who have cultural beliefs, values, customs, and practices (including parenting) that differ from a worker’s own.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Goals:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster safety for mothers and their children.</li> <li>2. Counteract the tactics of battering.</li> </ol> <p><b>Approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually gauge and account for the risk of harm to a mother and her children.*</li> <li>• Develop a positive, problem-solving partnership with him.</li> <li>• Help him focus on his children’s well-being and not on their mother.</li> <li>• Account for his social position and life experiences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge and skills: Workers are prepared to...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Work with a person who is aggressive, intimidating, and manipulative in ways that lessen such behavior and encourage cooperation.</li> <li>✓ Engage in positive, helpful ways without colluding in the battering.</li> <li>✓ Help him to stop harmful parenting and foster nurturing parenting.**</li> <li>✓ Engage with people who have cultural beliefs, values, customs, and practices (including parenting) that differ from a worker’s own.</li> </ul>
<p>*Gauging risk of harm means to develop and adjust the center’s plan for the safety of each mother and her children.</p> <p>**The operating assumption here is that battering a child’s mother is harmful parenting.</p>	

## SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS IN CASES OF BATTERING THAT INVOLVE CHILDREN...



Adapted with permission from the DAIP Power and Control Wheel, Duluth, Minnesota. All rights reserved.







Between 2002 and 2010, Praxis International worked in partnership with the Office on Violence Against Women to provide technical assistance and training to grantees in the Supervised Visitation Program. The following resources were developed during that partnership and are available at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org).

*Safe Passage: Supervised Safe Exchange for Battered Women and Their Children*, Jane Sadusky, March 2010

*Engage to Protect: Foundations for Supervised Visitation and Exchange*, 2009

“Recognizing and Understanding Battering,” Ellen Pence and Jane Sadusky

“Engaging with Battered Women,” Maren Hansen-Kramer, Julie Tilley, Beth McNamara, and Jane Sadusky

“Engaging with Men Who Batter,” Maren Hansen-Kramer, Julie Tilley, Beth McNamara, and Jane Sadusky

“Informing the Practice of Supervised Visitation.” Melanie Shepard, Jane Sadusky, and Beth McNamara

“Crafting Policies that Account for Battering – Beyond Cut-and-Paste: 9 Tips to Successful Program and Service Policies,” Ellen Pence and Jane Sadusky

*On Safety’s Side: Protecting Those Vulnerable to Violence – Challenges to Notions of Neutrality in Supervised Visitation Centers*, Martha McMahon and Ellen Pence, 2008

*New Perspectives on Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange: Orientation*, Jane Sadusky, 2008

*Building Safety, Repairing Harm: Lessons and Discoveries from the Safe Havens Demonstration Initiative*, Jane Sadusky, 2008

*Building the Practice of Orientation in Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange: A Trainer’s Guide*, Ellen Pence, Val Kalei Kanuha, Maren Hansen-Kramer, Jennifer Rose, Beth McNamara, Julie Tilley, and Jane Sadusky, 2008

The reports of the Safety and Accountability Audits conducted by the Safe Havens Demonstration Initiative sites, which addressed the following questions:

City of Kent, WA: How does a victim of battering who might benefit from supervised visitation services identify and access them? January 2007

South Bay Area, CA: How does the work of a visitation center produce or not produce safety for everyone involved? July 2004; Rev. February 2006

City of Chicago, IL: How does a visitation center account for peoples’ unique cultures and identities? December 2005

State of Michigan: What is the role of a supervised visitation center? July 2004

