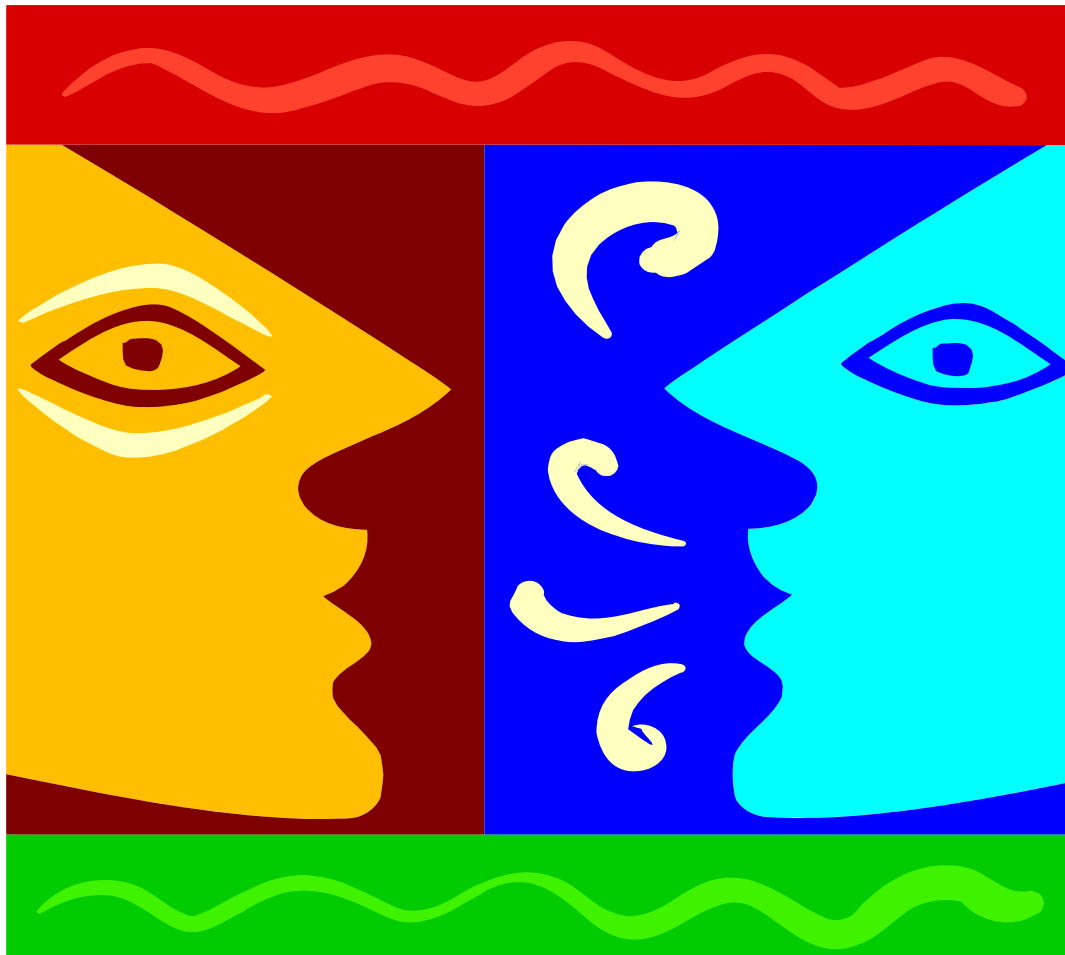


Addressing Intimate Partner Abuse in Runaway and Homeless Youth

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A Practical Guide for Service Providers



November 2007



INTRODUCTION

This practical guide, “Addressing Intimate Partner Abuse in Runaway and Homeless Youth,” was created by several agencies from the Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership (in Hollywood, California), in cooperation with domestic violence agencies in Los Angeles County. It is designed to help the staff and administrators of agencies serving runaway and homeless youth understand key issues relating to intimate partner abuse (IPA) among runaway and homeless youth. It has been developed as a “starting point” for agencies, a first step in creating safer environments for youth and increasing staff skills in understanding and responding to IPA.

The core agencies involved in this project from the homeless youth service sector were Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, Covenant House California, the Los Angeles Free Clinic, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center, Los Angeles Youth Network, and My Friend’s Place. The core agencies from the domestic violence service sector were Break the Cycle and Peace Over Violence. We hope that this document will support agencies in their efforts to effectively assess and reduce intimate partner abuse and implement policies, procedures, and practices that can help youth stay safe and avoid IPA.

The definition that we selected for intimate partner abuse comes from the US Department of Health and Human Services: *“Abuse that is committed by a current or past spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. The types of abuse include actual or threatened physical and/or sexual assault, emotional abuse, or verbal abuse. These crimes occur in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.”* Though there are many other terms used to describe this type of violence (e.g. dating violence, domestic violence, and family violence) we selected “intimate partner abuse” because we believed it was the most appropriate and inclusive term to use with the runaway and homeless youth we serve. This is also the term that youth participants felt best reflected the range of abusive behaviors they experienced. All stages of our work in this area were informed by the participation of homeless youth. We feel our project better addresses the unique dynamics of abusive relationships that occur among youth on the streets, because we have tried throughout our work to listen to and respect the voices and concerns of the young people we serve.

Homeless youth are at increased risk for intimate partner abuse due to several key factors. First, a significant number of youth leave home because of family conflict or family violence. They may have experienced or witnessed domestic violence, abuse or neglect. This early abuse leaves them without role models of healthy relationships, disrupts early attachments that are important for healthy development, and deprives them of opportunities for learning positive problem-solving and coping skills. In addition, without means of support, many youth turn to prostitution, drug dealing, or other illegal activity to survive on the streets, which increases their vulnerability to exploitive relationships and partner abuse.

This Practical Guide is intended to provide basic information and strategies for addressing intimate partner abuse in runaway and homeless youth. Agencies will need to take the next steps and adapt it to their specific communities and populations.

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Section 1:

Creating a Culture of Awareness and Safety in your Agency

Agencies can create a “culture of safety” that enables staff to respond effectively to the intimate partner abuse (IPA) experienced by their clients, while at the same time protecting other clients and staff from harm. Below are simple action steps that can help reduce intimate partner abuse and promote a safer service environment.

Policies and Procedures

- Review state-mandated reporting requirements for intimate partner abuse.
- Identify local resources in the area of domestic violence and intimate partner abuse prevention.
- Develop agency-specific policies for addressing intimate partner abuse.

Staff Training

- Ensure that staff are well educated about intimate partner abuse and about agency policies and procedures regarding IPA.
- Ensure that all staff are trained in assessing and responding to IPA in youth relationships.
- Host trainings from IPA/DV providers for staff and youth at least twice annually.

Environment of Care

- Display posters that address intimate partner abuse, such as those from the “See It and Stop It” Campaign (<http://www.seeitandstopit.org/pages/>) in prominent places.
- Display local IPA resource information, such as DV hotlines and legal resources, in prominent places (e.g. near pay phones or public areas).
- Create and display rules of conduct that explicitly prohibit interpersonal fighting, name-calling, verbal put-downs, etc., and make it clear that your space is a “violence-free zone.”
- Verbally reinforce rules of conduct with all youth at intake and during other activities at your agency.
- Make it clear that the agency will report IPA to law enforcement, when required.
- Ensure that all youth served by your agency who are experiencing IPA have a service plan tailored to their needs, circumstances, and level of readiness.
- Facilitate skill-building groups with youth that explore healthy relationships and intimate partner abuse, and provide concrete resources and guidance to youth. (For copies of our homeless youth-specific curriculum, Relationship Traffic, contact the Division of Adolescent Medicine at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles at (323) 361-2390.
- Make clear that all youth understand your agency’s response to IPA in your facility so that there is clarity and uniformity about expectations and responses.

Direct Services for Youth

- Ensure that all youth served by your agency who are experiencing IPA have a service plan tailored to their needs, circumstances, and level of readiness.
- Facilitate skill-building groups with youth that explore healthy relationships and intimate partner abuse, and provide concrete resources and guidance to youth. For copies of our homeless youth-specific prevention curriculum, Relationship Traffic, contact the Division of Adolescent Medicine at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles at (323) 361-2390.

Section 2: **Conducting an Individual Intimate Partner Abuse Assessment**

What questions should agencies ask about IPA?

Each agency can play a role in protecting youth and reducing intimate partner abuse by conducting an IPA assessment with the youth they serve and by using this assessment to guide service delivery. On the next page is a list of the types of questions that can be used in an IPA assessment.

When should these questions be asked?

Screening questions about IPA should be asked as part of the agency intake process. Of course, the type and scope of questions that are asked should match the level of service that youth are seeking and the capacity of the agency to respond to any findings. For example, if youth are only looking for a sandwich or a shower, it is not appropriate to ask IPA assessment questions unless there are other indicators that IPA is a problem. The answers youth provide to these screening questions can help the staff determine if further assessment is indicated. Other opportunities for conducting an IPA assessment include:

- When staff suspect or know a youth is in an IPA relationship;
- As part of in-depth assessment conducted with each youth per agency protocols;
- When youth convey the willingness to answer personal questions about their intimate relationships; or
- When a youth asks for help with their relationship.

How do we ask these questions to get the most honest response?

- Youth in IPA relationships often feel out of control. Explaining the exceptions to keeping disclosures confidential allows a youth to decide how to proceed and when to disclose specific information.
- Use age-appropriate language.
- When asking about IPA, make sure that the questions reference specific behaviors (such as hitting, kicking, slapping, verbal put-downs, threats, etc) instead of referring simply to “intimate partner abuse” or “domestic violence.” In this way, youth are clear about the behaviors that you are asking about. The Sample IPA Assessment Questions that are on the next page can be used as a guide.
- If possible, a staff member who knows the youth and has a positive relationship with the youth should ask these questions.
- IPA-related issues should be discussed in a non-judgmental fashion.
- Questions need to be asked in a private space to ensure confidentiality.

Sample IPA Assessment Questions

Here are some sample questions you might want to use to assess intimate partner abuse in the youth that you serve. Remember to check reporting requirements in your state, particularly if you are working with minors, so you are prepared to respond appropriately. It is important to explore the pattern of behaviors. You want to try to determine if an event is an isolated incident or part of a larger, on-going pattern of abuse.

1. Have you ever been in an intimate relationship with a partner where you were hurt, threatened or felt unsafe?
2. Have you ever been in an intimate relationship with a partner where you hurt or threatened your partner?
3. Who makes most of the decisions in your CURRENT relationship?
 - About who you hang out with and whom you talk to?
 - About money?
 - About when/how to have sex?
4. Do you ever feel afraid when your partner gets angry?
5. When you get angry, are you afraid of what you might do?
6. Has there ever been a verbal or physical incident between you and your partner while either of you was using drugs or alcohol?
7. Have you ever threatened or attempted suicide in response to difficulties in your relationship? (If yes, staff should evaluate for present suicide risk).
8. Do you currently feel that you are in danger of hurting yourself or hurting your partner? (If yes, staff should evaluate for present suicide risk and for the risk of violence against their partner).
9. Do you or your partner have access to or own a weapon?
10. What strategies have you used in the past that helped de-escalate the situation?

Ask the following questions of youth about themselves and their current partner.

Do you ever:	✓	Does your partner ever:	✓
Get jealous?		Get jealous?	
Accuse your partner of cheating?		Accuse you of cheating?	
Verbally put down your partner or call your partner names?		Verbally put you down or call you names?	
Threaten your partner?		Threaten you?	
Hit/kick/punch/slap/grab your partner?		Hit/kick/punch/slap/grab you?	
Hurt yourself or self-mutilate?		Hurt him/her self or self-mutilate?	
Force your partner to have unwanted sex?		Force you to have unwanted sex?	

Section 3: **Providing Services to Couples Involved in IPA at your Agency**

When homeless youth are involved in abusive relationships, agencies are faced with unique challenges as they try to maintain the safety of their clients and staff, link these youth to needed services, and determine whether or not they can safely serve both partners. This situation is often made more difficult when the status and volatility of the relationship changes frequently. Clearly, both partners are in need of help and services and both partners have likely been victimized previously in their lives.

How do I respond when both youth in a couple are clients at my agency?

- Always work within your agency's prescribed framework when dealing with IPA issues between youth. Never work in isolation. Always partner with teammates to ensure a thorough, thoughtful response.
- Ensure that your agency's policies around IPA are clear and understood and set consequences for inappropriate behavior, so both clients are aware of where your agency stands.
- Provide positive feedback to clients when they approach staff for assistance with conflicts.
- Determine if it's safe and appropriate to provide services to both clients. Depending on the circumstances, an agency may want to refer one of the clients to another agency for services or provide limited/conditional services for one or both clients at your agency. For example, if there is a history of serious abuse in the relationship and/or there have been acts of abuse on site at the agency or at other agencies, it may not be safe to continue to provide services to both youth.
- Assess whether providing services to the couple has a negative impact on other clients at the agency and whether the relationship dynamic creates an unsafe environment.
- If the agency decides to continue to provide services to both youth, consider allowing both clients to access services but at different times or on different days.
- If the agency decides to continue to provide services to both youth, determine the appropriate programmatic consequences for verbal threats or other inappropriate behavior. Applying programmatic consequences for threats of violence or actual violence may help reinforce the seriousness of the matter and maintain a culture of safety, while you attend to the needs of both youth.
- Sometimes, a youth who is abusing his or her partner may be very invested in keeping the abuse private, so be aware of that when conducting an assessment and/or investigating an incident.
- Make referrals for individual and couples counseling, as appropriate.
- If there is a history of substance abuse and/or mental illness, the risk for impulsive and/or aggressive behavior increases. Consider providing conditional services such as mandating the client(s) receive counseling or other services to address the issues at hand.

If it's unsafe to provide services to both clients, how do I decide which client to provide services to?

If you decide that it is unsafe or unwise to provide services to both members of the couple, you will need to determine which client to provide services to. You should also consider whether your agency has the staff capacity and expertise necessary to address IPA issues and maintain staff and client safety. Some ways to determine which member of the couple to provide services to include:

- Seniority: Who accessed services at the agency first?
- Empowerment: There is always the risk of losing both clients if they want to be together when accessing services, so sometimes just asking them to decide who should move to another program may be a healthier way to reach a decision.
- Need: Which client is more in need of services due to age, vulnerability, or circumstances?
- Resource availability: Is one client able to access similar services at another agency?

If you determine you can't serve both youth, make a referral and, with appropriate consent, share relevant information with the referral agency. In this way, you can use the resources in your community to ensure both youth have access to the services they need. If you work in a community with limited resources, your agency may be forced to make a difficult decision about who to serve. An agency may be able to make arrangements to maintain contact and provide limited services to one of the youth by phone or to see one of the youth off-site, if it is unsafe to serve both together.

Section 4: **Assessing and Addressing Imminent Danger**

Please Note: This document is just a guide and the information is not intended to be used as legal advice. Specific questions should be referred to your agency management, Child Protective Services, or your local law enforcement agency.

When working with a youth involved in an IPA relationship, it is necessary to continually assess the level of danger present in the relationship so that the agency staff can respond appropriately. This includes assessing for and responding to threats of harm by or between partners. Agencies need to consider in advance how they will respond to these situations and develop policies and procedures to guide their actions. This section suggests key components of how an agency might best respond to an IPA situation in which there is an immediate threat.

How do we respond if a youth shares that a partner has threatened him or her?

There are six distinct actions that must be considered in responding to a youth's report of an IPA current threat:

1. Creating a team response;
2. Assessing the level of threat;
3. Developing a safety plan;
4. Reporting to the police;
5. Filing a protective or restraining order;
6. Accessing community resources.

1. Create a Team Response

A youth may report concern for his or her safety to whomever they feel comfortable with at the moment. This may include such staff as the security officer, the cook, residential staff, a case manager or a therapist. In dealing with the safety of this youth, and potentially with the safety of other people in the agency, it is important to establish the following practices:

- Staff need to inform youth that they have to inform their supervisor about threats; and
- Supervisors in turn, may need to bring this information to the managers or directors who facilitate the decisions on how best to keep the youth safe and protect other agency staff.

A team response ensures that decisions regarding safety are made collaboratively and objectively, and do not rely on a single staff person's decision made in the spur of the moment.

2. Assess the level of threat

While not guaranteed as predictors of violence, a youth's past behaviors should be considered in assessing the level of risk. These behaviors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Threats of homicide/suicide
- Intimate partner abuse
- Criminal activity
- Forced sex by their partner
- Violence towards others
- Stalking

- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Possession of or access to weapons
- Abuse of pets or animals

Current risk factors that should be taken into account include:

- Depression or other mental illness
- Obsessive attachment to victim
- Access to the victim
- Seriousness of intent
- Specificity of plan
- Possession of and access to weapons

And, you must also consider:

- The reporting youth's distress and fear of harm, and
- The reporting youth's ability to follow through with a safety plan.

3. Develop a Safety Plan

If the team's assessment is that the threat does pose a danger to the youth, then the team needs to work with the youth to develop a plan for keeping the youth safe while he/she is at your agency and in the community (see Handout #2 located on page 27). This plan needs to take into consideration the following questions:

- Is the youth safe residing at or accessing services at your agency? If not, explore options for safe places for the youth to be during the day and at night
- Are both partners served at the agency? If so, refer to Section 3 on page 7, "Providing services to couples at your agency" to determine if your agency can continue to serve both partners.
- If the youth is not living in a shelter or residential program, are there ways to protect the youth's safety on the street?
- Will the youth accept a referral to a DV shelter for immediate safe and confidential housing? (Ensure that you have relationships with the DV shelters in your community, and know the ones that are interested in serving youth. Note, this is not an option for minor youth.)

4. Reports to the Police

If a youth reports someone has threatened his or her safety, it is the youth's option to report the incident to the police.

- Review the pros and cons of police involvement (see Section 6- Special Considerations on page 16) and help the youth make an educated choice about whether or not to report the incident to the police.
- If he/she is interested in making a police report, you can call the police to request that officers come to the agency or the youth can go directly to the station. If you request a police unit, be prepared to wait because this may be considered a non-emergency call, depending on the details of the threat. If the youth prefers to go to the station in person, make sure that they are accompanied by a staff person to help advocate for them. It is possible that the police will not want to accept the report. In that case, the youth can decide to file a temporary protective or restraining order (see below).

5. Consider Filing a Protective or Restraining Order

There are significant differences in state and local laws and practices around protective or restraining orders, so be sure and carefully research the mandates for your state prior to advising clients. If you don't know the law, you can contact a local Domestic Violence provider, your district attorney's office, or check out one of the websites starting on page 20 where staff may be able to locate web and other resources that can answer your specific questions. Additional information about protective or restraining orders is provided in Section 6, on page 14.

6. Access Community Resources

If the youth is interested in accessing services for victims of intimate partner abuse, then explore their interest in and readiness to engage in IPA services such as shelter.

- Is he/she interested in talking with a lawyer for legal advice? If so, refer to local agencies that offer free legal consultation to individuals experiencing IPA/DV. Look for legal agencies with specific youth expertise.
- If he/she is not interested in any of the options for getting away from their partner at the moment and intends to continue to stay with them, engage the youth in devising a safety plan. (Please refer to Handout #2, Safety Planning for Runaway and Homeless Youth, on page 27).
- If you determine that staff or clients are in immediate danger, you will need to call the police, even if the youth doesn't want it. The agency has a primary obligation to protect its staff and other clients.

Agency Responsibilities in the Aftermath of a Critical IPA Incident

- Legal responsibility to respond and report (see Section 5, Mandated Reporting Laws, on page 12);
- Ensuring safety of other youth and staff;
- Documentation of incident per agency policies and the law;
- Debriefing with youth and with staff. Allowing time for staff to share their feelings and identify lessons learned will help staff gain competence and skill in handling situations, and will help you revise policies or plan additional staff training as needed.
- Providing internal or external referrals for counseling, substance abuse treatment, or mental health screening for youth;
- Providing resources for staff that need more support and involvement from a mental health professional.

Section 5: **Mandated Reporting Laws for IPA**

Please Note: *This document is just a guide and is not intended to be used as legal advice. Specific questions should be referred to your agency management, Child Protective Services, or your local law enforcement agency.*

For state-by state legal information and resources, go to <http://www.womenslaw.org> or <http://www.sexlaws.org>.

It is critical to provide youth with sensitive and confidential services to address intimate partner abuse. Agencies should ensure that youths' legal rights to privacy are protected. However, each state has enacted mandated reporting laws that require certain professionals/employees to report information about a client to law enforcement or other government agencies. The following sections address three common types of reporting requirements that may be triggered by intimate partner abuse. Staff should fully understand mandated reporting laws in their state and clearly explain these duties to youth clients. Staff should also consult with their agency management to decide the best course of action in each individual case to comply with mandated reporting laws.

Duty to Warn:

Certain mental health professionals have a legal obligation to breach confidential communications in order to warn potential victims of threats to harm. In California, this duty to warn is often referred to as Tarasoff, named after the seminal case Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California. When there is clear evidence of danger, the duty to warn requires mental health professionals to notify potential victims or others who are in a position to protect them from harm, including the police. For specific information about the duty to warn, visit the American Psychological Association at www.apa.org.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting:

Many employees who have contact with youth are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. Depending on the state, abuse of a minor by an intimate partner may require a child abuse report to law enforcement or child protective services. Although child abuse laws largely focus on parental or familial abuse, these laws may also cover teens experiencing intimate partner abuse. These requirements may also extend to children who witness intimate partner abuse by parents or guardians. For general information about mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect, contact the National Center for Youth Law at www.youthlaw.org.

Injury Reporting Laws:

Health care providers may have an additional duty to report intimate partner abuse in states that require reporting of domestic violence-related injuries, even if the victim is an adult. In California for example, health care providers have a duty to report abuse to law enforcement if they provide medical services to a patient with physical injuries due to firearms or assaultive or abusive conduct. For more information about the additional reporting duties of health care providers, visit the Family Violence Prevention Fund at www.endabuse.org.

Other Reporting Issues

Whether or not a staff person is mandated to report a threat of serious harm between youth, the young person always has the option to report the incident to the police. Staff can help the youth assess the seriousness and lethality of the threat. If the risk of harm is high, help the youth consider all available and appropriate means of staying safe.

When you witness one youth directly threaten to harm another, there are no clear legal guidelines regarding your responsibility to make a police report. Therefore, consult with your agency management. Whenever threats are made, it is always appropriate to assess the seriousness and lethality. If the risk of harm is high, use all available means to keep the youth safe, including consulting with the police regarding the necessity of a report. Whether or not you report a threat, you should always document the incident, the youth's and police response (as indicated), steps taken, plan of action, and needed follow up action. Please note that there are special considerations for reporting intimate partner abuse when a child is present. (See Section 7, Special Considerations on page 16).

It is important to create a culture in your agency where violence and the threat of violence are not tolerated and where there are clear expectations for conduct. In addition, your services should include skill-building and prevention education to help keep youth safe and maintain healthy relationships.

Section 6: **Protective or Restraining Orders**

What is a protective or restraining order?

A protective or restraining order prohibits the restrained person from coming near or contacting the protected person. Because in most states violating a protective order is a crime, protective orders may offer safety to some victims. Youth victims should consider the following three types of protective orders:

- **Emergency protective orders:** When responding to a call for help, law enforcement can help victims facing threat of danger obtain immediate and short-term protection. In states where this option is available, orders are typically available 24 hours a day and may last up to 7 days.
- **Civil protective orders:** Victims of abuse and harassment can apply for a longer-term protective order from their local civil courts. If the victim and abuser are in an intimate relationship as defined by their state laws, the victim can apply for a domestic violence protective order. Victims in non-intimate relationships with their abuser may apply for a civil harassment order. Temporary civil protective orders are usually available the same day.
- **Criminal protective orders:** If an abuser is charged with or convicted of a domestic violence crime, a protective order may be issued by the judge handling the criminal case. Victims may check with the prosecutor or victims' advocate for help in determining whether a protective order was made in the criminal case against the abuser.

Facts about Protective or Restraining Orders

- Individuals with a protective or restraining order filed against them cannot be within 100 yards of or be in contact with the person who has filed the restraining order. This means if one client has filed a restraining order then both clients will not be able to access services at the agency at the same time while the restraining order is in effect.
- A protective or restraining order has to be delivered to the person before it takes effect. The local law enforcement agency will serve the order and their service fees should be waived in domestic violence cases. Protected persons may still need to complete a form requesting the service and indicating it is a domestic violence case to get the service accomplished without fees. Agencies should weigh whether or not they are willing to serve these orders as it may present a conflict of interest if both individuals are clients. Youth need to consider if there are other people that can deliver the restraining order safely.
- Individuals are initially given a temporary restraining order (TRO) but will have to appear in court to obtain a permanent restraining order. Both parties are not required to attend the restraining order hearing – the only requirement regarding the respondent/defendant is that they receive ample notice and have the opportunity to appear and be heard. If the respondent/defendant refuses to attend the hearing, a protective order can still be issued. The person requesting the protective order is required to appear for the hearing in order to obtain a protective order.
- Clients may both end up filing restraining orders against each other; your agency will have to determine how to provide services to clients in this situation.
- Often times, an agency may expend considerable resources to assist clients with the restraining order process and find that the couple gets back together. Agencies should

continue to support youth in getting restraining orders, as appropriate, but should be prepared that the circumstances can change.

- A person restrained by a restraining or protective order must comply with the order until it expires or is terminated by a judge. If a restrained person violates the order, he or she faces possible criminal penalties.
- Agencies should request a copy of the restraining order and keep it on file.

Section 7:

Special Considerations regarding Housing and Law Enforcement

Housing Options and Alternatives for Homeless Youth

Housing options for homeless youth needing to escape abusive relationships will vary across communities. The best housing option for a particular youth will depend on the services that are available in their community and on their age, gender, sexual orientation, and readiness to leave the relationship.

Historically, there has been limited planning and coordination between homeless youth and domestic violence agencies, and the housing options currently available generally reflect the separation between these two service sectors.

Below is a brief listing of some of the pros and cons to each housing option.

Homeless Youth Shelters (emergency or transitional living)

- Location is not confidential and may be known to the abusive partner;
- Security is often not as significant concern as it is in a DV shelter;
- Services are designed for homeless youth and responsive to their age-specific needs;
- Programs are often able to address mental health and substance abuse issues;
- Shelters generally do not accept youth with their own children;
- Shelters are often designed for or responsive to the needs of lesbian, gay, and transgender youth;
- Homeless youth shelters house both young men and young women.

Domestic Violence Shelters

- Most DV shelters are confidential locations, offering safety and protection;
- DV shelters are generally designed for adult woman and may not be available to unaccompanied minors or acceptable to transitional age youth ages 18 to 24;
- DV shelters are often ill-prepared to address mental health and substance abuse issues;
- DV shelters will generally accept woman with children;
- A domestic violence shelter may strongly encourage residents to apply for a restraining or protective order or may make this a condition of residency;
- DV shelters may have residency restrictions, particularly immediately after entering the shelter, that affect a resident's school or work schedule;
- In order to ensure the client's safety, decrease the chance that the individual will run into the abuser, and protect other participants, DV shelters may ask clients not to go to the areas they usually hang out in, which could include the homeless youth agencies the youth is connected to and receiving services from;
- D.V. Shelters may not accept male victims regardless of their age.

Law Enforcement Considerations

- While law enforcement agencies offer critical services to victims of intimate partner abuse, agencies need to be aware of specific issues that may arise once law enforcement is involved, and they must talk to and prepare youth for these in their safety planning

efforts: The youth who is threatening violence or abusing their partner may get arrested if you call the police. Sometimes a youth wants the abuse to end but doesn't want their partner to be arrested, and the youth should be aware that this might happen once law enforcement is involved. (Note, this concern does not take away a provider's legal obligation to report or their need to ensure the safety of youth or staff).

- Victims may get arrested if they have outstanding warrants for other issues.
- If both partners report violence, they may both get arrested.
- If the couple reunites, they may not be able to stop the criminal process. Victims do not control whether an abuser is arrested or charged for a domestic violence crime, prosecutors do. An abusive partner may be arrested and face criminal charges for a crime even if the victim does not want the process to go forward.

Section 8:

Taking care of yourself and your staff

Working with youth involved in Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA) can be challenging. These challenges are exacerbated when staff members are concerned about the physical and emotional health and safety of youth involved in violent or abusive relationships or if the staff members have been in these situations themselves. Individual staff persons, agency supervisors, and agency administrators are all responsible for taking steps to reduce the stress involved in providing high quality services to runaway and homeless youth involved in intimate partner violence.

What is the role of the agency administrator?

- Ensure that the agency has policies and procedures for assessing and addressing intimate partner abuse. These policies and procedures should include information on assessing IPA, addressing situations where there may be imminent danger to youth or staff, and providing services to couples involved in abusive relationships.
- Ensure that the agency has a plan for educating staff about IPA.
- Know legal requirements in your community.
- Develop relationships with other providers in your community to ensure that youth have access to the services that are available.

What is the role of the agency supervisor?

- Make sure that your staff know your agency's policies and procedures for assessing and addressing intimate partner abuse at your agency.
- Work with administrators and staff to create a culture of safety.
- Ensure that your staff have access to bi-annual training about intimate partner abuse.
- Be alert to the fact that there may be staff at your agency who have been involved in or witnessed domestic violence/IPA in their own lives and that they require additional support regarding these issues.
- Ensure that there is up-to-date resource information for staff and youth about intimate partner abuse.
- Anticipate that your staff may become frustrated and upset when youth return to abusive relationships and provide them with the supplemental education and support that they need.
- Provide opportunities to debrief (for staff and youth, as needed), in the event of a critical incident.

What is the role of the direct service staff person?

- Learn about your agency policies and procedures for addressing and preventing intimate partner abuse with youth at your agency.
- Keep your supervisor informed of any abusive relationships among clients that you are aware of and consult with him/her frequently to get the support that you need.
- Take all necessary and appropriate steps to protect the safety of staff and youth.

Common Staff Questions and Concerns about IPA

Is it normal to feel confused, frustrated, and angry in response to IPA issues between youth?

Yes. Relationships among youth are very changeable; this is even truer of runaway and homeless youth. When you are working with youth involved in an abusive relationship, you may expend enormous amounts of time and energy helping to support youth in ending a relationship or getting a protective or restraining order only to find that the couple is together again. If you have any personal experiences with IPA, you may become even more frustrated and angry or you may find yourself avoiding the issue. Learn as much as you can about intimate partner abuse and the cycle of violence so that you can be prepared. If you are unaware of any local training, ask your supervisor to help you find them. When you find yourself feeling confused, frustrated, angry, and even resentful, talk to your supervisor or co-workers to help you gain the perspective and support that you need. Find other ways to reduce your stress and to help you leave your stress at work.

What can I expect afterward?

We may never know what happens to the youth we serve or the impact of our interventions. As long as you know that you followed your agency's protocols, you will know that you did everything that you could to help your clients make the best choices possible in their particular circumstances. Keep in mind that though you may not have the chance to see the results of your efforts, some youth have returned later to share that they remembered their conversations with staff members and valued the lessons they learned long after they left the agency.

Section 9: **Resources**

Intimate Partner Abuse Information & Hotlines

National Domestic Violence Hotline

<http://www.ndvh.org/>
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

This hotline provides crisis intervention for friends and family, outreach to the deaf and blind, information for immigrants, safety planning, and referrals to numerous agencies throughout the United States.

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

<http://www.ncadv.org/>

This website provides a safety plan, including internet safety and identity theft precautions, public policy guidelines on how to advocate against domestic violence on a local and national level, current statistical data, and supportive publications for victims and their families.

Family Violence Prevention Fund

<http://endabuse.org/programs/teens/>

This website focuses on ending abuse in and out of the home via featured prevention programs and campaigns, which include fact sheets on teen partner violence, resource list of hotlines and organizations, and a detailed safety plan.

Stop Violence

<http://www.stopviolence.com/domviol.htm>

This website provides links to other violence prevention websites as well as hotline listings; it offers a multicultural approach to stopping violence, current statistics, safety planning, and a downloadable handbook for survivors of abuse.

Stalking Resource Center

<http://www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx>
1-800-FYI-CALL

The Stalking Resource Center raises national and local awareness of stalking and takes multidisciplinary measures against it via their training program, peer-to-peer exchange program, community partnership with practitioners, and statistical information on stalking.

Family Violence Prevention Fund- See It and Stop It

http://www.seeitandstopit.org/pages/seeit/effects_society.html

See It and Stop It aids one in recognizing the signs of violence, provides a list of definitions and terms as well as statistical data, and takes a societal approach at ending violence by enlisting the help of family and friends.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Safety, Health and Employee Welfare Division

<http://www.usda.gov/da/shmd/aware.htm>

This online domestic violence awareness handbook supplies links to national organizations and includes helpful information about victims, myths, safety planning, aid for family and friends, domestic violence in the workplace, and ways to prevent violence in the community.

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network

<http://www.rainn.org/>

RAINN provides valuable information on all types of sexual assaults, as well as current statistics, recovery tips, prevention methods, legal information, and locations of counseling centers and crisis shelters around the country.

<p>Youth Friendly Hotlines and Websites on Intimate Partner Abuse</p>
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Love Is Respect.org

<http://loveisrespect.org/>

1-866-331-9474 or 1-866-331-8453 (TTY)

Love Is Respect.org is the online community of the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, which provides callers with support and access to resources 24/7; the site also includes a chat component and provides information on internet safety, support, and intervention.

Teen Line

<http://www.teenlineonline.org>

1-800-852-8336 (*toll-free in California only*)

This is a teen-operated hotline tailored for teenagers who want to discuss such problems as abuse, suicide, drug abuse, or any other problems; the website also contains articles and a Youth Yellow Pages for needed referrals.

Teenline

<http://www.teenlineonline.com>

Teenline is a confidential/ anonymous hotline targeted for middle school and high school youth; the online site includes stories and testimonies, links to schools and other related websites, current news and events, and a message board.

Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence

<http://www.acadv.org/dating.html>

The Alabama Coalition provides statistical data on teen dating, dating safety plans for youth, listings of local shelters, legal aid for victims, and links to other violence prevention resources.

End Domestic Violence- Youth

<http://youth.enddomesticviolence.org/healthyrelationships/default.asp>

End Domestic Violence-Youth provides information on the dynamics of a healthy relationship, safety planning tips for the abused, and resources for youth in abusive families.

Love Is Not Abuse

<http://loveisnotabuse.com/>

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 800/787-3224 (TTY)

This site offers a quiz on dating violence, provides top ten warning signs of abuse as well as statistical information, advice for friends of victims during and after the abuse, and testimony from survivors of abuse.

National Runaway Hotline

<http://www.1800runaway.org/>

1-800-RUNAWAY (1-800-786-2929)

This site does not offer specialized services for intimate partner abuse prevention or intervention. However, it is the federally funded national runaway switchboard and can help link youth, parents, or professionals to local resources. It is a 24-hour crisis line with experienced staff.

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens.asp>

1-866-SAFEYOUTH or 1-866-723-3968

This website serves as a resource for various links highlighting violence prevention and it also provides the warning signs of abuse, current statistics and facts of different types of abuse, and information about how to actively get involved in implementing violence prevention.

Teen Victim Project

<http://www.ncvc.org/tvp/Main.aspx>

1-800-FYI-CALL

The focus of this website is to help teen victims via involvement in outreach projects, downloadable handbooks for those who help teen victims, and fact sheets about recognizing and responding to various forms of abuse.

T.E.A.R- Teens Escaping Abusive Relationships

<http://www.teensagainstabuse.org/index.php?q=mission>

T.E.A.R is a teen-run organization whose purpose is to prevent dating abuse through educational presentations; the site includes information on hotlines, warning signs, testimony, current statistics, and ways to escape abusive relationships.

Men Can Stop Rape

<http://www.mencanstoprape.org/info-url2700/info-url.htm>

Men Can Stop Rape is a prevention program that aids male youth in taking a stand against domestic violence via awareness-to-action education, community organizing such as trainings and workshops, and empowering male youth campaigns.

Legal Information

Break the Cycle

<http://www.break-the-cycle.org/>

Break the Cycle answers online questions about dating violence, provides safety tips and legal consultation for victims such as domestic violence and sexual assault protective orders, as well as information about dating violence programs and presentations.

National Center for Youth Law

<http://www.youthlaw.org/>

This website highlights current policies, legislation, and litigation on child welfare, juvenile justice, economic security for needy, low-income families, and health and mental health resources, as well as information on training programs for youth advocates.

Women's Law.org

http://www.womenslaw.org/more_info.htm

Women's Law.org provides state-specific legal information and resources for women throughout the United States who are current victims of abuse as well as information for friends and family.

Sex Laws.org

<http://www.sexlaws.org/>

Sex Laws.org is a resource that explains state-by-state, updated legal terms such as statutory rape, sexual assault, and age of consent, as well as federal laws and national reports.

California Attorney General's Safe From the Start: Protecting Children

<http://www.safefromthestart.org/index.aspx>

This website trains parents and professionals who work in adolescent programs with youth in communities that have been exposed to violence, provides a list of local crisis centers and shelters, and includes current updates on state and national information about domestic violence.

Medical and Health Related Sites

Sex Etc. Org

<http://www.sexetc.org>

This website provides a complete list of sexual terms and definitions, chats with health experts, hotline listings for crises and questions, and a plethora of information concerning sexual health and health in general.

Cool Nurse- Teen Dating Violence

http://www.coolnurse.com/teen_dating_violence.htm

Cool Nurse is a health resource network that provides statistical data on dating violence, safety tips for the abused, articles on abuse, and a list of various hotlines.

Medline

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/domesticviolence.html>

This website covers the issues of domestic violence via resources such as journal articles, videos, and directories; it also offers mechanisms against abuse like prevention and coping strategies and law and policy information.



Youth Handout #1

How Can the Law Help Me When It Comes to Intimate Partner Abuse?

1) What are the Types of Protective/Restraining Orders that Can Protect Me?

- **Emergency Protective Order (EPO)**
If you are in immediate danger, call 911. If a law enforcement officer arrives at the scene of an incident between you and your abusive partner, you can ask for an Emergency Protective Order (EPO). A judge that is on-call 24 hours a day will review your request for an EPO by telephone. If the judge grants your request, the law enforcement officer will provide you written proof that an EPO has been issued. Like a restraining order, an EPO makes it a crime for your abusive partner to come near or contact you. An EPO lasts 5 business days or 7 calendar days, whichever is sooner.
- **Domestic Violence Protective/Restraining Order**
Requests for a domestic violence restraining order must be made at your superior court. Same-day applications are typically available. When a request is filed, the judge will set a hearing date for a full review of your request within 3-4 weeks. The judge can also decide to issue you immediate protection to help keep you safe until the hearing is held, called a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO). A TRO is valid until the date of your hearing. If the judge grants you a restraining order at the hearing, the order can protect you for up to 5 years.

2) How does a Protective/Restraining Order work?

- **Notice:** A protective/restraining order is valid after it has been given to the abusive partner restrained by the order. Having the restraining order given to, or “served” on, the abusive partner is an absolute requirement. Any adult not involved in the case, including law enforcement, can “serve” the protective order.
- **Distance:** A protective/restraining order requires the abusive partner to stay away from the victim. The protected distance can be up to 100 yards away from the victim, their home, car, school, work, place of worship, or other location set by the court.
- **Contact:** A protective/restraining order prohibits the abusive partner from contacting the victim in any way, including phone calls, text messages, IM, letters, etc.
- **Firearm:** A protective/restraining order prohibits the restrained person to legally possess, buy or even try to acquire a firearm legally. They are also required to turn over any previously held guns to law enforcement.

3) Other Information about Protective/Restraining Orders

- **Immigration status:** INS will not be notified automatically if you file for protective/restraining orders. If your immigration status depends on your spouse, you may be able to “self-petition” for legal status. If the batterer is undocumented he/she can be deported.
- If a protective/restraining order is issued, other orders can be made to protect the victim, including custody, visitation, child support and orders about property.

4) Can I drop the charges?

If criminal charges are filed, it is up to the prosecutor as to whether charges will be filed, not the victim.

5) How much does it cost to get a restraining order?

There is no filing fee for domestic violence restraining orders. The court may have other service charges but these fees are usually waived. To have someone deliver the restraining order papers to your partner you have to complete a form indicating that service is being made in a domestic violence case.

6) How old must I be to get a restraining order?

The law varies among the states. Some states allow youth as young as 12 to obtain protective or restraining orders while other states allow only adults to apply. You will need to find out what the laws are in your state.

8) Where do I file police report against the batterer?

The police report needs to be made at the local police station where the incident occurred. For all 911 calls, a report will automatically be generated. Anyone can file a police report for suspected battery or violations of a protective/restraining order. The police are responsible for deciding when and how to follow up with investigations on any report made.

Youth Handout #2

Safety Planning for Runaway and Homeless Youth

1. Keep important phone numbers (e.g. police, hotlines, family, friends, and shelter) with you at all times.
2. Carry your own documents such as your birth certificate, identification, or social security card, and other important items such as medication, or ask someone you trust or an agency that helps you to hold them for you.
3. Tell people you trust about the abuse, even if it's in the past, and ask them to call the police if they ever think you are in danger. *People need to know if you are in a dangerous or potentially dangerous situation.*
4. Make an escape plan that includes 4 places you could go to be safe if you needed to get away in a hurry (this could include domestic violence shelters, emergency shelters or police stations).
5. Develop code words to use with friends when you are in immediate danger.
6. Try not to be alone in isolated areas.
7. Find someone you feel comfortable with to talk to.
8. Recognize the signs when your partner or ex-partner is escalating (questioning, interrogating, accusing, blaming, arguing, etc) and try to remove yourself from the situation before it gets out of control.
9. Get a restraining order if you think you might be in danger.
10. Give copies of the restraining order to the police, your housing program, drop-in centers you frequent, and any other safe places you spend time. Keep an extra copy with you at all times.
11. Ask a staff member for assistance in finding additional support for you.