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THE YWCA OF MISSOULA

THE YWCA OF BILLINGS

THE ABBIE SHELTER

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The views and opinions expressed herein are solely those of the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and do not reflect those of any funding or partner organization.
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Why was this manual created?

The Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) created this manual with the input and assistance of membership programs. This manual is meant as a guide for direct service programs in the state of Montana who work with non-abusive parents and their children in domestic violence programs, shelters, and support groups.

MCADSV believes that domestic violence must be addressed holistically. Non-abusive parents and their children have all been impacted by the violence perpetrated in their homes. The intention is not to direct programs or create rules, but to provide resources to those who work with children.

By engaging the non-abusive parents and involving them in addressing the impacts of violence on their children, advocates can facilitate a strong familial bond and increase the parent’s understanding of the effects of violence on children. Additionally, creating a safe environment for children who are also receiving services and providing engaging, age-appropriate, and educational activities will reduce the trauma experienced in the home and increase the resiliency of the child.

This manual will provide sample policies and procedures for children’s programs, information and tools for advocates, information for non-abusive parents, and curriculum suggestions for children in shelter or groups. Building a strong program to address the needs of children can lead to healing for the entire family.
Domestic Violence and Children: Facts and Statistics

- Children living in violent homes are at an increased risk of experiencing violence themselves. 30 to 60 percent of children living in abusive homes are themselves abused.

- Perpetrators often use children to control adult victims. (See power and control wheel)

- Exposure to violence increases the likelihood that the child will grow to be violent. This is not a direct cause and effect, but a factor in future violent tendencies.

- Between 2.3 and 10 million children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year in the U.S.

- 500,000 children are on the scene when police respond to domestic violence calls each year in the U.S.

- Domestic violence occurs disproportionally in homes with children under the age of 5.

- 25% of domestic violence homicides are witnessed by children of the victim.

- Women are at an increased risk of violence during pregnancy. Women are 400% more likely to experience increased abuse during unintended or unwanted pregnancies.

- One study has shown that 65% of domestic violence victims that were strangled by a partner were strangled in front of their children.

- 43% of domestic violence victims live in households with children under the age of 12.
The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children
1. The Power and Control Wheel

The Power and Control Wheel is a common tool utilized by domestic violence advocates and organizations. What is less common, is an adaptation of the Power and Control Wheel as it would apply to children. Many people do not consider how each of the pieces of the this wheel can be easily applied to how domestic violence looks between a parent and child.
Batterer may use intimidation by:

- Using looks, actions, and gestures to intimidate or cause fear in the family.
- Destroying property to show authority, intimidate, or punish the family.
- Using male or adult size to intimidate the mother or the children.
- Abusing pets to send messages or threats of violence to the family.
- Displaying or cleaning weapons in front of the family to send messages or threats of violence.
- Using violence in front of the children.

Batterer may use emotional abuse by:

- Forcing the children to engage in put-downs or name calling of the mother.
- Putting the children down or calling the children names.
- Humiliating the mother in front of the children.
- Forcing the mother to engage in embarrassing acts in front of the children.
- Undermining her value as a mother (i.e., making the mother believe she is an unfit parent, telling the mother the children do not love her).
- Shaping how the children view their mother.
- Being inconsistent in visitation, discipline, or parenting.
Power and Control Wheel as it Applies to Children

**Batterer may use isolation by:**
- Not letting the mother see or spend time with the children.
- Limiting opportunities for the mother and the children to get help from outside sources.
- Not allowing the children to participate in age appropriate activities outside of the home.
- Not allowing the children to invite friends into the home.
- Controlling access to trustworthy adults (i.e., school counselors, grandparents, extended family members).
- Not allowing the mother to respond to the children’s needs (i.e., hurts, fears, basic needs).

**Batterer may use minimization, denial, and blame by:**
- Shaping the children's understanding of the source of the violence by blaming the mother.
- Making the children believe the mother is to blame for the violence.
- Pitting family member against family member.
- Fostering instability and creating confusion for the children by denying the violence happened.
- Normalizing the violence.
- Making light of the violence.
- Causing the children to feel guilty and to believe they are to blame for the violence.
Power and Control Wheel as it Applies to Children

Batterer may use children by:
- Making the mother believe anything that happens to the children is her fault.
- Using the children as confidants.
- Threatening to take the children away, make a CPS report, or hurt the children if the mother reports the abuse or tries to leave the batterer.
- Exposing the children to the abuse (i.e., through direct observation, overhearing, or knowing about the abuse).
- Undermining the mother's efforts to parent the children.
- Probing the children for information about the mother or her new partner.
- Controlling the use of contraception or having children born close together; overwhelming the mother.
- Causing physical harm to the children as a result of violence toward the mother.
- Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect perpetrated directly against the children.

Batterer may use male privilege by:
- Forcing the mother and the female children to do household duties.
- Teaching the children to not respect women.
- Centering family life around the batterer.
- Demanding the children keep quiet about the abuse.
- Demanding the mother handle the unpleasant or demanding tasks of child rearing.
- Showing poor emotional boundaries.
- Teaching that women are weak or stupid.
- Having the ultimate authority but assuming no responsibility, including household chores or parenting.
- Establishing rigid gender roles for the children.
- Creating rules for everyone in the household to follow and changing the rules without warning.
Batterer may use economic abuse by:

- Creating poor credit for the mother so that she is unable to get financing on her own.
- Controlling the family finances or withholding information about the family finances.
- Giving the mother a meager allowance for her and the children’s needs.
- Withholding child support.
- Refusing to help pay for necessities.
- Creating reasons for the mother to lose her job (i.e., calling her work frequently, making her miss work, withholding transportation).
- Disrupting child care arrangements needed to maintain employment.

Batterer may use coercion and threats by:

- Threatening to report the mother to welfare to impact her economic benefits or to initiate a child maltreatment investigation.
- Threatening that CPS will take the children away.
- Making threats to harm the mother or the children if the mother leaves him.
- Threatening to report the mother or the children to immigration authorities.
- Making threats of retaliation toward the children who disclose abuse to outside helpers.
- Threatening to abandon the children.
- Making threats of suicide or other self-harm.
2. Behavioral Effects

Experiencing and witnessing violence can be a traumatic experience for any person, but the effect that violence has on children can present itself in much more drastic ways. Children can experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other disorders that have a severe impact on their day-to-day behavior. PTSD, for example, can cause sleep disturbance, intensified startle or defensive reactions, and constant worry. Additionally, violence can be a learned behavior and children will often imitate or mimic the behaviors they see from an abuser or victim. Behavior can become increasingly aggressive towards peers, teachers, and other people in positions of authority. Additionally, being in a violent home increases the risk of a child becoming a victim of violence in the future.

Other behavioral symptoms can be less obvious and include:

- Recurrent physical complaints (headache, stomach ache)
- Constant worry about danger and safety of loved ones
- Difficulty completing a task
- Hyperactivity
- Animal cruelty
- Defiance (higher level than normal)
- Substance abuse
- Isolation
- Choosing peers over parents or caregivers
- Promiscuity
3. Emotional Effects

Exposure to domestic violence can cause a variety of emotional issues in young children. Perhaps most detrimental is the effect on a child’s emotional attachment to the abusive and non-abusive parents. The children may experience strong conflicting emotions toward an abusive parent, such as love, fear, affection, resentment, etc. These conflicting feelings can then be reflected in how the child feels toward the victim; resentment toward the abusive parent may cause the child to feel protective of the victim. Likewise, affection for the abusive parent may make the child feel indifferent to the victim and his or her plight.

Additionally, continued exposure to violence can desensitize a child to the pain or suffering of others. When violence is the “normal” way of life, sympathy or sensitivity to violence will decrease. Children exposed to violence will often withdraw from normal friends or activities, will be increasingly vigilant and aware of perceived threats or possible violence (whether those threats are real or not), and may experience consistent worry and anxiety.

Other adverse emotional impacts include:

- Decreased ability to develop basic emotions
- Difficulty being soothed
- Difficulty seeing another’s perspective
- Difficulty seeing “gray areas” or seeing everything as black or white
- Increased clingingness
- Increased fear, especially of abandonment
- Depression and resulting self-harm
- Low self-esteem
- High maladjustment and homelessness
While children who witness violence can develop negative emotional and behavioral attributes, it is important to note that a child can also be very resilient. Positive behavioral and emotional attributes can grow in a child who comes from a violent home. Resiliency in a child manifests as the ability to adapt to a negative environment. Children who experience violence are four times more likely to develop negative emotional and behavioral characteristics, but nearly half of children who experience violence adapt normally.

Normal development and adaption can be attributed to a number of factors, including the strength and parenting skills of the abused parent, the child’s inherent nature and ability to analyze situations, strong connections to peers and other community members, and a healthy and nurturing school environment. Most sources also cite access to resources serving both the family and the child individually as a determining factor in whether or not a child develops resilience and positive behavioral/emotional attributes.

**Positive behaviors and emotions present in a child demonstrating resiliency:**

- Protectiveness
- Ability to think critically about and resolve conflicts
- Tendency to “keep the peace” or act as peacemaker
- Normal, age appropriate cognitive development
- The ability to identify, think about, and verbalize feelings
- Interest in socializing with peers
Adults who are exceptional at relating to children all have some characteristics in common. I have worked with many children’s advocates over the past 30 years and without exception, when they come into a room where there are children, the children instinctively know that this is “their” person. Keeping boundaries as an adult and still communicating with children on their level is a challenge that many adults cannot manage. As adults we often think we know what’s best for children and that we have to protect them from the world which is a harmful place. However, when working with children who have witnessed violence towards their mothers /caregivers or who have experienced violence themselves, it is crucial to be mindful of how we communicate and approach them.

Children have feelings, opinions, know what feels right and what doesn’t, they just may not be able to communicate all of this with adults or the way they do communicate is non-verbal. Advocates must be aware of other ways children may communicate. They have voices and it is our responsibility as adults to hear those voices and to not shut them down, put words in their mouths, or assume we know what their feelings are. I once knew a psychologist who ran a group in an elementary school for 6 year old boys. They were all from homes where domestic violence had occurred and they all had opinions about what had happened to their lives as a result. They were readily able to talk about what they felt when the abuse occurred and how their parents were oblivious to their feelings.

The power we have as adults can easily be used over children. Since their experiences have been full of power used over them, children’s advocates must find other ways to be with children. Of course behavior that hurts others or themselves can be stopped, redirected to other activities or discussed as inappropriate. They must learn from us what is okay and what isn’t. However, most adults fall back on punitive responses to “out of norm” behavior.

Children’s advocates have appointed power, given to them from life experience, chronological age, size, and full ability to communicate. Children are developing, learning how to use gradually larger words, make more complicated sentences and are exploring the myriad of feelings they experience, some that they don’t have names for yet. Our job is to assist their learning experience that has been somewhat derailed by violence. They have learned hurtful actions and words from the abuser. They model this behavior without even knowing the meaning behind it. They label this “mean”. Instead of punishing meanness, advocates are able to model alternatives to the use of mean words and behaviors. Advocates can redirect children into more kind and respectful actions and communicate alternative words. This is using power with children. It is empowering them and teaching them new skills as well. All adults who work with children can become a “children’s person” by becoming mindful of their words and actions with children. By becoming a “power with” advocate, you too can empower children.

For more information on child development with age-specific information, please visit:
http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists
Supporting Caregiver-Child Relationships in Domestic Violence Shelters

Jennifer Certa, Children’s Program Coordinator, YWCA of Missoula

In early childhood, the relationships children have with their primary caregivers provide the foundation for future social and emotional development. A caregiver who perceives and responds to a child’s needs becomes the secure base from which a child is able to explore the world, learn resilience and self-soothing in stressful situations, regulate emotions, understand how to form meaningful relationships with others, and develop a sense of self-worth and self-confidence. Dysfunction in this relationship between a child and her primary caregiver therefore can have negative impacts on the child’s health, well-being, and later success in school and life.

Exposure to violence can both damage the caregiver-child bond and hinder children’s healthy development - unless they receive support to help them cope and heal. When caregivers are in crisis, it impacts their ability to offer this support to their children. This is why it is essential that providers working with families who have experienced violence offer interventions that focus on rebuilding and strengthening caregiver-child relationships in shelter and promote positive attachment and parenting skills. For children, healing from traumatic experiences begins there.

How Advocates Can Help:

- **Create a safe and healing environment for families in shelter.** Encourage healing by offering therapeutic play and creative activities, as well as opportunities for caregivers and children to spend time together. Help caregivers maintain routine and create stability for their families.
- **Model nurturing interactions with children.** Serve as role models for talking to and resolving issues in responsive, respectful, and non-violent ways. Talk about and model healthy boundaries.
- **Help caregivers identify their children’s emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs.** Provide support in understanding and accessing community resources to meet those needs.
- **Build a working alliance with the caregiver.** Help her understand how her abuser may have undermined her parental authority and/or taught children to participate in her abuse. Model respect for her children. Consider her the expert on her children and her situation.
- **Teach alternatives to physical acting-out and physical discipline.** Help children learn effective coping and conflict resolution skills and non-violent ways of playing. Help caregivers identify and practice non-violent discipline and behavior management skills.
- **Help caregivers understand the impact that trauma has on child development.** In addition to helping the caregiver better understand her child’s needs, this may also help her reframe self-blame and negative views of her children as bad or uncontrollable.
- **Let children know it is okay to talk about what happened.** Provide a safe place and person for children to talk about the trauma they have experienced. Help caregivers understand how children may think and process, offer support in responding appropriately.
- **Provide services and support with respect of each family’s individual strengths and culture.** Assess and validate the caregiver’s strengths, efforts to seek help and protect her children, and ability to draw upon her resources. Keep cultural beliefs and practices in mind when making referrals or creating individual service plans.

Sources: The Child Witness to Violence Project (Boston Medical Center) and Parent-Child Center, Inc.
Program Policies and Procedures
Battered Women’s shelters have undergone many changes in the United States as the movement grows and changes. We, as advocates, have learned from our work and are always trying to improve services for victims. One of the more recent improvements is a move away from rigid rule based shelters to reduced-rule shelters where victims decide what is best for them and their families. Advocates working in shelters have the best of intentions when making and enforcing shelter rules, but in order to provide the best possible services we need to shift how we think about service delivery.

Under a rule-based model, advocates dictate how survivors will live while they are in shelter. We assume without rules the shelter will be in chaos and somehow unsafe. Many rules are offensive to victims because they assume the victim will behave in a certain way. For example, telling shelter residents they are responsible for their children upon intake assumes they would allow their children to run unsupervised throughout the shelter. Mothers know they are responsible for their children and many would be insulted if welcomed to the shelter by being told this.

Advocates can still maintain order in shelters by having one-on-one conversations with shelter residents when issues arise. For example, if a resident is returning to shelter at all hours of the night or staying out of shelter overnight on a regular basis her advocate could discuss with her how her actions are affecting the others in shelter and assess whether she has someplace else safe to stay. This feels much more empowering then having a blanket curfew and/or overnight policy.

It is important to remember that women who are coming to shelter have done nothing wrong to end up there. They are not in jail or a treatment program and should be allowed to live their lives as normally as possible. Also, we must work to empower all victims of violence; allowing them to make choices for themselves and their children is a good place to start. We may not agree with all of their decisions and choices but unless someone’s immediate safety is at risk it is not our place to judge or impose standards.

At the YWCA Gateway House in Billings we have adopted a reduced rule approach. So far the changes have been really good for staff and shelter residents alike. As program manager, I am no longer faced with making decisions about who has a good reason to break the rules and who doesn’t. Also, the shelter advocate’s precious time is now being spent advocating for residents rather than playing rule police. The whole atmosphere in the shelter has changed and everyone is happier.

I will be the first to admit that change is difficult and three years ago I thought having a shelter with limited rules would be impossible. After thinking the concept over and hearing about it several times over the years I was finally ready to give it a chance in early March. I am so pleased with the results and I would encourage all other shelters to adopt a reduced-rule model as much as possible. The good news is if it is a horrible failure rules can be reinstated. I bet you won’t have a horrible failure though and all staff and people seeking shelter will be happier with the change!
Program Policies and Procedures
The following policies and procedures are models only. Programs are not required to adapt these policies but may use them as written or adapt the policies to specific program needs.

Teenage Boys in Shelter
It is known that a non-abusive parent fleeing an abuser will be more likely to return to the abuser if they cannot stay in shelter with their children. Additionally, not providing services or shelter to teen boys serves as a deterrent for a non-abusive parent proactively seeking out shelter and services. Separating a teen boy from his non-abusive parent could further traumatize both individuals. In order to best serve the non-abusive parent and create a unifying environment for the family, non-abusive parents will not be denied services based solely on their arrival with a teen son. Section 306(c)(2)(B) of FVPSA prohibits sex discrimination in shelter services.

Absent extenuating circumstances, an abused parent fleeing an abuser shall receive shelter, alternative shelter, and services equivalent to those received by abused parents with younger children or teen girls. These services include age-appropriate activities, group work, and individualized services.

Programs may take into consideration instances where gender is a bonafide programmatic factor reasonably necessary to the normal or safe operation of that particular program or activity (i.e. the teen boy’s history at the shelter, known violent behavior, etc.)

Procedure:
1. Discuss confidentiality policy with teen boy before he accompanies participant to shelter.
2. Provide information to participant and son on program policies, procedures, mandatory reporting.
3. Include specific intake information on teen boy, received from parent outside of his presence, describing his experience with violence and the impact of violence on the survivor’s parenting.
4. Explain confidentiality to the teen boy and assure him that any information he shares with advocates will also be confidential unless confidentiality must be broken for mandatory reasons.
5. To both participant and son, discuss: Safety planning; Conflict resolution between program participants; Conflict resolution between specific participant and son.
6. Provide participant with necessary support for building, maintaining, and strengthening relationship with participant’s son.
7. Meet with teenage boy for separate intake, with consent of participant.
8. Include appropriate information on domestic violence and teens in group counseling sessions that involve participant.
9. Schedule regular status meetings with participant and son to monitor progress.

If a program feels having a policy regarding teen boys in shelter is necessary, that policy cannot discriminate against or be gender biased towards these clients. Rather, the policy should outline the procedure for providing services for this population to make all clients feel comfortable while receiving services. A non-discriminatory example of this policy is above.
Program Policies and Procedures

Child Intake
Each child that enters the shelter, if appropriate considering age and ability, shall receive a separate intake from his or her parent. It will be stressed to the program participant that a separate intake is essential to establishing a trusting, honest relationship between the child and the advocate.

Procedure:
1. The advocate working with the participating parent will fill out and co-sign a consent form with the parent, including an emergency contact for the child and the names of any adults to whom the child can be released.
2. After the consent form is signed, the advocate will then fill out a child intake form, with each child, outside of the presence of the participating parent.

The Consent Form and Child Intake Form can be found in the APPENDIX.
Referral Services for Children
Shelter staff will maintain a list of agencies available for referral services for children in shelter and participating in programs. This list will include mental health services, mentoring services, tutoring services, and other services that provide child-centered programming.

Procedure:
1. A child will not be referred for other services without the permission of the participating parent.
2. The parent permission form will contain specific information on the referral services recommended and an advocate will go over those services with the participating parent with explanations of the reasons for referral.

A Parent Permission Form can be found in the APPENDIX.
Program Policies and Procedures

Participant Conflict in Front of Children
Conflicts between program participants should first be resolved by the participants themselves. If the participants are unable to resolve the conflict in a respectful, non-aggressive manner, a staff member will intervene and mediate. Conflicts in front of children are prohibited.

Procedure:
If conflicting participants are arguing, raising their voices, or having a physical altercation in front of children, the following steps will be taken:

1. Any present children will be removed from the area by a Child Advocacy Program (CAP) or other staff members and taken to a safe, comfortable space, preferably out of ear shot of the conflicting participants.
2. CAP or other staff member will remain with the children until the participants have either resolved the conflict themselves or another staff member has intervened to mediate the conflict.
3. CAP or other staff will not place blame on one participant or another, but will attempt to answer any questions the children may have in a rational and neutral manner.
Program Policies and Procedures

Child Transportation
Participating children or children staying in shelter may be transported by program staff for program purposes only. A child will not be transported without a permission form signed by the participating parent. Children will be transported in car seats and seat belts according to age and size, with no exceptions. Program staff will take all reasonable precautions to limit the liability of the program with regard to child transport.

Procedure:
1. Any program staff who may be transporting children to and from school, medical appointments, court appearances, etc. must have a valid driver’s license and up-to-date car insurance, copied and on file with the program.
2. The transportation policy will be explained to participating parents and a permission slip must be signed and filed with the program before children are transported for any reason.
3. Program staff are prohibited from transporting participating children at the request of parents for non-programmatic reasons.

The Child Transportation Permission Form can be found in the APPENDIX.
Program Policies and Procedures

Children’s Program Volunteers
The Child Advocacy Program will recruit and train volunteers to work with program staff. Before volunteers work with participating children, they will be required to go through at least 8 hours of training on domestic violence and its effects on children, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting. Volunteers must also be trained in the Children’s Program curricula, activities, and policies.

Procedure:
1. Every volunteer is subject to a criminal background check.
2. Every volunteer must complete at least 8 hours of training.
3. A staff member will be present with each volunteer during the first 4 weeks of volunteer shifts.
4. Volunteers will be encouraged to enhance their knowledge of domestic violence by attending relevant trainings.
Program Policies and Procedures

Interaction With Children Outside of Program
Program staff and volunteers are prohibited from interacting with children outside of programmatic purposes. This prohibition includes but is not limited to transportation, baby sitting, and entertaining. Because staff and volunteers often form bonds with participating children, the program recognizes that these interactions may seem normal. However, staff and volunteers must limit these activities so as to discourage participants from taking advantage of services. While connecting with children is encouraged, appropriate boundaries are essential to the effectiveness of advocacy.

Procedure:
If program staff or volunteers are unsure about whether or not an interaction with a child is inappropriate and outside the scope of the program, he or she should:
1. Ask supervising staff.
2. If the activity or interaction is approved by supervising staff, a consent form particular to that activity should be signed by the parent.

The Consent Form can be found in the APPENDIX.
Program Policies and Procedures

School Attendance for Participating Children
Every participating child of school age shall be enrolled in a local school within one week of entering shelter. Additionally, any children not in shelter but participating in Child Advocacy activities is expected to attend school regularly without absences for program activities. Education and social interaction are an important part of development and growth and will be a priority for participating children.

Procedure:
Within one week of entering the child advocacy program:
1. Participating parents must enroll children in school.
2. If participating children are not in shelter, parents must fill out “School Information Form” to be kept on file with the program.
3. If excessive absences from school occur while children are in shelter or participating in the child advocacy program, staff shall meet with parent to discuss absences and inform parent of detrimental effects of school absence.

The School Information Form can be found in the APPENDIX.
Program Policies and Procedures

Photographs
Staff and volunteers should respect the privacy of participating parents and children, this includes taking photographs without the consent of the participating parent.

Procedure:
Before photographs are taken of participating children, staff and volunteers must:
1. Obtain a signed consent form from participating parent, to be kept on file.

The Photo Consent Form can be found in the APPENDIX.
Program Policies and Procedures

Mandatory Reporting
All domestic violence service providers funded by the Department of Public Health and Human Services are mandatory reporters under Montana law. Because service providers must take into consideration the child’s “best interests,” it is of utmost importance that program staff monitor children for signs of abuse and work with Child Protective Services (CPS) to either remedy and combat that abuse, or if necessary, remove the child from the abusive parent. This policy includes reporting abuse by the domestic violence survivor. While reporting is crucial to the safety of the child, program staff should approach the situation in a collaborative way. Working with the survivor to figure out what is best for the child is an important empowering technique. Reporting should be approached delicately and in a way that defers to the parents’ decision making authority, until it is clear that staff must take action on behalf of the child.

Procedure:
1. When providers know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected they shall report the matter promptly to the Department of Public Health and Human Services.
2. If the child is at a substantial risk of harm, DV advocates should call the local police and CPS centralized intake.
3. If there does not appear to be a risk of immediate harm, the advocate should:
   • Talk with the client and encourage him/her to call centralized intake. A follow-up call to centralized intake should be made to confirm the client’s call.
   • If the client refuses to call, advocates must make the call themselves.
   • If the decision to call CPS has been made, the advocate shall inform the participating parent of the decision.
4. If a children’s advocacy program staff member is unsure whether or not a call to centralized intake is necessary, that staff member should consult with supervising staff.
Program Policies and Procedures

Working with Child Protective Services
Because Child Protective Services (CPS) plays an integral role in combating violence against children, the Child Advocacy Program (CAP) will strive to maintain a balanced, professional, and respectful relationship with that agency and its representatives. The safety of children will always come before professional disagreements and CAP staff will make every effort to resolve suspicions of abuse and neglect in a way most beneficial to the child and the non-abusive parent. Interactions with the CPS agency and staff will always be professional and courteous. CAP staff members will do their utmost to offer education and information to CPS workers to better their knowledge of domestic violence and therefore understand the needs of the children and the non-abusive parent.

Procedure:
1. The CAP manager will endeavor to form a relationship with local CPS and schedule monthly progress meetings.
2. The CAP manager will create a communications plan with CPS or a CPS representative to facilitate scheduling of meetings, reporting processes, and information sharing strategies.
3. The CAP manager will offer and encourage training for all CPS staff on domestic and sexual violence theory, advocacy, and issues. These trainings should take place on a quarterly basis, if possible, to address any new issues that arise and keep new CPS staff abreast of the information.
4. After an amicable and sustainable relationship with CPS is established, the CAP staff should enquire about participation on any local task forces or teams relevant to child protection work and advocacy.

TO REPORT A POSSIBLE CASE OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, CALL TOLL-FREE:
1-866-820-5437

http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/cfsd/childfamilyservices.shtml
Cultural Considerations: Children in Shelter in Montana
The next section of this manual focuses on children who are too often lumped into an advocacy category in which they do not belong — namely, the majority. Most children in Montana shelters will have a few major things in common; their parents will be white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and English speaking. While this is not true everywhere and every time, MCADSV would like to address the needs of children who either are themselves part of a marginalized group or have parents who are. The next four pages will address children who are and/or have parents who are:

- Native American
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgendered
- Immigrants
- People who Experience Disabilities

When MCADSV provides training to advocates, both new and seasoned, there is something our trainers always say: services should be equal, but that does not mean they should be the same. What that means in this context is that advocates should strive to treat each child equally, providing the best service possible no matter what the child’s background may be. More importantly, though, it means that in order to provide the best service and advocacy, advocates must take into account the specific needs of children with diverse upbringings, cultures, educations, and circumstances. Whether the child has a language barrier or is coming into his or her own sexuality, we must advocate for the whole child, not just the parts that are easy and understandable.

While these Montana residents are not the only marginalized people who access services, they do access shelter on a more frequent basis, which is why specific cultural considerations have been included in this manual.
Working With Native American Children

There are seven reservations located within the borders of the State of Montana. Those reservations are home to 13 different Native American tribes. Each reservation and each tribe is unique, with differences in culture, custom, religion, and a multitude of other areas. Keeping in mind that no two children or families are the same, whether they appear to have the same ethnic background or not, there are basic steps that can be taken and considerations that can be made by advocates working with Native American children.

Cultural Considerations:

- Historically, Native American women and children have suffered an enormous amount of discrimination. In the context of child advocacy work, it is important to remember that Native American children are removed from their homes at a far greater rate than children of other ethnic backgrounds. This history has created a vast amount of distrust in systems outside of the family and immediate cultural circle.
- Extended family goes far beyond aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc. Child-rearing decisions often involve multiple adults and can take longer than outsiders may be used to.
- Every native child has a right to maintain his or her tribal identity and stay connected with his or her culture or family. If a child has a particular connection outside of his non-abusive parent, it should be explored and maintained.
- Native American families are culturally unique and children shouldn’t be expected to fit the “father, mother, Sally, Bobby, 3 bedroom house with a yard, balanced meals” mold that mainstream culture aspires to imitate.
- If the child and his or her parent have religious or cultural practices that they adhere to and depend on, those practices should be respected, allowed, and accommodated in the face of protestations from other program participants.
- Dietary differences between Native American children and others in the child advocacy program should be noted and respected. For example, many Native American children are lactose-intolerant. Be sure to make note of dietary differences and respect the parents’ and children’s preferences.

“Native American Children often are shy, quiet and do not maintain eye contact after experiencing trauma, like other children they need to feel protected and safe. Sometimes acting out in school and home after the violence has occurred, they at times become the protector of their mother and/or siblings.”

—Trina Wolf Chief, Advocate, Chippewa-Cree Tribe
Working With Children Who Are LGBTQ or Come From LGBTQ Families

In rural states like Montana, where there are few protections for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people, serving children who identify as LGBTQ or children whose parents are members of the LGBTQ community can be especially complicated. Discrimination against LGBTQ people is still legal in most areas and in most contexts in Montana. Same-sex couples are specifically excluded from the partner-family member assault statute and many judges will not grant orders of protection to same-sex partners. Montana law doesn’t prohibit bullying in school, either. The combination of these factors, and many others, necessitates a higher level of understanding when working with LGBTQ children and families.

Cultural Considerations:

- “Coming out of the closet” is a very personal matter for LGBTQ people. If there is a child in your program who you suspect may be struggling with his or her sexual identity or orientation, or who you know is an LGBTQ person but has not divulged that information to anyone, it is important to be supportive but unobtrusive. Advising a child to come out when he or she is unready is never okay.

- LGBTQ children and parents in abusive homes may experience a greater level of isolation. Because of misinformation, fear, tenuous family relationships, and small communities, being LGBTQ might limit a child or parent’s options for friendship or connections in the community. Your program may be the most supportive environment an LGBTQ child or parent has.

- Systemic discrimination against LGBTQ children and parents can be frightening, overwhelming, and discouraging. Many people in the LGBTQ community do not report or access services because they fear they will not receive adequate attention and might actually be discriminated against by police, medical personnel, shelter staff, and other victim service personnel, etc.

- Children are especially susceptible to teasing and attacks based on their gender or sexual identity, and that is true for kids in shelter, as well. Creating a welcoming environment for LGBTQ kids and families is of the utmost importance for a welcoming shelter and programmatic environment. This includes being clear with other program participants, both young and old, that harassment of or discrimination against LGBTQ youth and families will not be tolerated. Put a rainbow flag up in your play room!
Working With Immigrant Children

Children from immigrant families can face a variety of issues, legally and socially. Anti-immigrant sentiment seems to increase as time goes on, instead of decrease as one would assume. While Montana’s immigrant population is just a small percentage of the total number of residents, it is still significant, especially in areas with seasonal employment. The barriers faced by adult immigrants are often passed on to their children. Being sensitive to immigrant issues and aware of the challenges faced will help advocates in seeking out helpful avenues for the immigrant children they serve in shelter.

Cultural Considerations:

- Language barriers are easily surmountable. There are many in-state and out-of-state organizations that can provide translation services for children and parents in shelter. The most important thing to remember is that children have the same rights to an interpreter as adults and should never be used to interpret for their parents.

- Immigrant children accessing shelter services should be afforded the same legal protections as adults. Namely, if the child is undocumented but you think outside services are necessary, be sure to contact an immigration attorney first. For example, if child abuse becomes a concern, it is important to fully understand the ramifications of reporting to CPS and possibly putting the family at risk for separation or removal from the country. The family’s status can impact the child’s security.

- Discrimination in the provision of services is prohibited in domestic violence organizations. Program policy should also prohibit discrimination against immigrant and non-English speaking victims who have qualified for services.

“Children who lack documentation or whose parents lack status are incredibly vulnerable and may internalize what is happening to their parents or feel in some ways responsible. It is imperative that we work to keep children with their family members as long as they are safe and cared for. Migrant children like all children deserve to know safety, security, stability and love.”

—Bethany Letiecq, Associate Professor, MSU
Working With Children Who Experience Disabilities

“Disability is part of life. Resilient children and adults can live really well with all kinds of challenges, including disability. Thanks to brain science, we know where resiliency comes from now: one or two primary caregivers who provide stable, safe and nurturing care during the first three years of life. When that is missing, some of the building blocks of a child’s brain will be too—things like emotional regulation, empathy and the ability to be happy. So supporting parents to provide that kind of care to their children is the single most important thing we can do to make the world a better place.” — Anita Roessman, Staff Attorney at Disability Rights Montana

Considerations:

♦ Children who experience disabilities are at a much greater risk of physical and sexual abuse than children without disabilities. If a child experiencing a disability is accessing services with an abused parent, advocates should take steps to ascertain whether or not the child has been abused as well.

♦ Anyone who experiences a disability may have an extremely increased level of isolation in his or her life. This is especially true for children, who because of a combination of age and impairment, may have access to his or her parents, only. An advocate could be the most trusted, outside connection a child will encounter.

♦ Most people tend to see a person and label them as one thing: gay, Indian, Hispanic, disabled. Much of the work done around working with children who experience disabilities focuses on “disabling the label.” Make sure you look at each child as his or her whole self — each child is more than the disability.

♦ Ask questions: a child who experiences a disability may need different things, but he or she probably knows best what those needs are. Instead of hovering or assuming a child needs you at all times or only specific times, go ahead and ask. This will empower, give him or her a sense of independence, and clarify things for you as an advocate.

♦ Be conscious of a child’s limitations and take note when they exceed your expectations! Include children who experience disabilities in children’s group and other activities as much as possible, but be sure to take note if one-on-one attention is the better option for a particular subject or day.

“When one family member is living with a substantial disability, the whole family is living with it. Effective help has to include an assessment of how everyone is being affected, especially the very youngest family members.” — Anita Roessmann
Resources for Advocates Working With Children
Introduction
Advocates engaged in providing group work for children are frequently tasked with deciding what to do with a diverse age range of children. These modules and suggested activities for children’s groups were designed to provide advocates with engaging activities and dialogue to use with children impacted by abuse and violence in the home.

Advocates often balance tasks of engaging children in shelter settings, working with mothers on child-specific goals, and organizing and leading support groups for children. Formality of children’s groups often depends on time, resources, and staff support. Among the multiple settings in which advocates provide group work for children include, but are not limited to:

- Providing supervision for children while mothers’ participate in the adults’ support group
- Leading a children’s support group simultaneously to the adults’ support group, at times in the same location
- Engaging children in group work within a shelter setting
- Leading a children’s support group independent of the adults’ support group and in a location other than shelter

Formality of children’s groups range from the first setting listed, typically the most informal, to the last setting listed, the most structured and formal type of children’s group. The latter setting meets on a regular basis at a scheduled time every week, and requires the mother’s commitment to bring her children to the group on a weekly basis, independent of the services she may be receiving.

The framework here is intended to be flexible and can be adapted to meet the unique needs of these different group settings. Regardless of the level of formality, quality interaction with caring adults enhances children’s resilience to the impacts of abuse and violence in the home.

Goals of Activities
The goals of these activities are:

- To create a safe space for children to talk, to learn, to be heard, and to hear others who share similar circumstances
- To foster resilience and build strengths in children by focusing on their life experiences in a way so children will understand that abuse and violence in the home was and is not their fault, that the use of violence and abuse is not okay, and that there are trustworthy and caring adults who care about their safety
- To provide children in the group information and activities on expressing feelings, developing healthy self-concepts, problem-solving skills, and dealing with conflict in safe, effective ways
**Suggested Age Range**
Although these activities were designed for children ages 6-12, discussions and activities can be adapted to meet the needs of different age ranges.

**Module Length**
The recommended length of each module is 1 to 1.5 hours. This may vary depending on the size of the group and the age ranges of group members. Consider having a back-up activity planned for all meetings in case you need to fill more time or adapt to the specific circumstances of the group.

**Module Topics**
There are eight modules. The first module is designed for welcome and introductions, and the last for closings and endings. Aside from these first and last modules, each can be pulled out and used independently.

The modules and activities consist of the following topics:
- Welcome and Introductions
- Identifying and Expressing Feelings
- Strengthening Self-Concept
- Problem Solving
- Healthy Ways to Deal with Anger
- Dealing with Conflict
- Defining Healthy Relationships
- Wrap-up and Closing

**Module Outline**
Each module outline includes:
A. Introductions and Icebreaker (10-15 minutes)
B. Check-in (10-15 minutes)
C. Topic of the Week (10-15 minutes)
D. Activity of the Week (15-30 minutes)
E. Check-out (10-15 minutes)

**Group Set-Up**
The recommended group set-up is to have chairs in a circle for group members to sit and have discussion, with additional appropriate spaces for children to work on their activities. Consider also having healthy snacks available for group members.
Welcome & Introductions Module

Consider asking mothers to join for the Welcome and Introductions Module, as this helps show children they are supported in participating in the group. This also gives mothers a chance to see the group structure as well as topics and activities to be covered in the next seven modules. If this is not possible, consider providing mothers with a brief summary of what is covered in the groups.

Materials needed:
Flipchart (or large paper)
Manila folders (one for each group member)
Crayons or markers
Magazines
Glue
Scissors
Tape
Any other art supplies available

A. Introductions and Icebreaker

1. Group leader(s) welcome everyone.

2. Let group members know the agenda of activities for today.

3. Have a conversation with group members about upcoming sessions and topics so they have an idea of what to expect in the upcoming groups. Group members should feel comfortable suggesting topics and activities to the group leader.

4. Explain the structure of the groups.
   Structure for all modules consists of:
   • Introductions and Icebreaker (10-15 minutes)
   • Check-in (10-15 minutes)
   • Topic of the Week (10-15 minutes)
   • Activity of the Week (15-30 minutes)
   • Check-out (10-15 minutes)

5. Explain to group members that some things might come up during groups that trigger uncomfortable or upsetting feelings. Let group members know that the group leader is available anytime a group member wants to talk after the group, or during the group if more than one group leader is available.

6. Lead the icebreaker activity and give the first example.
   a. Have each group member start by introducing themselves, and ask them to complete the following sentence: “My name is _________ and something I like doing is _________.”
B. Check-in
Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.

C. Topic of the Week: Group Ground Rules
Note: If the ground rules activity is not feasible to do as a group process, the group leader should create some basic ground rules for the group that are posted and visible during all group sessions. These should be briefly reviewed with group members at the beginning of every session.

1. Let group members know all groups must have ground rules in order for them to be effective. Lead a discussion with group members by asking:
   a. Do you have rules at school? In your classroom?
   b. What are those rules?
   c. What would your classroom be like without rules?
   d. How are the rules helpful?

2. Explain to group members that this group will need the same kinds of rules so that the group works for everyone. Ask group members:
   a. What kind of rules do you think we should have for this group?

3. Have group members give examples, and put their responses on the flip chart.

4. Without being too restrictive, create some basic ground rules for the group. Write these on the flip chart or keep a list so they can be posted and visible during all group sessions. Create ground rules that create safe spaces for everyone, including:
   a. No violence (e.g., hitting, slapping, kicking, name calling, or put-downs)
   b. Listen when others are talking (i.e., take turns speaking)
   c. What is said in the group stays in the group. Let group members know that this includes not talking about other group members’ personal information outside of the group (e.g., at school). Let group members know that if they disclose harm to self or harm to others, that their parent may need to be told. Let group members know that you will always tell them first if you plan to talk to their parent, or that you will help them tell their parent themselves, if they choose.

5. After group members understand and agree to the group ground rules, have each group member sign the ground rules flip chart.
D. Activity of the Week: Activity Folders

1. Explain to group members they will be decorating a manila folder to hold the activities they work on each week. They can color, draw, cut out pictures from magazines, or decorate it with pictures of things they enjoy doing. Make sure each group member’s name is on their folder. This is a good beginning activity since it does not force a lot of interaction. Remember that some group members may be nervous about attending group for the first time.

2. Use the artwork to engage in conversations with group members to get to know each group member better. Give group members praise about their originality and creativeness.
   Ask individual group members:
   a. What are you drawing?
   b. What made you decide that?
   c. How does that make you feel?

3. Give group members at least 20 minutes to work on their folders. At the end of the activity, ask if anyone would like to discuss their folder with the group.

E. Check-Out

1. Check-out with group members by asking:
   a. How did you feel about the first group?
   b. Do you have any questions?
   c. How are you feeling (mad, sad, glad, afraid)?
Identifying & Expressing Feelings Module

Materials needed:
Flipchart of group ground rules (see Welcome & Introductions Module)
Paper plates (one per group member)
Crayons or markers
Construction paper
Magazines
Glue
Tape
Scissors
Any other art supplies available

A. Introductions and Icebreaker
   1. Group leader(s) welcome everyone.
   2. Let group members know the agenda of activities for today, and remind them of last session’s topic and activity, if appropriate.
   3. Lead the icebreaker activity and give the first example.
      a. Have each group member start by introducing themselves, and ask them to complete the following sentence: “My name is ________ and something I like doing is __________.”
   4. After the icebreaker, review the ground rules for the group and make sure any new members sign their name to the ground rules sheet.

B. Check-in
Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.

C. Topic of the Week: Identifying & Expressing Feelings
   1. Explain that today’s topic will focus on what feelings are, what feelings may look like on the outside, and how feelings are expressed.

Group Leader’s Notes:
Children impacted by domestic violence may need permission to express their feelings openly and in a healthy way. The batterer may have taught the child that it was not okay to express feelings, or may have displayed unhealthy ways to express feelings through the use of abuse and violence. Learning to identify feelings can help children to understand what they are feeling, why they are feeling that way, and how feelings can be expressed in a healthy way.
2. Use the following questions to lead a discussion about feelings:
   a. What are feelings?
   b. What do feelings look like?

3. Explain that everyone has feelings, and that feelings are important because they represent our emotional sensitivity and response to situations.

4. Feelings typically fall into four basic categories; glad (happy), sad (upset), mad (angry), and afraid (scared).
   a. If your friend says to you, “I feel okay today,” or “I feel bored today,” does that tell you how they are feeling? Your friend may be sad about the loss of a pet, mad about getting in trouble, or afraid of doing poorly on a test. Using glad, sad, mad, and afraid helps you clearly express to someone else how you feel.

5. People have a lot of feelings. At times, people may have several feelings at once, and that is okay. Some people choose to share their feelings while others keep them inside. Ask the following questions:
   a. How do we express feelings verbally?
   b. How do we express feelings non-verbally?

6. People express feelings in a variety of ways. Verbal examples include telling someone how you feel or how something makes you feel. Non-verbal examples include laughing, smiling, frowning, crying, drawing, painting, and through other forms of expression. At times, people express feelings in violent ways, such as hitting or breaking things. Ask the following question:
   a. What might happen if we express feelings non-verbally instead of verbally?

7. When people express feelings non-verbally instead of verbally, miscommunication may happen or someone may be hurt by the actions. Let group members know that it is okay to express feelings openly, verbally and non-verbally, when we and others are not hurt by the words or actions. Ask the following questions:
   a. Have there been times when you were told it was not okay to express your feelings? What was happening? What did that feel like?

8. When someone’s safety is at-risk, it may not be okay to express feelings openly, verbally and non-verbally. For example, the batterer may not allow the child to express feelings openly without fear of punishment. Be prepared to talk about this and safety plan with group members around the issue, as needed.
D. Activity of the Week: Feelings Pie

1. Have group members draw four different sections (lines) on a paper plate. Draw one line down the middle of the plate from top to bottom, and one line from side to side (i.e., as if each were a big slice of pie).

2. Ask group members to write the names of the feelings discussed (mad, sad, glad, afraid) at the top or bottom of each section.

3. Have group members draw a picture to represent each feeling. Show group members pictures of different feelings, or go through magazines to find different feelings (e.g., someone smiling, someone crying or frowning) to cut out.

4. Encourage group members to be as creative as they want, using circular faces, colors or markers, or anything they feel represents that feeling.

5. After group members have finished drawing, ask if anyone would like to share a slice of their pie with the group. Ask the following questions:
   a. Is there a time in your life when you have felt that way?
   b. Tell me something that would make you feel that way.
   c. If you were feeling that way, how would you verbally tell someone?

6. Practice identifying feelings and verbally expressing feelings with group members. Let group members know that we use the check-in and check-out process at each group as an opportunity to practice verbally expressing our feelings in a healthy way.
   a. “When __________ happens, I feel __________.”

7. Have a conversation about the group members’ feelings and emotions so they can learn to identify when they are feeling a certain way. Ask the following questions:
   a. How would you feel if...
      ♦ Your brother or sister keeps coming into your room?
      ♦ The kids at school are teasing you?
      ♦ You did not get the toy you wanted at the store?
      ♦ You were yelled at?
      ♦ You made a mistake?
      ♦ You helped a friend or family member?
      ♦ You do not get to play with your friends?
      ♦ You get to go to your favorite restaurant?
Strengthening Sense of Self Module

Materials needed:
Flipchart of group ground rules (see Welcome & Introductions Module)
1 Ball
Shop Front Activity sheet (one per group member)
Crayons or markers
Any other art supplies available

A. Introductions and Icebreaker
1. Group leader(s) welcome everyone.
2. Let group members know the agenda of activities for today, and remind them of last session’s topic and activity, if appropriate.
3. Lead the icebreaker activity and give the first example.
   a. Have group members sit in a circle on the floor and roll a ball to each other. When group members get the ball, have them introduce themselves and tell the group one thing that makes them feel good about themselves, or what they do to feel happy when they are sad. Roll the ball until everyone has had a turn.
4. After the icebreaker, review the ground rules for the group and make sure any new members sign their name to the ground rules sheet.

B. Check-in
Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.

Group Leader’s Notes:
Batterers and the tactics they use can impact a child’s sense of self. For example, if a child is surrounded by negative comments and harsh words, it may be more difficult for them to see they are truly important in someone else’s eyes. During the school age stage of development, a child’s sense of self is largely based on how the child perceives important people in their life will judge them. The existence of quality relationships with caring and trustworthy adults is important in helping children create a positive sense of self. Children can be nurtured and their sense of self strengthened by responding to their interests and efforts in a positive way, and with praise and support from caring adults. Treating children with respect and asking for their thoughts and feelings on certain subjects also helps strengthen their sense of self.
C. Topic of the Week: Strengthening Self

1. Explain that today’s topic will focus on how we think and feel about ourselves (sense of self), how people get a positive sense of self, and why a positive sense of self is important.

2. Begin by leading a discussion about sense of self. Ask the following question:
   a. How do we express feelings verbally?

3. Sense of self is how people feel about themselves, both inside and out. This can include how people believe others’ think and feel about them, and how worthy and deserving people feel they are. People can feel good or bad about themselves. Ask the following questions to further the discussion:
   a. How does a person get a positive (healthy) sense of self?
   b. Is a positive sense of self something we naturally have? Is it something we are born with or something we work to build?

4. A positive sense of self is not something people gain at once; it is something that can be strengthened and deepened by focusing on the positive aspects of life and accomplishments, such as good grades in school. Having important people in life that care about us and our safety helps strengthen our sense of self. Ask the following question:
   a. Why is a positive sense of self important?

5. A positive sense of self is important because all people deserve to feel good about themselves, their life, and their accomplishments. Everyone deserves a positive sense of self.

6. Explain that people’s bodies are able to do many different things that are good. Our arms can give people hugs, our fingers can color beautiful pictures, and our words can make others feel special. Sometimes, the positive aspects of life and the things people are good at are harder to see. Today, we are going to spend time thinking about all the positive things our bodies and minds do, and make them visible for everyone to see on our shop front window.

D. Activity of the Week: Sense of Self Shop

1. Use the “Shop Front Activity Sheet” located at the end of this module and have group members name their shop. Have them write this name on the shop banner. This name can be whatever the group member would like.
Shop Front Activity Sheet
Bag of Choices Activity Sheet

Find a Puppy
You and a friend are playing at the park down the street and find a puppy roaming around. It isn’t wearing a collar and you have no way of knowing who he belongs to. You and your friend both want to take the puppy home with you.

Q: What can you do in this situation? How would it make you feel?

Homework Left at Home
You worked hard on a big homework assignment. When you get to school, you realize you left your homework at home. You try calling your mom, but no one answers.

Q: What can you do in this situation? How would it make you feel?

I Want That Toy
Your friend has a toy that you want, but your parents won’t buy it for you. Your friend won’t let you play with their toy and is even teasing you with it.

Q: What can you do in this situation? How would it make you feel?

Television
You and your sister or brother are fighting over who gets to watch the television. You only have one television in the house.

Q: What can you do in this situation? How would it make you feel?
Riding Bikes
You invite your friend to go ride bikes and she brings along another friend that you don’t know very well. She didn’t ask or tell you the other friend was coming.

Q: What can you do in this situation? How would it make you feel?

Sleepover
You have a sleepover with your friends and your family orders pizza for everyone. You have a friend that says she hates pizza and won’t eat any.

Q: What can you do in this situation? How would it make you feel?

Stolen Folder
You have a decorated folder at school that you just got from your favorite aunt. You come in from lunch break and it is no longer on your desk.

Q: What can you do in this situation? How would it make you feel?

Saying Bad Things
Your friends are telling you to call a girl in your class a bad name. You know that you could get in trouble and hurt her feelings.

Q: What can you do in this situation? How would it make you feel?
Healthy Ways to Deal With Anger Module

Materials needed:
Flipchart of group ground rules (see Welcome & Introductions Module)
Pen or pencil
Finish the story activity sheet (one per group member)

A. Introductions and Icebreaker

1. Group leader(s) welcome everyone.

2. Let group members know the agenda of activities for today, and remind them of last session’s topic and activity, if appropriate.

3. Lead the icebreaker activity and give the first example.
   a. Have each group member introduce themselves.
   b. Ask all group members to stand in a circle, and let them know they are going to be walking different walks. Allow enough time for group members to become engaged and figure out what each walk would look like. Once group members have a good idea of expressing different walks, add more feelings to the walk.
   c. Ask group members to:
      ♦ Walk a happy walk
      ♦ Walk a scared walk
      ♦ Walk an angry walk.

4. After the icebreaker, review the ground rules for the group and make sure any new members sign their name to the ground rules sheet.

B. Check-in
Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.
C. Topic of the Week: *Problem Solving*

1. Explain that today’s topic will focus on healthy ways to deal with anger.

2. Start by leading a discussion about anger. Ask the following questions:
   a. What is anger?
   b. Does everyone get angry?

3. Explain that everyone gets angry, and that this is a normal feeling and emotion. It is a feeling people get when they are mad or upset. At times, people will feel angry because they are afraid, frustrated, confused, sad, or anxious. Ask the following question:
   a. What are all the ways to deal with anger, good (healthy) and bad (unhealthy)?

4. Healthy ways to deal with anger include communicating verbally that you are angry (i.e., “I am angry about _______.”), creative expression (e.g., painting, drawing, journaling, writing), and talking to the person you are angry with to reach a solution. Unhealthy ways to deal with anger include using physical violence, breaking things, throwing things, and stomping around the house. Ask the following question:
   a. Why is it important to deal with anger in a healthy way?

5. Explain that it is important to deal with anger in a healthy way so that you, others around you, and things do not get hurt.

D. Activity of the Week: Finish the Story

1. Let group members know they are going to be storytellers. Have each group member complete the “Finish the Story Activity Sheet” located at the end of this module.

2. After group members have finished their story, ask them to share it with the group.

*Group Leader’s Notes:*

Batterers often display anger in ways that are hurtful and violent. Those living with the batterer may not be allowed to be angry or express their anger at how they are treated. Anger is a normal feeling, and everyone gets angry. Learning to express our anger in appropriate ways is important for children who live with batterers. This includes not hurting others, not hurting themselves, and not hurting things. If people do not learn to express anger in a healthy way, it can sometimes lead to aggression or unhealthy behaviors.
3. After group members have shared their stories, lead a discussion using the following questions:
   a. What do you do when you are angry?
   b. How do you look when you are angry? How do you sound?
   c. What is it like to be angry?
4. List these answers on a flipchart or piece of paper and use this to talk about other ways people can handle their anger in positive ways, such as taking a time out to calm down, taking deep breaths, doing a physical activity, or talking to someone about their feelings. Make sure group members know that these are not punishments for feeling angry, but rather an opportunity to collect their thoughts by themselves and calm down, or possibly to keep themselves and others safe.

E. Check-out

1. Check-out with group members by asking:
   a. What was one thing you liked about today’s group?
   b. How are you feeling (mad, sad, glad, afraid)?
A boy had a really bad day. Write about what had happened to him.

Because his day was so bad, he began to feel very angry. Write about how the boy is feeling.

Since he was so angry, he has hurt someone he loves. Write about how him being angry made him do something he wouldn’t do when we was happy.

The boy wants to figure out a way to stop being angry. Describe what he is thinking.

The boy wants to control his anger in a healthy way that doesn’t hurt him or others. Describe some ways he can do that.

Let’s finish this story with a happy ending. Write about how the boy ends up no longer being angry.
Dealing With Conflict Module

Materials needed:
Flipchart of group ground rules (see Welcome & Introductions Module)
Flipchart (or large paper)
Pen or pencil

A. Introductions and Icebreaker
   1. Group leader(s) welcome everyone.
   2. Let group members know the agenda of activities for today, and remind them of last session’s topic and activity, if appropriate.
   3. Lead the icebreaker activity and give the first example.
      a. Have each group member introduce themselves, and ask them to complete the following sentence: “I am special because __________.”
   4. After the icebreaker, review the ground rules for the group and make sure any new members sign their name to the ground rules sheet.

B. Check-in
   Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.
   1. Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.

C. Topic of the Week: Dealing With Conflict
   1. Explain that today’s topic will focus on how to handle conflict.
   2. Lead a discussion about dealing with conflict. Ask the following questions:
      a. What is conflict?
      b. Is there a time in your life where you did not agree with someone?
      c. Are there benefits to settling conflict in a positive and healthy way?
**Group Leader’s Notes:**

Batterers often create a climate of chaos and conflict and may use tactics of abuse and violence to resolve conflict. Children need to understand they have choices when dealing with conflict that do not include the use of abuse and violence. Children are faced with conflicts every day in which they must decide how to choose between their own interests and the interests of others. The goal is for children to learn to think about choices in conflict situations, come up with solutions to resolving the conflict, and develop the skills to carry out solutions in a positive and healthy manner.

Conflict happens when two or more people cannot agree on something. Everyone deals with conflict, sometimes daily. During certain conflicts, one person may feel happy with the solution, while the other person may feel sad. For example, there may be conflict when someone else is playing with something you want to play with, or when you want to watch a certain TV show and someone else wants to watch a different show. At times, so much time is spent figuring out who wants what that no one is able to get what they want.

There are benefits to settling conflict in a safe and fair way. Resolving conflict in a fair and safe way can lead to feeling happy, whereas using unsafe or unfair ways of solving conflict can lead to feeling sad or hurt. For example, you may save a friendship if you handle conflict in a peaceful way, whereas you might lose a friendship if you were to handle conflict in violent way.

**D. Activity of the Week: Solving Conflicts Peacefully**

1. Begin by ask the group “When a conflict is settled in a way that is not fair, how do you feel?” Answers may include feelings like mad, sad, upset, frustrated, and afraid. Use a flip chart or other visual aid to display group members’ responses.

2. Brainstorm and discuss unsafe or unfair ways to respond during a conflict. Examples include:
   a. Hitting the other person.
   b. Saying something mean or rude about the other person.
   c. Throwing things.
   d. Saying you are going to throw something at or hit the other person.
   e. Taking something from the other person.
   f. Pushing the other person.
   g. Kicking something or the other person.
3. Next, brainstorm and discuss safe and fair ways to respond during a conflict. Examples include:
   a. Telling the other person you are mad, sad, or scared.
   b. Listening to what the other person has to say.
   c. Talking through the conflict together.
   d. Taking deep breaths to calm down.
   e. Walking away from the conflict.
   f. Telling the other person you want them to leave.
   g. Telling the person to please stop.
   h. Telling a grown up about the conflict.

4. Ask group members for examples of conflict, either in their own life or in someone else’s life. Have some examples prepared in case they are struggling with providing examples. Examples include:
   a. You and your friend both reach for the last piece of pizza at the same time. You both want to eat it.
   b. A boy from school borrowed a book from you and said he would bring it back to you tomorrow. The next day, he tells you he forgot to bring it back, and you need to use the book for your homework.
   c. You want to play a new computer game you were given for your birthday, but your big sister is playing on the computer.
   d. You are coloring and drop the marker you’re using on the floor. Your friend picks up the marker and starts to color with it. You weren’t finished using it to color your picture.

5. Spend time having group members role play safe and fair responses to the examples of conflict provided. Have each group member take a turn in resolving a conflict in a safe and fair way.

E. Check-out

1. Check-out with group members by asking:
   a. What was one thing you liked about today’s group?
   b. How are you feeling (mad, sad, glad, afraid)?
Defining Healthy Relationships Module

Materials needed:
Flipchart of group ground rules (see Welcomes & Introductions Module)
1 Role play scenarios activity sheet
Flipchart (or large paper)

A. Introductions and Icebreaker

1. Group leader(s) welcome everyone.

2. Let group members know the agenda of activities for today, and remind them of last session’s topic and activity, if appropriate.

3. Lead the icebreaker activity and give the first example.
   a. Have each group member start by introducing themselves, and answering the following question: “What is one of your favorite things about someone in your family, and why?” Use this opportunity to start defining healthy relationships. For example, if a group member says, “I like my big sister because she takes me out to dinner and to my favorite place,” respond with something such as, “That’s nice of your big sister. She is showing you she loves you and cares about you by taking you someplace you enjoy.”

4. After the icebreaker, review the ground rules for the group and make sure any new members sign their name to the ground rules sheet.

B. Check-in
Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.

1. Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.

Group Leader’s Notes:
A batterer’s goal is to gain and maintain power and control in a relationship. Therefore, it is likely that children impacted by domestic violence will have seen characteristics of an unhealthy relationship at some point. It is important that children are taught about healthy relationships, including what they look like and how they may feel, and strategies to help create healthy relationships.
C. Topic of the Week: Defining Healthy Relationships

1. Explain that today’s topic will focus on healthy relationships.

2. In order to build healthy relationships, people need to be able to respect and value not just their own feelings, but those of others, as well. Ask the following questions:
   a. Why are relationships important?
   b. What is healthy relationship? What is it like? How does it feel?

3. Relationships and friendships are important because they are what connect people. Healthy relationships are based on the notion that both people in the relationship are equal; one is not better than the other. Qualities of healthy relationships include treating each other with respect, being trustful and trustworthy, and supporting each other unconditionally. Healthy relationships may have characteristics of safety, happiness, love, trust, affection, fun, laughter, support, comfort, kindness, no fear, and shared interests. Ask the following question:
   a. What is an unhealthy relationship? What is it like? How does it feel?

4. Unhealthy relationships may include a lack of respect, fear, lies, no fun, no trust, and not safe.

5. In healthy relationships, people know you are interested in them and their lives by not just talking about yourself, but also by asking questions about them and their life. Listening to your friends is important because you want them to listen to you when you need someone to talk to.

D. Activity of the Week: Role Play

1. Assign group members into pairs. Use the “Role Play Scenarios” activity sheet located at the end of this module and read each pair one scenario. Ask them to role play each character in the scenario, and to practice or come up with ideas to share back to the group. Provide examples, as needed, and give positive feedback and encouragement.

2. After all group members have had an opportunity to role play, ask them to discuss with the group the ideas they came up with. Ask other members for ideas, as well.

E. Check-out

1. Check-out with group members by asking:
   a. What was one thing you liked about today’s group?
   b. How are you feeling (mad, sad, glad, afraid)?
Role Play Scenarios

Scenario 1: New Girl at Recess

A new girl arrives at school and is sitting next to you in class. When it is time for recess, you notice she is by herself and no one is talking to her.

Q: What are some things you could say or do to start building a healthy relationship with the new girl at school? What are some things you could talk about?

Scenario 2: New Boy During Lunch

At lunch, you notice a new boy at school. The new boy comes and sits down next to you.

Q: What are some things you could say or do to start building a healthy relationship with the new boy at school? What are some things you could talk about?

Scenario 3: Friend After School

You have a friend over after school and you are both playing in your room. He brought a video game over that you really want to play.

Q: What are some ways you could ask to play the game in a healthy way? What are some ways the friend could respond?

Scenario 4: Eating Dinner

It is dinner time and it is just you and your older sister or brother. They are fixing dinner tonight and it is not your favorite food.

Q: What are some ways you could tell your brother or sister that you would rather have something else? What are some ways the brother or sister might respond?
Wrap Up & Closing Module

Materials needed:
Flipchart of group ground rules (see Welcome & Introductions Module)
My resources activity sheet (one per group member)
Certificate of Participation (one per group member)

A. Introductions and Icebreaker

1. Group leader(s) welcome everyone.

2. Let group members know the agenda of activities for today, and remind them of last session’s topic and activity, if appropriate.

3. Lead the icebreaker activity and give the first example.
   a. Read the following statements to the group members, and have them stand up from their chair if the statement applies to them.
      ◆ I have felt proud of myself.
      ◆ I have used problem solving skills.
      ◆ I have been able to tell someone how I am feeling.
      ◆ I have been able to calm myself down when I was angry.
      ◆ I have felt like I could share things with this group.

4. Remind group members to take their activity folders with them today to help remind them of the things that were talked about during each session.

B. Check-in

Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.

1. Check-in with group members by asking how they are feeling today (mad, sad, glad, afraid), and if anything needs sharing from their week. It is each group member’s choice on whether to share.

D. Activity of the Week: My Resources

1. Consider planning something fun for the group members to do this last session. Choose something such as playing games or having a pizza party. Spend this time celebrating successes and having fun with the group members.
2. Before the end of group, complete with each group member the “My Resources” activity sheet located at the end of this module so that group members have resources to take with them.

3. Before check-out, hand each group member a certificate for participating in the group. This will give group members a sense of accomplishment which plays a large part in fostering resiliency in children.

D. Check-out

1. Check-out with group members by asking:
   a. How do you feel about this being the last group?
   b. Is there anything else you would like to share?
   c. How are you feeling (mad, sad, glad, afraid)?

2. Thank group members for coming to group and participating.
My Resources

Someone I trust is:

Someone I can talk to is:

Someone that will listen to me is:

When I’m feeling sad or mad, something I can do to feel better is:

If I am not safe, I will:

More resources:
Certificate of Participation

CONGRATULATIONS!
This certificate is presented to you for all the great work you have done. You should feel very proud of yourself!

Group Leader’s Signature

Date
Appendix
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Parental Consent for Child Intake - Part 1

This form gives permission to the Children’s Program advocate to do an initial interview with your child/children. It is a simple question and answer, which only seeks to gain a basic knowledge of your child/children so that the children’s program can better serve his/her/their needs more effectively. Providing services to a family is a holistic process, an essential part of which is to acknowledge that the children involved also need support and understanding. These services can be better provided if advocates know a little more about children and how they are feeling.

Please list the children accompanying you to services:

Name

Age

Name

Age

Name

Age

Name

Age

Name

Age

Name

Age

By signing this form you, as the participating caregiver, acknowledge that you understand issues of confidentiality and mandatory reporting and you have given permission for this intake for the child/children listed above.

Caregiver signature

Date
Parental Consent for Child Intake - Part 2

Emergency Contacts for Participating Children:

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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Adults to whom children can be released:

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Children’s Program Child Intake

Date _________________________

Name of Advocate

Child’s Name ________________________________

Caretaker’s Name _____________________________

Intake Interview

1. Who is in your family? (Have children draw a picture of their family, while you continue talking)

2. Do you know why you are here, at the shelter? Why?

3. Do you know what domestic violence is? Can you tell me what it means to you?

4. Explain rules of the shelter for his/her age. Ask if they have any questions.

5. Explain children’s groups they may attend and what happens there.

6. What activities do you like to do? Anything you would like to do while you are staying at the shelter?

7. Is there anything you want us to know about you? (Special interests, hobbies, etc.)

8. Do you have any questions for me about the shelter, domestic violence or anything else?

Source: YWCA of Missoula
Family Services

Purpose:
The Children's Program provides continued support to families who have experienced domestic or sexual violence. Because violence often disrupts child development and creates chaos in a family, Children's Program Advocates will work with the families towards emotional healing, development of positive life skills-for children and the parent-and a vision of a strong, safe and non-violent family.

Goals/Services:
- To provide a stable support system for the child (or children) by providing regularly scheduled activities.
- To develop individual goals for the children and a plan to work towards these goals.
- To provide age appropriate development activities and therapeutic play.
- To provide various recreational, cultural and educational activities.
- To help the children identify safe people and places.
- To assist the parent in developing parenting and coping skills.
- To provide respite care.
- To coordinate with other community programs and agencies as requested by the parent.
- To provide referrals to other YWCA and community resources.
- To provide education and support to the parent creating a non-violent and safe home.

After 6 months, we will hold another meeting to discuss the effectiveness of the program and family need for services (depending on waiting list).

Family Goals: ____________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Family Requirements:
Advocate must check in with parent prior to and after each weekly visit (approx 10-15mins). Please try to give the advocate 24 hrs. notice if you need to cancel or reschedule the visit. (We understand that sometimes this may not be possible).

________________________________________
Caregiver Signature Date

________________________________________
Family Service Advocate Date

________________________________________
Children ‘s Program Coordinator Date

Source: YWCA of Missoula
Parental Consent for Child Referral Services

In the course of providing services through the children’s program, advocates may decide that further, more extensive, or specific needs of children would be better met by outside sources. This may include but is not limited to professional counseling services, mentoring programs, tutoring programs, or other community-based organizations which provide child-specific services.

It is important that parents be involved in their child’s programmatic course and activities. An advocate working with your child has decided that your child’s needs would best be met by an outside resource.

Child’s name: ________________________________

Referral to: ________________________________

Purpose: ________________________________

By signing this form you, as the caregiver, acknowledge that you understand the need for a referral to an outside resource in the community and you agree to allow your child to be referred to that service.

______________________________   ____________
Caregiver Signature       Date
Child Transportation Permission Form

Certain programmatic activities may require advocates to transport children from shelter to other locations for things like referral services, field trips, and other group outings. Each advocate who will transport children is required to have a valid driver’s license and car insurance, both of which are kept on file and available for review by participating parents.

By signing this form, you give permission to advocates to transport your child/children to outside programs and activities. Your signature also acknowledges that advocates are not allowed to transport children for activities outside of the scope of the program and advocate responsibilities.

________________________     ____________________
Caregiver Signature              Date
Parental Consent for Photographs

In the course of providing services through the Children’s Program, advocates may wish to take photographs of participating children. These pictures may be intended for programmatic use or simply for fun. Please mark one of the following options below:

_____ I consent to photographs of my children, but only if they are not used outside of the program.

_____ I consent to photographs of my children for use inside and outside of the program.

_____ I do not consent to any photographs of my children.

______________________________   _______________________
Caregiver signature               Date
## Child School Information Form

Please fill out the following information for each child participant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child's Name</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Enrollment Date</th>
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Caregiver's signature                Date
Library Resources

_A Family That Fights_
By Sharon Chesler Bernstein

_A Safe Place_
By Maxine Trottier; Judith Friedman

_A Terrible Thing Happened – A Story for Children who have Witnessed violence or Trauma_
By Margaret Holmes

_Angry Monster Machine: A Game to Teach Kids How to Express Anger_
By Hennie Shore

_Breaking the Silence; Art Therapy with Children from Violent Homes_
By Cathy Malchiodo

_Children’s Perspectives on Domestic Violence_
By Professor Audrey Mullender

_Drawing Together to Learn About Feelings_
By Marge Eaton Heegaard

_Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women_
By Peled, Jaffe, and Edleson

_Group Work with Children of Battered Women: A Practitioner’s Manual_
By Einat Peled

_Jessica and the World: A Story for Children Who Have Bad Dreams_
By Ted Lobby

_Living with My Family: A Child’s Workbook About Violence in the Home_
By Wendy Deaton

_Nono The Little Seal – Book and CD_
By Sherri Patterson and Judith Feldman

_Paper Dolls and Paper Airplanes_
By Geraldine Crisci
Library Resources (continued)

*Something Is Wrong at My House*
By Diane Davis

*The Words Hurt: Helping Children Cope with Verbal Abuse (Let’s Talk)*
By Chris Loftis

*Today I feel Silly: And Other Moods That Make My Day*
By Jamie Lee Curtis

*Tough Boris*
By Mem Box

*When Dad Hurts Mom; Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse*
By Lundy Bancroft
Sources

The Pan-American Health Organization
http://www.paho.org

The Center for Children and Families in the Justice System
http://www.lfcc.on.ca

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs
http://www.theduluthmodel.org

UNICEF
http://www.unicef.org

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
http://www.uscis.gov

Legal Momentum: The Women’s Legal Defense and Education Fund

Science Daily
http://www.sciencedaily.com

Resilience Among Children Exposed to Domestic Violence: The Role of Risk and Protective Factors,
Cecilia Martinez-Torteya, G. Anne Bogat, Alexander von Eye, and Alytia A. Levendosky. Michigan State
University Press.

Special thanks to the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence for providing:
♦ The Children’s Power and Control Wheel
♦ Resources for Advocates Working with Children