

STRENGTHENING STAFF SKILLS: ENGAGING WITH MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SUPERVISED VISITATION CENTERS

Audio Conference Training Series for Supervised Visitation Grantees

DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING A VISITATION CENTER THAT IS FAIR, RESPECTFUL AND PROMOTES SAFETY FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR MOTHERS WHO ARE BATTERED WOMEN IS AN IMPORTANT GOAL, BUT THIS CAN BE EASIER SAID THAN DONE! IT REQUIRES STAFF THAT CAN ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT A PROBLEM-SOLVING, SAFETY-ORIENTED PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN, MOTHERS AND FATHERS. AND EVEN THE MOST EXPERIENCED AMONG US CAN BE CHALLENGED BY THE SKILLS REQUIRED TO BE ENGAGED WITH FAMILIES IN THIS WAY. PLEASE JOIN US FOR THIS AUDIO CONFERENCE TRAINING SERIES TO EXPLORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS THAT COMMONLY PRESENT DILEMMAS FOR CENTER STAFF.

Part 2: Listening and Engaging in Dialogue in Supervised Visitation Centers

February 18, 2010 ♦ 4:00-5:15 PM Eastern Time

FACILITATOR:

Part 2: Melissa Scaia

Melissa Scaia is the executive director of Advocates for Family Peace, a six-program agency that provides services to families experiencing domestic violence and child abuse in Itasca County, Minnesota. She provides training and technical assistance as a consultant for Praxis International. She currently serves as a faculty member for the Family Violence Department for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. She wrote her masters thesis on the effects of domestic violence on children. She is currently writing her doctoral degree dissertation on the role of supervised visitation centers in the context of domestic violence. Outside of her work and graduate school life she is a wife, mother of two children under the age of four, and a United States Figure Skating Association instructor.

PART 2: LISTENING & DIALOGUE IN SUPERVISED VISITATION CENTERS

Session Outline

- A. Welcome and introductions
- B. Grounding our work: The work and teachings of Paulo Freire
 - a) Understand mythical structures of thinking (nature vs. culture)
 - b) Understand that to change our world view (entitlements), we need to know our myths (beliefs), be conscious of them, look at the consequences and know we have other choices
 - c) Make the shift away from the banking system and toward a problem posing one
- C. The continuum of dialogue
 - “Banker” of knowledge --- “Engaged” in dialogue
- D. Break for questions
- E. The process of dialogue
 - a) Involves problem posing questions
 - b) Exposes interrelationships and connections between our personal and cultural beliefs
 - c) Exposes the dehumanizing consequences of our world view on ourselves and others
 - d) Creates alternative views of reality – other ways of understanding our world
- F. Four pillars of Paulo Freire’s work
 - a) Be concrete – start with the lives of people

- b) Dialogue is the medium of learning
- c) Education is never neutral – conversations with oppressed people either function to domesticate or liberate
- d) Liberated consciousness is borne out of love, not hatred

G. Break for questions

H. Sample exercise: Dialogue on beliefs and respect

I. How supervised visitation center staff can create an atmosphere for dialogue

J. Wrap-up and closing
