

Audio Conference Training

Domestic Violence and Supervised Visitation Training Series

Crafting Visitation Center Policies that Account for Battering

Part 2: The Architecture of a Good Policy

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Having a structure for thinking about and articulating sound policy will be essential to your policymaking success. In this session we will explore: 1) key elements of policy making, 2) the importance of conveying your written policies to different audiences and 3) ways of adapting written policy to each diverse reader.

Trainers: Ellen Pence, Praxis International, Maureen Sheeran, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and Jane Sadusky, Praxis International

Ellen Pence has been an advocate in the battered women's movement since 1975, focusing her work on legal reform efforts. She received her Ph.D. in 1996 from the University of Toronto. She has developed the process of safety and accountability audits based on Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnography work. Ellen is one of the original organizers of the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, which serves as an international model of legal reform work for battered women.

Maureen Sheeran has been a leader in domestic violence prevention and services for more than 21 years. She is currently the Director of the Family Violence Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the nation's oldest judicial membership organization. There, she works on policy and program development pertaining to child custody and child protection in the context of domestic violence as well as provides training and technical assistance to practitioners across the country who is seeking new approaches to working with families in which both mothers and

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children are being abused. Ms. Sheeran provides leadership nationally on the topic of supervised visitation and domestic violence and was also instrumental in planning and organizing such ground-breaking national conferences on domestic violence as *Full Faith and Credit: A Passport to Safety*, *Domestic Violence Fatality Reviews: A National Summit*, and *The First National Summit: Exploring Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment*. Additionally, Ms. Sheeran is responsible for the Department's multi-million dollar fund development strategy. Prior to joining the National Council, Ms. Sheeran served as Deputy Director and Development Director for the Committee to Aid Abused Women, a community domestic violence organization in Reno, Nevada.

Jane M. Sadusky, Madison, WI, is a writer and independent consultant on community response to violence against women. Her experience in the battered women's movement spans 25 years and includes work with shelter and advocacy programs, coordinated community response projects, and law enforcement agencies. Her publications include: *Violence Against Women: Focus Groups with Culturally Distinct and Underserved Communities*; and, with Ellen Pence, *The Praxis Safety and Accountability Audit Tool Kit*. She is a Praxis Safe Havens technical assistance partner.

Training Agenda

Primary Learning Objectives:

- 1) Introduce a method for in-depth policy analysis
- 2) Understand how to adapt written policy to different readers

A. Welcome & Introductions

B. Introduce a method for in-depth analysis of the sample policy

Please refer to the sample policies and worksheet *"The Architecture of a Good Policy"* provided

The special note on the worksheet: *"This worksheet is intended as a guide for thinking about policy development, procedural considerations and implementation strategies. It is not a literal listing of sections every policy should include."*

C. Architecture of a good policy

Elements:

- 1) Open with a general statement
- 2) Articulate the policy intent and goals
- 3) Provide a client-centered rationale for the policy
- 4) Define each policy component:
- 5) Include compliance and oversight features
- 6) Double check the design
- 7) Provide implementation guidelines

D. Break for questions and comments

E. Adapting written policy to different readers

- (1) Audience: The visitation center's organizational leadership and future board members
- (2) Audience: The visitation center's clients
- (3) Audience: The visitation center's workers

F. Questions and comments

G. Closing

This Audio Conference Training is presented by Praxis International in partnership with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

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Policy Assessment: The Architecture of a Good Policy*

* Special Note: This worksheet is intended as a guide for thinking about policy development, procedural considerations and implementation strategies. It is not a literal listing of sections every policy should include.

Policy under review: _____

Element:	This policy:
A) Open with a general statement 1) Clear & precise 2) Scope 3) Documentation or references	
B) Articulate the intent & goals 1) Board's intent 2) Link to mission & role 3) Link to principles & values 4) Underlying assumptions 5) Exceptions	
C) Provide a client-centered rationale 1) Needs & situations of people served 2) Program & service goals: safety and others	
D) Define each policy component 1) What will be done & who will do it 2) Definitions 3) Time frames 4) Standards 5) Supervision 6) Role of program	

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Element:	This policy:
participants 7) Adapt to individual circumstances	
E) Include compliance and oversight 1) Scope of accountability 2) Expectations & standards 3) Consequences for noncompliance 4) Evaluation	
F) Double check the design 1) Mission & purpose 2) Administration procedures 3) Underlying assumptions 4) Resources 5) Connect with other agencies 6) Ensure compliance & accountability 7) Training	
G) Provide implementation guidelines 1) Communicate to all involved 2) Operating procedures 3) Examples of policy in action	

Other questions and considerations:

Outcome:

Guiding Principles for the Supervised Visitation Grant Program

1: Equal Regard for the Safety of Child and Adult Victims

- Safety of children AND adult victims of battering
- Adult victims' safety needs visible and acknowledged in all center practices
- Hold a unique position in protecting adult and child victims from actual violence or from a batterer's attempts to use the center to continue the abuse

2: Valuing Multiculturalism and Diversity

- Reject "one-size-fits-all"
- Recognize, include, and respond to different cultures, backgrounds, and circumstances of individuals using center services
- Proactive, intentional

3: Incorporating an Understanding of Domestic Violence into Center Services

- Understand dynamics of battering and its impact
- Alert to ways in which separation can increase danger and shift battering tactics, including attempts to use visitation center as a tool and to involve children
- Recognize victims' fears and how protective behavior may be misinterpreted

4: Respectful and Fair Interaction

- Recognize center's power and influence over families
- Treating individuals with respect and fairness does not mean being neutral toward the violence or overlooking abusive behavior
- Recognize inherent power imbalance when one person is battering another

5: Community Collaboration

- Shared responsibility: center and community
- Broad support and community action help ensure safety during the process of separation
- Provide services to individuals; identify and eliminate barriers to safety and stability

6: Advocacy for Child and Adult Victims

- Link victims with knowledgeable domestic violence advocates; distinct from direct advocacy
- Provide meaningful access, not passing out a brochure or phone number
- Hold a unique position in to identify needs and gaps for individuals and in community at large

Adapted from *Guiding Principles – Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, December 2007. Download at www.praxisinternational.org, Visitation TA Materials.