 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>135</h1>
Chapter:	Special Casework Issues	
Subject:	Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Practice Framework	Page 1 of 2
Approved:	Karen Shea, Interim Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 8/3/2016
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 135	Dated: 3/31/2004

Purpose

To issue a policy statement on domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) to guide the division's development of other policies and child welfare practice.

Related Policies

Family Services [Policy 61](#): Responding to Domestic Violence in Child Safety Interventions

Family Services [Policy 250](#): Staff Safety

Introduction


The primary focus of the division's intervention in cases where intimate partner violence is present is to ensure the safety of children impacted by IPV by joining with the parent or caregiver who is victimized to increase safety and support, while holding the perpetrator responsible for the risk their abusive behavior poses to the child(ren). This is most effectively done through the use of comprehensive, ongoing risk assessment, consultation with domestic violence experts, effective supervision, and ongoing training and support.

Definitions

Intimate Partner Violence or **IPV** (also known as **Domestic Violence**): A pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and economic coercion that an adult or adolescent uses to obtain and maintain control over their intimate partner. For the purposes of this definition, intimate partner violence does not typically include child abuse, child to parent violence or sibling violence, which are considered forms of family violence.

Perpetrator: The person who uses a pattern of coercive control that may be primarily psychological, economic, or sexual and that is reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, credible physical threat, or sexual assault. A perpetrator is not a victim of domestic violence even when those abused react by using violence to defend themselves.

Victim: The adult person against whom a perpetrator directs abuse or battering.

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Policy

It is critical to the safety and well-being of children that the division actively work towards achieving safety for all family members and staff who respond to these cases.

The division commits to adopting policies and practices that:

- Remove blame for domestic violence from victims;
- Examine and implement strategies to support victimized parents of domestic violence in providing safety and well-being for their children;
- Hold the offending parent/caregiver responsible for the violence and the corresponding risk that violence poses to children and actively engage with that parent/caretaker to address these risks;
- Document all reasonable efforts made to prevent separation from the non-offending caretaker when children are removed from the home;
- Recognizing that children have different resiliency factors and may be impacted differently by the IPV in the home;
- Team with community partners to enhance safety and accountability strategies for families; and
- Actively plan for social worker safety through consultation with Domestic Violence Unit and/or Staff Safety Coordinator.

Policies that do not incorporate these principles risk endangering the safety, well-being, and permanency needs of children and youth at risk and experiencing the effects of child abuse and neglect.

Additional Resources

[Family Services Domestic Violence Position Paper](#)

[Family Services Protocol for Conducting Child Abuse Investigations When Domestic Violence and Child Abuse/Neglect Co-occur](#)

[Department for Children and Families Domestic Violence Protocol](#)

[Agency of Human Services Response to Domestic Violence](#)