

Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network Meeting Minutes-9/10/19

Present: Chris Huffine (Allies in Change), Linda Castaneda (Castaneda Counseling), Andrew Goodwin (Portland VA), Nanci Jarrard (VOA Home Free), Olga Parker (Modus Vivendi), Regina Holmes (ARMS)

Minutes by Chris Huffine, edited by Chris Huffine

Meeting Topic: Working with Abusive Partners who are Fathers

The group spent time talking about the Caring Dads curriculum which is a parenting curriculum for abusive partners. Those who are making use of it think it is quite good. One person mentioned that a lot of the fathers in Clackamas County are resistant to taking the Caring Dads class because they don't want to do "another" parenting class, even though this one is quite different from the parenting classes that are typically offered. It was mentioned that Child Welfare does not always require parenting classes in general, let alone DV specific parenting classes.

There was some discussion about the differences between an abuse intervention group and a DV focused parenting class. This included some discussion of another way of engaging abusive partners is as fathers, which they might be more receptive to.

It was mentioned that one way to describe the victim is not just by using her name, but by describing her as "your child's mother". This may be more impactful since some of the men may be more invested in being a good father than in being kind or respectful to their ex-partner. You can also make the point that putting down or disrespecting your child's mother is also being disrespectful to your child.

There was some discussion of mandatory reporting of child abuse to Child Welfare. One person talked about making mandatory reports three different times and never receiving a response from Child Welfare. It was clarified that mandatory reporting of child abuse is only required if you get the report directly from either the victim or the person was abusive. Third party reports (e.g., from the other parent) are not grounds for making a mandatory report in Oregon and are technically a violation of confidentiality.

Abusive fathers fall into two different groups when it comes to their stance towards fatherhood—some are very committed to being good fathers while others don't care much at all about their children. For those who are committed to being good fathers we can use that commitment to further motivate them to make real changes in their behavior.

We discussed some how some abusive partners are not necessarily overtly abusive towards their children, but can be neglectful. One way this shows up is not adequately supervising their children when they're the only parent around, particularly when their children are younger. Some partners have shared concerns that they can lose track of the children if they are out, or not

check up on them often enough when they are home. Another way they can be neglectful is not adequately prioritizing their children's needs over their own.

How to deal with children being forced to see the abusive parent when they don't want to?

Validate the children's concerns. Get them support outside of the family (e.g., therapist, supportive adults). Encourage the abused parent to make sure to offer the children as much of a debrief of their time with their father as they would like.