Does Familiarity Breed Collaborative Practice?
Co-Location of Domestic Violence Liaisons in Child Welfare Offices in NJ
An Implementation Case Study

Catherine L. Cummings, MA, PhD
Cathy.Cummings@rutgers.edu

Problem Statement

- **30-60% co-occurrence** of domestic violence & child maltreatment
- Historically divergent philosophical & practice models have led to ethical & legal conflicts (*Nicholson* case in NY in early 2000s)
- Initiatives over the past 20 years have sought to improve collaborative practice between child welfare (CW) and domestic violence (DV) workers & systems

Background: DV-CW Collaborative Practice Strategies

- Since the early 1990s, primary strategies have included:
  - Cross-training
  - In-house child welfare DV advocates
  - Co-location of community-based DV advocates in child welfare offices
- *Greenbook* (1999) national recommendations to improve collaborative practice included co-location of DV advocates in CW offices

Background: Studies on DV-CW Co-Location

- **2008 Family Violence Prevention Fund** reports highlighted need for studies to identify effective components of DV specialized positions, including co-located positions
- **University of Albany (2013)** study of 11 counties funded by NY state for co-location identified recommended components & challenges around relationships, processes & resources

Background: Co-Location in Child Welfare in NJ

- Statewide co-location of substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence specialists in local child welfare offices
- **NJ Domestic Violence Liaison** [DVL] co-location began in 2008 as a collaboration between Department of Children & Families and NJ Coalition for Battered Women

Systems Model of DVL Co-Location

- State Level CW System & Policy Contexts
- DV Service System
- CW local office norms, peers, supervisors
- CW worker mental models & practices
- DVL Co-Location
To examine development, implementation & impact on collaborative practice of co-locating liaisons from community-based domestic violence service organizations in local child welfare offices in New Jersey.

Study Aims
1. Describe the process of DVL co-location development and implementation in NJ.
2. Describe child welfare practice in NJ with families experiencing co-occurring DV and child maltreatment, in the context of DVL co-location.
3. Examine how implementation has impacted/ been impacted by relational trust & feedback loops.
4. Identify local implementation factors associated with use of co-located DVLS by child welfare workers.
5. Develop “lessons learned” from implementation in New Jersey.

Methods
- Case Study method to examine bounded system (DVL co-location within NJ child welfare system)
- Allowed data collection from multiple sources
  - Diverse stakeholders
  - Written records
  - Interviews & focus groups
- Developmental approach to create in-depth description of implementation processes & identify lessons learned

Study Design
Access to stakeholders & records via relationship developed with DCF Division of Family & Community Partnerships
- Document analysis
- Key informant interviews
- Field visits to 6 purposively sampled local child welfare offices
  - Interviews with DV Liaisons
  - Focus groups with child welfare workers

Findings: NJ DVL Co-Location Implementation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late 1980s</td>
<td>Early state-NJCBW discussions on how to better serve children &amp; families impacted by both CW &amp; DV.</td>
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<td>Early 1990s</td>
<td>Mandatory 2 day training for CW by NJCBW instituted</td>
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<td>1996-2003</td>
<td>Class action lawsuit/Blue Ribbon Panel/Federal Monitor</td>
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<td>Jan 2003</td>
<td>DVL co-location discussed but not adopted</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>Modified Settlement Agreement – NJ DCF created</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 2006</td>
<td>Office of DV services created</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>DYFS Case Practice Model and DV Protocol developed &amp; adopted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 2008</td>
<td>Joint AOC-DCF Greenbook Conference &amp; Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 2008</td>
<td>Initial $420,000 state funding for DVL Pilot – 8 DVLs in 7 counties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 2009</td>
<td>NJCBW warned DVL funding will not be renewed – lobbying</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2009</td>
<td>AOC Operational Guidance Memo issued</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 2009</td>
<td>DV Case Practice Protocol memo issued</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late 2009</td>
<td>State DVL funding restored for initial 8 positions in 7 counties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late 2009-Early 2010</td>
<td>Through state &amp; VOCA funds, 16 new DVLs added bringing total to 24 DVLs covering all 21 counties in NJ</td>
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<td>July 2012</td>
<td>State DVL expansion adds 7 new DVLs – now 31 total statewide</td>
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Timeline Discussion
- Non-linearity of DVL co-location development & implementation process
- Importance of relational trust for collaboration
- Critical role of feedback loops
Documentation

- Without the documentation of direct services provided to victims of domestic violence by the pilot DVLs in the local child welfare offices, DVL co-location might very well have ended before it was fully implemented, when the state budget process put funding in jeopardy.

Co-LOCATION & Collaboration

- The more the DVL views an important part of their role as supporting the caseworkers, the more positive the caseworker feedback.

Findings: NJ DVL Co-Location Logic Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Short Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Intermediate Outcomes</th>
<th>Long Term Outcomes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized forms for CW-DV referrals &amp; feedback to CW</td>
<td>Improved DV identification in DCP&amp;P families</td>
<td>Increased family knowledge of &amp; access to DV resources &amp; services</td>
<td>Increased safety for adult &amp; child survivors of DV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggregate data collected on DVL service families</td>
<td>Increased knowledge &amp; skills of DCP&amp;P staff to engage &amp; encourage DV offenders to access resources &amp; services that decrease their use of violence &amp; coercive control</td>
<td>Safety Plans for all DVs</td>
<td>Reduced child placement rate for identified DV families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing CW-DV system meetings</td>
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<td>Increased offender engagement &amp; referral</td>
<td>Reduced DCP&amp;P re-referral rate for identified DV families</td>
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<td>DCP&amp;P workers trained on DV Protocol</td>
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<td>Engage safely with both parties</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DCP&amp;P workers including SCR screeners trained on DV</td>
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<td>Effective case plans</td>
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DVL Role Self-Descriptions

- Educate/Empower DVVs directly
- Advocate for DVVs within CW
- Make sure DVVs not re-victimized by CW
- Support CWW to understand DV from different perspective
- Build capacity of CW/DV workers/systems
- Bridge between CW/DV workers/systems to enhance collaboration & DVV safety

Findings: Most Frequent DVL Activities

- Mostly DVLs in CW office(s) 4 days/week
- If cover 2-3 offices, less time at each
- Core activities:
  - Meeting with DVVs in person or by phone
    - Engagement, DV Education, Safety Planning
    - Some follow up as requested
  - Linkage to DV agency resources
  - Case Consults with CW staff around individual DVVs – may include records review (NJ SPIRIT, Promise Gavel)

Findings: Less Frequent DVL Activities

- Family Team meetings
- Home visits with caseworker
- Referral of batterers to services
- Legal advocacy
- DV-CW Collaborative meetings (monthly/quarterly)
- CW staff meetings
  - Unit meetings
  - Focus on Supervision
- Training groups of CW staff (2-4x/year)
Findings: Referral & Consultation Process
- DVLs do not have state email & cannot access agency email from state offices
- DVLs post their schedules in their DCP&P offices & workers leave them notes & Referral Forms
- If urgent, caseworkers call DVLs on cell numbers
- Communication is enhanced by the relationships developed through repeated contact in the DCP&P office

Process & Feedback Loops
- Some referrals to DVVs are verbal, followed by Referral Form (DVL may have to “chase” the form)
- Mostly DVL speaks with CWW before calling DVV
- DVL gives Direct Service Check-off Form to CWW documenting DVV contact & general info discussed
- DVL may follow up with CWW for coaching

Strengths of DVL Co-Location
- CWWs are more mindful of DV as a possible factor in child welfare
- Co-location supports CW in a more family-oriented rather than child-oriented approach to families experiencing DV
- CWWs may internalize “DV lens” and improve their empathy & practice
- Co-located DVLs can be pulled into crisis conversations with DVVs

Strengths of DVL Co-Location
- DV advocates more aware of complexity of child welfare practice & better able to educate & support DVVs
- Co-location allows for “teachable moments” to educate CW staff
- Opportunities to discuss complexity of “mutual violence” vs power & control
- Relationships with CWWs allow DV programs to reach more DVVs

System Challenges
- Not all DVVs who could benefit are referred to DVLs
- Need for DVL diplomacy around varied interpretations of DV protocol
- DVV confidentiality vs CWW “need to know” can cause frustration
- What to do with “mutual abuse”
- CW placing unrealistic demands on DVVs
System Challenges

- Insufficient resources and waitlists, especially for children & batterers
- Need for non court-ordered fatherhood initiatives to support healthy co-parenting
- Need for victim & batterer services in languages other than English
- Transportation & childcare barriers for DV services are common

Local Factors associated with use of DVLs by CWWs

- More referrals when DVL sits in a high visibility/high traffic location, is involved in meetings, and walks around to check in
- DVL services are more appreciated with quick turnaround – this is impacted by DVL to CWW ratios & number of offices served
- In rural areas, transportation barriers can increase with out of county referrals due to confidentiality

Lessons Learned – What Makes Co-Location More Successful

- Active Invested Leadership
- Visibility of DVLs in Local Offices
- Collaborative Engagement
- Timely Sharing of Data
- Development of Shared Trauma-Informed Paradigms

Does Familiarity Breed Collaborative Practice?

- DVL co-location can help to improve child welfare practice
- Fewer child removals from protective parents reduces trauma
- Need for further research to examine child & family outcomes in the context of co-location