

Guidance for Child Welfare to Work with Providers of Domestic Violence Offender Treatment

Colorado has a state Domestic Violence Offender Management Board (DVOMB) that sets the standards for offender treatment as well as approving the therapists that provide this treatment. The practice of offender treatment may vary by agency. It is essential that child welfare workers refer perpetrators to only those therapists that are approved by the DVOMB and those that maintain a high standard of quality in working with domestic abusers.

<http://dcj.state.co.us/odvsom>

As a child welfare worker, working together with an Offender Treatment provider will connect you with a valuable source of information for monitoring a perpetrator's case plan. Here are some steps to build a meaningful working relationship with your local Offender Treatment provider(s).

1: Contact offender treatment provider for input in working safely with highly dangerous domestic violence perpetrators and their families.

- Establish rapport in advance and discuss the provider's willingness to be contacted for consultation on seemingly high-risk domestic violence perpetrators
- To find information about and a complete list of approved DV perpetrator treatment providers refer to the Domestic Violence Offender Management Board (DVOMB) on their website at http://dcj.state.co.us/odvsom/domestic_violence/providers.html.

2: Make referrals as part of Case Planning with perpetrators of domestic violence

- Through a review of the DVOMB website (dcj.state.co.us/odvsom) and relationships with these community agencies, workers can learn about the policies and procedures of their local DV perpetrator programs and requirements for program participants.
- When possible, offering more than one provider will allow the participant to choose a treatment group that will best work with his schedule.
- CPS Case Plans will complement the Treatment Plans and Offender Contracts from the Offender Treatment provider. (See appendix to see what Treatment Plans and Offender Contracts include)

3: Obtain needed release of information in order to get reports from the treatment provider and to discuss participant progress

According to the DVOMB Standards, "Offenders who have committed domestic violence related offenses shall waive confidentiality for purposes of evaluation, treatment, supervision, and case management." This occurs when the treatment participant signs Release of Information forms. A worker should contact an offender treatment provider to ensure that the participant has signed a release, and the release should specifically state that the worker will receive written Reports from the Offender Treatment Provider.

Evaluation Reports

You can obtain a brief report that provides a basic overview from the initial evaluation of the perpetrator (outlined at Standard 4.09) this will include an overview of the evaluation findings.

- A. Review of instruments used and results
- B. Review of sources of information used
- C. Domestic violence dynamics
- D. Review of the DV Risk and Needs Assessment (DVRNA)
- E. Level and nature of domestic violence risk as described in terms of scenario development (e.g., likelihood, imminence, frequency, severity, victims, and context).
- F. Offender accountability
- G. Perpetrator motivation and prognosis
- H. Criminogenic needs
- I. Offender responsivity
- J. Specific victim safety issues
- K. Recommendations for treatment planning

Monthly Reports on Perpetrator Progress

You can obtain monthly treatment reports (outlined at Standard 4.10, 5.02VIII), which include:

- A. Results from most recent required Treatment Plan Review
- B. Perpetrator progress regarding competencies
- C. Any recommendation related to discharge planning
- D. Offender's level of treatment
- E. Evidence of new risk factors
- F. Offender degree of compliance such as fees, attendance, and level of participation

4: Participate on the local Multidisciplinary Treatment Team (MTT)

When a perpetrator is in treatment with a treatment provider who is approved by the DVOMB, the treatment provider must consult with other team members in order to best monitor and intervene with the Offender Treatment clients. These meetings are known as Multidisciplinary Treatment Team (MTT) meetings. These meetings may be in person, or by phone or sharing information by email. The MTT makes decisions regarding the initial level of treatment, changes to the level of treatment and the type and time for discharge.

You can - and hopefully will - participate in team case consultation with the DVOMB treatment provider and any other professionals involved in your case or involved with offender treatment. This MTT shares information and collaborates about the case. The MTT can communicate in person, via other scheduled meetings such as TDMS, email or voice mail, etc.

Working collaboratively and sharing pertinent information related to progress, changes in risk and other issues are all important for all professionals to share among one another in these types of cases. Since neither attendance at nor completion of domestic violence offender treatment necessarily signifies that the abuser has improved their behavior, it is valuable to obtain additional evidence of change. Your ability to monitor and respond to any continued abusive behavior contributes to promoting real change by the perpetrator, as well as to monitor the level of risk a perpetrator may pose to his children.