

Making the Connection: Home Visitors + Advocates

An Innovative Partnership

THIS INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP BRINGS TOGETHER THE HOME VISITING APPROACH TO FOSTERING STRONG, LOVING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN WITH DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE ADVOCACY INTERVENTIONS THAT SUPPORT SURVIVOR/PARENT AUTONOMY, SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SAFER PLANNING FOR FAMILIES.

The home visiting approach coupled with domestic and sexual abuse advocacy services holds great promise for prevention of further abuse and healing from the wounds of trauma. The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) has identified home visitor programs and domestic violence programs in Eastern Washington that are eager to create earlier interventions for pregnant and parenting survivors of abuse. These programs and organizations are: Parents as Teachers of Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington with the YWCA of Yakima and Lower Valley Crisis & Support Services, and Parents as Teachers of Columbia Basin Health Association with New Hope Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services.

WE SEEK TO CONNECT THE HOME VISITING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY APPROACHES — figuring out, how to safely make a connection among the home visitor, survivor/parent and advocate in their home or out in the community — and incorporate the promising practice of flexible financial assistance for survivors. Advocates use flexible financial assistance, mobile advocacy services, and community engagement on behalf of families who are both enrolled in home visiting and surviving domestic and sexual abuse. For example, advocates use community engagement strategies to build relationships with public and private housing/landlords to increase access to affordable and safe housing for survivors and their families.

FLEXIBLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS A PROMISING PRACTICE THAT SUPPORTS SURVIVOR-CENTERED MOBILE ADVOCACY SERVICES.

It is part of the Domestic Violence Housing First model piloted and evaluated by WSCADV. Advocates draw upon unrestricted funds to help survivors to become stably housed. Examples include transportation, child care, employment, and housing, car repair, work uniforms, and temporary rental assistance. Evaluation has shown that this approach increases survivor and family safety, stability, and self-sufficiency. Children could stay in the same school, have friends over for the first time, and play without fear. This innovative partnership holds promise for interrupting the inter-generational traumas of abuse, violence and homelessness for families.

BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL MOBILE ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTERED ON LATINO COMMUNITIES WILL BE A CORNERSTONE. What we learn from this partnership will ultimately inform statewide strategies for both the home visiting and domestic violence fields in Washington.