

# Introduction to the Safe & Together Model

Provided by:

Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women

# Objectives

- Understand the basics of the Safe and Together Model
- Learn about the model's Three Principles and Five Critical Components
- Understand why the failure-to-protect approach is problematic
- Recognize and use the Perpetrator Pattern-based Approach in your advocacy and case work
- Look at ways to partner with the survivor



## What is the Safe and Together Model?

The model can help advocates and services providers:

- Make better child-centered decisions,
- Build meaningful partnerships with adult survivors, and
- Develop effective interventions with domestic violence perpetrators.

# Three Key Principles

- Keeping the child Safe and Together with the non-offending parent
- Partnering with the non-offending parent as the default position
- Intervening with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to child/children



# Five Critical Components

These components lay the groundwork for our understanding of and intervention in domestic violence cases involving children.

While Components 1 – 4 are present in all cases, Component 5 is often, but not always, a factor.

1. Perpetrator's pattern of coercive control

2. Actions taken by the perpetrator to harm the child

3. The non-offending parent's efforts to promote child safety & well-being

4. Adverse impact of the perpetrator's behavior on the child

5. Role of substance abuse, mental health, culture, and other socioeconomic factors

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# Domestic Violence & Children

- 48% of mothers in one home visitation program reported experiencing DV since the birth of their child.[1]
- Between 40–75% of children in the CPS caseload exposed to domestic violence are also victims of physical abuse.[2]
- DV has a measurable and substantial association with caregiver and family functioning, which in turn have a substantial association with child health and behavior.[3]

## Citations

[1] Eckenrode J, Ganzel B, Henderson, Jr CR, & et al. (2000). Preventing child abuse and neglect with a program of nurse home visitation: The limiting effects of domestic violence. *JAMA*, 284(11), 1385–1391. <http://doi.org/10.1001/jama.284.11.1385>

[2] Margolin, G. (1998). Effects of domestic violence on children. In *Violence against children in the family and the community* (pp. 57 – 101). DC: American Psychological Association. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy2.library.drexel.edu/docview/61418057>

[3] English, D. J., Marshall, D. B., & Stewart, A. J. (n.d.). Effects of Family Violence on Child Behavior and Health During Early Childhood. *Journal of Family Violence*, 18(1), 43–57. <http://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021453431252>



## The Invisible Perpetrator

The Problem:

- In child welfare, the focus of DV cases has often been on the survivor—her behavior and decisions
- In this approach, the perpetrator and his behaviors become invisible
- Let's think about how this focus influences practice

# The Invisible Perpetrator (continued)

Let's bring the perpetrator's behavior into focus:

- Coercive control
- Harm to family functioning
- Harm to child
- Perpetrator as parent





# Failure-to-Protect Approach

A failure-to-protect approach to domestic violence means that the emphasis is on the adult survivor's decision-making, rather than on the perpetrator's behavior.

This approach is very common and very problematic:

- Ignores the perpetrator as a parent
- Makes the survivor responsible for the abuser's choices
- Sometimes, you'll hear the failure-to-protect approach described as a component of domestic violence-destructive practice.

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## What happens when we use a Failure-to-Protect Approach in casework?

We assume the domestic violence survivor is choosing to endanger her children by remaining with the perpetrator

We overlook the strategies she is using to keep her children safe

We focus on what she's not doing (such as moving out), rather than on identifying her strengths

We remove responsibility from the perpetrator as a parent

We impede achievement of our goal—improving child safety and family functioning

# What is the solution?

## Perpetrator Pattern-based Approach

- Views the perpetrator's behavior as the source of the harm
- Focuses on patterns of his behavior
- Highlights his accountability as a parent
- Embraces high expectations of men as parents
- Places the safety and well-being of children at its center
- Highlights the adult survivor's strengths as a parent
- Helps address the needs of families who are experiencing economic, racial, and cultural oppression
- Is the foundation of the Safe and Together Model



# Perpetrator Pattern-based Approach

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The perpetrator-pattern based approach is the foundation of domestic violence-informed child welfare practice.

We should be asking this foundational question: What are the negative effects of the perpetrator's behavior pattern on child and family functioning?

As you implement the approach, you'll be better able to:

- improve the safety, permanency and well-being of children,
- strengthen family functioning,
- form strong partnerships with survivors, and
- whenever possible, keep children Safe and Together with the domestic violence survivor

# What the Perpetrator Pattern-based Approach is NOT...

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It is NOT:

- Relationship-based
- Incident-based
- Geographically-based

## Let's do some examples together...

- FTPA: The mother is putting her children in danger
  - PPA: The father's violent behavior is endangering the children
- FTPA: The mother has a history of choosing bad partners
  - PPA: The father has a history of abusing previous partners
- FTPA: The mother has substance abuse issues and is not attending counseling because she can't find childcare
  - PPA: The father's behavior is interfering with the mother's ability to get help and he refuses to watch the children so she can go to counseling



## Let's do some examples together...

4. FTPA: The mother is not able to pay rent because she does not have a job, and the father is in jail

- The father prevented the mother from working, and as a result of his violent behavior that led him to being incarcerated, it left the mother unable to keep up with rent payments

5. FTPA: The electricity was shut off because the mother lost her job and has a hard time being consistently employed

- PPA: The father stalked and harassed the mother while she was at work, and as a result was terminated from her position. This is not the first time the father has interfered with the survivors employment.

## Using What We Learned So Far

We've identified two different approaches to domestic violence cases. Let's practice distinguishing statements that might indicate a failure-to-protect approach from statements that might support a perpetrator pattern-based approach.

For each statement in this activity, think about whether the statement indicates a **failure-to-protect approach** or a **perpetrator pattern-based approach**. Select your answer on the Zoom poll.



## Failure-to-protect or Perpetrator pattern-based?

- The couple engages in domestic violence
- This couple is having a relationship conflict
- The father has a history of violence and has abused multiple past partners
- The mother has a history of making bad relationship choices
- The mother is picking her boyfriend/husband over the kids
- The father is interfering with the mother's recovery by accusing her of having affairs at her AA meetings
- The father refuses to watch the children while the mother goes to counseling

# The Perpetrator's Patterns

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Two Victims: the survivor and the child(ren)

Coercive control is a pattern of behavior that takes away a family member's sense of: safety, self-determination, and satisfaction

Multiple Pathways to Harm:

- Family ecology
- Trauma and safety
- Partner's parenting



## Partnering with the Survivor

Partnering with the adult survivor is important to effective case work.

What is the survivor doing to promote child and family functioning in the context of the perpetrator's behavior pattern?

What are you doing to strengthen her ability to support child and family functioning?

# Six Ways to Partner and Support the Survivor

- Affirm
- Ask
- Assess
- Plan
- Document
- Validate



## Time for Reflection

Question 1:

When attempting to partner with the survivor, what could be reasons why the survivor might be hesitant to work with an advocate or service provider?

Question 2:

What does it mean to provide survivor-led services?

# Contact



COALITION to STOP  
VIOLENCE AGAINST  
NATIVE WOMEN

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# Partnering With The Survivor

Building a partnership requires the survivor to choose to engage with you.

Sometimes, historical or cultural factors get in the way.

- A survivor may distrust all authorities due to historical oppression, or
- Be wary of the child welfare system because of past experience.



# Managing Fears

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DV survivors will have a few common fears:

- Fear of the perpetrator
- Fear of the system

This is why your partnership skills are important!

What does the survivor hear if she's unwilling to make one of these choices?

"Call the police"

"End your relationship"

"Get a court order"





# More Accurate Assessment

To partner with the adult survivor,  
strengths as a parent.

- Safety
- Healing
- Stability



# Video 1



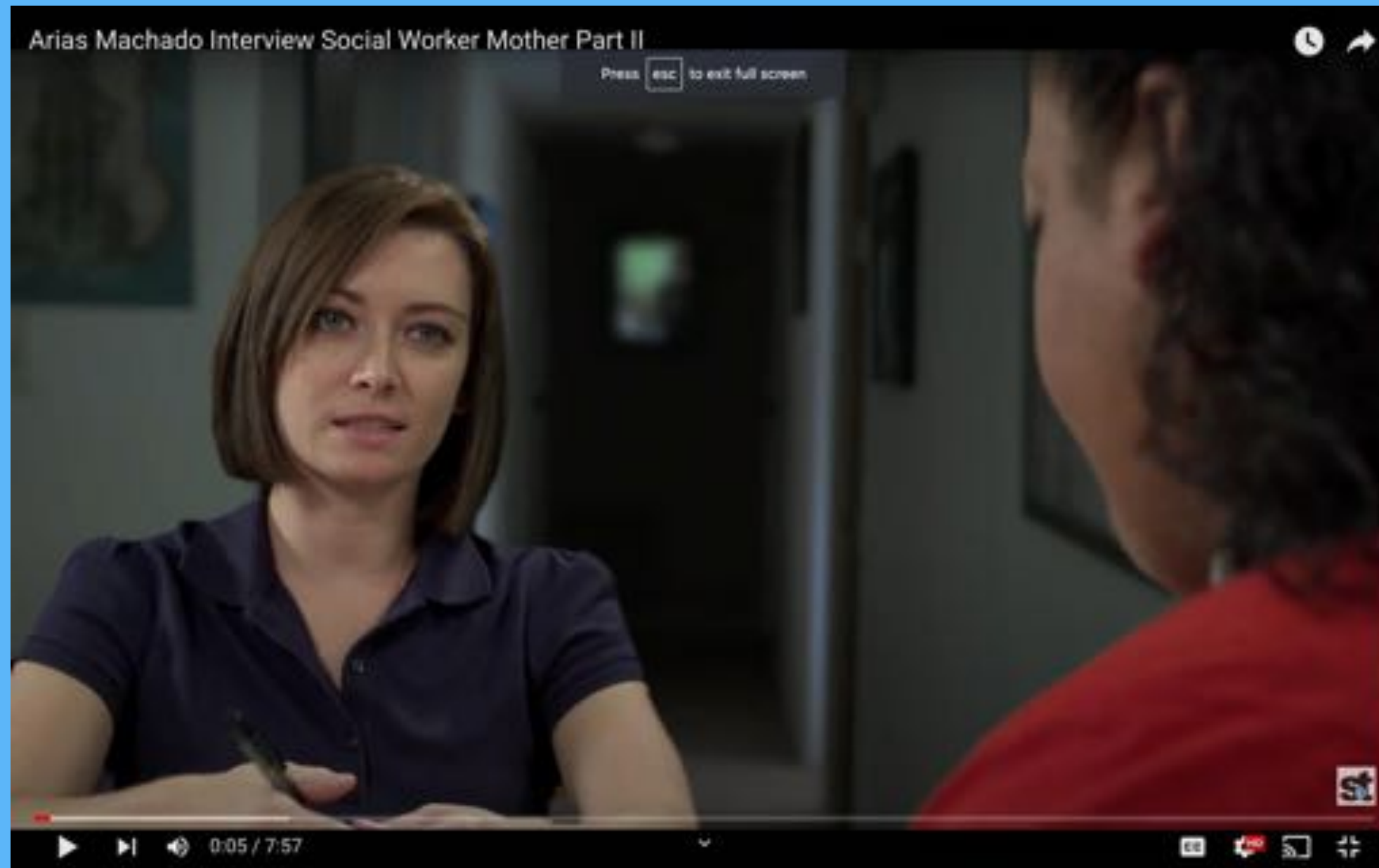
# Questions

WHAT DID THE WORKER DO TO BE CONSISTENT WITH HER ROLE AS AN ADVOCATE?

HOW DID THIS SUPPORT THE CHILD WELFARE WORKER'S ROLE AND MISSION?



# Video 2





# Questions

WHAT DID THE SOCIAL WORKER DO  
TO HELP THE MOTHER RESPOND TO  
HER SO WELL?

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS WORKS?

# Breakout Session 1



You will need paper and writing utensil.

## Breakout Rooms:

- You will be assigned to a group
- Designate a facilitator and notetaker
- chance to provide an answer to each group question
- After, we will reconvene and share your answers and reflections

## Group Questions

1. How do you already OR plan to use the Six Ways in your work with survivors?
2. Which of these steps do you feel is important in working with child welfare-involved clients? Why?

# Breakout Session 2



You will need a notepad and writing utensil.

## Breakout Rooms:

- You will be assigned to a group
- Designate a facilitator and notetaker
- chance to provide an answer to each group question
- After, we will reconvene and share your answers and reflections

## Group Questions

1. What are some survivor strengths that that often get overlooked?
2. How would you help a survivor navigate system barriers? Or fears of the perpetrator?

# Reflections

What new insights did you gain?

What is the importance or significance

Where are you most excited or

