



# Change is Possible: An Enhanced Model of Supervised Visitation for Families Impacted by Domestic Violence

## Literature Review

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Inspire Action for Social Change conducted a supervised visitation literature review to support the development of an enhanced supervised visitation model. An enhanced supervised visitation model provides an opportunity for men who use violence to cause no further harm to their partner and children, create a healthy, safe and caring relationship with their children, and potentially change their behavior. The aim of an enhanced model of supervised visitation fosters a sense of safety, honesty, trust and well-being by creating an environment that increases the adult victim and child's sense of safety, and allows for reparative experiences and opportunities in a warm, caring and humanistic environment.

Our literature review has used a combination of subject headings and keywords to identify the most extensive review that would be relevant to this project. The following search terms were used: 'supervised visitation', 'parent access', 'parenting time', 'therapeutic supervised visitation', 'therapeutic interventions for children exposed to domestic violence', 'domestic violence', 'intimate partner violence', 'parent-child trauma therapy', 'differential response', interventions with men who use violence', and 'custody and visitation'. Backward searches were also conducted through the references of articles. More than 350 articles and publications were reviewed for inclusion in this



examination with the listed articles and publications determined to be the most relevant to support the development of a varied and viable method of creating an enhanced model of supervised visitation for families who have experienced violence from their parents and partners.

- Aris, R., Harrison, C., & Humphreys, C. (2002). "Safety and Child Contact: An Analysis of the Role of Child Contact Centres in the Context of Domestic Violence and Child Welfare Concerns". Centre for the Study of Safety and Well-being University of Warwick.

This article outlines a study that was conducted in England and Wales to determine what supports safe and positive contact for children that also accounts for the safety and well-being of women who have experienced domestic violence. The study administered questionnaires and/or interviews with staff, court welfare officers, mothers, fathers and children from six different supervised visitation programs (contact centres). The study found there was a significant lack of understanding and agreement from referral sources, center staff, mother and fathers about what to expect of supervised contact, the level of vigilance needed to maintain safety for women and children and what centers do and have in place to support safety. The article also outlined the research that has demonstrated the significant impact domestic violence has on women and children. Indicating that the promotion of maintaining a relationship between a child and their separated parent has not been grounded an understanding of the damaging consequences of domestic violence and further challenged by a lack of agreement about how a supervised visitation program should operate.

- Bancroft, L., (1998). "Understanding the Batterer in Custody and Visitation Disputes". *Retrieved July 23, 2016, from <http://lundybancroft.com/articles/understanding-the-batterer-in-custody-and-visitation-disputes/>.*

The author indicates that anyone making custody and visitation determinations or recommendations must have a deep understanding of the "mind of the abuser". The author provides characteristics of a batterer that include being controlling, manipulative, entitled, and disrespectful. Indicating that this behavior is most often only seen by their intimate partner. The



author indicates that the behavior of men who use violence in intimate partner relationships is very controlled and calculated. If necessary, they can often go long periods of time without demonstrating controlling behaviors. Men who use violence are often able to create positive public images and are successful appearing, very credible and believable. Once their credibility is tarnished they will often move to harassment and intimidation to get their way. The author outlines a detailed list that can be used to assess risks to children when making visitation decisions.

- Birnbaum, R., & Alaggia, R. (2006). "Supervised Visitation: A Call for a Second Generation of Research". *Family Court Review* 44(1):119-134.

The authors provide a review of 17 of the major studies conducted on supervised access programs. The overview provides the research design, a summary of findings and comments related to each study. The authors' purpose in providing a review of all the major studies conducted is to demonstrate the shortcoming of the studies conducted and the current gap in research and literature on the parent/child outcomes and the intended and unintended consequences of supervised visitation. The authors indicate such research is necessary to determine whether programs are meeting the needs of children and families ordered to services.

- Brandt, E. B. (2007). "Concerns at the Margins of Supervised Access to Children". *JL & Family Studies*, 9, 201.

The author suggests that beyond having standards of practice in place for the provision of supervised access services, we lack a coherent set of principles regarding when and under what conditions supervised access should be ordered by the courts. The author poses the question that if the courts are charged with creating a custody arrangement that are in the best interest of the child then what considerations should warrant the intervention of supervised visitation and what considerations warrant the continuation of contact between a child and a parent who threatens the physical and emotional safety of a child. Four distinct types of cases



that have justified supervised access are outlined (1) when one or both parents are locked in a pattern of behaviors that is thwarting the process of shared parenting and/or the emotional health of the children, (2) when the child's relationship with a parent is threatened by substantial interference or kidnapping by the other parent, (3) when the health and safety of a child is threatened because of a parent's judgment regarding their care due to mental health and/or substance abuse, and (4) when there is a finding of domestic violence and the court finds the abusive parent lacks the insight his behavior has had on the child and the harm his actions have done to the other parent. The author then identifies two scenarios on the margins of the above-mentioned cases where supervised visitation has been justified but should be called into question. The first of these cases - when a parent has severely physically and/or sexually abused their child and the second – when there has been extreme domestic violence. The author indicates that the court has not considered the impact such abuse has had in either case and what the potential negative impact of continued contact – even if supervised – will have on these children and their protective parents. The author identifies that currently in these severe cases the only way a protective parent can legally stop contact is to petition the court to terminate parent rights otherwise the court will likely order supervised contact. The current rationale being used to support court ordered supervised contact in these two severe cases have not been studied and could potentially have serious negative consequences. In addition, the author outlines that the courts have not identified clear guidelines for when supervised access should be used nor has the court defined standards to be used when ordering supervised access. These standards should include such things as the level of supervised monitoring, who is considered an appropriate supervisor, and how will the court review the orders for supervised access.

- Beyer, M. (2004). "Visit Coaching: Building on Family Strengths to Meet Children's Needs". New York City Administration for Children's Services, Visiting Improvement Project.

The author developed the concept of "visit coaching" for the child welfare system in New York City. The article indicates that family visits in the child welfare arena are an underutilized service which could lead to safe reunification if the visit time was used differently. Further indicating that "traditional visits seem pointless", stating that families can have visits that go well for a long period of time but still not able to demonstrate they can keep their children safe.



Visits provide protection in the form of supervision, but most visits do not address the abuse or neglect that brought the child into care. The four principles of visit coaching include: empowerment, empathy, responsiveness, and active parenting. In addition to following these principles visit coaching must also include tailoring the methods to the family and child and intervene in ways that allow the parent “to take charge”. Due to the method of visit coaching being developed as a method to work within the child welfare system there is a primary focus on improving parenting skill deficits. The method also does not seem to be grounded in an understanding of domestic violence nor working with those who perpetrate violence in the home but rather working with the parent who experienced the violence and charged with failure to protect. But regardless of these distinct differences in understanding and grounding in domestic violence this model does have promise to be adapted and used in the family law system.

- Brisbene, T., (2011). “A Therapeutic Supervised Parenting Time Program: Enhancing the Current Model”. Adler Graduate School.

This paper was written and submitted by a graduate student as a partial fulfillment of their graduate degree. The author proposes that implementing a therapeutic supervised visitation model would offer families a valuable service, a chance to repair the parent-child relationship and would be more cost effective than offering supervised visitation, mental health services and parent education. While the paper mentions family violence the incorporation of an understanding of what interventions would be needed for these families is not provided. The paper primarily focuses on the need for parent education and support and provides an overview of parent education curriculum models.

- Bradshaw Schmidt, C. (2014). “A Systematic Approach to Reunification Therapy.” Breaking Boundaries in Custody Litigation. Dallas, TX. Retrieved on September 2, 2016 from [www.utcl.org](http://www.utcl.org)

This article is broken down into four sections (1) information to the courts on crafting a good order, (2) the initial assessment process, (3) overview and examples of graduated steps for a



parenting time plan, and (4) determine how to move between those steps. This article is written with a strong underlying premise that reunification therapy is needed due to parent alienation or an estranged parent and child and is not grounded in a firm understanding of domestic violence. The author does indicate that “a parent who lacks insight as to how their past issues of domestic violence, abusive parenting practices, and other problems impact upon their child may do more harm than good in pushing forward”.

- Burton, J. (2003). “In the Child’s Best Interest: Strategies Workers Use to Make Supervised Contact with Nonresidential Parents a Positive Experience for Children”.

The author examines how a supervised visitation center (Contact Centre) located in Queensland, Australia works to promote the child’s best interest while providing supervised services. The paper explored how the center defined the child’s best interest and how this center identified and acted to meet these interests. The author explained that the practitioners interviewed for this paper identified the child’s best interest as the primary reason for providing the service. The center has identified three strategies they saw as essential in acting in the child’s best interest (1) effectively engaging all service participants, (2) facilitating positive parent-child interaction, and 3) encouraging children to participate in decision making. The paper concluded by indicating the best interest of children using contact centre’s would be enhanced if additional services such as counseling and parenting programs were available.

- Chamberlain, L. (2014). “Comprehensive Review of Interventions for Children Exposed to Domestic Violence”. *Futures Without Violence* Retrieved September 22, 2016, from <http://promising.futureswithoutviolence.org/files/2012/01/Comprehensive-Review-of-Interventions-for-Children-Exposed-to-Domestic-Violence-FINAL.pdf>

The article is based on the well-documented understanding of the negative impact domestic violence can have on children coupled with the research that indicates family and community are essential to strengthening children’s capacity to support their ability to recover and thrive. In partnership with Futures without Violence, the author conducted a national scan of interventions for children exposed to domestic violence and provided an overview of the



findings to provide an accessible method for domestic violence advocates and other service providers to use such interventions. The national scan was designed to identify interventions that have been well supported by evidence, interventions that are practice-informed but unsupported by research and innovative or emerging practices in the field.

- Commerford, J. & Hunter, C. (2015). "Children's Contact Services: Key Issues." *Australian Institute of Family Studies*, CFCA Paper No. 35.

The authors provide a brief overview of the Australian child contact services and what is known currently about the characteristics of the families who are using services. The paper indicates that for those families using supervised visitation there are varied and complex circumstances facing families. Highlighting that families using supervised visitation services are more likely to live in "disadvantaged areas" and have two or more serious "personal or relationship problems" as compared to the general population. The paper also highlights the current lack of research in determining when supervised visitation is or isn't in a child's best interests to have continued contact with their non-residential parent as well as the varied differences in the perceived role of child contact services from the referral sources, government representatives, the residential parent and the non-residential parent and the supervised visitation providers themselves. Indicating that these divergent views can create challenges for service provision. This paper concludes by introducing an integrated social services model for supervised visitation providers as response to the varied and complex circumstances families face and the need to meet each family's unique and specific needs. The model supports supervised visitation programs to become a central hub to be able to refer families to other needed services, co-locate services within their own program and offer their own enhanced services of therapeutic supervised visitation and services offered with therapeutic intervention.



- Crook, W. P. & Oehme, K. (2007). "Characteristics of Supervised Visitation Programs Serving Child Maltreatment and Other Cases". *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention* 7(4):291-304.

The authors indicate that the number of supervised visitation programs across the country has increased from 56 known programs in 1995 to 525 documented services/providers in 2007. The State of Florida has been tracking the statewide usage of supervised visitation and program service data in a Web-based database since 2005. The database collects data into two sections (1) programmatic data (e.g. hours of service, waiting lists, budget information and (2) client, case and service data. The authors conducted an exploratory study of the program-level data the State of Florida has been collecting. Based on the data collected and analyzed the authors provided three recommendations to improve supervised visitation services. Their first recommendation is to ensure there are standards and certifications in order to ensure consistency and safety at supervised visitation programs. The second recommendation is to ensure increased and stable funding is available to adequately provide a safe environment. Noting that without stable funding the "unacceptable alternatives are program instability, waiting lists, and insufficient or nonexistent security measures". The third recommendation offered by the authors indicates a need for improved and ongoing documentation of program characteristics. They indicate that widespread tracking of program characteristics will help provide support for increased funding, legitimacy, and accountability for supervised visitation services. Lastly, the article outlines areas for future research that have not yet been completed in this field such as (1) what child and family outcomes are important to measure and track over time, (2) what program characteristics are important to measure and track over time, and (3) in what ways are child and family outcomes and/or program characteristics related or unrelated.

- Edleson, J.L. (2006). "Emerging Responses to Children Exposed to Domestic Violence". Harrisburg, PA: VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence/Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Retrieved September 22, 2016, from: <http://www.vawnet.org>

The author reviews the current research regarding the impact exposure to adult domestic



violence has on children. The research highlights the growing evidence that children exposed to adult domestic violence have greater problems than non-exposed children and at the same time other research on children's resilience in the face of traumatic events is demonstrating no greater problems than non-exposed peers. The author concludes that the literature is suggesting that there are assets in a child's environment that may play protective roles in their lives and thus buffering them from severe adverse trauma reactions. The article further reports children have varied experiences, risk factors and varied protective factors that create unique outcomes for different children. The article outlines several public policy responses that each hold unintended consequences that need further exploration. The article concludes by indicating that communities need to harness partnerships with community based programming to develop voluntary systems of care for children exposed to adult domestic violence.

- Edleson, J.L., Nguyen, & H.T., Kimball, E. (2011). "Honor Our Voices: A Guide for Practice When Responding to Children Exposed to Domestic Violence". Minneapolis, MN: *Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse (MINCAVA)*.

The guide provides an overview of the current research on the extent and impact domestic violence has on children and the significance protective factors in a child's life can have on the effects of violent exposure. The article reviews eight promising practices that support a child's resilience and ability to heal. The eight promising practices reviewed include (1) foster bonding among family members, (2) create a welcoming environment that supports everyday routines, (3) explore relationships with parents, (4) develop safety plans, (5) understand the unique needs of teens, (6) endorse community partnerships, (7) evaluate needs through the lifespan, and (8) cultivate informal supports.

- Flory, B.E., Dunn, J, Berg-Weger M., & Milstead, M. (2001). "Supervised Access and Exchange: An Exploratory Study of Supervised Access and Custody Exchange Services: The Parental Experience". *Family Court Review* 42 (1):60-73.

This paper outlines method and findings of an exploratory outcome study of a supervised visitation program in St. Louis County, Missouri. The families that were represented in the



study were all referred to the supervised visitation program by family court and were identified by the program as “high conflict”. The authors of this study defined high conflict as having one or more of the following criteria (1) children’s opportunity to maintain a relationship with both parents is precluded by parental behavior, (2) ongoing adult interpersonal conflict exposes children to negative messages and inappropriate role expectations, (3) ongoing inter-parental verbal and/or physical or sexual abuse and/or neglect is alleged, or (4) domestic violence exposes adult victims to potential physical harm. The paper generalized that the use of supervised visitation services made it more likely that parties would comply with their court-ordered parenting plan further stating that the use of supervised visitation is an effective enforcement mechanism. The paper did highlight that collaboration between social services and the court can be used to address the unmet needs of the family that the court alone can’t address.

- Groves, B. (1999). “Mental Health Services for Children Who Witness Domestic Violence”. *The Future of Children Domestic Violence and Children*, Vol 9.

This article briefly summarizes the current literature on the effects adult domestic violence has on children, highlights the complications of being able to identify and have access to many of the children who would benefit from therapeutic support and reviews the primary therapy approaches that have been used. The author indicates that almost all therapeutic interventions have been introduced because of the protective parent and child entering shelter services. Further highlighting that this is the most common way interveners have access to children who have experienced domestic violence in their home although more programs serving these children have been established. The article provides an overview of group and individual modalities and the challenges that can be faced when working with children who have witnessed domestic violence. The challenges highlighted are (1) involving the parent who perpetrates domestic violence, (2) meeting children’s complex emotional needs, and (3) addressing the possibility of concurrent child abuse. The author also indicates that little is known about the effectiveness of the current therapeutic approaches being used with children exposed to violence in their home and acknowledges the lack of funding to support such services and afore mentioned needed research.



- Israel, E. & Stover, C. (2009). "Intimate Partner Violence: The Role of the Relationship Between Perpetrators and Children Who Witness Violence." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Volume 24, No. 10.

This study examined whether intimate partner violence perpetrated by a biological father resulted in higher levels of posttraumatic stress symptoms and behavior problems than those children exposed to violence by non-biological fathers and whether those children exposed to violence perpetrated by both a biological father and a non-biological father figure had even higher increased risk of such symptoms. The results found that children exposed to multiple violent fathers and father figures had significantly more posttraumatic stress symptoms and behavior problems. The relevancy of this study for this project is to ensure there is a screening method in place for children who have been exposed to multiple violent fathers. Practitioners will need to be acutely aware of complex trauma being exhibited by these children and determine their ability to continue participation in visitation when exhibiting a complex trauma response.

- Jaffe, P., Crooks, & C., Wong, F. (2005). "Parenting Arrangements After Domestic Violence: Safe as a Priority in Judging Children's Best Interest." *Journal of the Center for Families, Children and the Courts*, Volume 6.

In this article, the authors outlined the rationale for clear and prescriptive guidelines for parent/child access in cases of domestic violence within the clinical and legal context. The rationale identified includes (1) abuse does not end with separation, (2) the significant overlap between domestic violence and child maltreatment, (3) batterers are poor role models, (4) victims of domestic violence may be undermined in their parenting role, (5) perpetrators may use perpetual litigation as a form of ongoing control and harassment, and (6) in extreme cases, domestic violence following separation is lethal. The article provides a framework for differential assessment and interventions that are based on an understanding of domestic violence. The authors outline child access options and the factors and risks that must be considered when determining the specific remedies for (1) supervised exchanges, (2) supervised access, and (3) cessation of parent-child contact. The article concludes by



indicating there needs to be more prescriptive guidelines for how to manage parent-child access in cases with domestic violence and develop more effective judicial system models for assessing, intervening, and monitoring changes in cases of domestic violence, further indicating that “judges need to be more actively involved in reviewing their court orders and ensuring both safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators”.

- Janich, N., Shafer, M.S., & McKay, C. (2014). “Safe Havens Assessment & Replication Model, Final Report.” Arizona State University. *Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy*.

Retrieved July 23, 2016, from

[https://cabhp.asu.edu/sites/default/files/150204\\_safe\\_havens\\_final\\_report\\_2014.pdf](https://cabhp.asu.edu/sites/default/files/150204_safe_havens_final_report_2014.pdf)

The authors provide a summative evaluation of the Safe Havens Grant Program of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) that the La Paloma Center in Arizona received. The evaluation was conducted to identify specific and actionable recommendations for consideration in the replication of the OVW model of supervised visitation in the State of Arizona. The evaluation examined the programs fidelity of the OVW Guiding Principles. The evaluation outlined six recommendations to consider in replicating this program in other communities in the State of Arizona.

- Maxwell, M. Sharon & Oehme, Karen. (2001). “Strategies to Improve Supervised Visitation Services in Domestic Violence Cases.” *Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse Electronic Clearinghouse*. Retrieved July 23, 2016, from:

<http://www.mincava.umn.edu/documents/commissioned/strategies/strategies.html>

The authors outlined the evolution and distinction of the use of supervised visitation in dependency cases and family court referrals when there is domestic violence. The article outlined the fact that supervised visitation has historically been organized to provide services in dependency cases where there is a case manager, a case plan and other services ordered to support each family ordered to services. The article further acknowledges that while supervised visitation can and should be used by those families referred by the family court in



cases of domestic violence significant shifts in practice must be made to these supervised visitation programs such as (1) adequate staff training on domestic violence, (2) safety and security safeguards, (3) enhanced policies and procedures such as requiring copies of orders for protection, and (4) strict attention to the confidentiality of program participants.

- McWey, L. M., Acock, A. & Porter, B. (2010). "The Impact of Continued Contact with Biological Parents upon the Mental Health of Children in Foster Care." *Child Youth Services Review*. 32(10): 1338-1345.

This study examined depression and externalizing problems of children in foster care with the frequency of supervised contact. The results indicate that supporting frequent, consistent; visitation with children in foster care and their biological parent can impact the levels of depression and externalizing problem behavior. Due to limited data available only contact with biological mothers was examined in this study. The study also highlighted research on the impact of the supervised visitation services being offered to decrease distress during services. The results from the study indicate that having an empathetic professional can help change parent-child interactions during visits. The strategies used by the professionals in the study were (1) listening to mothers, (2) acknowledging the difficulty of their current circumstances, and (3) giving attention to positive attributes of their parenting.

- McWhirter, P. (2008). "Therapeutic Interventions for Children Who Have Witnessed Domestic Violence". In G. R. Walz, J.C. Bleuer, & R.K. Yep (Eds.), *Compelling counseling interventions: Celebrating VISTAS' fifth anniversary* (pp. 31-38). Ann Arbor, MI: Counseling Outfitters.

The author highlighted the importance of therapeutic interventions for children who have witnessed domestic violence pointing to research that finds that children who "are not provided a therapeutic catalyst, following the trauma of witnessing domestic violence, exhibit more intense and enduring negative consequences. The model outlines the following characteristics (1) a group therapy for both children and mothers, (2) working jointly with the non-abusive parent and child, (3) located as a community-based program, and (4) offer child care for



younger children not engaged in a therapeutic process. The article outlines sample therapeutic activities to engage children and parents during group session.

- Montgomery, S. A. & Street, D. F. (2011). "Visitation Arrangements for Impaired Parents". *Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 20(3), 495-503.

The article provides a suggested methodology to conduct a clinical assessment when seeking to determine visitation right of parents with significant mental illness. The article indicates that the presence of a mental illness diagnosis should not be the determining factor in parental rights and visitation but rather the impact that condition has on parenting abilities. The authors provide an overview of areas that should be included in a comprehensive psychiatric history and examination. Once a significant mental health diagnosis is determined the authors identify the following key questions to assist in determining parental rights and the level of visitation (1) does the mental illness compromise parenting, (2) is the mental illness stable, (3) how can the mental illness best be stabilized, and (4) what compensatory factors are present? The article further indicates that it is also highly likely that a parent with mental illness will also have other risks that would also contribute to potential risks that should be considered.

- Nadkarni, L., & Zeek Shaw, B. (2002). "Making a Difference: Tools to Help Judges Support the Healing of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence". *Court Review: The Journal of the American Judges Association*, Volume 39, Issue 2.

The authors demonstrate the far-reaching impact domestic violence has on children and state that judges make the most significant decisions impacting the lives of each member of the family as well as having a significant role in shaping society's response to domestic violence. Given this information as well as the knowledge that there continues to be an increase in the number of domestic violence matters before the court the authors indicate that it is vital that judges are aware of how their decisions can play an important role in preventing domestic violence injuries and deaths. Judges must ensure there is a more complete picture of the violence being obtained and the quality of the information is adequate. The authors indicate



that this can be accomplished by doing the following (1) having a domestic violence inventory completed, (2) relying on compete lethality assessment, and (3) reviewing good collateral information. The authors urge the courts to appropriately take domestic violence into account when making custody and visitation decisions, indicating that failure to do so can result victim parents remaining with or returning to their abusive partners for fear of losing contact with their children. The authors indicate that a professional supervised visitation setting has been highly recommended when domestic violence has taken place. Cautioning the risks associated with unsupervised access. It is further recommended that rather than making time-limited orders when moving away from supervised visitation the court should take into consideration the abusive parents behavior while being supervised as well as the child's behavior. It is also recommended to not only pay attention to their behavior within the context of being supervised but also the child's behavior during transitions, the hours and days before and after contact. The article outlines the following considerations before moving from supervised visitation to unsupervised contact (1) there has not been direct abuse or irresponsible behavior by the abusive parent, (2) there has not been direct or indirect physical and/or psychological cruelty toward their partner, (3) there has not been expressed or subtle expression of willingness to hurt the children as an extension of willingness to hurt the victim parent, (4) has not been substance abuse issues, (5) there has not been any indication of refusal to accept the end of the relationship, (6) there has not been sexual assaults toward the victims or boundary violations toward the children, (7) there has not been threats to abduct or injure the child, and (8) there has not been refusal to accept responsibility for past abusiveness.

- Oehme, Karen & O'Rourke, Kelly. (2011). "Protecting Victims and Their Children Through Supervised Visitation: A Study of Domestic Violence Injunctions". *Faulkner Law Review* 3: 261-276.

This article provides an overview of the history of supervised visitation in domestic violence cases; provides the findings of a closed case study of 146 families ordered to supervised visitation by court order and highlights the role that supervised visitation program play in reducing violence based on this case study. The study demonstrates that those court ordered to supervised visitation due to domestic violence have multiple serious and overlapping issues. The study further suggests that those families who used supervised visitation services had a



decrease in both parental arrests and child protection involvement one year post service involvement.

- Parker, T., Rogers, K., Collins, M., & Edelson, J.L. (2008). "Danger Zone: Battered Mothers and Their Families in Supervised Visitation". *Violence Against Women* 14(11): 1313-1325.

This article outlines the experience of the City of Kent, WA while planning and implementing a supervised visitation center under the Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women – Safe Havens Demonstration Initiative. During the course of their demonstrate site experience they discovered the following five key elements that helped further refine and shape their supervised visitation program (1) the experiences of women who have been battered coming to their program, (2) experiencing how battering behavior continues during service provision, (3) how the rules of the program needed to evolve and change, (4) the importance of well-trained staff, and (5) the need to ensure the supervised visitation program is a part of the larger community response to domestic violence.

- Saini, Michael, Van Wert, Melissa, & Gofman, Jacob. (2012). "Parent-child Supervised Visitation within Child Welfare and Custody Dispute Contexts: An Exploratory Comparison of Two Distinct Models of Practice". *Children and Youth Services Review* 34 (1), 163–168.

This paper addresses the distinct difference between supervised visitation in the context of child welfare and custody disputes in Canada. The paper bases its analysis, findings, and recommendations on the notion that supervised visitation exist to maintain parent/child contact and outlines the fundamental differences in each context. The paper also highlights the fact that there is limited research on the outcomes for children and families after utilizing supervised visitation services. The paper concludes by indicating all families need clear direction about the reasons for attending supervised visits and the potential outcomes of participating in these services. The authors also outline the need for standardized training for staff of supervised visitation.



- Saunders, D., (1998). "Child Custody and Visitation Decisions in Domestic Violence Cases: Legal Trends, Research Findings, and Recommendations". Harrisburg, PA: VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence/Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Retrieved 06/10/2016, from <http://www.vawnet.org>.

The author first reviews the history and legal trends of child custody decisions in the past 200 years. Moving from the doctrine of father's ownership of children to little preference from one parent or the other, to the notion of the "tender years" when the mother-child bond was considered essential, to then the guideline of the "best interest of the children" which included a list of factors to consider when determining custody and visitation. Exposure to domestic violence was not included as a factor to consider when determining custody or visitation until the adoption of the Model Code of the Family Violence Project of the NCJFCJ. Model Code statutes specify that there is a "rebuttable presumption that it is detrimental to the child and not in the best interest of the child to be placed in sole custody, joint legal custody, joint physical custody with the perpetrator of family violence." The author then goes on to indicate that based on research that there is very strong potential of men who batter their wives to also abuse their children and further research has also demonstrated that there is tremendous negative impact of children's exposure to witnessing abuse as well as the indication that men who use violence are more likely to abuse alcohol and communicate in a hostile, manipulative manner. Based on this research the author indicates that visitation between the abusive parent and child should be limited and judicial decision-makers should take great care in awarding custody or visitation to perpetrators of domestic violence and if custody or visitation is awarded safety precautions and court enforced conditions should be put in place to lower the risk to children and their mothers.

- Smith, G. T. (2014). "A Strengths-based Approach to Supervised Visitation in Child Welfare. Child Care in Practice". *Northern Ireland Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Child Care Practices*, 20(1), 98.

This article explored a method of providing supervised visitation with the child welfare system



that supports fostering change that leads to successful reunification. The authors cite researchers Fraser, et al. (1996) findings that child welfare based supervised visitation service that build strong alliances with families, provide skills training, and assist family members with concrete needs resulted in sustained reunification than comparison services. The model outlines six elements that are key in supporting this strengths-based approach (1) enhancing the visitation environment by offering services in a warm and welcoming space, (2) conducting an age-appropriate strength-based assessment for each child, (3) holding resilience meetings to develop a resilience-building strategy with the parent who is entering services. This meeting begins to build an alliance between the parent and the worker, set goals and determine the initial activities to support the goals, (4) establish stable visit routines, (5) develop activities to promote resilience that provide parents with a chance to practice positive parenting skills and demonstrate the child's strengths, and (6) facilitating progress check-up meetings.

- Stover, C., Meadows, A., & Kaufman, J. (2009) "Interventions for Intimate Partner Violence: Review and Implications for Evidence-Based Practice." *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, American Psychological Association*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 223–233 0735-7028/09/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a00127.

This article reviewed the available studies conducted on intimate partner violence that had a randomized case assignment with at least 20 participants. The study examined seven treatment programs for men who use violence, six victim services treatment programs, five treatment modalities for couples and four child-witness intervention programs. The results of this review suggest that the interventions have limited effect on repeat violence above the intervention of arrest alone as method used to reduce repeat offenders in cases of domestic violence. Finding that the rate of recidivism in most perpetrator and parent-focused treatment is about 30% with six month regardless of intervention strategy. The study found that couples' treatment in conjunction with substance abuse treatment had the lowest recidivism rate. Child treatment models that combined treatment for mother and child were shown to be the most effective at the reduction of externalizing symptoms if the mother did not have a substance abuse issue and they were no longer living with the perpetrator of the violence. The researcher further concluded that the effectiveness of treatment would improve if an assessment of needs was conducted and people were engaged in a program that best met their individual needs



rather than a one-size fits all approach. The authors further indicated that given the high comorbidity rate of intimate partner violence and substance abuse they concluded that further evaluation of this type of treatment is needed.

- Stover, C. S., Van Horn, P., Turner, R., Cooper, B., & Lieberman, A. F. (2003). "The Effects of Father Visitation on Preschool-aged Witnesses of Domestic Violence". *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18(10), 1149.

The authors of this study sought to examine the effect of father visitation on pre-school children who have witnessed domestic violence and whether the severity of the violence perpetrated by the father impact visitation and its effect on the child. The authors provided an overview of the current research that has been done in this area and demonstrated a need for additional research in this area. The results of this study indicate that pre-school aged children who have witnessed their father's violence towards their mother demonstrated fewer depressive, anxious and somatic symptoms if they had weekly contact with their father. The study further concluded that those children whose fathers who were more violent showed an increase in aggression and antisocial behaviors irrespective of the frequency of contact with their father. Suggesting that children with more severe exposure to violence learn to use external means to cope with their feelings irrespective of having visitation with their father post separation. The limitations of this study that should be considered are (1) small sample size of 50 participants, (2) all study participants had been referred for mental health services as a point of entry for this study, (3) the type of visitation (e.g. supervised contact, unsupervised contact) nor length of contact (e.g. one hours per week or overnight visitation) was not considered, or (4) the quality of the visitation time was not considered. The authors conclude that the results of this study indicate that importance ensuring visitation decisions are made on an individual basis for each family.



“Change is Possible: An Enhanced Model of Supervised Visitation for Families Impacted by Domestic Violence” can be found at  
<http://www.inspireactionforsocialchange.org/resources/>

Inspire Action for Social Change is a non-profit organization that works to create change and improved opportunities for women and children experiencing barriers to safety as a result of domestic and sexual violence. We do this through customized trainings and individualized support designed to meet the unique needs of organizations, communities, and institutions working to end violence against women.

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