

# Washington Chapter AFCC Newsletter

SPECIAL ISSUE: Domestic Violence Symposium 2019

September 18, 2019

## Letter to WA AFCC

From: Connor Lenz, Family Court Services

The recruitment of Loretta Frederick for this SAFeR training was inspired by the May 2018 Webinar hosted by AFCC that detailed the SAFeR model. Ms. Frederick was chosen by AFCC due to her expertise in this area and the effort to bring her to Seattle for this training was intended to offer more education on standardized assessment of intimate partner violence in family law matters to local practitioners.

The DV Symposium planning committee has made a concerted effort to appeal to those conducting parenting plan evaluations and Guardian Ad Litem work as well as family law attorneys to promote increased awareness of domestic violence, uniform tools to screen and assess for this risk issue, and resources in the community that support families in cases of DV.



Connor Lenz; Loretta Frederick, J.D.;  
Hon. Judge Christopher Wickham (ret.)

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PLEASE VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE!  
<https://wa-afcc.org>

## The DV Symposium was a great success this year!

by: Dana Dean Doering

The WA AFCC was excited to partner with Connor Lenz at Family Court Services to help promote the DV Symposium via our AFCC chapter network. Enrollment increased this year from 500 to 750, with over 75 on the waitlist.

The DV Symposium Board says thank you to WA AFCC chapter for helping to promote the symposium.

This special issue of the newsletter highlights the SAFeR training which includes new DV & IPV protocols.

Topics of great interest included:

- Inspiration for strengthening families & communities, and human dignity
- Microaggressions

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## LOOK DEEPER AT DV & IPV- Screen, Assess, Focus on Effects & Respond (SAFeR)

by: Dana Dean Doering

Key points to remember:

1. Don't make assumptions- ask each & every client about IPV
2. Screen for IPV: Understand how to scale your concerns via the SAFeR method
3. Assess the child's experience and the nature & context of IPV

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## Save the Date for the 2020 WA AFCC Chapter Annual Conference Friday, April 24th

Join colleagues at the Washington Athletic Club in downtown Seattle. Each year, leaders in the family court area bring their insights and expertise for a day of continuing education.

[Event Information & Registration](#)

## **Letter to WA AFCC From: Connor Lenz (Cont...)**

Some jurisdictions in the State of Washington such as Thurston County have now mandated specialized training for GALs in the area of intimate partner violence and the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is now offering trainings for counties attempting to incorporate standardized screening and assessment of domestic violence in their court systems. Additionally, during the DV Symposium this year a separate judicial officer only training was organized with Ms. Frederick and Judge Wickham (ret.) from Thurston County covering the SAFeR model. Both of the presenters advocated for use of SAFeR as a judicial decision making tool and as a means for judges and commissioners to evaluate the work of parenting evaluators and GALs vis-à-vis intimate partner violence. The SAFeR model is a tool that can help evaluators consistently and effectively gather and present relevant information to judicial decision makers and other family law professionals about the nature and impact of intimate partner violence on children and their parents. The DV Symposium planning committee is grateful to the WA AFCC chapter for its support of these trainings.

## **The DV Symposium was a great success this year! (Cont...)**

Additional Topics of interest included:

- The history and evolution of the Domestic Violence Response system
- The impact of trauma; risk, resilience and response (awareness and concern about exposure)
- Using the SAFeR model to determine risks in identified Custody cases
- Breaking the silence in African American Faith Communities
- Trauma informed courtrooms
- Enhancing safety measures
- How language impacts our response to Gender-based Violence
- Creativity and art as paths to resilience
- Crafting protective parenting plans
- Demystifying protection orders (ERPO, VAPO, AHO, SAPO, RO and DVPO)
- Decoding implicit bias in the courtroom
- Technology-facilitated DV
- Workplace Safety
- LGBTQ violence issues
- Teen dating Safety

## **LOOK DEEPER AT DV & IPV- Screen, Assess, Focus on Effects & Respond (SAFeR) (Cont...)**

**SAFeR promotes Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)-informed decision-making in family law matters.**

SAFeR is an approach to decision making in IPV-related family law matters. It consists of four parts:

1. screening for IPV
2. assessing the full nature and context of IP
3. focusing on the effects of IPV
4. responding to IPV in all recommendations, decisions, and interventions.



SAFeR staff provide training and technical assistance to courts, legal and dispute resolution professionals, advocates, and others on using SAFeR in their work.

<https://www.bwjp.org/our-work/projects/safer.html>

## **PRACTICE GUIDELINES- FOR FAMILY COURT DECISION-MAKING IN DOMESTIC ABUSE-RELATED CHILD CUSTODY MATTERS**

<https://www.bwjp.org/assets/documents/pdfs/practice-guides-for-family-court-decision-making-ind.pdf>

<https://www.bwjp.org/assets/restructured-protection-order-guide-watermark-update.pdf>

<https://www.bwjp.org/assets/documents/pdfs/ncpoffc-firearm-checklist-advocates.pdf>

## **WORKSHEETS**

<https://www.bwjp.org/our-work/projects/safer/safer-worksheets.html>

<https://www.bwjp.org/our-work/projects/intimate-partner-violence-intervention.html>

Intimate partner violence is often thought of as fundamentally different from other types of violence, but a considerable body of evidence shows that the gravest IPV with respect to the most vulnerable victims tends to be driven by “chronic” offenders who commit a wide variety of crimes at relatively high rates. Research also demonstrates that IPV offenders who do not fit this profile can be deterred by relatively low-level sanctions. The Intimate Partner Violence Intervention (IPVI) aims to create meaningful deterrence for the most chronic and dangerous offenders, while promoting safety for victims. The IPVI strategy is an evidence-based approach to reducing serious IPV through strategic law enforcement, community-based informal social control, and victim-centered advocacy and social service provision. With a partnership of law enforcement, victim advocates, social service providers, and community members, IPVI addresses all offenders known to the criminal justice system while enhancing support and outreach for victims.

Like all effective coordinated response, this initiative relies heavily on law enforcement and community working together to implement all parts of the IPVI strategy. In addition, law enforcement data about IPV offenses in a jurisdiction is critical to the successful implementation, specifically the ability to distinguish between incidences of “intimate partner” violence and other “family” violence.

With selected jurisdictions, the NNSC and BWJP will provide intensive assistance and support to these communities to implement the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention, including but not limited to:

- An in-depth inquiry of the jurisdiction’s crime data to identify the jurisdiction’s most serious and chronic IPV offenders, an evaluation resources and capacity across partner agencies, and assessment of current policies and operations.
- Direct, intensive technical assistance on the implementation of the strategy as well as best practices in responding to, investigating and prosecuting IPV cases;
- Peer support and collaborative learning opportunities with other communities implementing the strategy; and
- An evaluation of implementation.

For more information on the IPVI strategy, please [click here](#).

## **BATTERED WOMEN’S JUSTICE PROJECT**

<https://www.bwjp.org/our-work/projects/intimate-partner-violence-intervention.html>

*BWJP promotes systemic change within the civil and criminal justice systems to ensure an effective and just response to victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV), and the children exposed to this violence.*

In BWJP’s view, an effective and just response to IPV

- Identifies the context in which the offense occurred and addresses IPV as a patterned crime.
- Maximizes interagency coordination toward shared intervention goals.
- Maximizes victim safety and engagement in the process, and offers meaningful community support and protection that allows victims to act on their own behalf, and on behalf of their children.

- Holds abusers accountable for ending their violence and coercion, and offers meaningful assistance to those seeking to change.
- Reduces the harm to children exposed to violence in their homes and promotes their future well-being.
- Incorporates evidence-based risk and lethality assessment strategies into its practices.
- Identifies and reduces disparities in interventions and case outcomes related to race, class, age, sexual orientation, and gender.

To achieve this mission, BWJP staff

- Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions or military installations seeking to assess and improve their coordinated community response to IPV.
- Identify effective civil, criminal and military justice system policies and practices in local communities across the country, and promote their implementation nationwide.
- Organize national and local trainings to improve the skills of the range of professionals involved in these cases, and build the capacity of legal advocates working in local jurisdictions to effect systemic change.
- Analyze and comment on policy proposals related to civil/criminal justice system practices in IPV cases.
- Participate as amicus curiae in relevant appellate cases.
- Undertake special projects to identify effective and just civil/criminal justice interventions.
- Identify emerging research on civil/criminal justice responses to IPV and promote discussion of its application in the field.
- Develop and disseminate guides and other tools to assist professionals in the field.
- Listen with empathy, engage in strategic thinking, and provide information/referrals to IPV victims and others seeking guidance regarding their civil or criminal cases.

## **An Introduction to National Sources of Intimate Partner Violence Victimization Data**

### **Event Details: Sep 19, 2019 2-3:30pm CDT**

This Webinar is hosted by the Battered Women’s Justice Project and is open to the public.

This webinar is designed as a descriptive and non-technical introduction to national sources of data on intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization in the United States.

Target audience members are practitioners and others who are not primarily engaged in conducting their own research but are interested in learning more about the data systems that inform policy. The webinar focuses on three data collections: the Uniform Crime Reporting Program’s National Incident-Based Reporting System (UCR-NIBRS), the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS). In particular this webinar will include:

1. A discussion of each of the three national IPV victimization data sources including:
  - How the data are collected
  - How each can inform IPV research and policy
  - The strengths and limitations of the data source
2. A discussion of online resources and tools to assist practitioners who might be interested in exploring these data on their own
3. An opportunity for discussion and questions from participants

### **PRESENTERS**

Lynn A. Addington, J.D., Ph.D. Professor, American University

**REGISTRATION:** To register for the webinar, [click here](#).

Training packages will be available soon. Check back for updates on this page.

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**Practice Guidelines and Standards:** Guidelines for Examining Intimate Partner Violence

<https://www.afccnet.org/Resource-Center/Practice-Guidelines-and-Standards>

**Center for Excellence in Family Court Practice:** Initiatives informing the work of practitioners

<https://www.afccnet.org/Resource-Center/Center-for-Excellence-in-Family-Court-Practice>

**AFCC: Family Court Review: Articles of Interest to Professionals**

**FAMILY COURT REVIEW**  
An Interdisciplinary Journal



**Calculating Safety: Reckoning with Domestic Violence in the Context of Child Support Parenting Time Initiatives**

By: Nancy Ver Steegh & Gabrielle Davis

First published: 17 April 2015 <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12150>

**Abstract**

This article explores domestic violence–related implications of federal and state initiatives seeking to establish parenting time in connection with entry of child support orders. The authors recommend and explore two critical family violence safeguards. First, parents need the information and support required by them to make deliberative decisions about parenting time, including: (1) understanding the legal meaning, consequences, and practical effect of formally establishing parenting time; (2) exploration of the extent to which various parenting time arrangements are in the best interests of the child; and (3) knowledge of the nature of dispute resolution and court processes available to them. Second, parents, rather than child support officials, should decide whether, when, and how to pursue establishment of parenting time.

**Key Points for the Family Court Community**

- The impact of domestic violence on parenting and on child safety and well-being varies extensively.
- Some survivors of domestic violence are forced to make high-stakes calculations regarding the safety and well-being of their children in the context of parenting time initiatives.
- Deliberative, informed, and voluntary decision making about parenting time is a key family violence safeguard.
- Domestic violence exclusions are only partially effective, in part because they unrealistically rely on quick and accurate identification and assessment of domestic violence and its implications.
- Parents should decide whether, when, and how to establish parenting time.

*Citation:* Ver Steegh, N. and Davis, G. (2015), Calculating Safety. Family Court Review, 53: 279-291. doi:[10.1111/fcre.12150](https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12150)

**Safe-Haven Reopening: Lowering the Custody Modification Standard to Reopen an Initial Agreement in Cases of Domestic Violence**

By: Brittany E. DeVries

Family Court Review Volume 56, Issue 4

First published: 21 October 2018 <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12385>

**Abstract**

This article argues for a safe-haven reopening, which would consequently lower the custody modification standard that is currently required to reopen an initial custody order when evidence of domestic violence that was not before the court in the initial hearing phase, is plausibly alleged and corroborated. Further, in most jurisdictions in this country, the legal definition of domestic violence is too limited. The article argues that domestic violence definitions in this courtroom should be broadened to their nonphysical and/or unreported forms of violence, which some psychologists and researchers have labeled "coercive control."