

Collaboration Between CPS and Victim Services

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About me...

- Social Service Practitioner at Kings County
- Master of Social Work
 - Title IV-E student
- Victim Advocate for 6 years
 - Domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking
- Bachelor of Science, Criminology (Victimology)



Need for Collaboration

- Many families that come to the attention of CPS are impacted by other issues, such as intimate partner violence (IPV)
 - 25-70% of families (Fusco, 2013)
 - 1 in 15 children witnessed IPV (Hamby et al., 2011)
- These co-occurring victimizations lead families to be involved with multiple systems (e.g. CPS and victim services)
- Effective partnerships and collaboration with service providers are crucial to ensuring that families are provided with the services necessary to:
 - Address these victimizations and prevent future ones
 - Efficient use of resources (delivered timely, prevent duplication)

Introduction to the Problem

- Historically siloed responses to child abuse and IPV (Findlater & Kelly, 1999)
 - CPS did not address IPV
 - Victim service agencies did not consider child safety
- Tension between systems regarding the “victim”
 - Adult IPV victim or child who witnesses IPV
- Professionals in each system did not understand the others’ role and thus did not value them, leading to mistrust

Collaboration between CPS and victim service agencies has not always been a focus, but over the years, the importance of this collaboration has been recognized, and various efforts have been made to improve collaboration.

The (Current) Problem

Despite these co-occurring victimizations, CPS and victim service professionals continue to encounter barriers to collaboration, such as:

- Communication
- Complexities
- Participation
- Competence

(Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2018)

Literature Review

- Ongoing and recent recommendations include:
 - Trust and understanding across systems via cross-training (Findlater & Kelly, 1999; Fusco, 2013; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2018; NCJFCJ, 1999)
 - Establishment of common goals
 - Willingness to change
 - Supportive leadership
 - Colocation (Findlater & Kelly, 1999; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2018)
- RISE model aims to address facilitative factors (Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2019)
 - Consistent communication, leads to rapport building, which fosters appreciation for collaboration, all leading to an understanding of case processes
 - Not yet tested...
- Gaps:
 - Newly hired, excluded non-case carrying, top-down, not examining within group difference

This Study

- Sought to add to the literature, and address several gaps
 - Participants who:
 - Had several years of experience in CPS,
 - Were employed under varying classifications, and
 - Were assigned to varying units
- Specific to Fresno County
 - Convenience (researcher's preexisting knowledge, and participants)
 - High levels of IPV (Vasconcelos, 2022)
 - High levels of child abuse and neglect referrals, as well as investigations (Webster et al., 2022)

Methodology

Research question: **What are the experiences of Fresno County CPS social workers, who have worked with families impacted by IPV, in collaborating with IPV victim service providers?**

- Purposive and snowball sampling
- Qualitative interviews
- Thematic analysis

Findings - *Demographics*

- 11 participants; 8 female, 3 male
- 1 SWI, 1 SWII, 6 SWIII, 1 SWP, 1 SWS, 1 SSPM
 - All current employees
- 1 ER, 5 VFM, 3 FR, 1 RFA, 1 TDM facilitator
 - Most also had experience in other units
- Experience ranged from 6 months to 23 years
 - Avg.: 9.4 years
 - Median: 8 years

Findings - *Themes*

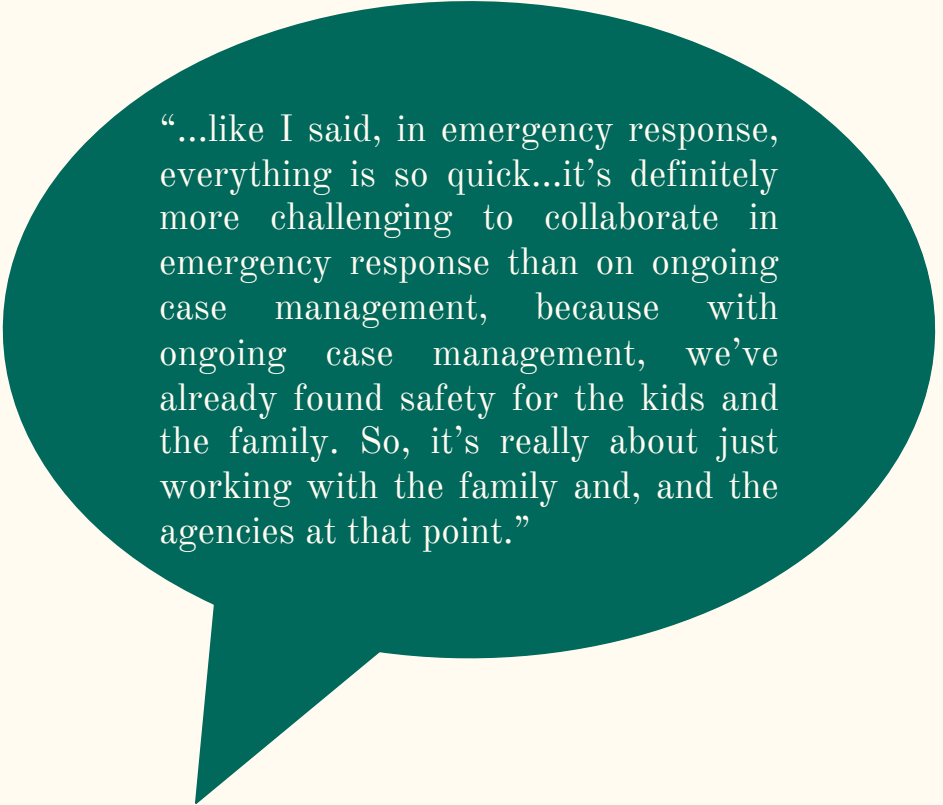
3 overarching themes; 2 themes have subthemes

- Collaboration varies
- Collaboration is working well with one particular victim service agency
- Barriers exist

Themes: Collaboration Varies

Collaboration varies for several reasons:

- Differing definitions of collaboration
 - Referral vs. partnership
- Depends on parents ability to understanding agency's concern and willingness to engage in services
- Depends on CPS's level of involvement with families (i.e. ER, (V)FM, FR, etc.)



“...like I said, in emergency response, everything is so quick...it's definitely more challenging to collaborate in emergency response than on ongoing case management, because with ongoing case management, we've already found safety for the kids and the family. So, it's really about just working with the family and, and the agencies at that point.”

Themes: Collaboration Working Well with One

When asked about their experiences collaborating with victim service agencies, all 11 participants talked about Marjaree Mason Center (MMC).

Many participants characterized the as positive because:

- the services MMC provides can mitigate some of the risks associated with IPV
- MMC's involvement elevates some of the barriers to parent engagement

“I’ve seen—there’s times when we can, you know, stay, refrained from, you know, filing to remove the kids and offer less restrictive, you know, assistance because parents have been connected, and they’ve been able to get into the shelter and get connected with like safe resources to prevent us from having to step in and make a plan on our own. So, it definitely opens the, it opens the conversation up to less restrictive plans.”

Theme: Barriers Exist

- Communication-related
 - Characterized as either a lack of information sharing or issues stemming from confidentiality policies
- Staff availability
 - Of both SWs and victim service staff
 - Fast-paced nature of CPS (ER)
 - High caseloads (ongoing)

“...every agency has a very strict confidentiality, and sometimes they can be difficult if parents haven’t signed a release of information or, you know, they kind of drag their feet on that sometimes. So, that would get in the way. So having, you know, appropriate release of information is definitely crucial to collaborating, or else, like neither of us can really share information.”

Discussion of Results

Recommendations

- Cross-training within both systems
- Mutual understanding of each other's roles, priorities, and policies
- Needs assessment to establish goals and objectives for collaboration

Future research should aim to further explore within group differences related to the classification and unit assignment of CPS social workers.

Implications

Policy

Should establish:

- The value of collaboration,
- A definition of collaboration, and
- A standard procedure

This could be accomplished by updating or creating PPGs.

Practice

Social Workers Should:

- Recognize the value and importance of collaboration
- Making attempts to do so on all referrals/cases
- Understanding victim services role and importance

Thank you, CCASSC!

Questions?

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