



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

CASA/GAL Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum

Volunteer Manual

CHAPTER SIX

HEARST *foundations*



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CHAPTER 6:



Domestic Violence and Cultural Competence

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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 6:
Pre-Work Recap



- ✓ Read the article **Understanding Domestic Violence** and the statistics about domestic violence. Write down any questions you have.
- ✓ Complete the pbs.org “**Sorting People**” exercise and consider the questions listed.
- ✓ Complete the **Exploring Culture and Perceptions Activity** and answer the listed questions.
- ✓ Read the article on **Stereotyping vs. Cultural Competence**.

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Prior to this training session, you should have completed the following Pre-Work assignments:

- Read the article “Understanding Domestic Violence” and the statistics about domestic violence found in the Chapter 6 Online Resources. Write down any questions you have.
- Complete the pbs.org “Sorting People” exercise, and consider the questions that appear in the Chapter 6 Pre-Work Handouts.
- Complete the Exploring Culture and Perceptions Activity, and answer the listed questions.
- Read the article “Stereotyping vs. Cultural Competence.”
- Complete the Culturally Competent Child Advocacy Activity.
- Read the article “Tips on How to Become More Culturally Competent.”
- Complete the Individual Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence Activity by filling in the details in the Individual Action Plan.
- Read the Initial Case Notes for the Amarillo Case.

Chapter Overview and Competencies

This chapter continues to explore the importance of cultural competence in CASA/GAL volunteer work. You'll learn about issues related to domestic violence, and you'll continue to apply your new knowledge and skills in a case simulation.

Competency Building in Chapter 6	
Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills, Attributes, Behavior Development in Chapter 6
Cultural Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands and demonstrates self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values when working with diverse groups• Knows strategies and steps to take to increase cultural competency skills and demonstrate culturally competent child advocacy• Understands how to recognize and challenge own biases
Foundation of Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands how domestic violence affects children and families• Knows the importance of being aware of resources in the community that assist with substance abuse
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands the importance of speaking and writing clearly and concisely• Knows how to utilize basic communication and interviewing skills

Domestic Violence

Putting a Face on Domestic Violence: Activity 6A



Part 1: Watch the video “Why We Stayed.”

Part 2: Listen as the facilitator presents information about domestic violence and how it affects the work of CASA/GAL volunteers. Ask any questions you have about the homework reading or the material presented in class.

Part 3: In your group, share your responses to the following questions.

- What was going through your mind as you listened to the women’s stories?
- Did the information in Part 2 alter your thoughts? How so?
- How do you think hearing the story and reading the information about domestic violence might influence your volunteer advocacy?

Domestic Violence and CASA/GAL Volunteer Work



As a CASA/GAL volunteer, it is important for you to be aware of the possibility that domestic violence exists in the families you encounter. If you suspect domestic violence is occurring, make sure the victim has several opportunities to talk to you alone. The partner who has been battered is often terrified of revealing the truth for fear of further violence. Observe body language carefully. Look for typical characteristics:

- A conspiracy of silence prevails.
- The batterer often seems more truthful, confident and persuasive than the victim.
- The victim may seem angry and frustrated.
- There is often no police or medical record of the violence.
- There is a recurring cycle of family tension, followed by the batterer's explosion, followed by a period of calm (often filled with apologies and promises) that then begins to build back to tension

Domestic violence is about control and domination. When a battered partner leaves the family home (or the batterer is forced to leave), the batterer feels a loss of control formerly exerted. This makes the batterer even more likely to be violent. This increased level of danger makes many victims reluctant to leave, even when the consequence of staying may be the placement of children in foster care.

Impact on Children

Lenore Walker, author of *The Battered Woman*, describes the world of children who grow up in violent homes:

“Children who live in battering relationships experience the most insidious form of child abuse. Whether or not they are physically abused by either parent is less important than the psychological scars they bear from watching their fathers beat their mothers. They learn to become part of a dishonest conspiracy of silence. They learn to lie to prevent inappropriate behavior, and they learn to suspend fulfillment of their needs rather than risk another confrontation. They expend a lot of energy avoiding problems. They live in a world of make-believe.”

Domestic Violence and CASA/GAL Volunteer Work, Cont'd.

Children in families where there is domestic violence are at great risk of becoming victims of abuse themselves. In some cases, children may try to intervene and protect their mothers, getting caught in the middle of the violence. In most cases, however, children are also targets of the violence. Batterers sometimes deliberately arrange for children to witness the violence. The effect on children's development can be just as severe for those who witness abuse as for those who are abused. Witnessing violence at home is even more harmful than witnessing a fight or shooting in a violent neighborhood. It has the most negative impact when the victim or perpetrator is the child's parent or caregiver.

*J. Chiancone, "Children: The Forgotten Victims of Domestic Violence,"
ABA Child Law Practice Journal, July 1997.*

What Can a CASA/GAL Volunteer Do?

Be both knowledgeable and concerned about domestic violence.

Children from violent homes are at a higher risk for abuse than other children. According to "A Nation's Shame," a report compiled by the US Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, "Domestic violence is the single, major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in the US."

Take into account the history and severity of family violence when making any recommendation for placement of a child. Many professionals in the field of domestic violence believe that you cannot protect the child unless you also protect the primary nurturer/victim (usually the mother). As part of that perspective, they advocate for placement of the child with the mother regardless of other factors, saying to do otherwise further victimizes the mother at the hands of the system.

Determine the best interest of the child. It may be that, with proper safeguards in place, the victim can make a safe home for the child while the threat from the batterer is reduced by absence, treatment and/or legal penalties. It is also possible that the victim has shortcomings that prevent her from caring for her family at even a minimally sufficient level. You should assess the situation with a clear understanding of domestic violence dynamics, but in the end, you must make a recommendation based solely on the best interest of the child.

Domestic Violence and CASA/GAL Volunteer Work, Cont'd.

Seek resources for children from violent homes. Children need:

- Positive role models and supportive environments that will help them develop social skills and address feelings about the violence in a constructive manner.
- Help adopting alternative, nonviolent ways to address and resolve conflict (through specialized counseling programs, therapy, domestic violence victim support groups, youth mediation training and relationships with supportive mentors).

Recommend help for parents.

- Try to ensure that domestic violence victims are treated fairly by the legal system and not further blamed in child abuse/neglect proceedings.
- Advocate in your community for things like housing, emergency shelters, legal procedures and court advocates that increase the safety of mothers and children and support the autonomy of the adult victim.
- Encourage parenting classes for battered parents focused on empowering them to become more effective parents and teaching them how to help children cope with the consequences of witnessing domestic violence.
- Advocate for treatment programs for batterers, followed by parenting classes focused on how to parent in a non-coercive, healthy manner.
- Be alert to any signs that domestic violence has recurred or even that contact between the batterer and the victim is ongoing, if that might compromise the child's safety. The foremost issue is the safety of the child.
- Know where the victim can find help in your community.

The facilitator will distribute a list of domestic violence resources in your community. Or, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) 1-800-787-3224 (TDD).

A Child's 911 Call: Activity 6B

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator plays a recording of a child's 911 call during a domestic violence incident in her home.

Part 2: Look through the Signs of Childhood Domestic Violence chart that lists some possible signs of childhood domestic violence and discuss. Remember that different children respond to childhood domestic violence differently. Becoming aware of common signs associated with children's exposure to violence will help you better assess a child's safety needs.

Part 3: In the large group, discuss the following questions:

- What effects might witnessing domestic violence have on Lisa (age 6) and her two younger siblings?
- What services might you recommend for Lisa's family, including Lisa, her mother, her stepfather, her younger sister (preschool-aged) and the baby?
- Reflecting on Tips for CASA/GAL Volunteers, how might a CASA/GAL volunteer approach a first interview with Lisa? Do you see any barriers to interviewing a 6-year-old exposed to domestic violence? How might a CASA/GAL volunteer overcome these barriers?

Signs of Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV)

	Infant	Preschool-Aged	School-Aged	Adolescent
Behavior	Being Fussy / Decreased Responsiveness / Trouble Sleeping / Trouble Eating	Aggression / Behavior Problems / Yelling / Irritability / Trouble Sleeping / Frequent bedwetting / Repetitive play expressing disturbing themes	Aggression / Acting out or frequent outbursts / Disobedience / Bullying others / Frequent bedwetting / Repetitive play expressing disturbing themes	Dating violence / Bullying others / Drug or alcohol use / Criminal behavior / Running away / Attempting suicide / Inflicting self-harm / Frequent tardiness or absence from school, activities, or work / Early sexual activity
Social		Trouble interacting with or getting along with peers / Isolating themselves from others / Startling easily and frequently	Fewer and poor quality peer relations	Few quality relationships / Dating violence (victim or perpetrator) / Teen pregnancy / Starting easily and frequently
Emotional/ Psychological	Attachment needs not met	Emotionally withdrawn or detached / Fear and anxiety, sadness, worry / PTSD / Feeling unsafe / Separation anxiety / Trouble eating	Emotionally withdrawn or detached / Frequent physical complaints / Fear and anxiety, depression / Separation anxiety / Low self-esteem, shame / PTSD / Emotional responses not matching situation / Trouble eating / Frequent health complaints	Emotionally withdrawn or detached / Substance abuse / Frequent thoughts of suicide / PTSD / Feeling rage, shame / Unresponsiveness / Frequent health complaints

Signs of Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV)

	Infant	Preschool-Aged	School-Aged	Adolescent
Cognitive	Inability to understand	Self-blame / Difficulty trusting others / Bad dreams / Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the issue / Difficulty concentrating / Lower verbal skills	Self-blame / Distracted, inattentive / Lack of interest in hobbies or activities / Academic problems / Pro-violent attitude / Difficulty trusting others / Bad dreams / Illusions, hallucinations and flashbacks / Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the issue / Difficulty concentrating / Lower verbal skills and reading levels	Short attention span, difficulty concentrating / Lower verbal skills / Lack of interest in hobbies or activities / Pro-violent attitude / Defensiveness / Difficulty trusting others

Challenges You May Face: Activity 6C

Part 1: Which of the situations on this list would you find the hardest to work with? Put a checkmark next to the three you'd find hardest. What are your "hot buttons"?

- A parent who spends most of her money on drugs
- A parent who believes his wife/partner deserves the beatings he gives her
- A parent who lies to you
- A parent who lives in a deplorably dirty home with human/animal waste and no water
- A parent who fondles his 4-year-old child
- A parent who used drugs during her pregnancy
- A parent who refuses to take the medication that controls his mood swings
- A parent who left his children in the car in a parking lot while he went drinking at bars until closing time
- A parent who won't leave the man who physically abuses her in front of her children
- A parent who is so depressed she doesn't get out of bed for weeks at a time

Part 2: In pairs, discuss the following questions:

- Which situations did you pick as your top three and why?
- How might your values, thoughts and feelings about these situations impact your effectiveness as a CASA/GAL volunteer?

Part 3: The facilitator will ask a few volunteers to share answers with the large group.

Skill Building: Cultural Competence

Exploring Culture and Perceptions: Activity 6D

Recall the activity on Exploring Culture and Perceptions that you have completed as Pre-Work. Discuss any questions that you may have.

Culturally Competent Child Advocacy: Activity 6E

Recall the activity on Culturally Competent Child Advocacy that you have completed as Pre-Work. Listen to the facilitator provide a brief overview of differences between stereotyping and cultural competence and the “10 Benefits of Practicing Culturally Competent Child Advocacy.” Reflect on the questions in the Institutional Bias Checklist. Discuss any questions that you may have.

An Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence: Activity 6F



Recall the article “Tips on How to Become More Culturally Competent” that you read as part of Pre-Work. Also, recall the Individual Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence that you have prepared. Listen as the facilitator provides a brief overview of the article and the purpose of the plan. There are many resources in your community for increasing your cultural competence. Consider going to the following places to learn more:

- Your local library
- Museums
- A university in your community
- The Internet
- Community agencies (such as the health department)
- Communities of faith
- Community groups focusing on the cultural traditions and norms of particular cultural or language groups
- Community groups providing health services to particular cultural or language groups

Can you think of any particular resources in your community for expanding your cultural competence? Remember, while race and ethnicity are often the first things that come to mind when people think of the word “culture,” there are many other aspects to culture—and many ways to develop cultural competence in every community. Share your ideas in the large group.

Working a Case

The Amarillo Case: Activity 6G



Part 1: Your group will receive a hard copy of the initial case file for the Amarillo case, which you read for homework. Take several minutes to re-familiarize yourself with the information in this case file. You will also receive a list of questions that your Questioner should remind your group to consider as you review documents and make your recommendations. After you review the initial case file, send your Runner to the facilitator to request an additional document (either an interview transcript from a key player you'd like to speak with or another important document you'd find during a case). You may continue to request additional interviews and documents, one at a time, over the course of 35 minutes, to complete your information gathering for the case at this stage. After 35 minutes, your Scribe should legibly write on the flipchart your group's recommendations to the court regarding services for the child, services for the parent and placement decisions.

Part 2: Take a few minutes to view other groups' recommendations, and then briefly discuss the debrief questions that the facilitator distributes. In the large group, discuss these questions and any others that arose during the activity.

Summarizing the Current Status of a Case: Activity 6H

Part 1: Using your program's court report format, write a two- or three-paragraph summary of the current status of the Amarillo case based on the notes and interviews you read in the previous activity. Your summary should include both the current status of the case and the current status of the child, and it should be typed on a computer.

Part 2: In the large group, discuss what you included in your summary. The facilitator will point out any key omissions.

Chapter Wrap-Up and Review

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 6 Volunteer Training Evaluation, and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Chapter 7 Pre-Work

Prior to the Chapter 7 training session, complete the following assignments:

- **Resilience**

Watch the video “How Resilience Is Built,” which appears in the Chapter 7 Online Resources, and think about relationships you had as a youth that helped you build resilience. (The video is 2 minutes, 17 seconds.)

- **Childhood Reflections**

Listen to “Childhood Reflections,” an audio recording of adults who spent time in the child welfare system speaking about their childhoods and some of the ways the youth exhibited resilience. Prepare a list of ways you think resilience was exhibited.

- **Aging Out Statistics**

Read “Statistics on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care,” which appears in the Chapter 7 Pre-Work Handouts.

Go through the Ecological Model of Factors Affecting Resilience diagram and the factors affecting resilience shown on the graphic (e.g., a child’s thoughts and behaviors, family, school, local community, and the wider society).

Chapter 7 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

- **Concurrent Planning**

Read the topics and answer the questions associated with concurrent planning (pages 3 through 8):

- Permanent Resolutions: Questions to Consider
- Placement with Relative or Kin: Questions to Consider
- Long-Term Foster Care—An Impermanent Solution: Questions to Consider

- **Review Greene and Amarillo Cases**

Re-read or review the Greene and Amarillo cases.

- **Educational Challenges for Children in the Child Welfare System**

- Read up on educational challenges for children in the child welfare system.
- Answer the questions on their K-12 experiences provided in Pre-Work.

- **The Brown Case**

Read the initial case notes before attending the Chapter 7 session.

- **Key Acronyms in Education Advocacy**

Familiarize yourself with the key acronyms listed in “Beyond Alphabet Soup.” These acronyms are often used in educational settings and might be included in a child’s school records. You can use this information as reference material.

- **Laws Related to Older Youth in Foster Care**

Laws that are related to older youth in foster care are provided in Pre-Work.

- **LGBTQ Glossary**

A glossary of LGBTQ terms and expressions is provided in Pre-Work. The terms and expressions are useful when working with youth or family members who identify as LGBTQ. Familiarize yourself with these terms.

