

TRAINING CHILD WELFARE WORKERS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FINAL REPORT

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Introduction

In October of 1995, five schools of social work were awarded grants from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) to develop programs to assist child protective service workers in addressing domestic violence. The Columbia University School of Social Work (CUSSW) was one of the grantees. This paper is the final report CUSSW's project.

The principal objective of the CUSSW grant was to train public child welfare workers to understand and intervene appropriately with families where there is concurrent child abuse or neglect and woman abuse. This objective was accomplished by designing, implementing, and evaluating a competency-based training curriculum on domestic violence for direct service workers in the New York City Child Welfare Administration (CWA). The training curriculum was designed to impact worker's attitudes toward domestic violence, provide them with knowledge and skills for assessing domestic violence, and enhance their practice with families in which there is woman abuse.

Context

While the training needs of child welfare workers has been discussed for the past 30 years, it is only recently that training regarding domestic violence has become an issue in New York City and Nationally. Research on child fatalities, several highly publicized cases, and recent research helped to make domestic violence a pressing training need.

The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect (1995) recommended that, "Programs should integrate services on child abuse and domestic violence and address the need for interagency training." The report cited evidence which indicates that in 50% of homes with adult violence there is also child abuse or neglect.

In New York City, ACS's reorganization plan, *Protecting the Children of New York*, made reference to the highly publicized deaths of Lisa Steinberg and Elisa Izquierdo. These deaths, as the report points out, served as catalysts for change within the child protection system. A factor common to both of these children's homes was that their mothers were battered women. Furthermore, ACS's Fatality Review Panel found that in over 70% of child fatalities the mother was a victim of woman abuse. It is also clear that woman abuse is not limited to homes where there are child fatalities. The limitations of New York City's Child Welfare System to respond to the needs of battered women was detailed in a report by Manhattan Borough President, Ruth Messinger and City Council Member Ronnie Eldridge in a report entitled, *Behind Closed Doors*. This report called for demonstration projects to test new models for responding to battered women in the child welfare system. One such demonstration project was pilot research by CUSSW faculty [Magen, Conroy, Simon, Pancieria, and Hess \(1994\)](#) which demonstrated that woman abuse was present in more than 1/3 of all cases and that purposeful efforts to identify battered women during child maltreatment investigations were more effective than relying solely on reports from the State Central Registry. These deaths, reports, and research made clear that concurrent domestic violence and child maltreatment is an impediment to achieving ACS's mission of demonstrating that "homes are safe and secure."

It was in this context of heightened awareness and increased advocacy that CUSSW began to develop the domestic violence training curriculum.

Design of the Training Program

During the beginning of the design phase it was necessary to renegotiate CUSSW's agreement with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). There were several changes within ACS between the time the grant proposal was submitted and awarded which necessitated changes in the original plan; among the changes were a new commissioner, a new director of ACS's Satterwhite Training Academy, reductions-in-force at the Satterwhite Academy, the hiring of a large number of caseworkers, and a change in the name of the agency from the Child Welfare Administration (CWA) to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

While the Director of the Satterwhite Academy and the Director of Curriculum Development had no questions regarding the project, the Legal Counsel for the Academy expressed a concern. The issue in question was the appropriateness of those with responsibility for protecting children from abuse and neglect (CPS workers) also taking on responsibility for identifying and intervening in domestic violence. While this matter was resolved with the Legal Counsel, this is an issue which manifests itself within the child welfare system in a variety of ways--an issue which training alone cannot settle.

Curriculum Development

There were four operating assumptions which guided the development of the training curriculum. First, the curriculum was designed to start where the workers were. That is, the curriculum assumed that the all trainees has some knowledge and expertise. The domestic violence training did not have to cover issues that workers were already expected to know. For example, there should be no need train child protective service workers about child maltreatment or child welfare law. The second assumption guiding the training was that people do not have to be convinced that domestic violence exists. While information on domestic violence is complex, confusing as well as contradictory; there may be differences on the extent, severity or causes of abuse, the training curriculum assumes that people know something about domestic violence. Third, the curriculum assumes that workers acknowledge a function in child protection work for assessing of domestic violence. Fourth, the training curriculum was designed with the assumption that the best way for people to learn the material was to be involved with it--for the training to be interactive.

As drafts of the training curriculum were developed they were reviewed by faculty of the Columbia University School of Social Work, the Deputy Director of the ACS Satterwhite Training Academy, ACS's Legal Counsel, Supervisors within ACS, Battered Women's Advocates, the Child Welfare Committee of the New York City Interagency Task-Force on Domestic Violence, and the Domestic Violence Educator's Colloquium of New York City. Each individual or group offered feedback and numerous revisions were made. Of particular note was the input offered by the Domestic Violence Educator's Colloquium of New York City. This colloquium was comprised of a dozen professionals who offer training to agencies, hospitals, police departments and the courts, on working with battered women and their families. The colloquium offered a number of suggestions on the first draft of the training curriculum.

The section of the training curriculum on assessment was of particular concern to personnel at ACS. Changes were made to this portion of the curriculum to make it consistent with the new New York State Risk Assessment. The Satterwhite Academy was very involved with training for the new New York State Risk Assessment during the first year of this project. The assessment section also built significantly on the work done by the co-principle investigators and ACS on a project referred to as "Zone C." In the Zone C Project the workers in a specific area of Manhattan were trained to use a detailed protocol for assessing domestic violence in investigating child abuse and neglect.

It was apparent from the discussions with the Domestic Violence Educator's Colloquium and the Satterwhite Academy that a document needed to be developed not only for the trainers, but also for the participants. This evolved into the Participant's Workbook. The Workbook was designed to be precisely that: a WORK book. This book contains some material from the trainer's manual so participants may refer to it during lecture portions of the training. The Workbook also includes all the exercises as well as providing room for note taking. Sections of the Workbook pay particular attention to safety planning and laws related to domestic violence. Finally the workbook has a substantial bibliography for participants to access materials on their own after the training.

Parts of the training curriculum were tested in a domestic violence course offered at the Columbia University School of Social Work. In addition, the entire curriculum was field tested in February of 1996 with 15 trainees from ACS. These pilot tests of the curriculum and consultation from the lead trainer resulted in additional changes.

The training curriculum is presented in two manuals, a [Trainer's Manual](#) and a [Participant's Workbook](#). The training was designed to be implemented over two days. The goal for day one is for participants to become aware of their own feelings regarding victimization and to begin to empathize with the position, plight, and peril of battered women and their children. Once participants have gained an emotional and cognitive understanding of domestic violence from day one, in day two they learn how to assess and intervene as well as how to use laws, protocols and resources.

The training manuals were amended for national use. Specific references to New York City laws, practices, and resources were deleted and replaced with nationally applicable information. Directions were inserted as to where localities and municipalities should go for the information that would be both accurate and helpful for their public sector employees doing child protective service work.

Recruitment and Training of Trainers

Trainers were sought who had a dual interest, and professional respect, for both child protection and work with battered women. As well documented elsewhere, advocates for child protection are often antagonistic toward battered women's advocates and vice versa (see for example Cummings & Mooney, 1988; Edleson & Schechter, 1995). A small cadre of trainers were selected who had demonstrated, in previous training experiences, their respect and capacity for the duality of the work. The selected trainers met with the authors who reviewed the curriculum; attention was given to both the content and the process of training. Initial training of trainers focused on helping them to implement the various exercises called for in the curriculum. Since

the goal of the training program was to improve workers' attitudes toward women who are abused, as well as give them tools for intervening effectively, the process of the training was also extremely important. Trainers had to not only convey the material well, but also engage workers in a real discussion of the material. The trainers had to be able to challenge, without disengaging, workers whose attitudes were problematic. Of particular importance was their comfort with, and skill in being able work with culturally diverse front line child protection workers. Over the course of the Project six Trainers were recruited and trained.

Implementation of the Training Program

Four months after the Project began the first training was held. The geographic area served by this training grant was the City of New York. Within the five boroughs of the City of New York , ACS has 17 Zones and over 900 Caseworkers and Supervisors. A reality of the trainings was that however many participants we planned on there being, at most, 75% would attend. The Caseworkers and Supervisors (who also did investigations) were often scheduled to attend and then drawn away by emergencies. Initial trainings, planned for 20 to 25 participants were usually attended by 15 to 20. Toward the end of the life of this Project ACS stepped up its recruitment of child protective service workers. It is one of the great successes of this Project that ACS requested that our training be institutionalized as a two day segment of the training every new ACS worker receives. As a result the last four trainings undertaken directly by this Project were each well attended. While the goal of the grant was to train 300 workers, the project ultimately trained over 400. Table 1 lists the dates and participation at each of the fourteen training events.

Table 1
Dates And Number of Participants at Each Training Event

Training Dates	Number of Participants	Number Consenting to Evaluation
1. 2/21/96 & 2/22/96	13	13
2. 4/17/96 & 4/18/96	19	19
3. 5/15/96 & 5/16/96	19	14
4. 6/12/96 & 6/13/96	14	10
5. 6/26/96 & 6/27/96	14	9
6. 9/11/96 & 9/12/96	18	14
7. 9/23/96 & 9/24/96	12	8
8. 10/22/96 & 10/23/96	17	14
9. 11/12/96 & 11/13/96	7	5
10. 12/16/96 & 12/17/96	21	16
11. 12/17/97 & 12/18/96	23	23
12. 4/8/97 & 4/9/97	50	27
13. 5/28/97 & 5/29/97	105	46
14. 7/30/97 & 7/31/97	100	63
TOTALS	432	281

Evaluation of Training Program

The training curriculum was evaluated using three methods. First, a multiple choice test of worker knowledge and attitudes regarding domestic violence was developed. This test incorporated portions of the training assessment survey developed by the Satterwhite Academy, the Inventory of Beliefs About Woman Abuse (Saunders, Lynch & Greyson, 1987), and new questions developed by the co-principle investigators. The test was designed to be completed within 20 minutes and was administered three times to all trainees who consented to be involved in the evaluation procedures. The questionnaire was first given prior to the initial training,

second immediately following the first two days of training, and third, at least three months following the training event.

The second method for evaluating the training involved the use of a post session questionnaire (PSQ) for trainees. Seven questions on the PSQ inquired how satisfied the trainee was with various aspects of the training. These questions were scored on a five point likert scale (1= very low to 5=very high). Two open-ended questions on the PSQ sought data on what specifically the trainee had learned as well as suggestions for improving the training program.

Third, a voluntary sample of ACS workers who participated in the training were interviewed by CUSSW project staff. These interviews, which were tape recorded focused on the following areas: attitudes toward domestic violence, knowledge regarding domestic violence, skills in intervening with families where there is domestic violence, and reactions to the training curriculum. Interviews were conducted at least three months following the training event.

All the questionnaires as well as the procedures for collecting the data were approved the Institutional Review Committee (Human Subjects Committee) of Columbia University.

The Trainees

As Table 1 indicates 281(65%) of the 432 ACS workers who received the domestic violence training consented to participate in the evaluation process. The demographic characteristics of these 281 workers are presented in Table 2. The education attainment and work history of these workers are presented in Table 3. The proto-typical "average" trainee was a 35 year old, American born, Black woman with an undergraduate degree who had worked at ACS for about 1 year. However, as the demographic data indicate, the trainees represented the diverse population of New York City.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of Trainees (N= 281)

Characteristic	N	Percentage	M	SD
Age			34.9	(9.5)
Gender				
Female	154	71.0%		
Male	63	29.0%		
Marital Status				
Married/ Living with Partner	91	42.3%		
Separated/Divorced	30	13.9%		
Single/Never Married	91	42.3%		
Widowed	3	1.4%		
Race/Ethnicity				
White	36	18.0%		
Black	130	65.0%		
Hispanic (White)	15	7.5%		
Hispanic (Black)	12	6.0%		
Asian	5	2.5%		
Native American	2	1.0%		

Region of Origin				
North America	153	73.9%		
Caribbean	29	14.0%		
Africa	13	6.3%		
South or Central America	7	3.4%		
India	3	1.5%		
Europe	1	.5%		
Asia	1	.5%		
Language Spoken as a Child				
English	163	75.8%		
Bi-Lingual	32	14.9%		
Spanish	11	5.1%		
Yourba	3	1.4%		
French	2	.9%		
Hindi	2	.9%		
Gujarati	1	.5%		
Japanese	1	.5%		
Are you a Survivor of Domestic Violence?				
	Yes	27		
	No	181		

Table 3
Education and Employment of Trainees (N= 281)

Characteristic	N	Percentage
Education		
Graduate Degree		
No	146	68.9%
Yes	66	31.1%
Field of Graduate Studies*		
Social Work	15	27.3%
Psychology	9	16.4%
Business/Accounting	6	10.9%
Education	6	10.9%
Public Administration	5	9.1%
Sociology	3	5.5%
Criminal Justice	2	3.6%
Law	2	3.6%
Undergraduate Degree**		
Psychology	51	
Sociology	40	
Business/Economics/Accounting	23	
Criminal Justice	18	

Social Work	16		
English	10		
Political Science	7		
Education	7		
Liberal Arts	5		
Human Services	4		
Length of Time Worked at ACS			
Mode	1 year		
Mean	4.87 years	Standard Deviation	(5.39)
Range	0 to 28 years		
ACS Position Title			
Caseworker	111		
Supervisor I	46		
Supervisor II	29		
Other	30		
Length of Time Worked in Social Services			
Mode	1 year		
Mean	8.1 years	Standard Deviation	(7.76)
Range	1 to 33 years		

*Each of the following fields had one trainee: Engineering, Biology, History, Urban Policy, Human Development, Counseling, Chemistry.

**27 different fields listed. The top 10 categories are in the table.

Identification of Domestic Violence

The first question on the pre-test asked workers to estimate the number of domestic violence cases in their own or their supervisee's caseloads over the past 6 months. This question was asked in two ways; First, how many of these domestic violence cases had been identified either on the Oral Report Transmittal (ORT Form 2221) or by a previous caseworker? Second, in how many cases had they or their supervisees identified the domestic violence? Our previous work in Zone C (Magen et al., 1994) indicated the 28% of cases had co-existing domestic violence, but only half of these had been identified on the ORT. These questions served two related purposes. First, how aware were these workers, prior to training of existing domestic violence cases? and second, to what extent were they able to identify domestic violence without training?

Workers reported a range of 0 to 140 cases in the last six months had domestic violence identified on the ORT. The average number of cases across the 281 trainees that had co existing domestic violence identified on the ORT was 11.97 (SD = 19.99). When asked to report how many domestic violence cases in the last six months they or their supervisees had identified which were not shown on the ORT, trainees gave a range of 0 to 100 cases. The average number of cases across these workers was 9.24 (SD = 15.91).

Circumstances & Actions

19 questions on the pre-test, post-test and follow-up test asked workers to report on what actions they believed were appropriate to take when encountering a case involving a battered woman. The instructions stated, "Which of the following do you believe are appropriate actions for a caseworker to take in a case which involves domestic violence?" and then, for example, listed the following action, "Assist the mother in obtaining a Court Order of Protection".

Eleven of these questions were judged to be positive actions--they acted in the best interests of both battered women and their children. Two of these questions were determined to be contraindicated (e.g. Referring the couple for couples counseling) and 6 questions were neither positive nor negative, but depended on individual circumstances. These 19 questions were developed for this project.

Statistical analysis of the eleven positive questions revealed that they had adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$) to be considered a scale. The other two sets of questions did not have acceptable alpha levels (.46 and .67 respectively) to be examined as single scores.

High scores on the positive questions indicates that trainees are more likely to take actions. At pre-test on the positive actions questions the mean score was 36.23 (SD = 4.9). At post-test the positive action score declined to 33.56 (SD = 4.1). The difference between pre-test and post-test was significant ($t = 7.78, p < .01$). However, there was no statistical difference between the post-test score and the follow-up score ($M = 34.32, SD = 4.1$).

There were also statistically significant changes from pre-test to post-test, but not post-test to follow-up, on the two negative action questions. On the question regarding referring the family to a family preservation program, average scores went from 3.05 (SD = .9) at pre-test to 2.89 (SD = .9) at post-test, a statistically significant difference ($t = 2.24, p < .03$). The mean response

on this question at follow-up was 2.99 ($SD = .89$). Similarly, on the question about referring the family for couple counseling the average pre-test response was 3.22 ($SD = .8$) whereas the average post-test score was 1.98 ($SD = 1.2$), a statistically significant difference ($t = 12.7$, $p < .01$). The mean response at follow-up was 2.91 ($SD = 1.1$). The remaining 6 questions, judged to be neither positive nor negative, were not analyzed due to their ambiguous nature and inadequate internal consistency.

Similar to these questions on actions, nine questions were presented describing a variety of circumstances the worker might encounter. Trainees were asked, on a four-point likert scale, how likely they would be to take action under that particular circumstance. These nine questions had adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .83$) to be examined as a scale. A pattern similar to that reported above for the action scores was observed on the circumstances scores. Specifically at pre-test the average score was 30.24 ($SD = 4.1$), at post-test the average score was 31.29 ($SD = 3.8$), a statistically significant difference ($t = 3.92$, $p < .01$). The non statistically significant difference between the post-test score and follow-up score was .63.

These questions on actions and circumstances suggest that as a result of training workers were less likely to take action, both positive actions and contraindicated actions. One interpretation of this self-reported difference in worker behavior is that they were less likely to act on their own beliefs and assumptions, realizing that the best probability of successful intervention came from working with the battered woman, rather than unilateral action on the part of the worker.

Attitudes

The Inventory of Beliefs About Woman Abuse (IBWA) (Saunders, Lynch & Greyson, 1987) is a 31 item scale that measures attitudes toward domestic violence. This scale is scored into five subscales: Wives Gain From Beatings, Wife Beating is Justified, Offender Should Be Punished, Offender Is Responsible, and Help Should Be Given. The higher a score on the subscale the stronger the individual's belief is in that particular attitude.

By statistically comparing results from pre-test scores to post-test scores we were able to show the effect of the training on worker attitudes. An examination of post-test scores with follow-up scores indicates whether the attitudes present at the end of training persisted.

Analysis of the pre-test post-test data show that the training program produced statistically significant changes in worker attitudes toward domestic violence (see Table 4). Specifically, at the end of the training, as opposed to the beginning CPS workers had less of a belief that women gained from being abused ($p < .01$), less of a belief that woman abuse is justified ($p < .01$), more of a belief that batterers should be punished ($p < .01$), more of a belief that the batterer is responsible for the abuse ($p < .01$) and more of a belief that help should be given to battered women ($p < .01$). These data suggests that the Columbia Program was successful, at least in the short-term, in changing CPS worker attitudes toward domestic violence. There were no statistically significant differences between post-test scores and follow-up scores on the five IBWA subscales.

There were statistically significant differences between male and female CPS workers at pre-test on four of the five IBWA subscales. The one subscale without statistically significant differences was regarding the belief that help should be given to battered women. Given that all the trainees

were in a helping role, it is not surprising that there were no differences on this subscale. However, at post test only once subscale of the IBWA--that the batterer is responsible for the abuse--showed statistically significant differences between the male and female trainees. This data suggests that while male trainees when compared to female trainees had less favorable attitudes toward battered women at the beginning of training, by the end of the two day training program their attitudes, with one exception, were similar to female trainees. Thus, these data indicate that the training program may have had a more powerful impact on male worker's attitudes.

Another subgroup of trainees that warranted analyses were those who had identified themselves as survivors of domestic violence. Given that these trainees self-identified, it is likely that this subgroup of 27 are only those who were willing to disclose their status as survivors. Comparison of the attitudes of domestic violence survivors with all trainees as well as with only female trainees (since the 27 survivors were all female) found no statistically significant differences in attitudes at pre-test or post-test. This means that even at the beginning of the training, survivors of domestic violence had no more favorable attitudes toward battered women than other CPS workers.

Table 4
Pre-Test/Post-Test Differences on the Inventory of Beliefs About Woman Abuse (N= 169)

Inventory of Beliefs About Woman Abuse	Pre-test	Pre-test	
Subscale	M	(sd)	Change from Pre to Post
Wives Gain From Beatings	12.43	(4.9)	-1.09**
Wife Beating is Justified	17.08	(5.6)	-1.54**
Offender Should Be Punished	24.40	(4.8)	2.09**
Offender Is Responsible	19.10	(4.8)	3.37**
Help Should Be Given	31.14	(3.2)	1.48**

results are for matched pair two tail t-tests
* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Consumer Satisfaction

All 432 CPS workers who participated in the Columbia training completed a consumer satisfaction measure at the end of the two day training program. Over ninety percent of those trained rated the overall training program as good or excellent. Various components of the training also highly rated such as the usefulness of the training manual and small group exercises. Only 19 trainees, less than 5%, rated the training as "fair" or "poor."

Dissemination Activities

Interest in the work of the Project was significant. Consultations with various groups during development of the curriculum along with several presentations at local and national conferences generated many inquiries regarding our development and progress. Partly because of this interest we developed an Internet World Wide Web (WWW) page (<http://www.columbia.edu/~rhm5>) Interest, or "hits" to the Page began at a modest 2 per week. By the close of the Project we had received over 3,000 "hits" and mailed out 2 to 4 sets of Manuals every week to virtually every state in the Union and Puerto Rico, Australia, and Canada.

In the development phase of this project presentations were made at the New York City Agency for Child Development Annual Conference for providers of family-based day care; at the Columbia University School of Social Work Faculty Colloquium; and at the Barnard College's Center for Research on Women.

An overview of the project was given at the 11th National Council on Child Abuse and Neglect in Washington, DC. The authors presented a paper based on their work to the 5th International Family Violence Research Conference hosted at the University of New Hampshire. Additional presentations were made at the ACS Domestic Violence Group, at Hunter College School of Social Work, at the Maternal Child Health Project of Columbia University, at the Human Services Workshop, and at the Center for the Study of Social Work Practice.

Discussions were held with social work faculty at Simmons College School of Social Work and the University of California at Los Angeles who had similar ACYF funded projects. Common struggles and successes in integrating domestic violence training and services in child protective services were shared. As a result, a paper co-authored by four of the five ACYF sites has been prepared and submitted for publication.

Two concrete products from this grant were the training manuals [Trainer's Manual](#) and [Participant's Workbook](#) and the [WWW page](#) . This home page focuses on the nexus of domestic violence with child maltreatment. The contents of the home page include the training manuals described above. The training manual can be easily downloaded or requested via email from the co-investigators. In addition, this WWW page, located at contains papers on domestic violence and links to other domestic violence sites.

As was stated above selected portions of the training curriculum were used in a domestic violence course at the Columbia University School of Social Work. In addition, a Faculty "Brown Bag" Colloquium on the project was held. Several Master's students and one doctoral student from the School of Social Work have worked on various aspects of project.

Limitations & Impediments

There were several factors which, at times, impacted the ability of the project to proceed at the planned pace and have the greatest impact.

Our group of trainers was small and highly qualified. Because they were particularly talented, and committed, they were often difficult to schedule as they were called upon for other programs and projects in the field of domestic violence. Attendance by the participants was, as stated above, often below expectation until the very end when sessions were oversubscribed.

Participant's other responsibilities, often of an emergency nature, would tug, and, the training required a two-day commitment of time. Initially we were concerned that given our fixed resources for the number of trainings we could hold, we would not meet our target for individual participation whereas at the end, we surpassed it. Space for the Trainings was also sometimes a problem. The new ACS Commissioner, and the new Director of Satterwhite, were both intent on the training of new recruits and the retooling of current workers and supervisors. The various training components competed for limited space. At times, rather than implement our program at the Academy we trained in a borough office, the training room of a "sister" city agency, and one time in the donated space of a local bank!

Follow-up interviews with those trained was difficult at best. It was a time of some tumult in the agency, not necessarily unproductive tumult, but nonetheless it impacted on the ability to connect with previous participants. Workers and supervisors were reassigned, promoted, and sometimes separated from the agency.

An attempt was made to implement the program in New Jersey through the Division of Youth and Family Services. Competing providers of training made this attempt ultimately unsuccessful.

Impact on Policy and Practice

The most significant contribution to practice has been demonstrated on a case by case basis where children and battered women were provided needed services to keep themselves safe. Another important benefit was the impact on worker's attitudes toward domestic violence--the crucial first step in the training process. An increase in awareness regarding domestic violence coupled with augmented skills in the identification and assessment of domestic violence should have lead to actions on the part of workers which offered the mother and child more protection and assign the mother less blame.

As a practical matter, the development of the training curriculum for public child welfare workers on domestic violence was timely due to the implementation of the new New York State Child Welfare Risk Assessment. The state-wide use of this risk assessment instrument, which includes a section on domestic violence, made the training relevant for all child welfare workers in New York State, not just New York City. In the current budget climate both within the State and City, it is likely that the development of this curriculum would have been delayed or dropped. Furthermore, the James Satterwhite Academy for Child Welfare Training, CWA's center for training, was necessarily having to focus its efforts on the new State Risk Assessment and on a response to staff changes within the agency which necessitate additional training. Thus, this training project enabled Satterwhite Academy to provide needed training without taxing its resources. Satterwhite's involvement with this project from the inception will helped to insure that the training program continued after this grant expires.

Competent practice within the child welfare system in recent times has been guided by a standard based on the "best interests of the child." This focus, however, has typically been conceptualized and operationalized without a consideration of the needs of the mother. This project's training of child welfare workers, infusion of knowledge within the School of Social Work, and dissemination of information to wider audiences should, in the least, contribute to the re-examination of the principles guiding child welfare practice.