

## **Quality Improvement Center on Domestic Violence in Child Welfare: Advancing an Adult & Child Survivor-Centered Approach**

In 2016 the Children's Bureau/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched the national Quality Improvement Center on Domestic Violence in Child Welfare (QIC-DVCW). This 5-year effort was established to test interventions in order to improve how child welfare agencies and their partners work with families experiencing domestic violence (DV) to improve adult and child survivor safety, child permanency, and family well-being.

The overriding goal of the QIC-DVCW is to generate and disseminate knowledge and data on strategies that:

- Improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of pregnant/and or parenting families experiencing domestic violence who are involved in the child welfare system;
- Promote collaboration among multiple stakeholders (e.g. child welfare agencies, domestic violence programs for survivors and offenders, early childhood programs, mental health agencies, etc.) that are needed to effectively serve families who experience domestic violence;
- Enhance identification, risk assessment, planning and decision-making processes within and across systems; and
- Enhance capacity within child welfare to sustain changes in practice and policy.

### **Phase I – Planning**

In Phase I (Year 1), the QIC-DVCW conducted a series of listening sessions with families with lived experience of domestic violence and child welfare involvement (English and Spanish-speaking mothers and English speaking fathers), and a variety of professionals (e.g., child welfare and domestic violence program staff, staff of domestic violence offender intervention programs, judges and tribal leaders); conducted a review of research and federal data sets; and convened a National Advisory Committee to explore and refine the research questions for Phase II.

As a result of these efforts, the QIC-DVCW is advancing an Adult & Child Survivor-Centered Approach that aligns policies, practices and programming across sectors to be responsive to the interconnected experiences of child and adult survivors of domestic violence. The approach also aligns collaborative efforts to promote healthy accountability and to create meaningful pathways to change for the person who has caused harm. It orients the work of the QIC-DVCW to sustaining and strengthening the safety of survivors and the well-being of all family members, including the DV offender.

### **PHASE II – Research and Capacity Building Projects**

Generating an empirical knowledge base about collaborative models and systems interventions is a critical aspect of the work of the QIC-DVCW. In Phase II (Years 2 – 5) the QIC-DVCW will investigate the following questions in partnership with Research and Capacity Building Projects across the country:

1. Does a **collaborative, adult and child survivor-centered approach** -- that includes promoting accountability and positive change of the DV offender -- improve adult and child survivor safety, child permanency, and child and family well-being for child welfare involved families experiencing DV?
2. For **which families, and in which social contexts**, does an adult and child survivor-centered approach improve these outcomes?
3. What **factors are associated with successful implementation and sustainability** of an adult and child survivor-centered approach?
4. What are the **costs associated with the implementation and maintenance** of an adult and child survivor-centered approach, and how do these compare to the costs of "practice as usual"?

Three Research and Capacity Building Projects have been selected to work with the QIC-DVCW, and one additional project will be selected in the coming months. In northern Massachusetts, northern Illinois, and Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, public and private child welfare agencies will work with their dependency courts, domestic violence service providers, domestic violence offender intervention programs, responsible fatherhood programs, and others to test the impact of the Adult & Child Survivor-Centered Approach on outcomes for child-welfare involved families experiencing domestic violence. Projects will collect and report data on their activities to move the field toward more effective and sustained practices. A rigorous cross-project evaluation will synthesize qualitative and quantitative data to advance the field toward a common understanding of how child welfare agencies and their partners can be most effective when working with families experiencing domestic violence.

### **Knowledge Development & Dissemination**

Throughout the project, the QIC-DVCW will keep the field apprised of activities, progress, and lessons learned. The QIC-DVCW will develop publications and presentations, and will be available at conferences and professional meetings for interactive discussions. The final report will summarize findings and make recommendations for future policy and practice reforms. The QIC-DVCW website DVChildWelfare.org (launching in July 2018) will provide resources for interested stakeholders around the country.

### **National Advisory Committee**

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) to the QIC-DVCW is comprised of experts in child welfare and domestic violence research, practice, and policy along with judicial leaders and those experienced in tribal law and practice, racial equity, and early childhood. The NAC provides on-going strategic guidance at key points in the work of the QIC-DVCW.

### **QIC-DVCW Partners**

Through a cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau, **Futures Without Violence** is leading this endeavor along with an experienced group of partners including the **Center for the Study of Social Policy**, the **National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**, the **University of Kansas School of Social Welfare**, **Caminar Latino**, and the **Center for Health & Safety Culture at Montana State University**.