



Building a PEER TA Network State by State

Domestic Violence and Economic Security Webinar

Moderator: Lisa Washington-Thomas

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1:30 pm EST

MaryLouise Kelley: Good afternoon. This is MaryLouise Kelley, colleagues at the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. I would like to welcome you to this webinar on Domestic Violence and Economic Security offered through the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network.

In my program, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, we support Domestic Violence Services through 2700 different programs across the country and serve over 1.7 million survivors and their children. But we know that many victims of domestic violence will not go to a domestic violence program for services.

They may walk into a doctor's office, a TANF office, or child care center and still need help. In fact, it's more likely than not that a woman who seeks TANF benefits has experienced domestic violence during her lifetime and that's why we think it's so important that everyone who is working with women, working in human services programs, understands how to respond and recognize domestic violence when they see it, to respond appropriately in a supportive way and to help people link to the services and support and assistance they may need.

So I think it's wonderful that you're going to hear today about the links between economic security and increasing options for safety for domestic violence victims and their children. And you're going to hear some great examples of how programs can enhance economic security and safety for these survivors in some very practical ways.

Now for an introduction to the rest of the webinar I'm going to turn this over to my colleague Lisa Washington-Thomas, the Branch Chief for TANF Technical Assistance. Lisa.

Lisa Washington-Thomas: Thank you MaryLouise. Hi. Our TANF regulations (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) provide the flexibility to implement special programs that are primarily for screening of domestic violence and the referral of victims to the appropriate services.

Many states that have chosen the family violence option also have the flexibility to waive some program requirements such as work requirements and time limits as appropriate. Our office, the Office of Family Assistance, is focused on self-sufficiency and increasing healthy and stable families.

We have also been alerted that domestic violence is increasing during these difficult economic times. And since we're not domestic violence experts, we felt that it was extremely important to reach out to our colleagues at the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program in the Family Youth Services Bureau to provide useful information regarding family violence.

In addition, this information has been favorably received at several of our regional events sponsored by our TANF regional program managers. We are excited to work with our colleagues MaryLouise Kelley and Shawndell Dawson and our esteemed presenters Ilene Stohl and Kim Pentico, with Anne Menard moderating.

Our presenters will provide a brief history of domestic violence, including providing comparison statistics of the prevalence of domestic violence in the TANF population versus the general population. Then they will discuss how asset-building strategies can help these victims.

Our webinar has four learning objectives: to give TANF agencies and their stakeholders an overview of the relationship between economic security and the empowerment of survivors in domestic violence; to provide an outline of successful asset-building models geared towards survivors of domestic violence; to raise awareness of how programs and partnership are empowering survivors of domestic violence and are providing resources that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and to encourage collaboration between TANF agencies, the domestic violence community and asset-building programs.

We have a packed agenda. We expect the webinar to last an hour and a half with presentations again from Ilene Stohl and Kim Pentico with Anne Menard moderating the webinar.

We will only be taking questions and answers through the online Web chat. You can go to the question and answer sections at the top of the tool bar and submit your questions. We're hoping to answer all questions but we're expecting a large audience this afternoon. So if your questions are not answered, we will be providing a Q&A that will be on the Peer TA Web site, along with a transcript and the recording of today's webinar.

Now I'd like to turn it over to Anne Menard.

Anne Menard: Thanks Lisa and thanks MaryLouise for that welcome. And thank you all for joining us. It looks like we have a really nice mix of participants in terms of the role that you play in your communities and in your agencies, as well as your location across the country. So that is really gratifying for us that so many of you were interested in hearing more about domestic violence and we're expecting to get a lot of great questions. So I encourage you to post those as we're talking and there will be someone that's organizing those for the Q&A.

Let me introduce myself and my co-presenters. Again I'm Anne Menard. I'm the executive director of the National Resource Domestic Violence. I've worked on policy, practice and research issues effecting domestic/sexual violence survivors since the mid-1970s. I have been at the National Resource Center since 1994 except for a brief stint at HHS with the Family Prevention and Services Program.

I was a co-contributor to a report Not Enough--What TANF Offers Family Violence Victims which we released in March of 2010 with legal momentum and which reported on findings of a national survey of staff from nearly 600 domestic violence programs and other agencies, including TANF, Legal Aid, anti-poverty programs and child support offices which are working with victims on TANF related issues and I'm happy to answer questions about that if people are interested.

It's also my real pleasure to introduce my two co-presenters; Ilene Stohl has been active in the movement to end violence against women since 1992. Ilene who holds a Masters Degree in Public Health has worked as an advocate in shelters and community based programs across the country.

She currently coordinates the Economic Justice Project and Prevention work at the Washington State Coalition against Domestic Violence. Her current work focuses on helping systems and institutions improve their responses and strengthen the economic safety net for survivors.

And I know the Washington State Coalition has really built very strong collaborations with a variety of state agencies in Washington State as well as other collaborative partners and we'll be talking--we'll be pulling on that experience during this webinar.

I also want to welcome and introduce you to Kim Pentico who has been working with and on behalf of survivors of sexual and domestic violence since 1990. She has also worked at local domestic violence programs in Kansas and for seven years at the Kansas Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

She currently works as an economic justice specialist for the Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program which works to insure and enhance survivor access to economic justice and safety, and that is a project of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), one of our collaborative partners.

So I need to be advancing slides so let me make sure that I can do that. There we go. So there you have the names of the folks who I just introduced.

So what are we going to cover today? I know we --Lisa reviewed the objective but basically we've organized the information into these four categories. I'm going to do some initial defining of terms so that everyone knows how we're using the term, for example, domestic violence.

I'm going to turn it over to Ilene Stohl who's going to talk to us about domestic violence. What's money got to do with it and make some connections or look at that intersection between TANF and domestic violence and some of the things that are important to understand about what and when domestic violence arises within the TANF context.

We're then going to pivot to Kim Pentico who's going to talk about what we've learned from our work related to building economic security for domestic violence survivors. Over the last ten years or so it has really become a much more significant focus of domestic violence advocates and there's a lot of strategies and lessons learned and Kim is one of the people-- best people

in the country to talk to us about that because she really has that both broad and very specific view.

So we're going to get started. I want to start by asking: when we say domestic violence, what do we mean? And what you see on the slide in front of you is what I think is a pretty common working definition around the country.

When domestic violence advocates use the term domestic violence, we're generally talking about and we generally understand that to mean a pattern of abuse and coercive behaviors. That includes physical, sexual, psychological abuse, as well as economic coercion, and that's one of the focuses of today's discussion, used within an intimate partner relationship.

Domestic violence typically involves the use of a combination of tactics aimed at establishing control over an intimate partner.

So there are a couple of things that are important about this definition. I want to raise them up a little bit. The first is that we're generally talking about a pattern. We're not typically talking about one incidence of violence or abuse. So we're not talking about fights that get out of control. We're really talking about a set of interactions that really have at its center an attempt to control another partner.

The other thing that I want to lift up is that we're generally talking about a range of tactics. So not just physical violence although often physical violence within a relationship establishes that initial control over the partner and may be used to maintain control as the relationship controls. But we're also talking about these other tactics that you see here.

The other thing that's important to understand about domestic violence is that it's not just physical violence. And in fact if we're looking only for black eyes or bruises, we're going to miss a lot of domestic violence because it also involves all of the things that you see here and more. Stalking and threats to kidnap, kill or otherwise harm family, friends or property.

We've heard a lot from domestic violence victims who feel like-- who have said, you know, one of the most powerful controlling things my partner did is remind me that he knew where my mother lived. And if you know that you have a partner who's willing to use violence and is trying to keep you in a relationship that you might want to leave, that's a very powerful threat.

Threats to commit suicide as an attempt to keep someone in a relationship that they might be trying to leave also can be seen as part of this pattern. Use of degrading or coercive language, and of course, controlling food, sleep, access to money, credit cards or medical abuse.

This last one, denying contact with family or friends, is particularly important; isolating--isolating your partner. Cutting them off basically from those who could provide information or assistance.

And again that's why it's so important as MaryLouise said that we have partners so an abusive partner may let someone go to the doctor or may not; may let someone go to the TANF office and that may be the only place where they are going to be able to get information that there's help available or access services.

And economic abuse is an increasingly recognized tactic and we'll be talking about that quite a bit today.

So what do we know about domestic violence? And we are very excited about a recent study just released actually last month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Survey (NISVS) provided us much more rich and current information about the experiences of both men and women of intimate partner, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence and stalking.

And I'm just pulling out two of the findings. One in four women has been a victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The percentages for men are much lower--one in seven.

But a particularly important finding is that women are disproportionately affected by sexual violence by an intimate partner, violence and stalking. So while both men and women experience violence, that impact is disproportionately impacting women. Women are left more fearful and injured, require medical attention, and are concerned for their safety at significantly higher rates than men.

And --this survey is based on reports from both men and women. So as men and women describe their experience, they're significantly different.

Women are also twice as likely to miss school or work as a result of the violence that they experienced by their partner. And I want to make note of the link that's at the bottom of the slide and I encourage you to go and get a copy of the NISVS study. There's also a fact sheet. There's lots of information there for those of you who are interested in this very new data.

And it's because of the NISVS data and again there are lots of experiences and a disproportional impact of domestic violence on women abused by their male partners; because they are most likely to be the victims that you will

encounter in TANF and child support and other programs that you might be situated at, we are going to be using gendered language today.

But we also will be referring to victims primarily as females but we also want to acknowledge that domestic violence also occurs in same sex relationships and men can be abused by their female partners; all victims of domestic violence deserve our support and protection.

We also notice this on this slide, although that number is missing. I don't know how that happened. That every day in the United States, an average of three women are killed by a current or former intimate partner. So not by a stranger, not on the street as a drive-by, whatever, they are killed by someone with whom they were in an intimate relationship and may in fact have children together.

So this is a serious issue in this country and really one that requires all of us to do what we can to identify domestic violence when it occurs, to offer support and referrals to services and to do what we can to address safety issues and increase real options for victims and survivors.

So we're again very happy that you've joined us in this conversation and I'm going to turn it over now to Ilene who's going to expand our understanding of the connection between domestic violence and economics. Ilene.

Ilene Stohl: All right. Thanks Anne. And I just want to say thanks to everybody. I'm really honored to be asked to be the person to talk about this. I know that there are many, many folks across the country doing incredible work so I just really appreciate highlighting the work that we're doing at the Washington State Coalition against Domestic Violence, as well in Washington State. I'm excited to highlight the great partnerships we have.

I also just want to acknowledge that a lot of my thinking and doing has been really impacted by my predecessor Tyra Lindquist and by my current co-collaborator Traci Underwood. So I just want to acknowledge that.

So let's move on to what's money got to do with it? One of the things that I feel like in the domestic violence field we've been really good at for the last 30 to 40 years has been saying to everybody that anybody can be a victim of domestic violence. I think that we shouted that from the rooftops, we told folks, you know, it doesn't matter the color of your skin, your class, your gender, your life experience. Anybody can be a victim and that is still certainly true.

But what we also know is that women in poverty, and particularly women of color who are living in poverty, are at greater risk and I just think we need to acknowledge that and explore the reasons for that. So let me spend a little bit of time doing that.

So we know that money has a lot to do with domestic violence. There have been numerous studies that have shown this and I'm just going to break down what the research tells us.

We know that it's a cycle and that things are working together as these gears show. And we know that having limited financial resources is a big risk factor for domestic violence. We also know that an abuser's actions during the course of a relationship can plunge a survivor into poverty; even if they were not in poverty before and that leaving an abusive relationship can actually leave a survivor in an impossible financial situation.

All of these things work together. You may come in at a different place in the gears but we know that all of these are what makes domestic violence so problematic for folks living in poverty.

Let's break it down a little bit more. So we know that when you have limited financial resources, the reason why this impacts your safety and your ability to actually have options for safety is that when you have fewer financial resources, you actually have fewer good choices.

A lot of times people talk about how, well, I wish that they had made better choices. Well oftentimes the choices that are available aren't that great and when you're living in poverty and you don't have access to resources, even including a credit card to go spend the night somewhere when you know things are amping up or that you can pull your kids out of school and out of daycare and do a different one. If you don't have financial resources, you just can't have those options. So an abuser is able to gain much more control. And that research shows that the abuse is actually likely to last longer and be more injurious.

I want to make sure that I say though that this does not mean that those living in poverty are more violent. Certainly we know that that is not the case and we also know that it doesn't mean that those with plenty of financial resources are not at risk. In fact, we've seen that many times survivors are plunged into poverty because of the abuse that they've experienced and we'll talk a little bit more about that.

We also know that leaving an abusive relationship can make a survivor really have an impossible financial situation to deal with. We know that not only is that the case but that leaving is always one of the most dangerous times for a survivor. We know that from our work in Washington State, from our own

fatality review, that over half of women who are murdered by their intimate partners are murdered after separation; so after they've already left the relationship which, you know, is what we typically tell folks when they come and tell us that they're a victim. Often that's the first thing we say is you've got to leave.

And acknowledging that leaving is often the most dangerous time is really important to figuring out how folks can make decisions about their relationship that are the safest for them and their kids.

For a survivor who wasn't living in poverty, leaving often plunges her into poverty because she won't actually have access to her previous financial resources. So for somebody who had a joint checking account or who was relying on their partner's income, she may then become closed off as a result of ending the relationship and leaving.

For folks who have health insurance, oftentimes we don't think about this, but maybe they are on their partner's health insurance; that can abruptly be ended or children can be taken off. And so that can leave somebody in financial ruin if they have a kid with special needs or just anybody.

I mean I was just joking with my presenters that I was home the last three days with my sick child and I have the flexibility to do that. But when you're leaving an abusive relationship, you don't actually have as much flexibility or maybe you're in a low wage job where they don't include sick time. So we see how there's lots of opportunities for abusers to exploit that.

And then finally we often know that abusers' actions during the course of a relationship can plunge a survivor into poverty. Abusers use economics and

finances as a way to control their partners. They do this because it works and it's fairly easy to do.

The tactics that abusers use often set survivors up for financial ruin if they ever try to become independent. We know from survivors telling us that oftentimes abusers will use their social security number and use their credit for things that maybe aren't the safest or best investment and so that when a survivor leaves and they're trying to get an apartment on their own, they find out that their credit has actually been destroyed when they can't rent a place.

Abusers also know that having financial freedom allows people to make different choices about their relationships. And so they might work to limit the opportunities to keep or get a job.

And so some tactics might include harassing the victim at work, showing up, calling incessantly. And we know that of abused women, over three quarters of them who had a job were harassed by their partner.

As I mentioned, identity theft or ruining credit: a lot of times we also hear from survivors that the abusers has taken out lines of credit in their children's names and so they don't actually find that out until much later.

Not allowing a victim to work and develop a job history and skills: we also heard from survivors who were living fairly upper-class or middle-class lives where they were actually working for their partner and when their relationship ended, they had no work history because he couldn't be a reference for them or refused to answer any of those questions.

Not allowing somebody to have access to their bank account, forcing victims to hand over paychecks: one of the things that we just recently also saw in our

fatality review here in Washington State was that many of the women who were murdered by their partners actually were the only ones having the job in their relationship and that their partners were really demanding them to give over their money and they didn't have control over the income that they earned and that if they didn't continue to work, that they would actually be homeless because their partner wasn't bringing in anything and that was a really powerful tool of control.

And then doing things to get the victim evicted: I'm sure many of you have heard these stories before of those punching holes in the wall or, you know, destroying the property or, you know, if they're not allowed on the premises, still showing up and harassing or harassing the neighbors.

So we know that as Anne mentioned and other folks have already talked about, we know that a large proportion of the population in this country experience domestic violence which in and of itself is really unsettling and upsetting and certainly we're working to try and end that. But we also know that studies show that between 50% and 80% of women receiving welfare have been victims of domestic violence and that makes sense after what we've just talked about with all the reasons how your financial stability is really impacted by your relationships.

And so it would make sense that folks that are trying to access TANF are coming out of those relationships or are still in and trying to rebuild.

So we know that a quarter of women in the general population experience DV in their lifetime and that the prevalence for the TANF population is much higher. You know, some would say twice or three times as high.

We also know that for the tribal TANF folks that are on the call that we also know that in the native population, you know, abuse is staggeringly high and so that's a really important thing to, you know, keep in mind when we're talking with all of our TANF programs.

The other thing I'll just say about this before I move on is that we also know that the vast majority of TANF recipients are women and so I think anytime you have a predominantly female clientele, you also just need to make sure that you pay attention to domestic violence.

And in terms of the folks who are from child support calling in, we know that in some ways the domestic violence statistics and who the custodial parent is often mirror each other. And that from what I've heard at least in Washington State is that oftentimes it's about 85% to 90% of the custodial parents are women in Washington State and the other percentage are men and that that actually mirrors who's perpetrating and experiencing domestic violence in our state.

So I'm actually going to turn this over to Kim because she does a really nice job of talking about why this might be and what folks in poverty experience and what anybody experiences when they leave relationships. So Kim I'm going to turn this part over to you.

Kim Pentico: Sure. Thanks. And thank you. I want to thank everybody for taking the time out of your busy lives to be with us today.

So one of the things we talk about and Ilene's done a fantastic job of setting the stage for this but to take just a minute to take it out of those folks or the women we're working with or the survivors that we come in contact with and think about in your own life what would be the options in our - even in our

own personal lives if violence occurred and to take just a minute of what that would look like.

And for many of us our first instinct would be to call law enforcement or to leave or to fight back or to divorce and/or separate following all of those other things.

And the reality is that none of those have really for sure positive outcomes even for any one of us. Calling law enforcement--just think about it. What would that be like for you in your own home--calling law enforcement? Obviously to get safe, if that's what you needed to do, you would do it. But it would also mean then if you have children in the home, explaining what has occurred. It would mean having law enforcement outside of your house in the middle of the night or in the middle of the day and explaining it to family or to friends what's going on.

To have those conversations, to have your partner potentially a co-bread winner or primary bread winner or the person who takes care of the children arrested and potentially jailed for a period of time.

What does leaving really look like? Where would you go? If violence occurred, excuse me, would I be safer at a hotel or at a friend's house or at a family member's house? What would leaving truly look like for me or for you if violence occurred in your home this evening?

What would fighting back look like? Would that be safe for you to do? Would that be your instincts or would flee be the instinct or if ultimately the response or the choice you had was to divorce or separate, how would that look for you and your family? Would that be financially feasible? Would it be religiously a

possibility? For many folks, divorce is simply not going to be an option because of their faith or their community or finances for any one of us.

So for anybody, the choices are not good when it comes to what your response or available resources are if violence were to occur in your home at any time.

So then if we think about what those options would look like, particularly for leaving, I may lose my job if I leave. I may lose employment or a job particularly if the partner, my abusive partner and I work together. Or if he knows where I live and is harassing me at my workplace, I very likely will lose my housing.

I can tell you if I were to leave right now my partner, I would not likely be able to afford another place on my own remotely similar to what I have together. I travel a lot for my current job and it would be very difficult for me to navigate my current employment if I didn't have a partner who was safe that I could rely on to help do-- to co-parent with me. That would a huge challenge.

I can tell you that if violence were occurring in my home right now, leaving would be a really tough, tough choice for me. As crazy as that sounds, that may not be a safe choice for me. It may or may not-- it depends.

I would lose my healthcare if I were to leave at this point. My partner carries my health insurance for me and my children and so that would not be a good choice for me and obviously I would lose my partner's income.

So for any one of us, again leaving may not be a great choice and still as a society, as a community, we often think that's the simple answer and we know that that really for many of us is not on top of the fact that we also know that

leaving actually increases our risk of injury and violence. For many survivors that we see seven times the increase of injury and dangerous situations when women and survivors make an attempt at independence such as leaving.

So these are just not good choices. Then if we think about then women living in poverty, it is even more of a bad choice to look at. What does it look like if I'm a women living in poverty and I call law enforcement?

I have actually almost an equal chance of going to jail as my battered (?) does. There's a good chance we may both go to jail. There's just not always a great response. We're certainly working on that and being proactive in that area but those are not always good choices; particularly for folks living in poverty.

Leaving may simply not be an option. Where am I going to go if I have no access to a credit card, to stay at a hotel or transportation to go stay with friends or family? Fighting back may clearly put me in danger of also being arrested. And divorce and separation may not financially be an option for me if I'm living in poverty.

So I hope that helps us to sort of think through what that can look like for any one of us, let alone the really terrible choices that leaves women living in poverty and that the reality is for those folks is that it means doubling up. It means going to a shelter that often has a 30 or 60 day time limit. And can you imagine you picking up your family and your kiddos and going to a shelter and having 30 or 60 days to sort of get it all figured out and have another place to go to and that access to these resources increase safety.

If we can help folks get access to some of these resources, we know that their ability to get safe and stay safe is significantly increased. So that's where we as helpers and as social service providers and people who really just care

about what happens to folks, really can step up our game and make this possible for folks to get and receive safety.

Ilene Stohl: Thank you Kim. So I guess this is where the good news is. Right? That TANF actually can work as a safety net for these folks and in general and I know that, you know, from my perspective, TANF is obviously not a perfect program but it actually does have flexibility so we're going to talk about how that can work when it takes these survivors into account and has policies, practices and philosophies that really work to support and help create safety and at least promote economic security and empowerment for folks that are on its roll.

So one of the ways that the TANF program has really embraced this is through the Family Violence Option and this was an amendment back in '97 that was attached through our Washington State Senator Patty Murray and the late Senator (Paul Loftown) (?). And really I just think this is an incredible piece of legislation that allows states if they adopt the Family Violence Option to do some pretty creative and intentional things if they choose.

With that said, I will say that Washington State I think does have one of the best adoptions of and implementations of the Family Violence Option so I encourage those of you who are not in Washington State to really - to try and figure out ways to incorporate some of the great things that we've done here, and there are other states that actually are doing some great things as well but there is that possibility.

I think most states at this point have adopted the Family Violence Option but whether or not they've implemented a shift in philosophy and in practices I think really vary across the country. So I did just want to give a little shout out to Washington.

So if a state adopts the Family Violence Option, it has to do three things and you can't just do a couple of them. You have to do all three.

And so one of the things that you must do is screen individuals receiving TANF for domestic violence while maintaining their confidentiality. So pretty clear cut. States have implemented this in wildly different ways.

Currently in Washington State we have seven questions that you ask to determine whether or not somebody is experiencing domestic violence or formerly was experiencing it.

Once you screen them and you find out if they are in fact a survivor, then you need to refer those folks to counseling and supportive services. I think this is where Washington State really has done an excellent job in the ways in which most of our welfare offices, which we call community service offices - CFOs here, is that we have actually - they contract with domestic violence programs and have placed advocates in the welfare offices.

And so there are actually DV advocates on site that TANF recipients can meet with and have ongoing relationships with to do that work; that really is outside the scope of TANF but that really does impact your ability to participate and actually has TANF be a helpful source of support for you. So that I think has been really an incredible service for survivors in Washington State, and some other states have also done that.

And then finally--I think here is the beauty in this legislation--is that you can waive any program requirements. It's really quite broadly written. So you can waive any program requirement that makes it more difficult for individuals to escape domestic violence or that unfairly penalizes those who have or are being victimized or puts individuals at further risk.

And so this really leaves it wide open that you can really waive any program requirement that you see impeding a survivor's ability to participate and ability to get or stay safe. So I'm going to talk a little bit about how that has looked.

So this flexibility that the Family Violence Option provides really gives survivors the chance to recover from violence and the opportunity to either establish plans that work for them and move forward. It also enables work groups and other work on domestic violence issues to be counted as work activities.

So that's specific to Washington State. A number of years ago, the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) actually undid a lot of those really helpful provisions if you ask me. So, you know, this has varied across the country in whether or not this counts for Federal participation guidelines but certainly Washington State at least has adopted our own participation guidelines that we use and then of course that doesn't necessarily get reflected in the report to the Feds that, you know, they have a little bit different standards and we need those as well. But it's nice that it can have flexibility.

So how it has worked in Washington State--I just want to give a few examples and then I'll turn it back over to Kim to talk more about the broad economic justice work across the country.

But in Washington State and I should say that really nationwide the Family Violence Option does give the opportunity to waive any of these things and this is just what we've chosen to do here. But the legislation actually does call out child support and time limits specifically.

So in Washington State, if you are on TANF, just like everywhere else, you are required to participate with child support; by virtue of the Family Violence Option, you can waive that requirement. And so here in Washington you're able to get what we call good cause for non-cooperation with the division of child support which means that you can either not participate at all and not cooperate with giving child support any information about let's say the father of your children or the other parent of your children if that would put you in greater risk or put your children at risk.

And this really is critical for survivors of domestic violence. We have heard from many, many folks that it's the child support that really triggers a reengagement or a reaction of abuse. And so what we heard that what happens is, you know, maybe you've left and there's a little bit of calm period. Well when the child support notice is sent to the abuser, that really reignites their desire for control because they figure, well, if I'm going to be paying for these kids, I want to have some control over what they do, which, you know, makes sense if it's not an abusive relationship. Right?

But it can be really problematic if that control is coercive, manipulating and scary. Right? So waiving that program requirement I think is hugely beneficial and very important to the safety of survivors and their kids.

We have two levels of good cause here in the State and one enables somebody to continue to get the child support but they don't have to necessarily cooperate and their information is protected and the other one just stops collection all together.

We also can waive job search requirements in this state. And so this enables survivors who are on TANF but who just aren't quite ready to go to job search or maybe they can go to job search, but actually doing that would put them at

greater risk because the place where they do that is actually the same place where their partner or ex-partner is going or it's a small community and that's just not a safe thing for them to do. So there are ways to waive that requirement and have them still be working on things that will enable them to be economically self-sufficient later on but doesn't necessarily include that very specific job search component.

And then finally time limits. Here in Washington we for many, many years had a fairly open interpretation of the time limits and that has been cracked down recently and we really stick to the five year time limit but we do waive that for folks who are actively engaged in domestic violence activities and who are working with an advocate.

And again that's why the advocates in the offices are really, really beneficial because it provides that resource not only for the survivors but also for the workers at the TANF office so that they actually have support around how to help the folks in their caseload.

So I'm going to turn it over to Kim, but I think we'll talk more later about some of the things that in the current economic climate are more difficult to achieve with the Family Violence Option but that I think there's still really good reason to do; I think just a lot of opportunities continue to be great practices across the country. So that's all I have for now. Kim.

Kim Pentico: Thanks Ilene. And I would just mention, Ilene has much fancier screens than I do. So I'll just put that out there.

So I'm going to talk a little bit about asset-building in particular and in relation to what we're doing particularly through our partnership with the Allstate Foundation.

So let me just talk a little bit about asset-building and then I'll go into some of the things that we've been able to do through our program and some things that we've seen being out there training advocates in their communities.

So in doing this and thinking about asset-building, I think one of our greatest challenges in general is that it feels like information is beyond us; particularly when I'm out there training advocates. When I say things like building assets, they assume that is something that even they can't or don't do so their ability to learn about it to help others with feels really limited.

So if you think more about really what building assets means and the definition of assets, is that it's a useful or valuable quality, person or thing. Helps somebody create an advantage or resource.

Oh. Mine maybe doesn't go on. Oh, there we go. Or another definition is that an asset is a resource controlled by the entity as a result of past events and from which future economic benefits are expected to flow to the entity.

So an asset really can also just be information and education about things like finances, financial education, money management, budgeting, credit and things like that. So really information becomes for many of us, including survivors, their ability to not only get safe but to stay safe.

Economic justice is sort of beyond the immediate safety, beyond immediate shelter but really allows survivors to become secure, which is really what we are focusing on.

So I kind of would encourage us to always think about renaming that term asset or having conversations about what asset-building means. I sort of always joke around that we need to rename it getting our mojo back but really

relying on us and relying on our ability to learn more about financial management so that we can carry that on to others and provide that to others.

So here's a little about what we're doing. We at the National Network to End Domestic Violence have been so fortunate to partner with the Allstate Foundation and have been doing so now for seven years. And in doing so, we're allowed to address economic justice and financial empowerment issues for survivors of domestic violence. And we have done that through grant making, financial education and technical assistance and training.

And what we're probably most proud of in particular--the grant making is fantastic because it allows us to feel like Santa once or twice a year, but has been creating the financial education piece of that and we created a specific curriculum really geared towards the needs of survivors of domestic violence.

And what really is unique about that piece is that one entire module--there's five total--one entire module really is looking at how to do financial planning and safety planning through the lens of finding more information about assets and money and things like that, understanding that the needs of these folks is very different than the general population. So how to do that really safely and we provide more information about how to do that online. If anybody's interested, you can download the entire curriculum online for free.

So just a little bit about grant making is we have been moving ahead through a financial empowerment grant program. It is now a million dollar annual grant program and domestic violence--the state domestic violence coalitions are eligible for this--to apply for this. We currently have fifteen states--domestic violence grantees--and they're all working on financial literacy. They're also working on micro enterprise and micro loans, job skills and also creating Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) or matched savings accounts.

So I just want to highlight two of the programs that you might find interesting. I think they've been able to do some really neat things-- one of which is the (Remote) Network and they have a program called (Easy E). That stands for Education and Support for Economic Empowerment.

They work specifically with Vermont Works for Women Partnership in helping survivors of domestic violence gain job skills. But they're also partnering with their local credit union and they're able to do a two to one match for savings accounts for survivors meaning that every dollar that a survivor saves, it is matched with two dollars; one of which is through a community partner and the second dollar comes from the Allstate Grant Program.

And they've also been doing a micro loan program. Another program's doing that too but they're doing micro repair, micro loan program. And how this works is that they're allowing survivors to get very small micro loans and pay off debt which has helped them to repair their credit. They're allowed to pay these small micro loans back \$10 a month and then they're actually also doing a match step program as well.

It's a very small piece of this program but this has paid off hugely for survivors. I'll talk more specifically about micro loans here through the Kentucky Coalition.

Kentucky Coalition really has been for a decade now and longer doing a traditional IDA match program, which is a federally funded matched program. But they also have a financial education component to it.

But what is new and sort of unique about this is that they're also able to do a non-traditional matched savings which means the federal IDA program is

constricted to the three areas and it has a cap at how much you can save and it is a strict one-to-one match. And then what you can use it for is limited.

In the non-traditional match program, they use no federal dollars for it; they use all private dollars which is Allstate money and then other contributors. But it allows them to do a much higher ratio, but they are also able to use it for non-traditional things; things that are beyond the federal IDA program.

So if somebody needs to save money to buy a washing machine, they can use the matched savings program, or if they want to save it to buy an automobile; probably their biggest program is the car match program. And we know that having access to a car, particularly in rural areas, is huge and has a direct impact on many folks' ability to gain employment and to go to school, but to really gain financial independence. For many communities, it's relying on having their own automobile.

I actually live in Kansas and can tell you that we don't have great public transportation programs in many of our communities. If you don't live in three different cities in a 105 county state, you don't have access to public transportation. So it is critical and they have really met this need through doing this program.

They also have a micro loan program and this is where just Kentucky starting this has grown into many other programs doing this. They do a small \$100 micro loan and it really sort of doesn't matter what they spend the \$100 on; although many of them are using it to pay off a debt of some sort or to catch up on some past due bill.

And then they pay it back. It is a non-interest loan. You pay it back \$10 at a time every month for ten months. But the unique piece of that and what has

really turned into a fantastic credit repair program, is that the Kentucky Coalition then reports every month to the three credit bureaus that they are paying their loan on time as promised. And we are seeing these survivors who participate on average are increasing their credit score by 50 points, which is huge and some have been in the hundreds. This is life changing for many folks.

I can tell you when I did direct services many months ago, we didn't talk about things like credit. The importance of somebody's credit score right now has more importance than ever before and has really impacted their ability to function within our very financially focused world right now.

So credit report repair is huge and this is I think doing economic justice in general through our movement; this is one of the few times we've been ahead of the curve. I'm really proud of it and I think that these programs sort of really highlight that.

We've talked about what this financial education piece has been and what we've done with it at the National Network to End Domestic Violence--that it is a specific curriculum geared towards the needs of domestic violence survivors. We cover safety planning, budgeting, credit, how credit works, what are different kinds of loans and then we also do long-term planning which I think is fantastic.

And one of the things I'm really proud of is that we have really given that information to survivors. We don't just assume that they just need to know how to budget and that's it; that they don't deserve to know what an individual retirement account (IRA) is or what long-term planning looks like.

They may not be ready to do anything about it but at least the information is there and we can touch on some things so that when they are in a place in their lives that they have those tools available to them.

So we do talk specifically about safety planning in the curriculum but this is an important piece for anybody who's working with domestic violence survivors and talking about money and finances; you have to understand what financial abuse is and it's about controlling how money is spent and Ilene gave great examples of using credit, forcing a person or not allowing a person to work and things like that.

But we also then talk about if somebody's still in the relationship, still doing financial safety planning, explore how to set money aside safely and talking through some really creative ways to help survivors who are still living with their abusive partner; how they can start creating some of that safety net.

We talk about the pros and cons of disclosure. It may not always be safe for folks to disclose. There may even be laws that protect a person in employment and things like that if she is a victim of domestic violence. But if they don't think they're going to be treated fairly or the law's going help them out in that particular situation, it may not be safe to disclose.

So really talking through the pros and cons of what disclosure looks like, who to disclose to and when and all that and what their rights are.

We talk about how to do a safe housing search and that if you go to a large apartment complex that they may likely pull your credit report and if your batterer has enough information and know-how to maybe pose as you to pull your credit report as well or has access and other ways to credit reports - that would show up then on a credit report.

So really thinking in detail about how to stay safe when trying to get safe.

So here's just briefly and I'll get through this because I know we need to move on but I do want to talk about what we've learned. And that this is in my now 21 year career in doing this work is some of the most satisfying work I've ever done because I see the impact that this is having not only for survivors but the advocates they work with.

This is changing lives for lots of folks. And that what we've learned is that none of us were born knowing this information and that we're not always taught this information and that for many of us, doing this work comes with baggage.

One of the first exercises that we do when training a curriculum is to ask folks to think about when growing up, what were you taught about money? What were you taught about what you should know about money? Did your family talk about money and then we get a broad range of responses. You don't talk about it, that money doesn't grow on trees, if you can't afford it you don't buy it, don't use credit, don't worry about tomorrow, spend for today.

So all of us come with these messages about money that we were taught at a really young age. And particularly if you were taught not to talk about money and now I'm asking you to sort of throw it all out there and tell me everything that's going on with you financially, there's going to be some challenges. And we have to sort of honor that and we have to deconstruct that - spend some time doing that. That we can't just jump in on the first meeting and say so let's talk about a budget and not expect to be some triggers there for folks and to be aware of that.

And we've learned that we have to go slow. Like I said, we can't talk about budgeting on the first day. For many folks, even just saying the word budget makes people break out in hives and that we've learned that we also have to take time with the folks that are doing the work.

Many of our advocates - amazing, amazing advocates are living paycheck to paycheck. This may come as a surprise, but we're not terribly well paid as a movement.

And so many of them are having their own financial struggles. So really going slow and allowing advocates to learn about this and get excited about it and not be scared of the topic and issue has been one of the unintended just consequences but also has been a great gift for us to give those doing the work.

And then again talking about money is hard. It's really hard and has many, many triggers; particularly for survivors of domestic violence where money and finances were used against them. And then if we want to sit down and talk about money, and I don't take the time to think or ask about these things and, you know, the whole time she's thinking I was always told I was too stupid to handle money and then I want to sit down and talk about budgeting, that may be a huge trigger for her. So taking it slow and not making assumptions about people and their knowledge and where they're at.

This slide here provides you some information about how to get a copy of the curriculum online. There's a couple of different ways to do it. You can go to our Web site or you can go to the Allstate Foundation Web site. I'd encourage anybody that's interested to take a look at it. We're pretty proud of it and we'd love to hear some feedback.

So I think that I've talked plenty so thank you all.

Anne Menard: Hi. Thanks Kim and thanks Ilene. This is Anne Menard again. We wanted to also in addition to the resources that Kim just provided you links for and it's my understanding that you will all have access to these PowerPoint slides so you can pick up the links there. We also wanted to let you know about some special online collections the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence has pulled together on our online resource center which is at vawnet.org.

These are both special collections. They happen to be highlighted now and the featured information so you can find them easily in that top box. But there's one on asset building and individual development accounts which gathers together all sorts of information including research, tools, briefing papers, training support if those are available; in this case on asset building and IDAs.

We also have one that we just put up on earned income tax credit and other tax credits and how they can be particularly helpful to domestic violence survivors and others who are involved in asset building.

So we direct you to those for some additional information, as well as all the other information that's on www.vawnet.org.

A colleague of MaryLouise Kelley, Shawndell Dawson, at the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program at ACF will talk a little bit about the network of resource centers that (unintelligible) ?. Shawndell.

Shawndell Dawson: Yes. Thank you Anne and good afternoon everyone. As Anne mentioned and as MaryLouise mentioned earlier, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program not only supports domestic violence shelters, local programs, state coalitions and the domestic violence hotline, but we also

support a network of resource centers that provide a tremendous amount of training and technical assistance on various intersecting issues related to domestic violence. Next slide please.

Woman: I can do that.

Shawndell Dawson: Thank you. The state domestic violence coalitions that we support are critical partners and can be very helpful to grantees across the country that are trying to help serve and improve responses to victims of domestic violence. We have the Washington State Domestic Violence Coalition featured today. We have many coalitions that are a part of the network of economic justice programming being supported by Allstate and the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

But they serve as statewide leaders. In their efforts, they're very connected to the local programs within their communities. They can think outside the box around policy and responses and also look at specific programming and problem solve any very serious or challenging situations that agencies may be encountering.

The contact information for the domestic violence coalitions can be found on the NNEDV Web site under the coalition tab and there are state violence coalitions for each state and U.S. territory and we encourage you all to seriously think about ways to partner with state domestic violence coalitions and local programs if you all are not doing so already. Next slide please.

In addition to the state domestic violence coalitions that we fund, we also fund nine special issues, culturally specific and national resource centers that focus on various different issues related to domestic violence. The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence is one of our grantees and provides a

tremendous amount of research and information on www.vawnet.org on their online resource center, as well as helping to support several special collaborations and initiatives such as asset building, earned income tax credit, working with the office of child support enforcement, as well as working with OFA grantees.

The other national resource center that we have is the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, and they provide training and technical assistance to the tribes and tribal programs that are funded by the (FISA) office, as well as working in collaboration with the other resource centers to look at how we can improve our responses to tribal and native women who are experiencing domestic violence, sexual violence and also help improve practices both within tribal communities and non-tribal communities and being more supportive in response to survivors and their families.

We have four special issue resource centers that focus on various issues. We have the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence which is housed within Futures without Violence. They provide technical assistance as it relates to medical and healthcare communities responses to incident partner violence, information and referral and capacity building.

They also have leadership nationally around the issue of home visitation and domestic violence and have released a curriculum around that for individuals to utilize in better responding in those communities that are housing home visitation programs.

In addition to that, they have national leadership around engaging men and boys to prevent intimate partner violence, as well as looking at issues and innovative programs related to teen dating violence.

The Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Child Custody and Child Protection is housed by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. They provide a tremendous amount of research, advocacy and leadership as it relates to domestic violence and child custody, as well as working with the child welfare community to improve responses to victims of domestic violence.

And they provide training for advocates, its attorneys and judges, as well as looking at research and doing analysis and providing policy guidance on systemic change.

The National Center on Domestic Violence Trauma and Mental Health provides a lot of research and advocacy strategies related to improving responses to the lifetime trauma that many victims of domestic violence and their children unfortunately experience, and also helps to improve trauma informed care and trauma informed strategies within the domestic violence program, as well as engages with mental health professionals to think about their responses in support of victims of domestic violence in the context of their clinical and non-clinical setting. Next slide please.

The Battered Women's Justice Project houses the criminal and civil justice center and they provide a tremendous amount of support to legal advocates, as well as attorneys in looking at how the criminal and civil justice system is responding to victims of domestic violence and their children.

They also have a special set of expertise and work relating to military families and they've been doing some work with our colleagues in the Department of Defense Family Advocacy Program and looking at trauma and intimate partner violence and responding to military families and improving responses there.

We have three culture specific institutes that are supported by the SIPSA program. The Asian and Pacific Islander Domestic Violence and the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, as well as the National Latino Network which is housed by Casa de Esperanza.

And these three organizations provide national leadership in really moving the domestic violence field, as well as other systems and improving the cultural relevancy and linguistically appropriate responses to the victims of domestic violence, analyzing the very unique aspects that culture, race and oppression have on victims of domestic violence and their families, as well as leading special initiatives relating to trauma, to teens, to community organizing when it comes to community engagements; whether it's within the Asian and Pacific Islander community, the African American community or working with African immigrants, and also looking at the Latina and Hispanic populations.

And so the Web sites are there. They are a wealth of information and we encourage you all as you think more about the intersecting issues of domestic violence, being impacting the lives of the families accessing TANF. If you all need training and technical assistance, we encourage you all to utilize these Web sites and links to connect with our resource network. Thank you.

Anne Menard: Thanks so much Shawndell. This is Anne Menard again. Before we go to questions, I have a few questions that I want to pose to Ilene and Kim and have us have a conversation and Shawndell can join in as she wants to as well. And then we're going - I know there have been a couple of questions that have come in so we want to get to those as well.

But before we do that, Ilene and Kim, you know, we know from all our work as domestic violence advocates working with a wide range of systems that building and sustaining meaningful collaborations can be really challenging.

Can you talk about what you see as some of the challenges facing domestic violence advocates, TANF agencies, and economic empowerment agencies like some of the ones on the call today who are trying to work more collaboratively? And then I'm going to ask you to tell us what you see as some of the successes.

Ilene Stohl: Sure. This is Ilene. You know, I think that I'd say the biggest thing that's impacting I think most social services right now and I just really see impacting our state is the whole idea of trying to do more with less.

And I think that what we're seeing is that each agency and each specific, you know, human service is really being tightened and what we find is that in our state, domestic violence programs are really being squeezed. And in fact, their funding is really being limited.

At the same time, other community programs and other state institutions are also being squeezed and so they're looking to domestic violence programs to take up the slack. And I think that has been a really tough balance for us to work within because certainly domestic violence advocates are essential to the work of the TANF programs.

And I think they're really, you know, people don't get into this work, whether it's TANF or domestic violence, because you know they just - for the money. Let's be honest. Right. They get into it because they really genuinely want to help people and I think that has been a really big challenge for us when we truly want to help and we see that our services are so impactful and are so

helpful and in fact can be life saving and really life enriching that to then expect us to do more is really problematic.

So I see that one of the things that I think the TANF program has is some flexibility in really trying to figure out how to maintain funding or at least protect the funding. And how to make sure that we're using the creative opportunities that we have with things like the Family Violence Option to use our partners in a way that works for them and really works for the survivors on the caseload. So I think that's a big challenge.

Kim Pentico: Yes.

Ilene Stohl: And I imagine it's happening across the country.

Anne Menard: And Kim, when you think about the, you know, the collaborative partnerships that have emerged from the Allstate grants either directly or, you know, just sort of happenstance, what do you see as some of the challenges that people have had to overcome or that organizations have had to overcome.

Kim Pentico: I think Ilene touched on a piece of it for sure; the economy's really been hard and I think that's the current excuse as to why we're not able to do this right now. I think it's always been hard. But this is, because of the economy and the current economic climate, where a lot of folks are coming down saying there's just not enough money to do this work even though we know that the investment is worth it. We know the investment pays off.

So I think that's a challenge. I think doing economic justice in general is not an easy sell. It's not, you know, saying let's talk to law enforcement, let's train the courts, let's - that kind of stuff. It's easier because it's the place we

go to when violence is occurs. Right. That's the immediate response and that is important. That is critical but it's not hard to explain why that's important.

It is harder to make this economic justice sell in doing crisis work. This feels like an add on. This feels like when we've got the time and the money and the energy; this is the work that we could do. That's a nice thing but we can't.

And yet those of us doing the work know that we will in the long run do less crisis work if we can get this figured out. So I think that's part of the challenge as well.

And I think if we bring in more private partners, because it's not - quote - unquote for lack of a better term, it's not a sexy sell doing economic justice work, it's harder to get private folks involved as well. It's sort of amazing that people like the Allstate Foundation continues to fund this work because it's not a clear business reason to do this work but they continue to do it.

And there are other ones out there. So I think those are some of the challenges that we've seen.

But and I think some of things we've touched on earlier was our own ignorance as a movement that I think as a society community as well around what is economic justice, how does this work - that that's one of the challenges as well.

Anne Menard: And I'm going to ask one more question and then we'll go to the Q&A period but so if you had to pick out one exciting success that you've seen and that could be nationally or within your state, including of course expanded economic stability for survivors, but also kind of the mutual benefits of the partners involved, what would it be? You know, when you think about the

successful collaborations that you talk about. What is it that's most exciting about them?

Kim Pentico: For me, it's been just demystifying and sort of letting the air out of advocacy anxiety around this issue. That when advocates are going to their mailbox every day and dreading opening a mailbox because there's bills in it that they can't figure out how to pay or why things are the way they are and they don't themselves budget and things like that, that getting advocates excited about their own financial future and really taking some ownership over that and not feeling bad about wanting to think that at some point they may retire.

That's been for me one of the most exciting things because when the advocates get excited about it, they do such a better job of then translating that to the survivors and they come at it with a whole different lens and approach and that's when we see programs take off. I think that's probably been one of my most exciting pieces about doing this work.

Anne Menard: How about you Ilene.

Ilene Stohl: Yes. For me it's hard to separate out all of them because I think they sort of all go together but I think one of the things that, you know, I've seen is that we actually experienced some cuts in our state with the advocates that were based in the community service organizations (CSOs) which was, you know, was really upsetting and I'm still hopeful that that can be undone.

But the outcry that I heard from the workers that they really - the TANF workers themselves really saw those advocates as being not only a support to the survivors but a support to them - really showed me how impactful those advocates and the CSOs have been to really create more of a, you know,

holistic safety net that I think a lot of people hope for when they think of the TANF program.

And so in some ways out of that really unfortunately occurrence and one that again I really do believe can be mitigated and hopefully undone, you know, I really did see the impact.

The other thing I'll say is that something that hasn't necessarily continued but that when it was happening just brought me so much satisfaction was that one of the things for a number of years that we were able to waive job search instead of was when advocates were actually doing that financial education at the CSO. Those groups have not necessarily continued and I think it's really unfortunate that that has not happened because what we were finding was that survivors that were attending those groups were really kind of getting a whole new sense of worth and that they could actually do this on their own once they were off of TANF or even when they were transitioning.

One of the things that we really learned from those groups was that, you know, man - budgeting, the people that do it best are the people on TANF. You know, that's actually not the group of folks that we need to talk about budgeting with because they know how to do it.

And so I think that was a real big, you know, learning moment for all of us that they really have a lot to share and that, you know, it kind of goes with that notion of groups that, you know, everybody wants to give and to get and so that was one of those instances where folks that were on TANF really have all this great skill of how to actually function and get by in poverty.

And so I really hope that we're able to expand that work again and when that was happening it was, I think a really exciting move.

Anne Menard: Thanks Ilene. Lisa, I'm going to call on you to let us know what questions came in through the chat and while you're organizing that, I know that there was one question about how to access the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey from CDC and I'm just going to tell you what that Web site address is again and it will be on the slides if you get a hold of that.

It is www.cdc.gov for Centers for Disease Control.gov/violenceprevent - that in one word - violenceprevention/NISVF - N-I-S-V-F. Again I encourage you to go and look at the findings that are presented there.

So Lisa did you have any questions but I haven't been able to kind of track them.

Lisa Washington-Thomas: Sure. Thanks Anne, Ilene and Kim. The first question we have is how can we educate the judges more on domestic violence relationships and what is the best for the children?

Kim Pentico: That is a great question. This is Kim and I'm really glad that Shawndell was able to go through the resource center. I'm scrolling back.

One of the resource centers - the resource center on domestic violence, child protection and custody is housed at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and they, along with the Battered Women's Justice Project - the Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Child Protection and Custody is the second bullet there. So you can see there it is (NCJFCJ).

You can see their Web site there, as well as the Battered Women's Justice Project which is www.bwjp.org. It has a lot of resources available for training judges. Judges, including bench cards, curriculum, they themselves offer judicial training across the country.

The state coalition, depending on where the person's located, also may have resources related to judicial training that may or may not be of priority of the State Domestic Violence Coalition but they would surely know where those resources are available. So, there's a lot of great training materials available; for judges working in different types of courts; working in domestic violence courts or working in juvenile court and asking custody decisions.

So the resource network that is funded by the office (unintelligible)? resource for the person who asked that question.

Ilene Stohl: This is Ilene. If I could just weigh in too, that's a huge issue which obviously we could do days and days of training on. But the thing that in terms of trying it into the TANF program, the thing I will say about that is that, you know, obviously that reflects an understanding that going through the family law process is really tough and it's also really tough when you're on TANF.

And so I do think that there is some flexibility again in that Family Violence Option that you can actually waive program requirements that are limiting somebody's ability to attend court hearings or actually provide, you know, the information to the court that they need in order to maintain or get custody.

And so I do think that that's just something that's really important to take into account when you're making somebody's plan for participation that going through those family law proceedings is a really difficult process and often takes a large toll especially on folks who are being manipulated through that system by their abuser. So thanks for that question.

Kim Pentico: I'll just pop in for a second too here. This is Kim. That one of the things that we talk about quite a bit is that there also are many opportunities within that criminal justice system or particularly civil justice system to make allowances

and to increase protections around finances and access to resources that we don't always take very good advantage of because this is a place where we need to do some education in the court system in particular.

Almost all protection orders do allow for some sort of financial relief and when I go across the country and train advocates, I hear time and time again our judges will never order temporary assistance, whether it be for spousal support or child support, in a protection order--they don't think that that's the place for it.

But for many survivors, that's their only opportunity potentially to ask for those things; particularly if they're not married or they're simply never going to be able to afford a divorce that that is very appropriate and it's not about being greedy or whatever some thoughts are but we really do know her ability to secure some temporary assistance from a partner may really have a huge impact on whether she's able to leave and leave for good.

Many survivors return because they have no resources to be elsewhere but if the judge were to order some assistance, or payment of child support, or even payment of rent or assistance in other ways or continuing to pay something as - what seems simple or not very important but continue to pay things like insurance, car insurance and health insurance and they can order that in a temporary order or in their permanent protection order. It can have a huge impact on her ability to get and stay safe.

Anne Menard: Thanks. Lisa. Next, the good news.

((Crosstalk))

Lisa Washington-Thomas: We have a lot of questions about particular underserved populations. So we have another question about high school. Do you have any information about programs that are effective in high school?

Ilene Stohl: Well, this is Ilene. This is again a little bit off topic in terms of the TANF information so I'm not exactly sure if I'm missing something but you know I'll take this opportunity to promote the thing that we're currently working on at the Washington State Coalition which is available certainly nationwide.

We have an In Their Shoes Curriculum which is an experiential learning training that you do where you actually get cars and you become a teen character and you make choices and you see what happens in that relationship. And we actually are just about to release one in the late spring that is for classroom use in high schools; so directly for teens and it's just called In Their Shoes - Teens and Dating Violence, Classroom Edition.

And that should be out late spring and certainly you're welcome to go on our Web site and see more information about it. You just go to www.wscadv.org as in Sam - va - D as in dog, v as in victor .org (unintelligible).org (?) and there's more information and we've learned a lot from that and then I know that Anne actually just released a whole bunch of teen dating violence awareness month materials that I imagine are somewhere on your Web site. Anne, if you wanted to direct people there.

Anne Menard: Yes. Actually, what month are we in? February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month so there's actually a lot of activity and information available now. I think my colleagues in the other room are doing a webinar on what role parents and caregivers can play in preventing teen dating awareness month - preventing teen dating violence.

On vawnet.org - www.vawnet.org there is a link to a whole series of resources related to teen dating. Violence awareness month, including highlights of curriculum that are being used in high school or in other settings, how to use social media to which of course is the way that young people communicate with each other increasingly. So there are a lot of good resources.

It also identifies partner organizations that really focus on teen dating and violence awareness and building healthy relationships or encouraging teens to develop healthy relationships and have the skills to sustain them.

So this is a good time for you to ask that question. There are lots of resources available but I would go to vawnet.org and in the top box just keep scrolling through until you see the teen dating violence awareness month link and that will take you to lots of resources that we've developed or again our partner organizations have developed.

Lisa Washington-Thomas: Thank you. We are - we're running short on time so I have time for one more question and that was, what are the unique issues you have encountered when working with Latino clients on these issues?

Shawndell Dawson: This is Shawndell and I'll jump in. Our resource center, Casa de Esperanza has been doing a tremendous amount of work around economic advocacy, intimate partner violence and immigration and the issues that range in providing services to domestic violence survivors that are immigrants range from having access to bank accounts and resources, as well as having limited English proficiency.

And having challenges accessing resources not only within their own language, but having someone to talk to about safety planning but then also having inherent fears if they are undocumented about reaching out for support,

in addition to encountering challenges with coming to access jobs and employment and various different types of levels of - limited access to what's available in their communities and then also being able to talk to someone within their own language about what they may or may not know about how those systems work.

Additional information about working within the Latino community can be found on the Casa de Esperanza Web site which is listed in the series of links that are at the end of the PowerPoint slide. You can also call and contact them in terms of asking questions around finding technical assistance and resources. They have a huge network across the country that they support with community based service providers that are working with Latino populations across the country.

Lisa Washington-Thomas: Thank you Shawndell.

Anne Menard: And Lisa, I can let people know that we weren't able to get to a lot of the questions but we're happy to answer those. I think we're happy for Lisa to forward those to us if there's e-mail addresses attached to them and we can respond individually so we'll try to get answers to all your questions.

Lisa Washington-Thomas: And we will also be posting a list of the questions and answers when we post the transcript and so we will send you those questions so we can work even after this webinar.

Anne Menard: Great. Thanks.

Lisa Washington-Thomas: I want to take this time to thank Anne, Ilene and Kim for your wonderful presentations, as well as our partners MaryLouise and Shawndell from

(FYSB) and I also wanted to thank our Peer TA staff, (Kamille), (Patricia), (Lu), (Lesley) and (Sarah).

We wanted to take a few minutes right now to take a temperature check of how we're doing, as well as see how useful the webinar was. So our first polling question is do you feel it is important for TANF agencies and domestic violence programs to partner? And I'll give you a few minutes.

One is strongly disagree, two - disagree, three - neutral, four - so five is strongly agree. Okay. Next question.

I feel it is important for survivors of domestic violence to have access to asset building programs? Again one is strongly disagree and five is strongly agree.

Okay. Next question. The presenters had valuable information to share. One is strongly disagree. Five - strongly agree.

Thank you. Next question. I have a better understanding of the resources available to TANF agencies and its stakeholders to help create partnerships and train staff on domestic violence.

Okay. Next question. I have a better understanding of a relationship between economic security and the empowerment of survivors of domestic violence. Again five is strongly agree. One is strongly disagree with others in between.

Okay. Next question. I learned about successful asset building models geared towards survivors of domestic violence.

Next question. I learned about strategies that I can use for creating partnerships between TANF agencies, the domestic violence community and asset building programs.

Okay. Next question. Are webinars an effective tool in providing technical assistance? Okay. Next question.

This is the last question. The logistics of the webinar ran smoothly. Okay.

Thank you very much. We are always interested in trying to help our participants to have a better life, to have healthier life, to have a more stable life. It's more important for us to try to do good work, to do good so that people have a means to raise their children both and move them into self-sufficiency and move them into a healthy, safe environment. We are always eager. One of the old TANF administrators used to say TANF is not good enough for anyone and we want to make sure that we are providing services that will help our TANF recipients to have a life that we would be proud of and that we would want.

So I thank our presenters and I thank all of you who came out - who tuned in to listen to us give ways to improve the lives of our constituencies out there. Thank you so much and have a good afternoon.

END