

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Tool: Suggested Interview Questions for the Non-Offending Parent	Effective Date: May 1, 2009
	Reference: 4.C (4.10 - Interviewing the Parent, Guardian, or Custodian)	Version: 1

Suggested Interview Questions for the Non-Offending Parent

Always interview the non-offending parent alone. Prior to beginning the interview it is important to:

1. Explain the process of the child protection service (CPS) assessment.
2. Provide assurance that the children's safety (as well as that of the non-offending parent's) is the goal of the assessment.
3. Provide assurance that the alleged domestic violence offender will not be confronted with the source of information, or any information concerning his or her safety that he or she has shared.
4. Explain that he or she will be provided with referral information regarding safety for him or her and the children.
5. Explain the limits of confidentiality.

Below are suggested questions to utilize while interviewing the non-offending parent in a domestic violence relationship.

Note: If the non-offending parent of domestic violence is believed to be the alleged perpetrator of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N), see policy, [4.11 – Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator](#).

1. Do you ever worry about the safety of your children? If yes, tell me more about that.
2. Where are the children when the fighting happens?
3. Has your partner ever hurt you in front of the children?
4. How has the child been exposed to the violence: heard it happen, saw it happen, told about it by siblings or others, or saw the aftermath (broken bones, bruises on parent or other family members or stitches)?
5. Have the children ever been hurt, either accidentally or on purpose during an incident? Tell me about this.
6. How are you able to keep your children safe?
7. Has your partner:
 - a. Called your child degrading names?
 - b. Threatened to take the children from your care?
 - c. Accused you of being an unfit parent?
 - d. Threatened to hurt or kill you in front of the children?
 - e. Touched your children in a way that made you or them feel uncomfortable?
 - f. Asked your children to report on what you do during the day?
 - g. Had your children spy on you?
8. Has your child:

- a. Overheard the yelling and/or violence?
 - b. Behaved in ways that remind you of your partner?
 - c. Physically hurt you or other family members?
 - d. Tried to protect you?
 - e. Tried to stop the violence?
 - f. Hurt him/herself?
 - g. Hurt family pets?
 - h. Been fearful of leaving you?
 - i. Exhibited emotional/behavioral problems at home or school?
9. Describe how the children respond to the violence. Have you noticed any effects?
10. How do you believe your children understand the violence?
11. When I interview your children, will they tell your partner what I ask them?
12. On a scale of 1-10 (where 10 is very safe all the time and 1 is not safe at all), how safe do you feel?
13. What does safety mean for you and your child(ren)?
14. What do you believe would help keep you and/or your children safe? What can be done to make this happen?
15. Tell me about your relationship. What is good about it and what is not so good about it?
16. How do decisions about things such as discipline and money get made?
17. Do you have family or friends you can talk to about your problems?
18. Who are some of the people you turn to for support?
19. Do you feel free to do, think, believe what you want?
20. Do you have any current injuries or health problems?
21. Has your partner ever:
- a. Isolated you from your family or friends or going someplace you wanted to go?
 - b. Followed you to see where you go?
 - c. Accused you of being unfaithful?
 - d. Controlled your money?
 - e. Called you degrading names?
 - f. Made threats to hurt you or the children?
 - g. Made threats to kill you if you ever attempt to leave or divorce?
 - h. Hurt household pets, or threatened to hurt them?
 - i. Been violent to people outside the family?
 - j. Threatened to report you to DCS or take away the children?
22. Does your partner ever act jealous or possessive? If yes, tell me more about that.
23. Have you ever felt afraid of your partner? In what ways?
24. Has your partner ever physically used force on you (e.g., pushed, pulled, slapped, punched, hit, strangled/choked or kicked you)? If so, tell me about the worst episode. What was the most recent episode?
25. How frequently does this happen?
26. How dangerous do you think your partner is?

Note: The more types of abuse there are, the more dangerous the situation is likely to be for the adult victim and the children. If the abuse is happening more frequently and/or getting more severe, the risk for the adult victim and children is high.

27. Does your partner do reckless things that scare you, such as driving too fast with the children in the car? Tell me about that.
28. Has your partner ever been depressed?
29. Has your partner ever abused over the counter medications, prescriptions, illegal drugs and/or alcohol?
30. Does your partner have any weapons? Does he or she have access to weapons owned by others?
31. Has your partner ever threatened to commit suicide? If yes, when and what was the plan?
32. How often do you get hurt by accident?
33. Are you afraid at home?
34. Were you ever assaulted while you were pregnant?
35. Have you been exposed to domestic violence in a previous relationship(s)?
36. Do you have/have you had a domestic violence advocate?

Note: If they have not contacted a domestic violence advocate, recommend that they do.

37. Have you ever used a domestic violence shelter or group? Was it helpful?
38. Have you ever called the police? What happened?
39. Have you filed a protective order? What happened? (e.g., did your partner respect the order)?
40. Have you:
 - a. Told anyone about the abuse? What happened?
 - b. Seen a counselor or therapist? What happened?
 - c. Left home as a result of the abuse? What happened?
41. What do you think will happen when I leave?
42. Will it increase the risk of harm to you or the children if I ask your partner some questions?

Note: If the victim is fearful of the consequences of questioning the offender, then it should not be done until safety can be achieved. Safety always comes first.

43. How do you think he or she will react when he or she finds out we talked to you?
44. How do you think he or she will react when he or she finds out we talked to the children?
45. How do you think he or she will react when we talk to him or her?