

Mapping Perpetrators' Patterns – Short (MPP-S)

The following Practice Tool can help you better understand how domestic violence perpetrators are impacting child and family functioning and how to develop meaningful plans to intervene with the perpetrator to improve child and family functioning. Pick a specific case and use the tool to map the perpetrator's pattern onto various aspects of assessment, practice, decision-making and collaboration.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE PERPETRATOR'S PATTERN OF COERCIVE CONTROL AND ACTIONS TAKEN TO HARM THE CHILDREN (1ST & 2ND CRITICAL COMPONENTS) ¹

List the behaviors the perpetrator has engaged in to degrade child and family functioning. In this step you are outlining the perpetrator's behavior and statements (actions), not its impact on child and family functioning.

- Father has physically assaulted Mother multiple times over the last five years. The incidents of violence have included punching her in the face repeated in front of the children, causing bruising and one broken nose. He has pushed her against a wall, thrown dinner plates at her head, and threatened her with a knife held against her throat.
- More than once, Father has threatened to kill Mother, telling her he would "cut her throat" and "drag her into the woods to die." He said this in front of their 5-year-old son.
- Father stalked Mother at work and at her parent's house when they were separated three years ago. He would drive by both locations, honking the car horn. He smashed his car into her parents' car, knocking off the side view mirror.
- Father has taken all the children out of the house, then called Mother demanding she give him money so he could buy meth, saying she would never see the children again if she doesn't give him money.
- Father has punched multiple holes in the walls in the kitchen and living room when he was upset with someone in the family.
- Father kicked in the 13-year-old step daughter's bedroom door when she ran away from him during the last incident. During this incident he called her a "stupid bitch who was just as dumb

¹ *Types of behavior:* Include violence, threats, intimidation, and financial, emotional and sexual abuse, undermining the other person's parenting, using children as weapons against the other person. Physical and emotional abuse and neglect of children are part of this pattern as well. Include violent behavior and threatening behavior to others outside the family in this list including gang involvement, behaviors towards interveners (police, CPS workers), other violent criminal behavior, sanctioned violence as part of work/career e.g. martial arts, military service, law enforcement.

Scope of information: Consider the following related to scope of information: Full range of behaviors during presenting incident: Before, during and after; Pattern in current relationship; Behaviors in prior relationships; Other relevant behavior, e.g. violence in other settings; Indirect and direct actions towards children includes both abuse and neglect.

Sources of information: Consider the following related to sources of information: Child welfare records; Criminal background check; Interviews with Adult Survivor, Child Survivor, Perpetrator; Collateral contacts: Family, Friends, Providers, Adult Probation/Court.

as her mother” and “threaten to kick her out onto the street.” He told that’s where a “raghead whore” like her belongs.

STEP 2: MAP THE PERPETRATOR’S PATTERN ONTO THE CHILD AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING² (4TH CRITICAL COMPONENT)

Complete the following sentences:

The perpetrator’s behavior pattern caused the following trauma related effects on the children:

- The 13-year-old girl has been getting into fights at school; she sometimes wants to sleep with her mother because she is afraid; she is fallen behind academically in school; there is also concerns that she might have started smoking marijuana.
- The five-year-old boy has speech impediment, stuttering when he is nervous. He is very clinging with her mother and has very difficult transitions from school to home.
- On more than one occasion the police reports indicate that both children were crying in their room when the police arrived.

The perpetrator’s behavior pattern disrupted the family’s ecology in the following ways:

- The family has moved three times in the last few years as few years as result of Father’s violence: once one Mother fled to her parent’s house; once when they went into a refuge; and once when Father’s violence led the family to be evicted. This appears to have contributed to the 13 year’s old girls academic and behavioral issues.
- Mother reports she has lost her last two jobs because either Father showing up to work or harassing by phone or because she moved to get away from his violence. This reports that this has prevented her involving the children in afterschool activities and limiting other expenses related to the children.
- The 13-year-old has dropped out of counseling because Father says it costs too much money and it was “bullshit anyway.” The girl reports missing her counselor.
- Police reports, and interviews with Mother and the children indicate that whenever Father gets violent the children miss days at school and for days afterwards have trouble sleeping.

The perpetrator’s behavior pattern affected the other parent’s parenting in the following ways:

² Things to consider: Multiple pathways to harm including trauma, effects of the family ecology and effects on partner’s parenting. Give examples of the connection between perpetrator behavior patterns and harm to the child and family functioning. Physical safety: Physical abuse of children: Has the perpetrator physically injured the children by physically abusing these children? Other children? Violence or threats of violence towards partner that create child trauma concerns, e.g. driving dangerously leading children to being afraid of being in the car with the perpetrator. Neglect that creates safety issues: Has the perpetrator’s behavior led to the children being placed in unsafe situations e.g. left alone for long periods of time without supervision. Interference with basic needs being met: Interference with partner’s parenting: Has the perpetrator’s coercive control interfered with the other parent’s ability to discipline, guide and/or care for the children? Has this lead to aggressive behavior? Erratic discipline? Impact of overall coercive control on immediate and overall functioning and stability of household, e.g. safe, stable housing or educational disruptions, interference with food, medical care. Connecting children’s emotional, behavioral and other issues to the perpetrator’s behavior: Did the perpetrator’s behavior pattern cause, exacerbate or interfere with the treatment of any of the following: Trauma related symptoms and issues such as aggression, depression and/or developmental delays.

- Mother reports that the children do not listen to her and often throwback in her face the same insults that Father uses against her: “you’re fat”, “you’re stupid.” The boy has called his mother a “raghead,” a slur that he has heard Father use against her.
- Mother reports that her depression returned after Father forced her and the children to move back with them after she felt like he was a threat to her parents (where they were living).
- Mother reports not wanting to the children to be alone with the Father because he might take them from her. She reports “I feel like a single parent because I’m afraid for him to be alone with the children, ever.” Mother reports being exhausted from managing the household and her fear of him taking the children.

How else did the perpetrator’s behavior pattern impact child and family functioning?

- Father’s drug use has contributed to the family’s lack of housing and income stability.

STEP 3: MAPPING THE PERPETRATOR PATTERN ONTO ADULT SURVIVORS STRENGTHS (3RD CRITICAL COMPONENT)

List as many behaviors as is known in this case in response to each sentence. ³

The adult survivor did _____ to promote safety of the children in response to the perpetrator’s coercive control and actions to harm the children. ⁴

- Sending them to room; trying to keep Father calm; lying to Father about things that might upset him as ways to keep the children physically safe.
- Taking the children to a refuge twice and moved in with her parents for extended periods of time when she was more worried about Father’s violence (usually when he was using).
- Until she lost her last job, paying for her daughter to play soccer and her son to be in after school program to minimize their exposure to their Father, and provide emotional safety.

³ Contextualizing adult survivor decision-making: We cannot understand the adult survivor's decision-making, particularly her protective efforts and safety planning without understanding the perpetrator's behavior. Statements can be made to her like: "I'm assuming you've been taking steps to make things better/keep yourself and your children safe in the face of your partner's behavior. I want to learn more about these efforts." Building a meaningful and effective partnership with an adult domestic violence survivor is built on an understanding of the perpetrator's pattern. Building a partnership with the adult survivor requires the ability to identify the perpetrator's behavior, not her behavior and choices nor the relationship as the source of the child welfare concern. This foundation allows you to address child safety and risk without blaming the adult survivor and is more likely to lead to collaboration: "Given that we've seen no change in his pattern, we remain concerned for you and your children." "It's not fair but given that he remains dangerous and we've tried everything in our power to address his behavior with him, we want to work with you to develop a plan that keeps you and your children safe."

⁴ Some examples may include: has consistent rules, routines and discipline, nurtures the children; the children and the survivor have a clear attachment; survivor provides financially for the children, ensures the children’s needs (food, education, shelter, clothing, medical treatment) are taken care of, provides fun for the children, supports the children’s social development, provides love for the children. Other examples may include: having a support network; maintaining family or social relationships; using formal resources like therapists, advocates or law enforcement for support; actions taken by the survivor to protect herself from abuse; acting as a positive role model for the children; maintaining employment; obtaining state assistance; working with housing or other systems to provide stability for the family; knowing what is safest for her family.

- Repeatedly telling Father that his behavior was bad for the children and demanded in he get help for his substance abuse and violence.
- Mother has called the police on three occasions to protect herself and her children.
- Mother keeps the children with her as much as possible in order to avoid Father using the children to control her.
- Mother has sought and received a court order to protect herself and her children.

The adult survivor did _____ to promote healing from trauma of the children in response to the perpetrator's coercive control and actions to harm the children.

- Took both children to a therapist to get help.
- gotten counseling for herself so she can, in her words, "better help the children. If I'm strong they will do better."
- Does daily check-ins with about their feelings and how their day is going.
- Talked to the counselors at the children's schools about what is happening at home so they could help her children.
- Talks about how she tries to read to the 5 year old every night and does her best to get her daughter over to maternal grandparents house, as her daughter and her mother are very close.

The adult survivor did _____ to promote stability and nurturance of the children in the face of perpetrator's coercive control and actions to harm the children.

- Despite the violence and all the associated disruptions, maintained the children's medical care. She maintains all household routines for the children: cooking meals etc.
- Made sure the children know the household schedule a week in advance to give them a sense of routine. She said "it helps them to know, as best as I have control over it, what is happening."
- When in refuge, maintained contact with the children's school, making sure they get up to date on homework and other work as possible. (The refuge was in a different school district.)
- Whenever she had money, paid her daughter's soccer fees so she could play. This is very important to the daughter.
- Whenever she moved the children because of Father's violence, found a place that was safe and stable e.g. refuge, her parent's house.

What else did the adult survivor do to promote child and family functioning in the context of the perpetrator's behavior pattern?

- Mother has been able to continue her own education as best she can despite the disruptions caused by Father's violence.
- Mother has been able to maintain her own sobriety for the past three years (despite violence.)

STEP 4: MAPPING THE PERPETRATOR PATTERN ONTO SOCIO-ECONOMIC, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, MENTAL HEALTH OR OTHER COMPLICATING FACTORS (5TH CRITICAL COMPONENT)

List the issues in child and family functioning that the perpetrator's pattern of behavior may have caused, e.g. a homeless family had stable housing before he started his coercive control.

Father's violence appears to have caused:

- Housing instability over time
- Income issues for the family due causing mother to lose her job twice and losing his own job because of substance abuse and arrests due to violence.
- The children's behavioral issues. (The children's therapist reports that the children's issues seem to be a result of Father's violence and other abusive behavior.

List the issues in child and family functioning that perpetrator's pattern of behavior may have exacerbated, e.g. a child's behavior issues have gotten worse because of his coercive control.

- The most recent incident which involved putting knife to Mother's throats in front of children, and kicking in his daughter's bedroom door, resulted in the children losing more days in school. They seem to struggling again after a period where they were doing better.
- The daughter struggled with friendships and fitting in when she came to this country. She eventually made friends but now reports feeling more isolated because of Father's behavior.
- Mother was sober when Father and she met. (She used drugs when she was in Syria as an adolescent.) For a period, she relapsed. Mother said, "it was all too much for me." For the last three years she has been sober again.

List the issues in child and family functioning where the perpetrator has interfered with efforts of other family members to receive treatment or services, e.g. interfering with the other parent's efforts to get sober.

- Father has consistently undermined Mother's efforts to get the children to therapy, refusing to pay and telling the children to "not tell anyone their business." The therapist reports that the 5-year-old boy, who seems most identified with father, has become resistant in counseling. She believes that he is emotionally torn because of father's undermining.
- Father continues to harass mother about her AA meetings, and going to the local mosque. She continues to go despite his harassment. She only goes when she can get her mother to watch the children.

In what ways has the family's socio-economic status or cultural context increased the perpetrator's power over the family and/or made family members more vulnerable to his coercive control?⁵

Mother is Syrian and Father is Caucasian. His verbal abuse to her and the children includes racial epithets. While Mother is a citizen, she feels in the current environment it is harder to get help for herself and her children.

⁵ Some examples of this might be that she has a criminal history that makes her afraid to call the police; a history of substance abuse that has increased her isolation from potential supports; she's undocumented; she's part of tight-knit immigrant community which means it's easy for him to monitor her.

STEP 5: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Based on Steps 1-4, answer the following questions using a scaling system where 1="not at all" and 5="perfectly"

- 1. How comprehensively was the perpetrator pattern assessed? If your answer is less than 5, what is one thing that could be done to improve the assessment of his pattern of behavior?*
- 2. How comprehensively was the perpetrator pattern documented clearly and in one place? If your answer is less than 5, what is one thing that could be done to improve the documentation of his pattern of behavior?*
- 3. How comprehensive were the efforts to intervene with him to improve child and family functioning? If your answer is less than 5, what is one thing that could be done to improve the intervention efforts with the perpetrator?*
- 4. How well did efforts to partner with the survivor take into account the perpetrator's pattern of behavior and her efforts to respond to it? If your answer is less than 5, what is one thing that could be done to improve partnering with the adult survivor?*
- 5. How well managed were any safety risks created by disclosures by the adult and child survivor? If your answer is less than 5, what is one thing that could be done to improve the management of any disclosure-related safety risks?*
- 6. How clearly and comprehensively did the information about the perpetrator's pattern of behavior inform cross-system collaboration? If your answer is less than 5, what is one thing that could be done to improve the use of his pattern of behavior to improve cross-system collaboration?*