



RDVIC

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Abuse History – [Case Number(s)]

Report Prepared By:

Your Name

Identified Parties:

All respondent caregivers and parents; co-petitioners; intervenors if any

Relationships:

First Husband and Mom – marriage 1/1/2010, divorced 1/1/2016

One child of relationship: Daughter, [d/o/b]

Abusive Partner and Mom - marriage 1/1/2017, divorced 2020.

One child of relationship: Son [d/o/b]

Sources of Information:

1. Structured interviews using the SAF(e)R model with Mom between [intake date] and [last interview date].
2. Peer counseling sessions with Mom conducted pursuant to her post-adjudicatory improvement period from [first service date] to present.
3. Any other specific documentation you reviewed – e.g. – text messages, phone calls, photographs, etc.

Abuse History

2011

Marriage with First Husband [FH] is generally stable and pleasant in the beginning, and Mom does not characterize the marriage as physically abusive, but rather that she felt neglected and overburdened. In comparison to the physical abuse from her second marriage, Mom struggles with the idea of labeling her first marriage abusive and does not use that term herself – she focuses on toxicity and unhealthiness in the relationship and the difficulty in co-parenting.

2012-2015

Daughter was born one year into the marriage. Mom describes First Husband as distant and not consistently loving, often making insulting comments to her and not respecting her parenting. Mom reports a loss of self-esteem during the marriage over time as well as loneliness and isolation – all of her friends and family members were problems for the marriage and she felt she could not reach out. The parties separated in December of 2015.

2016

Throughout 2016, communications between FH and Mom are tense and at times toxic, especially regarding parenting concerns. Text exchanges between them show FH frequently insulting Mom's intelligence, character, and parenting and Mom asking to be left alone and not talked to in a disrespectful manner. Some text exchanges make reference to face to face conversations, including one where FH told Mom he hoped she died and significant name-calling. Some text conversations include FH stating he is trying to get Mom arrested for her relationship with Abusive Partner [AP]. Her continued relationship is a point of contention for months; while FH may have had real concern for Mom's safety regarding AP, many of his comments to her on the subject were excessively cruel and had the opposite of the intended effect.

Following unloving treatment from FH, Mom was vulnerable to "love-bombing" behavior (excessive positive, affectionate attention directed at a potential victim), and AP's excessive and constant affection felt welcome and flattering. The early relationship with AP follows common patterns in relationships characterized by domestic violence: early "love bombing" followed by a careful, patterned introduction of violence in order to groom the victim into accepting violent treatment. This is the "cycle of violence" that characterizes domestic violence – an apologetic honeymoon phase after an incident, followed by tension building and culminating in a new violent incident. This comprises a pattern of inconsistent but strong care and affection mixed with hostility and more severe incidents of violence. This *intermittent reinforcement* pattern shapes the actions of the victim and can create traumatic bonding between victims and offenders. The offender is both the person causing harm to the victim and the person giving them comfort; this creates and reinforces the notion that with the right behaviors from the victim, they can have the positive aspects of the relationship without the violent ones.

There were some comparatively low-level aggressive incidents during this time frame such as yelling, physical intimidation, and throwing objects. No significant dates stuck out to Mom. During this time frame, it was believed by Mom that AP was in recovery and he had a traumatic background that made some violent incidents explainable if not acceptable.

2017

As Mom's relationship with AP progressed, her co-parenting relationship with FH continued to deteriorate and become more toxic. FH's frequent unkindness to Mom undermined any attempt he did make to warn her away from the relationship with AP. Mom and AP married in May of 2017. Five days later, custody of Daughter was changed to permit Mom only supervised visitation based on AP's history of drug use. After the custody arrangement changed, AP's violent behavior began to escalate and include more physical aggression and violence, including throwing objects at Mom and using more violent language. Based on the sequence of events, it seems likely that this escalation occurred because daughter was around less often to witness the effects of the abuse on Mom and speak to AP's abusive behavior.

Mom characterizes this period as a time when she was frequently emotionally abused and that violence would occur if she stood up for herself. This included throwing items at her and breaking her property, including phones and other technology that would have allowed Mom to access help.

Towards the end of 2017 Mom began making moves towards leaving the relationship for the first time and prepared to file for divorce.

2018

In January of 2018, Mom shared photographs of injuries to her face – a black eye and other bruising, a split lip – with her mother and friends. These injuries were caused by AP while she was attempting to separate from him. At one point, Mom began to barricade the door to her apartment to prevent AP's entry. In February, Mom had a final divorce hearing which was continued because AP did not appear; Mom informed him that the next court date would be March 10 and received a text message stating (paraphrase): "I hope you like everything else that's going to happen". Shortly thereafter, AP met with Mom and threatened to kill her; he held her at gunpoint, forced her to drive to another town, and pulled the trigger, upon which the gun did not fire because it was jammed. Faced with a death threat and actual murder attempt, Mom returned to the relationship out of fear. Throughout the year, AP would make reference to that incident and attempt to reframe it as if it were funny; this was terrifying to Mom. Mom discusses this incident in a way that is consistent with traumatic memory formation: physical sensations, sounds, and feelings are stronger in her memory than anything else.

In February of 2018, Mom's employer received a letter from FH regarding Mom's black eye, as well as a death threat made to Mom by AP, her recent attempts to leave, and that the violence was escalating. Attached to that email was one of the pictures of bruises that Mom had shared with others in January.

Throughout the year there were further violent incidents. AP would drive recklessly with mom in the car in an attempt to scare her and throw objects. Mom did attempt to leave the relationship again and went as far as getting divorce papers. Throughout this year discussions of starting a family began; Mom was hesitant and not on board, as she was trying to leave at various points. AP's emotional abuse and manipulation was ongoing, however, and he convinced Mom that if they had a child together things would get better. AP continued to isolate Mom and cut her off from supports; there were strict rules and punishments for non-compliance.

2019

Early in 2019 Mom became pregnant with son; violence continued and escalated during this time frame and Mom felt very stuck now that she was pregnant. Mom was not comfortable with terminating a pregnancy at that point in time and continued to hope that things would improve. Mom reports that AP physically assaulted her by slapping her when she was pregnant and created a fear of harm by continuing to drive recklessly. Mom also attempted to separate from AP during pregnancy and afterward, and he was living outside the home at various points. AP would show up at Mom's home unannounced and had keys. Following a reconciliation, a return to family court resulted in a cross-over referral to Child Protective Services and the current court case was opened.

Mom filed for divorce from AP for the last time in March of 2019. This was finalized in October of 2020.

Son was born in November of 2019. By this time, AP had attempted to strangle Mom twice and was exercising a high level of intrusive coercive control.

2020:

In April of 2020, AP came to Mom's home requesting entry. Based on his previous entry and ongoing violent behavior, Mom determined that the safest option would be to permit the entry and try to keep things calm. After he left, Mom took steps towards relocation.

In July of 2020, Mom received a voicemail from AP wherein he threatened her.

Following AP's relinquishment of his rights to Son, Mom began to make disclosures regarding domestic violence.

On December 14, 2020 AP called Mom from jail. During this call he is seeking ways to contact Mom, including asking for an address to write to her and asking her to change her number so that he can call her. Mom responds to his request to write her by telling him he isn't supposed to do that and responds to his request that she get a new number by saying "ok". Mom states that court went poorly and she has to stay away from him. Following this call, Mom got a new phone number but did not provide it to AP, cutting off his ability to contact her.

While incarcerated, AP's emails and calls from the jail have been pulled. It appears that many of these emails were intended to be passed to Mom and many contain love-bombing language and promises of change.

2021:

Mom was referred for DV Specialist services in January of 2021.

Emails to Mom from the jail continued in 2021, including an implied threat on 1/5/2021 where AP implies he will harm anyone who Mom dates in the future. In a recorded call with a third party, AP tells that person to tell Mom to view another person's emails, where he had been sending emails intended to be shared with Mom.

During February, began emailing her directly; on March 5, 2021 in the presence of witnesses, Mom logged into the jail email website and blocked AP's ability to email her.

Risk Assessment – Highly Dangerous, Potentially Lethal Behaviors

Over the course of the relationship, AP exhibited or committed a significant number of abusive acts that are considered to be highly dangerous, potentially lethal behaviors. A dangerousness and lethality assessment conducted with Mom documented 11 out of 12 possible factors:

1. Possession, access, and use of weapons – AP would threaten Mom with weapons and made an attempt on her life with one.
2. Direct Threats to Kill – AP threatened to kill Mom, himself, and friends and family.
3. Victim perceives/believes the offender might kill them – Due to the attempt on her life, Mom believes that AP is capable of and willing to kill her.
4. Stalking – During the relationship, AP monitored Mom’s location and conversations; he has continued to try to reach her from jail despite their divorce and her blocking communication from her end. The emails sent from AP to third parties since his incarceration indicate he is still seeking information about Mom and is attempting to contact her – she is refusing all contact.
5. Strangulation – AP committed felonious assault in the form of strangulation at least twice during the relationship. Strangulation is an extremely dangerous act which is associated with a 750% increase in risk of intimate partner femicide.
6. Intrusive Coercive Control – AP controlled the day to day life of Mom with strict rules and intense consequences for non-compliance.
7. Recent or attempted separation by victim – Mom has left or attempted to leave the relationship twice and is now divorced and committed to separation.
8. Unemployment of the offender – During the course of the relationship, AP was usually employed but lost his job; he is now incarcerated and therefore unemployed.
9. Escalating violence over time – There have been three significant escalations over the course of the relationship: The attempt to leave, the change of custody to remove Daughter from Mom’s home, and the birth of Son.
10. Substance abuse – Substance abuse does not, by itself, constitute a highly dangerous potentially lethal behavior. However, in light of the other lethality factors, substance abuse can be an aggravating factor, and AP has been known to abuse methamphetamines, alcohol, and other drugs.
11. Presence of a step-child in the home – Prior to their marriage and the change in custody, Daughter’s presence in the home may have contributed to AP’s dangerousness and potential lethality.

These behaviors and traits are research-based indicators that are strongly associated with a high risk of intimate partner femicide. The only factor that was not present was forced sex; in discussions with Mom, it is clear that the significant overall risk to her safety complicates the question of consent, and she states that she accommodated AP’s sexual advances to reduce the harm to herself.

Protective Behaviors

Mom exhibited multiple protective behaviors towards her children in response to AP's violent behavior.

1. Attempting to leave – Mom made multiple attempts to terminate the relationship, returning only when it became clear that she was in danger while they were separated.
2. Remaining in the relationship: Despite appearances, remaining in the relationship is a protective behavior on Mom's part. Given the dangerousness of leaving and the specific attempt on her life when she did attempt to leave, Mom's fear of death was reasonable. Put as bluntly as possible, she could not protect her children if she was no longer alive – survival was essential to being able to be protective at all. (Note that leaving or attempting to leave a relationship characterized by domestic violence is a dangerousness and lethality factor.)
3. Safety Planning – Following AP's incarceration, Mom took steps to enhance her security in case he was released. She changed apartments, hid all visible signs of which apartment was hers, and placed cameras on her door to document any attempt by AP to return or harass her. She has engaged in ongoing safety planning throughout the case.
4. Accommodation – This is a common protective behavior that victims of domestic violence will use to try to minimize the level of violence they and their families experience. Mom knew AP and his patterns well from experience and that accommodation and attempting to calm him would often diminish conflict and prevent violence and refusing to accommodate him would generally result in violence. Examples of accommodation include but are not limited to:
 - a. Agreeing to start a family with AP in hopes it would show her dedication to him and stop some of the violence from occurring
 - b. Accepting sexual advances to avoid being sexually assaulted
 - c. When AP appeared at the apartment asking to come in, Mom accommodated that request based on the history of violence and previous break-in.
 - d. Speaking kindly to AP during the jail call rather than confronting him or refusing the call. Based on experience, Mom knew that if she confronted him or refused the call she would be subjected to verbal abuse, so she simply proceeded with the call.
5. Custody Change – Mom realized during the custody proceedings for Daughter that she would be safer with her father and eventually came to view that change as appropriate and best for Daughter's safety.

Services Provided

Referral Source:

Referral Reason:

Intake Date:

Dates of Service (as of reporting date):