

Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP)

Deborah Lipson, J.D., Family Preservation Director

Hans Giller, M.Ed., Family Violence Counselor

Amy Lentz Horn, LISW, Family Violence Counselor

Family Violence

The Lucas County Juvenile Court Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) provides support to families and youth after a youth has been charged with Domestic Violence against a family member. All FVIP support is also available to families who are referred by the Probation Department or Assessment Center if there are signs that a youth has been or is likely to be abusive in the home, even if the youth has not been charged with Domestic Violence. Youth who have been charged with an offense such as refusing to follow house rules or staying out past curfew may benefit from FVIP because although the behaviors are not criminal, they can quickly escalate into aggression and violence.

Almost 70% of these cases involve a youth who has been violent or threatening towards a parent and the rest of the victims are siblings, grandparents and other household family members. In addition to the conflicts between family members there are many additional issues which may underlie a family violence incident, such as: disrespect, ineffective communication, step parenting, financial strain, untreated mental health, non-compliance with medication, unresolved trauma, Intimate partner domestic violence, post-adoption, substance abuse, ineffective discipline, current or former child welfare involvement and many other situations which are unique to each family.

Because these cases usually involve complex family dynamics, it is important to include the family in any interventions with the youth. And because of the family issues, these cases are especially suited to the court's efforts at Juvenile detention reform and diversion. FVIP is committed to decreasing the incidence of family violence by developing family-specific interventions that promote community and family safety, victim restoration and healthy relationships through education, skill building, family support and conflict resolution.

The Family Violence Intervention Team and Assessment Center staff provide the following crisis management, support and service referrals to the youth, parent and family members:

- Meets with youth to establish trusting relationship
- Administers Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN): an evidenced-based screener to determine mental

health and substance abuse needs of youth, and makes appropriate referrals.

- Administers OYAS Diversion tool to determine the youth's risk to the community
- Administers the public health screening instrument to determine if there are any housing, food or medical needs, and makes appropriate referrals
- Presents families with Family Safety Video (a white-board animation video that was created by the Team in collaboration with The Draw Store in 2016. This video teaches families how to de-escalate, helps youth learn how to recognize their "red flags" and how to make a plan to resolve their anger in a healthy, non-violent manner.
- Completes Individualized Safety Plan based on the tool taught in the Family Safety Video which is signed by the parent and youth.
- Contacts the parent to complete a comprehensive intake form to obtain background information on all underlying issues which may have led to the youth's violent and/or aggressive behaviors.
- Administers a safety screening to determine if the concerns are isolated or indicative of an ongoing pattern of behavior and to determine if the parent is concerned for safety with the youth in the home.
- Screens the parent for participation in a Family Conflict Mediation. This is an opportunity for the youth and parent to sit down together, with a neutral third party, and safely discuss the underlying issues which led to the youth's aggression and develop a plan of action to improve safety in the home.
- Accompanies the family to every court hearing until the case is resolved, continually assessing safety in the home and making appropriate recommendations to the magistrate or judge regarding detention, interim orders, and services.
- Offers families the opportunity to participate in the court's Step-Up Program, a nationally recognized program designed specifically to address adolescent



domestic violence against family members. It is a strength-based educational program, taught in individual sessions by the family violence counselors. The curriculum teaches skills to build healthy and respectful family relationships, such as being accountable for one's actions, I statements and problem solving.

- Offers families the opportunity to participate in either Functional Family Therapy (FFT) or Multi-systemic Therapy (MST), both in-home, evidence based programs offered by A Renewed Mind and Zepf Center, respectively.
- Offers families a detention alternative at Safety Net Shelter, a local runaway shelter which provides strength based services in a safe and caring environment. Court staff transports youth to and from court for all FVIP activities and participates in family meetings.
- Provides up to two weeks of respite care for youth who need an additional cooling off period and/or time to get services in place. The licensed homes are provided by three local private foster home agencies who contract with the court to provide these placements. During the period of respite, families are encouraged to visit and may be referred to the Step-Up program or other community services. The respite is paid for through a RECLAIM grant from the Ohio Department of Youth Services.
- Coordinates services and support for families involved in the Crossover program, Wraparound Services and with outside agencies, such as Lucas County Children Services, Safety Net Shelter, local mental health agencies, Advocating Opportunity, Youth Advocate Program by attending staffings, Team meetings and otherwise communicating regularly with all providers working with families.
- Promotes and refers youth to prosocial activities, such as classes at the Toledo Museum of Art, sports activities, voice lessons, yoga, and music programs as well as court opportunities, such as workforce development, bicycle building program, and basketball clinics.
- Consults with Court Psychologist, Dr. Liza Halloran, on cases with difficult mental health or behavioral issues which interfere with the family's participation in the Step-Up or other community services. Dr. Halloran offers ideas, strategies and recommendations to meet the family's needs and conducts psychological evaluations, if needed.

FVIP Program Achievements of 2018

The Team worked with 319 families with youth who were violent or threatening towards family members.

- 42 (13% of the DV complaints) in 2018 were handled unofficially with no hearings before a magistrate.
- 277 (87% of the DV complaints) in 2018 were handled officially and the youth appeared before a Magistrate.
- Of the 277 complaints handled officially, 174 complaints (55%) were dismissed. Of the remaining 83 (59%) were adjudicated delinquent of DV or a lesser included offense, and 20 (7%) are still pending.
- Of the adjudicated DV youth, only 3 (1%) were placed on court supervision, either probation or misdemeanor services.

Showed Family Safety video to 319 youth and their parents and helped them to create individualized Family Safety Plans.

Attended over 650 hearings—to provide support to parents, continually evaluate safety, assess the youth's progress and needs, request court orders and make referrals for the Step-Up Program, MST, FFT and other community services.

Contacted and/or met with parents or guardians of the 319 youth charged with Domestic Violence to evaluate safety in the home, screen for family conflict mediation and create a plan of action to improve safety in the home.

FVIP provided 72 days of respite care for youth who were placed in private foster homes licensed by Adriel, Inc. and The Twelve of Ohio, Inc. until safeguards and services were put into place to improve safety in the home.

The Family Violence Counselors facilitated 101 individual Step-Up sessions with 74 different families. During the sessions, the individualized family safety plan was reinforced and families were taught healthy communication skills aimed at creating respectful interactions in the home.

Of the 319 DV charges filed in 2018, 153 families participated in Family Conflict Mediation and 123 families successfully reached an agreement with steps on how the family will work together to reduce aggression in the home.

Sixteen families were referred to Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) through the Zepf Center.

Twenty six families were referred to Family Functional Therapy (FFT) through A Renewed Mind.

Teen Dating Violence

Although the number of teen dating violence cases filed in the U.S. are very low, nearly 1.5 million high school students experience abuse from a dating partner every year. Only a handful of domestic violence cases are filed each year in Lucas County against teens who have been violent or threatening towards a boyfriend or girlfriend. These cases are more similar to the traditional domestic violence cases in the adult system because they often involve power and control, not usually seen in family violence cases. The victims are referred to the Juvenile Court's Victim Advocate who supports the victim through the court process, provides notification of all court hearings, and assists the victim with filing for a protection order, if warranted.

The FVIP Team's work on this issue is focused in two areas: providing education and safety planning to the alleged perpetrator and increasing community awareness on healthy dating relationships.

The FVIP Team worked with Court psychologist, Dr. Liza Halloran, to create a one-time education program which includes a discussion about healthy dating relationships and the development of an individualized healthy relationship safety plan. The safety plan contains specific parameters for safely and productively interacting with an intimate partner. FVIP has also identified several local mental health agencies who will provide batterers intervention treatment, through individual sessions, for the teen perpetrator. Referrals are made, if appropriate.

The Team has joined in with national and local agencies to raise local awareness about the issue and promote healthy dating relationships. Every year, the Team hosts a "Wear Orange4LOVE" campaign throughout the Court during Respect Week – which occurs near Valentine's Day. Nationally, the week is dedicated to promoting respectful teen dating relationships. Also during Respect Week, the Team facilitates workshops and discussions on teen dating violence with high risk youth involved with the court, from youth in detention, to those placed at the Youth Treatment Center and in Community Detention. The Team also collaborates with other local community stakeholders as an active member of both the Lucas County Youth Sexual and Domestic Violence Coalition and Lucas County Domestic Violence Task Force (including the Best Practices subcommittee).



Family Violence Intervention Program Team members Debbie Lipson, and Amy Lentz Horn deliver candygrams and tags promoting healthy violence-free relationships, in support of the "Wear Orange4LOVE" campaign. Court visitors and staff alike received the promotional items.

