

The Impact of Cross-Disciplinary Training on a Collaborative Response to the Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Victimization

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Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Victimization

- Research over the last 30 years has shown that domestic violence and child victimization often co-occur within the same family
- In a review of studies, Edleson (1999) found 30-60% of families experiencing one type of victimization, were also experiencing the other
- Historically, domestic violence and child victimization have been treated independently of one another
 - Child welfare system and domestic violence advocacy programs
 - Two very different systems built upon different set of missions, mandates, and policies and procedures



Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Victimization

- More recently communities have recognized that no single agency can adequately serve families experiencing both domestic violence and child victimization
 - Early work in Massachusetts and Michigan has shown promising results by promoting collaboration
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) brought together an advisory committee to develop guidelines for policy and practice for communities struggling to respond to these cases



The “Greenbook” Initiative

- NCJFCJ published “Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice” or “Greenbook” in 1999
- The “Greenbook” recommends that communities must cross-train their domestic violence, child welfare, and juvenile court system personnel
 - Law enforcement, schools, health care systems, faith and community organizations
- Six local demonstration projects were funded to implement these NCJFCJ recommendations in 2000
 - A national evaluation team is documenting the process and examining the effects of implementation on collaboration and system change



Impact of Training on Inter-Agency Collaboration

- Jones et al. (2002): a five-day training series on inter-agency collaboration for public child welfare workers
 - Showed gains in knowledge, positive attitudes toward collaboration, and reported levels of collaboration
- Saunders and Anderson (2000): a two-day training on domestic violence for child protection workers
 - Showed gains in self-reported recognition and handling of co-occurrence cases
- Kolbo and Strong (1997): initial and ongoing training were the most frequently cited strategies to overcoming barriers
- Harbaugh et al. (1987): noted positive benefits of interdisciplinary training and education on professional practice



Impact of Training on Inter-Agency Collaboration

- While training is seen as an integral component to enhancing inter-agency collaboration, it is not entirely clear that all trainings can have a positive impact
- Research has not progressed to the point of identifying the nature and type of trainings that yield positive results
- Moreover, it is not clear whether trainings, in and of themselves, can enhance collaboration without addressing system barriers



Focus of Current Study

- The current study examines the extent to which trainings offered to state child welfare workers in WV:
 - Reached the intended audience
 - Changed participants level of knowledge
 - Changed participants attitudes toward collaboration
 - Increased self-reported levels of collaboration
- Seeks to identify perceived barriers and how they may relate to self-reported levels of collaboration



Co-Occurrence Training in WV

- West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WVCADV) established a study and policy workgroup to begin addressing the issue
 - Used the “Greenbook” recommendations as a basis and held educational forums presented by national experts
 - Recommended consistent statewide cross-training among disciplines on family violence
 - Developed a multidisciplinary training curriculum to be presented by a multidisciplinary training team



Training Curriculum Topics

- A series of 10 regional trainings were conducted in the fall of 2004
- The training curriculum = nine modules presented in a one day session
 - The impact of batterers on adult victims
 - Public policy principles of legal/court system
 - Overview of abuse/neglect process
 - The impact of children's exposure to batterers
 - Coordinating community responses
 - Assessing risk across disciplines
 - Safety planning across disciplines
 - Roles/responsibilities of other players
 - Bringing the players together when conflict occurs



Evaluation Design

- A quasi-experimental pretest and posttest design was used
- Pre-Training group (on site) = Charleston
- Post-Training group (mailed 6 months out) = Clarksburg, Huntington, and Shepherdstown
- Pre/post-training survey designed to measure participants'
 - Knowledge level regarding co-occurrence issues and others roles/responsibilities
 - Attitudes toward counterparts in other disciplines
 - Level of collaboration
 - Perception of barriers



Evaluation Design

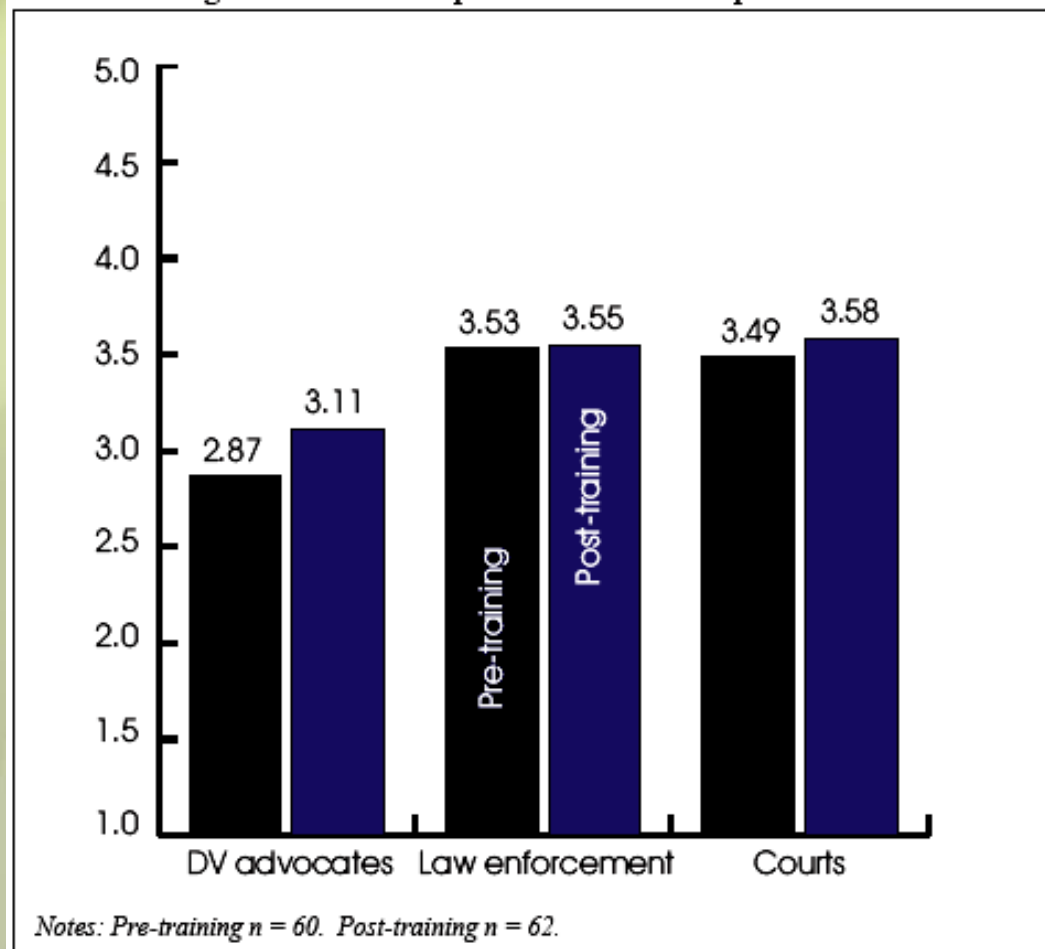
- Pre-training group and post-training groups were matched on (a) total years of experience and (b) whether they had participated in prior trainings on the topic
- Once matched no significant differences between the two groups on gender, race, age, education, and work location (urban vs. rural)
- Final matched sample consisted of 62 child welfare workers
- Study focuses on this groups' interactions with domestic violence advocates, law enforcement, and court personnel



Knowledge of Counterparts Roles and Responsibilities

- Participants reported least knowledge of roles and responsibilities of domestic violence advocates
 - Increased most among groups at post-training
- Findings suggest: (a) CW workers have less knowledge of advocates role and (b) greatest gains may occur with DV advocates

Mean knowledge level of other responders' roles and responsibilities





Knowledge of Training Competencies

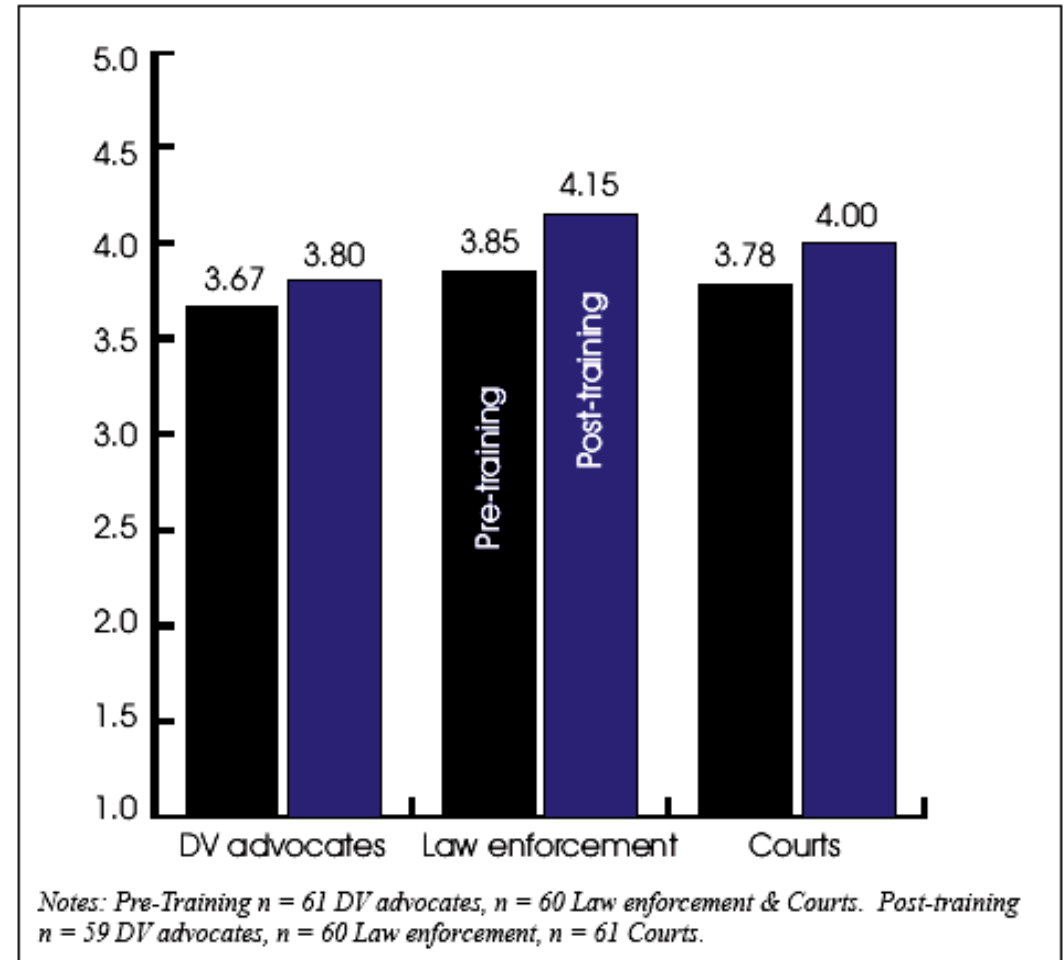
- Perceived level of knowledge measured in terms of training competencies pre and post-training
 - Most knowledgeable of how child abuse/neglect cases are processed and assessing risk of harm to children
 - Less knowledgeable of how DV cases are processed
 - More participants felt knowledgeable of safety planning issues for children than for adult victims
 - Greatest increases at post-training occurred regarding laws and legal definitions pertaining to these cases



Attitudes Toward Agency Counterparts

- Positive attitudes toward collaboration increased for all three groups
- Domestic violence advocates also rated slightly lower for attitudinal measures
 - Attitudes toward law enforcement were most positive and increased most at post-training

Mean attitudinal score, views toward collaborations with other responders

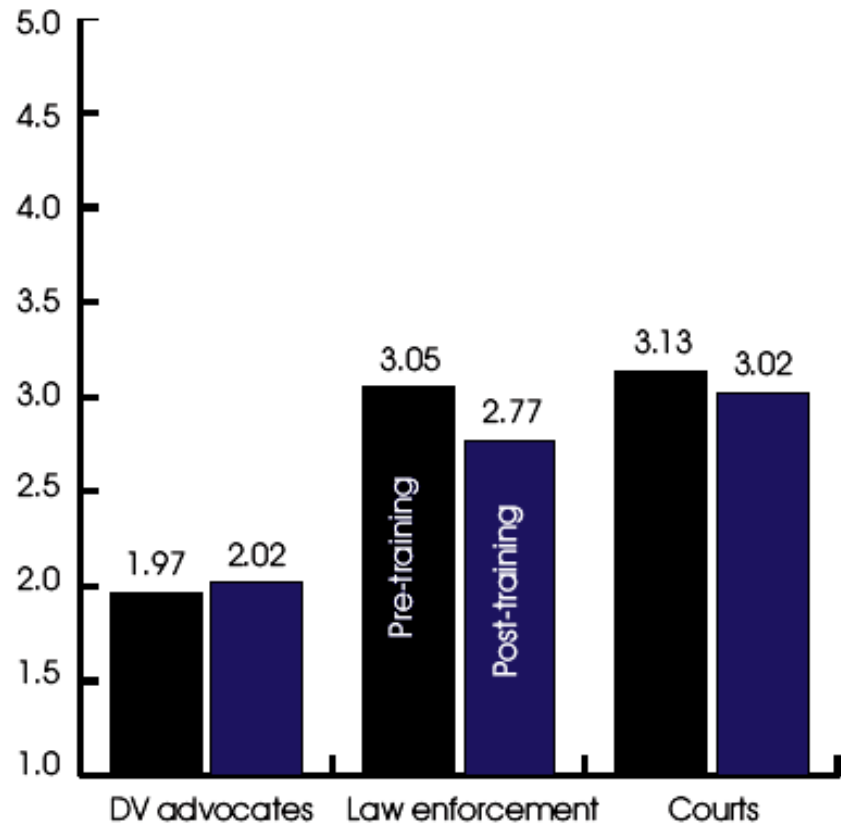




Self-Reported Collaboration with Agency Counterparts

- Collaboration mean scores low across all three groups at both pre and post-training, particularly for DV advocates
 - Post-training scores decreased slightly for law enforcement and court personnel
 - Remained the same for DV advocates

Mean level of collaboration with other responders



Notes: Pre-training n = 60 DV advocates, n = 62 Law enforcement, n = 59 Courts. Post-training n = 60 DV advocates, n = 61 Law enforcement & Courts.



System and Individual Level Barriers to Inter-Agency Collaboration

- Generally, system-level barriers are perceived by a greater proportion of child welfare workers than individual-level barriers
- Over 70% of participants identified system-level barriers
 - high turn-over rate, too few staff, and time constraints
- Accessibility of counterparts and different priorities were the most identified individual-level barriers both pre and post-training



System and Individual Level Barriers to Inter-Agency Collaboration

- A reduction occurred in the perception of many barriers prior to and after the training:
 - Lack of contact between agencies, differences in agency mandates, confidentiality restrictions
 - Lack of interpersonal relationships and lack of confidence in counterparts knowledge
- High turn-over rates for workers, failed collaborations in the past, and inability to agree on action to be taken increased slightly in the post-group



System and Individual Level Barriers to Inter-Agency Collaboration

Number and percent of participants indicating item is a barrier toward collaboration pre/post-training

	<u>Pre-Training</u>		<u>Post-Training</u>	
<u>System Level Barriers</u>	#	%	#	%
High turn-over rates for workers	47	79.7%	50	82.0%
Time constraints	44	74.6%	41	68.3%
Too few staff	43	72.9%	39	63.9%
Confidentiality restrictions or requirements	27	45.8%	23	37.7%
Differences in agency mandates	24	40.7%	20	32.8%
Lack of contact between agencies	23	39.0%	17	27.9%
Agency policies/procedures	22	37.3%	20	33.3%
 <u>Individual Level Barriers</u>	 #	 %	 #	 %
Accessibility of counterparts	22	37.3%	21	34.4%
Different priorities in the handling of cases	21	35.6%	21	34.4%
Lack of interpersonal relationships	19	32.2%	10	16.4%
Lack of confidence in counterparts knowledge	18	30.5%	11	18.0%
Differences in ideological values	17	28.8%	14	23.0%
Failed collaborations in the past	16	27.6%	19	31.1%
Inability to agree on actions to be taken	16	27.1%	19	31.1%

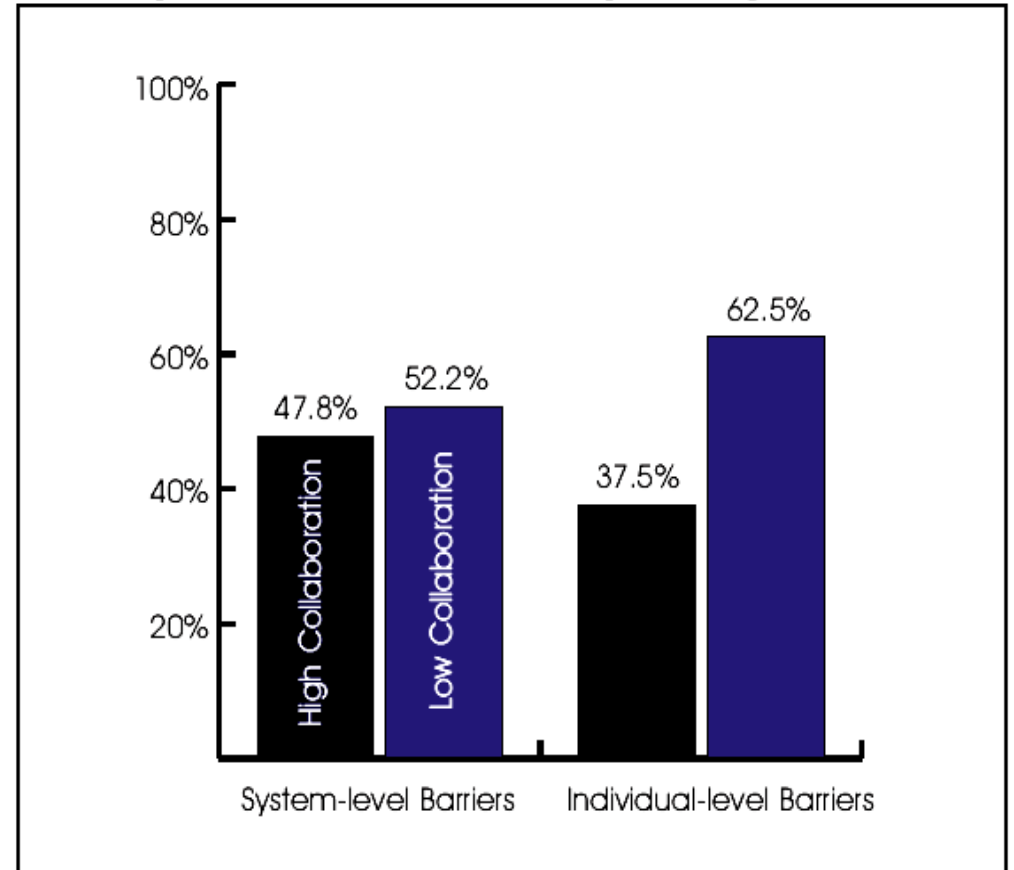
Notes: n = 59 for all pre-training items except failed collaborations in the past (58). n = 61 for all post-training items except time constraints (60) and agency policies/procedures (60). Responses of "quite a bit" and "a great deal" used to determine if item is a barrier.



Relationship between Perceived Barriers and Collaboration

- Participants who perceived the presence of individual barriers, were most likely to report a low level of collaboration
- Self-reported collaboration was not significantly impacted by perceptions of system-level barriers

Relationship between barriers and collaboration, post-training





Conclusions

- ❖ Slight changes in knowledge and attitudes did not correspond to increases in self-reported collaboration
- ❖ Collaboration with, as well as, knowledge of the roles and responsibilities and attitudes toward DV advocates remain lower compared to law enforcement and court personnel
- ❖ Disjuncture between views on the importance of and actual collaboration → while many feel collaboration is important, far fewer are actually doing it
- ❖ Training was successful in reducing participants perceptions of the presence of many barriers
- ❖ Perception of the presence of individual-level barriers may be most important for influencing levels of collaboration



Implications

- ❖ Trainings may not be enough to enhance collaboration, may need to reduce barriers as well → particularly individual-level barriers
- ❖ This study tells us that greater attention may need to be given to the nature of trainings and which trainings are likely to be most effective
 - ❖ May be related to dosage and duration
 - ❖ Ongoing and longer trainings with greater intensity have shown some positive results (see Jones et al. 2002; Saunders and Anderson 2000)
- ❖ Future research should seek to delineate the characteristics of trainings associated with heightened collaboration



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TEAMWORK