

SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Home Visitation and Domestic Violence Programs

Background

Home visitation programs are case management programs designed for pregnant and parenting mothers of small children. These voluntary programs have been created for low-income mothers to support their parenting and infant/toddler care through health education and by providing linkages to local services. Home visitation programs help mothers with a range of issues, one of which is domestic violence. Many home visitation programs are required to screen for domestic violence and provide referrals to local domestic violence programs and national hotlines.

The goal of this MOU is twofold. The first goal is to help establish a deeper relationship between home visitation and domestic violence programs and support ‘warm’ referrals. As an example of why deeper program partnerships can make a difference in conversation with clients, we are working with home visitors so referrals are more like: “If you are comfortable with this idea, I would like to call Sherrie from Safe Haven (local DV program), she is really kind and has worked with many, many women in your shoes.” Verses—“Here is a hotline number in case you need to call.” When personal connections are made between programs it helps clients feel safer accessing support and taking action.

Some home visitation programs have already developed such relationships with their local domestic violence agency. In fact, some partnerships have made it possible for the home visitor to bring the advocate to meet with a woman as part of case management to encourage deeper participation in domestic violence advocacy services. While we recognize that not all programs have this capacity, this partnership can create an opportunity for a direct connection to a domestic violence program that she might otherwise not make.

A second goal in developing a partnership between home visitation and domestic violence services is to create opportunities to connect pregnant and parenting women to home visitation services while they are in shelter. Developing a trusting relationship with the home visitation program is a way to extend support to women beyond shelter and help her connect to case management services that would be more trauma and violence informed through a partnership between agencies.

This recommendation comes with caveats. Of course it would be essential that home visitation staff signed a confidentiality agreement if they were to come to the shelter in the same way advocates do and promise not to reveal the location of the shelter and the location of the mother and her children.



The parties listed above and whose designated agents have signed this document agree that:

- 1) _____ (home visitation program) and _____ (domestic violence program) will meet with each other once per year to understand the services currently provided by their respective programs and review referral policies between agencies.
- 2) When domestic violence is identified by home visitation, _____ (home visitation program) will review advocacy services available and provide referral to _____ (domestic violence programs).
- 3) Any home visitor assigned to providing services to pregnant or parenting women at the shelter will complete any/all confidentiality agreements required by the shelter to ensure client safety and to assure that the location of the shelter remain confidential and not shared with ANY-ONE including friends and family, _____ (home visitation program) will take all precautions to ensure victim/survivor safety and assign staff to work with shelter clients that have training on domestic violence.
- 4) _____ (domestic violence agency) and _____ (home visitation program) agree to work to the amount feasible to ensure that each family has a consistent staff member assigned to assist them and to minimize the transfer of cases involving domestic violence.
- 5) _____ (domestic violence program) agrees to provide every victim/survivor seeking services with safety planning (including safety planning for children) and information on how to meet their basic human needs (such as food, housing and clothing), including offering to connect her to _____ (home visitation program) as part of a supportive case management plan.

We, the undersigned, approve and agree to the terms and conditions as outlined in this Memorandum of Understanding.

Executive Director
Domestic Violence Program

Executive Director
Home Visitation Program

Date

Date

