

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Tool: Domestic Violence and Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting Considerations	
	Reference: 2.E (2.30 Domestic Violence [DV])	
Effective Date: June 1, 2022		Version: 3

DCS will carefully assess the appropriateness of holding a CFT Meeting with both the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence (DV) offender present. Reasons why holding a joint meeting would **not** be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. The non-offending parent does not want a meeting for fear that the non-offending parent or the children would be in danger or feels intimidated and therefore unable to represent the child's best interests;
2. The non-offending parent has secured a "no contact order" and the meeting would be a violation of the order (the FCM should check to see if there is a "no contact order" as there are circumstances where the non-offending parent may not be aware that the "no contact order" is in place);

Note: DCS may request that the court lift the "no contact order" for the time of the meeting if holding a joint CFT Meeting is in the best interest of the family.

3. The FCM believes the non-offending parent or the child could be in danger if the meeting took place;
4. The family of the non-offending parent or the alleged DV offender either denies or enables the abuse;
5. The FCM believes the parent alleged to be the victim of DV or the child could be placed in danger if the meeting took place; or
6. The alleged DV offender denies that DV is an issue or that DV has not occurred when evidence states otherwise (e.g., police reports and visible bruises).

Note: It may initially be inappropriate to have the parent alleged to be the victim of DV and alleged DV offender attend the same CFT Meeting. Prior to each meeting DCS should evaluate the option of having the parent alleged to be the victim of DV and alleged DV offender attend the same CFT Meeting. Other options may be considered, such as a conference call with the alleged DV offender. If there is a court order in place, permission can be sought from the court for the alleged DV offender to be on the phone for a CFT Meeting.

Prior to deciding to hold a CFT Meeting with both the alleged DV offender and non-offending parent present, the FCM should answer the following:

1. Are there orders prohibiting contact (protective orders, restraining orders, or no contact orders)?
2. Do the non-offending parent and the alleged DV offender live together?

Note: If they do not live together, consider whether the non-offending parent's address and contact information need to be protected and kept confidential from the alleged DV

offender on CFT Meeting documents.

3. Is DV a topic that has been addressed publicly with the alleged DV offender (e.g., with police, a judge, the FCM, or other family members)? If yes, how did the alleged DV offender react?
4. What are the goals for having the alleged DV offender present and those for not having the alleged DV offender present at the CFT Meeting?
5. What is the biggest fear if the alleged DV offender does participate in the CFT Meeting?
6. Is the alleged DV offender involved in any services and, if so, for how long?
7. Are there any current stressors for the alleged DV offender that should be considered?

If it is determined that it is not appropriate for the alleged DV offender be present at the CFT Meeting with the non-offending parent, consider the following options to allow for involvement in the process:

1. Record the alleged DV offender's responses when discussing topics to be discussed during the CFT Meeting, and inform the CFT participants of the responses;
2. Allow the alleged DV offender to participate in some or all of the CFT Meeting via phone;
3. A criminal justice representative or a provider (e.g., therapist or case manager) with whom the alleged DV offender is working may attend the CFT Meeting as the alleged DV offender's representative;
4. The alleged DV offender may write a letter responding to questions/topics that will be discussed during the CFT Meeting; and/or
5. Hold two (2) separate CFT Meetings.

If the non-offending parent and the alleged DV offender will be attending the same CFT Meeting, the FCM will consider developing a Safety Plan (see policy 2.XX Domestic Violence) for the CFT Meeting with the non-offending parent and discuss the following prior to the CFT Meeting:

1. Are there any specific topics to avoid discussing during the meeting?
2. Are there safety concerns about anyone else who is attending the CFT Meeting?
3. Does the non-offending parent want to discuss the DV during the meeting?
4. How safe does the non-offending parent feel discussing the DV with the alleged DV offender present? Without the alleged DV offender present?
5. What actions will be taken if the non-offending parent feels unsafe during the CFT Meeting?
6. Is it appropriate to discuss the DV if children will be present at the CFT Meeting?