

Children & Youth Advocate Manual

How to & Hindsight Project



Children & Youth Advocate Manual History

In 2011, the Children & Youth Coordinator at End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (End Abuse), Ann Brickson, started the four challenges project, a project to inspire programs to address the major barriers to delivering the best quality domestic abuse services for children and youth. While highlighting the long-standing challenges faced by Wisconsin domestic abuse agencies to provide stable children and youth programming. The four challenges identified are; very broad range of ages in a single support group, single support group facilitator, New Children & Youth Advocates often must reinvent the agency's children and youth program every time there is position turn over, and new Children & Youth Advocates need more orientation and training.

In 2012, Ann Brickson worked with the Children & Youth Committee to create a training manual for new children & youth advocates (CYA). To begin addressing the four challenges the '*Guide to Knowledge and Skills for Children and Youth Advocates in Wisconsin Domestic Violence Programs*' was created in response to comments by domestic abuse directors that they found it difficult to train new children and youth advocates.

In 2016, Cody Warner, End Abuse's LGBTQ & Youth Program Director worked with the Children & Youth Committee to update and adapt the '*Guide to Knowledge and Skills for Children and Youth Advocates in Wisconsin Domestic Violence Programs*.' Which is now the Children & Youth Advocate Manual (CYAM), a tool for youth advocates that provides information and resources on the foundations of children & youth advocacy. These documents will be regularly updated.

The Children & Youth Committee is made up of Children & Youth Advocates across Wisconsin that meet quarterly. The role of the committee is to advocate for children and youth domestic abuse programming throughout Wisconsin with focused efforts to advocate for children and youth as primary consumers of services, reinforce family-focus in all services provided, and [appreciate & understand cultures](#) on child rearing & family. Throughout the CYAM **protective caregiver** is used to identify the adult of the child receiving services. The Children & Youth Committee recognizes children may receive services outside of a mother or a father and this language best reflects that.

Children & Youth Advocate-Supervisor Relationship Building

The Children & Youth Advocate Manual is also meant as an online tool for CYA **AND** their supervisors/trainers to discuss and revisit resources, trainings, and skill-building opportunities a CYA identifies as a need to support their Children and Youth program. This guide may compliment other orientation and training provided by individual agencies.

Supervisors/trainers and CYA are strongly encouraged to check back with one another regarding their progress in understanding each area and what topics might need further training and professional growth. It is encouraged that the supervisor/trainer also go through the materials to look for trainings and networking opportunities for the CYA. [HERE](#) is an example of how to create a training plan.

One way to alleviate the challenge of creating a youth program from the ground up when a new youth advocate is hired, is by creating a [Youth Program Module](#). In the youth program module link is a template to start documenting how the youth program runs.

Throughout the CYAM there are references to End Abuse's New Advocate Manual, you will need your login information for [End Abuse's website](#) to access this resource. Your director or supervisor will need to set you up with your login information. If you are unsure of how to create a login, please contact codyw@endabusewi.org.

Use Linked Resources to Learn More

When a CYA needs more information on a given topic, they can use the '*Resource*' section and the links provided in each section. The resources contain information that CYA can use to educate themselves further on each topic. Videos used in the resource sections have been checked to make sure there are subtitles and that the subtitles are correct.

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Connect with End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (End Abuse) staff are always a resource that should be strongly considered when looking for additional information on many different topics whether by supervisors or CYAs. You can submit a question to our website [HERE](#). To contact Cody Warner the LGBTQ & Youth Program Director please email at codyw@endabusewi.org. **Please contact Cody if you find any links that do not work.**

End Abuse staff can:

- Talk with supervisors about orienting new CYA.
- Talk with CYA about various aspects of children, youth, teen, and family advocacy.
- Subscribe advocates to the Children and Youth advocate listserv (WisKidsDV) or others found [HERE](#).
 - The listserv allows staff working with children, youth, teens, and families in Wisconsin to communicate with each other; ask questions; and share ideas, resources and information through email.
- Inform supervisors and CYA about upcoming Children and Youth Conference Calls (CYCC), trainings, and networking events.
 - The CYCC is a place to learn about children, youth, teen, and family specific topics AND free think solutions to barriers within CY programs with other CYA
 - The CYCC occurs monthly and are announced on the WisKidsDV listserv.
- Suggest ways CYA can connect with their peers who have experiences in different intersections of children & youth advocacy.
- Suggest additional resources and trainings.

End Abuse Program Areas

Below is a list of program areas that End Abuse focuses on with a brief description of what kinds of work is focused on in each program and a hyperlink to find that area on the End Abuse website.

Program Area	Description
Children & Youth, Teens, and Families	Children, youth & family services, & teen dating violence.
Coordinated Community Response	CCR/community collaborations, systems advocacy, victim services.
Homicide Prevention	Lethality assessment program, homicide response; reporting; and prevention, community collaborations, systems advocacy
Legal	Legal system and issues, restraining orders, family law, immigration, language access, public benefits law.
Policy	General policy, legislative advocacy and media relations. (i.e. housing, child welfare, human trafficking, and civic engagement).
Prevention	Primary prevention & anti-oppression. Prevention grant program, statewide prevention public awareness.
Program Capacity & Support	Victim services, trauma-informed care, program administration, capacity development, executive director support, and community collaboration.
Reach	Culturally specific services, anti-oppression and youth work. Outreach to Tribal communities, trauma-informed care, services for elders and individuals with a disability.

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The following lists are topics that many experienced Children & Youth Advocates wished they would have learned earlier into their career.

<p style="text-align: center;">For You</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌘ Find your support system within the agency and set appropriate boundaries within those supports. ⌘ Understand the effects of secondary trauma that happens to all advocates and the importance of incorporating self-care into your daily life. ⌘ Recognize your own triggers and how that will affect your ability to work with youth and families. ⌘ Do not feel that you need to have an answer or solution to everything. ⌘ Connect the relationship of trauma-informed care and resiliency to your work. 	<p style="text-align: center;">With Community Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌘ <u>YOU</u> must take the time to maintain and build these relationships. ⌘ Talk to your supervisor to provide information about different community partners. ⌘ Partner with someone at your agency to meet other agencies. ⌘ It helps to know the face and make a personal connection at an agency. ⌘ Meet people through touring facilities, setting up lunches, create cross trainings between agencies. ⌘ Put judgements about other agencies aside to build better relationships that are necessary to serve victims and survivors. ⌘ Create spaces to ask honest questions about programming. Ask questions with humility, like “<i>help me understand [xyz].</i>” ⌘ Understand that agencies may not be capable of providing the same services anymore. ⌘ Connect with local committees and community coalitions.
<p style="text-align: center;">Within the Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌘ Set up a training plan with supervisor. ⌘ Search for competency trainings in listening skills and crisis management. ⌘ View the protective caregiver’s as the experts in their family’s lives. ⌘ Advocate for your program because your program is essential to providing quality services. ⌘ Recognize the importance of setting up a balance between office time (i.e. grant reporting) and youth time (i.e. groups/1-on-1s). ⌘ Utilize Low-Impact Debriefing between staff and co-workers. 	<p style="text-align: center;">With the Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌘ Safety plan with the whole family; meaning those that are receiving services. ⌘ Use active listening skills and provide suggestions as appropriate. ⌘ Understand Parenting in Public and how it affects the whole family. ⌘ Set boundaries with program participants (clients) and maintain them. ⌘ Advocate the needs of the family for both the child AND protective caregiver.
	<p style="text-align: center;">With the Protective Caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌘ Create a positive relationship with the protective caregiver. ⌘ Provide consistent messaging that aligns with the protective caregiver’s wishes.

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Recognition

I want to thank all the advocates that have spent their time helping to create and update the Children & Youth Advocate Manual. Without all your insights, feedback, and resources the CYAM would not be anywhere near complete. Thank you to everyone that has helped as a part of the Children & Youth Committee from 2016 to 2020:

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And a HUGE thank you to the advocates who went through and reviewed the entire manual in 2018! With the valuable feedback you provided, End Abuse will be able to provide much needed, relevant updates to the Children & Youth Advocate Manual!

Amanda Meixner

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