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 foundational tool for CYA that provides necessary information and resources for their work.

In 2023, Cody Warner worked on creating better graphics and user accessibility throughout the entire CYAM.

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 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 programming. This guide may complement 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 training and networking opportunities for the CYA. Example 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 (will need to download to view document). 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. Follow these instructions to begin registering on End Abuse’s website. Visit endabusewi.org and click on “login.” Then click the “register” link, below the login credential prompt. You will need to click on the "I am an advocate and/or employee of an affiliated organization" to get the proper access. Once your registration is confirmed you will have access to the “For Members” resources.
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 throughout the manual. 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 subtitles are available and correct.

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.

End Abuse staff can:

- Talk with supervisors about orienting new CYA.
- Talk with CYA about various aspects of children, youth, teen, and family advocacy.
- Inform supervisors and CYA about upcoming Children and Youth Conference Calls (CYCC), trainings, and events.
- 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

On the next page is a chart with a list of program areas that End Abuse focuses on with a brief description of what kind of work is focused on in each program and a link to find that area on the End Abuse website.
## Program Area Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coordinated Community Response</strong></td>
<td>CCR/community collaborations, systems advocacy, victim services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>Victim services, trauma-informed care, program administration, capacity development, executive director support, and community collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engaging Youth</strong></td>
<td>Children, youth &amp; family services, &amp; teen dating violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homicide Reports</strong></td>
<td>Homicide response; reporting; and prevention, community collaborations, systems advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>Domestic Violence Housing First initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Human Trafficking Awareness</strong></td>
<td>National Human Trafficking Hotline, Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Services &amp; Related Resources</strong></td>
<td>Legal system and issues, restraining orders, family law, immigration, language access, public benefits law.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outreach to Underserved Communities</strong></td>
<td>Culturally specific services, anti-oppression, and youth work. Outreach to Tribal communities, trauma-informed care, services for elders and individuals with a disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prevention</strong></td>
<td>Primary prevention &amp; anti-oppression. Prevention grant program, statewide prevention public awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Policy Advocacy</strong></td>
<td>General policy, legislative advocacy, and media relations. (i.e., housing, child welfare, human trafficking, and civic engagement).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following lists are topics that many experienced Children & Youth Advocates wished they would have learned earlier into their careers.

### For You
- 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.

### With Community Partners
- **YOU** 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 “help me understand [xyz].”
- Understand that agencies may not be capable of providing the same services anymore.
- Connect with local committees and community coalitions.

### Within the Agency
- Set up a training plan with supervisor/trainer.
- 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 coworkers.

### With the Family
- 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 (youth) and maintain them.
- Advocate the needs of the family for both the child **AND** protective caregiver.

### With the Protective Caregiver
- Create a positive relationship with the protective caregiver.
- Provide consistent messaging that aligns with the protective caregiver’s wishes.
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 2023:

Ann Vang  
Bobbi Jo Bentz  
Deanna Bingham  
Dori Richards  
Jack Basten  
Jodi Nuthals-Mikulsky  
Karen Larson  
Karla Romero  
Lori Weinert  
Lue Yang  
Mainou Xiong  
Melissa Rivera  
Milly Gonzales  
Olivia Osborne  
Sharon Lewandowski  
Taume Kohl  
Taylor Lopez  
Tracy Plamann  
Vong Khang  
Wanda Smith  
Yer Yang

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

Amanda Meixner  
Cassie Reilly  
Catina Cole  
Ellen Honsa  
Heidi Lindsey  
Jack Basten  
Janelle Krueger  
Jennifer Schunk  
Kandi Krueger  
Kendra Taber  
Lauren Baur  
Marie Clark  
Natasha Keiser  
Shelly Johnson  
Sherry Kovaleski-Boock  
Taylor Lopez

Last, but never least, thank you to all the staff at End Abuse and WCASA that have helped me along the way. From reviewing the document to providing resources to listening me explain what the document is over and over. This resource would not be as great without our collaboration.

Abby Swetz  
Adrienne Roach  
Angie Rehling  
Ann Brickson  
C.J. Doxtater  
Chase Tarrier  
Cia Siab Vang  
Colleen Cox  
Danny Ho  
Diane Wolff  
Diara Parker  
Elise Buchbinder  
Gricel Santiago-Rivera  
Ian Henderson  
Jenna Gormal  
Kari Niesen-LaScala  
Kelsey Mullins  
Kathryn Chapman  
Kwnwahta Smith  
Megan Sprecher  
Olivia Osborne  
Sara Krall  
Sarah Curley  
Simone Lewis-Turner  
Stephanie Ortiz  
Stephanie Vang  
Tegan Swanson  
Tess Meuer