

# 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 turnover, 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 who 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 that 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, training, and skill-building opportunities that a Children & Youth Advocate identifies as a need to support their programming. This guide may complement other orientations and training provided by individual agencies. Supervisors/trainers and the Children & Youth Advocates are strongly encouraged to check back with one another regarding their progress in understanding each manual section 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 Children & Youth Advocate. Here is an [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](http://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 proper access. Once your registration is confirmed, you will have access to the "For Members" resources.

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### 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 Children & Youth Advocates. You can submit a question to our website [HERE](#). To contact Cody Warner, the LGBTQ & Youth Program Director, please email at [codyw@endabusewi.org](mailto:codyw@endabusewi.org).

#### End Abuse staff can:

- Talk with supervisors about orienting new Children & Youth Advocate.
- Talk with Children & Youth Advocate about various aspects of children, youth, teen, and family advocacy.
- Inform supervisors and Children & Youth Advocates about upcoming Children and Youth Conference Calls (CYCC), trainings, and events.
- Suggest ways Children & Youth Advocates can connect with their peers who have experiences in different intersections of children & youth advocacy.
- Suggest additional resources and training.

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### 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                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Coordinated Community Response</a>         | CCR/community collaborations, systems advocacy, victim services.                                                                                                            |
| <a href="#">Engaging Youth</a>                         | Children, youth & family services, & teen dating violence.                                                                                                                  |
| <a href="#">Housing</a>                                | Domestic Violence Housing First Initiative                                                                                                                                  |
| <a href="#">Human Trafficking Awareness</a>            | National Human Trafficking Hotline, Resources                                                                                                                               |
| <a href="#">Legal Services &amp; Related Resources</a> | Legal system and issues, restraining orders, family law, immigration, language access, public benefits law.                                                                 |
| <a href="#">Outreach to Underserved Communities</a>    | Culturally specific services, anti-oppression, and youth work. Outreach to Tribal communities, trauma-informed care, services for elders and individuals with a disability. |
| <a href="#">Prevention</a>                             | Primary prevention & anti-oppression. Prevention grant program, statewide prevention public awareness.                                                                      |
| <a href="#">Public Policy Advocacy</a>                 | General policy, legislative advocacy, and media relations. (i.e., housing, child welfare, human trafficking, and civic engagement).                                         |

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

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

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### Recognition

I first want to thank all the advocates who 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 who has helped as a part of the Children & Youth Committee from 2016 to 2026:

|                              |                       |                           |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
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| <b>Karen Larson</b>          | <b>Olivia Osborne</b> | <b>Yer Yang</b>           |

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 provided much-needed, relevant updates to the Children & Youth Advocate Manual!

#### Amanda Meixner

|                        |                        |                               |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
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|                         |                               |                            |
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