Most domestic violence (DV) survivors enter the family court system in a crisis state. DV-focused programs embedded within the court can offer supportive services, reduce the stress of engaging with the court, and empower survivors to navigate their cases.

Seven Steps to Creating a Program to Empower DV Survivors

1. Lay the Groundwork
   - Secure funding from multiple sources
   - Build rapport and partnerships with stakeholders
   - Set up a safe, restricted-access office space co-located within the court

2. Identify the Target Population
   - Be prepared to serve a wide variety of DV survivors with cultural sensitivity

3. Develop a Case Flow Process
   - Warmly welcome DV survivors with a client-centered approach
   - Match clients with a case manager
   - Follow up with high-risk clients

4. Determine the Staffing Required
   - Likely roles include:
     - Leadership: advocate
     - Director: supervisor
     - Front desk staff: first responder
     - Case manager: client coordinator
   - Reflect community diversity

5. Develop a Training and Supervision Plan
   - Use progressive training (coursework, shadowing, observation)
   - Set supervision expectations (include reflective supervision as needed)

6. Continuous Quality Improvement
   - Compile and analyze metrics of program effectiveness and design fidelity

7. Examine Potential Barriers and Facilitators
   - Barriers to address:
     - Community stigma
     - Fear of deportation, language barriers
     - Financial, housing dependence on harming party
     - Hesitance to engage with courts
     - Misperceptions of program offerings
   - Facilitators to leverage:
     - Collaboration with partner agencies
     - Professional development and self-care
     - Community outreach about program benefits

Adapted from: Empowerment-Based Domestic Violence Programming Within a Family Court Setting: An Implementation Guide, by Dionne Barnes-Proby, Mallika Bhandarkar, Melissa M. Labriola, Sierra Smucker, Emily Hoch, and Yael Katz, 2022 (www.rand.org/t/TLA1669-1). To view this infographic online, visit www.rand.org/t/IGA1669-1. The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest. RAND® is a registered trademark.

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