

Potential Solution Focused Questions for Domestic Violence

Ask the partner who was harmed:

1. On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 is you felt safe during this incident that got CPS involved and 0 is you felt totally unsafe, where would you scale this particular incident of violence or threats? What brings you up to that number? What is one more thing that would help you feel safer?
2. If we were to ask the children that same question, what would they say?
3. When you think of your time with your partner, what is the highest number you have ever felt? What was going on at that time that brought you up to that number? Who was in the room? What helped you feel safer? What were people doing that made the situation safer? When was that? Where were you at that time?
4. When you think of your time with your partner, what is the lowest number you have ever felt? What made it that number?
5. When you think of when things are starting to get scary with your partner, what are the things that are happening that tell you things are getting scarier more dangerous? What do you see? What do you hear? What would the kids say they see going on?
6. When you think of your role as a parent, what do you see as your most important roles in caring for your children? What role do you see your children should be playing in your family? What role does your partner play in your family?
7. When things start to get scary, what kinds of things have you done to help your kids stay safe from with what your partner is doing or saying? What kinds of things have you seen your kids do to ensure they are safe from the scary stuff? What do you see happening with your kids when things are getting scary?
8. When you think about what you know about the impacts of violence on children, what is your worst fear for your children? What do you think your children would say they worry about?
9. When your kids are 25 years old, what kind of parent do you want them to say you were to them as a child? What kind of values do you want them to understand are important for your family?
10. If your children were adults living out of the home and you heard about an incident where one of your children was using violence against his or her partner and your grandchildren were there, what would you want your child to do? What would you say to them?
11. Has anyone ever told you they are worried about your safety with your partner? What did they see or hear that worried them?
12. What are all the good things you see with your partner? What would the children say they like about your partner?
13. Has there ever been a time when your partner seemed to be headed towards violence and stopped? What was going on then? Who was in the room? What were they doing?
14. Consider completing a behavioral continuum chart on a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 is the behavior is positive and supportive to the partner and children and 0 is the partner's behavior is violent, what would you be seeing at each end? At a 5? What would the children say they see? What would the neighbor's see? What would the safety network see? What would the family say they need from the safety network at each level? From each other, etc.?

Victim - Non-offending Caregiver:

- How do you and [partner] get along?

- How do you and [partner] make decisions about money/how to spend your time?
- When your partner does not do what you expect, how do you manage?
- Do the two of you plan to continue to be a couple? Is that important to you?
- What are you willing to do in order to make your relationship successful and keep the children safe?
- On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 is that you feel completely safe physically, and 0 is where you are terrified every day that [partner] will seriously hurt you, where are you?
- If [partner] were here, how would he/she describe you?
- In the past year, have you been injured by [partner]?
- How does your best friend feel about your relationship with [partner]?
- Many parents in similar situations find it hard to be the best parent they can be when they feel scared. How have you managed?
- What have you learned are the best ways to protect [child] when you are aware that your partner might soon be violent?
- What have you tried in the past to keep yourself and your children safe?
- Have your partner's actions ever made it difficult for you to take care of the kids the way you want to?

Ask the children:

1. What are the best parts about your dad/mom?
2. What kinds of things do you like to do with your dad/mom?
3. On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 is you always feel safe with your dad, and 0 is you never feel safe, where would you scale it? What does feeling safe look like to you? What do you see your dad/mom do that helps you stay safe? What brings you up to that number? What is one thing you would need to see to make you feel one step higher safer?
4. Who do you feel safe with? What do you see them say or do that helps you feel safe?
5. What do you see/feel/hear that worries you with your parents? At what point are you really worried? What kinds of things have you done to help feel safer? When do you know when you need to do those things? When you have done those things in the past, what worked? Was there ever a time when it didn't work? What was different about that time?
6. Who all knows about the worries about your mom and dad? If I were to talk to those people, what would they say they have been worried about?
7. When you think of people you know with your friends and family, who do you know that can solve their problems without it getting scary? What have you seen them do or say that leads you to believe this?
8. What do you see/hear/feel that tells you things are not going well and could get scarier?
9. What worries you or your brother/sister when your _____ is getting scarier? What do you want to say?