

MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR CHILD PROTECTION WORKER



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What did We Do?

We asked 44 mothers and 45 fathers whose families had files open at child protective services as a result of child exposure to DV about their perceptions of their CAS worker. Aside from completing a self-report measure, participants were interviewed for additional comments.

What did We Find?

Mothers.

Approximately half had a positive perception of their worker (22 mothers), while the remaining mothers had a negative perception (15 mothers), or mixed perception (7 mothers), often because they reported on two or more workers, some of whom they viewed positively and others who they viewed negatively.

Fathers.

Approximately half had a positive perception of their worker (22 fathers), while the remaining fathers had a negative perception (22 fathers), or mixed perception (1 father).

What Contributed to Positive Perceptions of CAS Workers?

For Mothers	For Fathers
<p>CAS workers were...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Empathetic to the emotions and needs of mother and child ✓ Considerate in regards to the safety and wellbeing of mother and child ✓ Collaborative in the decision-making process ✓ Nice and friendly ✓ Easy to talk to 	<p>CAS workers were...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Good mediators for conflicts between them and their child's mother ✓ Open-minded—had the ability to look past personal history to remain fair in their approach to both parents ✓ Friendly and respectful ✓ Genuinely concerned for the best interests of their children
<p>CAS workers were great at providing...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Alternatives when solutions were not feasible ✓ Counselling and advice (e.g., legal) ✓ Practical and timely resource support (e.g., referral to appropriate parenting programs) 	<p>CAS workers were great at providing...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Practical resource support (e.g., referral to programs like Caring Dads)

What Contributed to Negative Perceptions of CAS Workers?

For Mothers	For Fathers
<p>CAS workers were perceived as NOT...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Acknowledging their efforts to care for their children while dealing with trauma × Agreeing with them on what was in the best interest of their child × Understanding the impact of DV on their ability to parent × Understanding their personal feelings and needs (e.g., the impact of living with mental illness) × Involving them in the decision-making process or next steps (e.g., sent them to a parenting program without asking or explaining why it was necessary) 	<p>CAS workers were perceived as NOT...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Taking their insight or needs into sufficient account × Caring about their interests and instead always favoured the interests of the child's mother
<p>Mothers indicated they felt...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Like the onus was on them to protect their children from DV × Fearful that noncompliance would lead to child apprehension × Like they were purposely being separated from their child when it was unnecessary × Like their children would have been better off if they did not have to deal with foster care 	<p>Fathers indicated they felt...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Disempowered – that decisions about their children were made without them and without their input × Hopeless in their ability to help achieve better outcomes for their children and families × Frustrated and helpless over response time and service delays × Deliberately misled (e.g., told behaviours were acceptable, only to have those behaviours used as evidence against them)

Ways to Strengthen a Relationship

Overall

- Support client autonomy
- Remain client-centered
- Provide practical and timely assistance and helpful resources

With Mothers

- Provide feasible solutions and alternatives whenever possible
- Engage in trauma and violence informed practice
- Recognize their efforts to keep themselves and their children safe

With Fathers

- Remain unbiased and open-minded to the possibility of change
- Keep them informed and consider their perspective when making decisions
- Support and promote positive co-parenting

FIND IT ONLINE

<http://kh-cdc.com/en/project-profiles/safe-understood.html>



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