![June](June logo with daisies and sunrise)

2013 EPRESS

LAST CHANCE to fill out our Annual Performance Measures Survey

**It only takes 20 seconds** to fill out the Performance Measures Survey using the link below. Please also have **EVERYONE** at your agency take the survey. Thank you!!

https://fsu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_77q2C63QBngfWGp

Helping Low Income Families Fight Hunger

Summer Feeding information at the Summer Breakspot site: http://www.summerfoodflorida.org/

Parent resources to mobilize communities against hunger and poverty: http://www.flimpact.org/resources.html

Snail Mail

This week, we sent each program (by U.S. mail) shiny new copies of some of our fliers, specifically ones for Father's Day, our low-

cost activities to do with kids, Building Blocks of Parenting, and What Good Parents do to Support their Children. Each program will receive a stack for clients.

As promised, we also sent every program that participated in the last phone conference a Berenstain Bears Workbook about Feelings. This slender workbook is full of great ideas to use for the Sixth Protective Factor: Children's Emotional Development.

Questions from Directors

Are other programs receiving tougher cases lately? It seems that we are getting cases that are quite complicated and dangerous – even more so than usual. Is this happening to other people?

Even though I do not have empirical data to measure complex cases, I have been hearing lately of some very difficult cases being referred to programs. So I can tell you that you're not alone, not by a long shot! Just in the past few months I've even heard of clients wearing GPS tracking anklets being referred to supervised visitation, and yesterday I learned that a client seemed so dangerous that other **clients** complained about him. Still, the best practices should help you sort out these cases and determine whether you can take them or not. Remember, if you don't have the resources or training to accept or keep a case, you are permitted to reject/discharge that case.

At intake, a client (non-custodial parent) told me "The judge said if I didn't like the program, I didn't have to come here." I told him that nobody had ever told us that, but he insisted. I didn't do anything more at the time, but now that he's used the program for a few weeks, he says he is done with us, and he's going to unsupervised visits. What should I do? Should I continue to schedule visits?

No. I'm worried that scheduling the visits knowing that the father is not going to show up would upset the child. In addition, it is a waste of the program's resources. But let's start from scratch: my view is that it would be

highly unusual for a judge to promise a litigant something like optional supervision, even if it's a new judge. Check the referral documents for such a notation. Then, if nothing about the optional nature of your program is found, notate the father's statement, and notify everyone in writing about it, along with a note that the visits are cancelled until further notice. That gives the custodian time to go back to court to get the issue clarified. The other reason to inform the custodian is to put her on notice that the father might show up for unsupervised visits contrary to the court order. Be sure that all lawyers, guardians, case managers, and the court itself get copies, too.

If your program is lucky enough to have its own way to communicate with the court directly, do this first. In other words, seek clarification from the judge if you have a means to do so. Only a few programs do, and they can solve this problem much quicker than those that do not.

Of course, if it's a dependency case, consult the case manager immediately. He or she will be able to settle the matter.

One of our families has a new parenting coordinator. Yesterday she asked me a question about the case. She mentioned something that she read in the mother's email about one of the children at our program. Is it ethical for her to read the parties' email?

Yes, it likely is ethical. Parenting coordinators have lots of resources available to them, including the communication between the parents. This might include written or recorded communication, and email is written communication. When the parenting coordinator in this case was retained, she probably has a signed agreement that lists all the information that she has access to.

Prevention Through Empowerment: Theory and Practice of Empowerment for SV Administrators

This article explains empowerment theory, empowerment practice with families, and ways for administrators to support empowerment.

Empowerment Definitions

As we talked about in the last phone conference, it's often helpful to understand the theories surrounding practices. Supervised visitation directors and staff should understand the theory of empowerment so that they can empower families to heal from and prevent abuse. There are many ways to think about empowerment, including how to empower yourself to improve your supervised visitation program. Below we suggest several definitions:

- Empowerment is a means to achieve needed social change, personally and politically, in ways that meet human needs. It is a tool for individual and social transformation.

- The base of the word empowerment is power. Power refers to self-determination and the acquisition or resources. Social service providers enable clients to gain power to solve individual problems.

- Empowerment is a person's (1) access and control over needed resources, (2) decision-making and problem-solving abilities, and (3) acquisition of instrumental behavior needed to interact effectively with others to procure resources.

- Empowerment is a process of discovering within ourselves and in others the capacity to bring about change. Empowerment means accepting personal responsibility to act. As we realize our power, we become free to transform ourselves and to discover untapped strengths. At the heart of the empowerment process is the phenomenon of helping someone else to see something he or she hasn't seen before and subsequently to act upon that insight. *It is not a bullying power, not the power to make people afraid. It's the power to make them see new things as possible.*

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory coincides with Strengths-Based theory. This is because the client and social service provider both bring unique knowledge and experiences to issues and problems. While strengths-based theory focuses on using the client's strengths to overcome the client's individual issues, empowerment theory uses *both* the client's strengths and the social service provider's knowledge and access to information and resources to overcome the individual problem. Empowerment theory recognizes four core issues:

- *Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs*. Beliefs regarding self-efficacy - a sense of self that promotes action on one's behalf, a belief in self-worth, and a sense of control - affect the empowerment process.

- *Validation Through Collective Experience*. In collective experience, the self and others recognize shared experience; i.e., that some of one's perceptions about oneself and the surrounding world are indeed valid and therefore legitimate to voice. Collective experience can motivate one to seek change beyond the individual level toward other systems, such as the family or community.

- *Knowledge and Skills for Critical Thinking and Action*. Through mutual sharing and support, individuals can think critically about the internal and external aspects of a problem. They can identify macro-level structures and their impact as well as explore how they have acquired their values, beliefs, and attitudes and how these affect the problem. Through consciousness-raising, people come to see how their problems are similar to those of others. They also begin to notice common experiences that help them collectively to understand and take action.

- *Action*. Individuals can develop action strategies and cultivate the resources, knowledge, and skills necessary to influence internal and external structures. They learn to assume responsibility for their actions. Behaviorally, they become willing and able to act with others to attain common goals, as well as reflect on and learn from those actions.

Empowerment is not:

- Those with power charitably giving and sharing resources with those without power;

- Victim blaming;

- Social Work theory that is deficit-focused;

- Viewing power only as an exploitative and scarce resource; or

- One-sided, with professionals who work with families as the experts and problem-solvers, and the client as a recipient of the professional's ideas and interventions.

Multiculturalism

Empowerment practices utilize those elements of the helping relationship that can increase one's power. As a practice model, it involves a multicultural perspective and recognizes that these different perspectives can strengthen social service theory and practice.

Empowerment Practice with Families

Social service providers that work with families use empowerment practices for capacity building. *Capacity building* refers to enabling, supporting, teaching, and encouraging family members to take control of their family and community. Empowerment-based practitioners begin with the premise that all families and communities know what they need to function in a healthy way. They also believe that families want the best for their members and community and that families do the best they can given the multiple barriers that exist between them and desired outcomes. Empowerment-based practitioners seek to identify these barriers and work with families to remove them. Barriers may be structural, as in educational or agency policies, or may involve the lack of opportunities, knowledge, or skills of family member, or even neighborhood obstacles.

Family Deficits that Empowerment Practice Addresses:

- Information

- Resources

- Skills

Social service providers that work with families can help them increase all of these.

Provider Barriers to Empowerment Practice with Families:

- Lack of understanding of the diverse ways families function and care for members

- Need for increased cultural competency

- Need for self-awareness

- Need for acceptance of differences

- Societal perspective of social services as a last resort

One model of child welfare empowerment practice "pursues solutions through (1) acknowledging family strengths, (2) empowering families to create change by expanding their options, and (3) including community and kinship members to advocate, support and collaborate with families within the child protection system."

Empowerment Theory for Administrators

Empowerment principles apply to administrators, too! The importance of social service administrators' support of and involvement in empowerment practice is necessary for its success. However, three chief barriers to the development and sustainability of empowerment programs are:

1. Funding Issues, particularly the resistance of funding sources concerned about the longer times required for documentable results in empowerment-oriented approaches.

2. A Social Environment that involves political and philosophical differences with other agencies and agency competition.

3. Intrapersonal Issues, especially those characteristics of clients or workers that seem to interfere with empowerment practice.

Administrative Strategies to Promote Empowerment include:

- Focusing educational presentations when possible on 'common needs' or common goals with the audience. For example, most empowerment-oriented programs have a preventive component that makes them cost effective in the long term.

- Using every opportunity to make communication contracts/Memos of Agreement, formal or informal.

- Learning to use the media effectively, including developing strong support among members of the media.

  - A thoughtfully planned, ongoing public education effort.

Lunch-Time In-Service Training

After reading this E Press, ask yourself and your staff: Can we empower our clients to succeed? Can we empower our Program to succeed? How?

Use poster board or dry erase boards to write (1) a list of ways that you are currently empowering your program, and (2) a list of ways that you might do so in the future. Then start strategizing how to get that second list fulfilled.

Empowerment Resources

- http://familyfocusresourcecenter.org/
- http://caseygrants.org/equalvoice/power-of-an-equal-voice-resource-videos-for-family-empowerment/
- http://www.fldoe.org/family/
- http://www.floridanetwork.org/
- http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/educators/find-local-programs/fl/index.aspx
- http://www.fccflorida.org/resources/state.htm
- http://www.familycommunityresources.com/

Cyber-Stalking: Awareness and Prevention

We have had supervised visitation clients as well as staff complain about stalking behaviors. Read the following to educate yourself and your clients about cyber-stalking.

Introduction:

In the United States, approximately 3.4 million people are stalked each year (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010). With rapid advancements in technology, personal electronics such as cell phones, laptops, and GPS units have become smaller, cheaper, easier to use, and more popular. Along with these advancements, the average person's online presence has also grown; almost everyone has at least heard of and most know how to use Facebook, Linked-in, Google, and You-tube to connect with and gain information about business and personal acquaintances (Chaulk & Jones, 2011). As a result of these factors, technology has become more prevalent in stalking cases.

More than one in four stalking victims reported their stalker used some form of technology to monitor or harass them; unwanted contact via email and instant messaging are most commonly reported (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009). Two common issues arise when technology is involved in stalking cases, the first is a failure to recognize that cyber-stalking is happening and the second is an inability to gather conclusive evidence that proves cyber-stalking. This is why both raising awareness about cyber-stalking methods and teaching preventative measures against cyber-stalking are important.

What is stalking?

- "Stalking" is legally defined (F.S. 784.048) as:
  - It is considered a crime if the stalker intentionally, repeatedly harasses a person over a period of time.
  - Penalties include up to one year for misdemeanor stalking and up to five years for aggravated stalking (misdemeanor stalking while also threatening to injure or kill).

- Generally, it is known as the intentional pursuit or repeated following of a person in an effort to harass or instill fear.

- Can be associated with other criminal behaviors, such as robbery, burglary, or more severe crimes.

Stalking: The Basics

- Stalking is a crime of power and control.

- 75-80% of those cases involve men stalking women.

- Stalking can be conservatively defined as 'a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated (two or more

occasions) visual or physical proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal, written, or implied threats, or a combination thereof that would cause a reasonable person fear' (National Institute of Justice, 2007).

How prevalent is stalking?

- 12-16% (1 in every 6-8) women will be victims of stalking in their lifetimes

- The FL Department of Law Enforcement reported 589 total cases of stalking (and 2,209 cases of threat/intimidation offenses) in 2012

- 3.4 million adults (18 years or older) were victims of stalking in one 12-month period according to the latest "National Victimization Survey" by the Bureau of Justice Statistics

- This same report also notes that almost half (46%) of victims experience unwanted contact with their offender at least once a week
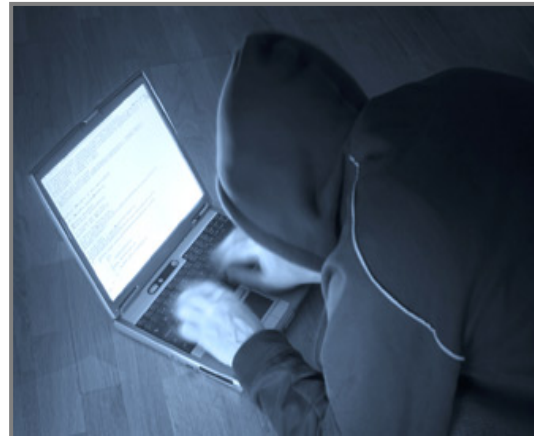
Who stalks?

- Approximately 59% of female stalking victims and 30% of male stalking victims report being stalked by some type of intimate partner. Nearly three fourths of stalking victims say they know the offender.

- 3 out of 4 stalkers are male.

- Female victims are more likely to be stalked by male offenders, whereas males are stalked by an equal percentage of both males and females.

What does stalking look like?

Common intrusive acts / stalking behaviors include:

- Sending unwanted gifts (flower, candy, love letters, etc.).

- Telephone harassment (leaving messages, repeated hang-ups, unwanted text messages, etc.).

- Showing up where the victim is or following the victim.

The Use of Technology to Stalk: "Cyber-Stalking"

There is no universally accepted definition for cyber-stalking; it comes in many forms. Cyber-stalking involves one person repeatedly using the internet, email, cell phones, or other electronic devices to harass, monitor the movements of, or threaten another person.

- In many cases, cyber-stalking is another phase of stalking behavior or occurs concurrently with other stalking behavior.

- 48 states, with the exceptions of Kentucky and Nebraska, have statutes directly addressing cyber-stalking or cyber-harassment.

- 83% of cyber-stalking victims experience harassment via email.
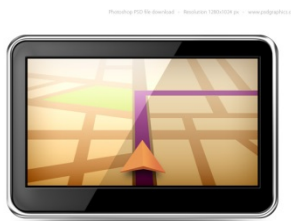
Food for Thought

- Take a moment to consider your online presence and personal electronics. Often times, cyber-stalking victims, their advocates, or investigators are not aware of the many ways a cyber-stalk can track and harass their victims.

- If someone wanted to monitor or harass you, how might they do that? Are you vulnerable? Consider: your online presence, whether you reveal your changing locations to others online, if your electronics are password protected, and if you keep your computer's history protected or deleted.

Recently, the most popular instrument to be used by stalkers is the Internet. Knowing how the Internet – even more importantly, social media – can be used as a tool for stalking is the first step in protecting yourself and your family from becoming victims.

- Other ways people engage in cyber-stalking include:
  - Using internet resources to find the victim's home or work address or monitor the victim's social life. This could include using social networking websites, such as Facebook or Foursquare, to locate/follow the victim.
  - Using a small GPS device on to the victim or victim's property to monitor the victim's movements.
  - Gaining access to a victim's cell phone and using text messaging services that link the stalker's phone to the victim's cell phone GPS and update the stalker on the victim's movements.
  - Using small cameras to monitor the victim's social contact, movements, or routine while she/he is at home, work, or in the car.
  - Gaining access to a victim's computer via spyware, which could allow the offender to monitor the victim's keystrokes, know her/his internet history, or even see the victim's computer screen in real-time.
  - Knowing the victim's email address, the stalker could:
    - Publish that information online asking other's to send harassing messages to the victim.
    - Send viruses or spyware to infect the victim's computer.
    - Subscribe the victim to pornography.
    - Access services that could send the victim excessive amounts of spam email.
    - This could be particularly damaging if the offender used the victim's work email address.

<u>Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare</u>

There are 1.06 billion active *monthly* Facebook users. Many of these users don't realize that the majority of their information is "public" by default. This is because on most social media sites, like Facebook, it is the user's responsibility to "self-regulate" the privacy of their information. Facebook and all its users (as well as any users of other linked sites, such as Instagram, Foursquare, or Twitter) have access to any posts, photos, identifying information, etc. until the user marks them as being "private."

Just as there are endless opportunities for all of your information to be susceptible to stalkers, the opportunities to protect your information are also endless. Here are some general rules to follow on Facebook and other social media sites that collect information:

- If it's allowed, manage who can see your posts, particularly posts that would share information about yourself; if it's not allowed, it's not worth posting at all.

    o Facebook has a drop bar below every post that allows you to manually control this. It looks like this:
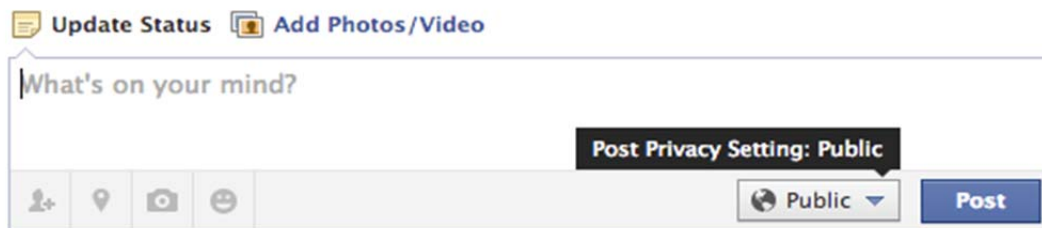

- Generally, don't post your location. (Most things are time-stamped on social media sites, which means that people know not only where you are, but *when* you are there as well.)

- Set your identifying information (birthday, where you live, your place of work, etc.) as being private.

- On Facebook, some game apps require access to your personal info. Don't allow it – play those games for free online somewhere else.

- For more information on the details of your Facebook privacy and data sharing policy, click here.

<u>Other Technology That Can Be Used For Stalking</u>

The Internet is a powerful piece of technology, but there are many more gadgets and gizmos that can be twisted into tools for stalking, too. Listed are some of the more common types as well as ways to keep them away from the hands or eyes of stalkers:

- *GPS trackers*
    - Countless forms
    - Inexpensive
    - Provide real-time locations
    - Can be as small as an SD card and easily stored in a variety of places
    - ***Protect yourself:***
        - Weekly cleaning/inspections of commonly used items: handbags, pockets, cars, laptops, etc.
        - If you find any new or strange, unrecognizable devices on or in unusual locations, dispose of them.
- *Smartphones*
    - Many apps require personal information when they are downloaded – info that other users can potentially access
    - "Find My iPhone" is an app that is used to find a lost iPhone, but with certain information, it can easily be used by others to track your current location.
        - The iPhone was created a year after the production of the latest survey on stalking, meaning that we don't have sufficient information on the number of cases involving smart phones.
    - ***Protect yourself:***
        - If an application asks for access to personal info/photos/location, only

17
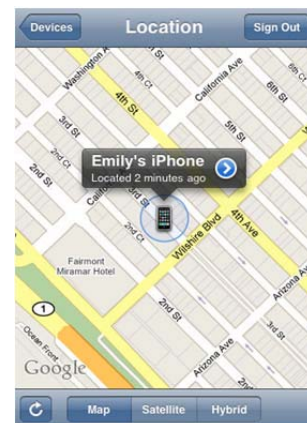
> download it if it is necessary (like a mobile banking app).

- Specifically *avoid* downloading game apps that require your personal info. Again, play those games online.

- Put a "lock" on your phone so others can't download unwanted apps while you aren't looking.

- Avoid "checking in" to places on your mobile apps like facebook, twitter, and foursquare

    - One site, pleaserobme.com, highlights the importance of keeping your location hidden. You can locate anyone by putting any twitter username into a search engine. It finds the exact location of the most recent check-in, showing followers where you are – or where you aren't (e.g. home)!

- *Public WiFi*
    - Using public wireless internet can open up your computer to potential hackers or people looking to steal or even just see information stored on your computer and other devices

    - ***Protect yourself:***
        - Both Apple and Windows have file-sharing capabilities. That is, they allow other users to access your files when they are sharing the same network. Turn this setting to "off" or manage it so that you can control who sees/receives your files and when

        - Windows users, click [here](#) for a guide on how to turn it off.

        - Mac users, click [here](#).

- *Webcams*
    - "Webcams" are connected to the "web," and therefore can be used as spying devices

    - ***Protect yourself:***
        - When you aren't using it, turn it off!

- For the more mobile webcams at home, unplug them when they aren't being used. This ensures that they cannot be used by hackers/burglars to see who is home when you aren't.

Tips for Protecting Yourself

If you or someone you know believes they are being stalked/cyber-stalked, this should be reported to the police.

- Some preventative measures against cyber-stalking include:
  - Be aware of your online presence.
    - Never post your physical location, email, or phone number on social networking sites, such as Facebook.
    - Google yourself to know what personal information other's can access.
  - If you have a computer, install anti-virus software to prevent spyware or virus. They are many free anti-virus programs online.
  - Keep track of your personal electronics.
    - Do not leave your computer or phone unlocked or lying around, especially in the presence of someone who may want to monitor your social contacts or your whereabouts.
    - Clear your call logs and text messages on your phone, and clear your internet history to prevent anyone from monitoring your social contact and/or general interests.
  - Do not share your computer, phone, email, social networking, or other passwords with anyone.