

Integrating Advocacy Services

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Who is TAP

Texas Advocacy Project is a non-profit law firm providing FREE legal services to victims of:

- Intimate partner violence
- Sexual assault
- Stalking
- Other services offered:
 - Training & advocacy
 - Community outreach & awareness

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light to dark, creating a modern and professional aesthetic. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, some with thin white outlines, set against a white background.

Working with Community Based Advocates

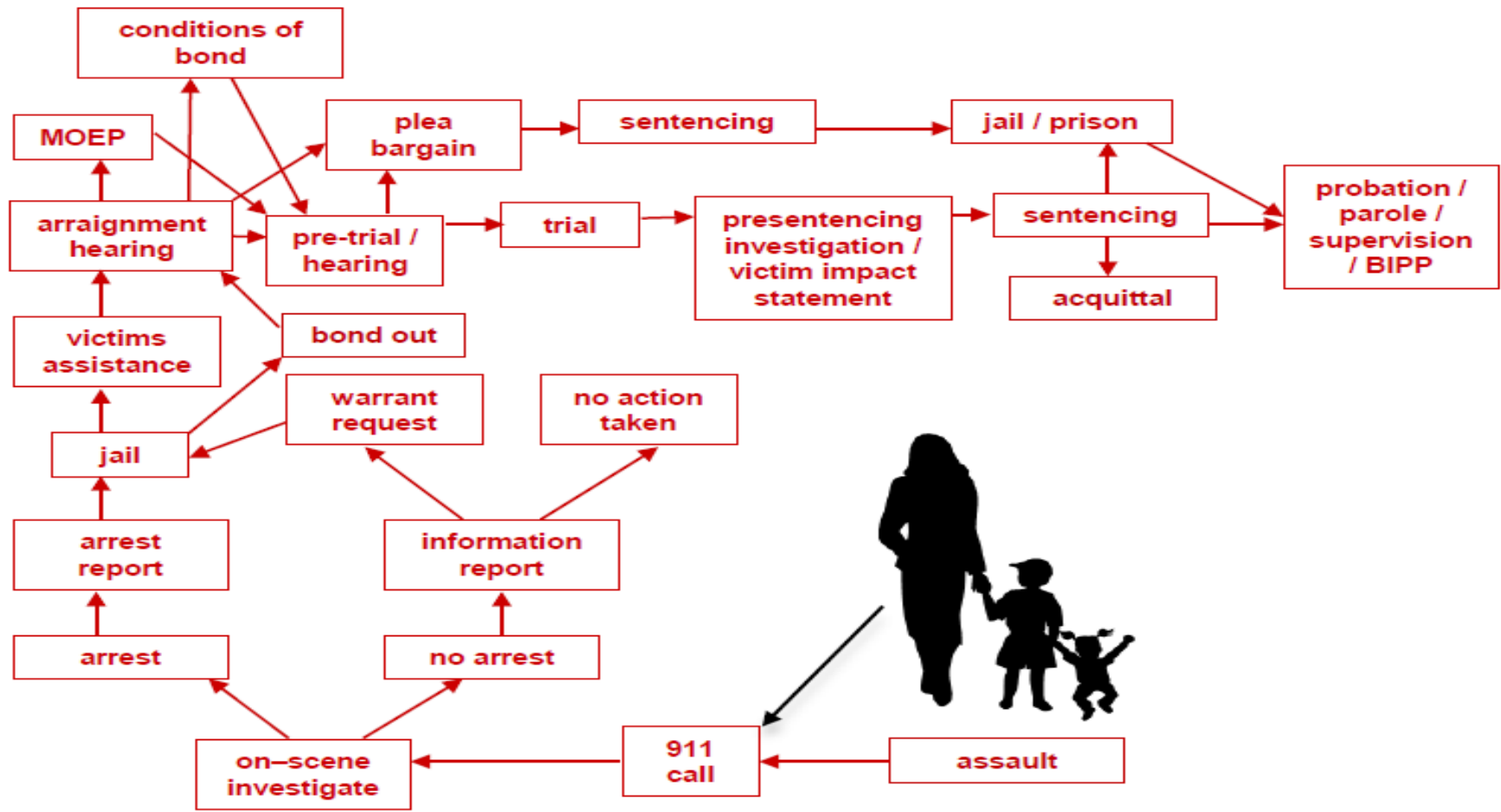
Advocacy

- Systems-Based Advocates
- Community-Based Advocates
- Advocates Within the Military

IPV victims may be involved with multiple institutions that have many steps when involved with child protection, civil and criminal justice systems, and the military response to IPV.

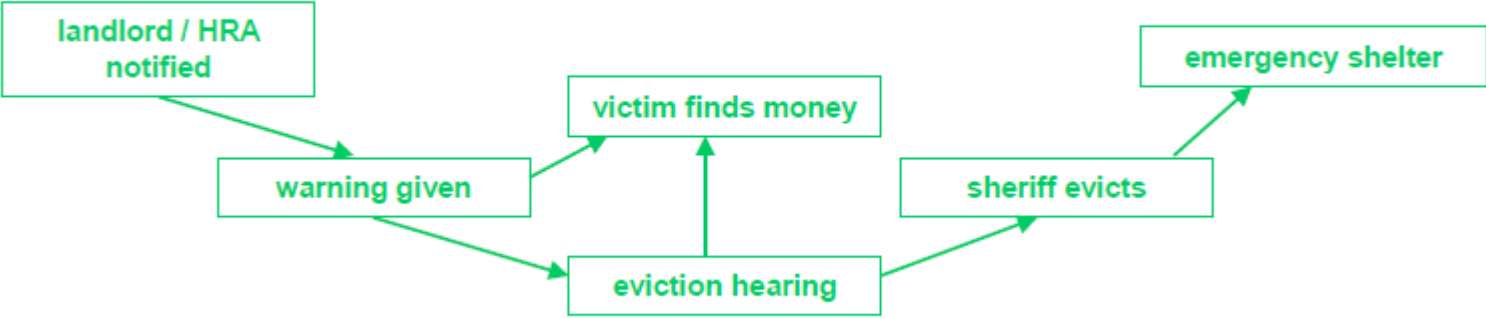
Praxis - Rural Technical Assistance on Violence Against Women



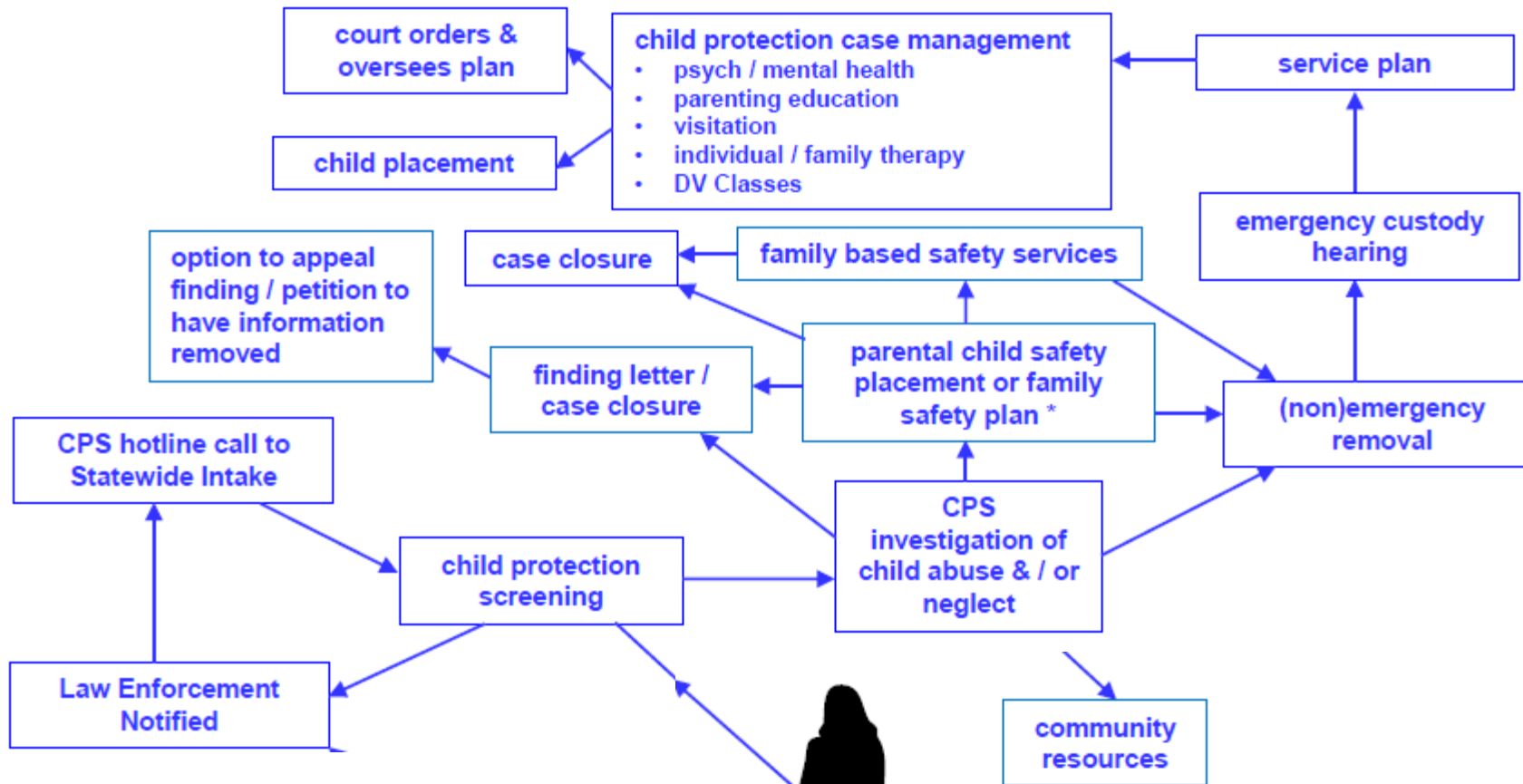


TX CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM MAP

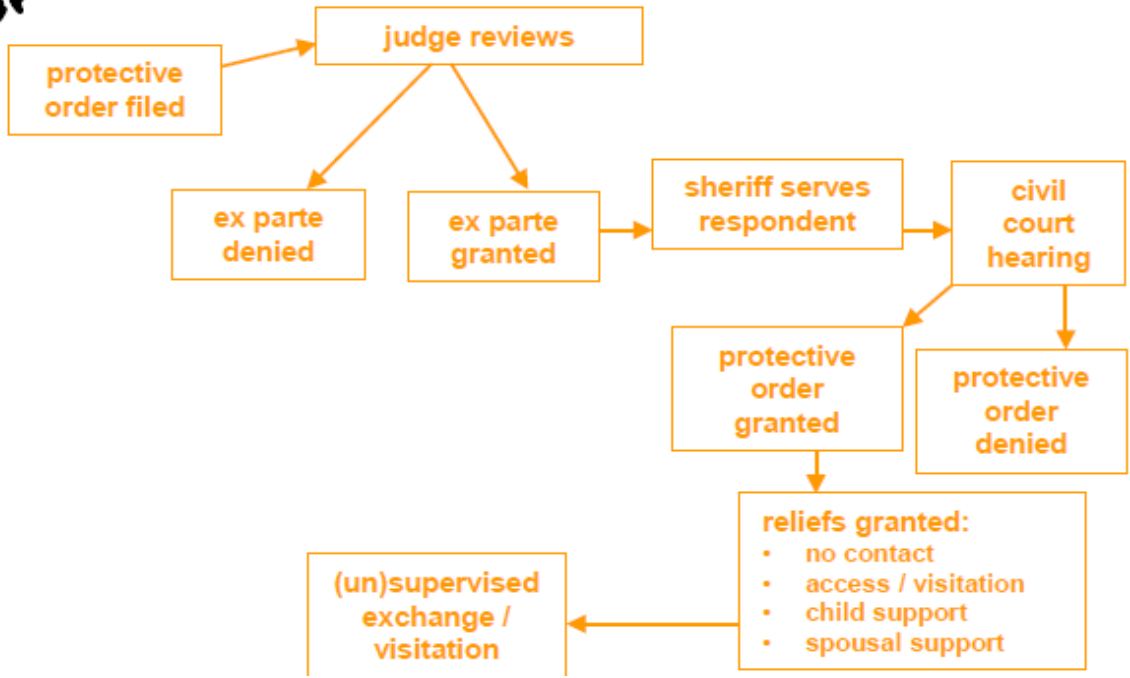
TX HOUSING MAP



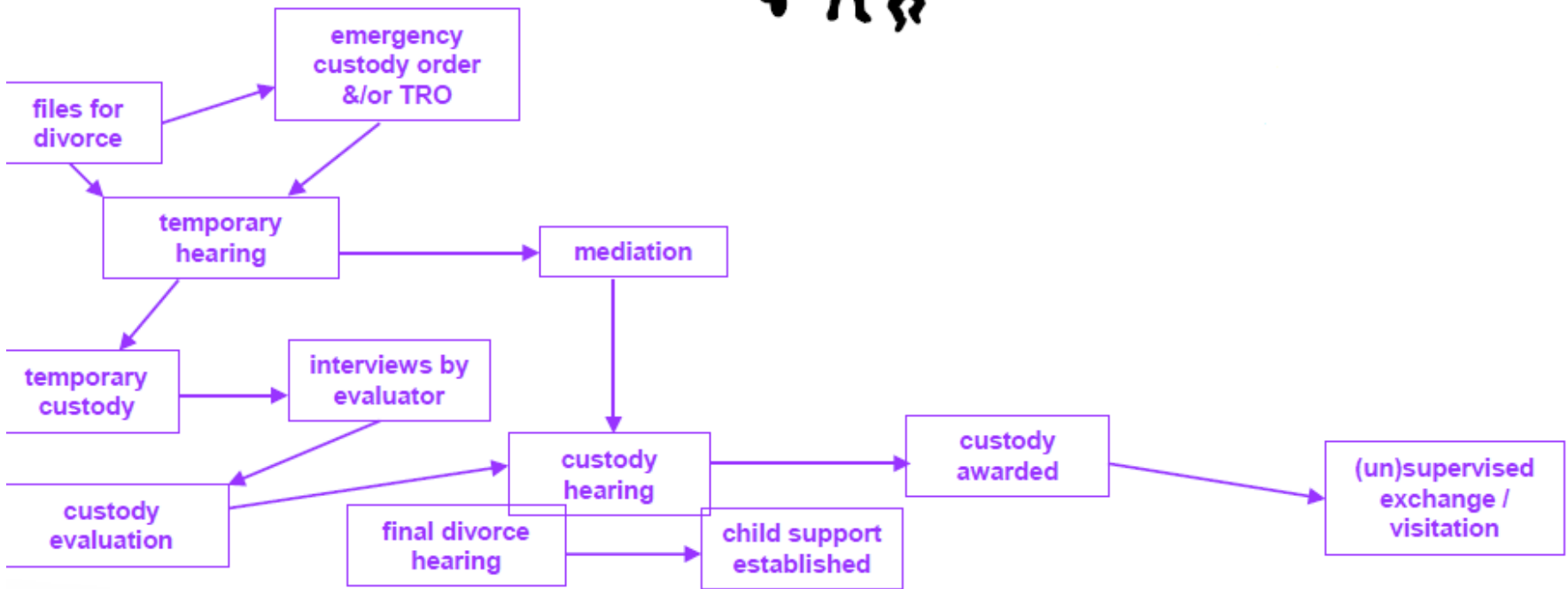
TX CHILD PROTECTION MAP

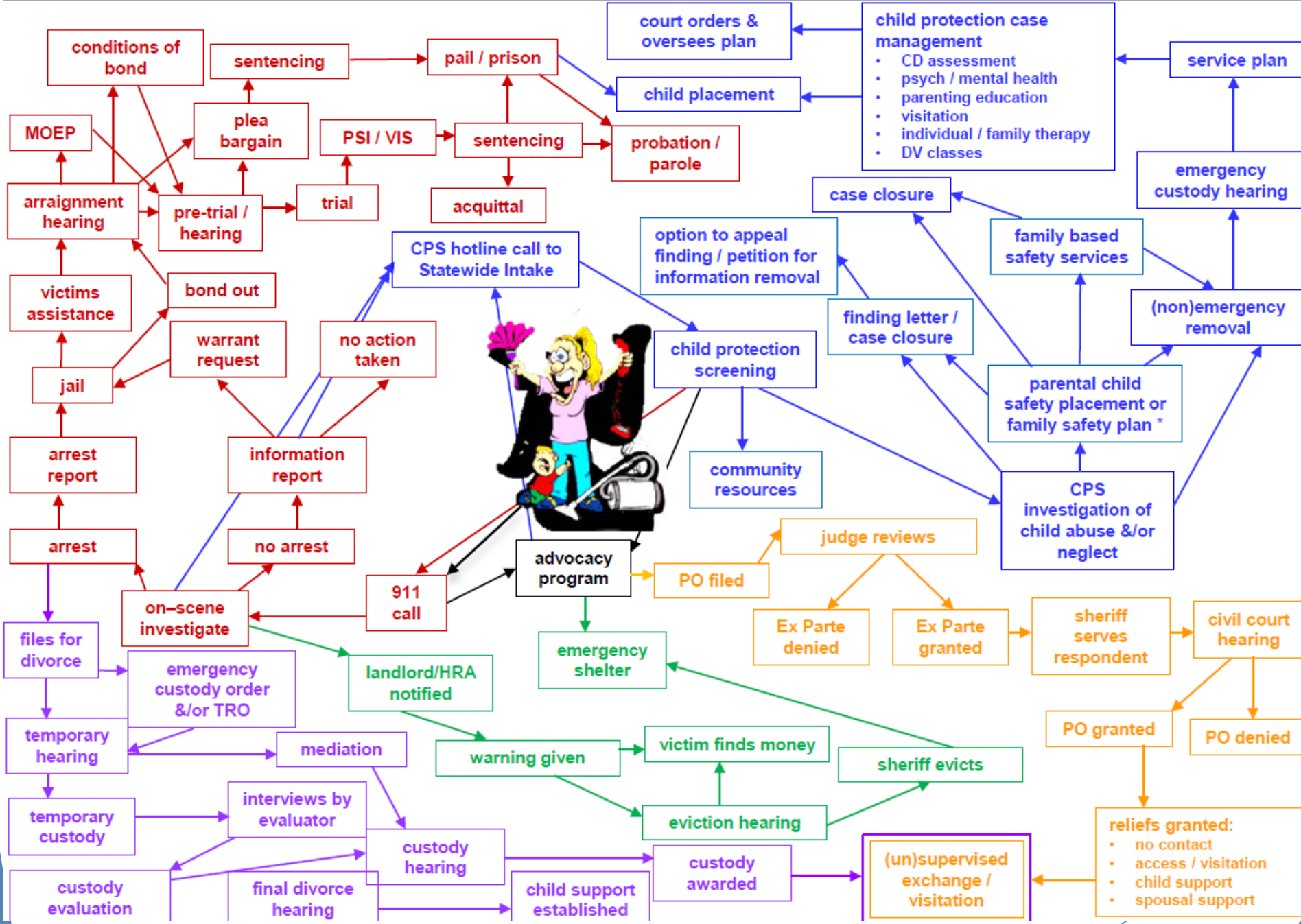


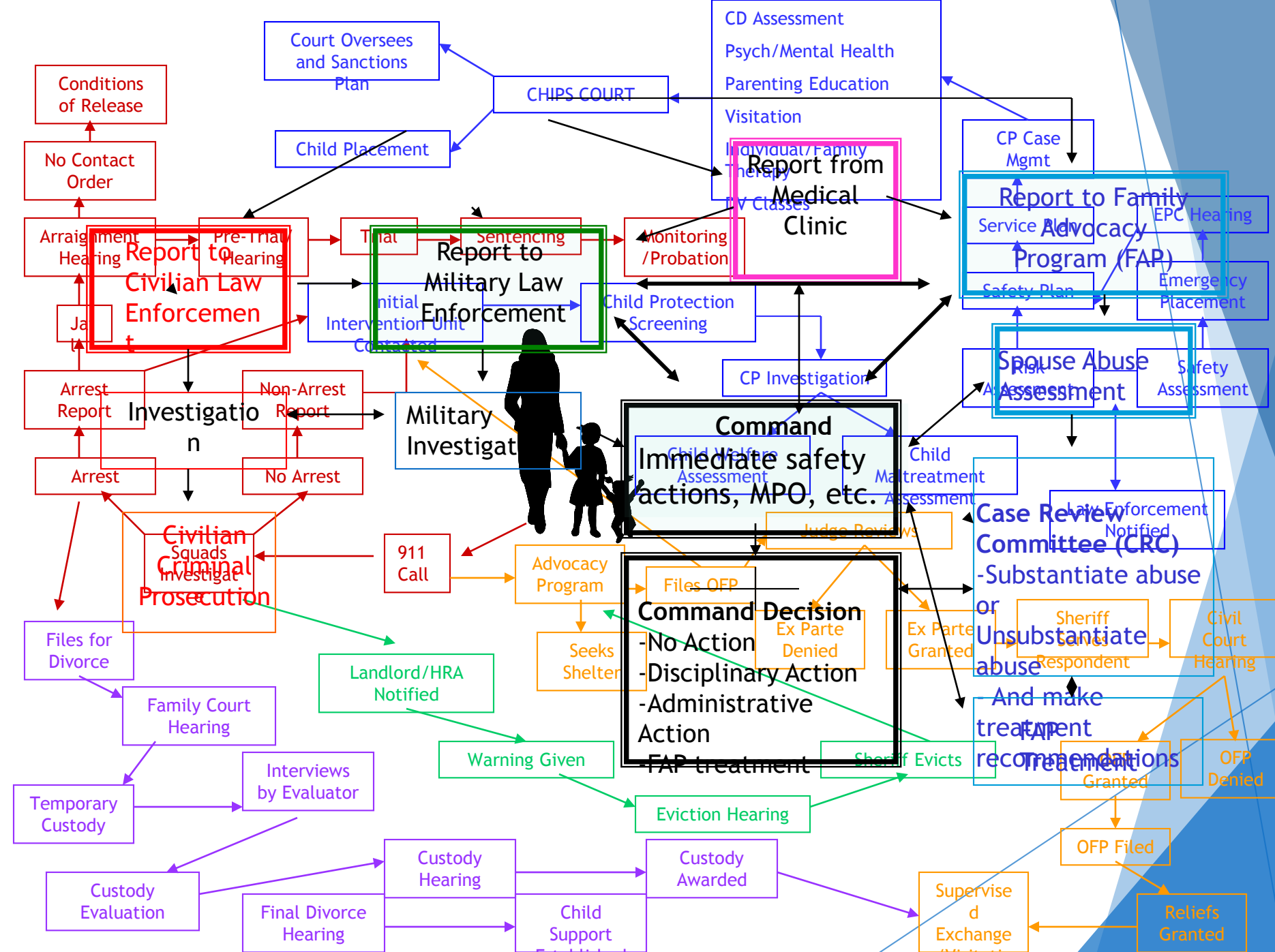
TX PROTECTIVE ORDER MAP



TX CUSTODY MAP







And . . .

VHA
VA
VTC Courts

What do Victim Advocates do?

- Confidential services
- Accountable to the victim
- Engage with victims to assess risks posed by the abuser, by intervention, and develop a safety plan
- Understand and listen to the lived experiences of abuse, cultural alienation, or dealing with institutional responses
- Explain civil, criminal, and military responses, and explore increased safety and unintended consequences
- Strategize with victim to identify and achieve short and long-term goals for safety and autonomy
- Facilitate access to resources, emergency housing, shelter⁴⁶

Systems-Based Advocates

- Support victims in their role as a witness to a crime
- Employed by a public agency - law enforcement, prosecuting attorney, probation, or some other entity within the city, county, state, or federal government
- Nothing that a victim says to a system-based advocate will typically be protected as confidential.
- Roles and responsibilities vary based on their host or governing agency
- Various names for the position victim liaisons, crime-victim advocates, Victim-Witness Assistance Coordinators

Community-based Advocates

- Exclusively focus on the interests and autonomy of the victim (and support people)
- Represent the interest of the IPV victim, providing information and support that allows him/her to make an informed choice that best serves his/her interest
- Facilitate the risk assessment conversation and safety planning
- Enhance the system's response by providing resources and direct support to victims of IPV

Community-based Advocates

- Assist victims in dealing with the **impact of the IPV on all areas of their lives**, not just their interactions with the criminal justice system

CHANGE AGENT

- Advocate for an institution to adjust its practices to enhance safety for victims of IPV and her/his children
- Serve as a systems-change agent, whose job includes some combination of training, consultation, strategic planning, and policy and protocol development

Advocates in the Military

- Most like a systems-based advocate, with some exceptions related to confidentiality
- Restricted reporting
 - Provides for informed decision making
 - Limits information to select individuals
 - No report to command or law enforcement - no actions taken with perpetrator
- Unrestricted reporting
 - Report to command and law enforcement
 - Actions potentially taken with perpetrator
- Exceptions

For each woman and her children, what risks are generated by...

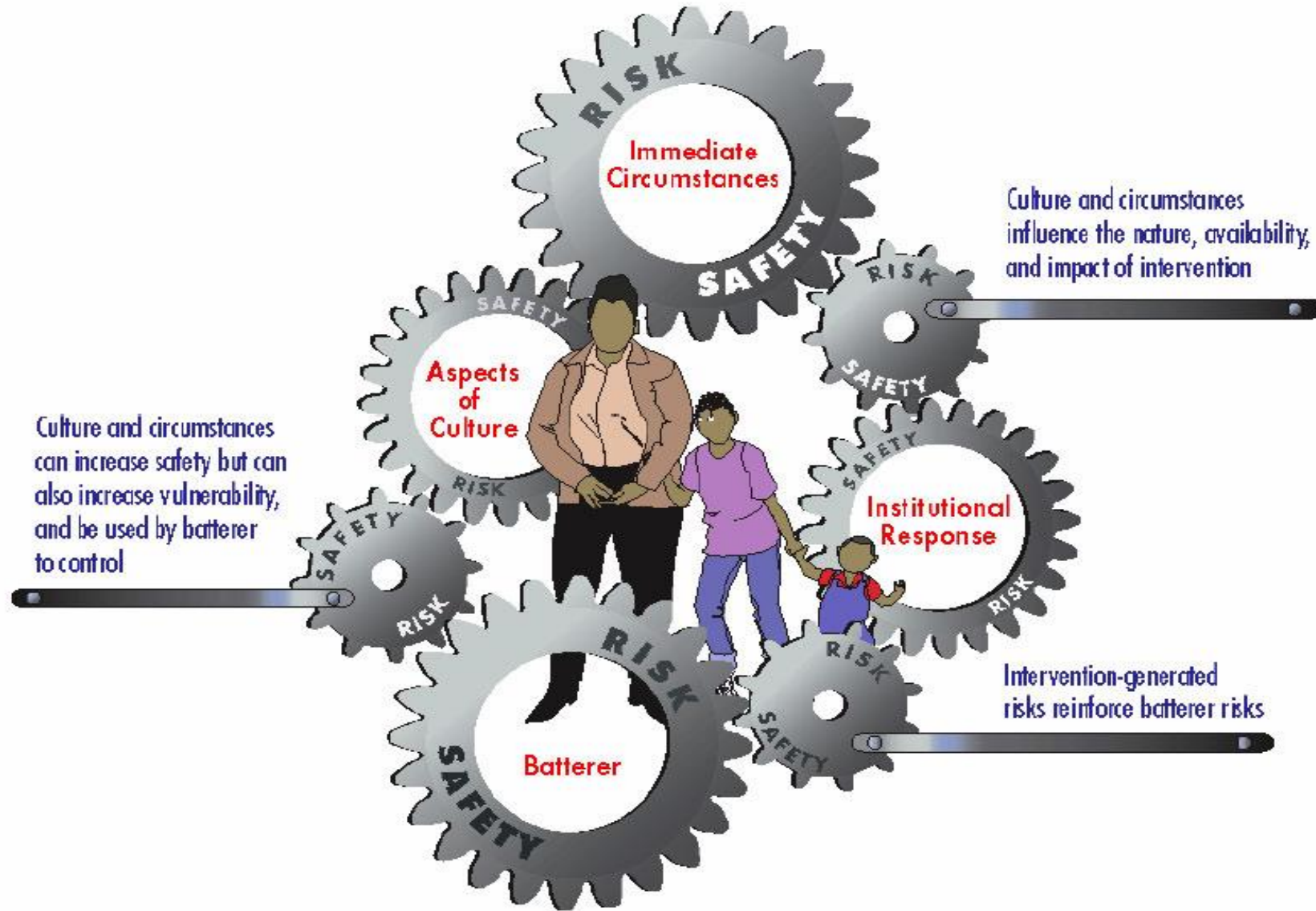


Figure 9: The Complexity of Risk and Safety 1

Understanding Victim Behavior

- Love partner, but want abuse to stop
- Don't want abuser to go to jail
- Try to handle the situation themselves
- Many abusive behaviors are not criminal
- 36% report to police about IPV
- 10% report sexual assault
- Primary reasons women report IPV to the police
Stop the violence + Protection



IPV Victim Issues

General

- Fear of violence/reprisals
- Threats to recant/drop charges
- Fear of losing children
- Financial concerns/dependence
- Shame and embarrassment
- Reluctance to become involved with police and courts
- Trauma/Mental health issues

Military & Veteran-related

- Fear negative effect on military career
- Loss of access to services and benefits
- Lack of knowledge of civilian resources
- Isolation and lack of support system
- Caretaker role and guilt

Why Independent Advocates?

- ▶ Only advocates can represent the interests of the victim when they conflict with those of the State.
- ▶ Independent advocates increase the likelihood that victims/survivors will participate actively in the judicial process.
- ▶ Advocates' independence of the criminal justice system allows them to play a coordinating role among elements of the system.

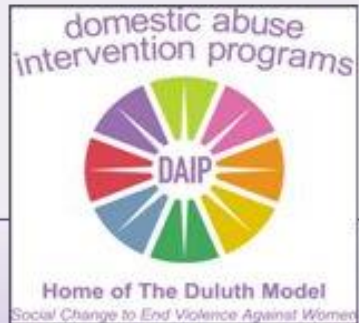
Why Independent Advocates?

When victims receive advocate-assisted services following victimization, they experience less secondary trauma or re-victimization as they interact with the medical and legal system. This in turn results in higher prosecution rates, increased offender accountability, and reduced long-term cost to the community.

Campbell, R. (2006). Rape survivors' experiences with the legal and medical systems: Do rape victim advocates make a difference? *Violence Against Women*, 12, 30-45. doi:10.1177/1077801205277539

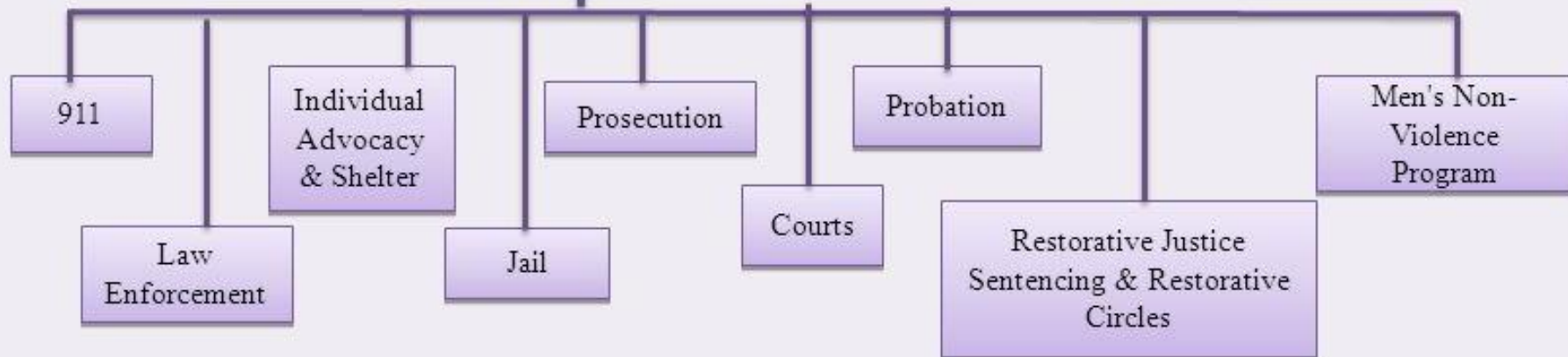
Talking with Victims about Risk and Danger

- Identify life-threatening violence and serious risk to victim and children
- Some victims' perceptions vastly different than the advocate's or the danger assessment
- Some victims downplay risk and signs of danger
- Most dangerous cases can be when there has been no intervention
- Intervention can compromise safety - unintended consequences
- Separation does not always stop the violence and can be the most dangerous time



The Duluth Model Approach

Coordinated Community Response (CCR)



“We have a good relationship with
the DV agencies”

What does that mean?

MST Data

- 20% of women veterans who use VA health care screen positive for MST
- 23% of female users reported experiencing at least one sexual assault while in the military/1.2% for males (2011)
- Women at higher risk who:
 - Entered the military at younger ages
 - Are enlisted rank
 - have had sexual assaults prior to military service

Department of Veterans Affairs, Women Veterans Task Force, *Strategies for Serving Our Women Veterans*, May 2012

Ensuring a Victim-centered Approach

- How are you working with the advocates in your community?
- How can you incorporate a trauma-informed approach when working survivors?
- Screening and offering services from the beginning.

How We Can Help

- Texas Advocacy Project offers free assistance and can help answer legal questions survivors may have!
- We can help survivors when there are barriers to receiving legal remedies, i.e. a wait list for legal aid, denial of protective order, no attorneys in their county.
 - Assisted Pro Se
 - Virtual Legal Clinics
 - Direct Representation

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TEXAS ADVOCACY PROJECT

All Texans should live safely in hope, not fear.

800.374.HOPE