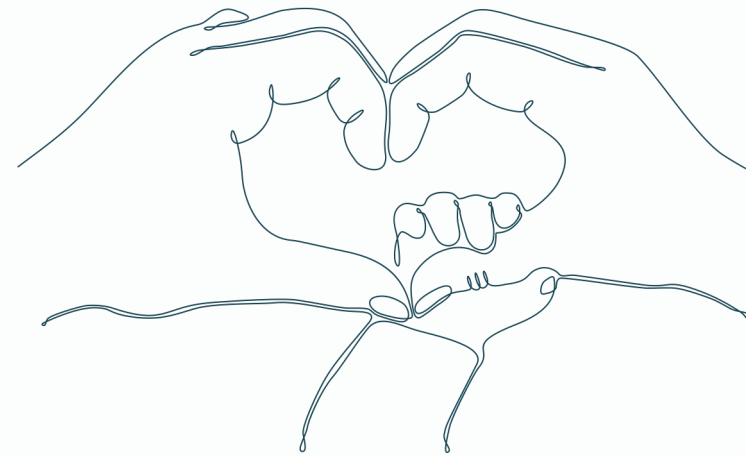


Advocating for a Proactive and Cross-Sectoral Approach to
Intimate Partner Violence:
Insights on How Child Protection Services Respond in
Saskatchewan, Canada



European Conference on Domestic Violence

Reykjavík, Iceland

September 12, 2023

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“This research was undertaken with deep respect for social work and child protection, in the abiding hope of improving the quality of decisions made about children who live with violence”
(Alexander et al., 2022, p.3).



PROJECT BACKGROUND

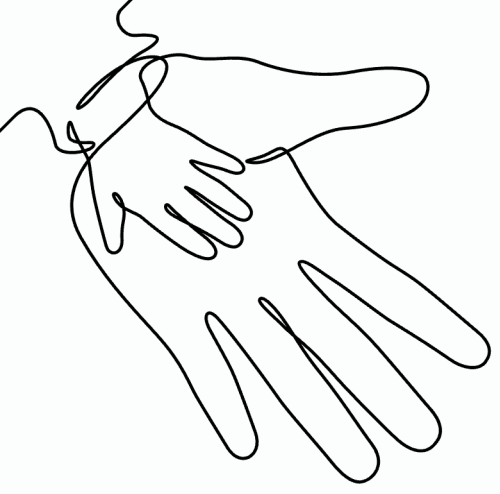
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Grant (2018-2023)

4 provinces: Alberta, **Saskatchewan**, Manitoba, Ontario

Study Objectives:

- Investigate Canadian policy and approaches to child IPV exposure.
- Establish an understanding of how CPS organizations respond to IPV.
- Identify gaps or barriers in CPS practices and policy development.
- Develop practical recommendations for future development and implementation.

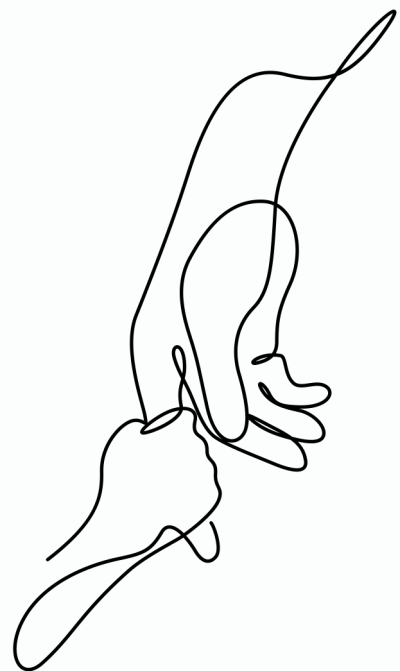


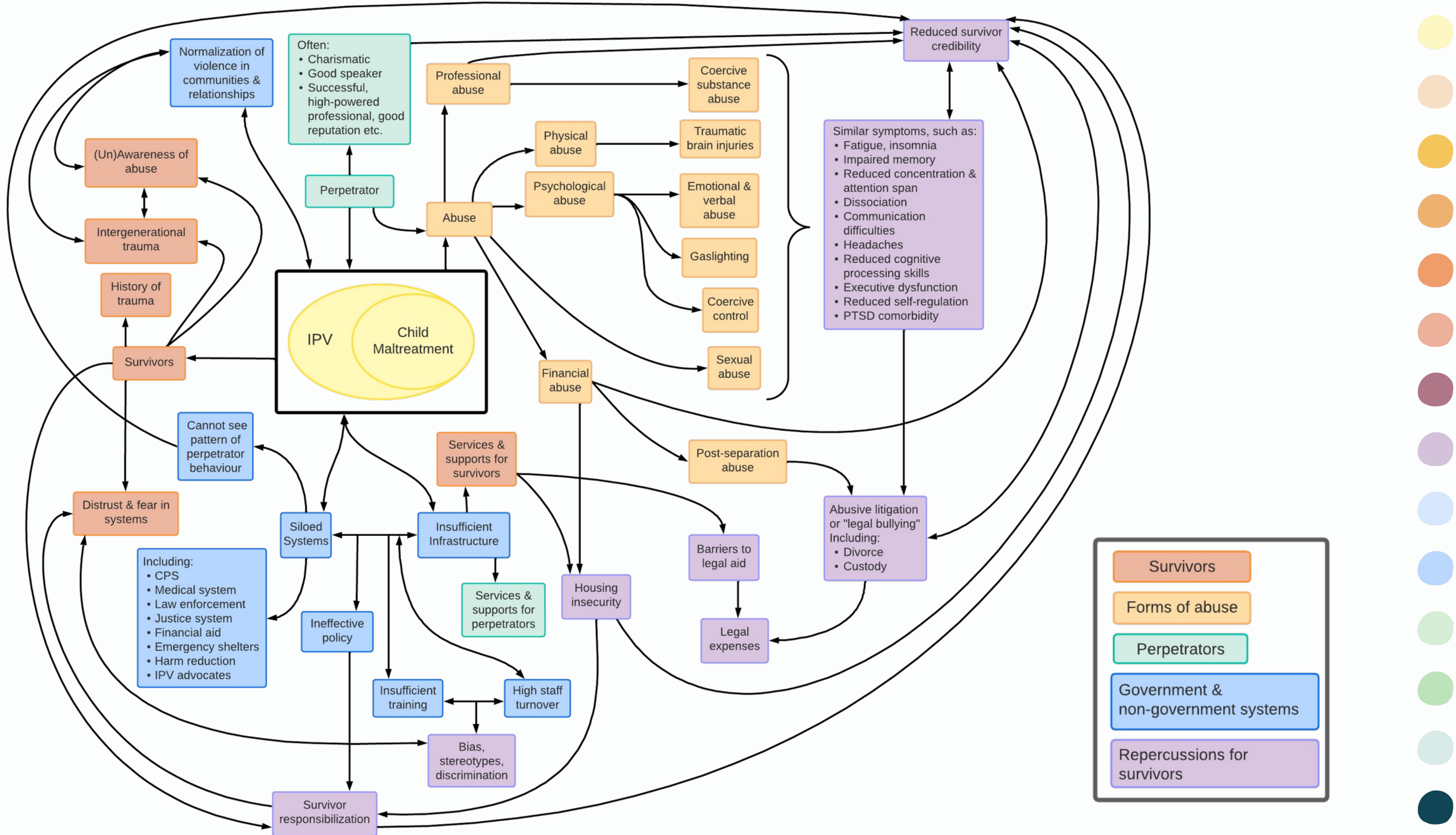


Project Background

6 phases of research:

- National policy scan
- **Interviews with CPS supervisors (N=9)**
- **Survey with CPS front-line workers (N=120)**
- **Focus Groups with CPS front-line workers (N=5)**
- **Interviews with Collateral supports (N=10)**
- **Interviews with Survivors (N=3)**





Survivors

Forms of abuse

Perpetrators

Government & non-government systems

Repercussions for survivors





CPS Front-line Worker Survey

Adapted for front-line child protection workers

Better understand the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and self-reported practice behaviors (KAP model) related to IPV

Based on the *American Physician Readiness to Manage Intimate Partner Violence Survey* (PREMIS) (Short et al., 2006)

100 items for participants who identified/managed a case involving IPV (past 6 months) / 68 items for those who had not

- *perceived preparedness*
- *perceived knowledge*
- *actual Knowledge*
- *practice issues*

CPS Front-line Worker Survey: Demographics

Participants

(N=120)

Female: 115 (95.8%)

Male: 5 (4.2%)

Assessors/Investigators/Other

10.3%

Intake workers

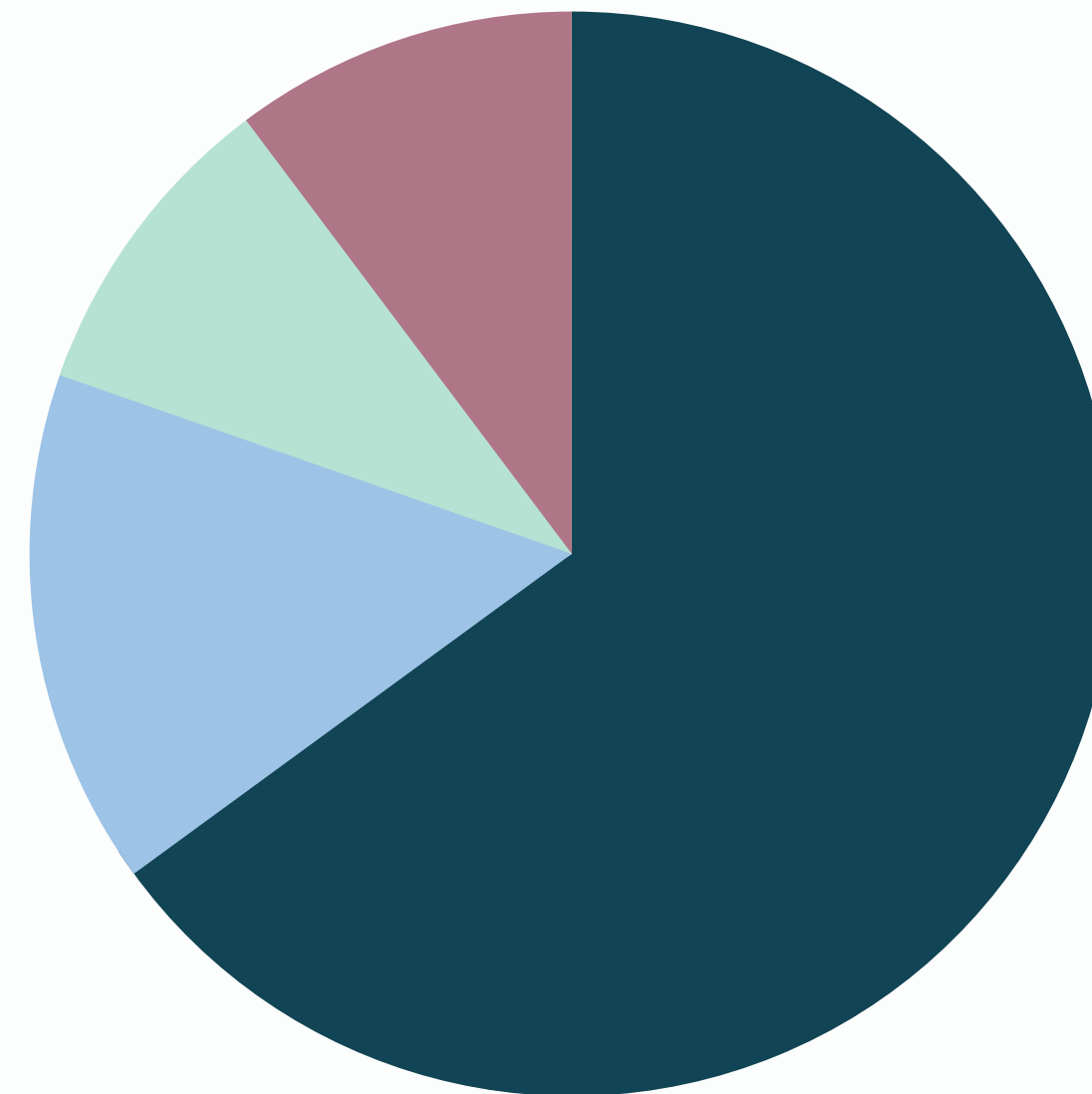
9.4%

Out-of-home care workers

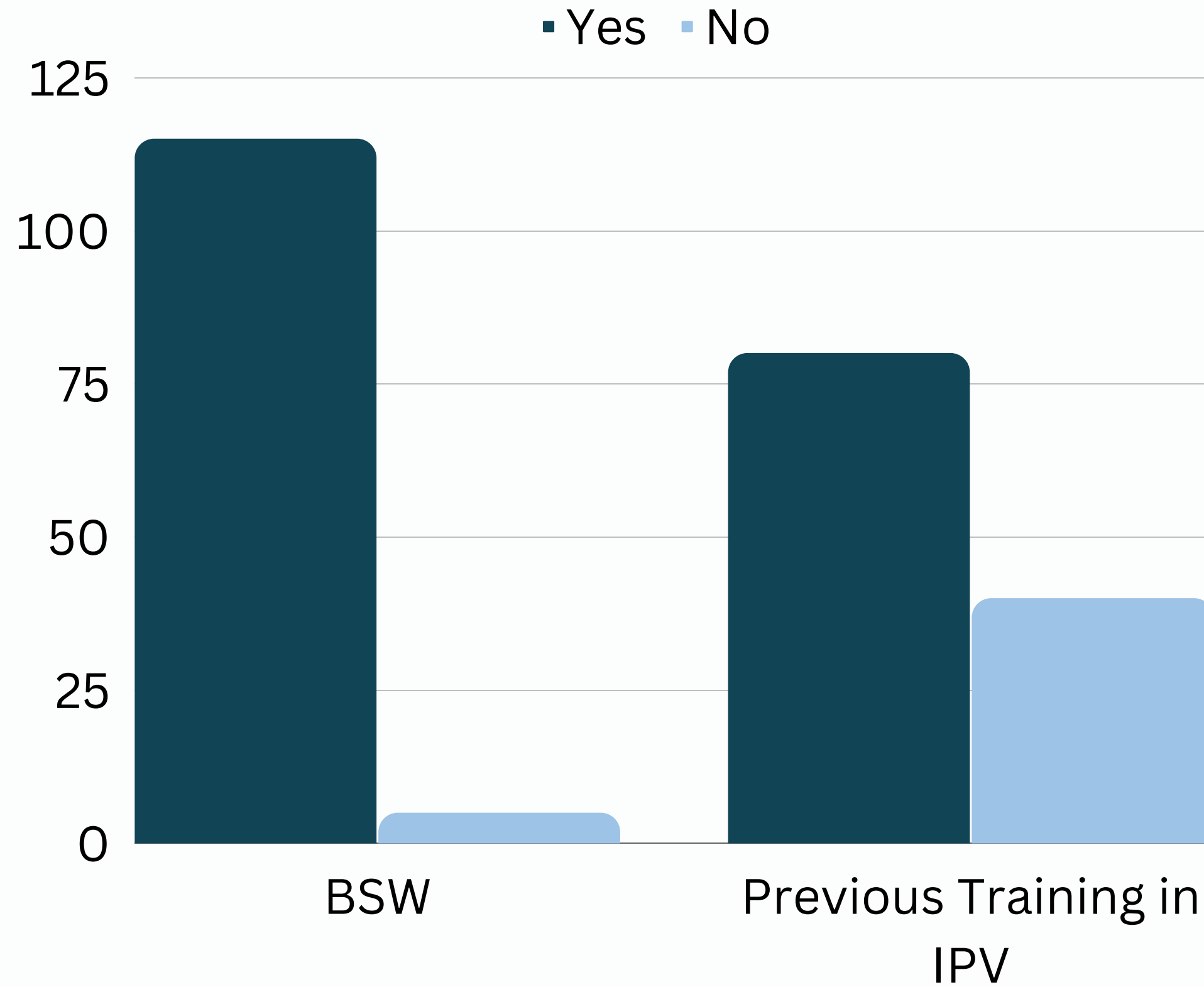
15.4%

Caseworkers

65%



CPS Front-line Worker Survey: Education & Training





PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS TO INTERVENE IN IPV CASES

AREAS OF CONCERN for some workers (i.e., for growth):

- Engage with marginalized groups (e.g., immigrant, refugee, newcomer; Indigenous; same-sex; male survivors; female perpetrators)
- Engage with and assess perpetrator's readiness to stop the behaviour and capacity to parent and protect the children
- Engage with and assess survivor/victim's [S/V] readiness/ability to leave relationship AND to be able to help assess their level of danger



PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS TO INTERVENE (CONT'D)

OTHER LIMITATIONS/AREAS FOR GROWTH:

- Understanding and identifying IPV (e.g., identifying distinct types, asking appropriate questions, documenting clearly in case notes, confidently concluding involvement)
- Assessing safety (e.g., helping S/V create safety plan, conducting safety assessment for children)
- Assessing parenting capacity of perpetrator and S/V



PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT IPV

AREAS OF CONCERN/FOR GROWTH:

Better understanding:

- coercive control
- relationship between IPV and substance use
- barriers for survivors/victims who want to leave violent relationships
- effects of exposure on children

ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT IPV

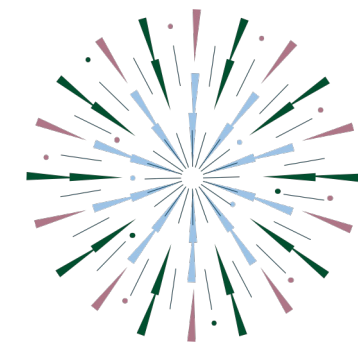
AREAS OF CONCERN (FOR GROWTH):

Misunderstanding

- the connection between substance use and IPV
- that S/Vs don't *necessarily* have difficulty parenting & putting their children at risk
- that not every person who assaults their partner is engaging in an ongoing pattern of coercion, intimidation, and abuse

AREAS WHERE WORKERS HAVE A GOOD LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE:

- women's and men's experiences as S/Vs as different/distinct
- there can be valid reasons for staying in an abusive relationship
- S/Vs are at greater risk of injury or even death when they leave the relationship
- IPV is damaging to children, even if they do not witness it
- perpetrators will often try to hurt S/V's relationship with their children &/or undermine their parenting as a way to control or hurt them



PRACTICE ISSUES

Areas of concern identified:

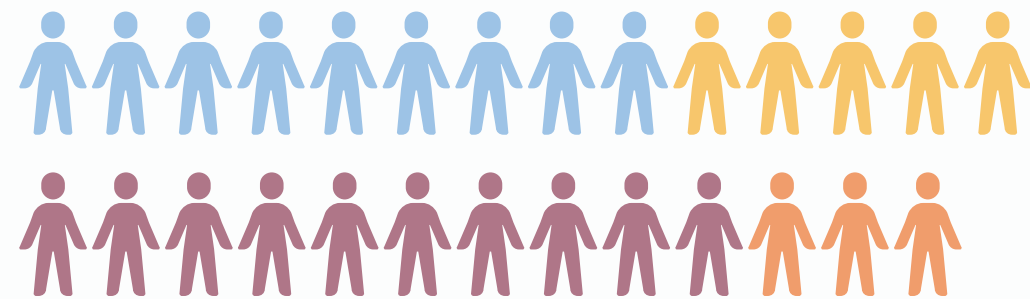
- few resources for perpetrators, therefore hard to hold them accountable
- inadequate time to respond to S/Vs effectively
- more effective intervention would occur with greater collaboration with other systems



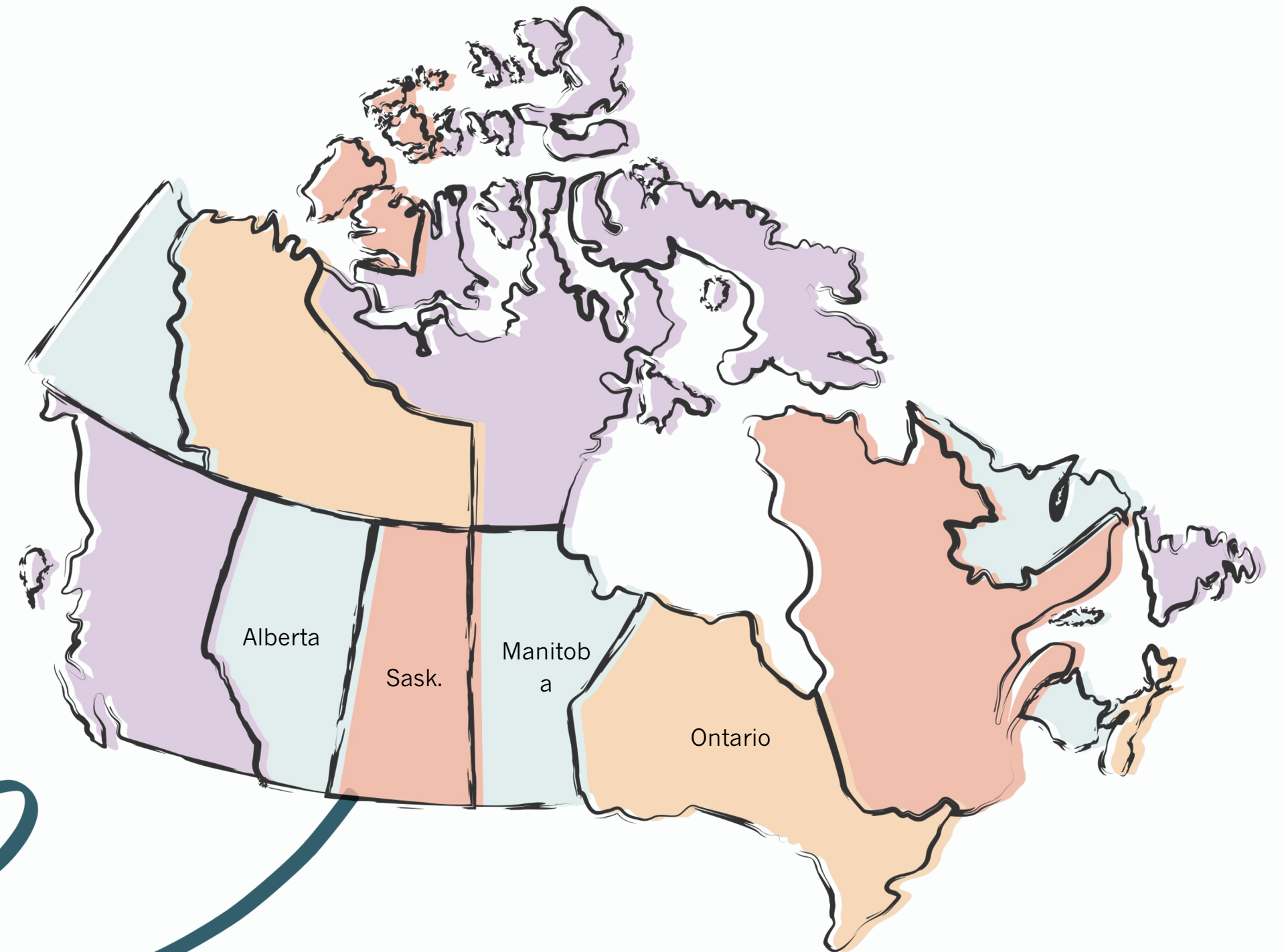


Qualitative Data: Thematic Analysis

Participants:



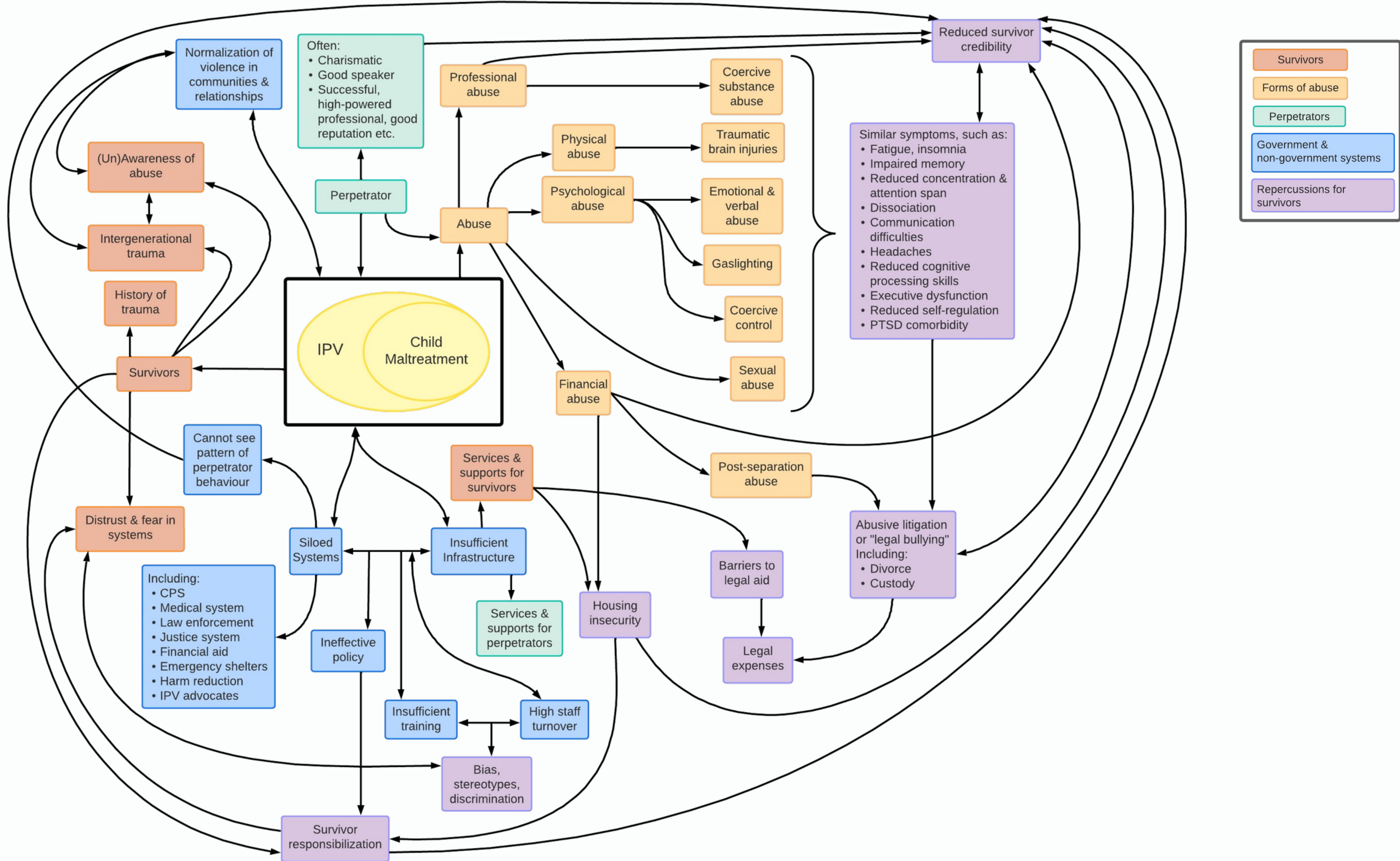
CPS Supervisors
CPS Workers
Collateral Workers
Survivors



SELECT THEMES:

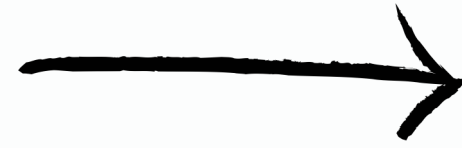
- Insufficient Inter-agency Collaboration & Communication
- Public Misconceptions, & Negative Experiences with CPS and "the System" as a Whole
- Insufficient Infrastructure, Community Supports, and Resources
- Burden of Responsibility on Survivors



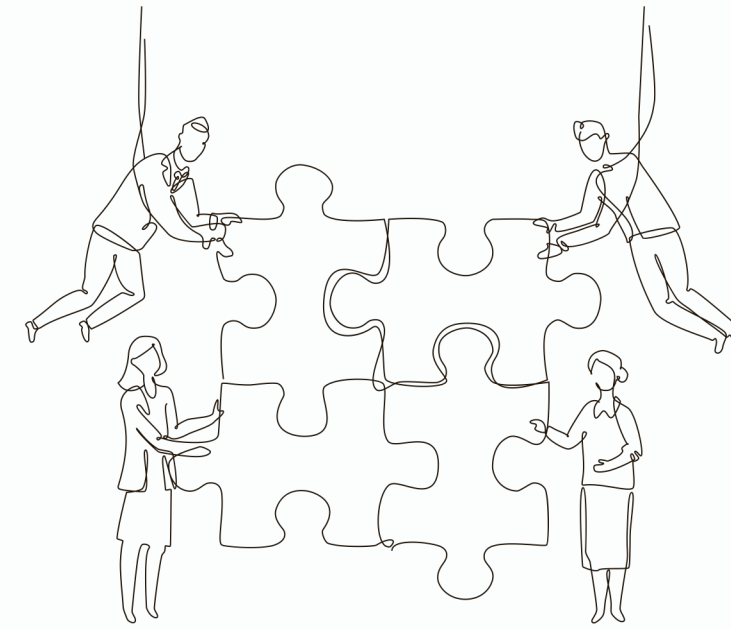
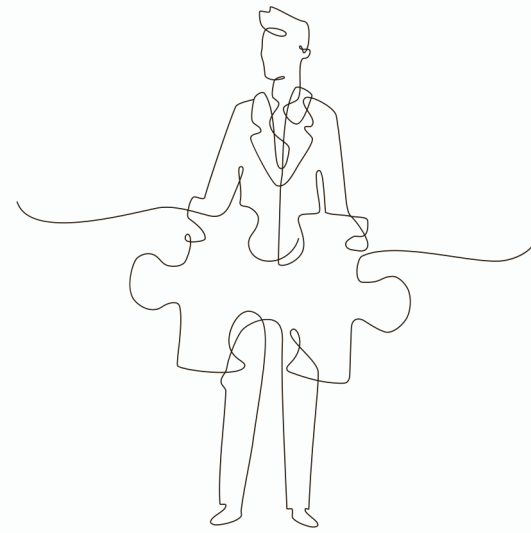




Siloed
Systems



Cross-Sectoral
Collaboration



"I think a big piece is interconnecting all of our systems ... As far as our situation, no one was watching, no one was keeping track, nobody got involved, and anybody that did, he was able to manipulate."

- Sarah



Any Questions?



Thank you for your time!

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