



When Supervised Visitation Does Not Equal Safety

Practical Challenges and Safety
Protocols in Supervised Visitation

Tamatha Mosier
Anita Rydberg

YWCA
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MISSION

High-Risk DV is Not Simply “High Conflict”

High Conflict

- Disagreement
- Poor communication
- Hostility
- Difficulty co-parenting

Coercive Controlling Violence

- Pattern of domination
- May include:
 - Threats
 - Violence
 - Intimidation
 - Stalking
 - Surveillance
 - Use of children or systems

Systems designed for parental conflict may be **unsafe** when the underlying dynamic is **coercive control**

Separation Does Not Equal Safety

Custody, visitation & exchange can create predictable points of continued access and increased safety risk

Harassment & Threats

Contact can continue or intensify after separation

Stalking

Physical or technology-facilitated monitoring

Systems & Legal Avenues

Processes intended to resolve disputes can become another avenue for control

Children

Children may be used for information, messages, or retaliation

“Dropping your kids off to someone that hurts you is scary.”

— YWCA OKC shelter listening session, 9/10/26

Who is Supervising?

Informal Supervision

- Family member or friend
- Little or no DV-specific training
- Limited structure or protocol
- Inherent bias

Professional / DV Informed Supervision

- Trained professional
- Controlled arrival/departure
- Confidentiality & documentation standards
- Understanding of coercive control & stalking

“I had to give them to his parents because they supervised the visits. It made me physically ill every time.”

— YWCA OKC shelter listening session, 9/10/26

Safety Risks Associated with Visitation

- Stalking and surveillance
- Technology-facilitated tracking
- Children used to gather or carry information
- Coercion, intimidation, and manipulation
- Risk can present before, during, and after visit

The word 'supervised' tells us that another person is present. It does not tell us, by itself, whether the visitation is **safe**

DV-Informed Supervised Visitation Requires

- Screen for DV Risk
 - coercive control, stalking, lethality
- Design for physical and emotional safety
 - Separate arrivals/departures, secure exchanges, protect confidential information
- Train & Reassess
 - DV Training, ongoing risk assessment
- Partner & Document
 - Victim service collaboration, DV informed documentation

Considerations From the Domestic Violence Field

Differentiate

Do not equate high-risk domestic violence with high-conflict parenting

Assess

Use DV informed screening and ongoing risk assessment when visitation or exchange involves domestic violence

Build Expertise

Ensure specialized training and meaningful partnerships with domestic violence victim service providers

Measure Safety

Define success by physical and emotional safety, not simply by whether a visitation occurred

The question is not only “can we supervise this visit?” but “Can we structure contact without creating another avenue for abuse?”

Selected Sources

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Survivor listening session feedback is qualitative context from nine current shelter residents and is not intended to represent all survivors