More to the Story: How the Economic Effects of Domestic Violence Can Lead to Dangerous Custody Outcomes
Overview

- The Costs of Domestic Violence
- The Nature and Consequences of Economic Abuse
- How the Economic Implications of Domestic Violence Lead to Dangerous Custody Outcomes
- Addressing Economic Abuse in Custody Cases
- Breakout Activity
- Wrap-up
The Costs of Domestic Violence
#1 reason survivors don’t leave and/or return to an abusive situation is financial insecurity

$104k is the average cost associated with being a female survivor of domestic violence

99% of survivors experience financial abuse as part of the domestic violence

Experiencing domestic violence is financially devastating for most people. Survivors can only secure long-term safety for themselves and their children if they can afford to leave, rebuild and heal.
Economic Abuse
What is economic abuse?

• Tactics that control a survivor’s ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources.

• Method of control meant to create total financial dependence.

• It’s all about control.
What does economic abuse look like?

- Interfering with resource acquisition
- Controlling access to resources
- Exploiting resources
What are the effects of economic abuse?

- Resource depletion
- Decreased employability over time
- Coerced / fraudulent debt
- Damaged credit
- Financial naiveté
Why does economic abuse matter?

- It has devastating effects on a survivor’s financial well-being.
- It’s incredibly pervasive: 99% of survivors have experienced it in some form.
- It’s widely misunderstood: A 2014 study revealed that 78% of Americans did not know that economic abuse is a form of domestic violence.
- It’s goes unaddressed: Economic abuse is not recognized as domestic violence under state or federal law.
- It has dangerous implications for custody determinations.
Economic Abuse and Custody
The Problem

- **90%** of service providers report that their clients experience litigation abuse.
- **54%** is the rate at which the abusive parent is granted custody in California.
- **80%** of mothers with children experiencing homelessness have previously experienced domestic violence.
Addressing Economic Abuse in Custody Cases
Approaches & Tools

- Identify and combat litigation abuse in the courtroom
- Consider economic abuse in custody determinations
- Request / order financial relief for survivors
Breakout Activity
Wrap - up
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