**Family Court Services Q & A Template**

Many survivors who are involved with a protection order case or a family law matter are referred by or ask the court to utilize Family Court Services (FCS) for a domestic violence risk assessment or a parenting evaluation. Since many service providers and survivors have questions about how FCS works, insert who conducted the interview interviewed the insert who you interviewed from FCS.

This interview was conducted on insert the date of your interview. The answers below are not verbatim, but they do accurately capture the information shared. We recommend asking the FCS manager and those you interviewed to review the responses and to offer corrections, if needed, prior to sharing this tool with others.

**Family Court Services Overview**

*Survivors often ask how FCS is structured and about their staff,*

*so we posed these questions to FCS.*

1. **Please tell us how Family Court Services (FCS) is structured.**

Insert answer

1. **What background, education, and training are required to work at FCS? We are particularly interested in the aspects of staff training that include information about domestic violence and mental health.**

Insert answer

**Case Assignment**

1. **When does the court assign cases to FCS?**

Insert answer

1. **Do you ever decline cases?**

Insert answer

1. **How does FCS determine which staff person works on a case?**

Insert answer

**Parenting Evaluations**

1. **What is the purpose of parenting evaluations?**

Insert answer

1. **What information is gathered for parenting evaluations and how are they conducted?**

Insert answer

1. **How do you determine which witnesses you will interview?**

Insert answer

**Language Access**

1. **Does FCS provide free court-certified interpreters for witnesses who do not speak English fluently?**

Insert answer

**Domestic Violence Assessments**

1. **How does FCS define domestic violence?**

Insert answer

1. **When and how does FCS conduct DV assessments?**

Insert answer

1. **Are DV assessments done only with an alleged perpetrator or with both parties? If they are done with both parties, are they asked the same set of questions?**

Insert answer

1. **If there are allegations of domestic violence, does that change how other aspects of the case are evaluated?**

Insert answer

**Mental Health Evaluations**

1. **When and how does FCS conduct MH evaluations?**

Insert answer

1. **What would you like from MH service providers who you contact as part of an evaluation?**

Insert answer

**Recommendations**

1. **What factors inform your recommendations?**

Insert answer

1. **Do you have an internal case review process or a system where a supervisor reviews/amends recommendations before they are submitted to the court?**

Insert answer

1. **If a service provider wants to give feedback about the recommendations or about the evaluation process, how could they do that?**

Insert answer

1. **Is there anything else we should know?**

Insert answer

This tool was adapted from the Domestic Violence and Mental Health

Collaboration Project’s Family Law Toolkit for Survivors.

The original version of this tool can be found at

<http://endgv.org/toolkits/family-law-toolkit-for-domestic-violence-survivors/>.

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