

Virtual National Conference May 11-14, 2021

Canadian Domestic Homicide
Prevention Initiative



Reflections from Ontario service providers: Challenges and promising practices to assessing risk for children

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Preventing domestic homicide: From research and lived experiences to practice

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Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

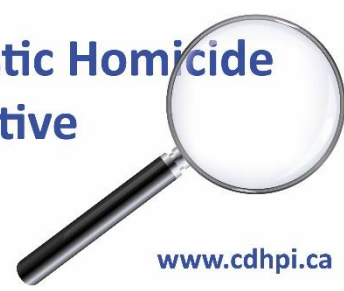
Canada

May 12, 2021

Police Response to Children at Risk



Police & Domestic Violence



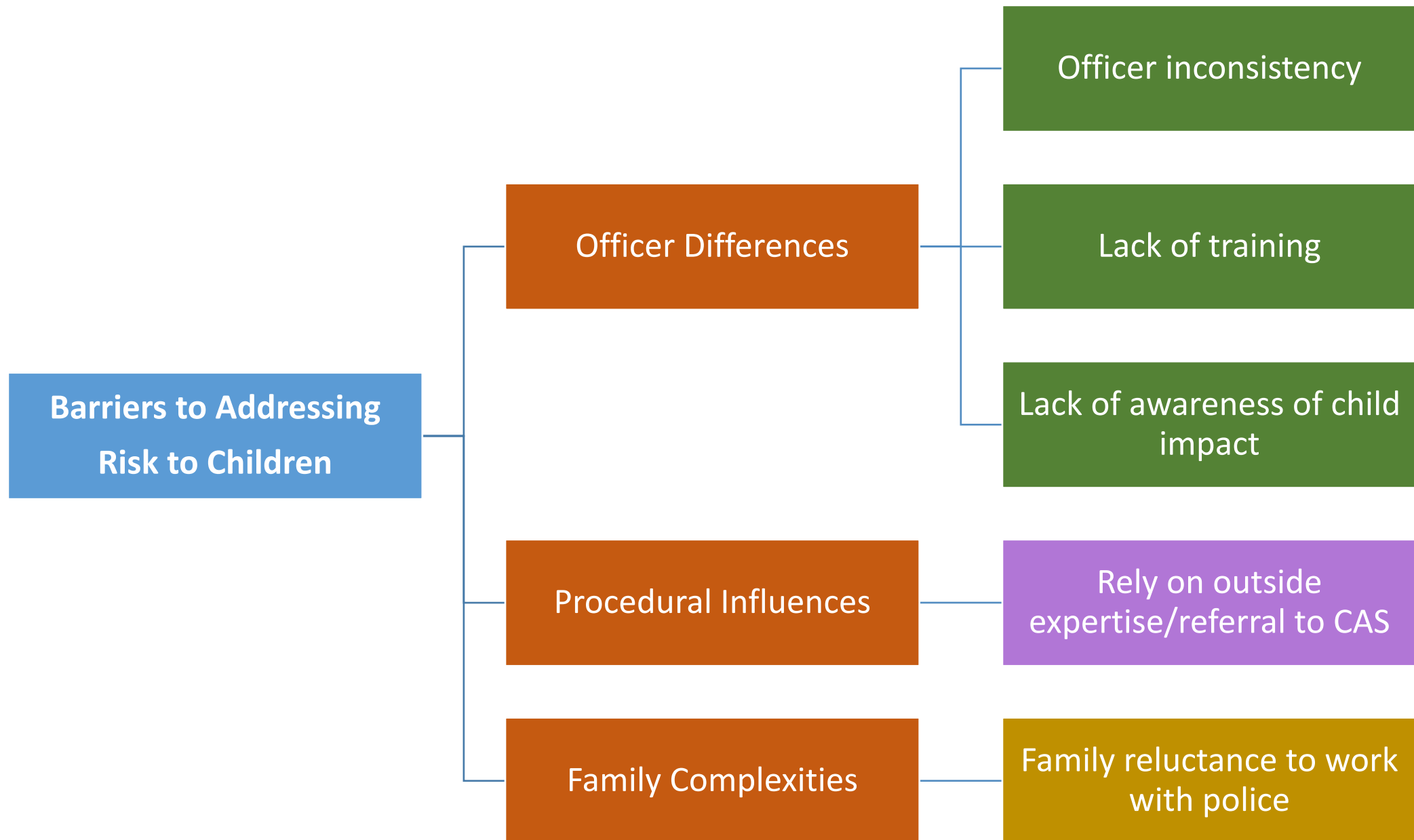
- Police play a **vital role** in the response to DV
- First **contact** for many families
- **Obligations** to act (i.e., to intervene and protect victims and families)
- **Gate keepers** to the Justice System / potential services
- **Little research** examining **police response** to children exposed to DV
 - Children are viewed on: “**the side-line**”

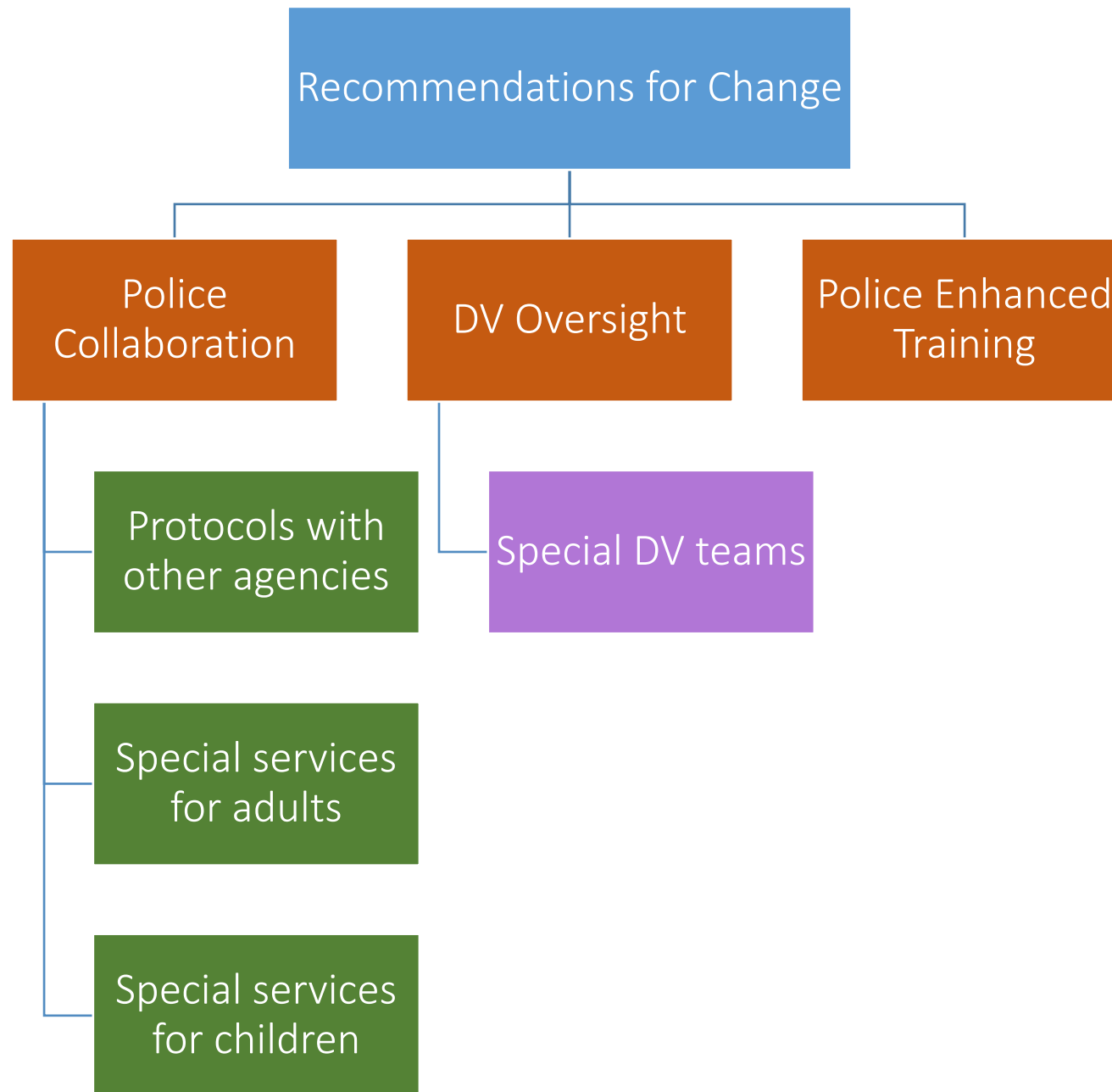
What is actually taking place for police?

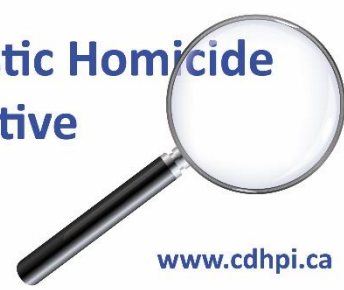
The vast **majority** of police officers are saying they **frequently** engage with **children**

The majority of police surveyed also indicated that they **used a structured risk assessment tool**

What is the police perspective?







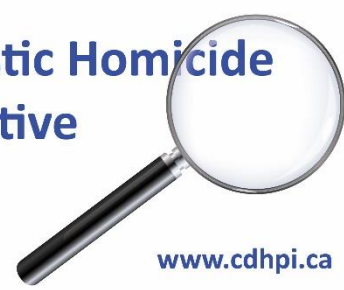
Final Highlights

- Police are talking about: **inconsistency, need for training, and the importance of collaboration**
- The police can do a better job but **cannot succeed on their own!**

Violence Against Women (VAW) Services



VAW Services



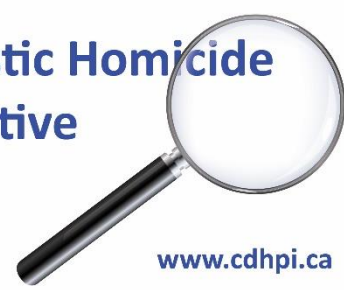
- Shelters offer protection for women and children who are fleeing from domestic violence
- In Ontario, there are 100 organizations that provide some form of domestic violence services (Ontario Ministry of Community Services, 2019).

**In Canada, 3, 137 children accompanied
3, 565 women to shelters**



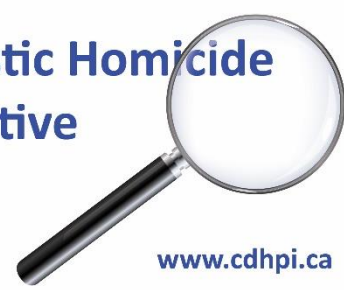
(Statistics Canada, 2018)

Research Question



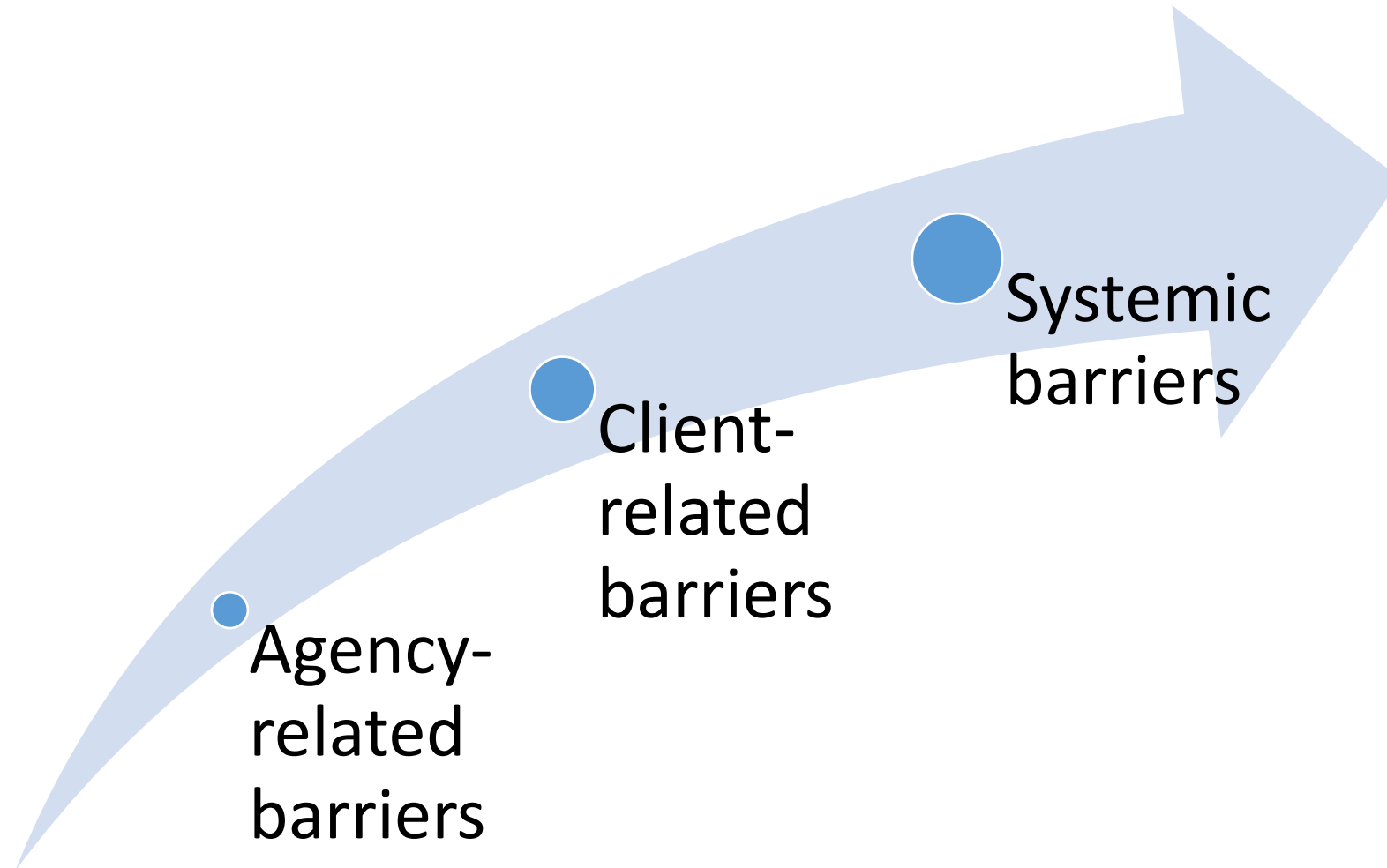
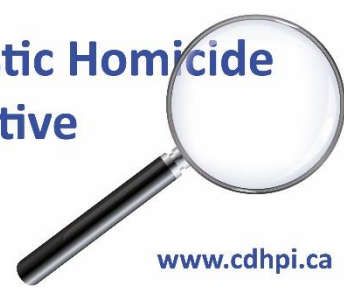
What are the barriers to providing child-specific services within VAW agencies?

Current Research Study



- An analysis of interviews with 27 Ontario VAW service providers (81% DV shelter workers)
- Examination of key barriers to service provision for children

Key Themes

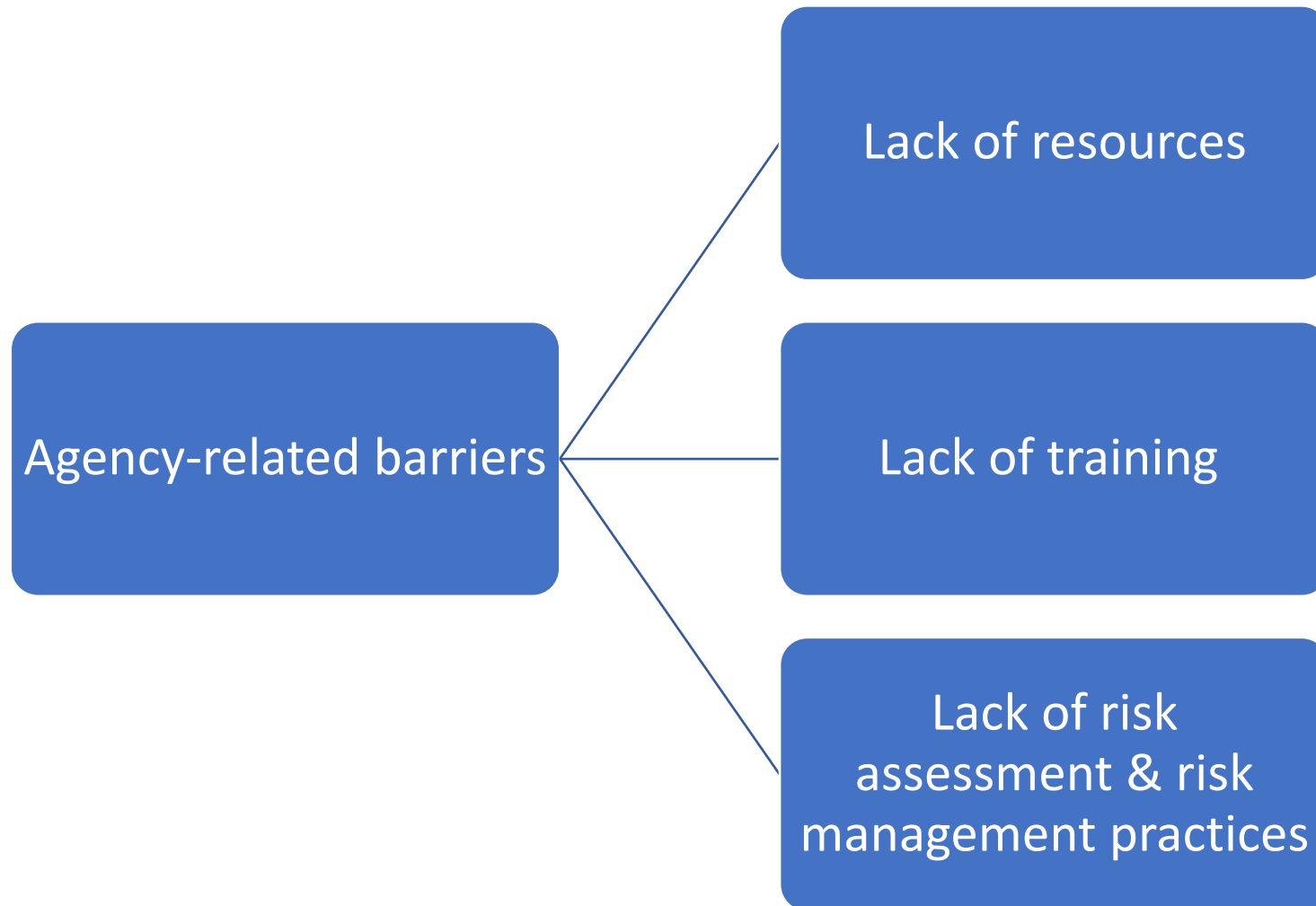
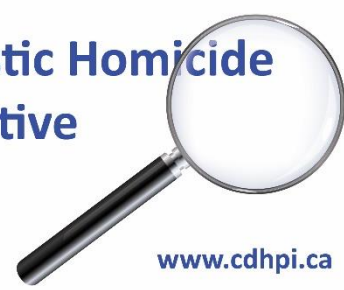


Agency-
related
barriers

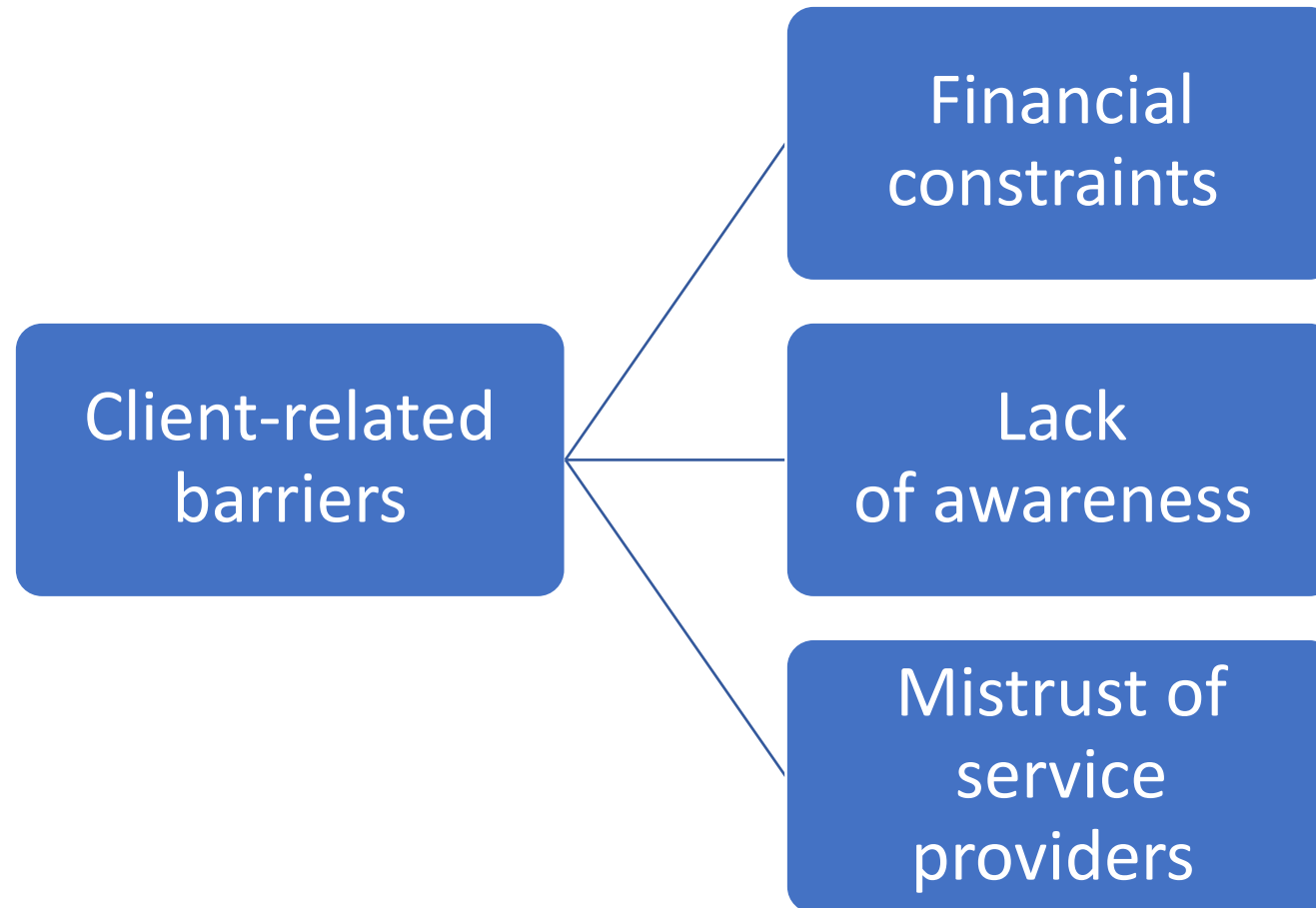
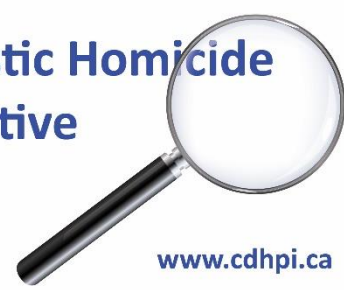
Client-
related
barriers

Systemic
barriers

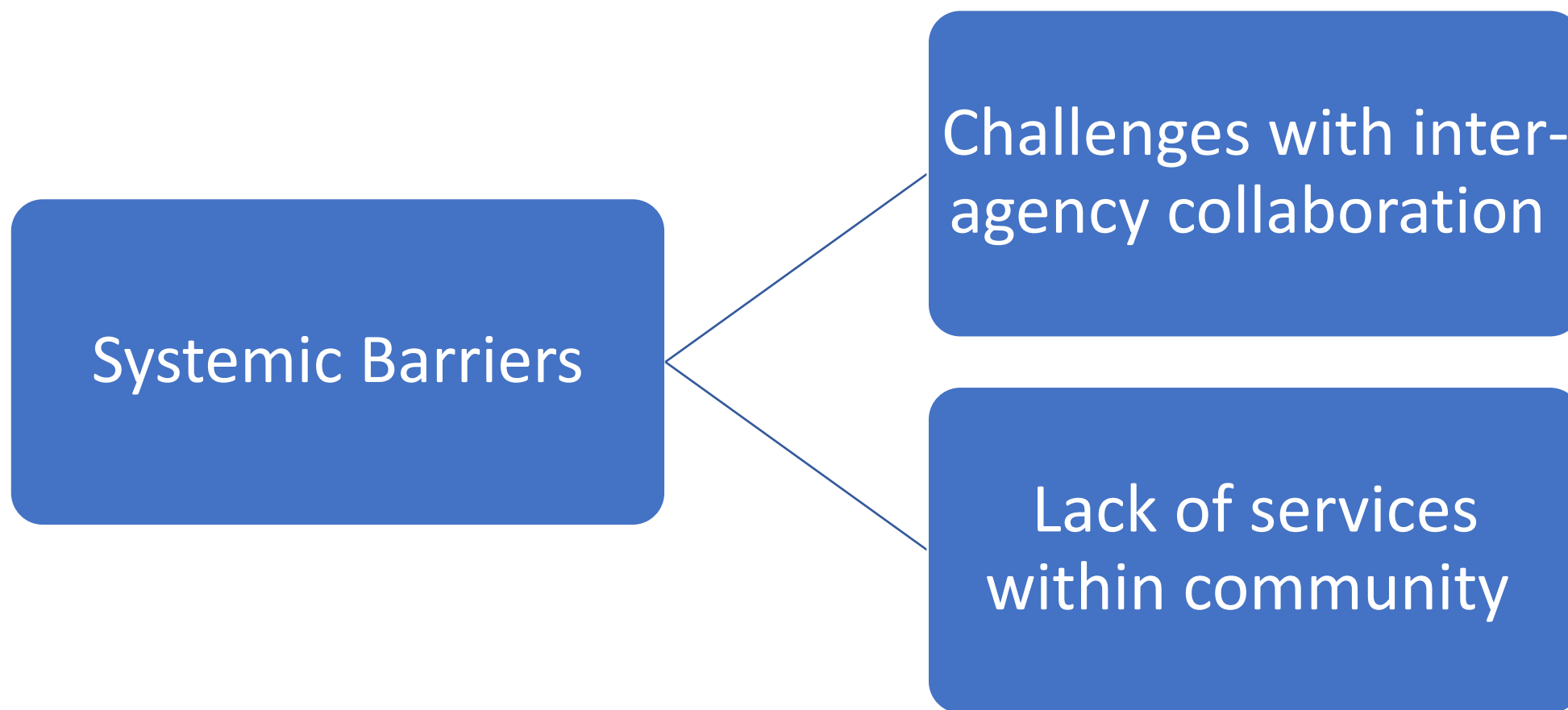
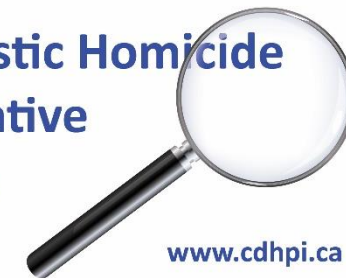
Agency-Related Barriers



Client-Related Barriers



Systemic Barriers

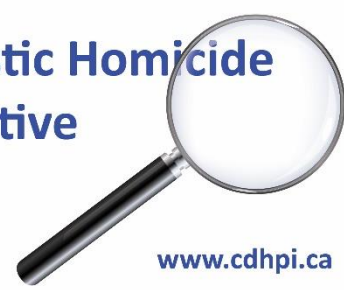


Overall, VAW workers are dedicated to helping their clients, however they are limited by barriers within and outside of their agency

Child Protection Services

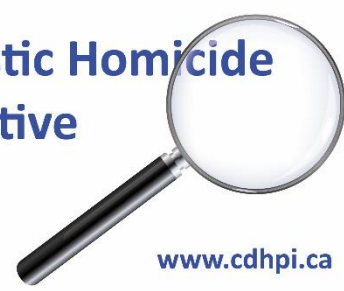


Role of Child Protection Services



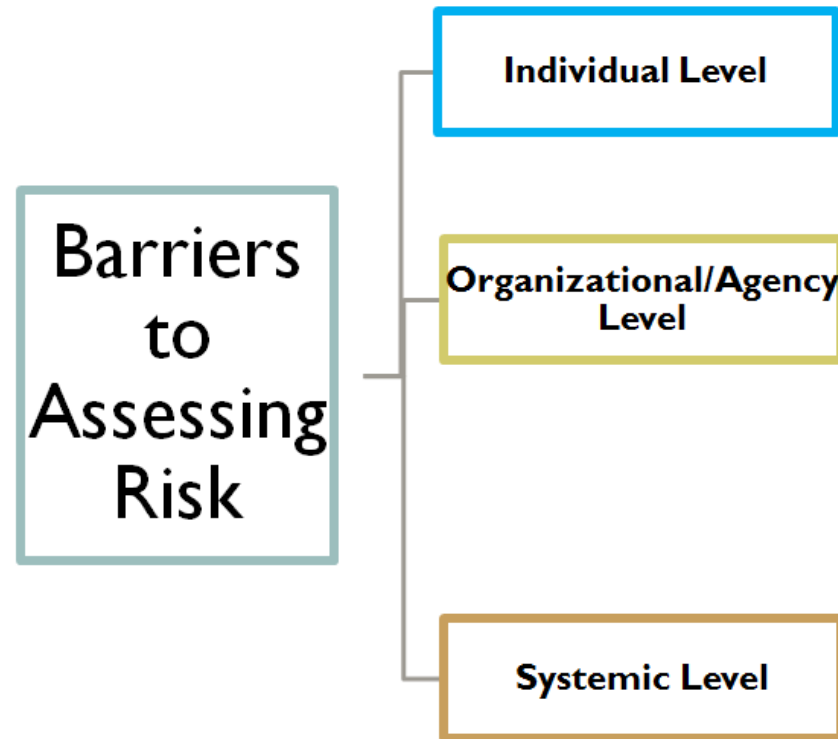
- Assessing risk to children, safety planning, risk management
 - DV and child maltreatment co-occurrence – 60- 75%
- Unique position to engage with perpetrators/fathers
 - Onus often placed on mother
 - Separation without support can increase risk

Study Sample

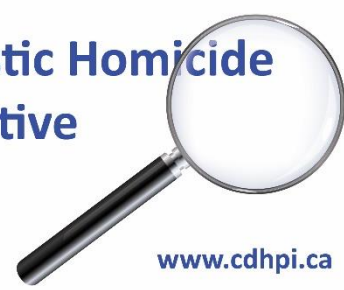


- Interviews with 29 Ontario Child Protection Service workers; majority frontline workers with 5+ years experience
- *What are the challenges to assessing risk in DV cases?*

Challenges



Challenges at Individual Level

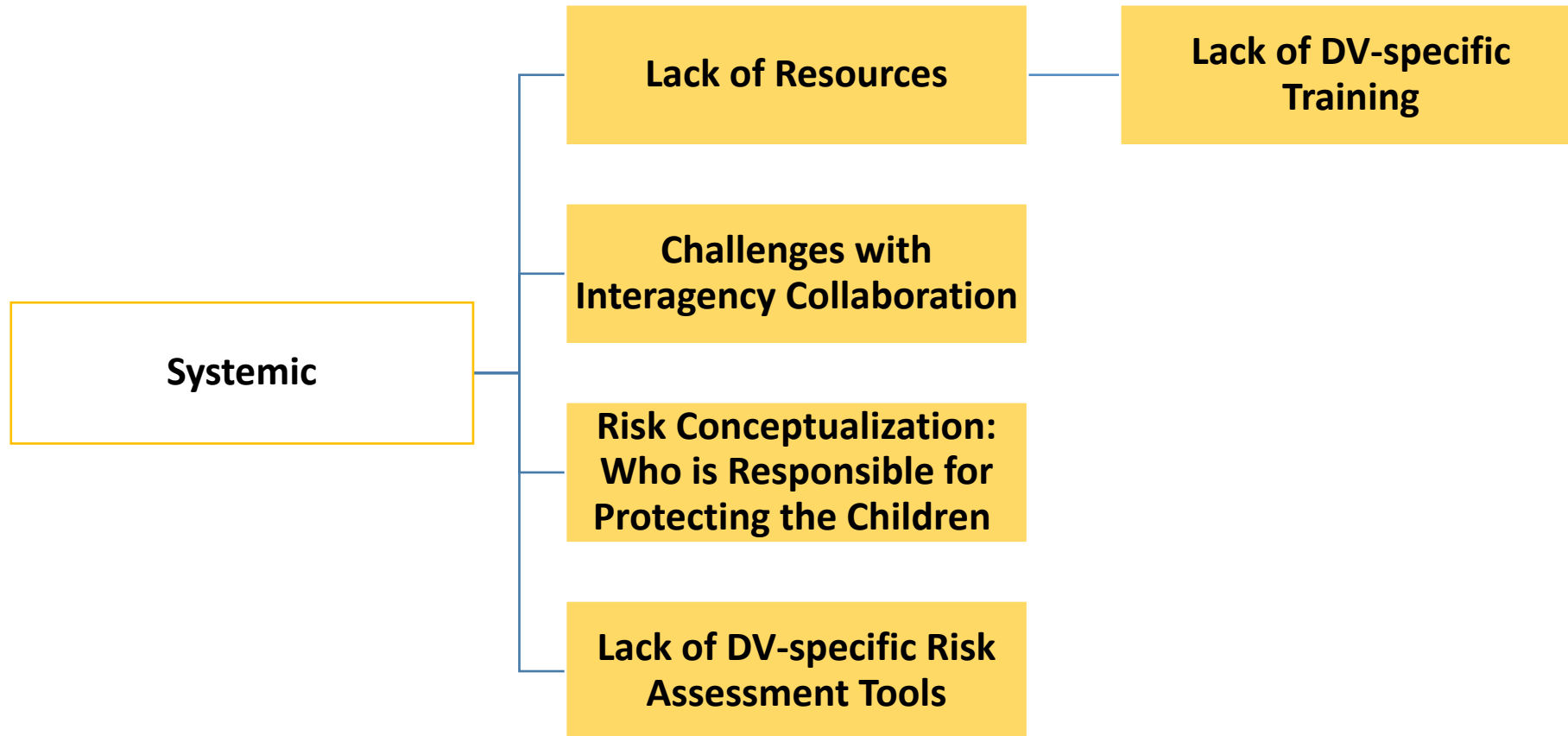


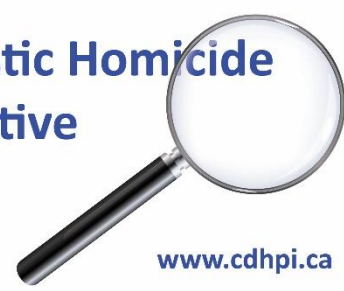
Challenges at Organizational Level

Organizational

**Lack of Internal
Policies/Protocols**

Systemic Level Challenges





Promising Practices



Collaboration

Building trusting relationships



Enhanced training

Competent clinical supervision



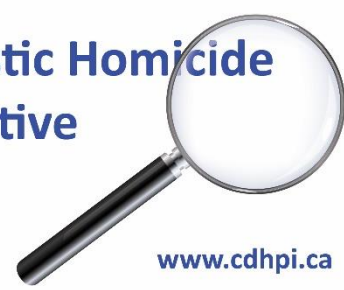
Protocols



Paradigm shift

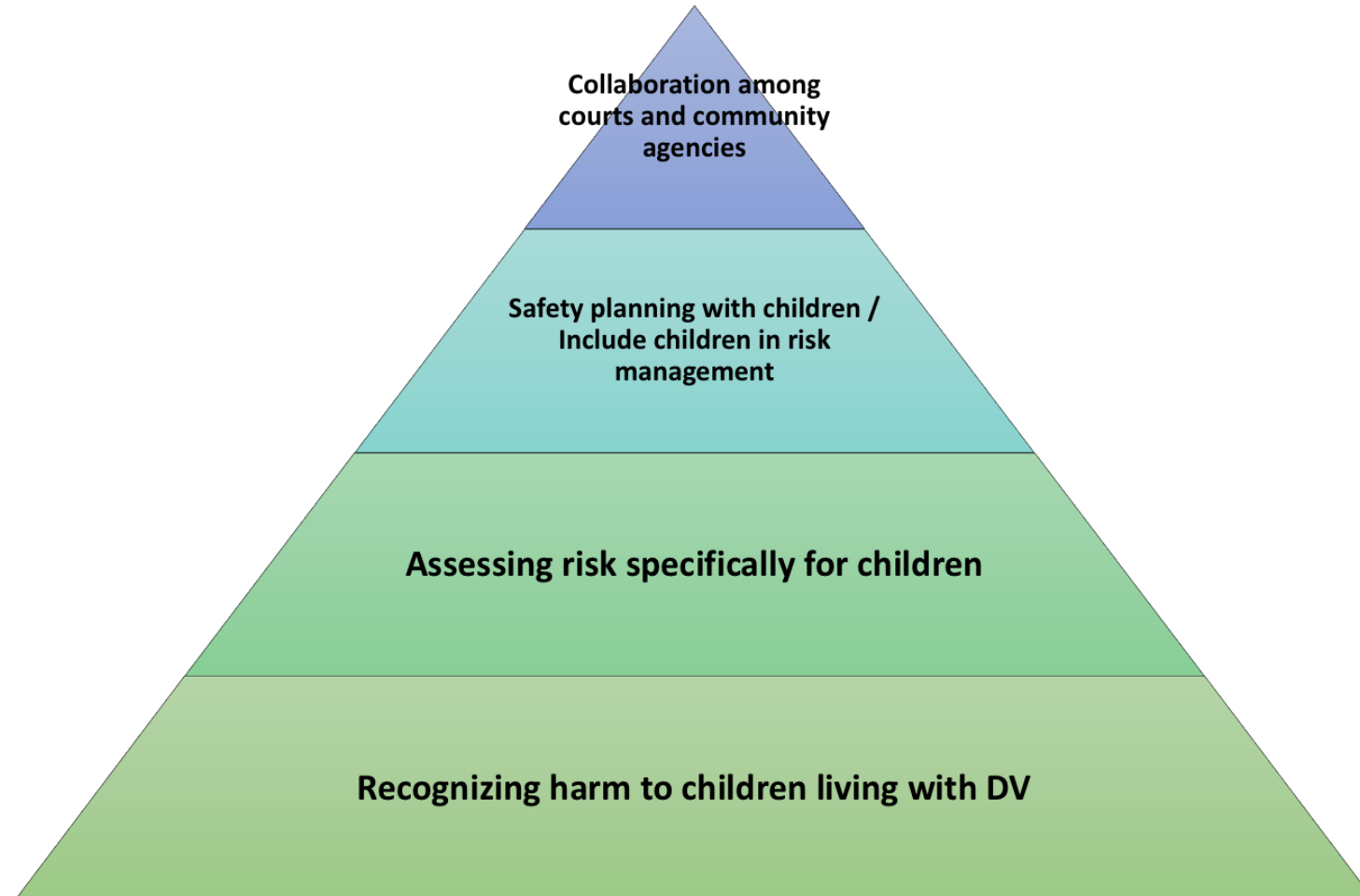
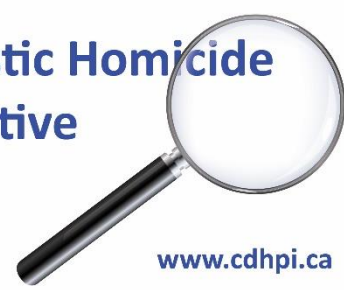
Risk conceptualization

CPS Conclusions



- CPS has a key role to play in potentially saving lives
- To do so effectively, CPS needs:
 - Better training
 - Need better tools to differentiate cases between high conflict and DV cases
 - More effectively engage fathers & hold them accountable
 - More thoughtfully engage mothers
 - Enhanced community collaboration

Best Practice When Children are Involved



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Prevention Initiative



Initiative canadienne sur la
prévention des
homicides familiaux