

# PAC Collaborative: TRANSFORMING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACILITATION THROUGH TRAUMA-INFORMED, MOTIVATIONAL APPROACHES

2026



PAC COLLABORATIVE

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Domestic violence (DV) remains a pervasive challenge, impacting individuals, families, and communities nationwide. Effective intervention depends not only on the programs themselves but on the facilitators who deliver them. Yet many facilitators report feeling unprepared to navigate complex trauma, recognize personal biases, and foster accountability among participants. Standard training models often emphasize rules and compliance over understanding and engagement, leaving facilitators and participants at risk of frustration or harm.

PAC Collaborative addresses these gaps through a trauma-informed, motivational, and systems-based approach to facilitator and advocate training. Central to our model is the PAC framework: Pause – Acknowledge – Choose, which guides facilitators in responding mindfully and ethically to challenging situations. By integrating Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Family Systems Theory, PAC Collaborative equips facilitators to support self-discovered accountability, reduce re-traumatization, and foster meaningful behavioral change among participants.

This white paper outlines the challenges facing domestic violence facilitators, details PAC Collaborative's evidence-informed approach, and provides actionable guidance for organizations seeking to implement trauma-informed and reflective practices in their programs. By investing in facilitator development through PAC Collaborative, agencies can enhance program outcomes, strengthen community safety, and promote long-term accountability and healing.

# WHO WE ARE

PAC Collaborative is a training and professional development initiative focused on strengthening domestic violence related practice through trauma-informed, motivational, and systems-aware approaches. Our work centers facilitators, advocates, and practitioners who engage individuals and families impacted by violence within complex systems of accountability and care.

PAC Collaborative approaches facilitation as a guided process rather than an enforcement role. We emphasize self-discovered accountability, ethical engagement, and reflective practice, recognizing that sustainable change occurs when individuals are supported in understanding the impact of their behavior and exercising agency in choosing different responses.



This white paper is intended for facilitators, advocates, program leaders, and systems partners seeking an evidence-informed framework that integrates trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and family systems theory within domestic violence intervention contexts.

We believe sustainable change occurs when individuals are supported in understanding the impact of their behavior and exercising agency in choosing different responses.

# INTRODUCTION/PROBLEM STATEMENT

Domestic violence continues to be a critical public health and social justice concern. According to national estimates, millions of individuals experience physical, emotional, or sexual abuse from intimate partners each year, with far-reaching effects on mental health, family stability, and community well-being. Effective intervention programs exist, but their success hinges on the knowledge, skill, and reflective capacity of the facilitators who guide participants.

## **Gaps in Facilitator Training**

Many facilitators and advocates receive training that emphasizes procedural compliance over engagement, leaving them unprepared to address the nuanced dynamics of domestic violence. Common challenges include:

- Limited understanding of trauma and its effects on survivors and offenders.
- Difficulty recognizing and addressing facilitator biases.
- Insufficient strategies for promoting self-discovered accountability rather than imposing external enforcement.
- Burnout and stress due to inadequate support systems and reflective practices.

These gaps can result in inconsistent program outcomes, potential harm to participants, and missed opportunities for meaningful behavioral change. There is a pressing need for training programs that equip facilitators not only with knowledge but with practical, trauma-informed skills and frameworks to guide their interactions ethically and effectively.

## **The Need for a New Approach**

PAC Collaborative was developed in response to this need. By combining trauma-informed care, Motivational Interviewing, and Family Systems Theory, our model provides facilitators with a structured yet flexible framework for guiding participants through the change process. The PAC model, Pause, Acknowledge, Choose, empowers facilitators to respond mindfully, recognize patterns, and foster accountability in ways that respect both the participant's agency and the facilitator's ethical responsibility.

Through this approach, PAC Collaborative not only enhances facilitator competence and confidence but also strengthens program outcomes, promotes survivor safety, and supports community resilience. This white paper explores how PAC Collaborative's philosophy and methods address current gaps in domestic violence facilitator training and offers guidance for organizations seeking to adopt a trauma-informed, reflective, and motivational approach.

# PAC COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

PAC Collaborative provides a structured, evidence-informed framework for domestic violence facilitators and advocate training, designed to support facilitators in guiding participants through self-discovered accountability, rather than enforcing compliance. Central to our approach is the belief that facilitators are guides, not enforcers, and that meaningful change occurs when participants are met with understanding, reflective engagement, and consistent ethical practice.

## **Facilitator Stance and Philosophy**

At PAC Collaborative, facilitators are viewed as guides rather than enforcers, supporting participants in a process of self-reflection, learning, and growth. Central to our philosophy is the belief that sustainable change arises when individuals exercise their own volition and make conscious, self-determined decisions to take responsibility for their actions.

Key principles of this facilitator stance include:

- **Guiding, Not Controlling:** Facilitators create a safe, structured environment that encourages participants to explore their choices and understand the impact of their behavior, rather than imposing compliance.
- **Self-Determined Accountability:** Change is more enduring when participants actively reflect on the consequences of their actions and choose to take responsibility, fostering authentic behavioral transformation.
- **Mindful and Ethical Practice:** Facilitators are trained to pause, acknowledge, and choose responses that are trauma-informed, nonjudgmental, and ethically grounded.
- **Reflective Growth:** Facilitators continuously examine their own assumptions, biases, and responses to ensure their guidance remains objective, compassionate, and effective.

This philosophy ensures that facilitators empower participants to engage meaningfully in the change process, while maintaining the integrity, safety, and accountability essential to domestic violence intervention.

## **Core Principles**

PAC Collaborative integrates three evidence-based frameworks to support facilitator development and program effectiveness:

### **1. Trauma-Informed Care (TI):**

- Recognizes the prevalence and impact of trauma on survivors and offenders.
- Equips facilitators to respond without re-traumatizing participants.
- Encourages a strengths-based, empathetic approach.

### **2. Motivational Interviewing (MI):**

- Engages participants in exploring their own motivations for change.
- Reduces resistance and defensiveness by emphasizing collaboration rather than confrontation.
- Provides facilitators with strategies to guide participants toward actionable goals.

### **3. Family Systems Theory:**

- Frames domestic violence within relational and intergenerational dynamics.
- Helps facilitators understand patterns of behavior and systemic influences.
- Supports holistic approaches to accountability and intervention.

## The PAC Model: Pause – Acknowledge – Choose

The PAC framework operationalizes these principles into a simple, actionable process for facilitators:

1. **Pause:** Take a mindful moment to assess the situation, personal reactions, and the participant's state.
2. **Acknowledge:** Recognize the participant's experience and perspective without judgment, validating emotions while maintaining accountability.
3. **Choose:** Decide on the most ethical, trauma-informed, and effective response, drawing from MI techniques and family systems awareness.

This framework serves as a guide for facilitators in real-time, supporting consistent, reflective, and ethical intervention practices.

## Training Components and Methods

PAC Collaborative combines theoretical grounding with hands-on skill development, emphasizing interactive learning and reflective practice. Key components include:

- **Mindfulness and Check-Ins:** Facilitators practice self-awareness and regulation before and during sessions.
- **Psychoeducation:** Training covers types of abuse, patterns of coercion, intent versus impact, and trauma-informed interventions.
- **Interactive Exercises:**
  - Partner work and roleplay to practice PAC responses.
  - Group discussions and case studies to explore facilitator bias and ethical dilemmas.
- **Reflective Practice:** Structured opportunities for facilitators to examine their assumptions, biases, and responses to participant behaviors.
- **Ongoing Support:** Coaching, mentorship, and peer consultation to reinforce skills and prevent burnout.

## **Unique Value Proposition**

PAC Collaborative distinguishes itself through a holistic, evidence-based, and practical approach that combines theory, reflective practice, and real-world application:

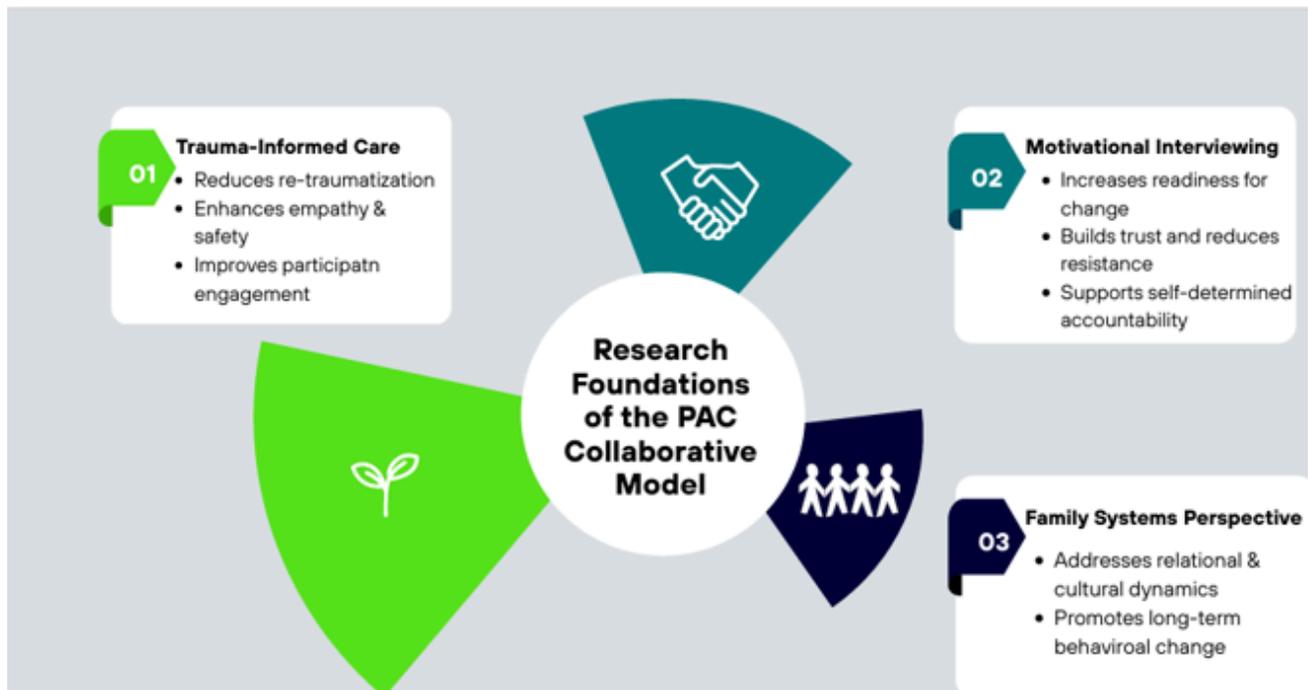
- Facilitators are empowered with tools to navigate complex participant dynamics with confidence.
- Programs see improved participant engagement, accountability, and long-term behavioral outcomes.
- Emphasis on trauma-informed care and MI reduces the risk of re-traumatization and fosters meaningful, ethical interactions.

By focusing on guiding rather than enforcing, PAC Collaborative equips facilitators to create safer, more effective, and sustainable domestic violence interventions.

## Evidence Supporting the Approach

To establish credibility and demonstrate that PAC Collaborative's methods are grounded in research and best practices, this section summarizes key evidence supporting the core components of our model: trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and system-informed intervention strategies. While research in intimate partner violence (IPV) and offender intervention is evolving, a growing body of evidence supports approaches that align with PAC Collaborative's philosophy and methods.

**Figure 1.** Research foundations of the PAC Collaborative model.



### Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care (TIC) emphasizes understanding the pervasive impact of trauma on cognition, behavior, and relational patterns. Training professionals in TIC has been shown to shift practices toward greater empathy, active listening, and reduced judgment, which fosters safer and more inclusive engagement with clients. Practitioners report enhanced awareness of trauma's effects and changes in how they respond to stress or resistance in care settings when trained in trauma-informed frameworks.

In domestic violence programs specifically, qualitative analyses of trauma-informed approaches reveal core themes that support survivor and participant well-being by reducing re-traumatization and reshaping organizational practices to be more responsive to trauma histories.

## Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Behavior Change

A growing evidence base suggests that integrating motivational interviewing techniques into offender intervention and behavior change programs enhances engagement and outcomes:

- A systematic review of interventions for IPV perpetrators found that MI techniques, whether standalone or integrated into batterer intervention programs (BIPs), increase attendance, treatment adherence, motivation for change, and positive behavioral outcomes, especially among individuals initially low in readiness to change (Pinto e Silva et al., 2023).
- Research on motivational strategies in IPV interventions indicates that when facilitators employ MI principles, the therapeutic alliance improves, resistance decreases, and participants are more likely to collaborate with program goals, leading to greater likelihood of pro-change behaviors and reductions in violence-related behaviors over time (Santirso et al., 2020).
- Additional literature suggests that methods enhancing engagement, such as building agreement on goals and supporting clients' autonomy can improve treatment engagement, reduce dropout, and support sustained change (Soleymani et al., 2018).

These findings align with PAC Collaborative's emphasis on self-determined accountability and collaboration between facilitators and participants.

## Systems and Contextual Understanding

While specific empirical work on family systems theory in IPV treatment is more conceptual than experimental, theoretical frameworks emphasizing relational and intergenerational dynamics support the need to understand how behavior is embedded in broader social and familial systems. Interventions that incorporate systemic perspectives are considered promising for addressing patterns of violence and promoting healthier relational functioning over time (Bowe et al., 2025).

Additionally, broader intervention research underscores the importance of culturally responsive and context-sensitive programming, recognizing that programs tailored to clients' cultural norms and structural contexts show stronger outcomes for behavior change and reduced recidivism (Satyen et al., 2022).

## Synthesis and Relevance to PAC Collaborative

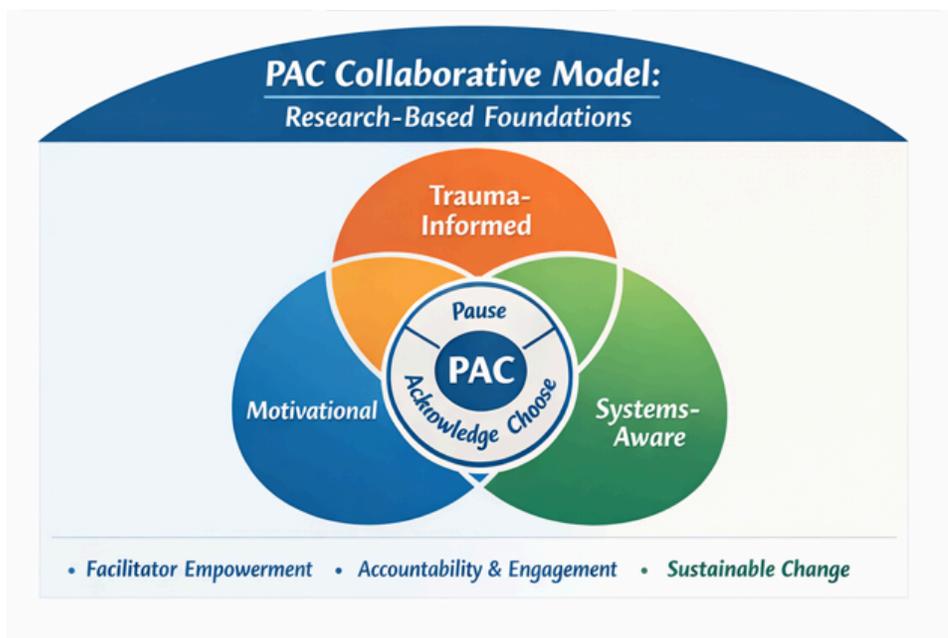
The evidence summarized here supports PAC Collaborative's three foundational pillars:

- Trauma-informed practice promotes safety, reduces re-traumatization, and enhances engagement.
- Motivational Interviewing improves readiness for change, increases adherence, and strengthens facilitator-participant collaboration.
- Systems-aware and culturally responsive frameworks provide necessary context for sustainable change.

Together, these evidence-informed components bolster the rationale for PAC Collaborative's model, signaling that training facilitators in reflective, empathetic, and participant-centered approaches is supported by both theory and emerging empirical findings.

The PAC Collaborative Model presented below integrates the trauma-informed, motivational, and systems-aware principles discussed throughout this paper into a cohesive framework for facilitator practice.

**Figure 2.** The PAC Collaborative model: Trauma-informed, motivational, and systems-aware framework.



## **Implementation and Recommendations**

Effective domestic violence intervention requires more than theoretical alignment; it demands practical, sustainable implementation strategies that support facilitators over time. PAC Collaborative is designed to be flexible and adaptable across organizational contexts while maintaining fidelity to trauma-informed, motivational, and systems-aware principles.

### **Training Delivery and Structure**

PAC Collaborative recommends a modular training structure that allows organizations to tailor learning to their needs while ensuring consistency and depth. Training may be delivered through:

- Foundational workshops introducing trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, family systems perspectives, and the PAC framework.
- Skill-building sessions focused on real-world application through roleplay, case analysis, and facilitated reflection.
- Ongoing learning modules that reinforce concepts and support continued professional growth.

Training formats may include in-person, virtual, or hybrid delivery models, increasing accessibility while maintaining engagement.

### **Facilitator Support and Sustainability**

PAC Collaborative emphasizes that facilitator development is an ongoing process rather than a one-time training event. To promote sustainability and prevent burnout, organizations are encouraged to incorporate:

- Reflective practice groups that provide structured opportunities for facilitators to process challenges, biases, and ethical dilemmas.
- Coaching and mentorship to support skill integration and confidence over time.
- Peer consultation models that foster collaboration and share learning among facilitators.

These supports strengthen facilitator capacity while reinforcing ethical, trauma-informed practice.

## **Organizational Alignment and Readiness**

Successful implementation requires organizational commitment to trauma-informed values and reflective practice. PAC Collaborative recommends that organizations:

- Assess existing policies and practices for alignment with trauma-informed principles.
- Support facilitator autonomy while maintaining clear program expectations and accountability structures.
- Allocate time and resources for ongoing training, reflection, and professional development.

Organizational readiness enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of PAC Collaborative implementation.

## **Anticipated Outcomes**

Organizations implementing PAC Collaborative approaches may expect:

- Increased facilitator confidence and competence in managing complex participant dynamics.
- Improved participant engagement and reduced resistance.
- Greater emphasis on self-determined accountability and ethical practice.
- Enhanced program consistency and community trust.

Collectively, these outcomes contribute to safer, more effective domestic violence intervention efforts.

## **Recommendations for Stakeholders**

PAC Collaborative recommends agencies, funders, and community partners:

- Invest in facilitator-centered training models that prioritize reflection and ethical practice.
- Support evidence-informed approaches that integrate trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and systems awareness.
- Recognize facilitator development as a critical component of program success and community safety.

## **Conclusion and Call to Action**

Domestic violence intervention work requires more than compliance-driven programming; it requires skilled facilitators who can navigate complexity, trauma, and accountability with clarity and care. As the field continues to evolve, there is a growing need for facilitator training models that are reflective, trauma-informed, and grounded in evidence-based approaches to behavior change.

PAC Collaborative responds to this need by centering facilitator development as a critical component of effective domestic violence intervention. Through the integration of trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and systems-aware perspectives, PAC Collaborative equips facilitators to guide participants toward self-determined accountability while maintaining ethical responsibility and program integrity. The PAC framework - Pause, Acknowledge, Choose - offers a practical, accessible structure that supports mindful decision-making in real-time practice.

By investing in facilitator-centered training and ongoing reflective support, organizations can strengthen program consistency, improve participant engagement, and reduce the risk of harm or re-traumatization. More importantly, such investment contributes to safer communities and more sustainable pathways to change.

PAC Collaborative invites agencies, facilitators, advocates, funders, and community partners to engage in this work collaboratively. Whether through training, consultation, or reflective practice support, PAC Collaborative seeks to partner with organizations committed to ethical, trauma-informed domestic violence intervention.

Transforming systems begins with supporting the individuals within them. By prioritizing facilitator growth, reflective practice, and evidence-informed approaches, PAC Collaborative aims to advance a more effective, accountable, and humane response to domestic violence. Organizations interested in implementing or learning more about PAC Collaborative are encouraged to explore partnership opportunities and facilitator development initiatives.

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