

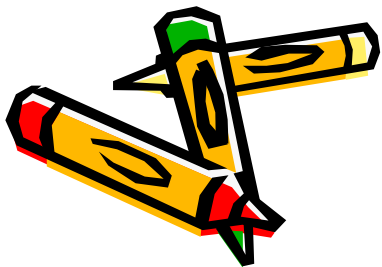
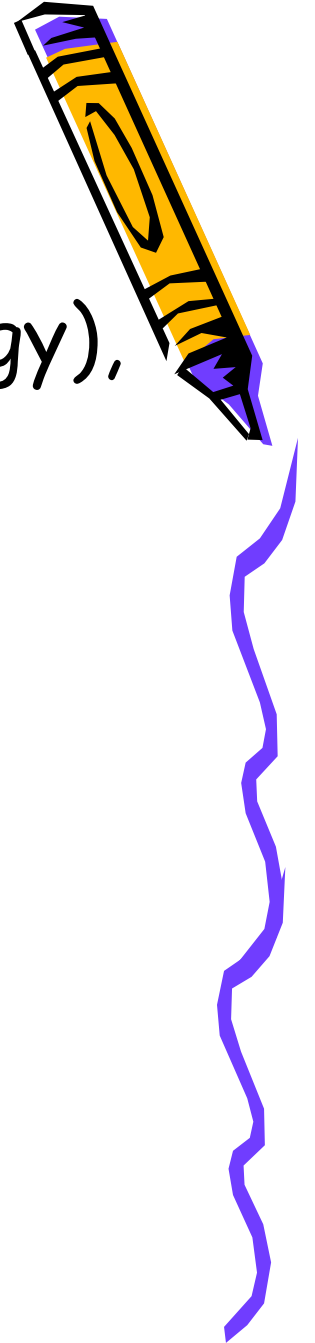


Institutional Accountability and Safety Audits



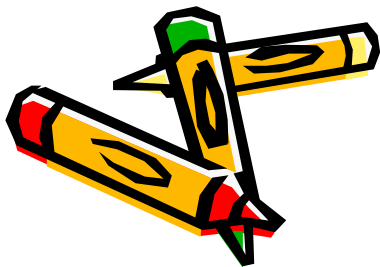
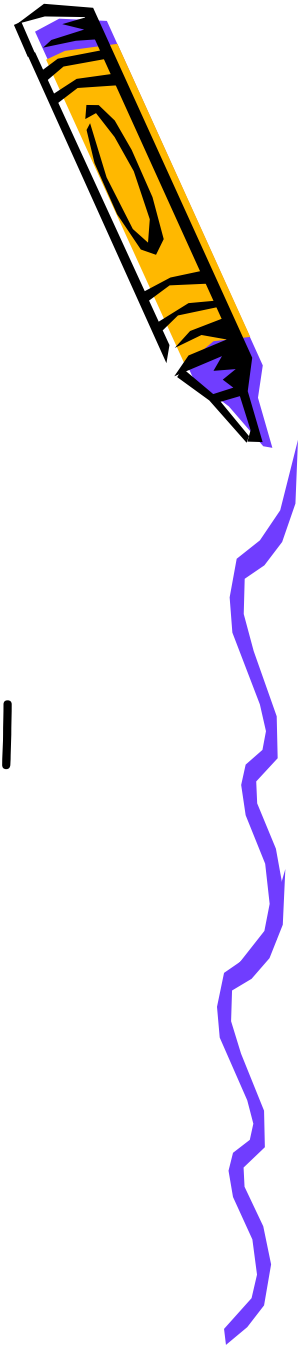
Background

- Institutional ethnography (sociology), Dorothy Smith
- How society structures our lives
- Method: "how" things happen
- Adapted by Praxis International, Ellen Pence (Duluth)
- Week training course



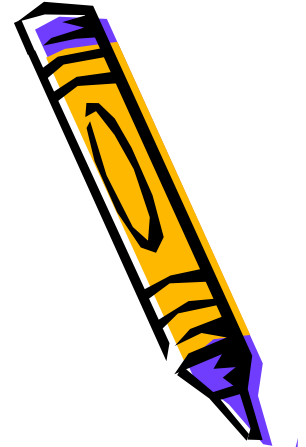
Lived experience to case...

- Safety and risk are complex - immediate circumstances, abuser, aspects of culture, institutional responses.
- Door through which she enters will have an enormous impact
- E.g. School nurse, application for housing



Case processes

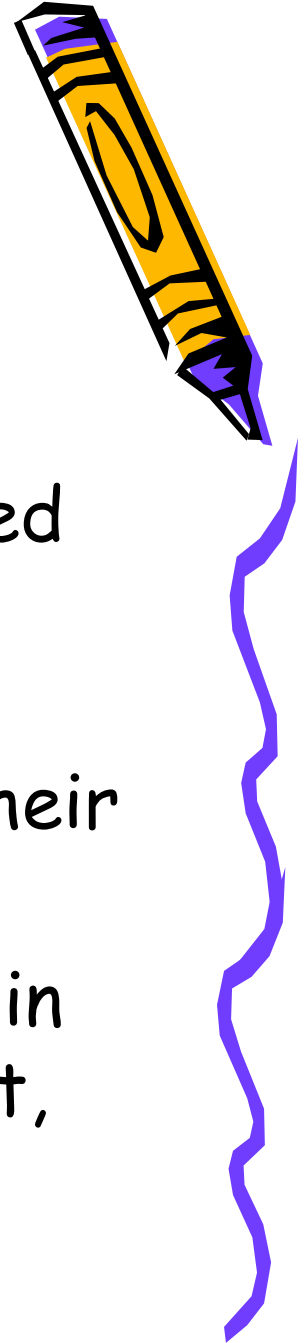
- 999 call
- Different "meanings" to the call - woman wants police to stand between her and him and make him understand that if he doesn't stop NOW something bad will happen to him
- Activates a complex system
- Several workers from several agencies involved



- Map

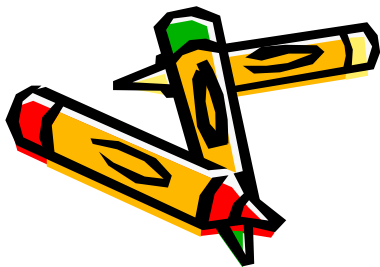
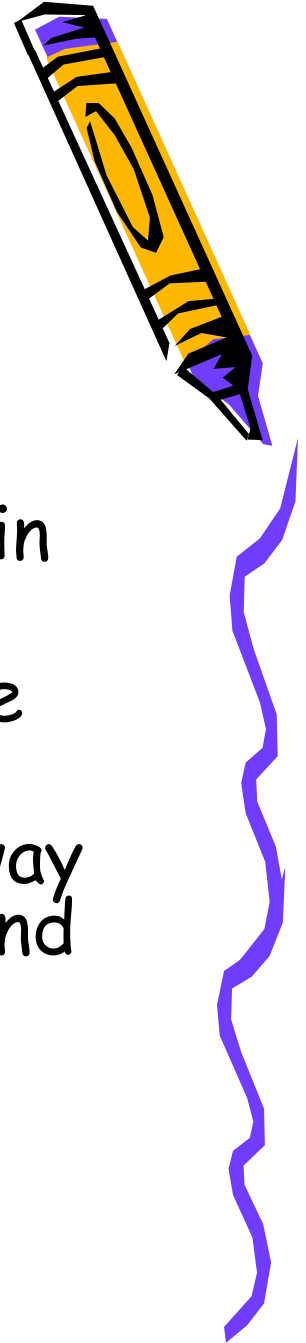
How does this come about?

- We are a highly managed society
- A web of agencies and organisations
- Complex become cases which are treated as like
- Workers can have varying degrees of autonomy but no-one gets to make up their own job
- The way an agency gets workers to act in authorized and acceptable ways - direct, influence, control and cajole .



Problematic...

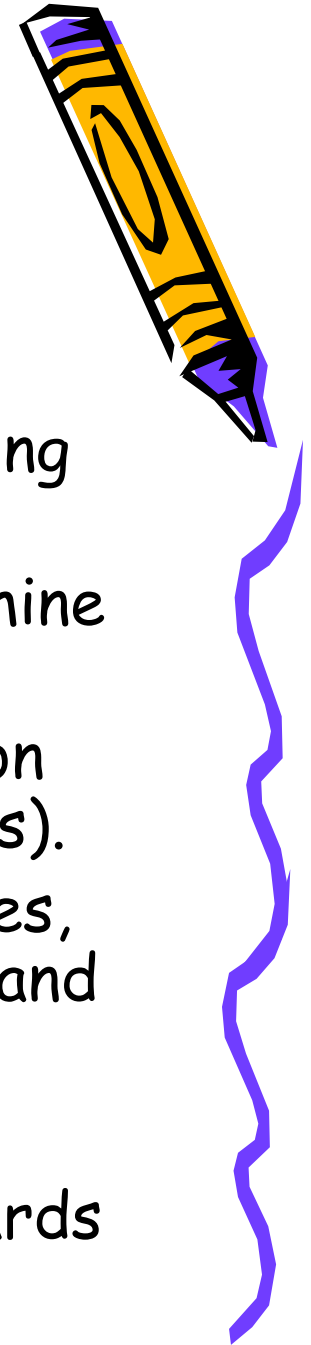
- Systems designed for justice and protection - reform efforts (do they protect?).
- How text is used is important - stands in for person, like veins of system.
- How do dissimilar cases get treated the same?
- How do we close the gap between the way in which people experience their lives and institutions manage their situations as cases?



The process involves six steps:

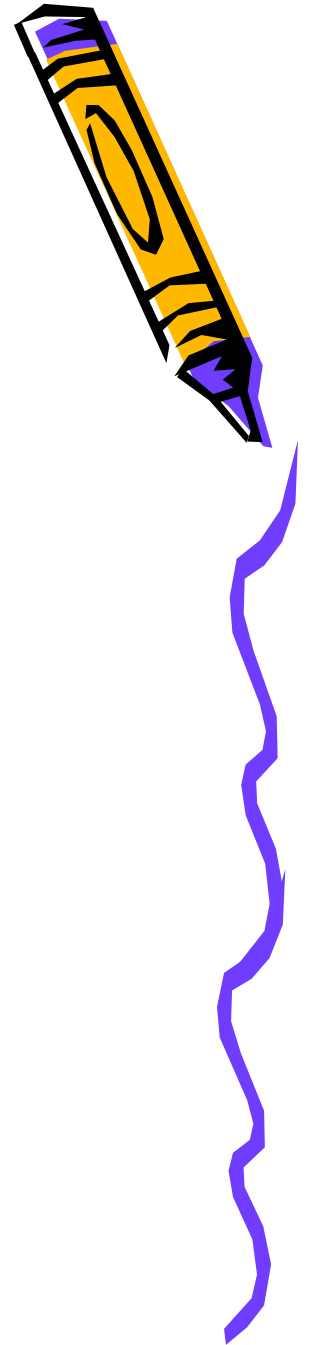
- Initial negotiation on the nature of the audit, (focus group), which is then followed by forming and preparing an audit team.
- Determining what part of the process to examine (need to be focussed).
- Define the scope of the audit (one intervention may affect others and audits need parameters).
- Collecting data: looking at files, reading policies, observing practice, interviews with key staff and service users.
- Analyzing data.

Recording findings and progressing towards recommendations.



Who is involved?

- 1. A multi-agency team*
- 2. An audit coordinator*
- 3. Safety Audit UK*



Audit question



- Audits ask questions that begin with *How....*
- An Audit will show how problematic outcomes are produced by the institutional work routines and ways of doing business.
- The Audit begins with a question that highlights a gap between the lives of the people who are being processed and the institution responding to their situations. For example:

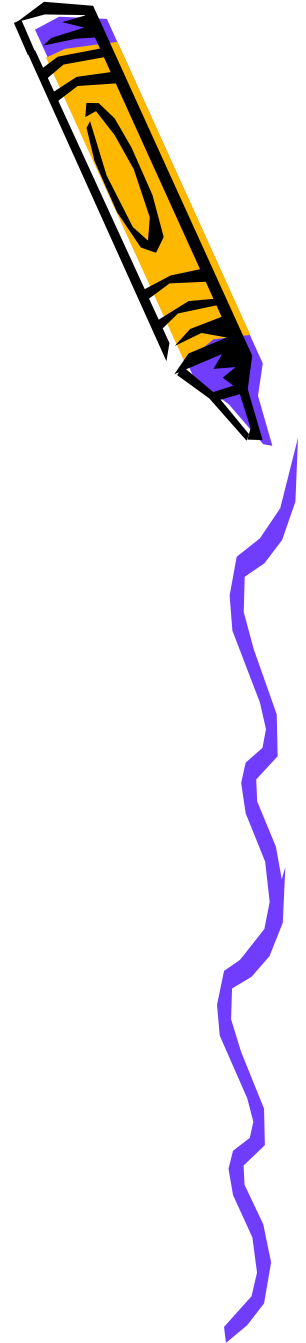
How are victims/survivors of domestic violence made safer or more vulnerable by the actions of interveners?

- By asking *how* something comes about, rather than looking at the individual who is doing it, we discover systemic problems and are able to come up with recommendations for longer-lasting change.



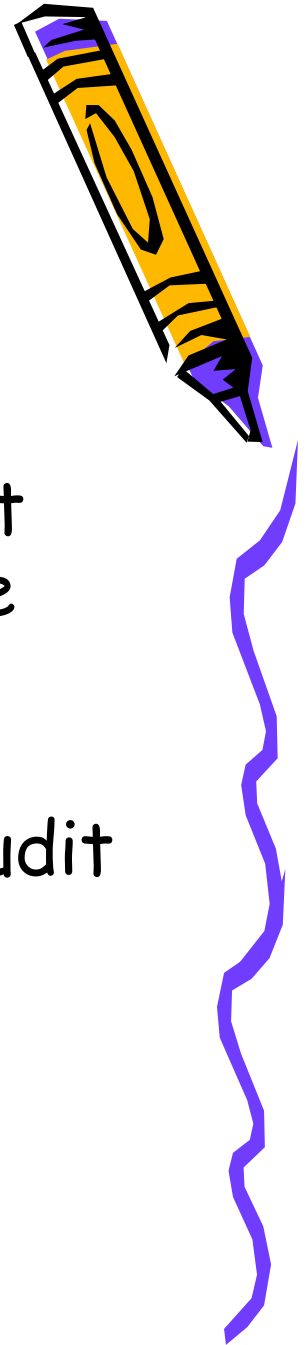
Audit Trails

1. Rules and regulations
2. Administrative practices
3. Resources
4. Concepts and theories
5. Linkages
6. Mission, purpose and function
7. Accountability
8. Education and Training
9. To be discovered...



How long does the process take?

- The length of time needed for an audit depends on its scope and depth. A short intense audit, perhaps involving only one agency, could be completed over four months.
- A more extensive audit, involving the audit team tracking the flow of information across several agencies and different systems, could take up to a year.



The Audit uses a new method of interagency work:

- Sidesteps many of the tensions between agencies
- Deepens the analysis of how a given problematic outcome occurs
- Develops concrete structural solutions to some of the continued problems practitioners face when responding to these cases



Problematic features of institutions

- Fragmented - each event is a "case"
- Co-ordinated by text (written word)
- Relies on categories
- Time is different to lived time (overrides)
- Institutional functioning is privileged over individuals' needs



Communication without dialogue

Continued...

- Have concepts that organise how workers think and act
- Create a fictitious universal person as standard
- Mask own limitations and failures
- Weak systems of accountability to people whose lives are being managed
- Use coercion to gain compliance
- Individualise the social

