

Domestic Violence Intervention: Dialogue Pathway For Disclosed Abuse

As with other sensitive issues, assess for domestic violence only after you have established an initial connection with the patient

Health Care Professional to assess all patients aged 14 years & older and a parent &/or guardian of a pediatric patient for Domestic Violence at every visit as appropriate, alone (away from anyone who could influence their ability to speak freely).

Use Language Cards or Language Line, as required.

Universal Education & Direct Enquiry Statements:

We know that violence and the threat of violence in the home is a problem for many people and can directly affect their health. Abuse can take many forms: physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or neglect. We routinely ask all patients and parents about abuse or violence in their lives. Are any of these a problem for you or your children?

Option: Are you experiencing any of these behaviors where you are living?

Patient Discloses Abuse

Validate patients Disclosure by stating:

*That must have been very frightening for you
No one should have to suffer physical harm.
No one should be forced to have sex
You are not responsible for the abuse.*

*It's not your fault
You're not alone.
What do you need to be safe?
Right now, what do wish to do?*

Assess for Safety (current and upon discharge)

- Determine if the patient (and/or their children) are in danger (many underestimate their risk)
 - Obtain information concerning the nature of the abuse the patient is experiencing
 - Obtain a history of the abuse

Listen & Ask 'What concerns you the most right now'

*When was the last time you were abused? What happened?
How often does the abuse occur?
Is the abuse **getting worse** or is it getting scarier?
Is it happening more often?
Is your partner possessive about you or overly **jealous**?
Has a weapon ever been used? Were you **strangled**?*

*Does your partner every watch you closely, follow you or stalk you?
Has your partner ever threatened to kill you, him/herself or your children or pet, or destroyed things you cared about? Were you **ever beaten when you were pregnant**?
Does you partner drink alcohol a lot?
Are you afraid of your partner?
Are you afraid for your life or for the lives of your children?*

***Do you feel safe right now?**
"Are you safe to return home?"
"Have you thought about leaving"
"Do you have somewhere safe to go?"*

Offer/Provide Support and Community Resources to Patient

*I'm going to **connect** you with another member of our team (**Social Worker/ Mental Health**) who can speak to you about safety planning and other options you have.
I just want you to know that it is safer for you not to share any of your plans to leave with your partner.*

*You also have the option to report the abuse to the police. I can help you with that and we can call them together if you wish.
Here's a card with the number of a 24 Hr Helpline that you can call anytime.
We have a private phone you can use to call them now should you choose. I'll stay with you.*

Community Resources
Family Violence Info Line: 310-1818
or local Community Response Team/Help Line if available in your area
Government of Alberta Family Violence Supports
<https://www.alberta.ca/family-violence-find-supports.aspx>
ACWS: 1-866-331-3933

If children are involved, reporting is mandatory

Example Statement of Reporting to Children's Services

*"I'm legally obligated to make that call and I am doing it to keep you and your children safe"
Option: "Let's sit and call together" Local Children's Services or 1-800-387-5437*

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