

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION TIPS

From “*Domestic Violence: Cultural Competency In The Health Care Setting*,” Trainer’s Manual For Health Care Providers, Family Violence Prevention Fund (1998).

Goals for effectively responding to domestic violence victims

- increase victim safety and
- support victims in protecting themselves and their children by validating their experiences, providing support and providing information about resources/options.
- The goal is not to get them to leave their abusers or “fix” the situation or the relationship for the patient, but to provide support and information.

### 1. Listen to the patient and provide validating messages:

- “You don’t deserve this. There is no excuse for domestic violence. You deserve better.”
- “I am concerned. This is harmful to you (and it can be harmful to your children).”
- “This is complicated. Sometimes it takes time to figure this out.”
- “You are not alone in figuring this out. There may be some options. I will support your choices.”
- “I care. I am glad you told me. I want to know about domestic violence so we can work together to keep you safe and healthy.”

### 2. Listen and respond to safety issues:

a. Encourage victims to make their own safety plan for when a batterer is present in the medical setting, a victim fears leaving the medical setting or a victim is returning to the batterer.

b. See separate handout on safety planning.

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### **3. Provide information about domestic violence to the patient:**

- a. Domestic violence is a health issue for patient (and children). Violence can escalate; damage from the abuse escalates over time.
- b. Stopping domestic violence is the responsibility of the perpetrator, not the victim.
- c. Victims, with assistance and support from others, can increase their own safety (and their children's).
- d. List whichever supports are available: within the health system; legal options; community advocacy services, etc.

### **4. Make referrals to local resources:**

- a. Advocacy and support systems within the health care setting
- b. Advocacy and support services within the community (if any).

### **5. Follow-up steps for health care practitioners:**

- a. Schedule future appointments. Ensure the patient will have a connection to a primary care provider. Ask what happened after the last visit.
- b. Review medical records and ask about past episodes of domestic violence in order to communicate a concern for the patient and a willingness to address this health issue openly.
- c. Domestic violence, like other health issues (smoking, poor nutrition, high blood pressure, etc.), often requires multiple interventions over time before it is resolved.