

Asking about Domestic Violence and Abuse



Example Questions

- How are things at home?
- Is someone hurting you? Is there someone you are afraid of?
- Do you feel safe at home?
- Some women have these symptoms/injuries when they are at risk of abuse. Are you afraid of anyone at home? Does anyone try to control you or what you do?
- How is your relationship with your husband/partner/family? Has someone hurt you? Do you feel safe?
- Sometimes people with chronic pain have a lot of pain or tension in their lives that is reflected in their bodies. Might that be happening to you? Are you ever afraid of or hurt by anyone?
- Sometimes people with depression/low self-esteem have experienced major life events that cause this and can explain why they feel so low. Living in an abusive relationship can cause this. Could this be something that is happening at home?

Remember:

- Always ask women alone.
'It is the policy at our practice that we see all patients on their own. Please would you step outside while I talk to..... and she will then come and find you in the waiting room'
- Disclosure is a process not a one-off event
- Women may not tell you the first time you ask for many reasons, but you have made a huge impact.
- The patient is more likely to tell you at some point now you've asked – she knows you are prepared to hear her and that you are someone she can tell.

Respond:

- I believe you
- It is not your fault
- You have the right to be safe
- There is help available
- Thank you for telling me

Safety:

- Is it safe for you to go home?
- What are you afraid might happen?
- What has the perpetrator threatened?
- Has he made threats to the children?

If there are threats to kill her/the children/himself or the women is not safe to go home, refer to 'Emergency' section of the care pathway.

SPECSS (Risk indicators)

- Separation
- Pregnancy
- Escalation
- Cultural issues/sensitivity/isolation
- Stalking
- Sexual assault

Call your Advocate Educator, or Next Link (0117 9250680) if you are concerned or in doubt.