Universal Screening for Domestic Violence

Second Edition

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Objectives

- Define domestic violence
- List at least three forms of abuse
- Describe the prevalence of this public health problem
- Identify the cycle of violence
- Describe physical, psychosocial and pregnancy related effects of domestic violence
- List reasons why women stay in abusive relationships
Objectives (continued)

- Describe the clinical signs and symptoms of abuse
- Negate myths about domestic violence
- Use domestic violence assessment tools in practice
- Identify national and local resources available to help patients confronting domestic violence
- Describe applicable state mandatory reporting requirements
Definition of Domestic Violence
Nursing’s Advantage and Responsibility
Prevalence

- 8.3% of women in the US or 3-4 million women report past year physical assault by an intimate partner
  - Despite the increased use of the healthcare system by this group of women only about 20% are correctly identified or diagnosed
  - In primary care and GI practices 11-34% of women presenting with physical complaints are abused

(Commonwealth Fund, 1996; Jones, et al., 1999; Campbell 2002)
Largest Single Precursor of Maternal Mortality

- Between 4 and 8% of pregnant women are abused during pregnancy and even more before and after pregnancy (Gazamarian, et al., 1996; Martin, et al., 2002)
  - 11% more homicides in pregnant women than in non-pregnant women (Cefalo, 2001)
  - Partners are frequently the perpetrator
  - A pregnant woman is more likely to be murdered than to die of other causes (Krulewitch, et al., 2001)
- In public prenatal clinics 16% of pregnant women have been identified as abused (McFarlane, Soeken, & Wiist, 2000)
Adolescents and IPV

- Particularly susceptible … rates as high as 29%
  - Sexual risk taking
  - Unhealthy weight gain or loss
- Physical and emotional symptoms
- Pregnancy
- Higher risk for suicide

(Quinlivan & Evans 2001; Renker, 1999)
Mandates for Attention in the Health Care System

- JCAHO: policies and procedures for assessment, examination, treatment and referral
- Healthy People 2010
- Universal screening is supported in resolutions or position statements by AWHONN, ACNM, ANA, ENA, AACN, ACOG
Forms of Abuse

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Economic
- Destruction of Pets and Property
- Threats
- Stalking
Dynamics of Power and Control
Dynamics
Power and Control Wheel

- Isolation
- Intimidation
- Male privilege
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Economic abuse
- Threats
- Physical abuse
Cycle of Violence

HONEYMOON PHASE
(calm loving respite)

TENSION BUILDING

ACUTE BATTERING

Phase I

Phase II

Phase III

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Common Domestic Violence Myths

- “Some” women
- Infrequent
- Related to drugs and alcohol
- Easy to leave
- She must like it
Reasons Women Stay...

- **Internal Factors**
  - Concern for children
  - Damaged self-esteem
  - Fear directs decisions
  - Religious beliefs about commitment
Reasons Women Stay...

- **External Factors**
  - Social isolation
  - Economic limitation
  - Abuser promises change

(Campbell, McFarlane, & Webster 2000)
Physical Effects

- Neurologic
- Gynecologic
- Musculoskeletal
- Gastrointestinal
- Constitutional
Domestic Violence and HIV

- Increased risk for HIV through forced sex, STD’s, partner’s refusal to use safe sex practices, depressed immune system
- Increased risk for violence after HIV disclosure

Psychological Effects

- Post traumatic stress syndrome
- Flattened affect
- Eroded self esteem
- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Suicide
Abuse in Pregnancy
Pregnancy Related Effects

- Unintended pregnancy
- Bleeding
- Delayed prenatal care
- PTL and low birth weight
- Miscarriage, fetal injury, fetal death
- Depression, substance abuse

(Dietz, 1999; Gazmararian, et al., 2000)
Postpartum Risks
Maternal Mortality

- Four cities where homicide is leading cause of death during pregnancy
- 40-50% may be committed by husband or boyfriend

Effects on Children

- May be abused
- Witness abuse
- Learning disabilities
- Become violent themselves

(Edleson, 1999)
Costs to Society

- Insurance
- Work loss
- Deaths by homicide
- Hospital/ER visits
Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

- Multiple bruises in various stages of healing
- Substance or alcohol abuse
- Extreme anxiety
- Presence of a controlling partner
- Frequent health care visits
- Vague somatic complaints
- Missed health care appointments
Physical and Psychological Presentation

- Typical injuries
- Signs of stress
- Addiction, substance abuse
- Other physical problems
Additional Clues

- Delay in seeking care
- Sporadic prenatal care
- Embarrassed or evasive demeanor
- Multiple providers and ER visits
Do Not Rule Out Abuse
Based on Appearance
Ask!

- Provide a safe and private setting
- Ask every woman:
  - At every health care visit
  - In each trimester of pregnancy and post partum
Universal Screening Methods

Abuse Assessment Screen (AAS)
Abuse Assessment Screen (AAS)

- Have you ever been emotionally or physically abused by your partner or someone important to you?
- Within the last year, have you been hit, slapped, kicked or otherwise physically hurt by someone?
- Since you’ve been pregnant, have you been hit, slapped, kicked or otherwise physically hurt by someone?
- Has anyone forced you into sexual activities?
- Are you afraid of your partner or anyone you mentioned?
Why It May Be Hard to Ask
Why It May Be Hard to Answer “Yes”
Setting the Stage

- Posters

- Literature
What to Do if She Says “Yes”

The ABCDE’S for management of intimate partner violence

(Holtz, Esposito, & Podhorin, 1994)
A-Alone

“You are not alone”
B-Belief

“No one deserves to be hurt”

“Not your fault”
C-Confidentiality

“The information you’ve given me is confidential”
D-Document

- Descriptions in quotations
- Photographs
- Treatment
- Referrals and information
- Woman’s decisions
Resources

- Hot line: 1-800-799-SAFE
- Restraining orders
- Shelter
Safety Plan

- Women should be safer following a health care encounter than they were before the visit.
Danger Signs

- Death threats
- Possession of a gun
- Previous attempts to choke
- Escalation of violence
Reporting

- What are your state laws?
- Report serious injuries or use of weapons
- CA, CO, NM, KY, CT, RI
  - http://endabuse.org/statereport/list
What to Do if She Says “No”

- If you are assured she is safe, provide information.

- If you suspect that she may be abused but she denies it – offer information and how to get help.
Culturally Competent Care

- Immigrant victims of abuse
- Indirect questions
- Referrals to English as a second language classes
- Interpreters
- Concerns about criminal justice system
Dispelling Myths About Abuse

- Only poor women
  - All socioeconomic levels
- Only mentally ill women
  - Multiple factors
- Women are at fault
  - Often awakened from sleep
- Abuse is not a health problem
  - Major contributor to morbidity and mortality
Dispelling Myths (continued)

- Women won’t discuss abuse
  - They appreciate being asked
- It is a waste of time to ask women about abuse because battered women stay with their batterers
  - Women need time and support
Goal of Screening Is Empowerment

- Respect
- Healthy relationships
- Living free
- Growing and thriving
Make a Difference

- Universal screening
- Identification
- Treatment
- ABCDE’S
Resources

- Family Violence Prevention Fund
- National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control