

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU SUSPECT THAT A WOMAN IS BEING ABUSED

1) EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT WHAT ABUSE IS AND ITS EFFECTS ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND THE MEN THEMSELVES

2) NOTICE POTENTIAL SIGNS OF ABUSE OCCURRING IN THOSE AROUND YOU

- **DEPRESSION/ANXIETY**
- **FATIGUE/EXHAUSTION**
- **APPEARING FRIGHTENED/FEARFUL/UNSURE OF HERSELF/INSECURE**
- **BRUISES/BLACK EYES**
- **FREQUENT “ACCIDENTS” THAT SHE REPORTS RELATED TO BRUISES**
- **HER PARTNER BEING CONTROLLING OR DEMEANING IN PUBLIC
I.E. IN FRONT OF YOU**
- **HER ACTUALLY TALKING WITH YOU ABOUT A PARTNER BEING
CONTROLLING AND ABUSIVE WITH HER**

3) ASK HER DIRECTLY ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN HER LIFE AND IN HER RELATIONSHIP

- **BUT NOT IN FRONT OF HER PARTNER**

...“ARE YOU IN A RELATIONSHIP WHERE YOU FEEL BADLY TREATED?”

...“DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR PARTNER IS TRYING TO CONTROL YOU”

...WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOU FEEL, THINK, SAY, AND DO

...“WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR PARTNER LOSES HIS TEMPER AND BECOMES ANGRY?”

...“WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU AND YOUR PARTNER DISAGREE OR HAVE CONFLICT AT HOME?”

...“DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT HOW YOUR PARTNER EXPRESSES HIS ANGER TO YOU OR OTHERS?”

...“DOES YOUR PARTNER EVER PUT YOU DOWN, CALL YOU DEMEANING NAMES, OR CURSE OR SWEAR AT YOU WHEN HE IS ANGRY”

...“HAS THERE EVER BEEN ANY PUSHING, GRABBING, OR HITTING WHEN YOU AND YOUR PARTNER ARGUE OR FIGHT?”

...“DO YOU EVER FEEL AFRAID OF OR INTIMIDATED BY YOUR PARTNER?”

4) LISTEN TO HER IN A NON-JUDGMENTAL AND NON-SHAMING WAY

5) BELIEVE WHAT SHE SAYS

- **MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIFFICULTY BELIEVING A MAN COULD ACT IN AN ABUSIVE WAY WITH HIS PARTNER**

- 6) **TALK TO HER ABOUT WHAT ABUSE IS, ABOUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF ABUSE RECURRING IN THE RELATIONSHIP, AND ABOUT THE POTENTIAL FOR AN ESCALATION OF ABUSE FROM EMOTIONAL AND VERBAL ABUSE TO PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL ABUSE (IF THE LATTER HAVE NOT ALREADY OCCURRED)**
- 7) **ENCOURAGE HER TO TRUST HER PERCEPTIONS OF HOW HER ABUSIVE PARTNER TREATS HER AND THINKS ABOUT HER**
 - **SHE MAY BELIEVE WHAT HE HAS TOLD HER THAT SHE IS “JUST BEING PARANOID” ABOUT HIM**
- 8) **CHALLENGE THE ABUSE AND VIOLENCE DIRECTLY AND LET HER KNOW THAT ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR IS HURTFUL, PUNISHING, AND INTIMIDATING AND THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS WRONG AND AGAINST THE LAW**
- 9) **REINFORCE THAT THE ABUSE IS NOT HER FAULT, THAT NO ONE DESERVES TO BE YELLED AT, PUT DOWN, OR PUSHED AND HIT, AND THAT ABUSE GENERALLY WILL NOT GET BETTER OR STOP ON ITS OWN**
- 10) **EXPRESS YOUR FEARS AND CONCERNS DIRECTLY TO HER**
 - **ABOUT HER SAFETY, HER CHILDREN’S SAFETY, AND WHAT THE CHILDREN ARE LEARNING FROM THE ABUSE THAT IS GOING ON AROUND THEM**
 - **BE A “REALITY TEST” FOR HER ABOUT WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING IN HER LIFE**
- 11) **ASSURE HER THAT HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR HER AND HER PARTNER**
 - **IF HE IS WILLING TO ADDRESS HIS CONTROLLING AND ABUSIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS**
 - **WOMEN OFTEN STILL LOVE THEIR PARTNERS; THEY SIMPLY WANT THE ABUSE AND THE VIOLENCE (IF PRESENT) TO STOP**
- 12) **HELP HER DEVELOP A WRITTEN “SAFETY PLAN” (TO USE WHETHER OR NOT SHE REMAINS WITH HER PARTNER) I.E. STEPS FOR HER TO TAKE IF THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR ABUSE OR VIOLENCE IN THE FUTURE**
 - **HOW TO RECOGNIZE WHEN SHE IS IN DANGER**
 - **MAKING A LIST OF PEOPLE SHE CAN CALL IN AN EMERGENCY**
 - **IDENTIFYING A SAFE PLACE TO GO ON A TEMPORARY BASIS IF NECESSARY**
 - **HIDING A SUITCASE OF CLOTHING, MONEY, IMPORTANT PERSONAL DOCUMENTS (E.G. SOCIAL SECURITY CARD, BIRTH CERTIFICATE, SCHOOL OR MEDICAL RECORDS, MARRIAGE LICENSE, BANK BOOKS) AND OTHER THINGS SHE MAY NEED IF SHE HAS TO LEAVE HOME QUICKLY**

13) HELP HER LOCATE COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR WOMEN IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- **A BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTER**
- **LEGAL ADVOCATES OR ATTORNEYS WHO CAN EXPLAIN HER LEGAL OPTIONS**
...E.G. OFP, ASSAULT CHARGES, SEPARATION, DIVORCE
- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**
- **SAFE PERMANENT HOUSING**
- **COUNSELING AND/OR A SUPPORT GROUP TO HELP HER SORT OUT WHAT SHE WANTS TO DO**
...COUPLE THERAPY IS GENERALLY NOT RECOMMENDED INITIALLY

14) BE PATIENT WITH HER

- **EVERYONE HAS HER OWN "TIMELINE" FOR LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP**
- **FOCUS AND BUILD ON HER STRENGTHS AND SURVIVAL SKILLS**
...SHE HAS MADE IT THIS FAR: HELP HER UNDERSTAND WHAT SHE HAS TRIED TO DO TO PROTECT HERSELF AND HER CHILDREN (IF SHE HAS ANY)
- **DON'T TELL HER WHAT TO DO**
...RESPECT HER PERSONAL LIMITS
...RESIST THE IMPULSE TO GO FOR A "QUICK FIX"
- **LET HER MAKE HER OWN DECISIONS**
...SHE IS ALREADY FEELING VERY CONTROLLED BY HER PARTNER
...DON'T BECOME JUST ANOTHER CONTROLLING PERSON IN HER LIFE WHO "KNOWS WHAT'S BEST" FOR HER
...AFTER ALL, IT IS ULTIMATELY HER LIFE AND HER JOB TO MAKE THE DECISIONS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO HER
- **"LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN" BY LETTING HER KNOW THAT YOU SUPPORT HER IN MAKING HER OWN DECISIONS AND THAT SHE CAN TALK WITH YOU AGAIN IN THE FUTURE IF NECESSARY AND IF SHE WANTS TO DO THIS**