



## Recognizing and Assessing Domestic Violence

### Recognizing signs and patterns

#### Is violence a factor in this relationship?

- Ask about the history of or current methods of problem solving
- Gaps in explanations
- Signs of vigilance, fear, being controlled or restricted
- Denial
- Coping styles: conceptualization of why the abuse has occurred: denial of the seriousness, attributing the blame outside the relationship, blaming herself, denial of her options, wanting to save her partner by helping him overcome his problem, her commitment to enduring the abuse for the sake of a higher commitment, such as religion or tradition.
- Evidence of physical injuries
- Changes in demeanor, especially if the perpetrator is present
- Physical violence predispositions( see checklist)

### Assessing Domestic Violence

#### If violence is a factor, what is the level of danger that a client faces?

- **ASK:** Have you ever been hit, pushed, punched, kicked or hurt in any way recently? If so, by whom? When ? How?
- Do you feel safe at home?
- Anyone in past relationships that is making you feel unsafe?

#### Asking About Violence

- Ask specific questions about TYPES of abusive behavior
- Ask how recent, how often
- Ask about outcomes
- Ask about who knows

#### Assessing Lethality

- Ask the client if she is in imminent danger
- What will happen as a result of telling you?
- Weapons?
- Is violent severe, escalating?
- Safety plan?

#### Safety Planning: Goals

- Prevent further injuries
- Client feels supported
- Victim is ACTIVE, not PASSIVE
- Empowers victim
- Develop support system

**Barriers to Help**

- Immigrants

**Adolescents-inexperience in relationships**

- Pressure to be in relationship
- Normative
- Self-doubt and low self esteem
- Intensity in relationship

**Cultural Beliefs and Values**

- Beliefs about marriage, divorce, sex and gender roles influence choices
- Family vs. Individual
- Fear of rejection by church
- Fear of isolation by family and loss of extended family
- Attitudes about seeking help outside the family