

## Domestic Violence: a Healthcare Provider's Role and Responsibility to Female Patients

Nurses and other healthcare providers play an important role in the assessment, education and support of victims of domestic violence in hospitals and clinics. Here are some guidelines for a domestic violence assessment, including how to respond when your patient is a victim of domestic violence.

### Assess Female Patients for Domestic Violence:

- Assess all females for current, past or family history of battering
- Educate patients about the cycle of violence and the impact of violence on children. They are accountable to victims by giving referrals in the community, as well as providing follow up care and advocacy
- Document, in detail, in the medical record, the physical condition of the patient, as well as the measures taken to treat
- Validate the magnitude of the problem with research as opportunities arise
- Interact with other disciplines in the community to provide primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of violence against victims

### How to Assist Victims of Domestic Violence:

*The six steps that the healthcare professional should follow when assisting patients who are the victims of domestic violence are:*

**ASSIST:** (Six steps to assist patients with domestic violence)

- 1. ASK** about domestic violence.
- 2. SEND** messages of support.
- 3. SAFETY** assessment and planning is done.
- 4. INFORM** patients of their options with referrals.
- 5. SUPPORTIVE** documentation is provided.
- 6. TELL** other health care providers.

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.vantageproed.com/viol/viol.htm>

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