Domestic Violence: A Major Public Health Problem

American College of Surgeons
Committee on Trauma
September 1999
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A MAJOR PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

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WHAT IT IS
• Exertion of control over another (physical, sexual, psychological)
• Leading cause of serious injury to women
• Repeat occurrences common

WHO IS VULNERABLE
• Elderly
• Domestic partners
• Children
• No diagnostic profile
• Crosses all boundaries

WHEN TO SUSPECT
• Nontraumatic complaints (headaches, ulcers, pelvic pain)
• Inconsistent history
• Physical signs (bruises in various stages over thighs, perineum, breasts; belt marks; burns)

HOW TO IDENTIFY
• Asking these 3 questions will identify 65%–70%:
  1. Have you been kicked, hit, punched, or hurt by someone in the last year?
  2. Do you feel safe in your current relationship?
  3. Is there a partner from a previous relationship who makes you feel unsafe now?

WHAT TO DO
• Immediate care of injury
• Reassure
• Determine immediate threat
• Treat related medical problems
• Document (photos, body maps)

SAFETY PLAN
• Isolate victim from abuser
• Develop alternate destination
• Provide referral phone numbers/agencies
• Respect difficulty to leave partner

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