

The following sample screening questions and statements can be used to develop a strategy to build rapport with each individual, to help make them feel comfortable.

Framing Statements

- “I’ve begun to ask all my patients about abuse because violence is so common in many people’s lives.”
- “From past experience with other people I work with, I am concerned that some of your behavioral health challenges may be caused by someone hurting you. Is that true?”
- “Violence affects many families. We have partnerships with trained professionals who serve the special needs of domestic violence survivors.”

Screening Questions

- “Are you in a relationship with a person who physically hurts or threatens you?”
- “Did someone cause these injuries? Was it your partner/husband?”
- “Has your partner or ex-partner ever hit you or physically hurt you?”
- “Have you ever felt controlled or isolated by your partner? Do you now?”
- “Do you ever feel afraid of your partner? Do you feel you are in danger?”
- “Do you feel like it is safe for you to go home?”
- “Has your partner ever forced you to have sex when you didn’t want to? Has your partner ever refused to practice safe sex?”
- “Has any of this happened to you in previous relationships?”
- “Has your partner or a former partner ever threatened to harm or kill you?”

Source: National Consensus Guidelines on Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence Victimization in Health Care Settings



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Supportive Statements

- “It wasn’t your fault.”
- “No one deserves to be abused.”
- “You are not alone.”
- “You must be feeling a lot of emotions.”
- “The next step is up to you.”
- “What can I do to help?”

Effective Assessment Strategies When Working Cross-Culturally

It is important to adapt your assessment questions and approach in order to be culturally relevant to individual patients. Listen to patients, pay attention to words that are used in different cultural settings and integrate those into assessment questions. For example: for coastal Inuit groups, “acting funny” describes intimate partner violence (IPV), whereas in some Latino communities, “disrespects you” indicates IPV. Focusing on actions and behaviors as opposed to culturally specific terminology can also help, or some groups may be more willing to discuss abuse if you use general questions. Be aware of verbal and non-verbal cultural cues (eye contact or not, patterns of silence, spacing and active listening during the interview).

SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE

- Use your patient’s language
“Does your boyfriend disrespect you?”
- Be culturally specific
“Abuse is widespread and can happen even in lesbian relationships. Does your partner ever try to hurt you?”
- Focus on behaviors
“Has your partner ever hit, shoved, or threatened to kill you?”
- Begin by being indirect
“If a family member or friend was being hurt or threatened by a partner do you know of resources that could help them?”

