NATIONAL HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Supporting Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and their Children: What pediatricians can do

Practice Guide

June 2023, Revised September 2025

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Non-IPV Specific Sample Script

Many patients often share with me that they are having a difficult time with food or housing, struggling in their relationship, or going through mental health issues, like feeling depressed or sad for example. Because these things are so common, I started giving these cards to everyone.

They have amazing resources on that back that you can reach out to anytime if you need support with any of these things. We also have a social worker here that you can talk to. I like to give 2, in case you know someone who can use this info as well.

Normalizing the Conversation

“So many caregivers of the patients I take care of are experiencing struggles and stress at home and in their relationships, many of which don’t feel safe in their relationship. If this is part of your experience, I want to make sure you have support should you ever need it.”

Normalizing the Conversation

“Having a child go through this can be so hard for everyone in the family. Especially during COVID. The stress can be overwhelming. How are you doing?

Often this kind of stress can affect our relationships. Can I offer you some resources should you—or a friend or family member—ever want to talk to someone about what is going on in your relationship? I tell all families, if you are ever feeling stressed, scared, or confused about your relationship, I am here if you want to talk, but so are the resources on this card which are anonymous and free.”

Normalizing the Conversation

“Because stress & violence at home is so common for so many families I care for, I started talking to all caregivers about this.”

Confidentiality and Telehealth

“Have you had a telehealth visit before? Do you have a private space in your home (or outside) where we can talk?”

“Just a reminder that what we talk about today is confidential, that doesn’t change because we’re not in person. I will not share anything we talk about outside of the care team unless you tell me that your children are being physically hurt by someone.”

Universal Education and Empowerment

“I started giving 2 of these resources to all my patients’ caregivers in case you are ever struggling in a relationship and also so you have information to help others if you know someone who is struggling.”

CUES and 2 Caregivers

“When our kids are going through scary things, it can affect the whole family. We aim to check in with all members of the family to give space to talk about how what’s going on is affecting them personally and how we can support.”

Support

”I am so grateful you shared that with me. Thank you for trusting me with your story. I hear you saying that things are complicated. Would you like me to offer some thoughts on what other parents have found helpful? I’m also ok with just listening.”

Support and Warm Handoffs

"Thank you for sharing your story with me. This sounds really difficult. ***I am here to support you and your child****. We work with closely with a local program that has helped a lot of parents in situations like yours. Would you like me to connect you with them? They can let you know about options and explore what might be helpful for you."*

Case Scenario: Creating a Safer Conversation

You have met with Diane and Craig once to talk about how they are dealing with their child's diagnosis. You note that they are always together, but you want to be able to offer universal education about stress and relationships to Diane and Craig separately.

What strategies might you employ to create the opportunity for those conversations?