



Women's Health
Council of RI

Question

If a patient reports they feel safe to go home, the provider should document this in the patient record and there is no further action required.

Yes

No



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Safety Assessment and Plan: The Basics

- Are there weapons in the home?
- Does the abuser have access to weapons?
- Does the patient have financial and physical resources to escape?
- Is the patient able to access emergency services via 911?
- If the patient does not live with the abuser, does the abuser have a key or alternate access to the home?
- Does the patient feel safe to go home?



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Engaging the Patient in Safety Planning

Validate the patient's experience and show empathy and good will to engage the patient in the process:

- I'm really glad you told us about what's happening at home and I'd like to help you.
- I want you to know that this is not your fault, and you are not alone.
- I can imagine that it must have been very difficult for you to share this with us; I hope you will let us help you.
- Could we talk for a few minutes about your immediate safety? I am worried about you and your children.



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Facilitate Informed Decision Making

- ❑ I'm not trying to frighten you, but you should know that DV often becomes more frequent and severe over time, and that seems to be happening in your case.
- ❑ Abuse can impact your health in many ways, and exposure to violence has very real consequences for children, even if they have not been physically hurt by the abuser.
- ✓ There are emergency resources available to you today if you need a safe place to stay/help obtaining a temporary restraining order/help with putting a safety plan into place.
- ✓ You do not have to file a police report to get help.

National Consensus Guidelines on Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence Victimization in Health Care Settings. Family Violence Prevention Fund, San Francisco. (2004)

Provide Assurance of Continuing Care



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- I know it's not easy to decide to take steps toward ending such an important relationship/asking for help/acknowledging the abuse.
- ✓ Whatever you decide to do, I will be here to help you. Let's talk more about this at your next visit.
- ✓ I'm glad you are considering shelter/a temporary restraining order/talking with someone about the abuse. I'll look forward to talking with you about that next time.
- ✓ I understand that you aren't ready to take any action at this time. Would you feel comfortable taking a few minutes to read through this safety plan/information before you go? That way I can answer any questions you may have before we schedule your next visit.