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Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

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**WITHOUT VIOLENCE**™

*Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund*

# Making Screening for Domestic Violence Simple: The Safety Card Evidenced Based Intervention

# Futures Without Violence is the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence



For questions about how Futures might be able to help your program and for other free technical assistance and tools including:

- Posters
- Safety cards
- Training Curricula

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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As a result of this training, you will better understand:

1. How to use the safety card approach to screen for domestic violence
2. How to use the safety card to provide universal education about the connection between domestic violence and health



WOMEN WHO TALKED TO THEIR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER ABOUT THE ABUSE WERE:

**~4 times more likely**  
to use an intervention

**2.6 times more likely**  
to exit the abusive  
relationship

McCloskey et al, 2006





- Brochure-based, empowerment intervention delivered by public health nurses to reduce domestic violence among pregnant and post-partum women
- Randomized controlled trial in urban and rural settings

(Eddy et al, 2008)



Research  
Supports  
Direct  
Assessment  
for  
Reproductive  
Coercion and  
IPV

# A Community-Based Family Planning Intervention to Reduce Partner Violence

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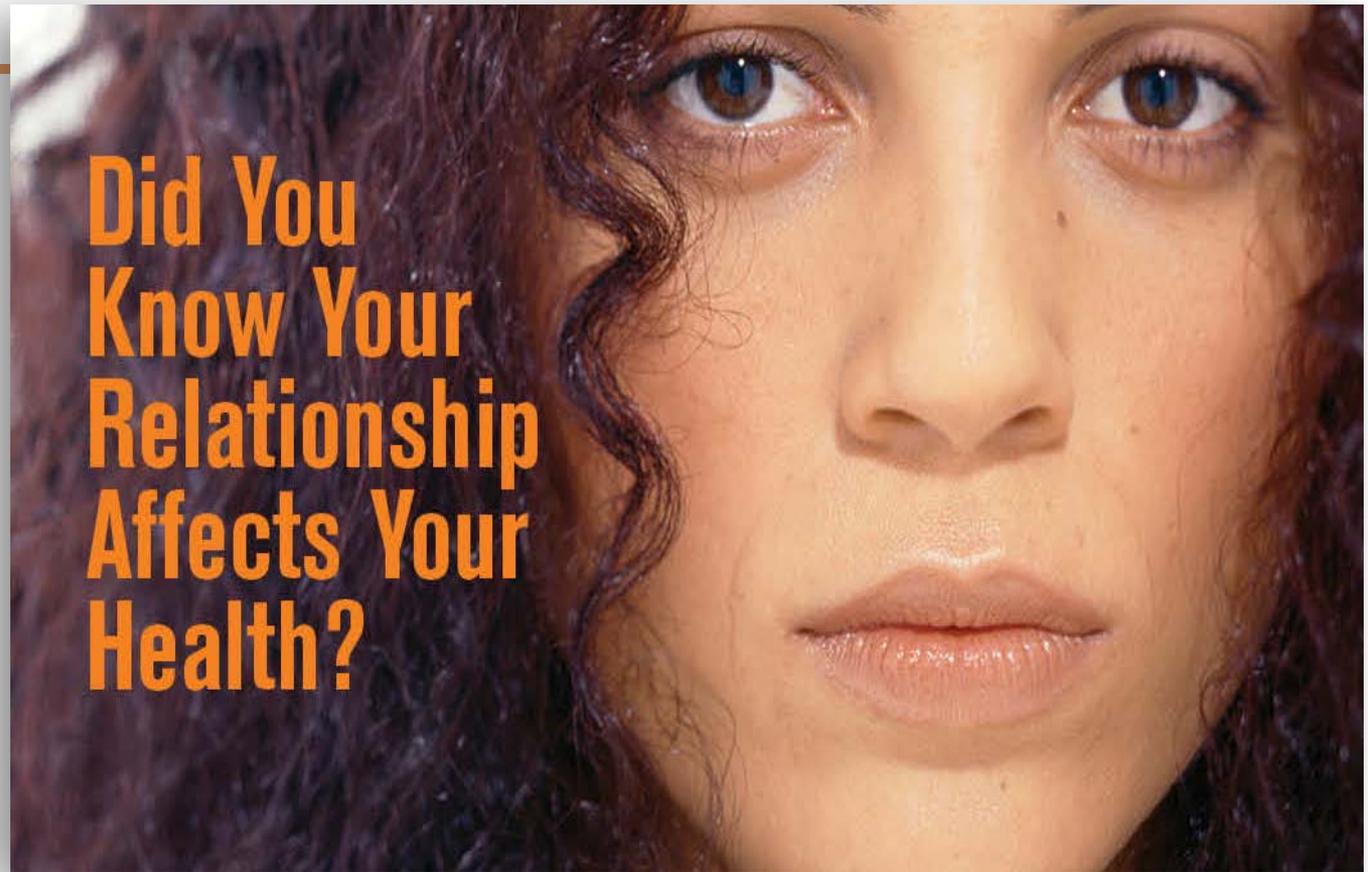
# Intervention Results

Among women in the intervention who experienced recent partner violence:

- **71% reduction** in odds for pregnancy coercion compared to control
- Women receiving the intervention were **60% more likely** to end a relationship because it felt unhealthy or unsafe



How does the safety card support screening and education about IPV?



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# Safety Card Resources



**Relationships, Support and Wellness**



**Hanging out or Hooking up?**



**Safe Homes, Safe Babies:  
Creating Futures Without Violence**



**Healthy Parents, Happy Kids**



**Healthy Moms, Happy Babies:  
Creating Futures without Violence**



**Loving Parents, Loving Kids:  
Creating Futures without Violence**



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# Coming To Alaska

- Collaboration between Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Futures Without Violence, & Alaska Family Violence Prevention Project
- Adapt safety card for Alaskans
- Opportunity for you to provide your ideas and recommendations



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# Universal Education

**You might be the first person who ever told her what she deserves in a relationship.**

## Are you in a HEALTHY relationship?

### Ask yourself:

- ✓ Is my partner willing to communicate openly when there are problems?
- ✓ Does my partner give me space to spend time with other people?
- ✓ Is my partner kind and supportive?

If you answered *YES* to these questions, it is likely that you are in a healthy relationship. Studies show that this kind of relationship leads to better physical and mental health, longer life and better outcomes for your children.



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# Make the Connection

Help her make the connection between her relationship and health outcomes.

### How is my health being affected?

**Ask yourself:**

- ✓ Are you over-eating and gaining weight?
- ✓ Do you often find yourself depressed or anxious?
- ✓ Do you have frequent headaches and/or chronic back or abdominal pain?
- ✓ Have you been diagnosed with hypertension or heart disease?

Any of these health problems may be the result of chronic stress from an abusive relationship. Making these connections can help you take steps towards better health.



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# Why Does the Safety Card Matter?

- Patient-centered care—disclosure isn't necessary for a provider to offer education and help
- Self assessment is important part of screening for IPV
- Card promotes kinetic memory (when you interact with something, it stimulates the brain to remember it)
- Empathy releases hormones (How to help a friend or family member)
- Provider having something to give patient that they know can help them, makes them feel good—promotes their well being



# Helping your patients in this way helps you too...

- Charles Raison, MD and colleagues at Emory University have demonstrated exercising compassion not only strengthens one's compassion but brings countless benefits to oneself and others
  - Compassion reduces negative neuroendocrine, inflammatory and behavioral responses to psychosocial stress.
- In fact, Jonathan Haidt, MD at the University of Virginia and others have shown that, not only are we the recipient of compassion's benefits but others are inspired when they see compassionate actions and in turn become more likely to help others in a positive feedback loop.



# Safety and Confidentiality

1. **Safety first:** Give the card only when the patient is alone in the room with you.
2. **Review** the limits of confidentiality and any reporting requirements (This will be covered in the next module: Trauma-Informed Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality and Documentation)



# Getting Started:

## First things first

Always review the limits of confidentiality-- even if you are not asking DIRECT questions about abuse-- in case there is disclosure and you need to report. (for more

information please refer  
Future's module on Trauma  
Informed



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## How to Introduce the Card:

- "We started giving this card to all our patients so they know how to get help for themselves or so they can help others."
- (Unfold card and show it) "See, it's kind of like a magazine quiz and it talks about respect, sex and texting. On the back are confidential hotline numbers you can call 24/7..."



# Steps to Safety Card Intervention

1. **Universal Education - Normalize activity:** "I've have started giving this card to all our patients"
2. **Assess for IPV - Open the card** and do a quick review: "It talks about healthy and safe relationships...and how relationships affect your health"
3. **Make the Connection - Create a sense of empowerment:** "We give this to everyone so they know how to get help for themselves if they were to need it—and so they can help a friend or family member..."
4. **Hotline Referral**



# Role of the Domestic Violence Advocate

- Provide risk assessment, safety planning and support
- Assist mothers and children who have experienced IPV to think and act in a way to increase personal safety while assessing the risks based on the perpetrators behaviors



Connect clients to additional services like:

- Housing
- Legal advocacy
- Support groups/counseling



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# Responding to Disclosures

1. **Validate patient's experience ("It's not your fault.")**
2. **Review safety card with patient.**
3. **Ask patient if she has immediate safety concerns.**
4. **Refer to a domestic violence advocate or hotline for safety planning and additional support.**



# What should be done if IPV is identified or suspected?

## The initial response by you is important

- Thank patient for sharing and trusting you
- Convey empathy for the patient who has experienced fear, anxiety and shame
- Validate that Intimate Partner Violence is a health issue that you can help with
- And let her know you will support her without judgment



Have you ever called any of these numbers to learn more about what services are available?



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[FuturesWithoutViolence.org](http://FuturesWithoutViolence.org)

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If you are being hurt by your partner, it is NOT your fault. You deserve to be safe and healthy.

Call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** for toll-free, 24/7 support with:

*safety planning, housing options, and local referrals.*

**1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)**  
**TTY 1-800-787-3224**  
**[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)**

**Call 911 if you are in immediate danger.**



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## Practical Application

- Divide into groups of three
- One person is the provider, one person is the client, one person is the observer
- Practice introducing the card (switch roles if you have extra time)
- Briefly discuss as a group—what worked, what would you change?



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**Thank you for your  
dedication to the Women  
and Children of Alaska and  
your commitment to  
improving their safety and  
to creating futures without  
violence.**



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