

Supporting Patients Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence

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Prioritize Patient Confidentiality

- Provide a **safe, private space** for patient conversations
- **Speak with patients privately**, without family members or friends present
- **Use professional interpreters** rather than family members for patients who prefer another language
- Ensure patient **privacy and safety** when **documenting in the medical record**
- Clearly **explain what is being documented** and the reason for it

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Recognize Potential Signs of Abuse

- Repeated use of **OTC products to treat injuries**
- **Frequently prescribed medications** for recurrent UTIs, vaginal infections, or STIs
- **Frequent requests for emergency contraception** which could be a sign of reproductive coercion

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Respond with Resources and Education

- **Provide education and resources to all patients**, which helps to reach patients who might not have disclosed abuse
- **Order and distribute** the **General Health Safety Card** to provide information on healthy relationships and national domestic violence resources
- Find local resources using your **State Domestic Violence Coalition**
- Share the **National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233)**

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Focus on Reducing Patient-Prioritized Risk

This could look like:

- Require **identification** at prescription pick up
- Remove patients from **pharmacy automated calls/texts**
- Educate on **how to hide and store medications safely**
- Discuss how to **discreetly administer medications**

Responding to Disclosure of sexual assault or other abuse in the pharmacy

If a patient discloses sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or abuse, follow these steps to get provide care and get them connected to additional resources.



Step 1: Validate and Believe

- Thank the patient for trusting you and reassure their decision to disclose



Step 2: Prioritize Confidentiality

- Move to a safe and confidential space in the pharmacy to continue the conversation.
- Pharmacists are mandatory reporters of abuse and neglect in most states. Know your state's mandatory reporting laws and communicate them to the patient.

Example: *“This conversation is private. Everything stays between us unless I am legally required to report something, like if you tell me about child abuse.”*



Step 3: Assess the Situation

- Is there an **immediate threat**?
- **Who is involved** in abuse?
- Are there **reporting requirements**?
- Can patients **receive confidential medical treatment without involving law enforcement**?
- Can **minors consent** to testing, treatment, and prevention of STIs/HIV, prevention or treatment of pregnancy, and a sexual assault forensic exam without parental consent or involvement?



Step 4: Offer Resources and Information

- [Find Local Sexual Assault Service Providers](#)
- [Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#), 1-800-656-4673



Step 5: Support Medication Access

- Offer and provide emergency contraception
- Offer and provide [Pharmacist-prescribed HIV PEP and PrEP](#) (if available in your state)
- Stock low cost generics (e.g; levonorgestrel, emtricitabine-tenofovir) and connect patients with Patient Medication Assistance Programs for HIV PEP and PrEP
 - [Gilead](#) - Truvada and Biktarvy
 - [ViiV](#) - Tivicay



Step 6: Promote and Respect Autonomy

- Respect the patient's choice no matter what (e.g.; whether to report the abuse to law enforcement, whether to seek treatment)
- Offer an approach to their care that focuses on minimizing harm