

# RADAR: A Domestic Violence Intervention

R	Routinely Screen Patients
A	Ask Direct Questions
D	Document Your Findings
A	Assess Patient Safety
R	Review Options & Referrals

## R = Routinely Screen Patients

Although many people who are victims of domestic violence will not volunteer any information, they will discuss it if asked simple, direct questions in a non-judgmental way and in a confidential setting. **Interview the patient alone.**

## A = Ask Direct Questions

*"Because violence is so common in many people's lives, I've begun to ask about it routinely."*

*"Are you in a relationship in which you have been physically hurt or threatened?" If not, "Have you ever been?"*

*"Have you ever been hit, kicked or punched by your partner?"*

*"Do you feel safe at home?"*

*"I noticed you have a number of bruises; did someone do this to you?"*

### If the patient answers "yes":

Encourage the patient to talk about it. *"Would you like to talk about what has happened to you?" "How do you feel about it?" "What would you like to do about this?"*

Listen nonjudgmentally. This serves both to begin the healing process for the patient and to give you an idea of what kind of referral the patient may need.

Validate the patient's experience. *"You are not alone." "No one has to live with violence." "You do not deserve to be treated this way." "You are not to blame." "What happened to you is a crime." "Help is available to you."*

### If the patient answers "no," or will not discuss the topic:

Be aware of any clinical signs that may indicate abuse: injury to the head, neck, torso, breasts, abdomen or genitals; bilateral or multiple injuries; delay between onset of injury and seeking treatment; explanation by the patient which is inconsistent with the type of injury; any injury during pregnancy, especially to abdomen or breasts; prior history of trauma; chronic pain;

symptoms for which no etiology is apparent; psychological distress such as depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety and/or sleep disorders; a partner who seems overly protective or who will not leave the person's side.

If any of these clinical signs are present, ask more specific questions. Make sure he or she is alone. *"It looks as though someone may have hurt you. Can you tell me how it happened?" "Sometimes when people feel the way you do, it may be because they are being hurt at home. Is this happening to you?"*

If the patient denies abuse, but you strongly suspect it, document your opinion, and let the patient know there are resources available should he/she choose to pursue such options in the future. **Make a follow-up appointment to see the patient.**

## D = Document Your Findings

Record a description of the abuse as the patient has described it to you. Use statements such as *"the patient states she was ..."* If they give the specific name of the assailant, use it in your record. *"She says her boyfriend John Smith struck her ..."* Record all pertinent physical findings. Use a body map to supplement the written record. Offer to photograph injuries. When serious injury or sexual abuse is detected, preserve all physical evidence. Document an opinion if the injuries were inconsistent with the patient's explanation.

## A = Assess Patient Safety

Before the patient leaves the medical setting, find out if he/she is afraid to go home. *"Has there been an increase in frequency or severity of violence?" "Have there been threats of homicide or suicide?" "Have there been threats to their children?" "Is there a weapon present?"*

## R = Review Options and Referrals

If the patient is in imminent danger, find out if there is someone with whom he/she can stay. *"Do you need immediate access to a shelter?"* Offer the opportunity of a private phone to make a call. If the patient does not need immediate assistance, offer information about hotlines and resources in the community. Remember that it may be dangerous for the patient to have these in his/her possession. Do not insist that he or she take them. **Make a follow-up appointment to see the patient.**



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Domestic Violence Resources	Contact Information
<p><b>National Domestic Violence Hotline</b> For local domestic violence programs near you check the blue pages in your phonebook under the heading of “Abuse/Assault”.</p>	<p>(800) 799-7233 TTY: (800) 787-3224 www.ndvh.org</p>
<p><b>Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence</b> Administrative offices of the statewide network of domestic violence services, information and referral during business hours.</p>	<p>(800) 932-4632 TTY: (800) 553-2508 www.pcadv.org</p>
<p><b>Pennsylvania Department of Health</b> Visit the Department of Health’s website for domestic violence materials in English and Spanish. Click on “Pamphlets and Publications” for item numbers and an order form.</p>	<p>(877) PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258) www.health.state.pa.us</p>
<p><b>Domestic Violence Mental Health Policy Initiative</b></p>	<p>(312) 864-4450 www.dvmhpi.org</p>
<p><b>Family Violence Prevention Fund</b> National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence. Technical assistance and downloadable documents and information are available on the website.</p>	<p>(888) Rx-ABUSE TTY: (800) 595-4889 www.endabuse.org/health</p>
<p><b>Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape</b> Statewide network of sexual violence crisis centers for information, referral and resources.</p>	<p>(888) 772-PCAR www.pcar.org</p>
<p><b>Physicians For A Violence Free Society</b></p>	<p>(415) 621-3582 www.pvs.org</p>

Resources for Continuing Medical Education	Contact Information
<p><b>Minnesota Medical Association</b></p>	<p>(612) 378-1875 www.mnmed.org</p>
<p><b>American Medical Women’s Association</b></p>	<p>(800) 995-AMWA www.AMWA-doc.org www.dvcme.org</p>
<p><b>Massachusetts Medical Society</b></p>	<p>(781) 893-3800 www.Mass.Med.org</p>
<p><b>Pennsylvania Medical Society</b></p>	<p>(800) 228-7823 www.pamedsoc.org</p>
<p><b>Physicians For A Violence Free Society</b></p>	<p>(415) 621-3582 www.pvs.org</p>
<p><b>Medscape</b></p>	<p>(888) 506-6098 www.Medscape.com</p>

**For more information or additional copies of this document please contact:  
Pennsylvania Medical Society, Member Services Department at (877) 272-2425  
Or log onto our Web site at [www.pamedsoc.org](http://www.pamedsoc.org)**