

## A HEALTH CARE APPROACH TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

How one Small Tribe Increased DV  
Awareness through Healthcare and  
Community Collaboration

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## Motivating factors

Screening for domestic violence is recommended  
by :

- ☐ American Medical Association
- ☐ American College of Obstetricians and  
Gynecologists
- ☐ Joint Commission
- ☐ IHS GPRA requirement (55% female patients ages 15-40)

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## The Facts

- ☐ Domestic Violence is the leading cause of  
injury among women of reproductive age, the  
single most common trigger for female suicide  
and up to 60% of women who are murdered  
die as a result of a domestic dispute
- ☐ Each year more than 1 million women seek  
medical assistance for injuries caused by  
battering

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### Health Effects of Domestic Violence

- ☐ Physical injuries
- ☐ Alcohol and drug abuse/health consequences
- ☐ Chronic pain syndromes
- ☐ Medical "non-compliance"
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Anxiety disorders
- ☐ Sleeping disorders
- ☐ PTSD

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### A Public Health Problem

Physical and sexual violence against women is a public health problem that has reached epidemic proportions.

American Medical Association  
Diagnostic and Treatment Guidelines  
on Domestic Violence, 1992

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### Why Screen? Screening Tells a Woman...

- ☐ She is believed
- ☐ She is respected
- ☐ She is not alone
- ☐ The health care worker is concerned about her wellbeing
- ☐ The health care worker is willing to listen
- ☐ Abuse happens to a lot of women
- ☐ The issue is being taken seriously
- ☐ Domestic Violence can effect her health
- ☐ She can get help

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When we ask about domestic violence we have the opportunity to educate the patient on options, safety plans, resources, warning signs , etc. and thus intervene and possibly prevent.

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**Why should we screen ?**

**Asking is Intervention!**

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**What if we don't ask?**

- ❑ Little or no disclosure
- ❑ The problem will continue to be ignored
- ❑ Abused persons remain isolated
- ❑ Opportunities to prevent illness, injury or death will be missed
- ❑ Treatment or advice may be inappropriate

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### Building a Tribal Health Care Response Team for DV/SA

Nurture a relationship with your Health Care staff...

- ☐ Find an ally among the Health Care staff.
- ☐ Invite Health Care staff to go to DV workshops with you. Cover the cost.
- ☐ Provide in house training... include lunch
- ☐ Gain "buy in" of the Health Director, Medical Director, Physicians, Nursing Director etc. by providing them with studies, statistics, etc. that demonstrate the health risks of domestic violence.

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### Suggestions:

Provide an Introductory Training with a nice meal .

- Open the dialogue
  - Demonstrate the need
  - Tell real Stories
  - Engage the group with interactive training
  - Meet people where they are at
- Be patient with those who have strongly held beliefs that are in opposition to what we know about domestic violence.

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### Barriers

- ☐ Providers are not interested.
- ☐ Do not see DV as a priority health issue.
- ☐ Believe that DV/SA is not prevalent in their patient population.
- ☐ Do not understand the dynamics of DV.
- ☐ Could not set aside the time for the training.
- ☐ Don't know how to support patients that disclose abuse.

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**As Advocates do we need to reconsider how we collaborate with others?**

- ☐ Historically mental Health Providers, Child Protection Workers, Medical Providers, and Law Enforcement did not collaborate with advocates and vice a versa.

We took on the role of “protectors’ of battered women and their children.

We were justified in the past because many service providers were not well informed about the dynamics of domestic violence and often victim blamed and held women accountable for being abused.

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**What is gained by collaborating with Health Care?**

- ☐ Increased awareness of DV/SA in the Health care organization.
- ☐ A Health care approach that includes a persons physical, psychological and social wellbeing...thus improved patient care.
- ☐ An opportunity to educate the community about DV/SA resulting in increased community awareness.
- ☐ An opportunity to promote access to community services.

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- ☐ Many that are abused will never call the police or a shelter...
  - But they will go to their Tribal health clinic, Dentist, or Behavioral Health counselor
  - Battered women have been telling us for years that had their doctor asked they would have told them.

**LET’S HELP THEIR PROVIDER ASK!**

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### Safety for those being abused

IHS facilities are going to screen for domestic violence because of GPRA

- ☐ Screening without sufficient training in domestic violence...
- ☐ Screening without resources to offer battered women...

**IS HARMFUL and COMPROMISES SAFETY**

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### What are you willing to do?

- ☐ Take a lead position
  - Chair or co-chair the response team ?
  - Write the policy and procedure?
  - Schedule team meetings?
  - Foster and nurture relationships?
  - Provide or sponsor a training?
  - Be the steam that keeps the team running?
  - Be available and accessible to Healthcare staff for referral, crisis intervention, patient education, etc.?

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- ☐ Ask someone to join you in the effort to end violence against women by establishing a health care DV/SA response team with you.
- ☐ Let others know they play a vital role in this effort.
- ☐ Follow up with a thank you note and reminder of the next meeting.
- ☐ Meet individually with leaders to engage them in this effort.
- ☐ Invite others to attend DV Conferences with you.
- ☐ Promote attendance at DV awareness activities.

### Educate at every opportunity

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☐ 2006 Domestic Violence Activities at Maliseet:

- Purple ribbon Project
- Purple Ribbon and Candlelight Vigil Posters displayed throughout Tribal Buildings an the Non-Native community
- Cookie Project
- Youth talking circle and Pledge banner "I Pledge that I will not use my hands or my words to harm another" / poster project
- Clinic showed DV in waiting room during the month of October
- Clinic staff gave out Vigil fliers to all patients
- Clinic sponsored "Wear Purple to Work day"
- PSA by Tribal Chief played on the local radio throughout October
- Teen Girl Retreat on DV/SA
- Teen Boy Retreat on DV/SA
- Shawl Project
- Newspaper articles and coverage of Candlelight Vigil
- Candlelight Vigil

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### Candlelight Vigil

- Drumming
- Welcome Speech by the Tribal Chief
- Vigil led by Maliseet Spiritual leaders
- Youth pledge Banner and Posters displayed
- Traditional ceremonies
- Video: Battered Hearts
- Call to action
- Candle lighting in Memory
- Candlelight walk through Reserve with drumming

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**Whose work is it to end  
Violence against women?**

**EVERYONES !**

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