

What You Need to Tell Your Client

Helping Your Client to Safety

If you suspect that your client is a victim of domestic violence there are a number of things you can do to help them.

- If you suspect that your client is in immediate danger, **Call 911**. If she is in danger, you and your co-workers may also be in danger.
- If your client has an ongoing problem with violence in the home, advise her about planning for her safety and the safety of her children and loved ones. Refer to the section in this manual “Safety Planning”.
- **Do not** tell your client “you need to just leave”. Leaving an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time and is the time they could be seriously injured or murdered.
- Empower your client to make their own decisions. This is important because they need to start regaining control of their own life.
- Encourage your client and remind them that they are the expert in their relationship, not you. They will know better how dangerous their abuser is and what they are capable of.
- If your client has left the abusive environment and needs help replacing vital documents refer to the section in this manual “How to Obtain Replacement Documents”
- If your client needs shelter, please consult the resource list.
- If your client needs assistance in getting benefits transferred, or restored, please see the resource list.

Safety Planning

Identify A Safe Area in Your House

- Install inside locks on a door
- Plan barricades
- Choose a room with a window
- Have a telephone in that room—get a cordless phone
- Arrange a signal for help with a neighbor
- Teach your children how to call 911
- Remove weapons from home
- If you feel an abusive episode is inevitable; move towards your safe area. Stay away from the kitchen (where the knives are kept) and stay out of rooms with no windows for escape, like the bathroom.

Find A Safe Shelter and Know How You Will Get to It

- Make transportation arrangements with a friend or family member
- Call ahead to notify them of your situation

Document the Abuse

- Keep a journal (make sure it is hidden)
- Get photos taken of damage to yourself/property
- Get medical attention and have them document the abuse
- Show the injuries to a friend
- Make copies of bills for damage to property
- Make copies of hospital/counseling bills

Keep Identification/Important Papers

- Drivers license
- Social security cards (yours and your children's)
- Birth certificates, immunization records
- Immigration Papers
- Rent receipts or mortgage papers
- Social services papers
- Utility receipts
- Prescriptions
- Car title and registration
- Tax records
- Bank statements
- Address book

Have Money and Keys

- ❑ Start hiding some cash for yourself (a good place for females is in your tampon box)
- ❑ Open your own bank account
- ❑ Save pay-stubs
- ❑ Car/house keys and safety deposit box/postal keys

Pack A Suitcase

- ❑ Shoes/socks
- ❑ Underwear
- ❑ Nightwear
- ❑ Change of clothes
- ❑ Toiletries
- ❑ Prescription drugs
- ❑ Kid's clothing and favorite toys
- ❑ Diapers
- ❑ Treasured possessions (pictures, keepsakes)
- ❑ Hide the suitcase in the car, under a bed, at a neighbor's, at church, in the garage or in a public locker

When You Leave

- ❑ Try to leave while your abuser is not home, or ask the police for help. Do not worry about being fair or giving the abuser the benefit of the doubt—**Protect yourself and your children!**
- ❑ Try to take your children with you, but if you cannot, do not assume you will lose custody because of abandonment. Leaving because of abuse is legitimate. Get legal assistance about parental rights as soon as possible. If you feel your children are in danger, contact child protective services or the police immediately!

Important Things to Remember

- ❑ You are not to blame
- ❑ You did not cause the abuse
- ❑ You are not alone
- ❑ Help is available!



Lethality Assessment

Lethality assessment is the attempt to identify the circumstances when a batterer is most dangerous by evaluating the batterer's beliefs and patterns of violence, coercion, and control. The following information was developed by Barbara J. Hart, Esq. in "Assessing Whether Batterer's Will Kill". The assessment looks at a number of predictors. The underlying assumption is the higher the number of predictors, the higher the potential for the batterer to commit a homicide or engage in potentially lethal behaviors.

Predictors of Lethality Include:

- ✓ Threats of suicide or homicide including killing himself, the victim, children or relatives.
- ✓ Fantasies of homicide or suicide in the guise of fantasizing "who, how, when and/or where to kill."
- ✓ Weapons owned by the perpetrator who has threatened to use them or has used them in the past (the use of guns is a strong predictor of homicide).
- ✓ Feelings of "ownership" of the victim.
- ✓ "Centrality" to the victim (idolizing and extreme dependence).
- ✓ Separation from the victim (this is an extremely dangerous time when perpetrators make the decision to kill).
- ✓ Dangerous behavior increases in degree with little regard for legal or social consequences.
- ✓ Hostage-taking
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Repeated calls to the police.

Lethality assessments are more an art than a science and cannot be considered precise by any means. They are not a tool for certain prediction, but rather one for risk assessment and safety planning or intervention. Social service providers should error on the side of caution and inform their clients that any abuser can potentially be lethal.

How to Obtain Replacement Documents

Birth Certificates

To obtain a copy of your birth certificate or the birth certificates of your children, contact the Fresno County Clerk's Office, or the county clerk in the county and state where you were born. You can also obtain your records in person by going to the Fresno County Hall of Records (On "M" Street between Fresno and Tulare in front of the Courthouse).

To help you, the clerk will need the following:

- The full name of the person for whom the records are being obtained
- Father's full name
- Mother's maiden name
- Place of birth
- Date of birth

In Fresno County a certified copy of a birth certificate costs \$16.00. You can pay with cash, check or money order.

If you request a copy by phone, you can use a VISA, Mastercard or Discover card to pay for it. However, the cost increases to \$21.00 to include the credit card processing fee.

Marriage License

To request a copy of a marriage license, you will need to provide as much information as possible including:

- Full names of the bride and groom
- Residence address at the time of the marriage
- Ages at the time of marriage
- Date of the marriage (month, day and year)
- Relationship to the person whose record is being requested

Divorce Records

If the divorce happened in Fresno County, the Fresno County Superior Court will have a record of it. You will need to go to the fourth floor of the Courthouse (located at 1100 Van Ness Avenue between Fresno and Tulare Streets) and request the decree from the family law clerk.

You will need the following information:

- The case number
- The names of husband and wife
- Present address
- Former address
- Ages at the time of divorce
- Relationship to the person whose record is being requested

Medi-Cal or Managed Care Cards

You can replace your Medi-Cal or Managed Care cards by contacting your provider. In Fresno County there are two providers

Blue Cross of California Medi-Cal Managed Care **1-800-407-4627**
Health Net Medi-Cal Managed Care **1-800-675-6110**

Medi-Cal/Food Stamp Cards

If you do not participate in the managed care option, you must contact your caseworker at Fresno County Department of Employment and Temporary Assistance. You can also contact the **Rapid Service Unit Hotline at 453-3787 or 453-3788.**

Social Security Cards

Call **1-800-772-1213** or go to one of the three Social Security offices in Fresno to obtain the form. Hearing impaired individuals may call TTY: **1-800-325-0778.**

5090 N. West
(NE corner of West and Shaw)
487-5061

1052 "C" Street
(Between Fresno & Tulare)
487-5391

5062 E. Clinton
(Across from the Fresno Yosemite Int'l Airport)
487-5193

You will need to provide one form of original identification. Xerox copies will not be accepted. Social Security will accept a valid driver's license, passport, school ID card, marriage and divorce records, clinic and doctor's records, military records, insurance cards and insurance policies.

Medicare Card

To replace a Medicare card, call **1-800-772-1213** or go to the local Social Security Office in person. ID is not required. You will receive the card in the mail within 30 days.

To change the address to which a Social Security/SSI check is mailed call **1-800-773-1213**.

WIC ID Card

You must go to the WIC office in person to replace your card. In Fresno that office is located at 1920 Mariposa Mall, Suite 120 (Located on the Mariposa Mall, south of the Fulton Mall).

You must have identification to obtain a replacement card. You can present one of the following: California Driver's License, Resident/Alien Card (MICA), Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, School Picture ID, California ID card, Medi-Cal Card or Immunization Card.

You can contact WIC by phone at **263-1150** for Fresno area clients and **1-888-638-7177** for rural clients.

Driver's License/California ID card

To replace a Driver's License or California ID card, visit the DMV office in person.

Clovis
533 Pollasky Ave
298-2063

Fresno
655 W. Olive
445-5469

6420 N. Blackstone
435-1995

TTY: 1-800-348-4327

You will be given a form to fill out and sign and are required to pay \$12.00 for a Driver's License and \$6.00 for a California ID (\$3.00 for senior citizens).

When to Contact Child Protective Services in Domestic Violence Cases

Under California law a mandated reporter must report willful child endangerment or the willful infliction of physical pain or mental suffering on a child. In the context of domestic violence, a mandated reporter must consider whether there is a risk of physical or emotional harm to the child. The fact that a child's parent or guardian has been the victim of domestic violence is not in and of itself a sufficient basis for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. Further, a child's exposure to a domestic violence incident in and of itself is not a sufficient basis for reporting. Other factors must exist which lead the mandated reporter to reasonably suspect that the child's physical or emotional health is endangered as the result of domestic violence.

A mandated reporter must report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services in the following domestic violence cases:

A domestic violence incident which caused physical injury to the child or created a serious risk of injury to the child.

Factors to consider in determining whether a domestic violence incident created serious risk of physical injury include:

- **Were objects thrown or broken in the presence of the child?**
- **Did the perpetrator threaten to harm the child?**
- **Did the perpetrator strike a victim who was holding a child?**
- **Did the child physically intervene in the violence?**
- **Did the perpetrator threaten to murder or commit suicide?**
- **Did the perpetrator threaten the victim with a gun, knife or weapon?**
- **Did the perpetrator choke or strangle the victim?**
- **Did the perpetrator hurt the family pet?**

A domestic violence incident which caused serious emotional damage to the child or created a substantial risk of serious damage to the child.

Serious emotional damage in the context of child protection law means the child exhibits severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, aggressive behavior toward self or others as a result of the conduct of a parent. Further, a report should also be made if the victim is incapable of providing for the child's treatment or care for the emotional damage caused by domestic violence or is unable to protect the child from repeated exposure to domestic violence.

Mandating Reporting of Domestic Violence

Only certain occupations are considered mandated to report domestic violence. Any health practitioner employed in a health facility, clinic, physician's office, local or state public health department who, within the scope of their employment provides medical services for a physical condition to a patient of whom they know or reasonably suspects of being a victim of domestic violence must report to the local law enforcement agency.

If you are a health practitioner and are aware of a domestic violence situation, a report by telephone is to be made immediately or as soon as practically possible. Additionally, a written report must be prepared on the standard form and sent to the local law enforcement agency within 2 days.

Domestic Violence and the Workplace

California Labor code provides guaranteed time off from work for victims of domestic violence to go to court or obtain services. These laws are known collectively as the "Victims of Domestic Violence Leave Act," and were enacted to address the impact of domestic violence on the workplace. These laws prohibit employers from discriminating or retaliating against domestic violence victims who take time off from work to seek judicial remedies, such as restraining orders, domestic violence related services such as medical or psychological counseling or escaping to a shelter program.

Steps for Supervisors and Co-Workers to Respond to Domestic Violence in the Workplace

Don'ts

- Don't tell the victim what they should do.
- Don't ask the victim what they did to deserve the abuse.
- Don't ask the victim what's wrong with them.
- Don't ask why they stay.

Do's If the Victim Isn't Talking About The Abuse

- Tell them you are concerned.
- Ask the victim if everything is all right.
- Give the victim an unmarked or marked card with a 24-hour crisis number.

Do's If The Victim Is Talking About The Abuse

- Be a good listener. Just listen.
- Ask the victim what they would like to do for themselves.

Ask the victim if there is anything you can do for them.

Workplace Safety Plan

- If you have a domestic violence restraining order or emergency protective order (EPO), submit a recent photograph of your abuser and a copy of the protection order to your supervisor, the legal department and chief of security.
- Obtain a civil protection order. Make sure that is current and on hand at all times. Include the workplace on the order.
- Provide a picture of the perpetrator to reception areas and/or security.
- Notify your supervisor of the situation.
- Identify an emergency person should your employer be unable to contact you.
- Review the safety of your parking arrangements.
- Have a security person walk you to and from your vehicle.
- Request a change or work site, job assignment or work schedule.
- Request all information about yourself to be kept confidential.
- If possible, have your telephone calls screened.
- Access your Employee Assistance Program.
- Document all incidents that occur with the batterer

Call 911 If In Immediate Danger!