

Sample Blog Post for October Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Instructions: Adapt this blog template below and include information about your health center's domestic violence/sexual assault (DV/SA) efforts and partnerships you've made with local DV/SA programs. Post on your website, or in a newsletter as part of October Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a nationwide effort to help recognize, prevent, and respond to a serious health crisis affecting a tremendous number of women and men across the country. Domestic violence refers to physical, emotional, or verbal abuse between intimate partners. Though this abuse can take many forms and degrees of severity, abusers often use shame, threats, or physical harm to control their partners.

The prevalence of domestic violence in the United States is staggering: Nearly 1 in 4 women report experiencing violence from a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in her life, and 1 in 7 men have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner. [Insert local DV prevalence data here]. Sometimes it is difficult to recognize the effect an abusive relationship can have on your health, but the impact is substantial. The stress of abuse can take a physical toll. Some of the most common effects include over-eating, depression and anxiety, frequent headaches, and hypertension. It can also increase a woman's risk for chronic health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, asthma and depression. Additionally, abuse can limit a woman's ability to effectively manage chronic illnesses such as diabetes.

[Health center] is working with [DV/SA agency] to expand their capacity to support survivors and victims of domestic violence across [name of town, county, or region]. As a result, [health center] is better equipped to talk to patients about domestic violence and connect them with resources for support. The types of support offered by [DV/SA agency] include [use this space to list a few key services/resources offered to adults and children. List a hotline or website, or name of a DV/SA advocate and how to reach them].

[Provide a story of impact about addressing IPV at your health center; or information about what types of DV/SA support is available to patients at the health center. This may include one-on-one counseling, health & wellness groups, times where DV/SA advocates are onsite, or safety planning.]

If you are worried that your health is being affected by your relationship, **you are not alone**. Here are some proven steps you can take to help you cope and improve your health:

- Talk to your health care provider about things you may be doing to help you cope, such as drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, or over-eating, and discuss healthier coping strategies and how to find support for next steps. This [Health Care Guide for Survivors](#) has tips on how to talk to your health care provider. It's important to talk with someone supportive who you trust about what's going on.
- If it is safe, write about the pain you experienced.
- Reduce your stress through [deep breathing](#) and exercise.
- If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, you can also call the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) for toll-free, 24/7 support with safety planning, housing options, and local referrals. Call 1-800-799-SAFE (TTY 1-800-787-3224).

For additional information on the health impact of violence, [contact](#) the [National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence](#).

[Add health center mission statement and local DV/SA program mission statement]

Developed by the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence, a project of Futures Without Violence
View more tools: www.IPVhealthpartners.org



Sample blog post for April, Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Instructions: Adapt this blog template below and include information about your health center's anti-sexual assault efforts and about partnerships you've made with local domestic violence/sexual assault (DV/SA) programs. Post on your website, or in a newsletter as part of April Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness month, a nationally recognized effort to draw attention to the fact that [one in five women and one in fifty-nine men](#) will experience sexual assault in their lifetimes.

We often equate romantic relationships with consent — leading to the common misconception that sexual abuse cannot happen between individuals in dating relationships and marriages. But this is far from the truth. In fact, over the past two decades, there has been a growing body of research drawing the connection between relationship violence and poor reproductive outcomes for women — including unintended pregnancies, HIV and AIDS, and serious injury.

The symptoms and signs of this type of relationship abuse are often hidden from plain sight. To maintain power and control in the relationship, abusers may use reproductive and sexual coercion to interfere with their partner's reproductive health, resulting in hidden and often undetected forms of victimization.

To address this widespread issue, [health center] in [city, state] trained their providers to discuss domestic and sexual violence, promote healthy relationships, and improve health and safety outcomes for all of their clients.

[Brief description of health center services and a story of impact on addressing SA at the health center].

How do you know if you may be experiencing abuse?

Ask yourself:

- Does my partner make me have sex when I don't want to?
- Does my partner mess with my birth control or try to get me pregnant when I don't want to be?
- Does my partner refuse to use condoms when I ask? Am I afraid to ask my partner to use condoms?
- Does my partner tell me whom I can talk to or where I can go?
- Am I afraid my partner would hurt me if I told him I had a sexually transmitted infection and he needed to be treated, too?
- Has my partner made me afraid or physically hurt me?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, you are not alone. It's important to seek help either from a health care provider or an advocate.

This [Health Care Guide for Survivors](#) has tips on how to talk to your health care provider about your concerns. Additionally, well-trained advocates can be reached confidentially at the National Domestic Violence Hotline 24/7 by calling 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) or online—www.thehotline.org or by calling RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) 24/7: 1-800-656-4673 or online—www.rainn.org.

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