

IMPLEMENTING AN DOMESTIC AND ABORIGINAL FAMILY VIOLENCE SCREENING TOOL IN AN ABORTION SETTING

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Introduction: Pregnancy is acknowledged as a time of increased risk for domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence (D&AFV) and unplanned pregnancy can heighten this risk. Asking women specific questions about their safety within a relationship is identified as helpful for women experiencing D&AFV. Screening for domestic violence with pregnant women can not only help women escape physical, psychological, emotional or sexual harassment, but can also prevent repeated abortions (Aston & Bewley 2009; Hall et al. 2014).

The practice of routinely asking questions regarding women's experience of violence is increasingly being promoted and used in health-care settings, particularly services for women. Due to the nature of D&AFV, women often cannot engage with services; however pregnancy is a time where no matter the outcome a woman will at some point engage with a health service. Across South Australia, antenatal clinics in public hospitals are introducing a universal screening tool for D&AFV. The Pregnancy Advisory Centre (PAC), as a specialist abortion service, is in a unique position to screen for D&AFV. The PAC has developed a screening tool aiming to capture those women experiencing D&AFV and with their consent, complete a more thorough risk assessment enabling us to tailor our service response to increase women's safety. At a minimum, a woman who discloses an experience of A&DFV is provided with a specially designed pocket brochure with the information she may need. These brochures are also available in our women only spaces for anonymous collection. Women who screen at high risk of imminent serious harm or death are provided with social work support to complete a state wide risk assessment linking with a multi-agency response alongside immediate safety planning. The implementation of this tool in April 2016 has already shown a significant uptake of support and information with a further quantitative review scheduled for October 2016.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: The Pregnancy Advisory Centre recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.