

Advocating for Victims of Domestic Violence

CONFIDENTIALITY: As a first step confidentiality must be established. Discussing the possibility of victimization must occur in private. A victim of domestic abuse will not typically disclose a history of violence in the presence of her perpetrator or other family members. If she discloses the violence in his presence, it is likely she will suffer retaliation.

ACKNOWLEDGE INJUSTICE: Let her know that the violence perpetrated against her is not her fault. No one deserves to be abused. No one has the right to use violence and intimidation to control another person in an effort to keep them in a relationship. What has happened to her is not her fault.

AUTONOMY: Empowering advocacy is based on the fundamental belief that victims of domestic violence have the right to control their own lives. In the process of victimization,

control has been taken away from them. In your interaction with a victim, you can give her that control back by respecting her decisions and reaffirming that she has the right to live a life free of violence and coercion.

SAFETY PLANNING: What are the victim's options? Does she want to go home, to the home of a friend or family member, or to a local safe house or shelter? What has she done to protect herself in the past? If she's returning home to her partner, can she plan for a quick escape should the violence begin again? Can she call law enforcement officials for protection?

PROMOTE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES: Know the resources in your community. Inform her services available that may be able to provide additional assistance. Is there a program for battered women in your community?

