



# What the *Health Care Community* can do about Family Violence Information Sheet

## *Get Help*

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, phone 911.

If you suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or exposed to family violence, phone your local Child and Family Services Authority, the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-KIDS (5437) or the police.

If you suspect someone is being abused in a care facility, phone the toll-free Protection for Persons in Care Reporting Line at 1-888-357-9339.

## *Get Information*

For information about local family violence resources, phone the 24-hour Family Violence Info Line at 310-1818, toll-free in Alberta, or visit [www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca](http://www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca).

Alberta Children's Services is proud to lead Alberta's Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Initiative.

## *Family Violence is a Health Issue*

Many people affected by family violence seek help from the health care community. Family violence may include physical, psychological, verbal, financial, sexual or spiritual abuse, or harassment or stalking. People seeking help may not mention the abuse, even though it affects them.

### What you can do as a health care provider

#### 1. Recognize

- Learn about the signs that may indicate a child or adult is being abused. Visit [www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca](http://www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca) for links to additional resources.
- If you see signs of violence or abuse, do NOT comment or ask questions with an adult's partner or caregiver present, or with a child's parent or guardian present. Arrange to be alone with the person.

#### 2. Ask the question

- When you are alone with the person, use the following approach to gather information about possible abuse. Be non-judgmental in your approach.
  - a. Make a general statement ("Everyone has arguments.").
  - b. Ask a general question ("What happens when you argue?").
  - c. Ask a follow-up question ("Has anything happened that may have caused your symptoms?").
- If abuse is confirmed, your immediate goals are to ensure the person is safe and to provide support. (Tell them, "It is not your fault. You deserve to be safe. Help is available.")
- The 'family violence screening tool' on the back of this sheet may assist you in checking for family violence, and providing appropriate help and support.

#### 3. Check safety

- Ask if the person is safe right now (or will be after leaving the facility).
- **If there is an immediate threat, call 911.**
- If necessary, arrange for the person to get help with safety planning.
- Tell the person that if they have recently separated or are considering separation, this is an extremely high-risk time and that they should use caution.

#### 4. Refer

- Help connect the person to other help. Phone the 24-hour Family Violence Info Line at 310-1818, toll-free in Alberta, for information on local family violence resources.

#### 5. Document

- Document the person's statements (using quotes), injuries, symptoms, treatments and referrals, and arrange for collection of appropriate evidence.



# Family Violence Screening Tool for Health Care Providers

The following chart can be used by all health care providers to screen clients for family violence and direct them to appropriate resources and assistance.

