

# ASKING & VALIDATING

Asking about domestic violence can be difficult but a woman may be hoping her health care providers will open the door and ask questions which will bring the issue forward. Patients expect to have a trusting relationship with their health care providers.

If you have concerns that your assessment findings may be as the result of domestic violence, you need to approach your patient in a gentle and non-judgmental way.

You may want to acknowledge that during your assessment the findings are inconsistent with what you usually see.

You might than want to ask:

Is there anything else going on for you right now?

Is there anything I can do to help you right now?

## **It is important to validate the patient's reaction.**

- ♦ if a patient discloses domestic violence, acknowledge and accept the information non-judgmentally
- ♦ let the patient know she is not alone by explaining the prevalence of domestic violence
- ♦ let your patient know you recognize the courage it took to disclose the domestic violence
- ♦ offer your assistance by asking if she has supports in her life and by identifying community resources and services
- ♦ most important of all, stress that no one deserves to be abused and that she was not responsible for the abuse
- ♦ if a woman has disclosed domestic violence, at subsequent visits you should ask how she is doing. It confirms for her your commitment as a health care provider.

With survivors of sexual abuse you may find you want to implement the SAVE Strategy.

*(adapted from the Presentation: Oral Care for Adult Survivors of Childhood Violence: Research Based Guidelines - presented by Candace Schachter, Laura MacDonald, Fran Richardson, Canadian Dental Hygienist Association Conference, Halifax, June 11, 2011)*

**Stop** → **Appreciate** → **Validate** → **Explore**

**Stop** treatment

**Appreciate** what is going on for the client

**Validate** the client's reaction

**Explore** ways to work together