

PROVIDER GUIDE: CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE WITNESSED INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

This guide is designed to help health and human service professionals provide support and safety planning for caregivers of children who have witnessed intimate partner violence.

OBSTACLES THE CAREGIVER MAY FACE

- Fear of partner retaliation (e.g. violence, calling child welfare authorities)
- Fear of losing children
- Lack of support and resources, or isolation from friends, family, and community
- Mental or physical health problems
- Effects of trauma, such as “patchy” memory or distrust of people and systems
- Resistance to share for fear of children being taken away (i.e. mandated reporting)
- Immigration status of parents and children



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN INTERACTING WITH THE CAREGIVER

Awareness

Children are likely aware of the abuse even if they do not directly witness it. They may overhear violence and experience its after-effects in many ways.

Child Abuse

Children can also experience physical or emotional abuse. Perpetrators may use children to spy on or weaken the authority of the caregiver.

Trauma and Behavior

Children may experience symptoms of trauma. This can look like nightmares, bedwetting, fighting others, or self-harm. They might exhibit anxiety or depression symptoms (e.g. being on high alert, constant worry, crying, or numbness).

Treatment

Children who witness violence are more likely to experience negative health impacts as adults. Interventions can help children and adults heal and improve long-term health.

The “Oxygen Mask” Rule

Caregivers and providers may focus on the child’s needs, but caregivers need support too. Providers can support caregivers by encouraging them to seek services for themselves.



USEFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK

① What do you feel comfortable talking about?

Let the caregiver know if you are a mandated reporter. A caregiver's IPV experience is not considered child abuse unless the children are being physically harmed. If necessary, you can help make a report with them.

② Have you created a safety plan for your children in case violence breaks out?

Identify a safe person and place for their children to go to (in and outside of the home). What will the children need to carry out this plan (e.g. cell phone)?

③ Who can you ask for support in helping your children feel and stay safe?

Identify caring adults in schools or day care programs who can help maintain a sense of safety in their children.

④ Who can help your children with stable relationships and mentoring?

Identify adults in their families or communities who can model healthy relationships. Find people who can provide stability for their children.

⑤ Have you considered counseling for yourself and children?

Provide resources for domestic violence counseling and any additional services.

RESOURCES

COUNSELING FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Anti-Violence Partnership

(215) 567-6776
www.avpphila.org

For children who witnessed homicides.

Children's Crisis Treatment Center

(215) 496-0707
www.cctckids.org

Center-based programs and individual services for children with complex trauma needs.

Congreso de Latinos Unidos Latina Domestic Violence Program

(267) 825-0524
www.congreso.net

Free counseling for adults who have experienced IPV and children who have witnessed IPV.

Lutheran Settlement House Bilingual Domestic Violence Program

(215) 426-8610 ext. 1282
www.lutheransettlement.org

Free counseling for adults who have experienced IPV and children who have witnessed IPV.

Women In Transition

(215) 751-1111
www.helpwomen.org
718 Arch St. Suite 401N

Free counseling for adults who have experienced IPV.

Resources continued on next page.



RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

CHILD CUSTODY, SUPPORT, PROTECTION FROM ABUSE

Congreso de Latinos Unidos Latina Domestic Violence Program

(215) 763-8870 ext.1353

www.congreso.net

Linkage to legal advice and representation in family law matters involving domestic violence.

Philadelphia Legal Assistance

(215) 981-3838

www.philalegal.org

Free legal advocacy and representation for family law matters, including PFA, child custody, and child support.

Women Against Abuse Legal Center

(215) 686-7082

www.womenagainstabuse.org

Free legal advocacy and representation for relationship violence-related legal matters, including PFA orders, child custody, and child support.

IPV MEDICAL ADVOCACY

Lutheran Settlement House STOP IPV Medical Advocacy Program

lutheransettlement.org

(215) 426-8610 ext 1282

Advocates who can provide patients with services and referrals related to IPV located at several hospital systems including:

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

3401 Civic Center Blvd.

CHOP- Karabots Pediatric Center

4865 Market St.

Einstein Medical Center

5501 Old York Rd.

Jefferson Frankford Hospital

4900 Frankford Ave.

Jefferson Torresdale Hospital

10800 Knights Rd.



FOR FURTHER SUPPORT, CALL THE PHILADELPHIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE: [1-866-723-3014](tel:1-866-723-3014)

Services are available in any language through Language Line interpretation services.