

Interim Guidance for Ohio Pharmacies on Supporting Domestic Violence Victims During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Rationale: The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in more extended stays at home, the closure of public spaces, decreased safe spaces for domestic violence victims, and additional barriers to flee an abusive relationship. Pharmacies, as one of the few readily-accessible, open public spaces, have a unique opportunity to support domestic violence victims by providing information on safety and connecting survivors with domestic violence resources.

Guidelines for pharmacies to help support state and local efforts to provide necessary resources and assistance to Ohioans suffering from domestic abuse:

1. Make contact with community partners who assist with responding to the safety concerns of domestic violence victims. Begin with local Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) [member domestic violence program](#) that serves survivors in your county.
 - a. Share your goals, which include:
 - i. Providing information about safety planning, domestic violence, and other crisis resources to people who might be unsafe at home during the COVID-19 crisis—as pharmacies are one of the few available and readily-accessible public spaces.
 - ii. Connect individuals who share that they are unsafe at home with safety resources, including domestic violence programs and police.
 - b. Learn about the ODVN agency’s services, and any additional supports that might be available during the COVID-19 pandemic, as many domestic violence programs are operating differently during the crisis.
 - c. Ask the agency to review the protocols below and for feedback on them, and adjust for local community resources or local realities.

Domestic violence victims want health providers like pharmacists to be nonjudgmental, listen, offer information and support, and not push for disclosure.

2. Use the **CUES** (Confidentiality, Universal Education and Empowerment, and Support) Evidence Based Intervention adapted for pharmacy staff.
 - a. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** Talk to everyone picking up prescriptions alone, if possible. Share any limitations you have on confidentiality. Consider:
 - i. Telling the patient you won't share anything they share with anyone.
 - ii. Specifically talking about how difficult isolation can be especially if people are having problems at home.
 - b. **UNIVERSAL EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT:** Provide information about domestic violence, and other crisis services and resources in your pharmacy. Consider:
 - i. Putting up posters about domestic violence resources on drive-through/pick-up windows
 - ii. Attaching flyer (see below) to prescriptions
 - iii. Having flyers available for people to pick up in waiting area
 - iv. Having safety cards in bathrooms
 - c. **SUPPORT:** If someone shares they are unsafe at home:
 - i. Thank them for sharing with you.
 - ii. Tell them they don't deserve to be hurt, and people are here to help.
 - iii. Ask how you can help them, and listen to their answer. Do what they ask you to do.
 1. Can you help them get in touch with the [local domestic violence program](#)?
 2. Do they want you to call the police?
 3. Are there any other community partners or resources that could be helpful for their situation?
 - iv. Review safety planning information on flyer.

For more information on CUES and other resources for health care providers, please visit www.ipvhealth.org.

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