

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY

ROLE OF THE PROVIDER

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DEFINITION OF BATTERING (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)

- # Battering is a systematic course of action
- # Battering is a tool of intimidation, control, & subjugation
- # Battering involves coercive control
- # Battering may or may not be established by physical and/or sexual violence

BATTERED WOMEN & HEALTHCARE

- # Battered women average 1 visit to ER per year & non-battered women average 1 in a lifetime
- # Battered women who do not seek any other kind of help will use the medical system
- # Although 59% battered women visit doctors for their injuries, only 10% are identified & referred to appropriate assistance
- # In the South Asian community, the silencing of battered women is exaggerated as physicians & victims may know each other socially

VIOLENCE AGAINST SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN THE U.S.

- # In Boston, 160 highly educated women were surveyed (Raj, A., & Silverman, J. JAMWA, 2000)
 - 35% claimed their current male partner had physically abused them at least once during their time together
 - 32.5% claimed they were abused within the past year
 - 19% claimed their current male partner had sexually abused them at least once during their time together
 - 15% claimed they were abused within the past year

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RELATED FATALITIES & NEAR FATALITIES

- # Between 1990 & April 2005 (*partial data*):
 - Homicide: 86 (53 women, 15 men, 18 children)
 - Murder/suicide: 17 (3 women, 14 men)
 - Attempted murder: 20 (13 women, 2 men, 5 children)
 - Attempted suicide w/DV: 5 (2 women, 3 men)
 - Suspicious disappearances: 3 women
 - Killed by police: 2 men

- # Total: 133

HELP SEEKING BEHAVIOR IN SOUTH ASIAN IMMIGRANTS

- # Fear of involvement with law enforcement
- # Embarrassment about reporting certain types of crimes; e.g., family violence
- # Language barrier
- # Cultural misunderstandings
- # Lack of knowledge of the U.S. legal system
- # View of immigration system as arbitrary & oppressive, especially after 9/11/01

BARRIERS TO DISCLOSURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- # Shame – self, family, & community
- # Guilt – failing marital & family responsibilities
- # Fear – cultural fear of being alone in an unfamiliar world
- # Financial insolvency
- # Lack of survival skills
- # Lack of fluency in English
- # Bias against divorce
- # Fate, kismet, or karma as arbiter of life

SCREENING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- # Routine screening is imperative
 - Appropriate & routine screening for domestic violence provides a basis for developing individual treatment and referral plans that will improve health care outcomes
- # Routine screening for domestic violence is recommended by
 - The American Medical Association

SCREENING – R A D A R

- # Routinely – screen female patients
- # Ask – direct questions
- # Document – your findings
- # Assess – patient safety
- # Review – options & referrals

ENSURING SOUTH ASIAN BATTERED WOMEN'S SAFETY

- # Take time to listen to the woman's story
- # Understand her needs & barriers
- # Her barriers may be unfamiliar to you, but they are NOT bizarre
- # Recognize your own biases & beliefs
- # Provide
 - Options, resources, & support

RESOURCES

National Resources:

- Center for Disease Control – Injury Prevention Program
- Family Violence Prevention Fund
- National Resource Center on Health

New Jersey Resources:

- **Manavi** – offers culturally specific services
 - (T) 732-435-1414; (Email) manavi@att.net
 - Website: www.manavi.org