

Are You a Health Care Provider?

Abusive relationships affect your patients' health. Intimate partner violence (IPV) can lead to physical and mental health problems, and it can exacerbate existing medical conditions and interfere with treatment and compliance. IPV is associated with higher rates of hypertension, diabetes, migraines, chronic pain, insomnia, fatigue, stomach ulcers, substance abuse, depression, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

It is important to become comfortable talking with your patients about IPV.

Here's how you can help improve our public health response to IPV:

- **SCREEN** all patients for partner abuse.

Set the stage: "Because abuse can affect health, we ask all our patients some routine questions."

Ask the question: "Have you ever been in a relationship in which you were threatened, controlled, physically hurt, or made to feel afraid?"

Offer help: "I'm glad you told me. We see many people in similar situations. I know of services that can help."

- **DESCRIBE** HAVEN services when patients disclose abuse.
- **OFFER** immediate referral or give patient HAVEN number to follow up at a safe and convenient time. Remind those not ready or interested at this time that HAVEN services are available at any time.
- **REMEMBER** to respect the patient's decisions and choices.
- **THINK** about safety when prescribing treatment, medication, and other interventions and discuss this with your patient.
- **CALL** HAVEN with any questions.

How HAVEN Can Help Providers:

Referrals

HAVEN services are **free** and **confidential** and do not require insurance or a referral. Call us or direct your patients to the HAVEN numbers listed below. Request the "advocate on call" if calling between 8:30 am and 5 pm Monday through Friday. On-call social workers provide back up at other times (617-726-2241). Police and Security can be reached 24 hours a day at (617) 726-2121. The Partners Employee Assistance Program also offers domestic violence services to employees and their families. They can be reached at (617) 726-6976.

Consultation

HAVEN is available to answer clinical or personal questions about abuse and IPV. When a patient is not ready to seek HAVEN services directly, HAVEN can help providers handle the situation, while ensuring the patient's safety and confidentiality.

HAVEN also consults on the development of hospital policies and clinical practices in compliance with the standards set forth by the Joint Commission.

Training

HAVEN provides comprehensive training for providers, community members, and others central to HAVEN's mission. Call to arrange a training for your practice!

HAVEN

Boston 617-724-0054

Chelsea 617-887-3513

Revere 781-485-6108



Additional Resources

Massachusetts Hotline SAFELINK

1-877-785-2020

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

Project supported by:

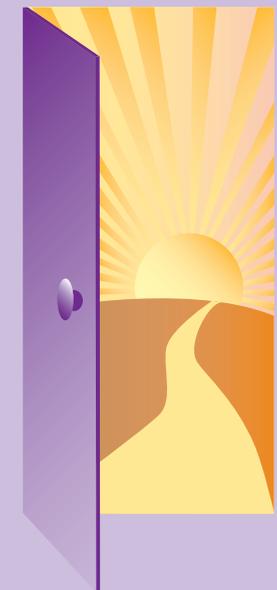
MGH/Partners Health Care Community Benefits Program

"Making a Difference" Grant Program

MOVA through 1984 VOCA grant from OVC, OJP, U.S. Department of Justice



Is Your Relationship Affecting Your Health?



HAVEN

Helping Abuse and Violence End Now

MGH Social Service Department

Chelsea 617-887-3513 • Boston 617-724-0054 • Revere 781-485-6108

HAVEN

IS MY RELATIONSHIP HEALTHY?... OR NOT?

Does my partner ever...

- Put me down and make me feel bad about myself?
- Intimidate me or make me afraid?
- Call me names that I don't like?
- Blame me when things go wrong?
- Tell me what to do, what to wear, who I can and cannot see?
- Make me feel like I can't do anything right?
- Control my access to money and/or keep me from getting or keeping a job?
- Control me or pressure me to do things I don't want to do?
- Push, hit, hurt, or threaten me?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, you may be in an unhealthy or unsafe relationship.

HAVEN believes that everyone has the right to healthy, non-abusive relationships.

Good relationships are good for your health!

Talk to your health care provider. HAVEN is here to help.

"I don't have to take as much medication for heart disease and diabetes as I used to or see doctors as often as I used to. I found what I'd been looking for here."

HOW COULD MY HEALTH BE AFFECTED?

Besides the visible injuries from physical abuse, the ongoing stress of having a controlling or violent partner can affect other areas of your physical and emotional health.

- Do I have frequent headaches, back or abdominal pain?
- Am I depressed and/or anxious?
- Am I over-eating and gaining weight? Under-eating and losing weight?
- Do I drink, smoke, or use drugs to cope?
- Do I ever feel forced into unhealthy or unwanted sexual activities?
- Have I been pressured about whether or when to have children?
- Does my partner make it harder for me to deal with my illness or disability?

People experiencing partner abuse are two times more likely to be in poor health. You can take steps to improve your own health, and the health of your children.

WHAT ABOUT MY CHILDREN?

If you are in an abusive or controlling relationship, the health and well-being of your children can also be affected. Studies show that children growing up in abusive homes experience more learning disabilities, behavior problems, drug and alcohol abuse, and other health problems.

How Can I Help My Kids?

- Let them know the abuse is *not* their fault
- Listen when they want to talk about their feelings and experiences
- Talk to your pediatrician if your child shows behaviors or symptoms that concern you



WHO IS AFFECTED?

Abusive relationships can affect people of every culture, race, class, religion, age, gender, and sexual orientation. People with disabilities, immigrants and refugees often face additional risks.

While both men and women can experience partner abuse, 85 to 95 percent of those who are abused are female.

Partner abuse does not just occur in heterosexual relationships – lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered people also can be affected.

People young and old can experience abuse at any point in their life.

Whether the abuse is happening now or ended years ago, the door is open. *All* are welcome at HAVEN.



HAVEN PROGRAM SERVICES

Since 1997, HAVEN at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) has provided free and confidential support to those affected by unhealthy, abusive relationships. With offices in Boston, Chelsea, and Revere, HAVEN serves MGH patients, families, employees, and visitors. We offer:

Advocacy & Individual Counseling

HAVEN advocates can help you plan for safety, find resources, and help you take better care of your health. Advocates from different cultural backgrounds can help you heal from abuse and develop goals for the future. Counseling is available in many languages with bilingual advocates or through hospital interpreters. Advocacy and counseling are carefully designed to meet your needs. Call us to find out how we can help.

Groups

HAVEN support groups are built on the belief that people can inspire one another to heal, grow, and thrive through mutual support. Groups for women with controlling and abusive partners are offered in English and Spanish at MGH Boston, Chelsea, and Revere.

"I can deal with my health better ... My medicine works because I don't have that stress ... I feel so alive. I thought there was no life left in me. Now I am living ... it was a miracle."