

Asking Questions in Domestic Violence Cases

Here are some examples of ways to gather information in a respectful, non-judgmental way and still find out what we need to know to develop appropriate case plans focused on safety.

<i>Effective Questions/responses</i>	<i>Ineffective Questions/Responses</i>
<p>Around Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Tell me what brings you here today. *Do you fear for your safety? Tell me about that. *Has this (the abuse) happened before? Tell me about that. *_____’s behavior sounds really scary. *I’m very concerned about your safety, have you considered ...? *What do you think needs to happen for you to be safe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *So you’re here because of domestic violence. *What did you do to make him hurt you? *If it happened before, why did you go back to him? *He sounds like a jerk, are you going to leave him for good this time? *I think you need to move out of town. You’re not safe if you stay here. *I think you should... *I would
<p>Around Restraining Orders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have you considered getting a restraining order? Tell me about that. *How do you think the abuser will react if you get a restraining order? *If you had a restraining in the past, how did that work for you? *In case _____ comes into the office, it would be helpful to have a copy of the restraining order in the file. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Why don’t you get a restraining order if he keeps bothering you? *You need to get a restraining order. *If the abuser violates the restraining order police have to arrest. *I got a restraining order before and the police came when my abuser violated it. *A restraining order will protect you.
<p>Around referrals to Service Providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *What kinds of support do you want? *What sources of support do you have? *What holes are there in your support network? *If you tried that before, how did that work for you? *Would you like to hear about services the domestic violence service provider has? *The crisis program has been very helpful for my other clients, have you considered accessing their services? *I am not an expert on domestic violence, I’d like to call the DV program to see if they know about other help you might be able to get. I will not use your name. Do you have any concerns about that? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *You need to go to the local shelter program. *I think you need to go to support group. *There are consequences for not following your plan.

<p>Around decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have you considered ...? * _____ is something that worked for other clients, have you considered that? *You are the best judge for what will work for you. *I'm concerned about how safe (specific option) is, what other options are you considering? *What do you think would happen if...? *If we include this activity in your plan, how will that work for you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *you need to.... *why didn't you...? *I got off welfare, so can you. *I got out of a DV situation, so can you.
<p>The client's story changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *My understanding was... how have things changed? *I received a phone call saying that _____ is back in the household. Can you talk to me about that? *I know this is a difficult time and I need to understand.... Could you give me more information on *No one deserves to be hurt, but I need to understand what happened to help you develop a better plan around your safety. *You're working hard to keep you and your children safe. I want to help you. Can you tell me what's changed since we talked before? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *You're lying to me *You're back with the abuser, so you're not eligible.