



## Initial response: Validation Statements

### Initial response to individuals who disclose abuse

You should affirm that violence is unacceptable behavior and express support, before any other response. Even if an individual does not choose to pursue other interventions or engage with other agencies, your validation of their experience and the offer of support is an act that may in the long-run contribute to the individual being able to change their situation. In addition to offering support, the clinician needs to make an initial assessment of their safety. This may be as simple as checking with the patient if it safe for them (and their children) to return home. A more detailed risk assessment will include questions about escalation of abuse, the content of threats, direct and indirect abuse to the children.

### Possible validation statements if an individual discloses intimate partner violence

- Everybody deserves to feel safe at home.
- You deserve to feel safe at home.
- You don't deserve to be hit or hurt. It is not your fault.
- I am concerned about your safety and well-being.
- You are not alone. I will be with you through this, whatever you decide. Help is available.
- You are not to blame. Abuse is common and happens in all kinds of relationships. It tends to continue.
- Abuse can affect your health and that of your children in many ways. I am interested in assisting you.