

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL ANTENATAL SERVICES
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCREENING
2002

The Sutherland Hospital Antenatal and Menai Outreach Clinic screen women for domestic violence at their booking in visit. This screening consists of midwives asking women the following questions;

1. Within the last 12 months, have you been hit, slapped or hurt by your partner or ex-partner?
2. Are you frightened or your partner or ex-partner?

If the woman answers No to both questions, the midwives still offer her the “domestic violence is wrong” information card.

If the woman answers yes to either of these questions, the midwives then ask;

3. Are you safe to go home when you leave here?
4. Would you like some assistance with this?

Intervention

• **Antenatal Clinic**

If the woman discloses domestic violence, midwives can offer assistance including discussing options, referral to the maternity social worker, police or DoCS, information on domestic violence services and resources and providing support.

If the woman consents, the Antenatal clinic will also contact the Shared Care GP to inform them of the domestic violence and any intervention/referrals undertaken with the woman. The midwife will phone the GP and speak to them personally.

• **Shared Care GP**

If the Shared Care GP becomes aware of domestic violence during a woman’s visit, the GP’s can offer assistance including discussing options, referral to appropriate support services, police or DoCS, information on domestic violence resources and providing support.

If the woman consents, the GP will also contact the Antenatal Clinic to inform them of the domestic violence and any intervention/referrals undertaken with the woman.

The intention of these actions is to enhance continuity of care between the Antenatal Clinic and Shared Care GP’s and ensure the woman receives the most appropriate support and intervention.

Children and Young People at Risk

If domestic violence is suspected or confirmed and there are children present in the GP practice, clinic, wards or it is known there are children at home, health workers need to assess whether to make a report to the Department of Community Services (DoCS).

The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, states that “ domestic violence has a profound effect on children and young people and constitutes a form of child abuse”. Under Ministerial directive, Circular 2001/123 all health workers are mandated to report concerns about safety, welfare and well being of a child where there are reasonable grounds to suspect risk of harm from abuse and neglect.

Pre-Natal report

A health worker who has reasonable grounds to suspect, before the birth of a child, that the child may be at risk of harm, may make a report to the Department of Community Services (DoCS). The intention of pre-natal reporting is to provide an opportunity for early support and assistance to pregnant women where their child, when born, may be at risk of harm. The principle is that of supportive intervention rather than interference with the rights of a pregnant woman.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES AND RESOURCES
Crisis Assistance (24 hours/ 7 days/week)

- Domestic Violence Crisis Line **Ph: 1800 65 64 63**
- Department of Community Services (DoCS) Helpline Ph: 13 36 27

Police/Legal Assistance

- Domestic Violence Liaison officer available at the following police stations;
 - Hurstville Ph: 9375 8599
 - Miranda Ph: 9541 3899
 - Sutherland Ph: 9542 0899
- Southern Sydney Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme Ph: 9589 1200
- Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (Harris Park) Ph: 9637 3741

Counselling, Welfare and Support

- Child, Youth and Family Services;
 - Sylvania Community Health Centre Ph: 9522 1000
 - Engadine Community Health Centre Ph: 9520 4644
 - Menai Community Health Centre Ph: 9543 1111
- Caringbah Women's Health and Information Service Ph: 9525 2058
- Crossroads Community Care Centre (Miranda) Ph: 9525 3790
- Sutherland Shire Family Support Service (Jannali) Ph: 9528 2933