



VALUE ENHANCED NUTRITION ASSESSMENT IN WIC

# VENA webinar

Thursday, January 28, 2016

2:00-3:00 PM ET

Title: *Love Letters from Maryland: Developing Staff Confidence in Participant Focused Counseling Skills*

Presented by: Maryland WIC

Audience: All WIC Agencies



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



# Maryland WIC

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**Better Nutrition** Brighter Future

## Love Letters From Maryland WIC:

Developing Staff Confidence in  
Participant Focused Counseling Skills

Colleen Pierre & Carol Bass





# Overview

- VENA implementation problem
- Staff training
- New employee training
- Ongoing staff development
- Difficult topics sample lesson

# Location of WIC Clinics

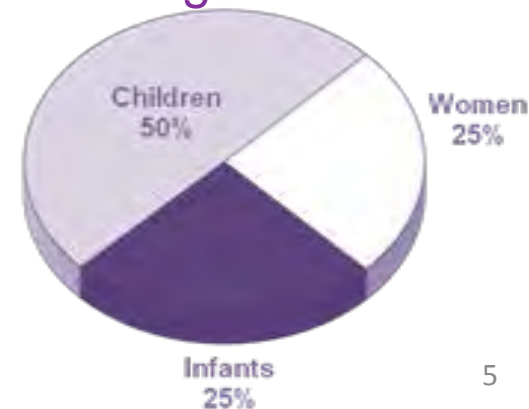
## Maryland WIC Clinics by County





# How many people does Maryland WIC serve?

- Approximately 143,000 Marylanders receive WIC benefits each month
  - In 1996, Maryland WIC served an average of 87,961 participants each month.
  - By 2010, the average participation grew to 148,670
  - Participation had risen steadily from the 1990's with a nationwide slowdown starting in 2010 and continuing into the present.



# Electronic Health Record: WOW

Pregnancy Information	Medical Information	Wt/Ht/Bloodwork																								
<p>1. Do you have any health problems or recent illnesses that concern your doctor?: <input checked="" type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Some</p> <p>2. What medicine do you take regularly?: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Takes <input type="text"/></p> <p>3. What vitamins do you take regularly?:</p> <table border="0"><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal vitamin w/Iodine</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prenatal vitamin</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Iron pill</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> None</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Multivitamin</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Folic acid pill</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Herbal supplement</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/></td></tr></table> <p>4. What dental problems are you having?: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Untreated caries <input type="checkbox"/> Missing or extracted teeth</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gum disease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/></p> <p>• Have a dental provider?: <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p>5. Do you have any food allergies diagnosed by a health care provider?:</p> <table border="0"><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Milk</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Soy</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Eggs</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Nuts</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Fish</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Wheat</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Corn</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td><td><input type="text"/></td></tr></table> <p>6. Do you eat or want to eat things that are not food?: <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="text"/></p> <p>7. Do you smoke any kind of tobacco products?: <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes Num/day: <input type="text"/></p> <p>8. Do you use recreational [street] drugs?: <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p>9. During the past month, have you often been bothered by:</p> <table border="0"><tr><td>-feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?*</td><td><input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes</td></tr><tr><td>-little interest or pleasure in doing things?*</td><td><input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes</td></tr></table> <p>10. What concerns do you have about the safety of you or your children?: <input type="checkbox"/> Some concerns <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p>Physician Name <input type="text"/> Phone <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> No Changes</p>			<input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal vitamin w/Iodine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prenatal vitamin	<input type="checkbox"/> Iron pill	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Multivitamin	<input type="checkbox"/> Folic acid pill	<input type="checkbox"/> Herbal supplement	<input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Soy	<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs	<input type="checkbox"/> Nuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Fish	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Corn	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="text"/>	-feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?*	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes	-little interest or pleasure in doing things?*	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes
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# The VENA Problem

- Staff resistance to VENA
- Lack of movement toward acceptance
- Inadequate knowledge and skills
- Computer screens
- Education: TMI not TLC

# The Goal

- Develop skills and instill confidence in staff to get:
  - More buy in for VENA approach
  - Better customer service
  - Participant investment in health
  - Increased job satisfaction for staff







# The Concept

- Mining for Diamonds
- Practice makes perfect
- Quarterly staff training
- Case studies and scenarios
- Staff appreciation



# The Concept

## Training, not Teaching

- Create a workgroup
- Survey staff for training needs
- Create lesson plans
  - Updated information
  - Staff activity



# The Concept

- Have a statewide workshop
  - Attendees: Representative/trainer from each local agency
  - Presenters: Creator of each Lesson Plan
  - Attendees: complete all activities at conference
- Complete quarterly staff training/Submit to State Office
- Add topics to Annual Nutrition Services Plan



# 1. Create Workgroup

- Workgroup:
  - State Staff:
    - Training Center staff
    - State Office nutritionist
  - Local Agency Staff
    - 6 Local agency coordinators
    - 2 Local agency clinic supervisors



## 2. Survey WIC Staff

Tell the VENA Training Team what you need...

Please complete the following statements related to VENA (Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment). **Check all that apply:**

1. It may seem difficult to complete a nutrition assessment with all of the information that has to be collected. At times, steps may be forgotten or even skipped. Please indicate if you would like some refresher training about how to do any of the following:

- Weight, height, and growth pattern
- Blood hemoglobin
- Dietary practices
- Medical history
- Family and environmental issues
- Documentation- notes, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, care plan

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

# Survey WIC Staff

2. Having the time to make a warm connection with clients is often challenging. Would you like some help with:

- Building rapport
- Developing empathy
- Building client confidence
- Continuity of care

Comment:

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# Survey WIC Staff

3. Based on the Mining for Diamonds evaluations, many who attended liked building on their listening and probing skills. Have you thought you might like a little more help with some of these skills:

- Active listening
- Asking open ended questions
- Affirming
- Probing when completing WOW screens
- Redirecting

Comment:

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# Survey WIC Staff

4. When a client has a lot of health and nutrition issues, it can be really tricky trying to figure out where to focus your attention. Please indicate if you would like more practice in these areas:

- Identifying key concepts to review with client from the Health and Nutrition Summary (no more than 3)
- Identifying stage of readiness to change

Comment:

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# Survey WIC Staff

5. Staying client-centered while completing a WIC certification is a skill that can grow and improve over time with enough practice. Have you thought you might need more training in these areas:

- Letting clients come up with their own solutions to nutrition issues
- Asking for permission when promoting behavior change
- Setting client centered goals

Comment:

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# Survey WIC Staff

6. Many WIC participants are from various ethnic backgrounds.

Please indicate which multicultural topics you would be interested in learning more about:

- Cultural eating patterns
- Communication styles

Comment:

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### 3. Decide Training Topics

- What is Culture?
- Conversation Starters
- Open Ended Questions
- Practice with Probes
- The Gift of Affirmation
- Readiness to Change
- Ask Permission, Summarize, Express Confidence
- Three Step Counseling
- Self Review Tool





# Binder Contents

- Lesson plans
- Activity sheets
- Self review tool
- Local agency evaluation form
- Local agency attendance form
- CD of all handouts



# Staff Appreciation

## Love Letters to WIC

- Collected positive participant annual reviews.
- Created slide show on a loop cycle to play before, after, during breaks.



**Love Letters to WIC Staff**




**“I love the WIC program.  
I know the information  
I receive is up to date and very  
beneficial  
for all my family.”**



**It was awesome  
and  
I learned new  
things!**





**“Very Great  
Wonderful  
people.”**

The background of the image is filled with several pink, heart-shaped candies. These candies have a slightly textured, sugary surface and are scattered across the frame. Some are in sharp focus, while others are blurred, creating a sense of depth. The overall color palette is soft and romantic, dominated by the pink of the candies and the white background.

**“The encouragement with  
recipes and good advice  
is great for our  
family.”**

**“I look forward to visiting the  
WIC office for all my questions  
are answered all the time.”**





# Question of the Day

**When is Train the Trainer 2?**





# Train the Trainer 2

- Repeat: Survey, assign, develop, train, train local staff, submit evaluations, report in Nutrition Services Plan.
- Topics:
  - Diversity (nonverbal communications)
  - Obesity Prevention
  - Parenting Skills (Bright Futures)
  - Difficult Topics (Pregnancy Loss)
  - Picky Eaters/Healthy foods for Weight Gain
  - Reconciling WIC/HCP advice
  - Distracted Participants





# Train the Trainer 3

- Repeat: Survey, assign, develop, train, train local staff, submit evaluations, report in Nutrition Services Plan.
- Topics:
  - Freeze: Counseling Along the Way
  - Goal Setting
  - WIC Speak
  - Writing the Care Plan Note
  - Staff Affirmation



# Train the Trainer 4

- Repeat: Survey, assign, develop, train, train local staff, submit evaluations, report in Nutrition Services Plan.
- Topics:
  - Difficult Topics: Postpartum Depression
  - Talking to Parents About Overweight and Obesity
  - Counseling on Physical Activity
  - Difficult Topics: Domestic Violence
  - Cultural Diversity: Meals Around the World



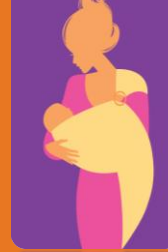
# Ongoing Initiatives

Incorporated Train the Trainer 1 topics into:

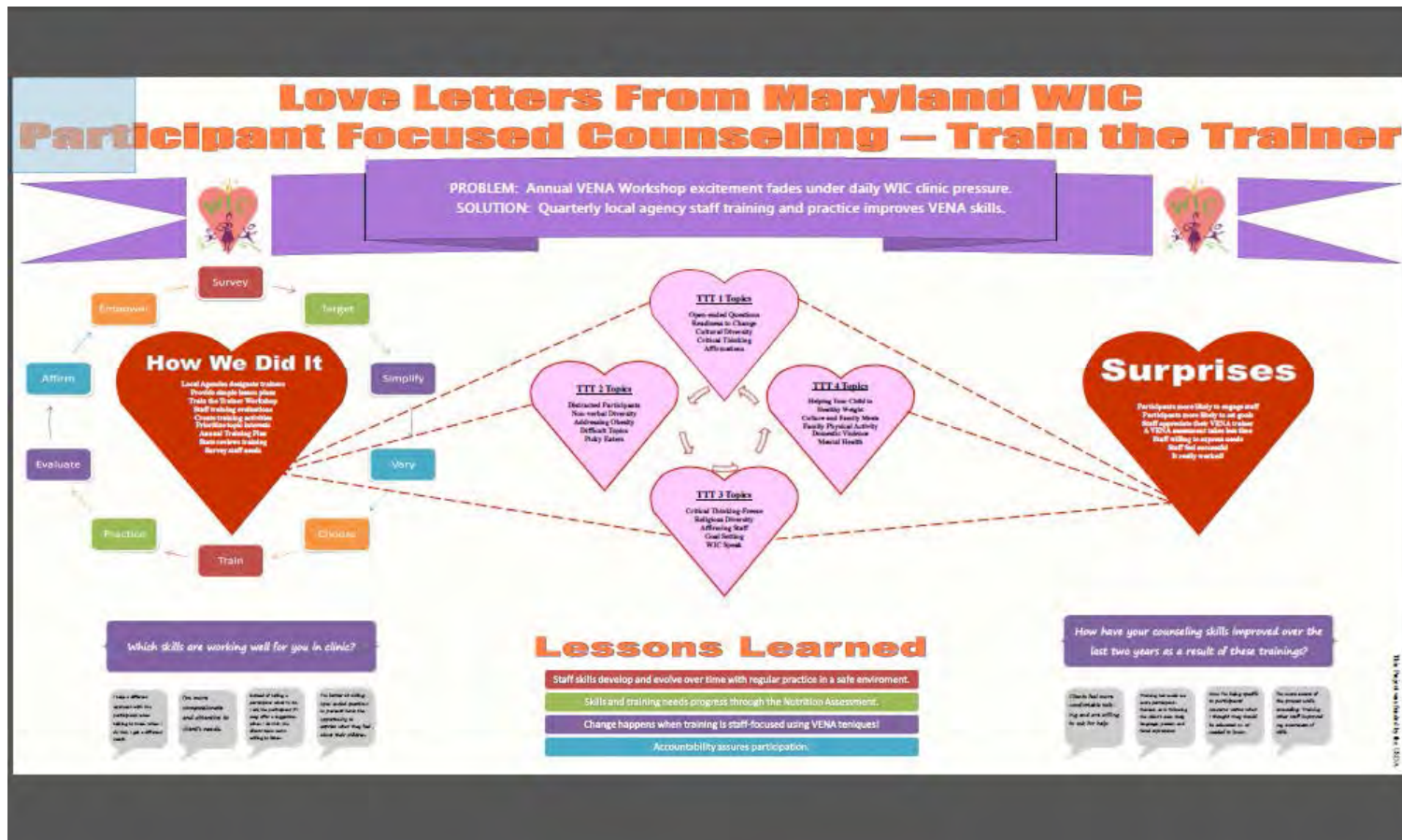
- New employee training curriculum
- Statewide regional trainings to reinforce with more long term staff
- Change WOW questions to make them open ended where appropriate



# Sharing



## Shared poster at NWA 2012 Denver



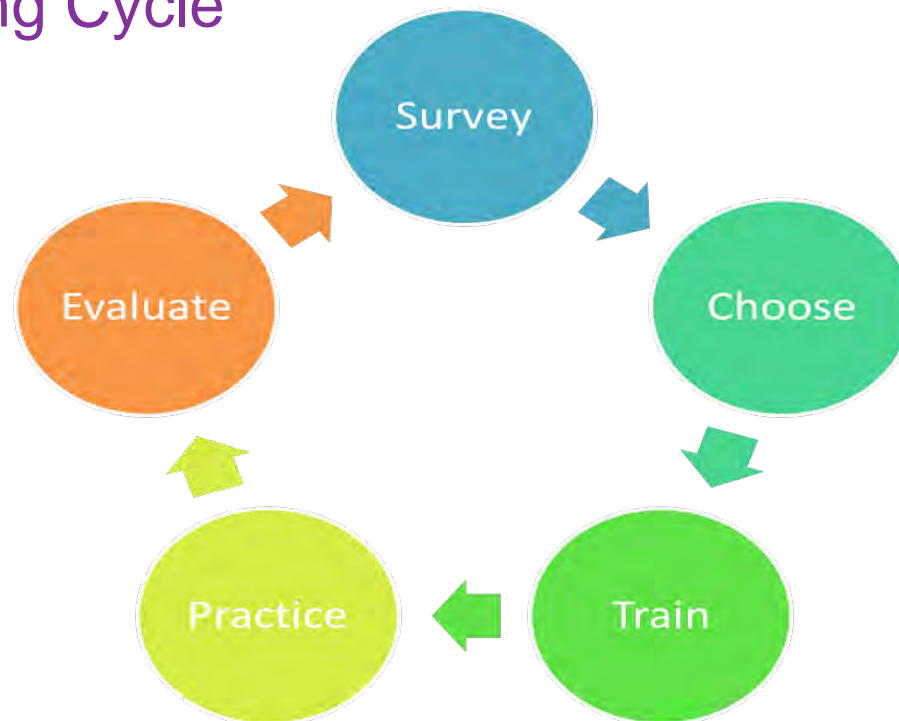


# Sharing

Food and Nutrition Service- PCS Webinar June 12, 2012



## The Training Cycle





# Sharing

- Uploaded all training materials to WICWORKS
- [https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/wicworks//Sharing\\_Center/gallery/statedev.html](https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/wicworks//Sharing_Center/gallery/statedev.html)
- By Topic> Staff Development & Training> Train the Trainer Programs (Maryland)

## Train-The-Trainer Programs

- This series of train-the-trainer programs was developed by Maryland WIC. The focus of the training is providing participant-centered services and it is the basis for the certifier training for Maryland WIC. Includes lesson plans, handouts, activities and case studies.
- 2012 Training Materials\*
- 2011 Training Materials
- 2010 Training Materials
- 2009 Training Materials



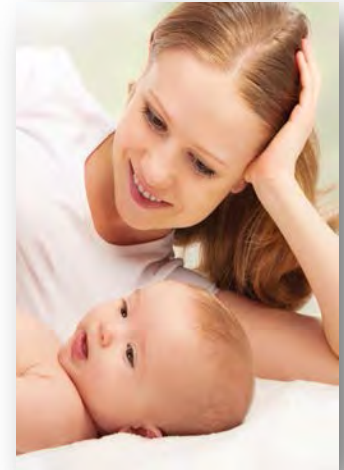
# Why Difficult Topics?

- Staff discomfort with interview process/ counseling strategies
- Decided on three main topics

Pregnancy Loss

Postpartum Depression

Domestic Violence (IPV)

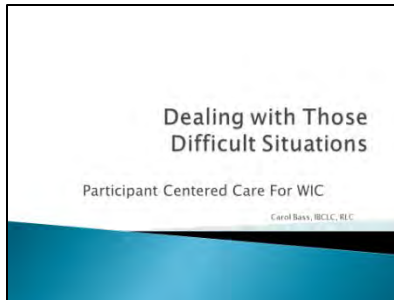






# Training structure

- Included activities, overviews, counseling guidance



## Activity 1: Helpful or Hurtful?

Has this ever happened to you? You call a WIC participant to remind them about a missed appointment and are told that she has lost the pregnancy. Perhaps you are seeing a participant in clinic who has just suffered a loss or received a devastating diagnosis related to her/his child. What do you say, how should you react?

(Place a Y next to the phrase or action if you feel would be helpful. Place an N next to the phrase or action if you feel it would not be helpful.)

- \_\_\_Ask them how they are feeling.
- \_\_\_Direct her to call you if they need anything in the future.
- \_\_\_Use open-ended questions. How, what, could.
- \_\_\_Try to be cheerful. Remind them of other good things in their life.
- \_\_\_Remind her that a lot of people have gone through similar issues. She will be ok.
- \_\_\_Share "that sometimes things are beyond our control, and were just meant to be".
- \_\_\_Discuss recommended time frames for when they could have another baby if they wish.
- \_\_\_Ask them if they know why this happened.
- \_\_\_Focus on why they are here today, how WIC will help.
- \_\_\_Tell them that you are sorry for their loss.
- \_\_\_Let them know that you understand how they feel.
- \_\_\_Give advice on how they might be able to cope.
- \_\_\_Share your personal experience with loss or difficult experiences with them.
- \_\_\_Discuss ways to prevent pregnancy problems in the future.
- \_\_\_Use the baby's/child's name.
- \_\_\_Encourage them to let some of this go, and move forward with their lives. There is a lot of good out there still to be experienced.
- \_\_\_Offer resources.
- \_\_\_With miscarriages, assure them that there is often something wrong with the baby and that sometimes this is for the best. No need to think that a future pregnancy will have the same outcome.
- \_\_\_Let them decide how much to share about the situation.

## Activity 1: Helpful or Hurtful?

Talking to a Mom who may have Postpartum Depression can be a scary and overwhelming thing. You may worry about saying or doing the wrong thing.

(Place a Y next to the phrase or action if you feel would be helpful. Place an N next to the phrase or action if you feel it would not be helpful.)

- \_\_\_Ask her how she is feeling.
- \_\_\_If she looks good (hair, make-up, dressed nice) it will usually mean she doesn't have PPD.
- \_\_\_Encourage her to trust her instincts.
- \_\_\_Tell her it is normal to feel this way after having a baby.
- \_\_\_Share information on how she can better take care of the baby.
- \_\_\_Tell her this may just go away on its own.
- \_\_\_Tell her to try and think positively.
- \_\_\_Focus on why they are here today, how WIC will help.
- \_\_\_Encourage her to get out for some time away from the baby.
- \_\_\_Tell her she is a good Mom and is doing a great job.
- \_\_\_Share your personal experience of having a baby and how challenging it can be in the beginning.
- \_\_\_Tell her if she gets exercise that will help get rid of the depression.
- \_\_\_Tell her that there are women who get PPD, it is a medical condition and she needs to talk to her physician.
- \_\_\_Tell her she will be back to herself once she gets some sleep.
- \_\_\_Offer resources.
- \_\_\_Involve support people in the conversation.
- \_\_\_Don't encourage her to join a "Mommies" group.
- \_\_\_Encourage her that this is the happiest time of her life and to enjoy her baby.
- \_\_\_Contact her physician and set-up an appointment.
- \_\_\_Encourage her to continue breastfeeding if she wants to stop.

What do all of these people have in common?

Brooke Shields



Gwyneth Paltrow



## Postpartum Depression

Jessica Rosenberger RD,LD,IBCLC  
Harford/Cecil County WIC Program



# Ready . Set . Go

Create a great learning environment

- Involve trainees emotionally
- We used video of “Luka” by Suzanne Vega to introduce topic



# Set the Stage



# But What If She Says Yes?

Why Screening for Domestic Violence  
is Important in WIC

Carol Bass, IBCLC, RLC



Do you have any concerns about the safety of you or your children?



**Why should we ask?**

**Why is it important?**

**What should I do if she says yes?**

**Why should we ask?**

## Maryland WIC's Mission Statement

To assist eligible women, infants and children to achieve improved nutrition and health status by providing nutrition education, selected supplemental foods, and health referrals in a caring, supportive environment.



# Domestic Violence/ Intimate Partner Violence is an important Public Health Issue

Estimates vary, but statistics indicate:

- \* Up to one in three families may be affected
- \* One in every four women will experience DV/IPV in her life
- \* 20-24 year old women are at greatest risk to experience nonfatal DV/IPV (Women of childbearing age)

# Domestic Violence/ Intimate Partner Violence is an important Public Health Issue

85% of Victims are Women

Children carry the burden of witnessing DV/IPV  
throughout their lives

Domestic Violence is a chronically underreported  
crime. Traditionally families and society has  
been hands off


“It’s a private family matter”



Has financial implications for us all...

CDC estimates that costs in 1995, when adjusted to 2003 dollars, exceeded \$8.3 billion in both direct costs for medical and mental health care and in the indirect costs of lost productivity. This estimate does not include costs associated with the criminal justice system.

Source: CDC "Intimate Partner Violence: Consequences"




## Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence possibly affects:

our families and the families we serve  
our schools  
our workplaces  
our neighbors  
our co-workers  
and the communities we live in.

Even our language/slang “Rule of Thumb”

“English Common Law allowed a husband to beat his wife as long as the stick diameter used was not wider than the diameter of his thumb”



Although universal screening is recommended in health care settings by most Professional Medical Associations, fewer than fifteen percent of women in a recent study by AAFP reported being asked about violence or physical abuse.

Source: American Association of Family Practitioners

The first step for many in  
breaking the family violence  
cycle is to tell someone

WIC offers a safe  
environment in which to ask

You may be the only one who does!

**Why Is It Important?**



Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion that adults and/or adolescents use against their intimate partners to gain or maintain power and control. It involves learned behavior that is intentionally chosen by an abuser. ...Domestic violence knows no boundaries and affects people from all ages, races, socioeconomic levels, religions, cultures and educational levels.

Source: Washington State's "Domestic Violence and Pregnancy: Guidelines for Screening and Referral"



# It's all about Control

Physical  
Emotional  
Economic  
Behavior  
Psychological

Intimate Partner Violence is not just a problem of poverty or low income groups, or certain ethnic groups or religious traditions, as we would often like to believe.


It is not a rural or urban problem.

It is a universal societal problem which presents across all segments of our society.

Domestic Violence is related to one third of female homicides in the United States

Nationally, six percent of women report abuse during pregnancy,

7.2% of responders in Maryland between 2004-08 reported physical abuse either during pregnancy or the year prior to pregnancy. (PRAMS)



Current or past partner abuse is related to many poor pregnancy outcomes and chronic health problems in women:

PTSD

Substance Abuse

Chronic Health Problems

Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress

Unintended Pregnancies/ Coerced pregnancies

Miscarriage

STDS

Poor adherence to medical recommendations

Self neglect, malnutrition

Physical injury

Preterm labor/ low birth weight

Gynecological disorders



Children who experience domestic violence situations in their homes are at risk :

Physically

Developmentally

Emotionally



**What Should I Do  
If She Says Yes?**



Use Participant Centered Counseling skills when asking the question

- \*Clarify if needed. Just say that DV/IPV is an issue for many families we serve, and that we ask everyone
- \*Ask everyone (Universal Screening)
- \*Restate her response if necessary



# Use Participant Centered Counseling skills when asking the question

- \* Use probing when indicated
- \* Open Body Language
- \* Eye Contact as appropriate
- \* Language barriers

And....

Be aware of room dynamics.....

Keep in mind; “If it is hard for you to ask,  
it is even harder for her to answer.”



Assess her immediate safety

*Use affirmations*

*Thank her* for trusting you with  
such personal information



Don't give advice or tell her what to do

Remember, our role is to screen and refer,  
not to solve a problem of this magnitude!

Offer to make the call.....

## So...What can I Say? Activity

"I'm afraid for your safety"

"I'm afraid for the safety of your children."

"It will only get worse"

"I'm here for you"

"You don't deserve to be abused"

"You deserve better than this"

Source: National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence

From a Study by Sarah M. Buel, JD and Quincy, MA, Court

Know what is available in your area

Refer for services

Updated WOW referrals

Printed Materials

Have materials available in waiting areas  
or participant packets

Document

# Know Your Resources/ Find Out More

## *MD Department of Human Resources*

<http://dhr.maryland.gov/victim/pdf/violence.pdf>

Resource list by County for Maryland

US Dept of Health and Human Services Office of Women's Health <http://www.womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women/>

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence [www.mnadv.org/](http://www.mnadv.org/)  
Maryland resources and information

US National Library of Medicine/National Institutes of Health  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/languages/domesticviolence.html>  
Multiple language resources



You can make a difference!





*Thanks for all you do!*



*Questions?*

# Supplemental Materials

- 50 Reasons Women Don't Leave Abusive Partners
- Myths and Facts About Domestic Violence
- Domestic Violence Affirmations Worksheet
- Sometimes We Wonder Worksheet

# Empower

**Give them resources**

**Involve local providers in the training**

**Local referral locations**

**Sharing opportunities**



# Other Difficult Topics

- Use a similar approach
- Certifier favorite: What Not To Say
- Repeat as needed

# Difficult Topics: Postpartum Depression

## Activity 1: Helpful or Hurtful?

Talking to a Mom who may have Postpartum Depression can be a scary and overwhelming thing. You may worry about saying or doing the wrong thing.

(Place a Y next to the phrase or action if you feel would be helpful. Place an N next to the phrase or action if you feel it would not be helpful.)

\_\_\_ Ask her how she is feeling.

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\_\_\_ Tell her it is normal to feel this way after having a baby.

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\_\_\_ Tell her this may just go away on it's own.

\_\_\_ Tell her to try and think positively.

\_\_\_ Focus on why they are here today, how WIC will help.

\_\_\_ Encourage her to get out for some time away from the baby.

# Difficult Topics: Pregnancy Loss

## Activity 1: Helpful or Hurtful?

Has this ever happened to you? You call a WIC participant to remind them about a missed appointment and are told that she has lost the pregnancy. Perhaps you are seeing a participant in clinic who has just suffered a loss or received a devastating diagnosis related to her/his child. What do you say, how should you react?

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- \_\_\_ Ask them how they are feeling.
- \_\_\_ Direct her to call you if they need anything in the future.
- \_\_\_ Use open-ended questions. How, what, could.
- \_\_\_ Try to be cheerful. Remind them of other good things in their life.
- \_\_\_ Remind her that a lot of people have gone through similar issues. She will be ok.
- \_\_\_ Share “that sometimes things are beyond our control, and were just meant to be”.

# Into the Future

## Current activity:

- Choose topics most relevant to staff
- Revisit old topics
- Look for outside training
- Activities: How would you discuss this with mom?
- Same standards, evaluations necessary
- Report in Annual Nutrition Services Plan

# For more information...

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**Carol Bass, IBCLC**

**[Carol.Bass@maryland.gov](mailto:Carol.Bass@maryland.gov)**

**301-334-7711**



# Questions?





Thank you for your participation.

Thank you for your hard work.

Stay tuned for the next VENA webinar in the  
Spring of 2016!



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture