

# Identify, respond and refer patients experiencing domestic abuse in general practice

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## Introduction

- In the UK domestic abuse is known to affect 1 in 6 men and 1 in 4 women in their lifetime and currently claims the lives of two people each week.
- Domestic abuse rarely involves a “one off” incident. It is usually a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour over time, often escalating to incidents of physical, emotional or sexual abuse.
- Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of gender, class, age, race, religion, disability, lifestyle or sexual orientation.

## Aims

- To identify, support and refer pregnant/post-natal women experiencing domestic abuse.
- Develop a protocol and/or incorporate a screening tool in the template for ease of early identification of domestic abuse cases.
- Identify areas of support including local domestic abuse support services and educate the primary care team

## Methods

- Use semi-structured interviews of GPs, nurses, midwives, health care visitors across GP practices in Ealing.
- Explore Health visitors/midwives/hospital community about their thoughts of DA and how they ask this in pregnant ladies/postnatal ladies.
- Antenatal team in local hospital/ interview consultant obstetrics & gynaecology
- Local pharmacist ? / social prescriber? can they support such women experiencing DA?
- The aim is to understand what is practiced locally and gold standard (antenatal clinics in hospital)

## Results

Leaflet and posters created (that can be sent electronically, uploaded on the surgery website and printed to give to patients etc.) with information about health promotion, services, increase uptake of childhood immunisations, in addition to domestic abuse.

Protocol/S1 template etc (increase clinicians’ awareness – take into account of community healthcare professionals such as health visitors too)

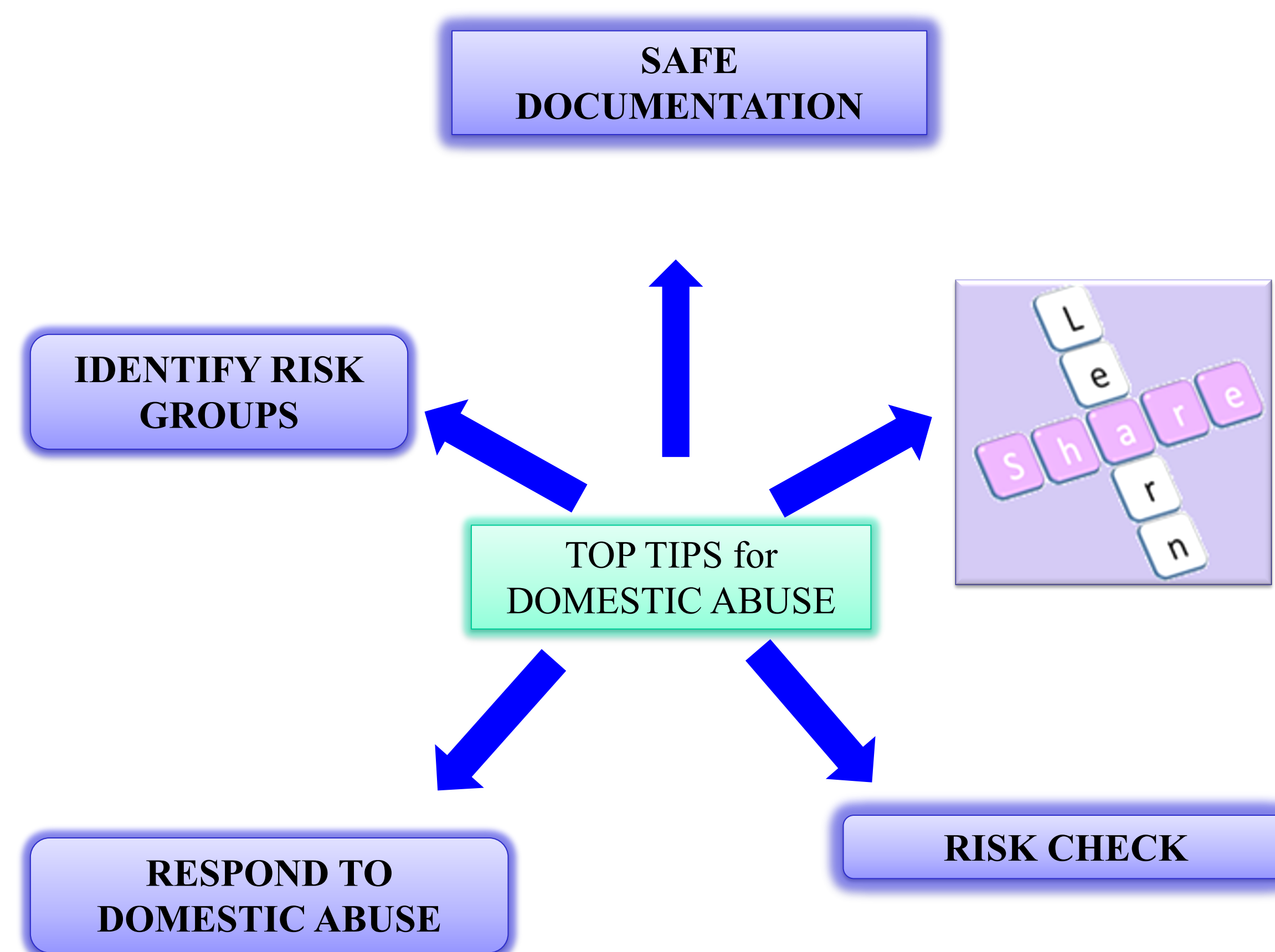
Group consultations for antenatal and postnatal women – address health immunisation promotion of women/baby

Discuss with midwives/antenatal team to find out if this exists in Ealing already, and may want to develop for the community

Promoting a survivor group in Ealing for women who has suffered with domestic abuse

## Direct feedback

- “Feel more comfortable now to manage patients who come with domestic violence issues”
- “Screening more proactively for Domestic abuse and being able to recognise signs.”
- “Being aware of services that I can refer patients to”



## Next steps

- To develop a culture for all healthcare professionals where it’s everyone’s responsibility to recognise and respond to victims of domestic abuse.
- To develop a community co-ordinated response: Focussing on Ealing pathways and referrals for domestic and/or safeguarding concerns

## Important consequences

- There is improved communication between all the different healthcare professionals involved in domestic abuse
- There is increased awareness of domestic abuse in primary care and signposted resources to support patients with domestic abuse.
- We have explored the educational needs of healthcare professionals for domestic abuse.

## Respond to DA

- “I believe you”
- “It’s not your fault”
- “Support is available”
- “Thank you for telling me”
- “Everyone has a right to be safe at home”



## Risk Check

- Is it safe to stay at home?
- Any threats to children?
- Do you have any immediate concerns?
- Child/Adult Safeguarding referral

