

Caring for Families, Birth, and Beyond:

Healing-centered support strategies for doulas

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Learning Objectives

As a result of today's training, you will be able to:

1. Discuss dynamics of intimate partner violence (IPV) and its impacts on perinatal health;
 2. Describe an evidence-based framework for providing universal education in perinatal, birth, and postpartum settings;
 3. Identify two practice-change strategies to support birthing people who may be experiencing violence and abuse.
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Grounding

Why this work matters

- Doulas are trusted
 - Birth work can be vulnerable
 - Caring for yourself allows you to care for others
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Caring for others starts with us

- There are survivors among us
- Self-care is important
- Care for each other
- Lean on supports

“If we are to do our work with suffering people and environments in a sustainable way, we must understand how our work affects us.”

Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky

Understanding IPV

Physical

Sexual

Emotional

Verbal

Financial

Spiritual

- Rooted in **power and control**
Violence is not always the priority
 - Abuse happens in cycles
 - Leaving is not always the best or safest option
 - Does not exist in a vacuum
 - IPV is pervasive
 - **A public health issue**
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Relationships can affect health

- General health and wellbeing
 - Brain injury
 - **Anxiety and depression**
 - Asthma
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - **Chronic stress**
 - **Substance use**
 - **Reproductive health**
 - Gastrointestinal disorders
 - **Perinatal outcomes**
 - Early childhood exposure to IPV
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Impacts on perinatal outcomes

- Pregnancy loss
 - Preterm birth
 - Low birth weight
 - Breastfeeding
 - Bonding
 - Perinatal mental health outcomes
 - Maternal mortality
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Trauma-Informed Doula Support

- You are with people at one of the most vulnerable and overwhelming stages of life
 - Childbirth can bring up past experiences of trauma that can affect pregnancy, birth and postpartum
 - A trauma-informed lens can help reduce the likelihood that your interactions unintentionally cause stress or re-traumatization
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Birth can activate trauma

- Mother may feel out of control of their body and/or mind
 - Intense sensations
 - Use of some positions for labor (on back, legs spread wide)
 - Use of medical instruments may lead to feelings of being trapped or restrained
 - Use of dim lighting or closed door, small spaces (like bathrooms or showers)
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Survivors and Medical Trauma

Women who had experienced IPV:

- reported higher rates of feeling pressured to accept medical interventions and pain medications during labor
- had higher rates of cesareans before and during labor
- felt that their baby would be seriously injured or die

Doulas can support survivors in their healthcare decision-making!

Talking about IPV in birth settings

You are a trusted presence

- Doulas are often the one person who is present across the most vulnerable moments
 - pregnancy and prenatal visits
 - labor and birth
 - immediate postpartum period
 - pregnancy loss
 - This builds trust, and that trust is what makes CUES powerful in your role
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Your role as a doula

You ARE:

- trusted support
- educator
- listener
- connector
- advocate

You ARE NOT:

- investigator
 - therapist
 - domestic violence counselor
 - law enforcement
 - responsible for fixing the situation
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Benefits of universal education

Builds trust and safety

Normalizes experiences

Aligns with what you already do

Shares resources with everyone, even if they don't disclose anything

Shares powers

Centers autonomy

Promotes prevention and altruism

Builds confidence for doulas

Why universal education works for doulas

- You're already building trust
 - You're already having real conversations about hard things
 - CUES can build on what you're already doing and increase your confidence talking about relationships by giving you a framework and language
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CUES: A healing-centered approach for IPV

C: Confidentiality



UE: Universal Education and Empowerment



S: Support

1. Increase the opportunity for safety and privacy
 2. Normalize conversations about relationships, stress, anxiety and safety
 3. Ensure everyone gets access to support and information
 4. Use altruism to increase connection and promote healing
 5. Know how to respond when someone discloses
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C: Confidentiality

- Understand your reporting requirements, if any
 - Discuss confidentiality before talking about relationships
 - Promote privacy as much as possible
 - Talk to caregivers alone (whenever possible)
 - Never use a child, family member or friend as an interpreter
-

UE: Universal Education and Empowerment



- Normalize the conversation
- Introduce 2 copies of a resource or card
- Make the connection to core messages
 - Educate that relationships can affect perinatal health
 - Connect to reason for visit or other conversations happening
 - Promote risk reduction

Normalizing the Conversation

"I talk with all my clients about relationships because they can really affect how supported you feel during pregnancy, birth and postpartum. Relationships can also impact your health and safety. So, I started giving these cards to everyone i work with. They have great info on how to build healthy homes and get support as parents."



Connected Parents, Connected Kids

Universal Education

“I always give 2 cards in case you are ever struggling in your relationship or so you know how to help if you know someone who is struggling. Everyone deserves support.”

Universal Education

“On the back of the card, there are resources you can call or text anonymously—stuff you can share with friends and family too.

And there is a supportive parenting helpline for times when you are feeling overwhelmed or frustrated. You can always talk to me as well.”

Using the Resources

- Free, anonymous helplines (call or text)
 - Advocate (and parenting support) in over 200 languages
 - Try the resources for yourself!
 - Call yourself to understand what support could look like
-

What a CUES conversation looks like...



Sample Scripts for Doulas!



Disclosure is not the goal
but *disclosure may happen*

Thank you for
trusting me with
your story.

You are not
alone.

This sounds
really difficult.

Support is
available.

It takes a lot of
courage to talk
about this.

No one
deserves to be
treated this way.

It's not your
fault.

You are so
strong.

I know you love
your child(ren).

**Supportive
and validating
responses**

S: Support

What to do with everyone:

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



FuturesWithoutViolence.org

Every parent needs support at some point. There are great confidential, helpful, and nonjudgmental numbers to call 24/7. In addition, there is an app and a text line that can help too. Scan the code to the right for more information.



Childhelp: 1 800-4A-CHILD (422-4453)

If you are feeling frustrated or angry with your child or just need to talk

Crisis Text Line: (Text 'start' to 741741)
www.crisistextline.org

Text trained counselors about anything that's on your mind

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse:
www.fatherhood.gov

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What to do after a disclosure:

- Ground yourself
- Offer **gratitude** for sharing their story
- Validate their experience, listen without judgement
- Offer resources and make **warm handoffs**, in ways that are safe, to trusted support services
- Consider safe ways to follow up

Making warm handoffs to community partners

- **Everyone has a unique and important role** in supporting survivors and their families
 - You don't need to be an IPV expert
 - Know the community based organizations to make warm referrals
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When to use CUES

- At least once when working with a mother or family
 - As often as needed
 - If you suspect something is going on
 - If someone discloses violence or abuse
 - During pregnancy and prenatal visits (birth settings)
 - Postpartum (birth settings, home)
 - When you have a private moment (partner steps out)
 - To support conversations about other hard experiences
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What home visitors and family support programs say about CUES

- Increases trust and good rapport
- Provides information for everyone
- Helps families engage
- Very well accepted

Caregiver Feedback



"I wish someone had given this to me 10 years ago."



"I experienced this in a past relationship."



"I know somebody who can use this card."

Key Takeaways

- Relationships affect health
 - You don't need disclosure to offer support
 - CUES fits naturally into doula care
 - Build partnerships before you need them
 - You don't have to do this alone
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Resources



<https://linktr.ee/futureshealth>



Order CPCCK cards

<https://tinyurl.com/CPCCKforDoulas>

Use the promo code
PROMISE to order cards at
no cost



CUES Videos for Home Visitation



by Futures Without Violence

Playlist • 5 videos • 382 views

This video series shares various ways home visitation staff can implement universal education—using the ...more



Play all



1



Working with known survivors of domestic violence

Futures Without Violence • 115 views • 3 months ago



2



Using CUES in earlier visits as a bridge or a segue to...

Futures Without Violence • 92 views • 1 year ago



3



Navigating CUES conversation about Adverse...

Futures Without Violence • 55 views • 1 year ago



4



Home Visitation: Supervision

Futures Without Violence • 1.3K views • 10 years ago



5



Using CUES in Home Visitation

Futures Without Violence • 5 views • 6 days ago



CUES Videos for Home Visitation



For additional resources visit IPVHealth.org

CUES Sample Scripts

Providing Universal Education in Birth Settings

This resource is meant to help you get started with providing universal education on safe and healthy relationships to all clients, using the Connected Parents Connected Kids (CPCK) safety card. These safety cards, developed by Futures Without Violence, help us have open conversations, provide anticipatory guidance and share resources with pregnant and postpartum clients and families.

The scripts are intended to be adapted to support the needs of every unique client or family and align with your own individual approach to providing services. You are encouraged to use these scripts as a starting point, then make them your own, and finally, find ways to have these conversations naturally with clients in ways that connect with other issues being addressed (*labor prep, labor and delivery, perinatal issues, postpartum support, pre-pregnancy support, parenting struggles, breastfeeding, maternal mental health, etc.*)

Sample scripts to start using CUES		Make these scripts your own!
Before you open the conversation and introduce a resource or safety card	C: Confidentiality and your limits to confidentiality (as applicable) <i>“Before we get started, I want to let you know that everything we talk about today is confidential, which means it’s private. I won’t share anything we talk about today unless you tell me you are being hurt physically or sexually or thinking about hurting yourself [or find out your role and state’s mandatory reporting requirements], then I will need to share it in order to keep you safe and get you help.”</i>	

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at Futures Without Violence



UE: Universal Education and Empowerment

"I talk with all my clients about relationships because they can really affect how supported you feel during pregnancy, birth and postpartum. Relationships can also impact your health and safety. So, I started giving these cards to everyone i work with. They have great info on how to build healthy homes and get support as parents."

I always give 2 cards in case you are ever struggling in your relationship or so you know how to help if you know someone who is struggling. Everyone deserves support"

When we help others it helps us too!



2-1-1 is a 24/7 confidential referral system to get connected to food banks, substance use, mental health, parenting supports, childcare and help with relationships.

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Every parent needs support at some point. Scan this code for more resources.



NATIONAL PARENT HELPLINE is staffed with trained advocates who offer nonjudgmental support and advice when you need it. **PHONE: 855-427-2736** <https://nationalparenthelpline.org>

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE has anonymous 24/7 help—for both people who are being hurt—and for those who cause hurt. **www.TheHotline.org 1-800-799-SAFE** Text "Start" to 88788 TTY 1-800-787-3224

S: Support

"On the back of the card, there are resources you can call or text anonymously—stuff you can share with friends and family too. And there is a supportive parenting helpline for times when you are feeling overwhelmed or frustrated. You can always talk to me as well."

You Matter

As a caregiver of kids, you want the best for them. Maybe that's a big change from how you or your kids were treated in the past.

- ✓ Everyone is worthy of hope, respect, support and kindness.
- ✓ Parenting can be lonely.
- ✓ Everyone deserves someone to talk to about parenting and relationships.

It's ok to ask for help!



"This card helps break down the real stuff in people's lives that we don't always talk about, like how hard parenting and relationships can be, and that everyone deserves support."

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Complicated Relationships Sometimes people hurt us—could be parents, partners, or others who do this. ✓ Sometimes we don't get support for ourselves, or support with parenting from the people we want it from the most. ✓ Sometimes we don't get to make decisions about money or the way we are treated physically or mentally. ✓ Sometimes hurting others or being hurt yourself makes people feel ashamed or afraid they can't change. No relationship is perfect, sometimes we need help. We all deserve to live without fear.	<i>"All relationships sometimes get hard or complicated. And sometimes, people may hurt us in our relationship—like name calling, fighting or other stuff that may be controlling or hurt us emotionally or physically."</i> <i>"This card helps us talk about how common relationship stress and problems are and what helps. Talking about this is so important because kids and babies need parents to be in the best possible space when things are rough—and supports can help."</i>	
Strong Kids There are simple things you can do to help support your child to heal and grow: ✓ Have fun with them and show them they are special. ✓ Show and tell them that you love them. ✓ Calm voices, calm hands, hugs, and cuddling helps them. ✓ Let them know that whatever is happening is not their fault. ✓ Celebrate one positive thing you do with your child every day.	<i>"I also like talking about what supports our kids need when we, as parents, are having a hard time...things like the special little things you do to show them they are loved. And, let's also think about how you can celebrate a positive thing you do with your child(ren) everyday, especially when something hard or scary has happened. What might work for you or what ideas do you have?"</i>	
Building Trust If systems have broken your trust in the past, they may be hard to trust now. ✓ Answering questions or sharing something is always your choice. ✓ You have the right to get information on how to get support for you and your family, including help for mental health, substance use and if people feel unsafe, or need help. We believe trust is something to be earned.	<i>"I'm not sure we say this enough, but what you share with me (even how you respond on forms) is completely up to you. It's your choice if you want to share something and if you don't want to say anything at all."</i> <i>Trusting takes time. That's why I'm giving you this card, because you don't need to share anything with me if you don't want to or don't feel ready to. Either way, I will still share with you how to get support for you or someone you know if you ever need it. And I am always here to listen and support however I can."</i>	

Supports if disclosures occur		Make these scripts your own
Providing support and making warm handoffs to trusted partners	<i>"Thank you for sharing your story with me. This sounds really difficult. I want you to know that I am here to support you and your family. We work closely with a local program that has helped a lot of people in situations like yours. Would you like me to connect you with them? They can talk with you about options and explore what might be the most helpful for you."</i>	
Providing support when a report is mandated (as applicable)	<i>"Remember at the start of this visit when we talked about situations where I would have to get others involved to help keep you safe? This is one of those times. I know it took a great deal of courage to share this with me, and we need to make sure that you are safe (and your children). I will need to report what happened to you and I really would like your help making sure that I understand all the things you need to make this as safe and supportive as possible for you."</i>	

Need extra support? Contact:

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