



*Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund*

### **Develop a Collaborative Model of Care**

Prior to assessment for abuse and violence, practitioners should ensure protocols are in place for a safe and effective response. This means having specified roles and responsibilities within the clinic setting, knowledge of existing resources within the local community (in schools, local domestic violence and rape crisis agencies, mental health agencies, child protective services), and an established system for activating these resources depending on the situation.

#### **A Team Approach is Beneficial**

- Providers should not feel that they must have “all the answers.” In these moments, having a team in place to call upon is necessary so the provider is not left carrying the weight of the situation alone. It is ideal to have an in-person introduction to an advocate or social worker to connect the young person with ongoing support.

#### **Emphasize Care as a Team Rather Than Passing Off Care**

- The provider’s response when a young person shares experiences of control and abuse is crucial for continuing support. Adolescents need to feel they are heard and that the provider, as a trustworthy adult, can handle what they have been through and just disclosed. A provider who seems uncomfortable or who simply tells the adolescent to speak with a social worker about this may be interpreted as uncaring or dismissive.

#### **Involve the Young Person in the Team and Decision-making**

- While adolescents may initially appear not to want the help of adults, they do desire to be protected and cared for. In the moments following a disclosure, the provider’s job is to validate what they have shared, affirm the courage it takes to talk openly of their experiences, in addition to offering a range of options to support healing and intervention. It is natural to want to promise “everything will be okay,” but rather than making empty statements, it is important to offer clear and realistic next steps while maintaining boundaries. “We’re all going to work together to help you stay safe.”

#### **Know the Limits of Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting Requirements**

- Knowledge of mandated reporting requirements and how to support a minor in the safest way possible requires consultation. Developing connections with colleagues to call to talk through options and best approaches is essential. Reporting a case to an outside agency without thoughtfully considering safety could put the young person at significantly greater risk for harm and even death. The resources available to a provider may be within the health system in which s/he works. A social worker or mental health worker within a clinic is often a good first connection. Some health systems have hospital-based domestic violence programs to support providers and offer services to victims. Having a referral list in your network (within both the health system and local resources) will assist you in knowing your allies and creating a collaborative network of resources.