Domestic and Community Violence Screening – Bowdoin Street Health Center

The Problem

Staff recognized that our patient population, recent immigrants and economically challenged people in a violent urban environment, is highly vulnerable to domestic and community violence. Multiple stressors impact patients' physical and mental health. In 2006, a baseline chart review revealed low rate of domestic/community violence screening (17%) and inconsistent location for documentation of screening and patient response.

Aim/Goal

To increase domestic and community violence screening from a baseline of 17% to at least 70% in order to identify those affected by Clinical staff discussions leading to a commitment to make screening a priority for care.

To develop a screening plan to incorporate into annual physical visits and provide support and care for patients with positive screening.

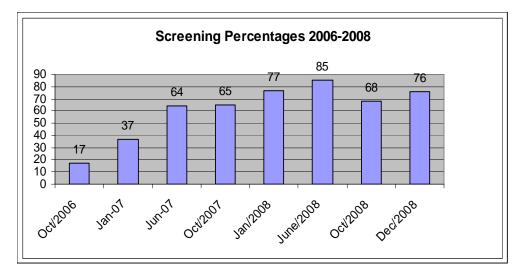
The Team

- Francine Azzara, RN, MPH
- Harvey Bidwell, MD
- Carol Palmer, LICSW
- Marjorie Mills, Family Advocate
- Clinical and Mental Health Staff

The Interventions

- Documentation was standardized on problem list under "Risk Assessment".
- In September 2006, the team identified a culturally competent and efficient set of assessment screening questions that were approved by clinical staff. Questions were added to the Visit Assessment Sheet.
- Staff instructed how to approach the subject, role play an interaction, and how to address positive responses.
- An intervention and referral plan was developed by our Mental Health Team and Family Advocate.
- Chart review and monthly reporting to staff monitored progress over next two years.

The Results/Progress to Date



Lessons Learned

- At first, many staff found it difficult to ask the questions, especially if they knew the patients or family. Staff reported they became more comfortable and don't hesitate to conduct the screening.
- The number of positive responses often approached up to 35% every month and evidenced by an increase in referrals for counseling to the Family Advocate and the Mental Health Team.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

Important to continue to monitor screening and provide feedback to providers on screening rates and support. Referrals are being received from outside of the health center as word has spread about the support of our Family Advocate and Mental Health team.





