

Appendix C: Trauma-Informed Safety Planning Strategies for Advocates

Sample safety planning questions are provided below. These questions range from simple ones that you may already be using in your program to more nuanced safety planning strategies for the unique concerns of pregnant and parenting survivors.

TRAUMA-INFORMED EMOTIONAL SAFETY PLANNING QUESTIONS

You mentioned some concerns about receiving health care because of things that have happened to you.

- ▶ Would you like to make a plan with a health care provider for pregnancy checkups, childbirth, or breastfeeding concerns?
- ▶ We know some wonderful doulas and midwives in the area who work with women who have had difficult experiences. They help them make plans so that their pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting experiences go more smoothly. Would you like to see one of these doulas or midwives for more in-depth planning around these issues?

REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL COERCION SAFETY PLANNING QUESTIONS

- ▶ Is there something that has helped when your partner pressured you to do things sexually that you were not comfortable with?
- ▶ Is there anyone you feel like you can talk to about the sexual coercion or abuse you have experienced? (If you have not talked to the survivor about these terms, use the survivor's language.)

PREGNANCY-RELATED SAFETY PLANNING QUESTIONS

Let's talk about safety concerns you have about your pregnancy.

- ▶ You have talked about your concerns when your partner is upset or angry. Has your partner ever tried to harm you during your pregnancy? What does he or she do? (i.e., abuse directed at her abdomen)
- ▶ Do you feel that your pregnancy is something that your partner uses to keep you under control? Can you describe what happened?
- ▶ Who can you count on to provide support during your pregnancy?

BIRTH CONTROL SAFETY PLANNING QUESTIONS

We have talked about your partner manipulating/hiding or damaging/destroying your birth control.

- ▶ Do you have any options for putting your birth control in a safe place that your partner doesn't know about? (for example, in with feminine hygiene supplies)
- ▶ Would you like to know more about birth control options that can't be seen or felt by your partner, like the IUD or an implant? (Resources for birth control information: Birth Control Methods That Can be Used without a Partner's Knowledge poster (see Appendix H), Planned Parenthood at www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/birth-control-4211.htm, Bedsider at www.bedsider.org)
- ▶ Do you have access to money to pay for birth control? If not, we may be able to find financial resources to cover the cost or find coverage for prescriptions.
- ▶ You've told me that you are interested in forms of invisible birth control. Let's make a plan to get you access to birth control. I can go with you or help you make an appointment, or both.
- ▶ I can introduce you to ____ at the clinic. This person has worked with women who have come to our program, and is very understanding.

PARENTING SAFETY PLANNING QUESTIONS

You have told me that you are worried that your partner will be a poor parent for your baby.

- ▶ Once the baby is born, there are legal options that could limit his access to your baby, and options for financial benefits or support to help you.
- ▶ Would you like to know more about your options (i.e., custody, court-ordered parenting plans, court-ordered alcohol/drug evaluations, court-ordered batterers' treatment programs, supervised visitation, public benefits/economic services)?
- ▶ You said you are interested in breastfeeding, do you think your partner will be okay with you breastfeeding?
- ▶ I can give you a referral to talk to someone about options for feeding your baby (i.e., consult with trauma-informed lactation specialist, breast pump, formula, when and where you may feel comfortable nursing).

SAFETY PLANNING FOR HEALTH CARE AND FAMILY PLANNING APPOINTMENTS

Let's talk about when and how to make an appointment at the clinic.

- ▶ We can expect that the clinic will want to confirm or remind you of your appointment or they may be calling with results of any tests. Let's call the clinic and make sure that they know they cannot call your house or cell phone, and can't send anything in the mail, or by email.
- ▶ Would you like to give the clinic alternative options for contact and receiving information, such as a friend's phone number and address, or our advocacy program office address or P.O. Box?
- ▶ You have shared with me that your partner has a pattern of stalking or has friends or family members watching you. We can plan how you will get to the clinic and home, if you would like.
- ▶ Some examples of plans that may help keep you safer are:
 - Driving in a different car
 - Not parking in the clinic lot
 - Creating an excuse for where you are spending your time
 - Paying cash instead of using a credit or debit card
 - Not keeping the paperwork on you after you are done
 - Planning for rest time after a procedure
 - Figuring out a safe place to keep medication