### **HEALTH-CARE RESPONSES** that Empower Women Impacted by Relationship Violence and/or Substance Use

# INCREASING SAFETY

#### PRIORITIZING WOMEN'S SAFETY

Putting safety first. Asking about women's fears/ concerns. Providing an emotionally and physically safe environment. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

#### CONNECTING WITH RESOURCES

Sharing accurate and detailed information about community resources with women without pressuring her to access them. Developing relationships with shelters, community programs and advocates. Understanding the importance of your professional role within a continuum of support.

#### FOCUSING ON NEEDS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Linking women's and children's needs. Supporting women in supporting their children. Recognizing her autonomy and roles separate from being a mother.

#### PROVIDING INFORMATION

Giving non-judgmental and accurate information about the health impacts of abuse/violence and substance use on women and infants/children. Avoiding scare tactics. Admitting when you don't know.

#### REDUCING BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Understanding what it took for her to get to health-care today. Strategizing with her to facilitate her access to care. Being flexible wherever possible.

## HEALTH CARE RESPONSES

#### BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

Focusing on relationship, not outcomes. Listening to women. Asking open-ended questions. Not asking 'screening' questions about relationship violence or substance use. Looking women in the eye. Being honest. Providing unconditional regard for her strengths, ingenuity and survival.

#### SUPPORTING DECISIONS

Sharing your health expertise. Recognizing she is the expert on her on own life. Believing and being guided by her experience. Respecting her right to make decisions in her own life, when she is ready. Getting over our own need to prescribe solutions.

A MAKING THE LINKS Recognizing the complexity of women's circumstances and choices. Understand the role of

choices. Understand the role of gender inequality and racism, as well as the links between violence, substance use and mental health. Addressing health issues. Working to reduce harm.

REDUCING HARM