



# Provider Guide: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

*This guide is designed to help health and human service professionals provide support and safety planning for people with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) experiencing IPV.*

## OBSTACLES YOUR CLIENT MAY FACE

- Barred access to healthcare or medications
- Threats to “out” a survivor’s STI-status
- Isolation from family, friends and the community
- Lack of information or misinformation about symptoms/diagnosis

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- **Cause/Consequence**  
The client may have an STI because of IPV or they may experience IPV because they have an STI.
- **Vulnerability**  
The client may have an STI because the abusive partner refuses to wear condoms, rapes/sexually assaults them and/or exploits them for commercial sex. The survivor may have HIV if they use injection drugs to cope with trauma and they contract HIV through shared needles.
- **Stigma**  
The client may experience shame, guilt and self-blame, because being a survivor of IPV and person with an STI can be a very stigmatized identity.
- **Treatment**  
The client may not have the freedom to comply with all treatment guidelines.

## USEFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK

- **Are you afraid to ask your partner to use condoms?**  
Be aware that continuing to push for inaccessible safer sex strategies can turn into victim blaming.
- **Are you afraid your partner would hurt you if you told them you had an STI and they need to be treated too?**  
Work with the client to identify ways to notify their partner, if they choose to do so. For example, a web-based notification or an anonymous call from the health department may be a safe option for some survivors.
- **Does your partner monitor your medications or interfere with your health appointments?**  
Work with the client to identify strategies to access care. For example, some providers offer solutions such as: coded communication for confirmation calls, phone check-ins and unidentifiable packaging.
- **Do you believe your partner has an STI or is at high risk for contracting an STI?**  
If it is a safe option, recommend the client to do regular HIV and STI testing. For many survivors, it provides a way to regain some measure of stress-relief and control over their bodies.



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## **RESOURCES**

### **HIV/STI TESTING & TREATMENT**

**Action Wellness (formerly ActionAIDS)**  
(267) 940-5515  
1216 Arch St.

**BEBASHI**  
(215) 769-3561  
1235 Spring Garden St.

**Health Information HelpLine**  
1 (800) 985-2437  
Referral to local services

**Philadelphia FIGHT**  
(215) 985-4448  
1233 Locust St.

**Planned Parenthood**  
1 (800) 230-7526  
Check website for locations

**Washington West Project**  
(215) 985-9206  
121 Locust St.