

Sex, Pleasure, Choice: A tool for addressing and preventing reproductive + sexual coercion



The *Sex, Pleasure, Choice* patient education brochure, or safety card, was developed for use in sexual and reproductive health settings. Sexual and reproductive health providers, navigators, and educators can use this business card-sized tool to prompt conversations with patients about sexual and reproductive autonomy within their intimate and/or sexual relationships, experiences of sexual or reproductive coercion, and how these experiences may be impacting their health.

Confidential and free chat, text, call line provides support 24/7:

thehotline.org
text "START" to 88788
800-799-SAFE (7233)
TTY: 800-787-3224



Free, anonymous safety aid: myplanapp.org
Low cost healthcare: bedsider.org

2022 Futures Without Violence. All rights reserved. Funded in part by the U.S. DHHS' Administration on Children, Youth and Families.
Cover art by Rommy Torrico. | futureswithoutviolence.org



This card can be used with people of all genders and sexualities and is an updated version of FUTURES' "Did you know your relationship affects your health?" safety card. The back panel of the card includes information on where patients can get support for themselves or a friend, a resource for safety decision making (MyPlan), as well as where to access low-cost sexual and reproductive healthcare.

The Evidence

- 1 in 2 patients seeking care at family planning clinics have experienced sexual violence + coercion, reproductive coercion, or other form of intimate partner violence.
- These forms of violence increase risk for unintended/unwanted pregnancies, STIs, mental health conditions, and other negative health outcomes and create barriers to healthcare.
- Normalizing conversations about healthy relationships, consent, and experiences of sexual + reproductive coercion within reproductive and sexual health settings increases knowledge of and access to supportive services.

Miller E, et al. Pregnancy coercion, intimate partner violence and unintended pregnancy. *Contraception*. 2010

How to use this card

This safety card can help facilitate conversations about healthy relationships and consent, sexual + reproductive coercion, and how they impact our health. As a part of the **CUES Intervention**, sharing this safety card with all patients,

- affirms messaging about the importance of consent and bodily autonomy,
- normalizes conversations about relationships in the health setting,
- and allows survivors to receive information and support without being required to answer "yes" to a screening question or voluntarily disclose abuse.

CUES Intervention

CUES is an acronym that stands for the elements of the intervention:

CONFIDENTIALITY | Meet with patients alone for part of every visit when providing universal education about consent, sexual decision making, and healthy relationships and share any limits to confidentiality at the start of the conversation.

UNIVERSAL EDUCATION | Using the safety card, share information about healthy and unhealthy relationships with all patients: “I give all of my patients a few of these cards, they have information..”

EMPOWERMENT | Offering two cards can help make conversations about health and sexual and reproductive coercion feel more approachable; one card is for them to keep and the other may be shared with a friend, or relative who may need support.

SUPPORT | If a patient does disclose coercion or abuse, validate what you heard, engage in a discussion about safety planning, and offer a warm referral to a domestic and sexual violence advocacy services or other community supports.

Sexual + Reproductive Health Safety Planning

In addition to warm referral to domestic violence advocacy services, it is important to discuss safe STI prevention strategies with patients who are experiencing abuse, coercion, or birth control/STI sabotage. These strategies may be harder for partner to detect or interfere with. If an abusive or controlling partner is **monitoring the patient's menstrual cycle**, and the patient might opt for contraception that is less likely to alter their regular bleeding patterns, such as:

- Keeping multiple doses of emergency contraception on hand, removed from packaging
- Removing strings from Copper T- IUD
- Popping birth control pills out of the packaging and storing them in an aspirin bottle

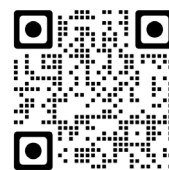
Additional strategies could include:

- Vaginal birth control ring which can be removed by patient for up to 3 hours, birth control implant or 3 month shot, with additional supply for use at home
- Purchasing pregnancy testing strips in bulk, with less identifiable packaging, and testing on a regular basis
- Information about PrEP and PEP for HIV prevention
- Lubricative suppositories, which may reduce tissue tearing and risk of some STI transmission.

For patients who have been diagnosed with an STI and are being hurt or controlled in their relationship, STI partner notification may lead to retaliation and increased danger. Refraining from or delaying partner notification or utilizing anonymous partner notification are possible safety strategies. Talk with all patients about the potential impact of partner notification before contacting their sexual partners.

Adapt this card for your community

Contact the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence to adapt or translate this safety card for your local community and context: health@futureswithoutviolence.org.



Order copies



online toolkit: ipvhealth.org | community health centers: ipvhealthpartners.org