The open doors of Hospital Emergency Departments have the potential to help women speak out about Domestic Abuse. However, many barriers exist that are keeping this issue behind closed doors.

### BARRIERS

#### Departments
- Lack of privacy
- Lack of After Hours Social Work Support
- Lack of screening prompts on the medical record
- Lack of screening tools
- Mandatory Reporting Policies
- Not excluding family members from examination rooms

#### Staff
- Feel they lack the time to deal with DV
- Less willing to screen patients with psychiatric complaints
- Do not know how to ask
- Do not know what to do if someone answers ‘yes’
- Feel uncomfortable discussing the subject
- Feel unsupported
- Do not know how or where to refer
- Do not know how to document properly

### SOLUTIONS

#### Open Doors

Departments can break down the barriers to screening for domestic violence by providing staff with simple screening tools, medical record prompts, referral protocols, social work support and providing non-clinical areas for screening that maintain privacy. Then staff can feel confident to ask and women can feel safe to speak out about abuse.

#### Open Minds

Improving health care providers awareness of the complexities of domestic violence and the impact it has on women’s health is key to improving screening rates. Possible solutions to this include staff in development of DV protocols, including DV as a core topic in undergraduate education and improving public awareness.

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