

Practice considerations	Conversation ideas
<p>Make it safe She can give you valuable insight into his moods, habits and daily activities so you can create an informed strategy about how to approach him in a way that keeps her and the children safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's important for you to know that I won't share information you have told me with [father]. • I will need to talk to you again. What is the best way for me to contact you? Is there a good day and time of day? • I'm interested in what you think the best way is to contact [father]. • Is there anything worrying you about me meeting with him? • [Topic] is what I'm planning to talk to [father] about. Do you think any of this puts you or the children in danger? • In what ways do you keep you and the kids safe?
<p>Avoid blame and be open to her perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never blame her for the violence. • Let her know you believe her. • Listen to her experience and explore the history and patterns of the perpetrator's behaviours. • Acknowledge and respond to her safety concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of mothers feel like they are to blame. His behaviour is not your fault. • I'm interested in you telling me a bit about your life. • I'm hearing that you're very worried that [father] is going to hurt you. How can I be of most use to you?
<p>Explore what she sees as risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge that she is best placed to know what will keep her safe or escalate the risk. • Explore the different risks and their causes. • Get her opinion on how culture, age, socioeconomic status, discrimination and the system (for example, child protection, health, or family law) create risks. • Ask her what she sees as the biggest risks to her and her children, and what she perceives as causing those risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to understand more about what worries you and what you think can keep [child] safe. • When do you feel the most and least safe? Why? • When do you think [child] feels most and least safe? • What are you most worried about? • What do you think is the biggest risk to [child's] safety? Why do you think this is the case?

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<p>Explore her relationship with her child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how he may undermine her relationship with her children. • Help to strengthen the bonds between her and her child to promote healing. • Bring her and her children together to talk about their experiences. This should only be done when safety has been established for both the mother and child. • Help her and her children see how they each cope and manage the violence and abuse. • Help her and her children to see and appreciate each other and the support they can offer one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think [father] thinks about your relationship with [child]? Why might he think that? • Can you tell me about any times that you felt that [father] has hurt your relationship with [child]? What did you do? • I'm interested to hear about whether you have not been able to parent in the way you would like to. Why do you think that is? What do you do? • How would you hope [child] would talk about their relationship with you? Tell me more about that. • If I asked your best friend what kind of mum you are, what would they tell me?
<p>Use language that shows there is a pattern of abuse, not isolated incidents</p> <p>Explore the range of tactics he uses to harm, control and abuse her and her children. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • denying her access to finances • isolating her from sources of support • denying her access to material possessions (such as taking the car, so that she can't take the children to school or appointments) • denying her medication or health treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You mentioned that [father] gives you an allowance. What do you do when he gives this to you? How do you feel? What do you think? • Can you tell me how you decide on parenting rules in the home? • Tell me more about how [father] gets pissed off when you talk to your mum. • I'm interested in hearing about times that [father] has made you feel scared. What does he do? What do you do? • How does his controlling behaviour get in the way of you being the mum you want to be?

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<p>Identify and show respect for her everyday efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the acts of protection she makes to keep her and her children safe—these may be big or small. • Ask her about what she does to keep her and her children safe. • Acknowledge the steps she has already taken to keep herself and the children safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this the first time you have had to stand up for yourself in this way? • In what other ways were you taking care of yourself and your children? • When [father] tells you he hates your mum and you're not to see her, what do you do? What do you think? • So when [father] is pissed off and you run out the front because the kids are inside, you have helped protect them. • When you have told the kids they aren't allowed to watch TV but [father] says not to listen to you, what do you do? So you find another way to discipline them instead. That's pretty flexible! • What other things have you done to make sure things aren't worse than they are?
<p>Understand her choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If she stays in or returns to a violent relationship, explore with her the reasons why. • Remember that many women who want to leave make several attempts to do so before they leave for good. • Don't judge her choice. • Ask her what support she thinks she needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm hoping you can tell me more about what makes you want to stay with [father]. • Have there been times you have thought you may want to leave [father]? I'm interested to know more about that. • Many women who have been hurt by their partner find it really hard to leave. That's very normal and I am not going to judge you for your choice to stay. • If you are staying with [father], we need to work out how we can keep you and the kids safe. I need to talk to him about his use of violence.