Algorithm for Approaching Possible Partner Conflict

In the past 3 months, have you and a partner fought a lot?

Yes

In the past 3 months, has a partner threatened, shoved, hit or kicked you, hurt you physically in any way?

Yes

I see you have a problem with your partner.
Lots of people have rough times in relationships, but, you don’t deserve to be treated this way.
It can be hard on you, and your family.

Please tell me what’s going on with your partner.
e.g., threatens to hurt you or the children, physical fighting, injured you, puts you down, forced you to do something sexual

How much contact do you have with ___?

Is there a gun at home?

How’s this affecting you, your family?
e.g., problems with children, sleep, eating, friends, work, stress

How are you dealing with this?
What else could you try?

Are you getting help?
Who/what’s helping?
e.g., talking with family or friend, religious group, counselor, a shelter, legal help, restraining order

Would you like (more) help?

Yes

No, other reason

No, getting enough help

What kind of help would you consider?
e.g., talking with family or friend, DV advocate, religious group, counseling for you and/or children, a shelter, legal help, restraining order, a safety plan

What might be the benefit of getting help?
Encourage getting help

What makes it hard to get help?
Suggest barriers, address them

What would make it easier to get help?

Supported parent’s choice
Reassured
Gave parent handout
F/U
No action needed

Offered help
Gave parent handout
Made referral
in-house or community
F/U

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Parental Conflict - Addressing Possible Barriers

Barrier: It’s not that bad

Response:
- I’m glad you feel that it’s not that bad
- Still, I’d like to help you, and I’m concerned how this may be affecting you and your child
- This problem doesn’t usually improve if nothing is done
- It’s often best to do something about it - sooner rather later
- Would you consider trying a program or counseling, and see how you feel? You may be pleasantly surprised

Barrier: It will get better with time

Response:
- I hear you that you feel things will get better with time
- While some things get better with time, problems between family members often do not, and they harm kids in the meantime
- How long would you want to wait before getting help?
- How would you feel about trying this program or counseling?
- If not now, please let me know when you feel ready

Barrier: I’d feel embarrassed

Response:
- I hear you. Lots of people feel embarrassed about this problem
- But, there are lots of reasons so many people face these problems
- Many parents need help, and many are getting help. You’re not alone! This is not your fault
- Would you like me to help you get help?

Barrier: My partner might get mad and make things worse

Response:
- I see that you’re worried about your partner getting mad. This is a common concern
- I will keep this strictly confidential [check to see if your state requires this be reported]
- You’re right that doing something about the problem has risks. But, so does doing nothing
- Would you consider trying a program or counseling?
Barrier: **I don’t know where to get help**

Response:

- Yes, it’s often hard to know where to get help
- If you’re interested, I can recommend a really good program or professional
- We have someone excellent here who can help. Would you like me to connect you with her/him?
- Here’s a handout with useful info on good helplines, websites and other nearby places that help

Barrier: **I don’t have the time**

Response:

- I hear you that there’s not the time to deal with this. You’re busy!
- Still, do you think this may be important – for you, your family, your child?
- It’s hard to be a good parent if you’re feeling scared
- Would you consider trying a program or counseling?

Barrier: **I don’t think these programs or counseling work**

Response:

- A lot of people feel unsure about getting help or counseling
- Have you had a bad experience with counseling? I understand that must be discouraging
- Do you think this could be different if you had someone really good?
- Would you like me to recommend a program or professionals I think you’ll find very helpful?

Barrier: **I’m afraid of losing financial security**

Response:

- I see you’re worried that doing something about this problem may create financial problems
- Many programs or counselors assist with finding classes, jobs or resources to help with this
- Would you consider trying a program or counseling to help with this?

Barrier: **I don’t think it’s affecting my child(ren)**

Response:

- I hear you that you don’t think it’s hurting your kids
- Sometimes effects of this problem may not be obvious, like babies crying more or children acting up
- Do you sometimes think that kids may pick up on more that we realize?
- I know you want things to be good for your child, getting help should make things better sooner – for you and your child
Barrier: I don’t have childcare

Response:

- Yes, childcare can be tough to find
- Perhaps family or a friend can provide childcare while you focus on your well-being
- What do you think?

Barrier: I don’t have transportation

Response:

- I see transportation is a problem
- Unfortunately, this is so common
- Would you like me to see if there's something close to home or on a bus route?