

# What Do Birth Plans and Stealth Birth Control Have to Do With Advocacy?

Innovative Strategies for Addressing the Reproductive Health Needs of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survivors

**What Do Birth Plans and Stealth Birth Control  
Have to Do With Advocacy?**

***Your Hosts***

***Leah Holland***

***Washington  
Coalition of  
Sexual Assault  
Programs***

***Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck***

***Washington  
Coalition of  
Sexual Assault  
Programs***

***Leigh Hofheimer  
Washington State  
Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence***

# Objectives

Develop skills in initiating conversations

Acquire strategies for integrating topics

Identify action steps for advocacy

# Enhancing Services for Pregnant & Parenting Survivors

3-year grant-funded project

Focused on survivors of DV, SA, & stalking

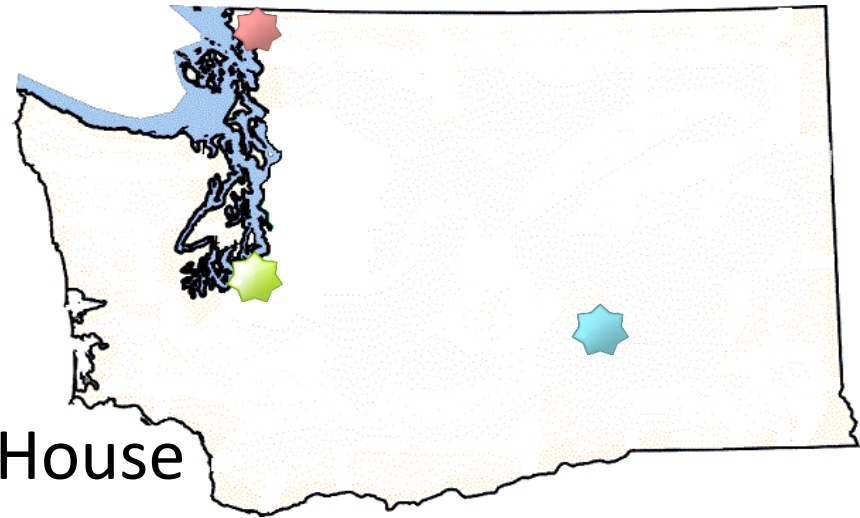
Joint project of WCSAP and WSCADV

# Demonstration Sites

- Adams County
  - Lead: New Hope DV SA

- Pierce County
  - Lead: Tacoma Community House

- Whatcom County
  - Lead: Whatcom DVSAS



# What's Making People So Excited?

Building on Futures Without Violence's work

Integrating reproductive health topics into our daily work with survivors

Really "getting it"

# What are the Problems?

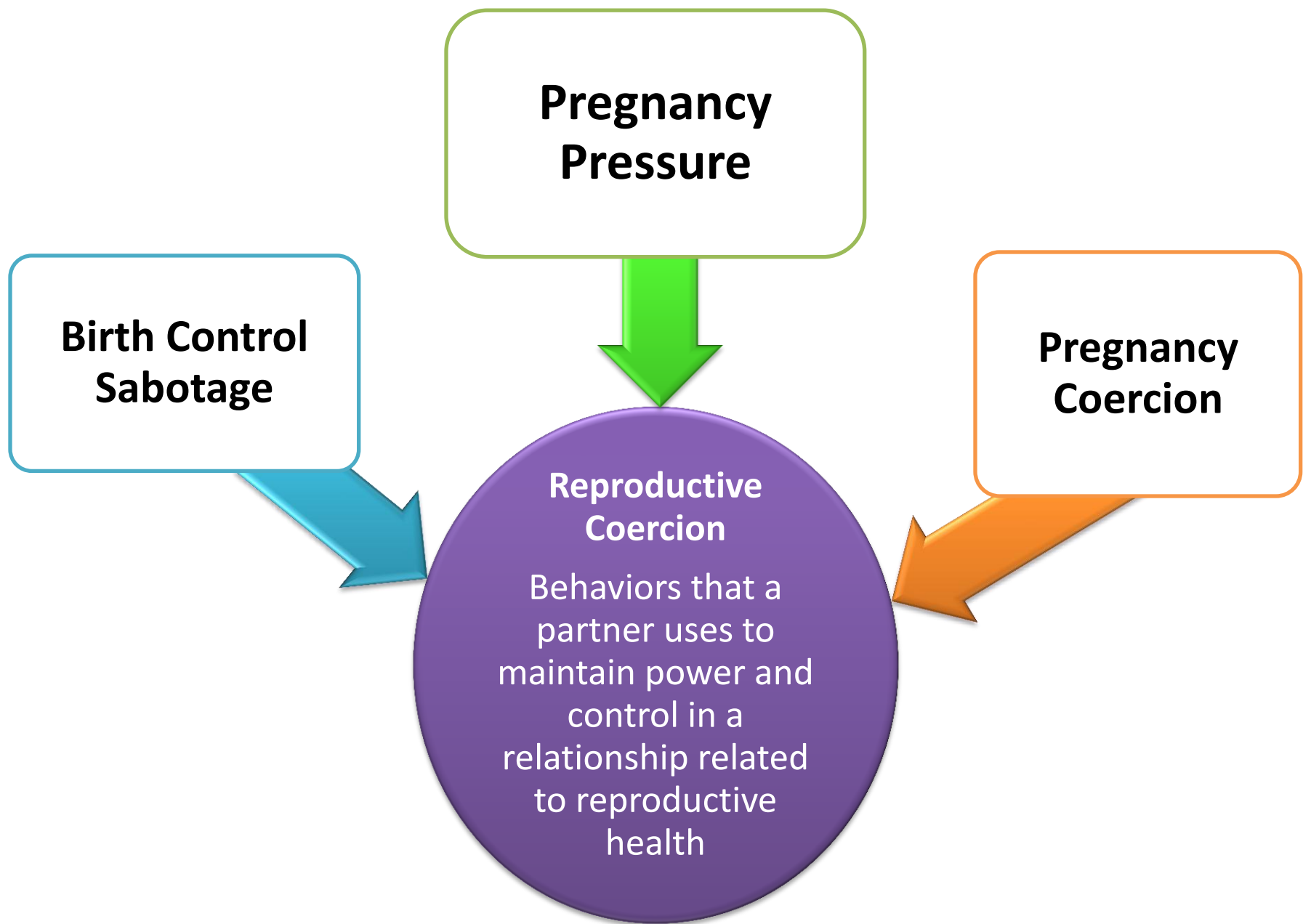
- 40% of abused women reported pregnancy was unwanted (Hathaway et al., 2000)
- 10% of WA women & 22% of WA teens report intimate partner abuse around the time of pregnancy (Washington State Department of Health, 2010)
- 1 in 5 abused women at family planning clinics reported pregnancy coercion (Miller et al., 2010)
- 31% of intimate partner homicide victims were under 21 when they became involved with their abusive partners (WCSADV, 2010)

# Violence and Reproductive Health are Strongly Linked

**Unplanned pregnancies increase women's risk for violence**

**Violence increases women's risk for unplanned pregnancies**





# Adolescent Rapid Repeat Pregnancy



Adolescent mothers who experienced physical abuse within three months after delivery were **nearly twice** as likely to have a repeat pregnancy within 24 months.

Raneri & Wiemann, 2007

## The Advocacy Movement's Analysis of Intimate Partner Violence

We care about all relationship violence, but we are especially concerned with helping people who are dealing with patterns of behaviors that

create power imbalances

result in entrapment and real limits on one partner's decision-making

are reinforced by threats & punishments

are backed up by social inequalities

# What About Teens?

- Teen girls in abusive relationships are 3.5 times more likely to become pregnant than those who are not being abused (Roberts, Auinger, & Klein, 2005)
- Teen moms abused by partners are twice as likely to have a rapid repeat pregnancy (Raineri & Weimann, 2007)



# What We Learned

Survivors benefit when advocates initiate conversations about reproductive coercion.

No single group of professionals can deal with these issues in isolation – it takes a village.

Because pregnant & parenting women & teens are already seeking services in the community, we need to reach out to a wide variety of service providers.

# Harm Reduction Strategies

## Initiate the Conversation

Emergency  
Contraception

Stealth Birth  
Control

# Stealth Birth Control



IUD – Cut the strings!

- Paraguard – no period change
- Mirena
- Skyla

Nexplanon  
“The Implant”

Depo-Provera  
“The Shot”

Great resources!  
Planned parenthood.org  
Bedsider.org

# Consider EC as a part of safety planning...

Messed with  
your birth  
control

Pressure to  
get pregnant

Threats to  
leave unless  
you get  
pregnant

Birth control  
and family  
planning  
decisions are  
not respected

Not able to  
make  
decisions  
about birth  
control or  
pregnancy

Forced to  
have  
unprotected  
vaginal  
intercourse

Pulled out  
your IUD



# Practical Guidelines for Advocates

Develop a plan

Display info on reproductive coercion

Train all advocacy staff

Learn the Safety Card intervention

Cross-train with system partners, including unconventional partners such as doulas & childbirth educators

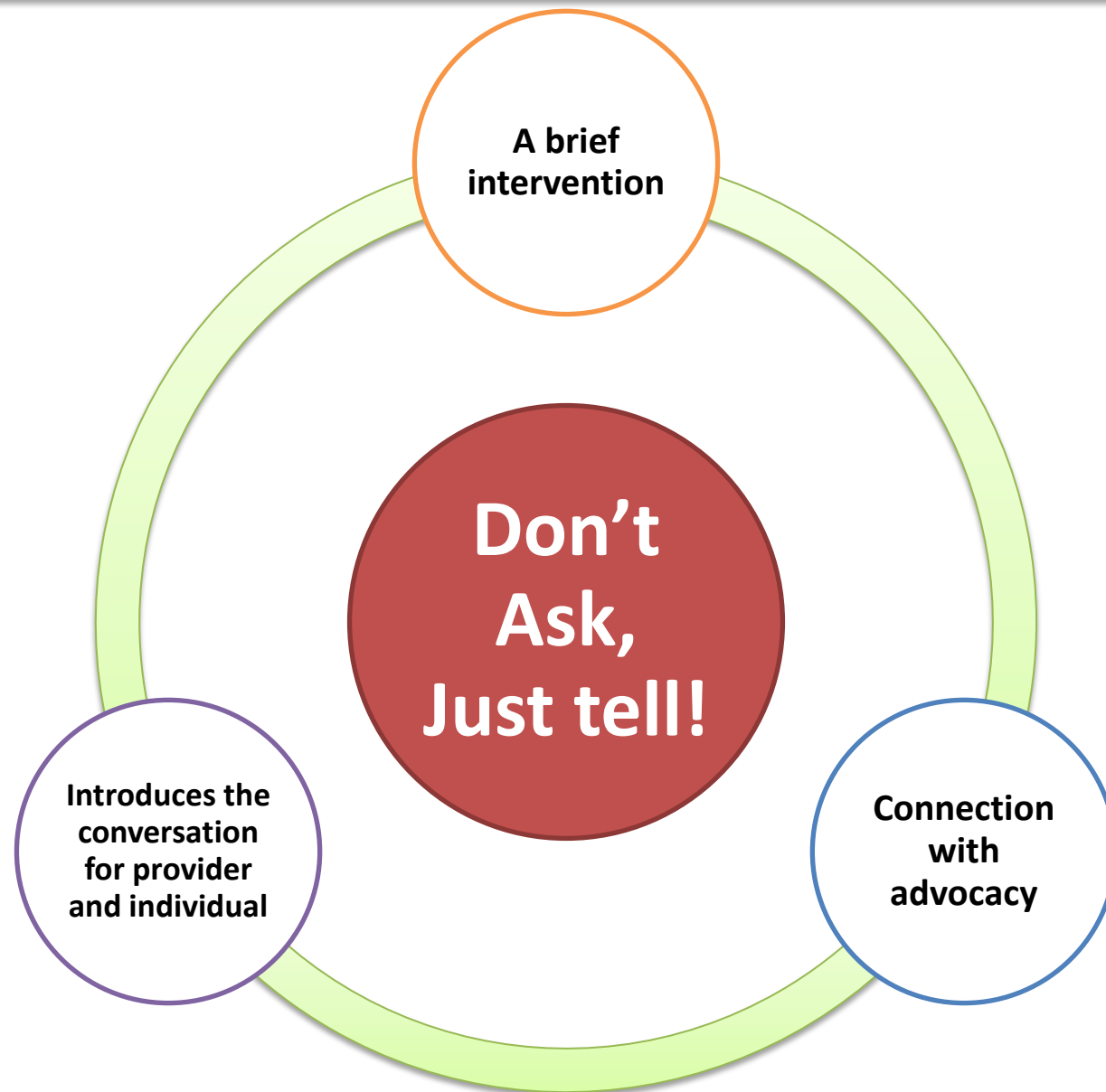
# Things You Can Do

1

## Use the Safety Card



# The Futures Without Violence Safety Card



# Brief intervention using the Futures Without Violence Safety Card

## 1. Offer the card at any contact

- Does not depend on disclosure
- Easily integrated into conversation

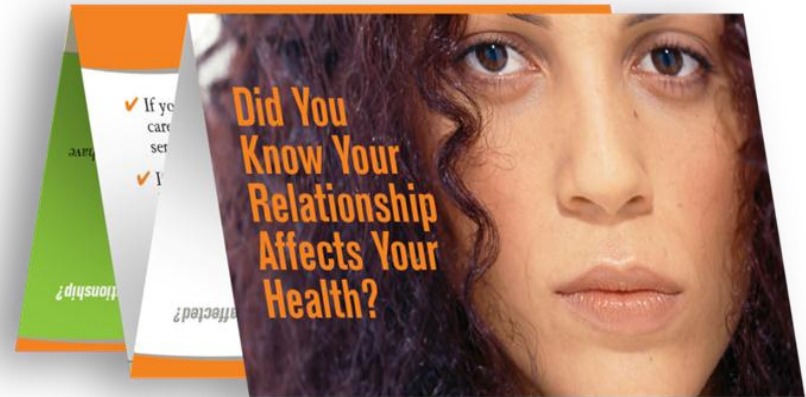
## 2. Self-assessment by individual

- Go over card with survivor

## 3. Check for questions

## 4. Can be used by system partners too

- Facilitate connection
- Helpful for friends and family



# Things You Can Do

2



Offer emergency contraception info & pregnancy tests at your initial contact

Ask pregnant survivors if they are free to make decisions about their pregnancy safely

Include access to health care and stealth birth control in safety planning

# Things You Can Do

3

Build relationships with and offer supported referrals to targeted resources

Develop specific referral handout and share it widely

<https://resources.parenthelp123.org/>  
-- Build a customized resource list



## Include information about reproductive coercion in

- Training for staff and volunteers
- Prevention programming
- Support groups
- Community education
- Any other training where appropriate

# Things You Can Do

5



Learn how trauma experiences affect pregnancy, childbirth, and caring for a baby

Work closely with childbirth professionals

Help survivors anticipate challenges and offer tools, strategies, and supported referrals



# New Tools for You

Forthcoming Practice Guidelines Toolkit – an online resource that will provide info & options for you and your system partners

Booklets on Trauma-Informed Services & Reproductive Health Advocacy Strategies

# New Tools for You

*FAQ about making over-the-counter medication available in domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault (SA) programs* handout

*Birth Control Methods that Can be Used Without a Partner's Knowledge* handout

*Emergency Contraception: It's over the counter... why not in your desk drawer?* webinar

Technical assistance (consulting) from Coalition staff

# Call us!

## **Leigh Hofheimer**

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

(206) 389-2515, Ext. 202 (Voice)

(206) 389-2900 (TTY)

[Leigh@wscadv.org](mailto:Leigh@wscadv.org)

## **Leah Holland**

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

(360) 754-7583, Ext. 106 (Voice)

(360) 709-0305 (TTY)

[Leah@wcsap.org](mailto:Leah@wcsap.org)

## **Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck**

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

(360) 754-7583, Ext. 112 (Voice)

(360) 709-0305 (TTY)

[Jennifer@wcsap.org](mailto:Jennifer@wcsap.org)

