

Workplace Safety: Domestic Violence Impact on the Workplace

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Did you know?

Prevalence of Domestic Violence in the United States:

- On average more than three women a day are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States.
- Nearly one in four women and one in ten men in the United States reports experiencing violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend at some point in their life.

Did you know?



- Domestic violence causes more harm to individuals than auto accidents, rape, and muggings...combined.
- Domestic violence happens to a wide variety of individuals, regardless of socioeconomic and education levels, age, race, sexual orientation, or religion.

Did you know?



- The decision to abuse and assault is the **abuser's choice** to make. It is up to individuals to control their behavior.
- Whatever the reason abusers choose for their behavior, the simple answer is that there is **no excuse** for assaulting a partner.

intimate partner violence

noun

1. Physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression by a current or former intimate partner.
2. Is preventable.

How does this affect your workplace?



Productivity

- Distracted, unfocused and stressed

Absenteeism

- 85% of victims report being absent from work due to the abuse. Absence from work is often related to:
- injuries, shame, depression, fearing for one's own or one's children's safety, fatigue, and/or the need to attend appointments with doctors, lawyers, or law enforcement for issues related to the abuse.

How does this affect your workplace?



Tardiness

- 50% and 60% of victims reported being late for work or leaving work early due to domestic violence issues

Job loss

- 91% of victims had resigned or lost a job in the last year as a direct result of violence at home

Cost to organizations

- Productivity, absenteeism, tardiness, job loss rates



Warning signs and risk factors for domestic violence in workplaces

RECOGNIZE that a colleague may be involved in an abusive relationship.

Here are some warning signs to look for:

- Change in job performance: poor concentration, errors, slowness, inconsistent work quality.
- An unusual number of phone calls/text messages, strong reactions to those calls/text messages, and/or a reluctance to converse or respond to phone/text messages.
- Co-workers receive insensitive or insulting messages intended for the colleague experiencing abuse.
- Disruptive personal visits to workplace by present or former partner or spouse.
- Questions about whereabouts, company and activities from a spouse or former spouse.

Warning signs of abusive behavior



- Is absent or late related to conflict at home
- Calls or contacts their partner repeatedly during work
- Bullies' others at work
- Blames others for problems, especially their partner
- Denies problems
- Can't take criticism and often acts defensively when challenged
- Acts like they are superior and of more value than others in their home
- Controls their partner or ex-partner's activities

Stigma...



Points of Concern	Points to Consider
You feel it's not your business	it could be a matter of life or death- violence is everyone's business
you don't know what to say	saying you care and you are concerned is a good start
you might make things worse	doing nothing is more likely to make things worse
you are afraid the perpetrators violence will turn on you and threaten the safety of the workplace	inform the police if you received threats
it's not serious enough to involve the police	police are trained to respond to situations like these
they were worried about maintaining confidentiality in the workplace	occupational health and safety read legislation requires workplaces to both consider safety and respect privacy of employees

Why people experiencing abuse may choose not to disclose



- Fear losing their job
- See it as a personal/private matter
- Fear being humiliated by the perpetrator
- Are too ashamed to speak about it
- Feel co-workers, supervisors or union representatives are friends of the perpetrator
- Fear being held responsible for the domestic/intimate partner violence
- Are worried about cultural taboos (bringing shame or dishonor to the family)
- Do not recognize or want to recognize the experiences as abusive
- Believe that the abuse is their fault

People experiencing abuse might choose to disclose if...



- Have a sympathetic supervisor, co-workers or union representatives who are willing to listen, and they feel safe in their work environment
- Need someone to confide in and talk to
- Want to explain their decreased work performance, increased absences or tardiness
- Need time off from work for court appearances or medical appointments
- Want to explain past/future phone calls or visits from the perpetrator
- Want to warn the workplace that the perpetrator may show up there
- Are afraid for their safety

What is your role as an employer?



To recognize domestic violence by

- paying attention to signs that abuse may be happening.
- developing policies and programs to help workers who are victims of domestic violence.

To respond to warning signs by

- Offering help and support to victims of violence.
- Do **not** give personal advice or counselling. Instead, have empathy and don't be judgmental.

To refer people to the help they need by

- telling your employee or co-worker about supports in the workplace and in the community

Creating Effective Workplace Domestic Violence Program



Organize a team

- Form a stakeholder group of representatives
- survey employees on workplace safety including domestic violence to get ideas and employee awareness

Develop a compliant policy

- Companies should work directly with their legal departments to develop policies and programs, using the latest information on legislation regarding intimate partner violence, leave for victims of domestic violence, nondiscrimination laws, and workplace restraining orders.

Creating Effective Workplace Domestic Violence Program



Provide training

- Supervisors and managers should have an understanding of how to recognize and respond to signs of domestic violence
- Training should include issues of privacy and confidentiality
- Outline how to respond sensitively and confidentially when victimized employees are identified

Creating Effective Workplace Domestic Violence Program



Human Resource Response/Managerial...

1. Communicate your concerns for the employee's safety. It's important to ask the victim what changes could be made to make him or her feel safer.
2. Tell the employee that you believe him or her. "Listening, listening, listening, is really important,"
3. Refer the employee to an EAP or local and national domestic violence centers **1-800-799-7233**
4. Be clear that your role is to try to help and not to judge

Creating Effective Workplace Domestic Violence Program



Build awareness

Incorporate information about awareness of domestic violence into

- Employee orientation programs
- Wellness and safety fairs
- Employee Handbook
- Internet site
- Newsletters
- Payroll stuffers
- Emails and posters

Employees need to know that they will not be penalized for seeking help

Question's



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V8FSVSP>