

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is abuse of one person by another in an intimate relationship. It can involve verbal, emotional and physical abuse, including threats, insults, pushing, punching, slapping, choking, sexual assault, stalking and assault with weapons.

Any act of domestic violence is something to take seriously.

Domestic violence occurs in all age groups and among all races, ethnicities, economic and educational levels. It can happen between a man and a woman or involve same-sex partners. The violence is rarely a one-time event. The usual pattern is that the violence escalates in frequency and severity over time.

Some facts about domestic violence:

- ◆ Nearly 1 in 4 American women report being raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former partner or date.
- ◆ Women are 5 to 8 times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner.
- ◆ More than 1 million women are stalked each year in the U.S., and over 25% of them report missing work as a result of the stalking.
- ◆ On average, more than three women are murdered by their partners in this country every day. In 2000, 1,247 women were killed by an intimate partner. The same year, 440 men were killed by an intimate partner.

Domestic violence is a workplace concern for employers

Domestic violence doesn't remain in the home. Abuse affects victims physically and mentally. Abusers have been known to come to the workplace. Survivors can be distracted by threatening phone calls, letters or e-mails, absent because of injuries, or less productive and unable to focus because of extreme stress.

If an employee is a victim of domestic violence, it is likely that the abuser will reach her by some method at work.

Domestic violence is not just a family problem. It is a crime with serious repercussions for the victim, her children, her co-workers, her employer and the entire community.

Domestic violence's impact at work:

- ◆ Victims lose a total of nearly 8 million days of paid work a year as a result of the physical and mental abuse they suffer. This is the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs.
- ◆ The health-related costs of rape, physical assault, stalking and homicide by intimate partners exceed \$5.8 billion each year.
- ◆ 68% of corporate leaders say a company's financial performance would benefit if domestic violence were addressed among its employees.
- ◆ Over 75% of abusers used workplace resources at least once to express remorse or anger, check up on, pressure, or threaten the victim.

How can supervisors help?

The following signs might indicate an employee is being abused: unexplained bruises or injuries with no logical explanation, frequent absences, trouble concentrating, or receiving upsetting calls, letters or e-mails. Here are some steps to help someone in this situation:

- ◆ Learn about domestic violence.
- ◆ Create a work environment where employees feel safe talking about personal issues. Respect confidentiality.
- ◆ Listen without judging. A battered woman may believe the negative messages she receives from her abuser. She may feel responsible, ashamed, inadequate and afraid that you will view her in the same way.
- ◆ Have her calls screened. Transfer harassing calls to security. Remove her name from company phone directories or web-based lists.
- ◆ Offer her flexible or alternate work hours. Give her a secure workspace.
- ◆ Help her create a safety plan for the workplace and home, including transportation issues.
- ◆ Refer her to community services, such as the local domestic violence program.

Respect the employee's boundaries and privacy, even if you disagree with her choices. It is difficult to leave the relationship when there are emotional or financial issues or children involved. Realize that the most dangerous time for her is when she threatens the control of her abuser by attempting to leave him.

Creating a Safe Workplace

Of the approximately 1.7 million incidents of workplace violence that occur in the US every year, nearly 19,000 are committed by an intimate partner. When an employee is the target of attack in the workplace by an intimate partner, other employees may be placed at risk. Here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Determine if your company's employee assistance program includes domestic violence services or referrals.
- ◆ Establish a training program on domestic violence for all managers and supervisors at your workplace to help them know how to respond to victims in their employ.
- ◆ Sponsor a workshop on domestic violence for all staff members.
- ◆ Provide victim safety information in private places, such as pay envelopes or restrooms.
- ◆ Arrange training for security personnel on safety procedures that meet the special needs of battered women who may be harassed or stalked at work.
- ◆ Set up a meeting between your security personnel and local law enforcement to help facilitate collaboration and information sharing.
- ◆ Support your local community domestic violence programs. Contact them to ask how your company can be involved.



Community Crisis Center Services

Services to victims of domestic violence, their family members and significant others include:

- ◆ Emergency shelter for women and their children fleeing abusive situations
- ◆ 24-hour crisis intervention hotline and information and referral services
- ◆ Emergency response to victims at area hospitals by trained volunteers
- ◆ Help obtaining Orders of Protection
- ◆ Advocacy with civil and criminal justice systems
- ◆ Individual counseling in Elgin, St. Charles and Hanover Park
- ◆ Weekly support groups for victims of domestic violence
- ◆ Parenting groups to encourage positive parenting and non-violent discipline
- ◆ Children's groups for witnesses of domestic violence
- ◆ Off-site counseling groups for batterers to help them change their behavior

Community Education

We welcome the opportunity to share information about our services. To schedule a presentation or workshop for your employees or organization, please call us at 1-847-697-2380.

EMPLOYERS WORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Community Crisis Center

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