

Domestic Violence & the Workplace



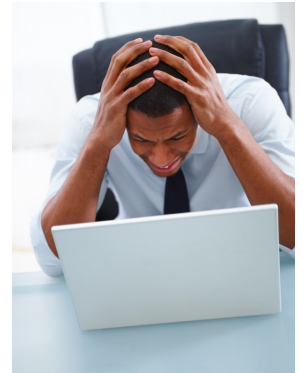
Domestic Violence Defined

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a serious social problem that occurs within the context of a relationship (e.g. boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, LGBT relationships, ex-partners) and refers to a pattern of behaviors utilized to have power and control over a partner. These behaviors occur under the context of physical abuse, emotional and mental abuse, verbal abuse, spiritual abuse, sexual abuse, and/or financial abuse.

Impact

Fear, threats and violence are not limited to the home environment. The abuse may follow a person into their place of employment. Some abusers use the workplace as another site where they can cause injury and harm to victims/survivors. In fact, most lethal injuries related to intimate partner violence occur at the workplace. Employers need to be prepared to address the issue of domestic violence as it directly impacts the workplace by: raising healthcare costs, increasing potential liability, affecting job performance and human loss.



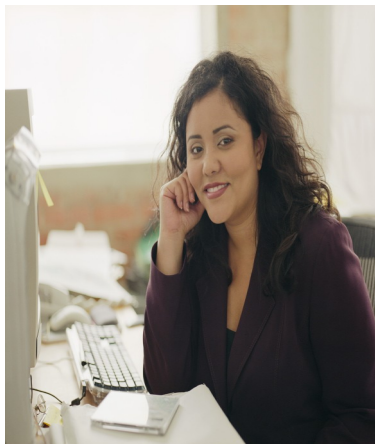
Workplace Statistics

- Homicide is the leading cause for death of women in the workplace.
- Lost productivity and earnings due to intimate partner violence accounts for almost \$1.8 billion each year
- Intimate partner violence victims lose nearly 8.0 million days of paid work each year - the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs and nearly 5.6 million days of household productivity.
- 68% of senior executives surveyed agreed that their company's financial performance would benefit from addressing the issue of domestic violence among its employees
- Of the approximately 1.7 million incidents of workplace violence that occur in the US every year, 18,700 are committed by an intimate partner: a current or former spouse, lover, partner, or boyfriend/girlfriend.
- 96% of battered workers experience problems at work due to abuse.
- 74 %of battered workers are harassed while at work by their abuser.

Related to these numbers is the human impact. Everyone: victim, co-workers, and employers are affected by domestic violence.

Statistics Source: American Institute on Domestic Violence

Safety Planning



Following are tips for victims/survivors to consider when safety planning at work:

Keep a copy of your restraining order at work.

- Attach the abuser's picture to the restraining order.
- Speak with your supervisor about the violence to discuss safety measures; time off and benefits.
- Take breaks and meals with company.
- Ask a security guard to walk you to your transportation.
- If the abuser contacts you at work, document it. Save voicemails and print e-mails.
- Change your email and extension.
- Consider changing your work site or work station.
- Change your route to work.
- Carpool.

How Can Employers Respond to Domestic Violence in the Workplace?

Where do I find DV Assistance?

For immediate law enforcement response:
9-1-1

To speak with a domestic violence advocate:
Interface Family Violence Response Team (IFVRT)
1-800-636-6738 24 hr hotline

To find out about your employment rights:
The Domestic Violence & Employment Project
888-864-8335 or 415-593-0033

In an abusive relationship, the batterer may enter the partner's workplace environment. This may include stalking, harassment, threats, and physical violence. Additionally, if the abusive relationship has developed among two employees, a restraining order may be placed on one of the partners. Some steps employers may take to address domestic violence in the workplace include:

- Develop domestic violence policies that can assist and meet the needs of those being affected by it.
- Provide domestic violence education to employees.
- Provide company personnel with the proper tools and training to respond to situations involving domestic violence.
- Know of experts or law personnel that can be contacted to assist with a situation involving domestic violence.
- **Find an appropriate time and place to speak with employee**
- Provide administrative support to the employee.
- Comply with all local, state and federal laws.
- Change personnel information (contact information; beneficiary information; wage allocation) with employee
- Protect confidentiality of employee.
- Link employee with community resources.

Adapted from **10 Things Employers Can Do**, by Robin H. Thompson, Esq.