

## 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 a co-worker 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.
- ◆ An estimated 24-30% of abused working women lose their jobs due to their domestic violence situation.
- ◆ 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 co-workers help?

The following signs might indicate a co-worker 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.
- ◆ Try to reach out to her in a trusting and unthreatening way. Remember to respect her confidentiality.
- ◆ Listen without judging. A battered woman may believe the negative things she hears from her abuser. She may feel responsible, ashamed, inadequate and afraid that you will view her that way.
- ◆ Let her know you care about her. Tell her she is not responsible for the abuse.
- ◆ Offer her flexible or alternate work hours. Give her a secure workspace.
- ◆ Explain that domestic violence is a crime. She can seek protection from the police or courts and help from a domestic violence program.
- ◆ Give her contact information for your local domestic violence program, and written materials about what she can do to protect herself.

Respect your co-worker'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.

## Workplace Safety Plan

When someone is the target of attack in the workplace by an intimate partner, others may be placed at risk. It is important for the one at risk to have a safety plan for home and work. Here are some suggestions you might make to your co-worker:

- ◆ Talk with someone at the workplace you trust, such as your supervisor, or human resources manager, about the situation.
- ◆ If your workplace has security, notify them of your safety concerns. Provide a picture of the batterer and a copy of protective orders to security and reception staff and your supervisor.
- ◆ Have your calls screened. Transfer harassing calls to security. Remove your name from directories and lists.
- ◆ Think about your safety in the parking lot. Ask for a security escort, and to park close to the entrance.
- ◆ Ask co-workers to call the police if your partner shows up to threaten or harass you at work.
- ◆ Ask about flexible or alternate work hours and a secure workspace.
- ◆ Review the safety of your childcare arrangements. Give a picture of the batterer and a copy of protective orders to your day care provider. Change to a new day care if necessary.



## 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 co-workers or organization, please call us at 1-847-697-2380.

# EMPLOYEES WORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



**Community Crisis Center**

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