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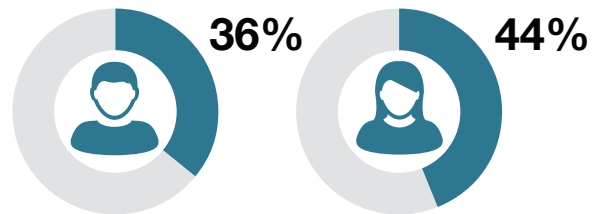
Healthy &
Respectful
Workplace



TIPS TO ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WHEN IT AFFECTS THE WORKPLACE

Domestic violence can be committed by a current or former intimate partner or by a family member. It can take many forms, including physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic, and can affect anyone regardless of race, ethnicity, age or income. Domestic violence also has the potential to spill over into the workplace. It may put the targeted employee at risk and may pose a threat to co-workers and clients.

In a 2018 survey of the Canadian population, 44% of women and 36% of men (age 15 and over) reported experiencing some kind of psychological, physical or sexual abuse during an intimate relationship in their lifetime. Women were more likely than men to have experienced physical abuse (23% versus 17%, respectively), sexual abuse (12% versus 2%), and psychological abuse (43% versus 35%).¹



Have experienced some kind of intimate partner violence

What are signs a co-worker may be experiencing domestic violence?

- Has unexplained injuries
- Misses work or is regularly late or sick
- Seems sad, lonely, withdrawn, and/or afraid
- Has trouble concentrating on a task
- Receives upsetting phone calls or text messages throughout the day
- Is reluctant to leave work

How does domestic violence affect the workplace?



The targeted employee may be repeatedly absent from work due to illness, injuries, and/or stress.



The targeted employee may be less productive due to stress and distraction.



The abuser may harass or assault the employee at their place of employment.



Staff may become anxious and fear for their co-worker's and their own safety.

What can you do if you are experiencing domestic violence?

- Call a provincial crisis hotline
- Contact a sexual assault or domestic violence treatment centre
- Go to a shelter
- Find a safe person to talk with at the office (employer, office manager, co-worker)
- Inform your employer if the situation is escalating

¹Cotter A. Intimate partner violence in Canada, 2018: An overview. *Juristat*. Catalogue no. 85-002-X. Ottawa: Statistics Canada; 2021. Available from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00003-eng.htm>



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Tips for co-workers

- Check in with your colleague (e.g., “I couldn’t help but notice...”) and let them know that they can talk to you.
- Encourage your colleague to save threatening voice mails or emails received at work in case they are needed for future legal action.
- Offer to screen your colleague’s phone calls or emails.
- Suggest that your colleague park close to the building entrance and request security escorts, if available at your workplace.
- Provide phone numbers for local shelters, community services, and other supports.

Tips for employers

- Include information and resources on domestic violence in your workplace violence prevention policy and program.
- Educate all employees on:
 - the policy and program
 - the signs of domestic violence
 - the appropriate actions to take at your workplace
- Act immediately upon any verbal or written report received from an employee.
- Develop a safety plan to ensure the targeted employee is protected while at work.
- Encourage the targeted employee to include the workplace in any restraining order.
- With the permission of the employee, provide staff with a photo or description of their abuser.
- Inform staff if a restraining order is in place.
- If the abuser enters the workplace, ask them politely to leave.
- Call police if the abuser becomes abusive, violent or is violating a restraining order at the workplace.

What are warning signs of potential violence?

When an abuser enters the workplace, their body language may signal the need for caution. Be alert to the following signs and behaviours:

- flushed or pale face
- shallow, rapid breathing
- sweating, trembling or shaking
- pacing, restlessness or repetitive movements
- clenched jaws or fists
- exaggerated or violent gestures and loud remarks
- scowling, sneering or use of abusive language
- glaring or avoiding eye contact
- violation of personal space

If you or a co-worker is experiencing domestic violence, please visit [Western University’s Workplace Harassment and Violence Resources \(www.learningtoendabuse.ca/docs/List-of-Support-Resources--BILINGUAL-.pdf\)](http://www.learningtoendabuse.ca/docs/List-of-Support-Resources--BILINGUAL-.pdf) to find support resources in your province.



If you are looking for resources to support your clients who may be experiencing domestic violence, please visit [VEGA Family Violence Education Resources \(www.cdha.ca/vega\)](http://www.cdha.ca/vega).