

BOTTOMLINE

ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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COMMUNITY VOICE



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Q: What role does an organization's CEO and/or Senior Management have in educating employees about domestic violence?

A: The CEO is the primary caretaker of the organization and all of its resources. The CEO and senior staff must make it clear that domestic violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. When signs of domestic violence materialize, it is important that staff take a proactive stance and provide the employees with the support and assistance they need. A survivor knows better than anyone what the perpetrator is capable of, and as a CEO, it is critical that organizational leaders understand and work with the survivor to determine what is the safest approach for both the individual and the workplace.

Q: Have coworkers ever disclosed that they have experienced domestic violence and did you know how to assist and/or where to refer them?

A: Not exactly, but a staff member made us aware that someone was stalking them. This resulted in senior staff reporting the matter to law enforcement and the individual was placed on notice not to contact the employee in the future. In addition, staff was provided with a photo of the suspect and advised to report any sighting of the individual to senior staff. Fortunately, this quick action resolved the matter. We recognize that in this situation it was safe for us to contact law enforcement. However, we also understand that a survivor of domestic violence may

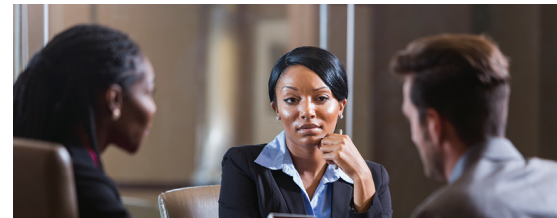
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What Is Domestic Violence and How Can Employers Respond?

Domestic violence is not a private, family matter; the violence, or the effect of the violence can, and does spill into the workplace. It is a difficult subject; but, with four to five women murdered by their husbands or partners each day in the United States,¹ and more than two million injuries each year,² it is unrealistic and dangerous to ignore the impact domestic violence has in our communities, our homes, and in our work places.

Florida defines domestic violence as any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another. However, domestic violence is more than just physical assault, it is a pattern of behaviors that individuals use against their intimate partners or former partners to establish power and control. It may include physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, or economic abuse, as well as the use of threats, isolation, pet abuse, using children as pawns, and a variety of other behaviors to maintain power over one's partner through violence, fear and intimidation. It can effect anyone, anywhere and at any time.

Each year in the United States, nearly 8 million paid workdays are lost as a result of domestic violence, the equivalent of 32,000 full-time jobs.³ The cost of domestic violence is high; not just in lost days of work, but in lost productivity, in employee job performance and in health care costs. It is estimated that the cost of domestic violence to the United States



economy is more than \$8.3 billion, this includes medical care, mental health services, and lost productivity.⁴

It is likely that as employers you know someone who has experienced domestic violence, as well as someone who has perpetrated violence against an intimate partner. You may be surprised to find that both are not who you might expect. Many employers believe that it can't happen within their organization, or to their employees. However, 71% of human resources and security personnel reported incidents of domestic violence on company property.⁵ This is especially staggering as it is specific to incidents of domestic violence at the workplace and does not include violence that occurs in the home or elsewhere.

As employers, you may not know what to do or how to help. The following is provided to give you information about what domestic violence is and isn't, potential signs that someone may be experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence, and suggestions about how to help. The bullet points are not exhaustive and additional information and resources are available through your community's certified domestic violence center, the statewide Florida Domestic

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Fast Facts About Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence does not stop at the threshold of people’s homes. Statistics show that 74% of domestic violence victims are also harassed at work.
- Domestic violence costs U.S. businesses nearly \$6 billion annually in aggregate costs, including in excess of \$4.1 billion in direct medical and mental health services.
- 40% of Senior Corporate Executives report being personally aware of a victim of domestic violence in their or another work place.
- Relatives and other personal acquaintances committed 28% of all workplace homicides in which women were victims, and 4% of all workplace homicides in which men were victims.
- A phone survey of 1,200 full-time employees found that 44% of full-time employed adults personally experienced domestic violence’s effect in their workplaces, and 21% identified themselves as a victim.

How Can Employers Respond? *continued from page 1*

Violence Hotline, or by emailing: bottomlineondv@fcadv.org.

What you should know about domestic violence

- Domestic violence is about power and control.
- Domestic violence occurs regardless of age, race, religion, and socio-economic and educational divides.
- Domestic violence and dating violence are not always physical.
- Domestic violence is not a disagreement, a marital spat or an anger management problem. It is abusive, disrespectful, and hurtful actions that one partner chooses to use against their partner.
- A victim of domestic violence is more often at a heightened risk when they choose to leave an abusive relationship.
- Domestic and dating violence is never

the fault of the victim. The perpetrator is completely responsible for their behavior, though they frequently blame their partner.

- Domestic violence can happen to anyone.

Recognizing the signs of a victim

- Frequently calls in sick.
- Has unexplained bruises and is prone to repeated “accidents”.
- Wears clothing that may seem inappropriate for the season, i.e. long sleeves or turtlenecks during the summer.
- Receives repeated phone calls that result in an emotional reaction.
- Isolation and/or avoidance of coworkers.
- Sensitive about home life or personal situations.

Recognizing the signs of an abuser

- Blames others for their problems, es-

Community Voice *continued from page 1*

not be in a safe situation to report the abuse to law enforcement at the time they disclose to an employer. Safety is the critical issue and as employers we should provide survivors with the information and resources available either through the local certified domestic violence center or the statewide Florida Domestic Violence Hotline. If and when the survivor feels safe to contact law enforcement, as an employer we should support his/her decision.

Q: If a colleague discloses to you that they are experiencing domestic violence, what resources would you look for to assist them and how would you know where to refer them for support and advocacy?

A: If a staff member did disclose they were a victim of domestic violence I would encourage them to report the matter to law enforcement if the abuse fell into a reportable act of domestic violence – and if they were in a safe position to do so. We know that when there is a change in the power and control dynamic the risk of lethality increases; therefore, we would want to ensure the victim had access not just to law enforcement, but also to safety planning and would support them in reaching out to the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline and provide them with information about available victim services programs such as the certified domestic violence center and supportive programs in the area.

pecially their partner.

- Frequently calls or emails their partner.
- May use company property to help stalk the victim such as phones, security equipment, or vehicles.
- May be frequently absent for short periods of time while calling the victim or stalking the victims’ home or place of work.
- May display outbursts of anger toward their partner and/or others.
- Gives their partner threatening or intimidating looks that may result in a victim looking at the abuser before speaking because of being frightened or intimidated.
- Answers questions directed toward their partner.
- Is often very loud or speaks in a condescending manner to others.

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Your L.I.F.E. A Statement of Empowerment and Determination

your
L.I.F.E.

Learn Individual Financial Empowerment

Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence have partnered to create Your L.I.F.E. (Learn Individual Financial Empowerment), a web-based financial education campaign, which provides financial resources and information to survivors of domestic violence to gain a better understanding of money management and how to achieve financial security. Your L.I.F.E. will empower and assist survivors by raising awareness and increasing financial literacy.

“As a husband and father, it pains me to know of the many occurrences of domestic violence and financial abuse, one of the most powerful tactics abusers use to keep a victim trapped in an abusive relationship,” said Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, who oversees the Florida Department of Financial Services. “I am committed to empowering survivors, and Your L.I.F.E. strives to do just that. The initiative is a step in the right direction and will offer tools, resources and educational materials to help

survivors seeking financial independence gain a better understanding of money management which may ultimately help them prepare for their financial future.”

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, along with fear, domestic violence survivors cite income and financial security as the strongest deterrents to leaving an abusive relationship. In 98 percent of abusive relationships, survivors have indicated that one of the primary reasons for staying in or returning to an abusive relationship is their inability to financially provide for themselves and their children.

Whether an abuser manipulates finances as a form of abuse or a survivor feels incapable of escaping an abusive situation because of financial struggles, finances often are a barrier to creating a life free from abuse. While financial abuse is a common tactic used by perpetrators, it is not widely understood, making it one of the most powerful methods of trapping a survivor in an abusive relation-

ship. The lack of financial independence may reduce the likelihood of a survivor remaining safe should they decide to leave.

The effects of financial abuse can be devastating, and the financial impact of domestic violence can last for 10-20 years while the survivor rebuilds credit and secures housing, childcare, and transportation. The Your L.I.F.E. initiative provides online assistance and education for survivors to assist them in achieving financial independence. The educational program includes topics such as budgeting and saving, repairing credit while reducing debt, and information on the different types of accounts offered by various financial institutions. Online tools offer information and resources on life events such as purchasing or leasing a car, buying or renting a home, and/or securing various types of insurance. In addition, the website has designated calculators available to assist survivors when budgeting for housing, childcare, repairs, and other expenses. Survivors can also download a resource guide that includes activities and worksheets to help implement the information secured through the Your L.I.F.E. program.

Every Floridian deserves to take charge of their financial future, and the Your L.I.F.E. initiative will help survivors of domestic violence gain financial independence and economic empowerment.

For more information on Your L.I.F.E. and other financial education materials, visit www.YMM.MyFloridaCFO.com/YMM.



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*Jeff Atwater
Chief Financial Officer
State of Florida*

How Can Employers Respond? *continued from page 2*

- Often speaks in a demeaning manner to the victim or about the victim to others.

How to help

- Offer to listen, don't judge and provide a safe and supportive environment.
- Don't try to rescue your employee, they know their situation better than anyone else.
- Advising a domestic violence victim to leave may put them and their children at risk. Instead encourage them to work with a certified domestic violence center to develop a safety plan.
- Follow, or create, workplace violence policies and procedures.
- Partner with your local certified domestic violence center.
- Have resources and information available such as the statewide Florida Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-500-1119, available 24 hours a day, and resources regarding your communities certified domestic violence center.

Dealing with employees who batter⁶

- Put policies in writing
- Assess the risks

- Respond appropriately
- Discipline or terminate carefully
- Provide counseling
- Take action

Additional resources

Workplaces Respond To Domestic and Sexual Violence at www.workplacesrespond.org

Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence www.caepv.org

American Bar Association Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic_violence.html

¹Catalano, S., Smith, E., Snyder, H., Rand, M. 2009. Female Victims of Violence. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvv.pdf>.

²U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2008. Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 57(05):113-117. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5705a1.htm>.

³Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. 2003. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/IPVBook-Final-Feb18.pdf.

⁴Max W, Rice DP, Finkelstein E, Bardwell RA, Leadbetter S. The economic toll of intimate partner violence against women in the United States. *Violence and Victims* 2004;19(3):259-72.

⁵Issac, Nancy E., Sc. D., Corporate Sector Response to Domestic Violence, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University School of Public Health, 1997.

⁶Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence. Available at: <http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/docdetail.php?docID=88&catID=7>.

FCADV provides a number of resources that are available to businesses and the general public to better understand the affects of domestic violence and the resources that are available for survivors and their children. For the business community, in addition to the BottomLine on Domestic Violence newsletter, FCADV can provide your business with Domestic Violence Does Not End When the Workday Begins posters, Domestic Violence in the Workplace Training Video and guidance with domestic violence model policies.

If you would like more information about any of these resources or assistance in locating your community's local certified domestic violence center, please email:

bottomlineondv@fcadv.org

FCADV serves as the professional association for Florida's 42 certified domestic violence centers and is the primary representative of survivors and their children in the public policy arena. The Coalition works to end violence by providing leadership, advocacy, education, training, technical assistance, public policy development, public awareness and support to certified domestic violence centers in Florida.

HELPFUL TOOLS

Sponsored by FCADV and the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families.

Florida's Certified Domestic Violence Centers

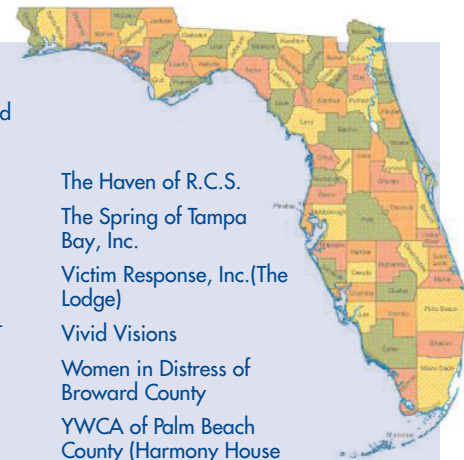
Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc.
Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, Inc.
Another Way, Inc.
CASA-Community Action Stops Abuse
Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies, Inc.
Citrus County Abuse Shelter Association
Dawn Center of Hernando County
Domestic Abuse Council, Inc.
Domestic Abuse Shelter, Inc.

Family Life Center
Favor House of Northwest Florida, Inc.
Harbor House, Inc.
Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties, Inc.
Help Now of Osceola County, Inc.
Hope Family Services, Inc.
Hubbard House, Inc.
Lee Conlee House
Martha's House, Inc.
Miami-Dade Advocates for Victims
Micah's Place

Ocala Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Center
Peace River Domestic Violence Center
Peaceful Paths
Quigley House, Inc.
Refuge House, Inc.
Safehouse of Seminole County
Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center
SafeSpace, Inc.
Safety Shelter of St. John's County (Betty Griffin House)

Salvation Army Brevard County Domestic Violence Program
Salvation Army Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Program of Panama City
Salvation Army Domestic Violence Program of West Pasco County
Serene Harbor, Inc.
Shelter for Abused Women & Children, Inc.
Shelter House, Inc.
Sunrise of Pasco County, Inc.

The Haven of R.C.S.
The Spring of Tampa Bay, Inc.
Victim Response, Inc.(The Lodge)
Vivid Visions
Women in Distress of Broward County
YWCA of Palm Beach County (Harmony House Program)



FCADV
Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Remember: Help Is Here!

Florida Domestic Violence Hotline • 1-800-500-1119 • 24 hours a day/7 days a week