

BOTTOMLINE

ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Volume 4, Issue 1

CORPORATE VOICE



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

I believe the role of senior management in educating employees about domestic violence is one of a clear, consistent, and compassionate communicator. The more employees understand the many manifestations of domestic violence, the more vigilant they will be in their personal and professional environments about helping survivors access safety services.

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

I have not been approached by a co-worker or employee, but if ever approached or asked to assist, I would most certainly encourage she or he to seek professional guidance through our local Domestic Abuse Council, a certified center with trained advocates who recognize both the physical as well as the emotional scars of domestic violence. I would offer support and whatever assistance I could including referring the person to either the statewide Florida Domestic Violence Hotline or to their local certified domestic violence center where trained advocates are available to offer assistance and support in a way that empowers survivors.

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What Employers Should Do About Domestic Violence

Commentary by Lauren Stiller Rikleen

Aside from the horrific emotional toll on families, domestic violence costs the U.S. economy more than \$8 billion a year.

In the wake of the outcry over the National Football League's weak responses to players involved in domestic abuse, it's clear employers have a responsibility to help curb one of America's biggest social and economic problems today: domestic violence. Employers must move beyond inadequate and defensive responses, and establish a zero-tolerance culture.

Leaders in the workplace have a vested interest in addressing domestic violence. In addition to the horrific emotional toll on families, the total costs to the US economy exceed \$8 billion a year, which includes \$727.8 million for lost productivity – or nearly 8 million paid work days lost each year. With such a large economic impact, it's hard to see why corporations don't do more to reduce domestic violence.

The data has long been overshadowed by a quiet adherence to 'hear no evil, see no evil.' But now we see statistics come to life through cases that have caught the public eye as incidents are captured on tape. While the scenes are brutal, they have also shown that employers often respond too softly or overlook the problems altogether. And when they do take action, it's generally only after a public outcry.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell outlined how the league will re-examine its personal conduct policy, shortly after a torrent of criticisms that he gave Ray Rice only a two-game suspension for punching his then-fiancée in an elevator.



After video of the assault was released, the Ravens cut Rice and Goodell suspended him indefinitely.

While many have criticized the NFL, others have also been seen as too soft on domestic violence cases. In August, U.S. District Court Judge Mark Fuller was arrested for beating his wife – an assault heard during a chilling 911 call for help. He accepted a plea arrangement that will allow his record to be expunged if he completes a counseling program.

To be sure, men are not the only perpetrators. Hope Solo, the star of the United States national women's soccer team, is breaking records on the field, even as she faced charges for assaulting her sister and nephew at a summer party. **(Unlike the other examples, Hope Solo's case was related to familial violence not intimate partner violence and was dismissed early this year).*

Each of these highly publicized cases demonstrated that business leaders must take direct and aggressive steps to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. In fact, as noted in a guidebook prepared by the American Bar Association, there are federal, state and local laws and regulations that may apply to workplaces

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Fast Facts About Domestic Violence

- Economic justice and financial independence are consistently identified as top needs by domestic violence survivors.
- Behind fear, survivors often cite income, employment and financial stability as strong deterrents to leaving abusive situations.
- In 98% of domestic violence cases, financial abuse helps to keep survivors trapped in abusive relationships.
- While domestic violence and financial abuse often go hand-in-hand, nearly 8 in 10 Americans know very little about this type of abuse.
- Programs that promote financial empowerment and economic justice save lives by providing domestic violence survivors with the tools and resources they need to leave abusive partners and live independently.

Domestic Violence in the Workplace *continued from page 1*

who are themselves at risk of liability if they ignore their obligations.

Corporations should start with the implementation of clear policies and procedures. With respect to abusers, the policies should be uniformly applied – regardless of whether the perpetrator is a superstar or a rank-and-file employee. Employers should be prepared to discipline and, if need be, terminate perpetrators, following applicable legal requirements.

Workplaces must also train managers and supervisors to recognize signs that a worker may be abused at home. Such training can include guidance for ways to begin a supportive conversation with an employee that can lead to the development of an individualized safety plan.

Also, employees should have access to resources, including trained staff across Employee Assistance Plans who can counsel victims of violence as well as co-workers who may be affected. EAPs can

also assist employees in accessing available services in the community. It is also critical to offer job protection to victims who may need time away from work for counseling, to attend court hearings, or for other reasons relating to abuse.

There are, of course, a myriad of legal issues that arise. Employers need to understand the interface between providing resources and a supportive culture, and knowing when legal advice, and the involvement of law enforcement, may be needed. The workplace may be called upon to preserve important evidence, such as telephone records and emails that may show a pattern of threats to an employee.

Employers can also seek help in assisting terrified victims in the legal process, particularly those who are afraid to testify, fearful that the next beating will be inflicted when the court day ends. As an article in the American Bar Association Journal reported, employers should cre-

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3. What type of information would be helpful for your organization’s decision makers in adopting best practices to address domestic violence in the workplace?

The physician members of the VCMS continue to benefit from straight-forward, data-intense information about the physical and emotional aspects of domestic violence (physicians are required to earn continuing medical education credits on this topic for license renewal). Our members are passionate about the total well-being of their patients and staff -- having up-to-date “go-to” information and resources is key to providing appropriate aid.

ate environments where people can come forward with information, knowing that action will be taken in response.

For too long, short-term financial interests and institutional reputations mattered more than prompt protection of victims and decisive responses against perpetrators. This must end now.

Since the outcry over Rice, the NFL has hardened its rules for employees who violate the league’s domestic violence policy. As welcome as the new policies are, there’s more it could do to prevent these problems. Commissioner Goodell, sponsors of professional sports, and employers across the country have the opportunity to take the lead and take a stand. It will be good for their image and their bottom line. For victims of abuse, there may not be time to wait until tomorrow.

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Lauren Stiller Rikleen, author of You Raised Us – Now Work With Us: Millennials, Career Success, and Building Strong Workplace Teams, is the president of the Rikleen Institute for Strategic Leadership and Executive-in-Residence at the Boston College Center for Work & Family. She was a founding member and second president of the Women’s Independence Network, which helped create the first shelter for victims of domestic violence in the MetroWest suburbs of Boston.

Florida Leaders Join FCADV and the Allstate Foundation to Launch Financial Literacy Month

FCADV and the Allstate Foundation launched National Financial Literacy Month and their partnership to raise awareness about the importance of economic empowerment and financial independence in the lives of domestic violence survivors and their children. Joining FCADV and the Allstate Foundation at an April 1st press conference were Attorney General Pam Bondi and Senator Denise Grimsley; both stressed the need for innovative economic empowerment partnerships that address the complex needs of domestic violence survivors.

“Economic justice and financial independence are consistently identified as top needs by domestic violence survivors,” said Tiffany Carr, President/CEO of FCADV. “Programs that promote financial literacy save lives by providing domestic violence survivors with the tools and resources they need to leave abusive partners and live independently.”

FCADV and the Allstate Foundation have expanded their economic justice collaboration to include *Changing Lives: A Partnership Between Florida Allstate Agents and Domestic Violence Centers*. The overarching theme of the project is to create partnerships at the local/community level between Allstate agents and certified domestic violence

centers.

“The Allstate Foundation has had a long standing commitment to the economic empowerment of domestic violence victims,” said Mike Sheely, Field Senior Vice President for Allstate Insurance Company. “The *Changing Lives* partnership allows us to reach deeper into the communities to support economic empowerment programs and further our impact by partnering with Allstate agency owners around the state to hold supply drives for their local shelters.”

As part of the project, a Statewide Advisory Team is working within their respective communities to create plans for increasing financial literacy, economic justice opportunities for survivors of domestic violence, and promoting activities and projects that engage Allstate agents as strong partners, such as *#SpringCleaning4DV**.

Attorney General Pam Bondi emphasized that education and awareness are needed to empower survivors of domestic violence. “Financial abuse is just one of many forms of domestic violence,” said Bondi. “Through the programs my office supports, and initiatives like the *Changing Lives* partnership, we can help provide survivors with the tools they need to live independently while raising awareness in the



local communities.”

Domestic violence survivors and their children spent 534,369 nights in one of Florida’s 42 certified domestic violence centers. “These statistics are startling, yet it is programs such as the *Changing Lives* and economic justice partnerships that will ultimately help reduce this number,” said Senator Denise Grimsley. “Financial security is the number one predictor of whether or not a victim of domestic violence will successfully leave and stay free from abuse.”

In addition to *Changing Lives*, FCADV and the Allstate Foundation have expanded the successful Allstate Economic Empowerment Program, *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management*. This program includes training specific to creating a financial plan, opening bank accounts, implementing matched savings programs, and helping survivors successfully meet their goals through microloans, micro enterprises or matched savings accounts provided by the participating centers.

“Training, awareness, and community engagement are all

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*Changing Lives:
A Partnership
Between Florida
Allstate Agents
and Domestic
Violence
Centers*

Partnership Spotlight *continued from page 3*

critical and will ultimately change and save lives, said Speaker Pro Tempore Matt Hudson. “The *Changing Lives* partnership encompasses each of these and has been recognized by the National Network to End Domestic Violence as a unique and model idea to engage Allstate agents with certified domestic violence centers.”

House Majority Leader Dana Young added, “The commitment to this partnership from both the Allstate Foundation and FCADV is significant and impactful. I’ve seen firsthand the difference that advocacy and financial empowerment can make in the life of a domestic violence survivor. As the project grows and expands to additional areas in the state, many more survivors will reap the benefits of this important partnership.”

“The FCADV and Florida’s 42 certified domestic violence centers are extremely proud to work with

our outstanding Allstate Foundation and Allstate agent partners,” said Carr. “We are also grateful to our elected officials who demonstrate their commitment to domestic violence survivors through their public actions and advocacy.”

**About #SpringCleaning4DV: As Floridians engage in the annual ritual of spring cleaning, it is a good time to consider donating cleaning supplies and personal items for use by survivors of domestic violence and participating certified domestic violence centers. For further information about specific certified domestic violence centers and Allstate agents involved or additional information, please visit <http://fcadv.org/fcadv-allstate> or email: AllstateProject@fcadv.org.*

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

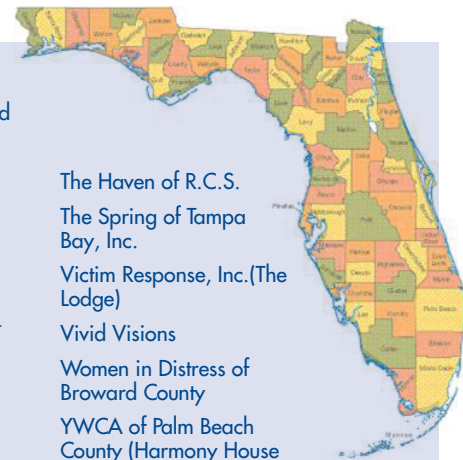
Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc.
Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, Inc.
Another Way, Inc.
CASA-Community Action Stops Abuse
Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies, Inc.
Citrus County Abuse Shelter Association
Dawn Center of Hernando County
Domestic Abuse Council, Inc.
Domestic Abuse Shelter, Inc.

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)



Remember: Help Is Here!

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



FCADV
Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence