

# BOTTOMLINE

ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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COMMUNITY VOICE



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

I'm not sure many employers and senior managers realize the extraordinary role they can play in educating their employees about domestic violence. Yes, they are aware of legal and liability issues, but there is so much more they can do. While the list is lengthy, I believe the most important thing is to create an atmosphere of respect and value, and require all employees to recognize and adhere to the same standard in their work environment.

*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?*

Before suggesting resources, my first question would be to inquire about his or her safety, and then proceed accordingly. In most cases, I would lend an ear and a heart in support, provide all the resources our organization offers, and suggest that they seek assistance if it is safe to do so. At the same time, I recognize that when a domestic violence survivor leaves or makes a change to the power and control dynamic – it is a very dangerous time. Thus, because they are the recognized experts, I would share information with her about the local certified

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## Domestic Violence in the Workplace is Everybody's Business

From the board room to the mail room and from executive staff to administrative staff, domestic violence can impact any employee in any business. The effects on business range from employee safety concerns to potentially significant costs and lost productivity. While studies differ on the overall cost of intimate partner violence to United States businesses, most place the number between 5.8 and 8.8 billion dollars. Specific to lost productivity, the costs range from 727.8 million to 1.8 billion dollars and add up to more than 7.9 million paid workdays lost per year – the equivalent of 32,000 full-time jobs.

Many businesses mistakenly believe that it won't happen to them or doesn't happen within their profession or among their employees. The facts bear out differently, as homicide is the second leading cause of death for women on the job. Of those workplace homicides, 39 percent were due to criminal intent such as a robbery, followed closely by homicides perpetrated by someone with whom the victim had a personal relationship (33 percent). The majority (78 percent) of those relationships were intimate partners.

Nationally, domestic violence harms more individuals than auto accidents, rape and muggings combined. And last year in Florida alone there were 106,882 domestic violence offenses reported to law enforcement and 205 individuals died as a direct result of domestic violence, representing approximately 20 percent of all homicides in the state.

Domestic violence is a difficult subject; but, it is impractical and in fact danger-



ous to ignore the impact this violence has in our communities, homes – and in our work places. Domestic violence does not end when someone crosses the threshold of their home to go to work. It is likely that most every employer knows someone who has experienced domestic violence, as well as someone who has perpetrated that violence. You may be surprised to find that both are not who you might expect - social stigmas and myths about domestic violence may cloud that recognition.

Would you recognize one of your employees who might be experiencing domestic violence; or, for that matter, an employee who is an abuser? Would you know how to respond if an employee disclosed they were experiencing domestic violence? If your answer is no, there are tools and resources that can assist you and your business.

A leadership team comprised of key business personnel is an important component to address domestic violence is-

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## Fast Facts About Domestic Violence

- More than half of workplace homicides perpetrated by intimate partners occurred in parking lots and public buildings.
- Nearly 33% of women killed in workplaces between 2003-2008 were killed by a current or former intimate partner.
- A survey of employees in the United States found that 44% of full-time employed adults personally experienced the effects of domestic violence in their workplaces, and 21% identified themselves as a victim of intimate partner violence.
- Only 30% of workplaces in the United States have a formal workplace violence policy, and only 44% of those have a policy to address domestic violence in the workplace.
- A poll of 1,020 men in the United States found that 61% of those surveyed thought employers should be doing more to address domestic violence.
- In the same poll, 83% said employers should have policies in place to assist victims, including job security if they take leave to get help.

## Domestic Violence in the Workplace *continued from page 1*

issues and to determine and implement the tools that will help create a safer workplace. These tools should include a domestic violence policy and protocols, and training programs for human resource personnel and supervisors on recognizing the signs of domestic violence and how to address these issues. For employees that seek assistance, have information and resources available for them as they make important life and safety decisions.

If your business has a domestic violence policy, it is always a good idea to review periodically to ensure it meets the needs of your business, your employees and complies with federal and state laws. If your business does not have a policy, you are not alone; more than 70 percent of workplaces in the United States do not have a

formal policy. Yet workplace policies can provide clear guidelines for employers and employees alike on addressing domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault as they impact the workplace.

A workplace policy will vary depending on the size, scope, and philosophy of a business, but some things to consider as part of your organization's policy include: definitions of the areas the policy will address (domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault), your company's philosophy about addressing violence in the workplace and/or a purpose statement, individuals covered by the policy, reporting and intervention procedures, confidentiality statements and agreements, security measures, protection order information

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domestic violence center where she could get answers to the many questions she may have to access safety, advocacy, and the support she needs.

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

I am fortunate to work with an organization that is very sensitive to domestic violence issues. However, because issues of trust, respect, safety, and human value are so important, it would be helpful to have information on best practices to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

and enforcement, responding to victims such as nondiscrimination and nonretaliation provisions, accommodations, assistance and benefits, safety planning, referrals to agencies that assist survivors, as well as responding to employees who commit violence. This is not an exhaustive list, but may be used as a guide to begin the process of creating a policy for your business. There are resources available to assist in this process, some examples include: Workplaces Respond To Domestic and Sexual Violence at [www.workplacesrespond.org](http://www.workplacesrespond.org), Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence [www.caepv.org](http://www.caepv.org), American Bar Association Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence [www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic\\_violence.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic_violence.html). Additionally, the Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-500-1119 is a valuable resource for anyone seeking information. The hotline's trained advocates are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for crisis intervention, advocacy, and information and referral services. The state's 42 certified domestic violence centers also are available to assist you and your employees. See the map on page 4 for the certified center in your area.

For additional information, training or technical assistance, please email: [bottomlineondv@fcadv.org](mailto:bottomlineondv@fcadv.org)

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## Expanding Access Partnership Brings Literacy Programs to Domestic Violence Centers

Approximately 36 million adults in the United States have low reading, writing, and math skills, but only 12% are enrolled in any type of adult education program. To address this significant need, ProLiteracy, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) have partnered to implement the Expanding Access project. This innovative project is designed to support social service agencies by incorporating adult literacy services into their existing program offerings. Currently, three of Florida's certified domestic violence centers are participating in the Expanding Access project.

For ProLiteracy, working with FCADV provided an opportunity to reach new groups of people not accessing education services. "We know that low-literacy skills may be intertwined with other social issues and challenges. We also know that education is a key component for people successfully overcoming these challenges," said Kevin Morgan, president and CEO of ProLiteracy.

ProLiteracy brings more than 60 years of experience and expertise in literacy work in support of the three local participating partners: Peace River Center Domestic Violence Shelter, Shelter House, and The Shelter for Abused Women and Children. In the first year of the partnership, ProLiteracy assisted each agency in assessing the needs

of their participants, and then helped them design education programs to meet those needs. In the process, ProLiteracy provides training, mentoring, and funding through the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. After the first year, ProLiteracy will help the centers develop community partnerships and identify funding to sustain the services.

All three partners get excited when they see agency staff and students champion the importance of literacy. "We want to see survivors in these programs get excited about learning and ask for more. We're already seeing that happen," Morgan said.

Each project is specifically tailored to meet the literacy needs of survivors. For example, at Peace River Center a financial literacy course teaches basic financial literacy concepts and vocabulary, including budgeting, comparison shopping, and math skills and provides the background for survivors to take the center's economic freedom course, designed to help women become financially independent. Shelter House initially offered a health literacy class, but as survivors' needs changed, ProLiteracy designed a job-search class that offers assistance with writing resumes and cover letters as well as assistance with interviewing skills. At The Shelter for Abused Women and Children the program was designed to assist survivors through an English language class to help them advocate

for themselves and their children with the various systems they may come in contact with such as healthcare, education or law enforcement. The program also assists survivors in accessing other community resources.

For over 20 years, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has been funding literacy programs across the nation. "The partnership with ProLiteracy and FCADV is making a difference in the lives of survivors of domestic violence by providing them with literacy and education skills that help empower them in reaching self-sufficiency and independence," said Denine Torr, Director of Community Initiatives for Dollar General. "By expanding access to strong models for literacy services, survivors are receiving enhanced educational support and becoming passionate about learning. We know that education is an investment that opens doors for personal, professional, and economic growth. With these three programs, we want to help individuals open more doorways to a brighter future and create models that can be replicated in other communities."

That's why ProLiteracy decided to work in Florida, Morgan said. "We knew that FCADV had a very strong coalition of local agencies," he said. "We knew we could work with them to develop great models for literacy services, and we were right. It's been a great partnership so far."



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## Domestic Violence in the Workplace *continued from page 2*

### Florida Laws

Florida Statute 741.28 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 family or household member.

Florida Statute 741.313 provides protections for victims who take time off work to attend to their specific situation under certain circumstances.

Florida law also provides a public record exemption for certain information documenting an act of domestic or sexual violence submitted to an agency by an agency employee.

### Domestic Violence Affects the Workplace

#### As a management issue:

- 96% of victims will experience problems at work due to their abuse or abuser;

- As many as 50% have lost a job due, at least in part, to domestic violence;
- Between 50 and 85% have missed work because of the abuse;
- 56% will be late for work at least five times each month;
- 54% miss a minimum of three full days of work a month

#### From a liability perspective:

Employers who fail to protect their employees from violence at work may be liable for monetary damages. Nationwide, jury awards average \$1.2 million and settlements \$600,000.

#### From a human perspective:

While the monetary costs of domestic violence are high, even more substantial are the human costs. The families torn apart, the children left parentless, the friends, and the coworkers left to wonder what they could have done while recognizing that perpetrators of the violence are solely responsible for their actions.

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](mailto: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.

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

## Florida's Certified Domestic Violence Centers

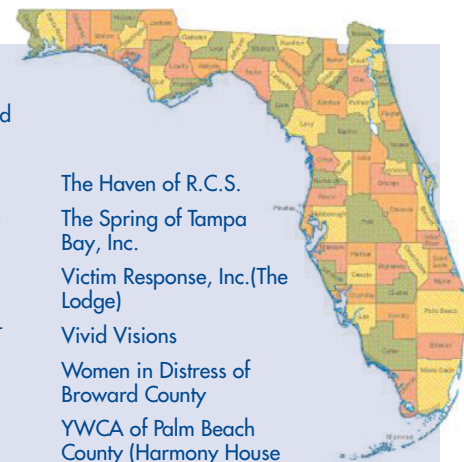
Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc.  
Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, Inc.  
Another Way, Inc.  
CASA-Community Action Stops Abuse  
Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies, Inc.  
Citrus County Abuse Shelter Association  
Dawn Center of Hernando County  
Domestic Abuse Council, Inc.  
Domestic Abuse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

HELPLEFUL TOOLS