

Domestic Violence in the Workplace



How to create a supportive workplace

Victims are more likely to disclose domestic violence situations at work when they feel safe and supported. A supervisor, co-worker, or union representative who is willing to listen can make a tremendous difference to enhancing the safety of a victim of domestic violence.

This fact sheet offers suggestions for employers interested in building a workplace where employees feel safe, supported, and valued. In a healthy workplace where difficult topics can be discussed, people are more likely to notice when a co-worker is in distress and a person experiencing domestic violence can more safely disclose her/his situation.

Without support, victims of domestic violence can feel isolated and alone. In the workplace, this can lead to a lack of concentration, increased anxiety, and poor decision-making skills. Employers can help to create a supportive work environment by promoting awareness of domestic violence, modelling respectful behaviour in the workplace, and making the workplace a safe and healthy space for everyone.

Promote awareness of domestic violence

Regularly review your workplace's violence and domestic violence policy with all staff

Display public education materials about domestic violence in accessible places like lunchrooms, washrooms, and on your organization's website

Hang domestic violence awareness posters in prominent areas of the workplace

Hold a brown-bag lunch session with police or an anti-violence organization to discuss domestic violence

Regularly circulate domestic violence prevention messages to all staff

Model respectful behaviour in the workplace

Be understanding and approachable

Be careful to preserve privacy and confidentiality as much as possible — without compromising safety

Be constructive and supportive when addressing job performance problems



Make the workplace a safe and healthy space

Hold regular safety meetings and support all staff to come forward with any safety concerns, including domestic violence

Incorporate health and safety training into orientation sessions for new hires

Have a workplace safety plan in place to deal with threats of violence at the workplace, including domestic violence

Discuss safety concerns directly with your employee who is experiencing domestic violence

Domestic violence — policies and practices

People are the most valuable asset in any workplace. Policies, practices, and programs that encourage a safe and healthy work environment enhance the well-being and productivity of workers. Including domestic violence in workplace safety policies and practices can strengthen your organization's ability to support victims of abuse and reduce the risk of a violent incident at work. Consider using the following elements to make your workplace safer.

Domestic Violence Policy

A domestic violence policy can help you support workers and deal with domestic violence that threatens to enter the workplace. Resources to assist you with creating a domestic violence policy can be found at www.worksafebc.com/domesticviolence and can be adapted to the needs of your workplace.

Workplace Safety Plan

A workplace safety plan sets out specific actions that will be taken to help keep the workplace and all workers safe from threats of domestic violence. It can help you respond more efficiently when you learn of a threat to the workplace. Learn more at www.worksafebc.com/domesticviolence.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

EAPs can provide support to employees affected by domestic violence in the workplace. An EAP may include assistance for workers dealing with domestic violence, such as counselling, legal, medical, and financial services. It is important to specify that domestic violence is included in your EAP and to ensure that human resources staff, managers, and employees know what kinds of support are available.

Safe Walk Program

If safe and appropriate, workplaces can arrange for someone such as a security member to escort concerned employees to their vehicles after work. A safe walk program can help to improve employee safety.