



Domestic Violence Information Sheet

RECOGNIZE domestic violence

1. Pay attention to signs that abuse may be happening:

- Physical injuries such as broken bones, black eye, loss of hearing
- Inappropriate clothing for the season (such as long sleeves or turtle necks in the summer or wearing sunglasses indoors)
- Uncharacteristically late or absent from work, wanting to work extra hours to avoid going home
- Change in job performance: errors, slowness, lack of concentration
- Sudden signs of anxiety and fear
- Generally acting isolated and quiet
- Disruptive visits or phone calls to the workplace by past or current partner

These warning signs are intended to support your intuition and encourage you to ask questions.

2. Ask questions, preferably in a private setting, such as an office with the door closed or away from where others can hear/see the conversation

- You might say "I saw bruises" or "I heard yelling" and "I am concerned about you".
- Or ask questions such as:
 - "Are you ok?" and confirm your assumptions on whether the person is experiencing abuse.
 - "I've noticed you've been late to work more often lately. Is anything bothering you?"
 - "You looked upset after that phone call today. I'm worried about you. Are you ok?"
 - "I overheard your partner yelling at you on the phone today. Are you ok? Do you want to talk?"

Remember that you are not a counsellor or therapist. Do not give personal advice or counselling. Instead, have empathy and don't be judgmental. The goal of these questions is for you to express concern and open a door for support.

Talking about domestic violence can be difficult. If you feel like it's none of your business...consider that an abusive relationship will only get worse as time goes on. If you don't know what to say...start with expressing concern and care from the heart and focus on being a good listener. If you're worried you will make things worse...remember that doing nothing puts everyone at the highest risk of danger. If you're worried you might be at risk of violence at work because you spoke up...you can also look to resources for help, and report any threats to the police.

RESPOND to domestic violence

1. Helpful responses if an employee discloses abuse?
 - “I believe you”, “It’s not your fault”, “I care about you”, “I’m worried about your safety”, “I will support you and whatever decision you make”
2. Have workplace policies/procedures to help workers who are victims of domestic violence
 - A proactive workplace policy/procedure should clearly outline:
 - that the workplace violence policy includes domestic violence that may occur in the workplace;
 - what measures and procedures employees should follow in case of an emergency;
 - what measures and procedures employees should use to report incidents of workplace violence, including domestic violence;
 - what steps the employer will take to deal with incidents of violence, including domestic violence, in the workplace;
3. Develop a workplace individualized domestic violence safety plan that outlines how both the employer and employee can prepare for the possibility of further violence. Each safety plan is unique, see the sample template at: XXX
4. Develop the capacity of your workplace to recognize, respond and refer:
 - Decide who will deal with safety or violence in the workplace. Some possibilities are: your health and safety officer, joint health & safety committee, workplace violence team, incident team, EAP / EFAP counsellor, human resources staff, union representative, supervisors, security.
 - Make sure that all employees know who to speak to in case of domestic violence in the workplace.
 - Train employees, supervisors, managers, human resources and safety officers, security personnel and union representatives to:
 - i. Understand domestic violence
 - ii. Recognize the warning signs of domestic violence
 - iii. Recognize when danger to the victim is increasing
 - iv. Respond to warning signs, rather than ignoring the problem
 - v. Respond appropriately and empathetically to victims of abuse
 - vi. Refer to the available resources within the workplace and the local community

REFER to external resources

Be familiar with organizations and support within your community, check out some of these websites to find some resources:

- Your local Police Service and ask for a specialist in domestic violence.
- Contact local woman abuse experts through the local Women’s Shelter or Sexual Assault Centre
- 2-1-1 government services
- www.sheltersafe.ca
- Transition House Association of Nova Scotia: <http://thans.ca/>
- Avalon sexual assault centre (Halifax): <http://avaloncentre.ca/>
- www.makeitourbusiness.ca
- www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca
- Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence www.caepv.org
- www.safeatworkcoalition.org