

Creating a Workplace Domestic Violence Program



Friday March 29 2019

Marylin Kames | HUMAN RIGHTS | HEALTH EQUITY | ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

It's a Workplace Issue


“In almost every case of domestic homicide, we found that the people around the victim knew what was going on – but didn’t know what to do about it...”

Employers & co-workers can make a difference.





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Workplace Domestic Violence Program




1. Make the case that Domestic Violence is a workplace issue




2. Educate all on Rights, Responsibilities, policies and processes.



3. Conduct risk assessment, safety planning & risk management .



4. Monitor and adapt safety plan.



Communicate regularly: posters, training, events, organization wide memos, being a sector leader

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Make the case



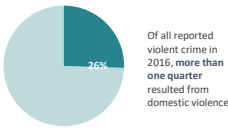
What is Domestic violence?

- **Violent, threatening or extremely coercive behaviour** perpetrated by a spouse, partner, former spouse or partner, or other member of one's family.
- Pattern of ongoing abuse or one single incident
- Affects people of all ages, ethnicities, races, religions, genders, sexual orientations, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds.



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Canada's family violence rates are staggering



Of all reported violent crime in 2016, more than one quarter resulted from domestic violence

Women are victims of intimate partner violence more often and more severely than men

Women were victims of intimate partner homicide at a rate 4X greater than men



Women are more likely:

- to report higher rates of injury caused by abuse;
- to experience long term PTSD-like effects than men; and
- to report being put down or called names than men

• Borczyk, M.A. & Conway, S. (2018). "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Juristat, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-622-X.

• Borczyk, M.A. (2017). "Prevalence in Canada, 2016." Juristat, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-622-X.

• Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (2016). "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Juristat, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-622-X.

• Borczyk, M.A. (2016). "Intimate partner homicide in Canada, 2014." Juristat, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-622-X.

Domestic Violence

It is a common misconception that woman abuse/domestic violence is a private issue.



- **34%** of Canadian workers report experiencing domestic violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- **Over half (54%)** of those workers that reported experiencing domestic violence, said it occurred **at or near the workplace**

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Important to keep intersectionality in mind

- **Indigenous women** are killed at 6X the rate of non-Indigenous women.
- **Women living with physical and cognitive disabilities** experience violence 2-3X more often than women living without disabilities.
- **Immigrant women** may be more vulnerable to domestic violence due to economic dependence, language barriers, lack of knowledge of community resources, fear of deportation.
- Women are at greater risk of experiencing **elder abuse** from a family member, accounting for 60% of senior survivors of domestic violence.
- Domestic violence in **LGBTQ communities** often goes unreported due to internalized homophobia, stigma and sexism
- **Transgender individuals** are almost twice as likely to self-report ever experiencing intimate partner violence, compared to the average rate experienced by cis-women* (City of Toronto)



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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: HEALTH IMPACT

Women exposed to intimate partner violence are →

Mental Health

TWICE
as likely to experience depression

ALMOST TWICE
as likely to have alcohol use disorders

Sexual and Reproductive Health

16%
more likely to have a low birth-weight baby

1.5 TIMES
more likely to contract syphilis, infection, chlamydia or gonorrhea

Death and injury

42%
of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner have experienced injuries as a result

38%
of all murders of women globally were reported as being committed by their intimate partners

Educate all on rights,
responsibilities, policies
and processes



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Domestic Violence Warning Signs

Domestic violence is a **pattern of behaviour** used by one person to gain **power and control** over another with whom they have or have had an **intimate relationship**.

- Change in performance, especially acting distracted, trouble concentrating
- Bruising that cannot be explained
- Sad, lonely, withdrawn and afraid
- Increased absenteeism or lateness
- Receiving upsetting phone calls, text messages or visits
- Missing work, sick or late more often



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All staff need to know

Who do I talk to
when I see warning
signs or risk factors?

How do I report if I
see an incident,
attempt and/or
threat of violence?

What else do I need
to know about my
responsibilities at
work?

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What managers do when a staff discloses domestic violence



Contact responsible office for safety planning.



Where appropriate, introduce the staff member to the resources available in your organization.



Identify and alert staff to the situation where necessary after consulting with responsible office and Security. Share information only on a need to know basis.



Contact relevant departments. Where appropriate, notify the police.

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Use case studies in training

An anonymous voice message is left on your phone. The caller says that they think one of your employees is being abused by her partner and wanted to let you know. They provide the name of the employee in the message.

- 1) What are the issues?
- 2) What steps do you take?
- 3) Who do you contact?

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How to talk to an employee who might be experiencing domestic violence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeJDtvs1NtQ>

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Practice See-ing It, Name-ing It, Check-ing It

SEE it

- Learn to SEE signs of abuse

NAME it

- Don't sit alone with suspicions and questions

CHECK it

- Ask questions. Seek help. Take appropriate action. Refer to resources.

I saw him sitting outside waiting for you. I am worried about you. Are you feeling safe?

I heard the voicemail that he left you. I'm really concerned for you. This is a threat. I need to work with Security to make sure you're safe. Do you want to go together?

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The e-Module

Recognizing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Training for Healthcare Professionals

- interactive
- feedback from many sources
- takes 15 minutes
- on legislation and on practical



Conduct risk assessment, safety planning & risk management



Understanding the Risk

All domestic violence is harmful and can enter the workplace

Coercive control presents the highest risks

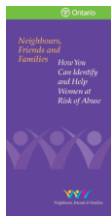
Situations can escalate suddenly

A single incident can be dangerous

Men, women and gender non-binary people experience violence differently

Recognizing Risk Factors

When women are killed, 86% of the cases had 7 or more risk factors.



Most common risk factors:

- Actual or pending separation
- A history of domestic violence
- The level of violence had been increasing
- Obsessive behaviour including stalking
- Depression of the perpetrator
- Abuser threatened to kill the victim in the past.

Roles & Responsibilities: Addressing Domestic Violence



What if a Staff Member is an Abuser?



If at the workplace, or while using workplace resources, can be subject to disciplinary action.



If appropriate, contact law enforcement



Provide assistance and resources to abusers.

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Monitor and adapt safety plan



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What is Workplace Safety Planning?

Security measures to minimize workplace danger and increase workplace safety when an employee is experiencing domestic violence.

Can include:

- Screening calls
- Changing emergency contact information
- Escorts to and from vehicle/public transit
- Parking spot near building
- Relocating work station
- Installing panic button
- Talking to security
- Communication procedures
- Notifying police
- Switchboard/internet/directory cleanse

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Communicate regularly:
posters, training, events,
memos, being a sector
leader




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Connect to the values of your organization

A health-care encounter may provide the **only chance** to stop the violence before serious injuries occur

Violence against women is a health-care issue



Talk to a health-care professional
We can help

Unintegrated systems and training for men's safety can be barriers to help. Staff education, awareness, screening, domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and financial control or abuse. Domestic violence is a serious health risk to women and their children.

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Information Staff & Managers Need

1. What to do if you are experiencing domestic violence?

2. What to do if someone discloses domestic violence?

3. Who do you contact for help?

4. What is the process if a staff experiences domestic violence? (Domestic Violence Incident Algorithm)

5. What policies apply?

6. Are there resources available for staff experiencing domestic violence? For colleagues? For managers? Resource tools

7. Is there training available on domestic violence in the workplace?

8. How do I get involved in educating, developing policies and processes? (Domestic Violence Awareness & Prevention Committee)

9. External Resources and Links

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Vicarious Trauma / Compassion Fatigue



Safety first. You don't have to be a hero and you may not be able to fix the situation.



Little things you do can make a big difference



Debrief.
Look after yourself
Check in with colleagues and managers

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Domestic Violence in the Workplace

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The Foundation

In almost every case of domestic homicide, we found that the people around the victim knew what was going on – but didn't know what to do about it...

Al O'Marra
(Former) Chief Counsel Coroner's Office of Ontario

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CAN WORK BE SAFE, WHEN HOME ISN'T?

Initial Findings of a Pan-Canadian Survey on Domestic Violence and the Workplace

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Canadian Labour Congress

Western FIMS

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Prevalence Rates

- 33.6% experienced / are experiencing DV
 - 53.5% experienced DV at work
- 35.4% know a co-worker experiencing/experienced DV
- 11.8% know a co-worker behaving abusively to spouse

Increased prevalence with vulnerability

- Indigenous respondents
- Respondents with disabilities
- Sexual orientation other than heterosexual

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Gender is a factor

We need to understand gender differences to address and prevent violence more effectively

- Men experience highest overall most likely to be killed by another male (Stats Canada)
- Women are more at risk of domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment (Canadian Women's Foundation)
 - experience the most serious injuries and are more likely to be hospitalized from injuries
 - are more likely to be killed by a partner/ex-partner - 97% of Ontario 2017 (DVRDC 2017 report)
- LGBT people experience higher rates of domestic and sexual violence


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How DV comes to work


40% abusive texts, phone calls
20% stalking, harassment
18% partner comes to workplace
15% abusive email messages
14% contacts co-workers, supervisor



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Disclosures

81% Co-workers
45% Supervisor
12% Union
10% HR/Personnel



"I was extremely nervous about sharing my situation... so far they have been very helpful and understanding and have also respected my privacy and been careful not to intrude."

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Individuals and organizations are unprepared to respond to domestic violence and workers have been harmed, harassed and killed at work.

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The Big Ideas

Challenge and change social norms

1. Teach everyone to recognize warning signs and risk factors and how to respond safely and effectively
2. Take a whole company approach




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Workplace Warning Signs

- Obvious injuries
 - bruises, black eyes, broken bones, hearing loss
 - often attributed to falls, being clumsy or accidents
- Clothing inappropriate for the season
 - long sleeves and turtlenecks, wearing sunglasses, unusually heavy makeup
- Uncharacteristic absenteeism or lateness





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Workplace Warning Signs


- Change in job performance
 - poor concentration and errors, slowness, inconsistent work quality
- Requests for special accommodations
 - leave early, change schedule
- Disruptive phone calls, visits

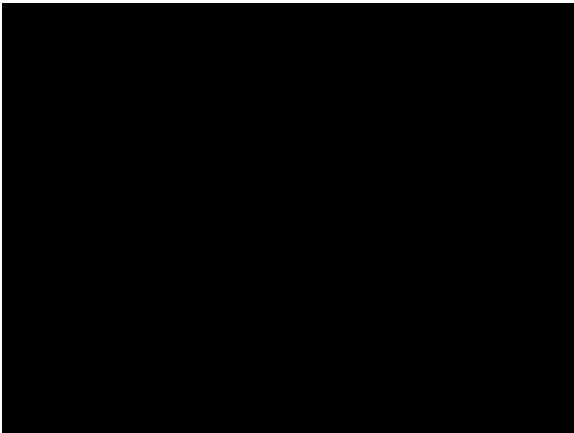


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Warning signs





...this is the third time this week you've been late
You have used up all your sick time
You aren't doing your job



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What will happen next?

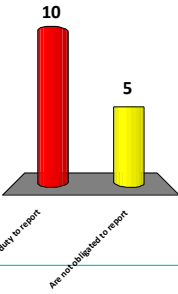



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Gail will most likely...

- A. Tell her husband to stop coming to her workplace
- B. Hide what is happening
- C. Lose her job




Response Option	Number of Responses
Have a duty to report	10
Are not obligated to report	5

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Recognizing Risk Factors

- A history of domestic violence
- Actual or pending separation
- Obsessive behaviour
- Depression of the perpetrator
- The level of violence is increasing
- Prior threats / attempts of suicide
- Threat to kill
- Prior attempts to isolate victim
- Victim had intuitive sense of fear
- Perpetrator unemployed



DVDRG 2012 Report

***39 risk factors identified that indicate potential for lethality**

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Risk Factors

Your husband...

- Haranguing the front desk staff
- Showing up here at all hours
- Calling you



...he's been out of work



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Recognizing Risk Factors

- A history of domestic violence
- Actual or pending separation
- **Obsessive behaviour**
- Depression of the perpetrator
- **The level of violence is increasing**
- Prior threats / attempts of suicide
- Threat to kill
- Prior attempts to isolate victim
- Victim had intuitive sense of fear
- Perpetrator unemployed




Missed Opportunity

***39 risk factors identified that indicate potential for lethality**

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Conversation Framework – SNCit!

1. **SEE it** - Visible warning signs and risk factors

2. **NAME it** – Name your concern

3. **CHECK it** – Ask questions, seek help, take appropriate action – refer/resources

SEE it – NAME it – CHECK it



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Open the door
for support




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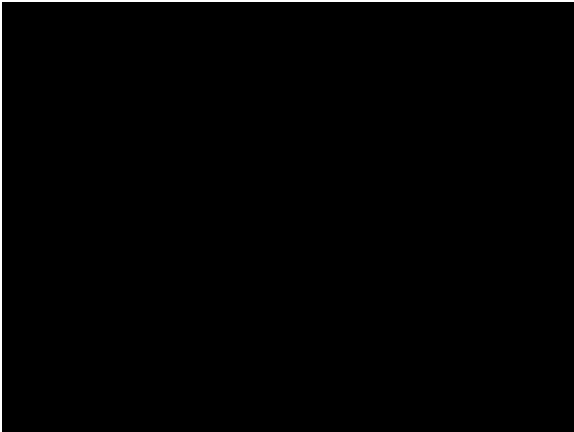
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Give me another
chance!




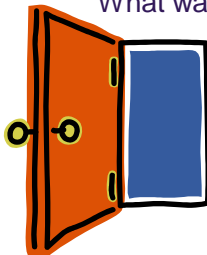
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What was the impact?



Do you think the door for support is open for Gail?



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Why is support important?



Gail is trying to manage the escalation on her own

She is more likely to be honest about what is happening to her in a supportive environment.

As the situation changes, open communication will increase safety



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The Big Ideas

- 1. Teach everyone to recognize warning signs and risk factors and how to respond safely and effectively
- 2. Take a whole company approach

Challenge and change social norms

Use an ecological lens



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Domestic violence is not just an individual issue




World Health Organization – Ecological Model

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The Individual in Isolation

Gail 'allows' the situation



Brian must be a bad person



Individual


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Duties: Internal Responsibility System

All parties have roles & responsibilities


Employer	→	Ensure compliance
Supervisor	→	Protect workers from violence
Workers	→	Report workplace violence



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A Culture of Open Communication

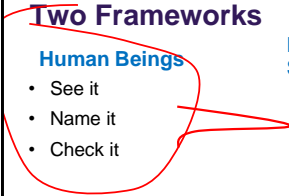

- The strength of your IRS is based on the degree to which people feel safe and supported to share information
- Employees should be encouraged to share concerns about warning signs at first sign – they need to know there will be no reprisals
- Make sure employees know that they should not try assess risk or stop violence

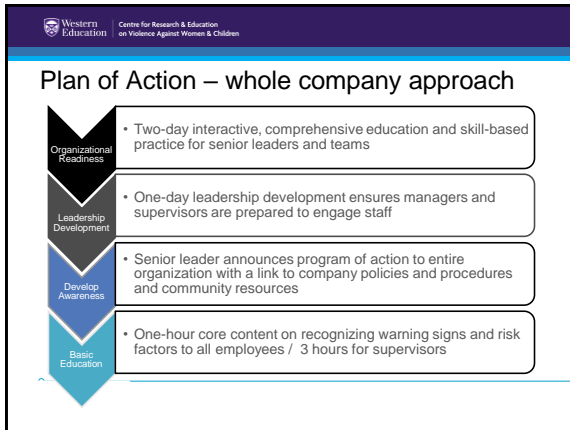


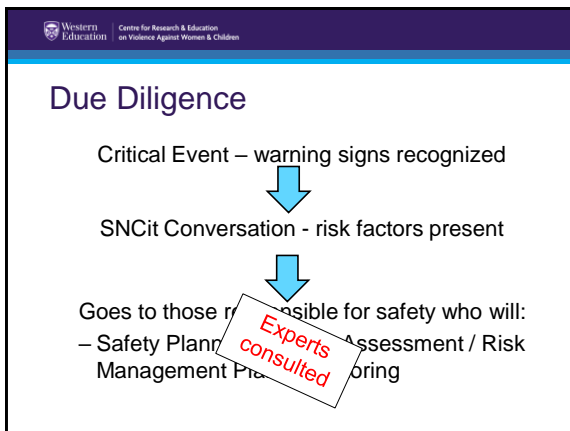
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Two Frameworks

Human Beings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See it • Name it • Check it <p>To act on warning signs</p>	Employers, Supervisors & Workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize • Respond • Refer <p>To protect & support workers</p>
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The Compassionate Workplace



Evidence from cost-benefit studies for addressing social problems show that *"the return on investment for implementing prevention programs and strategies range from a \$2 return for every dollar invested to as high as \$20 for every dollar invested."*




Wells, L., Boodt, C., & Emery, H. (2012).

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The Compassionate Workplace

The research is clear that doing nothing is not an option. Lack of response condones and rewards violence – explicitly or implicitly. Unaddressed violence and harassment have cascading effects.

Doing nothing exposes the organization and its employees to multiple risks including physical, psychological, emotional, social, legal, economical, and competitive impacts.





Namie & Namie, (2011)
McInturf, 2013, p. 7.

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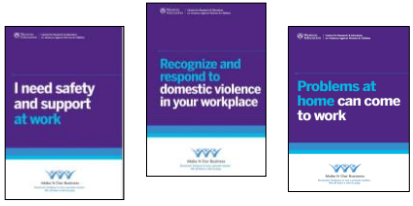
The Compassionate Workplace

Conscious capitalism is characterized by the idea that: "it pays to care, widely and deeply" about people and the state of the company culture.






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Workplace Resources



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