

## PART 1: Self-assessment quiz

# Can your workplace handle domestic violence?

There is not a single formula for responding to workplace domestic violence. Each situation is different and will need its own response. The *Make It Our Business* campaign gives you resources to help you prepare to respond to workplace domestic violence.

We have prepared these case scenarios to help you think about situations that could arise. You can use the *Make It Our Business* guidelines to help you think through possible responses. Often there are no 'right' or 'wrong' responses, but a range of alternatives. Use these scenarios to identify and clarify roles, responsibilities and resources available to members of your workplace. When you read these cases, ask yourself:

- What would you do in each of these cases?
- How would your workplace handle this?
- What resources would you turn to for help?

### Case studies

**You have been affected by domestic violence in the workplace or you have just learned about a possible case of violence. You need to respond right away.**

- Case 1:** You overhear your co-worker being threatened on the telephone – by her husband: he will kill her if she ever leaves him or tells others the truth about his violence.
- Case 2:** An employee is being stalked by an ex-boyfriend. Co-workers have reported seeing him hanging around the workplace. You are the security officer.
- Case 3:** Your employee, who is pregnant, is showing signs of bruising, cuts and sprains. She calls in sick, this time with a broken arm. In tears she discloses her partner “got mad and lost control”.
- Case 4:** As a union steward, one of your members tells you she has applied for and received a restraining order to keep her ex-husband from contacting her – including at work.
- Case 5:** You are the Human Resources Coordinator. You are meeting with an employee who wants information about the company’s benefit program. The employee mentions she’s going to separate from her husband and she says, “I’ve had enough of him beating up on me, and now on the kids”.
- Case 6:** An employee has told you, as Human Resources Manager, that she has just ended a long-term and violent relationship. When you ask, the employee tells you that she has not reached out for support or advice yet. She does not have a safety plan.

**You see warning signs of domestic violence at work. Your employee's problems may be leading to concerns about her work performance.**

- Case 1:** Your employee is distracted and cannot concentrate. She has always been a good performer. Now she is calling in sick and is often late. You know that you need to address this but wonder how to deal with these performance problems. She has not told you there are problems at home or with her partner, but you wonder why the sudden change over the last several weeks. You sense that everything is not right at home.
- Case 2:** As union president, you have been approached by a member and told “in confidence” that his co-worker is spending time away from work for personal reasons. She is asking him to cover for her (longer breaks and lunch, arriving late and leaving early). Your member thinks it's for court appearances, to see her lawyer and family doctor, and to arrange for housing and new schools for her kids. He is aware that his co-worker is having problems at home. He is concerned – and frustrated.
- Case 3:** Your employee gets calls from her husband throughout the day. Her children also call at bad times. When her husband calls, he asks coworkers about where she is and what she is doing. When she takes the calls, she gets off the phone looking really upset. When he phones, he sometimes uses his own name, sometimes other names. Coworkers are beginning to suspect that something is wrong at this employee's home. Coworkers are concerned, but they are also annoyed because it is really disrupting everyone's work.

**Building a pro-active violence prevention program**

- Case 1:** You have dealt with an incident of domestic violence at work. Now you know your workplace needs an effective program in place and you want resources and expertise you can easily turn to when you need them. The ad hoc approach worked this time but it was more luck than effective planning.
- Case 2:** Human Resources, the Joint Health & Safety Committee and Security know they need to work together to plan and coordinate a program to address domestic violence.
- Case 3:** Employees, supervisors and union reps have said that awareness and training initiatives related to domestic violence are a helpful starting point, but a pro-active approach is needed. This process needs to include a policy and needs to identify community resources.
- Case 4:** Legislative requirements and employee expectations are changing: the effects of domestic violence in the workplace need to be addressed. The focus has to be on prevention.

**In PART 2: “Self-assessment Quiz” we offer some points to consider when responding to these scenarios.**

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The views expressed in this campaign are those of The Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children, Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Ontario.