

SAFETY PLANNING AT WORK

Safety planning is a top priority in cases of domestic violence. Creating a safety plan involves identifying actions to increase the safety of employees who are experiencing domestic violence.

Everyone in the workplace has a role to play in helping to prevent woman abuse. Below are some safety planning suggestions that might be helpful to you:

- Ask the victim if she has had any protection orders or restraining orders. Find out if the workplace is in the orders. If there is an order, ask for a copy. Make sure that all conditions of the order are followed.
- Ensure that the victim is able to attend all legal and health appointments related to resolving the abuse.
- Ask for a recent photo or description of the abuser. Show it to security and reception so they will know who to look for or screen.
- Make sure the employee does not work in locations where she is visible and easily accessible to visitors. For example, make sure she is not working at the front reception desk or near windows that can be seen from the outside.
- Make sure all records and directories that the public can access do not include her contact information.
- Offer to have a co-worker or a supervisor screen her calls.
- Give her a new phone number.
- Block the abuser's emails from the system.
- Install a panic button in her work area.
- Give her a well-lit, priority parking spot near the building.
- Escort her to and from her vehicle or public transportation.
- Give her a cell phone with a pre-programmed 911 security feature.
- Provide information about the people and resources the employee can turn to in the workplace and community for help and support.
- Ask the employee to document all incidents of abuse in the workplace. Ask her to document how the abusive behavior affects her work. Work with her to address performance issues.

- Talk to the employee about scheduling policies or other human resource policies and practices that could help her. Work with her to arrange a schedule that is less predictable, to protect her from harassment and abuse at her work. Offer a flexible schedule, different from shifts or other work arrangements.
- Identify opportunities for time away from work to make it easier for her to get the help she needs to rebuild her life.
- Follow up with her. Check on her progress on well-being.

If both the victim and abuser work at the same workplace:

- Make sure that the abuser does not have access to the victim in the workplace. Do not schedule both employees to work at the same time. If possible, have them work at different sites.
- Hold the abuser accountable for an unacceptable behavior in the workplace. Use disciplinary procedures to deal with abuse.
- If the abuser engages in violence or other criminal activity such as stalking or unauthorized electronic monitoring in the workplace, call the police.
- Once the employee has told you about the abuse, make sure there are no negative repercussions for her.

Including Domestic Violence in the Occupational Health and Safety Act is a remarkable advance. Thank you for keeping your “Neighbours, Friends and Families” brochures handy to help you help a colleague or student- or a neighbours, friend, or family member- who may be exhibiting the warning signs that she is at risk of domestic abuse.

For training and resources to recognize and respond to workplace domestic violence:

Call 519-661-2111 ext. 84023 for training inquiries or visit makeitourbusiness.com.

