

Domestic Violence & The Workplace: Best Practices

What can you do to address domestic violence in your workplace? A lot! Fully and thoroughly addressing domestic violence as a workplace issue is a process involving the participation of employers, employees, and community advocates. Here are some suggested "Best Practices" to help your workplace begin to address domestic abuse and reduce its costly financial and social effects on businesses and the lives of their employees.

- I. **COLLABORATE.** Develop a collaborative, working relationship with your local crisis center.
- II. **ORGANIZE.** Create a domestic violence response team within your organization. Include representatives from a variety of departments:
 - Human Resources
 - Loss Prevention/Security
 - Employees/Associates
 - Public Relations
 - Legal Department
 - Employee Assistance Program
 - Union Representative (if applicable)
- III. **TRAIN.** Provide your response team with comprehensive domestic violence training through your local crisis center. Training will assist the team in several ways, including:
 - Identifying signs of employees who abuse or are abused
 - Reviewing workplace impact through case studies
 - Recommending appropriate outreach to those in need
 - Identifying internal and external resources for the team, employees, and organization
- IV. **DEFINE.** Define the role of Managers and Supervisors, Loss Prevention, Security, Human Resources, EAP, and other departments when domestic violence cases come forward.
 - Provide training to all parties, particularly those who will play key roles
 - Emphasize the goal of increased safety for all
 - Create response protocols
 - Define confidentiality ~ information to be shared on a "need to know" basis only
- V. **ACT.** Through your response team, develop and roll out a Corporate Non-Violence Policy Statement that includes the following:
 - We will provide a workplace free of threats, fear, and violence
 - We will respond to threats and potential violence
 - We will support our employees when accessing resources for domestic violence

VI. **EDUCATE.** Implement an employee awareness campaign

- Invite advocates from local shelters to lead brown-bag lunches or in-service workshops.
- Provide informative brochures and safety cards in private locations such as bathrooms
- Post the corporate Domestic Violence in the Workplace policy and have all employees review and sign it
- Offer information in employee newsletters, place hotline numbers on pay stubs, and/or send email reminders about abuse and local services
- Create a culture of safety that encourages employees to ask for assistance and resources

VII. **LEAD.** Be an active community leader in helping to end domestic violence

- Hold fund-raising events to support your local crisis center
- Donate money directly to the center
- Provide contributions of pro bono or in-kind services
- Share your corporate domestic abuse policy with other community businesses and leaders and encourage them to create a response plan of their own