

Domestic Violence in the Workplace

Presented by:

Dawn Sharer, Human Resources Manager

And

Faye Zemel, Director of Prevention and Systems Advocacy

The logo for Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAiS). The letters 'DAiS' are in a purple serif font. The 'i' is lowercase and has a yellow dot above it. The 'S' is uppercase and is the same size as the other letters.

DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION SERVICES

Discussion Guidelines



- ✓ **Safety for self**
- ✓ **Safety for others**
- ✓ **Confidentiality**
- ✓ **Gendered language**
- ✓ **Victim vs. Survivor**
- ✓ **DV/IPV Language**

Domestic Violence Affects Us All

- ✓ **1 in 5 women** and **1 in 7 men** in the U.S. will be a victim during her/his lifetime. (CDC)
- ✓ **48%** of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) and **45%** of Black women experience IPV compared to **37%** of White women who experience this type of violence. (workplacesrespond.org)
- ✓ Victims of DV lose an average of **137 hours** of work/year (Legal Momentum)
- ✓ DV causes victims to lose the equivalent of **32,000 full-time jobs/year** (Legal Momentum)

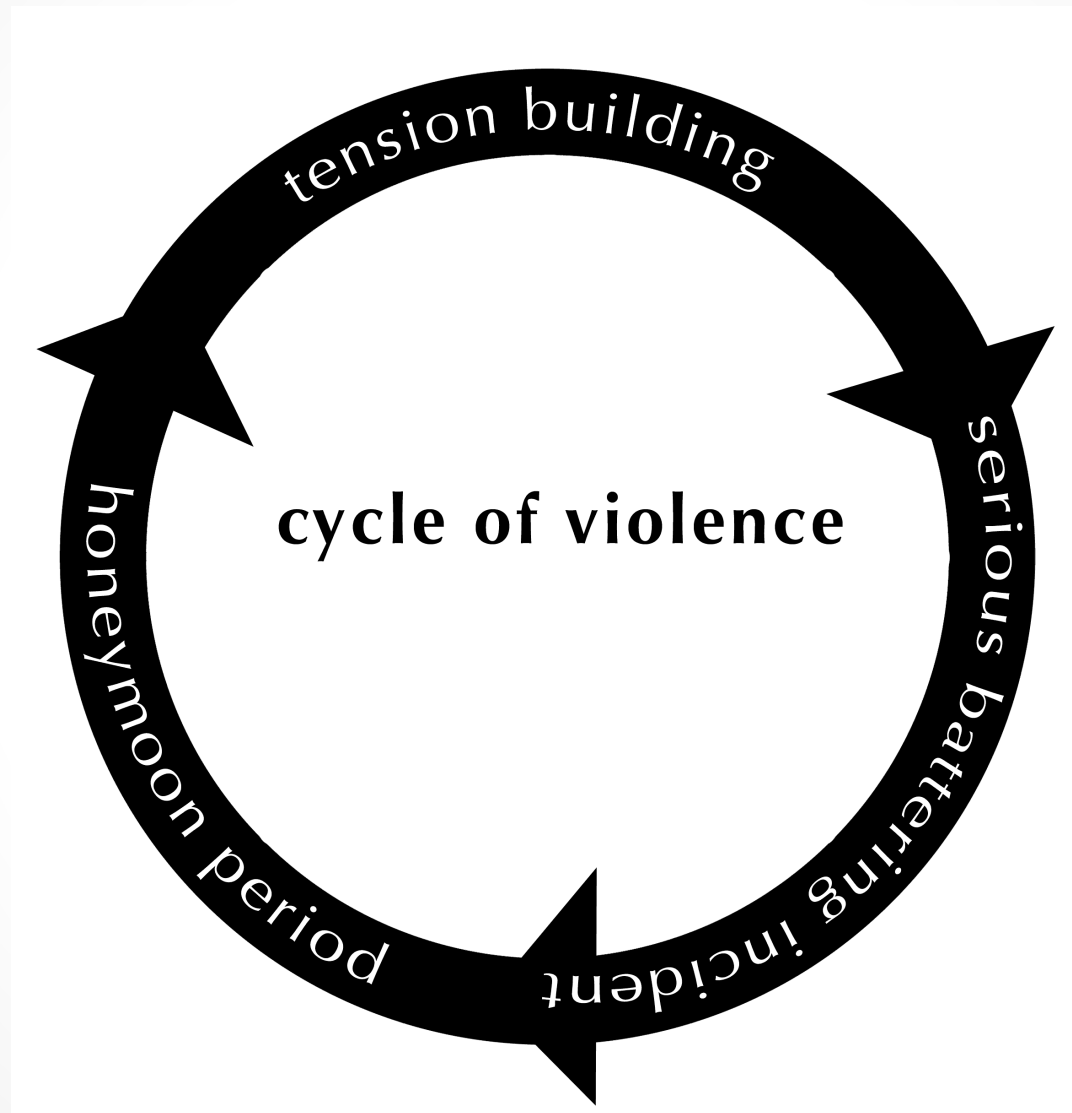
What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is the intentional use of power and control tactics by one intimate partner over the other in order to create an environment of fear and intimidation.

POWER & CONTROL WHEEL



CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



Domestic Violence – A Community Issue



“It’s Not My Business”

Common Beliefs and Assumptions	Realities and Truths
Domestic abuse is a police matter or family matter.	Domestic abuse is an employer’s matter
Domestic abuse “doesn’t happen here”.	Domestic abuse occurs at all socio-economic levels, against all genders, age groups and other demographic groups
HR or management “doesn’t get involved in personal matters”.	Domestic abuse has a tremendous affect on an employee’s performance, and her relationship and success with other employees, vendors and clients
“We could get sued if we don’t protect privacy and confidentiality.”	Not assisting an employee in a domestic abuse situation is a bigger risk in the workplace (workplace violence, injury, guilt).

What To Know Before You Start

- ✓ Abuse is never the fault of the victim or survivor.
- ✓ There are many reasons people do not leave abusive relationships and leaving an abusive relationship does not automatically make a person safer.
- ✓ Survivors are the experts on their own lives and the best judges of what course of action to take.
- ✓ Couples counseling, anger management, and drug and alcohol treatment will not resolve domestic violence issues.
- ✓ Confidentiality is crucial for victim safety. Disclosures of abuse must be kept absolutely confidential unless the employee agrees to share the information with others.



Impact on the Workplace

Individual	Co-workers	Organization
Physical and emotional health impacted	Concern for the victim	Concern for the victim
Isolation from friends and family	Fear violence will come to the workplace	Increased threat of violence
Difficulty meeting basic needs of self and family	Concern for personal safety	Compromised safety in the organization
Absenteeism, tardiness	Negative impact on workplace interpersonal relationships	Increased health care costs
Decreased concentration or job performance	Resentment toward the victim	Turnover and recruitment costs
Workplace interruptions	Productivity decreases, work stops	Productivity decreases, work stops

Laws Protecting Domestic Abuse Victims

- ✓ Wisconsin Safe Place Statute

“Every employer shall furnish employment which shall be safe for the employees therein and shall furnish a place of employment which shall be safe for employees...”

“No employer shall require, permit or suffer any employee to go or be in any employment or place of employment which is not safe...”



The
"domestic"
part doesn't
matter.
Violence is
violence.

Laws Protecting Domestic Abuse Victims

- ✓ Employment Laws
 - Title 7 (VII)
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Federal and state family and medical leave laws
 - Occupational health and safety (OSHA)

- ✓ Wisconsin and municipal districts such as the City of Madison may also have laws that protect victims including:
 - The Wisconsin Fair Employment Act (WFEA)
 - Wis. Stat. § 103.87
 - Stat. § 950.04(1v)(bm)
 - City of Madison - 39.03 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ORDINANCE.

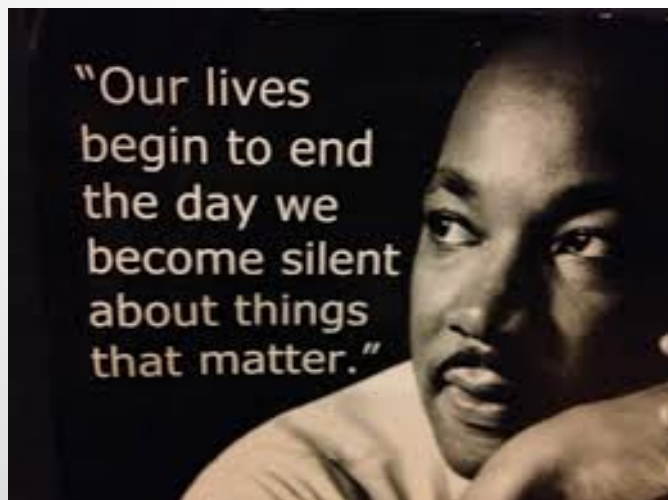
Workplace Signals

Patterns, not single sign or symptom

- ✓ Arriving to work late or very early
- ✓ Unplanned or increased use of Paid Time Off
- ✓ Decreased productivity
- ✓ Tension around receiving repeated personal phone calls
- ✓ Wearing long sleeves on a hot day or sunglasses inside
- ✓ Difficulty in making decisions alone or concentrating on tasks
- ✓ Avoiding windows, main entrance of office
- ✓ Repeated discussion of marital or relationship problems
- ✓ Flowers or gifts sent to employee at the workplace for no apparent reason
- ✓ Bruises, chronic headaches, abdominal pains, muscle aches
- ✓ Vague, non-specific medical complaints
- ✓ Sleeping or eating disorders
- ✓ Signs of fear, anxiety, depression, or fatigue
- ✓ Intense startle reactions

What Should I Do?

As an employer, if you are aware of a domestic abuse situation, you should not ignore it:



- ✓ Offer specific observations of what you have seen/heard (e.g., bruising, absences, repeated phone calls).
- ✓ Communicate your responsibility to provide a safe work environment to the individual and all other employees, vendors and clients.
- ✓ Communicate your concerns for the employee's safety.
- ✓ Respect confidentiality.
- ✓ Be clear that your role is to try to help (and not to judge).
- ✓ Understand they may deny the abuse. ●

What Should I Do?

As an employer, if you are aware of a domestic abuse situation, you should not ignore it:

- ✓ Listen, express concern, but do not offer judgment or advice.
- ✓ Ask the victim what changes could be made to make him or her feel safer.
- ✓ Tell the employee that you believe him or her.
- ✓ They know what is best – do not demand they contact law enforcement or use services.
- ✓ Allow them to use office resources to contact services/law enforcement.
- ✓ Refer the employee to an EAP, DAIS, or other resources.
- ✓ Consult with security staff if there is a concern about workplace safety.

Creating a Safe Environment

- ✓ Ensure employees know to call 9-1-1 in an emergency.
- ✓ Identify and communicate one person to respond to domestic abuse concerns (HR lead, high-level manager, benefits coordinator, EEOC coordinator).
- ✓ Consider developing a Domestic Violence policy.
(workplacesrespond.org)
- ✓ Implement a security policy and/or emergency procedures.



Creating a Safe Environment

- ✓ Consider a security system.
- ✓ Provide mandatory training for supervisors, like this one!
- ✓ Publicize your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- ✓ Sponsor domestic violence awareness events.
- ✓ Display and distribute materials that publicly condemn violence.
- ✓ Support a local DV agency, like DAIS.



Important Take-Aways

- ✓ Abuse is never the fault of the victim or survivor.
- ✓ Domestic violence is a community issue and we all play a part in addressing victim safety.
- ✓ Confidentiality is crucial for victim safety.
- ✓ It is your responsibility to create a safe work environment for all employees, so it's responsibility as an employer to act when informed.
- ✓ You can make a difference through education, partnering with DAIS and other community resources, and by being a caring, empathic employer or coworker.

Find Your Local DV Organization

For a list of DV agencies in WI:

<https://www.endabusewi.org/get-help/>

Culturally specific DV orgs are also listed

Domestic Abuse Victim Resources

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)

End Violence on Campus
608-265-1483

UNIDOS Against Domestic Violence
608.256.9195

Freedom, Inc.
608.255.8582

Rape Crisis Center
608.251.7273 (hotline)
608.251.5126 (Chimera training)

Deaf Unity
help@deafunity.wi.org

Police
9-1-1

What Does DAIS Do?

- ✓ 24-Hour Help Line (608.251.4445)
- ✓ Case Management
- ✓ Support Groups
- ✓ Legal Advocacy
- ✓ Children and Youth Advocacy
- ✓ DV Shelter
- ✓ Primary Prevention
- ✓ Outreach & Education

