Supporting those affected by domestic and sexual violence

Domestic Violence and the Workplace
Disclaimer!

For the purposes of this presentation:

- Language/Terminology
- Generalizations based on statistics available
- Experiences differ!
Intimate Partner Violence, Domestic Violence or Dating Violence: a pattern of coercive, manipulative and abusive behaviors systematically used to gain power and control over another individual.
Types of Violence

**Physical Violence**
- Hitting, grabbing
- Pulling, shoving
- Choking
- Destroying belongings

**Sexual Violence**
- Forced Intercourse
- Positions or acts one is not comfortable with
- Forcing victim to have sex with others

**Threats & Intimidation**
- Do what I say or else ___
- Threatens to kill victim
- Threatens to kill self
- Threatens to kill children, family

**Possessiveness**
- Treating as property
- Ownership & control
- Jealousy

**Stalking**
- Constant phoning, testing
- Following around
- Showing up at workplace or other places you go

**Emotional Abuse**
- Name calling
- Put downs
- “crazy making”

**Isolation**
- From family
- From friends
- From co-workers

**Economic Abuse**
- Controls all money & finances
- Ownership in abuser’s name — house, phone, car, etc.
- Takes all of victim’s resources — paychecks, savings
- Accounting for every penny spent
Who are we talking about?

Anyone can be abused, anyone can be an abuser

- Religious affiliation
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Social status
- Educational background
- Geographic location
- Wealth
- Poverty
- Middle class
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
Why Does Abuse Happen?

- Abuse occurs for many reasons:
  - It is learned as normal behavior
  - Many men and women still believe in traditional, rigid, hierarchical gender roles.
  - Attitudes that objectify and devalue women are common
  - Equality is perceived as a loss by the abuser
  - Abusers learn to minimize, deny, and blame others for their actions
  - Abusers do what they do because they can
Abuse is . . .

• Abuse is willful, intentional, purposeful behavior that originates in the mind of the individual who chooses to act.

• The purpose of abuse is to establish and maintain power, control, and dominance in the relationship.

• It is a lifestyle . . . not a singular event.
Abuse is *NOT* a result of:

- Loss of control
- Anger
- Substance abuse – alcohol, drugs
- Stress/anxiety
- Behavior of the victim
- Problems in the relationship
- Inevitable result of childhood trauma
Remember . . .

- Abuse is behavior that
  - physically harms
  - arouses fear
  - prevents a victim from doing what she/he wishes.

- Domestic violence is different from other forms of violence

- Power and Control
Dynamics of Domestic Violence

- Victim is forced to change her behavior in response to the abuse
- Occurs in current or former dating relationships, married or cohabitating relationships, and LGBT relationships
Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are the most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually the actions that allow others to become aware of the problem. However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the batterer, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, make up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they instill threat of future violent attacks and allow the abuser to take control of the women’s life and circumstances.

The Power & Control diagram is a particularly helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which are used by a batterer to establish and maintain control over his partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of these other types of abuse. They are less easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.

**Power and Control Wheel**

**Physical Violence**
- Coercion and Threats:
  - Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her.
  - Threating to leave her, commit suicide, or report her to welfare.
  - Making her drop charges.
  - Making her do illegal things.

**Sexual Violence**
- Intimidation:
  - Making her afraid by using looks, actions, and gestures.
  - Smoking things. Destroying her property. Abusing pets.
  - Displaying weapons.

**Male Privilege**
- Treating her like a servant, making all the big decisions, acting like the "master of the castle," being the one to define men’s and women’s roles.

**Economic Abuse**
- Preventing her from getting or keeping a job.
- Making her ask for money.
- Giving her an allowance.
- Taking her money.
- Not letting her know about or have access to family income.

**Emotional Abuse**
- Putting her down.
- Making her feel bad about herself.
- Calling her names.
- Making her think she’s crazy.
- Playing mind games.
- Humiliating her.
- Making her feel guilty.

**Isolation**
- Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, and where she goes.
- Limiting her outside involvement.
- Using jealousy to justify actions.

**Using Children**
- Making her feel guilty about the children.
- Using the children to relay messages.
- Using ultimatums to harass her.
- Threatening to take the children away.

**Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming**
- Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously.
- Saying the abuse didn’t happen.
- Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior.
- Saying she caused it.

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Incident/Assault

Cycle of Violence

Tension Building

Honeymoon
Stalking Facts

- 18-24 year olds experience the highest rate of stalking.
- 3 in 4 stalking victims are stalked by someone they know.
- 2/3 of stalkers pursue their victims at least once a week.
- 78% of stalkers use more than one means of approach.
- 30% of stalking victims are stalked by a current or former intimate partner.
- 46% of stalking victims experience at least one unwanted contact per week.
- Intimate partner stalkers frequently approach their targets, and their behaviors escalate quickly.
Separation - The Most Dangerous Time

- 25 – 50% of women killed by intimate partners are killed during the process of and after separation.

- Up to 75% of DV calls to law enforcement occur after separation.

- Up to 73% of visits by battered women to emergency rooms are made after separation.

- Up to 90% of domestic hostage takings may be in the context of DV.
So... how does this play into workplace violence??
DV in the Workplace

- An employee uses a work cell phone and calls and threatens a coworker with whom he or she had a prior intimate relationship.
- A survivor of domestic violence has fled her abusive relationship and is now being followed by her abuser at work.
- A former dating partner stalks an employee.
- A customer stalks a coworker.
- A supervisor sexually assaults an employee in an isolated part of a factory or farm.
- An employee’s estranged husband attacks the employee at the parking lot leading to severe injuries.
- An employee’s former partner gains access to the workplace with a weapon and kills the employee and her coworker.
What’s going on in the Workplace

• 25% of workplace problems such as lower productivity, turnover and excessive use of medical benefits are due to family violence.

• A study found that 74% of employed battered women were harassed by their partner while they were at work.
The cost...

- Cost of intimate partner rape, physical assault and stalking = $8.3+ billion
- 7.9 million paid workdays (32,000 full time jobs) - lost each year.
Warning Signs of Possible Abuse

• Social withdrawal

• Bruises or physical complaints

• Crying or outbursts of anger when on the phone

• Frequent personal calls that leave them upset
What Should I Do?

Become an Active Witness: SEE IT and SAY IT

• Plan it
• Tell what you see
• Express Concern
• Show support
• Offer referrals to resources
How Do I Know if an Employee Is Abusive?

- The existence of domestic violence may be undetected or “invisible” due to the abuser’s exemplary job performance or ability to “act the role” while at work.

- Some abusers may appear to be charming, socially responsible, and an “ideal” husband or father to the outside world.
Dealing with Aggression

- Be aware of changes
- Use your own communication skills: what you say vs. how you say it
- Remain calm
- Avoid entering the aggressor’s personal space
- Be aware of your own body language.
- Be assertive but avoid meeting aggression with aggression.
- Use exit strategies
  - If all else fails...your aim is to get away!

*Remember*, the earlier you spot a potential problem arising the more choices you have to avoid it.
Continuum of Threats

- Warning of impending violence
- Attempts to intimidate
- Thrill of causing a disruption
- Attention-seeking, boasting
- Fleeting expressions of anger
- Jokes
- Figures of speech
The Reality of DV in the Workplace

- 21% of full-time employed adults said they were victims of domestic violence
  - 74% of that group said they’ve been harassed at work.

- 65% of companies don’t have a formal workplace domestic violence prevention policy, according to research conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

- Only 20% offer training on domestic violence

- 16% of organizations had a DV incident in the past 5 years
  - 19% within past year
Policy wise... what can we do

- It is crucial that domestic abuse be seen as a serious, recognizable, and preventable problem like thousands of other workplace health and safety issues that affect a business and its bottom line.

- Fully and thoroughly addressing domestic violence as a workplace issue is a process involving the participation of employers, employees, and community advocates.

- Have a response protocol
Policy Needs to Address:

- Conduct that occurs off-duty.
- Security concerns.
- Violations of an employment agreement or other condition of employment.
- Non-actionable conduct that nonetheless needs to be addressed because knowledge regarding the issue is raising concerns or otherwise disrupting the work environment.
- Employer’s acknowledgement that domestic violence happens and may impact the workplace, and that employers will do what they can to accommodate those experiencing it.
- Training and referrals to resources [http://www.workplacesrespond.org/](http://www.workplacesrespond.org/)
Workplace Safety

- Knowledge of daily schedule
- Require identification
- Security
- Utilize the buddy system
- Parking
Personal Safety for Your Employees and You

- Changing regular habits.
- Plan out your travels.
- Keeping a watchful eye.
- Be prepared
- Protect your information
Safety Planning

A tool to assist in identifying options, evaluating those options and committing to a plan to reduce the risk when confronted with threat of harm or with actual harm.

Safety planning is not a one-time event but an on-going process that evolves as risk changes.
Personal Safety for Your Clients and You

- Changing regular habits, travel routes, times to shop.
- Parking: Try to plan where you will park before you go.
  - Park as close to your destination as possible.
  - If you will be returning after dark, consider what the area will be like then and try to park near street lights.
- If possible, get someone you trust to keep an eye on your house while you are away. They might even be prepared to visit your home to move mail away from your door, open and shut curtains etc.
Try and have your keys ready when you approach your home, so you don’t have to fumble in bags or pockets for them on your doorstep.

If you have a landline phone, think of getting an unlisted number. *67 can be dialed before dialing to block the caller’s number from showing up on a caller ID.

Close all windows and doors whenever you leave your home. Many people forget to close their windows, especially in hot weather.

Try to use sites run by organizations you trust. Using a reputable and ‘secure’ site is especially important when purchasing goods or services.
Personal Safety for Your Employees and You

- Changing regular habits.
- Plan out your travels.
- Keeping a watchful eye.
- Be prepared
- Protect your information
Legal Protection

- **Equity Order**: Provided by Superior Court
  - This order can be issued to a business and is meant to protect from continued harassment

- **No Trespassing Order**: Can be initiated by the business or with police assistance.
  - Meant to keep unwanted persons from property
  - Punishable by arrest
  - No Attorney Assistance required

- **Civil Restraining Orders**
Supporting a victim/survivor

- Listen to and believe her/him
- Trauma informed response
- Reflect & validate their feelings – mad, glad, sad, scared
- Assess lethality, consult with security team
- Assess resources
- Brainstorm for problem solving alternatives
- Action Plan – including a safety plan
- Review, refer (EAP, DV/SA services)
- Reward for strength, courage, taking action/calling today
- Stick with them
Get involved!

- Crisis Center Volunteering
- Events – WAM 2016 (October 5)
- Continuing education
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Questions?
References


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