

Domestic Violence in the Workplace



Domestic violence is a coercive behavior pattern aimed at maintaining power and control over an intimate partner. It can include physical, verbal, emotional, or economic abuse, leading to intimidation, isolation, and emotional damage. Domestic violence transcends gender, race, and socioeconomic backgrounds, affecting all types of relationships.

Why Domestic Violence is a Work Concern

Domestic violence impacts the workplace in two main ways:

1. **Employee Health & Productivity:** Victims may suffer mentally and physically, affecting their attendance, focus, and productivity.
2. **Violence at the Workplace:** Abusive partners may harass or harm the victim at work, creating safety risks for both the victim and their colleagues.

Manager and Supervisor Responsibilities

Managers play a key role in identifying and responding to signs of domestic violence. Their responsibilities include:

- **Recognizing Signs:** Notice changes in behavior or work performance, like frequent absences, injuries, or emotional withdrawal.
- **Confidential Conversations:** Address performance issues in a private, supportive setting, and ask if personal issues are affecting work.
- **Providing Support:** Listen empathetically, offer workplace support, and connect employees with resources like the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- **Safety Measures:** Collaborate with HR and security to create safety plans, which may include increased security, remote work, or changes in work schedules.

The Role of Work Colleagues

Coworkers can offer emotional support by checking in on victims without judgment or pressure. Since they don't have the same power dynamics as managers, colleagues may be better positioned to offer personal support and direct victims to appropriate resources.

For immediate support or to schedule a service within the U.S., call **855-420-0734**. For support outside of the U.S., visit headspace.com/work-life to locate your country-specific phone line and use company code: **xxx**

For self-serve resources, visit headspace.com/work-life and enter company code: **xxx**



Signs of Domestic Violence

Indicators that an employee may be a victim include:

- Unexplained injuries or hiding physical signs of harm
- Declines in job performance
- Frequent absences or tardiness
- Withdrawal from social interactions
- Signs of depression, substance abuse, or suicidal thoughts

How to Help as a Manager or Colleague

- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** In a non-judgmental way, ask if they need help and listen.
- **Respect Boundaries:** Allow the victim to share at their own pace and avoid giving direct advice.
- **Refer to Resources:** Provide information about EAPs or external domestic violence services, and offer to assist them in connecting with these resources.

What Not to Do

- Don't ignore signs or wait for the employee to ask for help.
- Don't pressure them to share personal details.
- Avoid suggesting marriage or couples counseling, as it could increase harm.
- Never judge or question their decisions about leaving the relationship.

By being observant, empathetic, and offering appropriate resources, managers and colleagues can help create a safer work environment for victims of domestic violence.

Headspace members also have access to immediate mental health support and meditations including:

- One-on-one guidance from coaches and clinicians who can guide you through challenging emotions and help you reach your goals.
- Hundreds of guided exercises for meditation and mindfulness to stress less, focus more, and sleep soundly.