



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of abuse in a relationship that is characterized by physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial control. Domestic violence is a widespread issue, affecting 1 in 4 women during their lifetime. When abuse occurs in a relationship, there is an impact on the community as a whole. Working together, we can help victims to safety and decrease the prevalence of domestic violence in all communities.

Role of Employers:

Ninety-four percent of corporate security directors report domestic violence as being a problem in their companies. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the annual cost of lost productivity due to domestic violence equals \$727.8 million, with more than 7.9 million paid workdays lost each year. There are several ways that employers can play a key role in stopping domestic violence:

- **Create** a company policy to address domestic violence.
- **Establish** a domestic violence task force, composed of both managers and employees, to regularly review policies to ensure that they are up to date with current laws.
- **Invite** your local domestic violence agency in to train staff members and to provide assistance in creating a safer workplace.
- **Know** the signs of an abusive relationship in your employees.

Role of School Districts:

Forty percent of teens between the ages of 14 and 17 report knowing someone their age that has been physically abused by a dating partner. Academic performance is greatly impacted when a teen is experiencing dating violence. In the following ways schools can take an active role in preventing abuse among students, thereby increasing the safety of the entire school system:

- **Model** respectful behavior to students.
- **Create** a school wide policy to define dating violence and to outline consequences and resources for students affected by this issue.
- **Train** Student Assistance Programs on a referral system for teen victims.
- **Give** students a voice on dating violence – help them to create awareness projects.
- **Implement** school-based “stay away” agreements which would outline specific behaviors that the alleged perpetrators must avoid. Behaviors may include talking to the victim, following the victim in the hallway, or harassing the victim in any way. This agreement may also include changing the schedule of the alleged perpetrator.
- **Hold** educational nights for parents on how to recognize the warning signs that teens may be in abusive relationships.
- **Offer** awareness lessons in school as a routine part of the curriculum.

Role of Family and Friends:

With statistics related to domestic violence as high as they are, it is very likely that you will know someone involved in an abusive relationship. Friends and family are often at a loss of what to

do to help their loved ones, but they can often be the people in a victim's life that have the greatest impact.

- **Affirm** that you are concerned about him or her. Too often, people believe that domestic violence is “none of my business” and this can prolong an abusive relationship.
- **Be supportive.** Avoid telling someone to “just leave” an abusive partner. Instead, tell them that they do not deserve to be abused, no matter what. The reasons why someone may stay in an abusive relationship are varied and complex. It can sometimes take several attempts at leaving before someone ends the relationship for good.
- **Encourage** your loved one to get in contact with a domestic violence counselor to create a safety plan.
- **Listen;** listen; listen!

Role of the Community:

- **Learn** the facts about domestic violence.
- **Be familiar** with your local domestic violence agency. Volunteer your time or organize a fundraising campaign. Cell phone drives are usually an effective way of raising money for domestic violence shelters. Find your local domestic violence agency through the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.ncadv.org.
- **Break** the silence! Talking about domestic violence lets others know this is a serious issue and one that you will not tolerate in your community.

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