

Everybody's Business

the quarterly newsletter of the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence

SPECIAL EDITION

The Results are in. Landmark CAEPV survey affirms that domestic violence significantly impacts America's workplaces—and that most employers are behind the curve.

In October 2005, the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence released the results of the first-ever national survey of employees on the impact of domestic violence in the workplace. The benchmark survey was commissioned in honor of CAEPV's 10th anniversary—and designed to discover how the general U.S. employee population perceives domestic violence as a workplace issue.

Not surprisingly, it revealed that intimate partner violence has a wide and far-reaching effect on Americans' working lives—in terms of economic productivity, personal safety and office culture. At the same time, most employers have failed to anticipate or respond to the impact by offering much-needed workplace policies and programs.

Here are some highlights of the survey findings. More results and discussion can be found inside.

Is domestic violence an important national issue?

A full 61% of survey respondents considered "stopping domestic violence" a very important national issue. Remarkably, this response placed domestic violence alongside other major national priorities such as providing better health care, fixing social security and fighting terrorism.

Is domestic violence recognized as a workplace issue?

When asked about the workplace, 53% of respondents indicated they were "very to somewhat aware" of domestic violence as a workplace issue, and 44% of those surveyed recognized domestic violence as impacting the workplace—much higher than anticipated.

What is the impact on victims?

The survey found that 21% of employed adults in the US are victims of domestic violence. Of these, 64% indicated their ability to work was affected. Thirty-one (31%) percent of those victims surveyed noted their employers provided no programs, support or help.

What workplace services would have been helpful to victims?

Forty-eight percent (48%) of victims indicated a comprehensive domestic violence awareness program would have been helpful to them, 45% indicated a hotline to report domestic violence and other problems would have helped, 43% said training on domestic violence would be helpful, and 40% noted that payroll staffers to raise awareness/promote access would have been a valued service.

What is the impact on co-workers?

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of co-workers reported "extremely to somewhat frequently" having had to do the victim's work for them. Thirty-one percent (31%) of those surveyed felt they had to "cover" for a victim of domestic violence (e.g., do their work for them or make excuses to a boss for absences). As a possible result, 25% indicated they resented co-workers because of the effect of the situation on the workplace.

What about workplace safety?

Co-worker concern for their own personal safety and the victim's safety was a notable finding. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of co-workers were concerned for their own safety when they found out a co-worker was a victim. Thirty-two percent (32%) believed the victim feared for his/her safety. Such fears were likely driven by abusers' frequent visits to the office, which 30% of co-workers surveyed reported occurring.

How many employers in the US have workplace policies on domestic violence?

When we asked, slightly more than one-third (34%) of those surveyed were aware of their employer having a domestic violence policy. More to the point, a full 66% of the men and women surveyed did not know if their employers had a program or policy regarding domestic violence.

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Behind the Numbers

We spoke with CAEPV Executive Director Kim Wells to get her insights and interpretations of the benchmark study.

Tell us how this survey came about and why CAEPV commissioned it?

In honor of CAEPV's 10th anniversary, we polled our members and asked them what we could do to mark this milestone for our organization and make a significant difference in the landscape of knowledge surrounding the issue of domestic violence and the workplace on a national level. Overwhelmingly, our members agreed that a survey of employed adults regarding the impact of domestic violence on the workplace would be the way to go.

Why is there a need for this type of data and information?

There are many reasons, but to me, probably three really significant ones:

First—we had no idea what the true impact of domestic violence was on the American workplace. There had been studies within certain groups, studies within states, but no national polls of full-time employed adults.

Second—before this survey, no one really knew how many employed people in the U.S. were victims of domestic violence. We had guesses, but no one knew for sure.

I've often been asked by employers, "Yes, I understand about the population in general, but what about the percentage of employed people who are victims?" Now we know that a statistically significant national poll found 21% of employed adults are victims of domestic violence. (65% of

those victims are female, and 35% of those victims are male.)

Third—we did not know before how many companies had policies to address domestic violence. This survey is a "benchmark" to ask the question from an employee perspective. Significantly, 66% of those we polled did not know if their workplaces had policies or not. This gives CAEPV a significant point of reference in our mission to make domestic violence workplace programs a standard of practice in U.S. businesses.

Why hasn't this research been done before?

I am guessing that funding of such a survey was probably a factor, and we were fortunate because we were able to go to our generous member companies and ask them to partner with us in this survey. If we had tried to go to traditional sources for funding, we may have been more restricted in the research, design or methodology.

Did you encounter any roadblocks or challenges in the process of designing and implementing the survey?

There were so many more questions we wanted to ask than we could put into one survey. We had to strike a balance between asking the most important questions, and knowing we could keep people on the telephone for so long. That was a very, very difficult process. I am so thankful for the wonderful experts that helped us with the survey—Jennifer Pearson Stapleton, Robin Runge, Deborah Widiss and especially Jane Randel.

We also had to be very sensitive to the issue we were asking about—recognizing that we would certainly be talking to people who had experienced domestic violence or had been close to it, or were perhaps involved in it now. So we developed a system with a code word to end the interview and offered the National Domestic Violence Hotline Number to every person who took the survey—and nearly one-third of them (32%) asked for the number.



Kim Wells
Executive Director
Corporate Alliance to End Partner
Violence

How did you define domestic violence in the survey?

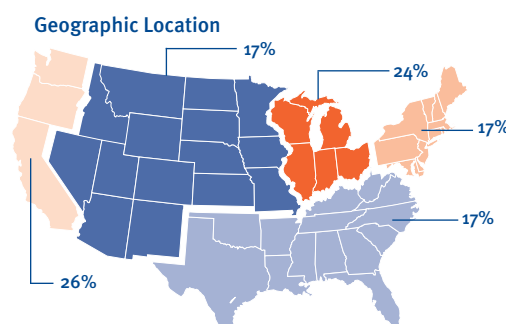
Good question. With the help of our experts, we defined it as follows: "Domestic violence is the use of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or threats to control another person who is a current or former husband, wife or other intimate partner, such as boyfriend or girlfriend."

What was your first impression of the results? Were there any surprises?

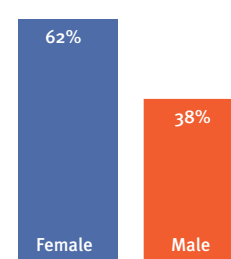
Yes! I was most surprised by the percentage of people who personally recognized the impact of domestic violence at work—44% of those we surveyed had some sort of

Who we interviewed

We wanted to ensure that we reached a broad and representative cross-section of American employees. To this end, our survey firm spoke on the phone with 1,200 employed adults. Here's a detailed breakdown of who we talked to.



Gender



experience at work that made them aware of the impact of domestic violence at work and that is incredibly significant. I thought that the number would be around 10%. So I was truly stunned to learn that nearly half of the people we polled recognized domestic violence impacting their workplaces.

Beyond that, I also think it is significant to note that co-workers were impacted by victims of domestic violence. While I was not surprised by these findings, 31% of the people we surveyed felt obliged to cover for their co-workers who were victims of domestic violence, and 27% felt they had to do the victim's work. As you can imagine, this led to the next issue—feeling resentful.

About 25% of those we talked to who were impacted by co-workers dealing with domestic violence situations felt resentful of the co-worker—and certainly this is because they felt they were covering for them, doing work for them or feeling unsafe themselves (38% of the co-workers we surveyed feared for their own safety).

I think this shows that not only are victims (and batterers) affected, but that co-worker productivity is impacted as well.

Just think—if a company has a domestic violence program in place and a workplace culture that makes it safe to come forward and get help, the impact on co-workers would be greatly reduced because there would not be a need to cover for a victim, or do the victim's work, or be concerned for one's own safety.

What do you see as the most significant findings? If employers were only going to pay attention to one statistic, which one should it be?

All the findings are significant for employers, but if they are going to pay attention to one thing, it should be that 21% of their employees are victims of domestic violence. This means that one in five full-time adults in America's workforce brings this issue to work with them, and it is in an employer's best interest to address it.

(You may wonder if we asked about perpetrators of domestic violence. We did—but such a small percentage of those we surveyed admitted to being perpetrators that it was not statistically significant.)

How will you use the results of the survey in your work with CAEPV?

We know we have a lot of work to do if only 34% of workplaces have programs to address domestic violence. In addition, we have great new information to share with employers to help them understand why it's in their enlightened self-interest to address this issue.

What kind of feedback and response have you been getting from the media and the corporate community?

We have received tremendous interest from the business community in the human resources, EAP, workplace safety, and work-life arenas. We have received some interest from the business press, but it has been interesting to see how difficult it is for them to see this as a business issue,

even with the information presented as national, scientific results. There still seems to be such a bias to view domestic violence as a "private matter"—but the specialized workplace management publications have been very excited about the research and grateful to us for doing it. That being said, ABC's World News Tonight did a wonderful story and follow-up print article on their website.

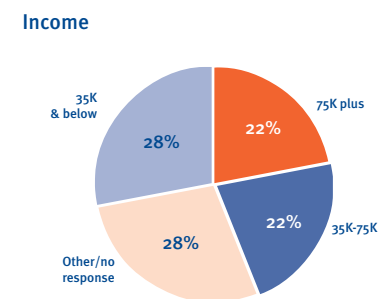
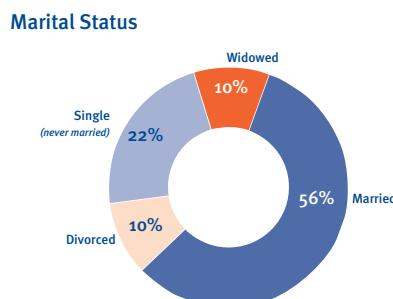
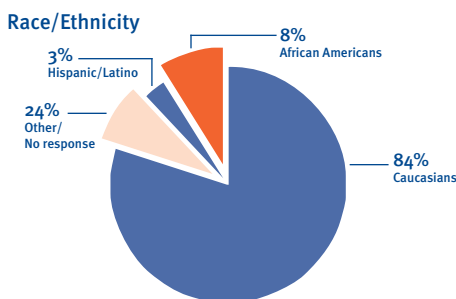
What is the ultimate value of this information?

It is so important when talking with businesses to have new and valid information, and we feel we have significantly added to the body of scientific knowledge regarding domestic violence and the workplace. We are hopeful this research will be part of what makes the difference for employers in choosing to implement a domestic violence workplace program.

CAEPV is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. Where do you think the corporate community will be 10 years from now regarding this issue?

I am hopeful that in 10 years, due to CAEPV's efforts, when we do this survey again, the numbers will have reversed, and at least 66% of workplaces will have domestic violence programs!

66% of all respondents were unaware of or did not know if their employer has a domestic violence policy or program in place.



Survey facts at a glance

<i>Survey Timing</i>	Conducted July 15 to September 10, 2005
<i>Survey Sample</i>	1,200 demographically diverse, employed adults (18+) in the U.S.
<i>Survey Technique</i>	Nationwide telephone survey; 56 questions
<i>Survey Administrator</i>	Group SJR, a national survey research and communications firm with offices in New York and Los Angeles
<i>Survey Sponsor</i>	Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence

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A solution in 6 steps.

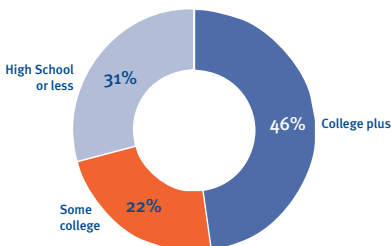
So what can employers do in the face of these sobering statistics? Fortunately, the answer is “plenty.” And the solution is relatively simple. Although most CAEPV members have already embraced the importance of domestic violence policies and plans, we can all use a little reminder of how to leverage them.

In conjunction with the release of the survey results, CAEPV published a simple Six-Step Guide to help employers through the process of creating a successful workplace program. Here it is in brief:

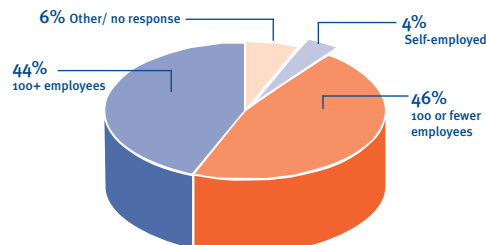
- Step 1:** Organize a multi-disciplinary team to oversee the process
- Step 2:** Develop a corporate policy for addressing intimate partner violence
- Step 3:** Provide training: recognize, respond and refer
- Step 4:** Build awareness through workplace communications
- Step 5:** Enlist employees’ help to ensure a violence-free workplace
- Step 6:** Broaden communications to include the community, important stakeholders in the company’s industry, and other organizations

To get specific tips and details, contact us at 1.309.664.0667 or email us at caepv@caepv.org.

Education



Size of Employer



Landmark CAEPV Survey

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What are employees' attitudes toward workplace domestic violence programs?

Although most employees were unsure if their employer had a domestic violence program, their attitudes toward such programs were strongly positive. In fact, 88% had a "very positive" to "somewhat positive" attitude toward employers who put in place a domestic violence awareness program at the office, while the remaining 12% had a neutral response to the question. Moreover, 78% of those asked believed a domestic violence awareness program would raise understanding of the issue, making it easier to identify a problem and help a victim.

What should a workplace program contain?

Respondents had clear views on what elements such programs should contain. Employees told us they believe a workplace program should contain the following:

- Employers should provide resources with referral numbers to local agencies that can help victims of violence and/or abusers – 74%
- Employers should contact the police when an employee is threatened at work – 68%
- Workplace domestic violence awareness programs should include training sessions for all employees – 66%
- Workplace programs should provide added security for victims of domestic violence – 55%
- Employers should provide a 24-hour hotline to report domestic violence and other workplace problems anonymously – 53%
- Workplace programs should train employees how to help their co-workers—50%

How should employers support victims?

The majority of respondents said that employers have an obligation to provide affected employees with access to the following:

- Time off to go to court or to the police – 71%
- Unpaid leave – 66%
- Domestic violence information and referral – 65%
- Medical help – 63%
- Security/safety planning – 54%
- Legal assistance, access to the courts – 50%
- Paid leave – 50%

How do employees think their employer would respond if they came forward as a victim?

In one of the most interesting parts of the survey, we asked non-victims some hypothetical questions about coming forward if they ever found themselves to be victims of domestic violence. Seventy-five percent (75%) of non-victim respondents said their current employer would be "very supportive" to "somewhat supportive" if they came forward as a victim today.

Are employees comfortable coming forward as victims?

Of those non-victim respondents who overwhelmingly indicated they believed their employer would be supportive if they came forward as a victim, 16% indicated they would NOT identify themselves as a victim to the employer. For those that thought they would come forward, 32% indicated they thought they would be "nervous," 26% thought they would be "relieved," and 14% thought they would be "concerned" about coming forward at work. Clearly, even though they overwhelmingly believed their workplaces would be supportive, when faced with the question for themselves, these non-victims expressed some reticence about approaching the employer.

What if a co-worker was a victim?

In another interesting hypothetical situation, when we asked respondents what they would do if they were to recognize that a co-worker was a victim of domestic violence, they were more likely to indicate they would respond through personal rather than professional channels.

- Reach out to the potential victim themselves – 68%
- Report concerns to their supervisor – 30%
- Contact human resources or personnel – 26%
- Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline – 26%

Conclusions

The survey highlights the fact that U.S. employers have full-time employees who are victims of domestic violence—and that non-victim co-workers recognize the impact of this issue on the workplace. In fact, it appears that more than 2/3 of U.S. businesses are not addressing domestic violence as a workplace issue, despite that it is affecting one in five members of the U.S. workforce.

This survey is a wake-up call. It is also a powerful tool to open conversations with employers about the importance of addressing domestic violence as a workplace issue. Bolstered by the findings of the survey, we can help employers understand the value of implementing a domestic violence program in the workplace. By learning to recognize the warning signs that an employee might be a victim, responding appropriately within the context of the workplace, and referring employees for assistance, it is clear that employers can positively affect victims and co-workers, and increase workplace safety and productivity.

As one manager of a company that was implementing a new domestic violence workplace program put it: "I am beginning to see with new eyes. I understand a reason for changes in my employee's performance and behavior that I never considered before. Now I know how to recognize that and respond appropriately." At CAEPV, we're doing everything we can to help more employers open their eyes to this critical issue. ■

The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence is a leading force in the fight against domestic violence. It is the only national organization of its kind founded by business leaders and focused on the workplace. Since 1995, the Alliance has brought together dozens of progressive companies who exchange information, collaborate on projects, and use their influence to instigate change.

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Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital
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Altria Group, Inc.
American Domestic Violence Crisis Line
American Express Company
Archer Daniels Midland Company
Avon Foundation
Bank One, Bloomington-Normal
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois
Blue Shield of California Foundation
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Gruber Industries, Inc.
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McLean County, IL Government
Master Software Corporation (Blackbaud)
Media Options
MicroAge, Inc.

Mid Central Community Action
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Football League
National Institute for the Prevention of Workplace Violence
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Alternatives Incorporated of Madison Co.
Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence
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The Children's Foundation
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National Center on Domestic & Sexual Violence
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Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape
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Sojourner Center
Soroptimist International of the Americas
Soroptimist International - Midwestern Region
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Southwest Women Working Together
Texas Council on Family Violence
YWCA of McLean Co. IL

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Anne C. Crews
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Our mission is to aid in the prevention of partner violence by leveraging the strength and resources of the corporate community. We believe that business plays an essential role in raising awareness of the issue and that our sustained efforts will help reduce and ultimately eliminate partner violence.

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