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## **Innovative Workplace-Based Program Helps Employees Understand, Address Abuse**

Awareness of domestic violence increases. Understanding of what constitutes abuse improves. Willingness to help victims rises dramatically. Knowledge about how to help victims soars.

Those are among the outcomes of an evaluation of Harman International's domestic violence prevention project, conducted in collaboration with the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF) from 2001 to 2003. The innovative project included: a new company policy regarding abuse; training on domestic violence and the new company policy; distribution of information, safety cards and posters; opportunities for employee volunteerism to support local domestic violence programs; referral sources and more. Experts say it is the most comprehensive workplace domestic violence prevention project ever devised.

"This evaluation is tremendously encouraging, because it demonstrates conclusively that workplace-based prevention programs can transform attitudes about domestic violence and influence behaviors," said FVPF President Esta Soler. "Harman International is a true pioneer in domestic violence prevention. Because of Harman's commitment to help end abuse, employers around the nation now have a roadmap for how to conduct effective prevention programs."

"We have shown that workplace training on domestic violence can be enormously effective," Harman International Executive Chairman Sidney Harman said. "It benefits victims of abuse, it benefits communities, and it benefits the companies that sponsor the training. Harman International is proud to have developed this prevention project. We will work with the Family Violence Prevention Fund to share lessons learned with other employers who are interested in helping to prevent and stop abuse."

According to the evaluation, conducted by Beverly Younger Urban, Ph.D., LCSW:

- After the domestic violence training, 91 percent of employees said they were now more likely to know where to refer someone who is abused for help, 89 percent said they were now more likely to be supportive of a colleague who is abused, and 86 percent said they were now more aware of what to do if there is a threat of domestic violence at work.
- The training caused a “highly significant increase” in the number of employees who said they know the signs of abuse, they know where to refer a victim to get help, and they know who to contact if they know an employee who might be attacked at work.
- Employees’ attitudes about domestic violence were more supportive of victims after the training than before it. In this statistically significant finding, about 20 percent more employees had highly supportive answers after the training.
- Responding to questions about the training, about three-quarters of Harman employees agreed that the training sessions increased their awareness and readiness to respond to domestic violence.

The project began in 2001, after a much beloved Harman employee of 24 years was killed by her ex-husband one block from her home in Northridge, California.

*The evaluation of the Harman International Domestic Violence Prevention Project is available online at [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org) (click the workplace program button).*