

It is important to remember that associates' home lives can affect their performance at work, especially an issue like domestic violence.

Defined as a pattern of coercive behavior that is used by one person in an intimate relationship to gain power and control over another, domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and financial abuse.

Some examples of coercive behavior are: hitting, punching, shoving, stabbing, shooting, slapping, threatening behavior, name calling, humiliating in front of others, controlling what one wears, says, and does, controlling the financial decisions, stalking, destroying or attempting to destroy property, and using children to control ones' partner.

Domestic violence occurs between people of all racial, economic, educational, religious backgrounds, in heterosexual and same sex relationships, living together or separately, married or unmarried, in short-term or long-term relationships.

If an otherwise valuable member of your team has inexplicably become less productive or more frequently late/absent, it could be that something else is causing the problem.

**The information that follows will help you to recognize domestic violence in the workplace and know what to do if you find it.**

## REFER

To help or get help:

National Domestic Violence Hotline:

**(800) 799-SAFE**

Handbooks for women, men, teens and parents:

Go to [www.loveisnotabuse.com](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com)

**LOVE IS NOT ABUSE**

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“ I remember the first coworker who asked me if my fat lip was caused by my ex-husband. He may have felt that it didn't do any good, or that he was wrong to ask. But by asking that question, he planted a seed in my mind that what was happening to me wasn't right. ”

— A Survivor

“Recognize. Respond. Refer.” is adapted from materials provided by the Colorado Bar Association

**RECOGNIZE.  
RESPOND.  
REFER.**

**What to Do  
When Abuse at Home  
Comes to Work**

# RECOGNIZE that a colleague may be involved in an abusive relationship.

## A victim may exhibit the following signs:

- Obvious injuries such as bruises, black eyes, broken bones and hearing loss, often attributed to “falls,” “being clumsy,” or “accidents.”
- Clothing that is inappropriate for the season, such as long sleeves and turtlenecks, as well as wearing sunglasses and heavy makeup.
- Uncharacteristic absenteeism or lateness for work.
- Change in job performance, including poor concentration, errors, slowness, and inconsistent work quality.
- Uncharacteristic signs of anxiety and fear.
- Requests for special accommodations, such as leaving early.
- Isolation, unusual quietness, or keeping away from others.
- Emotional distress, tearfulness, depression, and suicidal thoughts.
- Minimization and denial of harassment or injuries.
- An unusual number of phone calls, faxes or emails from a current or former partner, strong reactions to those calls, and reluctance to converse or respond to phone messages.
- Insensitive or insulting messages taken by others.
- Sensitivity about home life or hints of trouble at home. Comments may include references to bad moods, anger, tempers, and alcohol or drug abuse.
- Disruptive personal visits to the workplace by present or former partner.
- Irrational or unfounded fear about losing his/her job.
- The appearance of gifts and flowers after what appears to be an argument between the couple, which may include physical violence.

## An abuser may exhibit the following behavior:

- Be abusive or bully others at work.
- Blame others for problems, especially the victim.
- Deny problems.
- Show “defensive injuries” such as scratch marks.
- May or may not demonstrate violence at work.
- Is knowledgeable about the legal and social service systems and uses it to his/her advantage so it appears that he/she is the victim.
- Is absent or late related to his/her actions toward the victim or for court or jail time.
- Call victim repeatedly during work.

## An abuser may be “invisible” due to exemplary job performance.

# RESPOND

### To a victim:

- Gently and indirectly probe the issue:
  - I’ve noticed you’ve been distracted lately, and you don’t really seem to ‘be yourself.’ I am concerned about you, and am wondering if there is anything I can do to assist you?
  - I’ve noticed a change in your work in the past few months. You are not as productive, you are frequently late for work, often leave early, and have missed a few meetings. I am concerned about you, and about your work performance – is there anything I can do to help you improve or get back on track?

### If abuse is acknowledged, accept her/his reluctance to talk about it. Listening is the first step, and it may take time and several conversations before she/he will verbalize that she/he is being abused. Be there and be patient.

- Show concern and be supportive:
  - I am concerned for your safety.
  - You are not responsible for what your partner has done to you.

- You don’t deserve to be verbally, emotionally or physically abused.
- Without intervention the abuse likely will get worse.
- I will support you and your decisions.
- This affects your children, too.
- Let her/him know that domestic violence is a crime and that she/he can seek protection from the courts.
- Listen in a non-judgmental way.
- Provide information about company and community resources and suggest safety planning.
- Do not tell the person what you think she/he should do. Respect the person’s ability and responsibility for solving her/his own problems (when connected with appropriate resources).
- Do not try to physically intervene. Call Corporate Security or the police.
- Do not offer to go to the person’s home to get their things or have the person stay with you.
- Contact your HR Generalist or Corporate Security to apprise them of any suspected domestic violence situation immediately.

### To an abuser:

- Don’t reinforce the behavior in any way.
- Tell him/her you are uncomfortable when he/she insults or puts down his partner.
- Maintain that there is no excuse for violence.
- Indicate that you are concerned for his/her well-being.
- Do not try to physically intervene.
- Don’t be judgmental of the person – just their behavior.
- Provide information about company and community resources.
- Contact your HR generalist or Corporate Security if you suspect that one of your associates is an abuser.