

# Relationship Abuse: Impacting Businesses in Saratoga County

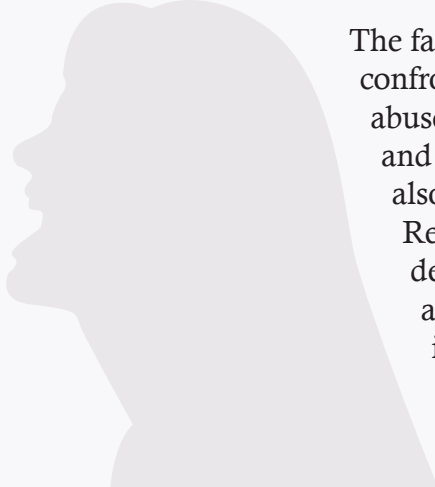
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## A Message to Saratoga County Business Leaders

One of your employees is likely a victim of relationship abuse, commonly known as domestic violence, right now. If that's a surprise, consider these statistics:

- One in five people in the workplace experiences relationship abuse at some point in their lives<sup>1</sup>
- Of that number, 96% say their work suffers as a result.<sup>2</sup>
- Nationally 40,000, incidents of domestic violence occur in the workplace every year.<sup>3</sup>



The fact is, every employer needs to confront the reality of relationship abuse, not only for the well-being and safety of their employees but also for the health of their business. Relationship abuse cuts across all demographic and income categories; and it's a serious problem even here in prosperous Saratoga County.

→ Domestic Violence is more than you think. Domestic Violence can span beyond a household, and is not always physically violent. This common, but sometimes misunderstood term, impacts many forms of relationships, and numerous types of abuse. As you'll see in these pages, it can also be known as relationship abuse or physical and non-physical violence.

Abuse starts at home, but doesn't end there. The corrosive effects of abuse can undermine productivity at your business if you're not tuned in.

Abuse does not discriminate. Anyone can become a victim of abuse in a relationship. There is no single profile of an abuser or abuse victim. Anyone can be abused regardless of race, gender, income level, sexual preference, or marital status.

You don't have to hit to hurt. Abuse takes many forms, and many people in abusive relationships are never physically assaulted.

<sup>1</sup>Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (2005, 12 October). *Everybody's business* Bloomington, IL.

<sup>2</sup>Ridley, E., Rioux, J., Lim, k., Mason, D., Houghton, K., Luppi, F., & Melody, T. (2005). *Domestic violence survivors at work: How perpetrators impact employment*. Augusta, ME: Maine Department of Labor & Family Crisis Services.

<sup>3</sup>Kirk, D. J., & Franklin, G. M. (2003). Violence in the workplace: *Guidance and training advice for business owners and managers*. *Business and Society Review*, 108: 523-537.



# Relationship Abuse Impacts Your Employees and Your Bottom Line

Domestic abuse begins at home, but it doesn't end there. It might be hiding in the cubicle next to you. It could be stalking your lunch room, tying up your phone line, or hogging bandwidth. Relationship abuse affects your employees, your work environment and your business bottom line.

## *Why should you take action?*

### **Your employees are affected:**

- **21%** of full-time employed adults have been victims of domestic violence, and most indicate work performance was significantly impacted.<sup>4</sup>
- **40%** of these victims report being harassed at work by their abuser.<sup>5</sup>
- **74%** of perpetrators had easy access to their partner's workplace.<sup>6</sup>
- **21%** of offenders contacted their victims at the workplace in violation of an order of protection.<sup>6</sup>

### **Your business is affected:**

- **\$1.8 billion** annually: Productivity loss due to relationship abuse.<sup>7</sup>
- **\$4 billion** annually: Health-related costs of intimate partner violence.<sup>8</sup>
- **More than 75%:** Used workplace resources at least once to check up on, pressure, or threaten the victim.<sup>9</sup>

### **Your employees need your help:**

- Co-workers frequently feel obliged to cover for victims of domestic violence by performing their work or offering excuses for their absences. Some co-workers resent the victim because of the effect their situation has on the workplace.<sup>10</sup>
- When employees find out a colleague is a victim of domestic violence they often feel concern for their own safety.<sup>11</sup>
- **84%** of employees believe that corporations should take action to address domestic violence.<sup>12</sup>

*The signs of relationship abuse and domestic violence can be hard to recognize, but supporting a victim is easier than you might think. This document, and resources available from Wellspring, will help you and your employees learn to recognize the signs of abuse and offer some simple techniques for victims, co-workers, and employers to become ready to address the problem.*

<sup>4,5,10,11</sup> Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2005 National Telephone Survey.

[http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts\\_stats.php?factsec=3](http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts_stats.php?factsec=3). Accessed September 20, 2012.

<sup>6,9</sup> Maine Department of Labor Statistics, Impact of Domestic Violence Offenders on Occupational Safety & Health: A Pilot Study, February, 2004. Accessed September 20, 2012, [http://www.maine.gov/labor/labor\\_stats/publications/dvreports/domesticoffendersreport.pdf](http://www.maine.gov/labor/labor_stats/publications/dvreports/domesticoffendersreport.pdf)

<sup>7,8</sup> Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States*, Atlanta Georgia, 2003. Accessed September 20, 2012, <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/IPVBook-a.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, September 25, 2007, CAEPV, Liz Claiborne and Safe Horizon survey. Accessed September 20, 2012, [http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts\\_stats.php?factsec=3](http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts_stats.php?factsec=3)

# Recognizing Abuse

Most people think of physical violence when they think about relationship abuse, but that's only one aspect of the problem. Relationship abuse is any pattern of behavior used by one person to control the actions of another person within a relationship. Controls can be emotional, financial, psychological, physical, or sexual.

## Types of Relationship Abuse

Type	Description	Example
Emotional	Undermining the other person's sense of self-worth	Criticizing, blaming, insulting, name-calling, inflicting guilt, undermining relationships
Financial	Using financial dependence to control the relationship	Controlling all financial decisions, withholding access to money, interfering with a partner's ability to work, refusing to contribute financially
Psychological	Using fear or humiliation to control one person in the relationship	Intimidating, threatening to harm oneself or others, destroying property, isolating from friends and family, making unfounded accusations, forcing confinement, exhibiting irrational jealousy
Physical	Inflicting bodily pain or injury on the other person	Grabbing, shoving, hitting, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, burning, threatening with weapons, controlling with substance abuse
Sexual	Using sexual coercion, degradation, or force to control a relationship	Forcing sexual contact, unprotected sexual intercourse, sexual intercourse with someone other than their partner, or prostitution; undermining a person's sexuality

### *What to look for?*

Are you concerned that one of your employees or co-workers may be suffering from relationship abuse? Here are a few signs that may indicate abuse:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Frequent absences                   | Isolation from co-workers                 |
| Abrupt absences                     | Overly anxious behavior                   |
| Emotional outbursts                 | Frequent tardiness                        |
| Absence from work/social functions  | Unexpected visitors                       |
| Seasonally inappropriate clothing   | Escorts to and from work                  |
| Performance or productivity changes | Excessive phone calls                     |
| Increased health care usage         | Asking co-workers to "cover" for absences |

