



FAST FACTS

Domestic Violence and the Workplace

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What types of violence is seen in the workplace?

- **Fact 1:** "Violence committed by criminals who enter to commit robbery or another crime and who have no connection with the workplace." (Gustin, 2013:15)
- **Fact 2:** "Violence directed at employees by customers, clients, patients, etc., for whom an organization provides service." (Gustin, 2013:15)
- **Fact 3:** "Violence against co-workers, supervisors or managers by a present or former employee." (Gustin, 2013:15)
- **Fact 4:** "Violence committed in the workplace by someone who is personally involved with an employee such as an abusive spouse, domestic partner, boyfriend or girlfriend." (Gustin, 2013:15)

Is domestic violence related to economic/social status of women?

- **Fact 1:** "Studies on human rights usually agree that poverty is the main cause of the involvement of young females in domestic works. Gender studies add a caveat that families and sociocultural conditions also determine the position of these young ones in society " (Omer, Jabeen, 2015 :4).
- **Fact 2:** "Poor families, employing their young girls as domestic workers is the easiest way of gaining income for their survival. Fear of hunger and lack of shelter thus forces parents of young female children to compromise with a situation that involves several risks, some even fatal. " (Omer, Jabeen, 2015:3).
- **Fact 3:** "Only eight percent were reported to have passed their middle education, while two percent had primary school education" (Omer, Jabeen, 2015 :6).

How does violence at home overlap into the workplace?

- **Fact 1:** “More than half (53.5%, n=1515) of participants with any lifetime DV experience reported that the violence continued at or near their workplace.” (Wathen, MacGregor, Macquarrie, 2015:3)
- **Fact 2:** “Job interference tactics identified in the literature reviewed fall into two primary categories: work disruption and work-related stalking.” (Versola-Russo, Russo, 2009:3)
- **Fact 3:** “Work disruption consists of tactics employed by the abuser primarily in an effort to prevent the victim from reaching the workplace either on time or at all. Particularly, results from a national 12-site welfare-to-work quantitative evaluation revealed several abusers’ methods used such as: sleep deprivation; refusing to care for children while participant went to work; hiding or destroying clothing, books, or car keys; assaulting the victim prior to work; or preventing the victim from going to work.” (Versola-Russo, Russo, 2009:3)
- **Fact 4:** “Stalking is generally defined as the unwelcome and repeated harassing or threatening behavior directed at one individual. Cupach and Spitzberg (2004) further noted that stalking may involve limited and indirect contact in the form of repeated harassing or threatening behavior. Additionally, stalking may involve more direct and physical contact.” (Versola-Russo, Russo, 2009:3)
- **Fact 5:** “When batterers exert control over victims’ employment or job opportunities, this is a form of victimization to intimidate their partners. The abuser may expand his violent behavior toward other employees even after the victim has resigned. It is possible that the abuser is trying to control the situation and anyone even remotely connected with the victim.” (Versola-Russo, Russo, 2009:3)
- **Fact 6:** “A violent event at work can have long-lasting effects. An act of violence can, undoubtedly, be very traumatic for the employees who are directly involved in the incident. The victim may be absent from work, or may be assigned to different responsibilities, and other coworkers must take on those duties, while offering assistance to the victim. While the victim may look to his or her coworkers for emotional support, the effects of that incident are still felt by those helping.” (Versola-Russo, Russo, 2009:4)

What kind of impact does domestic violence have on work performance?

- **Fact 1:** “37 percent of the victims stated that it affected their job in a variety of ways, including being late for work, missing work altogether, or even causing them to eventually lose their job.” (Lee, 2005:15)
- **Fact 2:** “Tardiness or leaving early are also red flags that have a direct impact on a worker’s ability to get the job done. In an often-quoted New York study, researchers found that 56 percent of the survivors surveyed responded that they

were late for work at least five days in a one-month period, and 28 percent stated that they had to leave early at least the same number of days because of the abusive relationship.” (Lee, 2005:15)

- **Fact 3:** “The inability to take her mind off the abuse results in mistakes in calculation, difficulty working with peers or customers, and even compromises in workplace safety, depending on the employee’s responsibilities” (Lee, 2005:15)

What types of disruptions do women go through at work because of domestic violence?

- **Fact 1:** “*On-the-job harassment* is abusive behavior perpetrated while a victim is at work with the intention of interfering with work duties and sabotaging employment. ” (Showalter, 2016:3).
- **Fact 2:** “*Workplace time reduction* is the loss of paid work time women experience because of domestic violence. Time lost at work can range from hours to months worked depending on the abuse.” (Showalter, 2016:3).
- **Fact 3:** “*Job loss* or unemployment is an extreme workplace disruption tactic that prevents women from working for money and maintaining financial stability. Job loss can be the result of termination or resignation.”(Showalter, 2016:3).

What types of workplace policies address domestic violence?

- **Fact 1:** “Only 5% of U.S. companies have domestic violence policies. The remaining 95% are vulnerable to lack direction, legal issues, and employee-team problems related to domestic violence.” (Katula, 2006:1-2)
- **Fact 2:** “The following guidelines should be used when asking employees about the existence of domestic violence situation: Provide a safe and private place. Ask questions without judging. Listen and believe. Express concern for safety. Reassure victims it is not their fault. Offer continued support, as leaving these situations take time. Express admiration for their courage.” (Katula, 2006:1-2)
- **Fact 3:** “Policies should comply with all local, state, and federal laws; maintain confidentiality; link with community programs; and maintain a safe and secure workplace, which extends to data systems. Personal handbooks should be audited to prevent other policies from conflicting with the domestic violence policy.” (Katula, 2006:1-2)
- **Fact 4:** “Women appreciated the fact the generally they were able to go and talk to workers when they encountered problems or were in need of practical or emotional support; That wherever possible workers would make time to listen

and, if necessary, would remain outside scheduled hours, or telephone to check that a problem had been resolved.” (Abrahams, 2007:68)

- **Fact 5:** “Organizations should create a threat assessment team. A threat assessment team includes a cross section of the organization, including a member from human resources, security, corporate compliance or the legal department, a customer service leader, and a local law enforcement officer as well.” (Smith, 2014:111)

What can/should a manager do to prevent violence in the workplace?

- **Fact 1:** “Implement a comprehensive selection process to screen out potentially violent employees as much as possible.” (Minor, 1995:18)
- **Fact 2:** “Arrange employee assistance programs (EAPs) to help employees handle stress, change and personal problems that may affect job performance.” (Minor, 1995:18)
- **Fact 3:** “Provide grievance policies and procedures for employees who feel they have been treated unfairly. Give employees access to an advocate who will allow them to vent frustrations and help them work through channels to solve problems.” (Minor, 1995:19)
- **Fact 4:** “Create a comprehensive crisis management plan that involves all levels of the organization, as well as community resources. Form a crisis management team that will develop policies and procedures for handling crises during middle and late stages.” (Minor, 1995:19)
- **Fact 5:** “Invest in safety awareness training for all employees.” (Minor, 1995:19)

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