



# You are not alone

## Recognizing Signs of Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence

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Domestic/intimate partner violence can occur in all cultures and communities. While it can be difficult to recognize, there are many signs that might indicate an employee is experiencing domestic/intimate partner violence. Being aware of potential signs of domestic/intimate partner violence can help you to take appropriate measures to prevent it from escalating in your workplace. You may notice that your employee is less productive than usual or see changes in social behaviour. Some visible signs of abuse might indicate an escalation of violence that could enter a workplace.

### Potential Signs of Abuse – Work Productivity

Your employee is:

- Having trouble concentrating
- Often arriving late or working increased hours for no apparent reason (e.g. very early arrival at work and/or working late)
- Missing work more frequently than usual
- Needing regular time off for "appointments"
- Being less productive
- Making excuses for poor work performance
- Receiving frequent phone calls and emails from a partner

### Potential Signs of Abuse – Social Behaviour

Your employee is:

- Behaving differently than usual (e.g. may become quiet, avoid interaction, eat alone, may not talk to others unless someone else speaks to him/her first)
- Appearing withdrawn and isolated
- Demonstrating uncharacteristic depression, anxiety, problems with concentration, appearing fearful or easily startled
- Engaging in fewer social activities than usual
- Making last minute cancellations
- Using drugs and/or alcohol to cope
- Apologizing for a partner's behaviour

- Having an unusual amount of control/demands over the work schedule exerted by the partner
- Obsessing over the time
- Exhibiting fear of partner/references to partner's anger
- Expressing fears about leaving children home alone with the abuser

## Potential Signs of Abuse – Escalating Abuse

Your employee is:

- Appearing flustered by incoming phone calls or emails from a partner
- Receiving repeated calls/faxes/emails
- Exhibiting reluctance to turn off mobile phone at work
- Trying to cover up bruises and scratches (e.g. wearing long sleeves or turtleneck tops in summer)
- Showing signs of strangulation
- Receiving unannounced visits from a partner at work
- Acting nervous when a partner shows up at the workplace
- Being followed to/from work by a partner
- Appearing depressed/attempting suicide
- Being the target of vandalism or threats

## Perpetrator may attempt to prevent the employee from getting to work or seeking work by:

- Interfering with transportation (e.g. hiding car keys or transportation money)
- Hiding or stealing the partner's identification cards
- Threatening deportation in a situation where the partner was sponsored
- Failing to show up to care for children
- Physically restraining the partner

## Perpetrator may interfere with the employee while at work by:

- Repeatedly phoning or emailing the employee
- Stalking and/or watching the employee
- Showing up at the workplace and pestering co-workers with questions about the employee
- Lying to co-workers about the employee's whereabouts
- Destroying the employee's or workplace's property
- Threatening the employee and/or co-workers
- Displaying jealous and controlling behaviour
- Verbally abusing the employee and/or co-workers
- Making disruptive personal visits to the workplace
- Physically harming the employee and/or co-workers

### Co-workers may:

- Receive insensitive or insulting messages intended for the employee experiencing abuse
- Be threatened, abused or physically harmed

### Sources:

1. Worksafe BC. Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: A Handbook for Employers. 2012.
2. Refuge and Respect. Domestic violence resource manual for employers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. 2010.