

RECOGNIZE, RESPOND, AND REFER

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

A victim may present the following clues:

- Obvious injuries such as bruises, black eyes, broken bones, hearing loss – these are often attributed to “falls,” “being clumsy,” or “accidents.”
- Clothing that is inappropriate for the season, such as long sleeves and turtlenecks – also wearing sunglasses and unusually heavy makeup.
- Uncharacteristic absenteeism or lateness for work.
- Change in job performance: poor concentration and errors, slowness, inconsistent work quality.
- Uncharacteristic signs of anxiety and fear.
- Requests for special accommodations such as requests to leave early.
- Isolation; unusually quiet and keeping away from others.
- Emotional distress or flatness, tearfulness, depression, and suicidal thoughts.
- Minimization and denial of harassment or injuries.
- An unusual number of phone calls, 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, temper, and alcohol or drug abuse.
- Disruptive personal visits to workplace by present or former partner or spouse.
- Fear about losing her/his job.
- The appearance of gifts and flowers after what appears to be an argument between the couple which may include physical violence.

continued

An abuser may behave in the following ways:

- May be “invisible” due to exemplary job performance or may be abusive at work.
- May bully others at work.
- Blames others for problems, especially the victim.
- Denies problems.
- Shows “defensive injuries” (such as scratch marks).
- May or may not demonstrate violence at work.
- Is knowledgeable about the legal and social service systems and use 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.
- Calls victim repeatedly during work.

RESPOND

To a victim

- With concern and support, such as:
 - *I am concerned for your safety.*
 - *I believe what you are telling me.*
 - *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 nonjudgmental way.
- Accept her/his reluctance to talk about the abuse; listening is the first step; it may take time and several conversations before she/he will verbalize that she/he is being abused; be there and be patient.
- Provide her/him with information about company and community resources and suggest safety planning.
- Do not tell the person what you believe 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 intervene physically, unless appropriate. Call security or the police.

continued

RESPOND

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.
- Tell her/him you are concerned for her/his well-being.
- Do not try to intervene physically, unless appropriate.
- Provide him/her with information about company and community resources, if available.

REFER

- Victims to local domestic violence agencies or company's EAP program.
- Abusers to local EAP or treatment programs.
- See www.makeyourbusiness.org for more information.
- Also see the handout *Where To Make Referrals*.