

Some Impacts of Family Violence on the Workplace

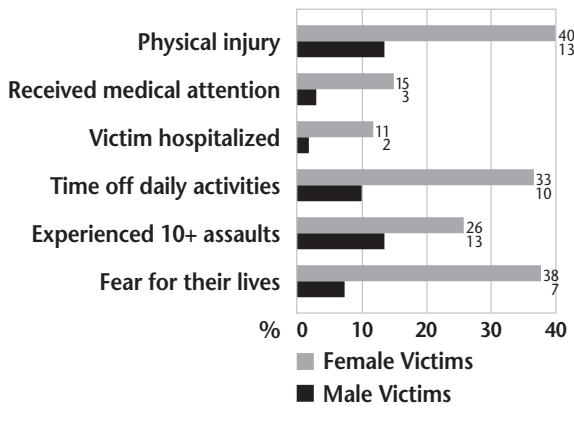
The purpose of this fact sheet is to outline some of the effects that family violence has on the workplace and the different ways in which it spills over from the home into the work site. Since family violence typically happens in the home, many people think that it is a private matter. Violence is not a private matter - it's everyone's business. No one deserves to be abused. The consequences of spousal violence on the workplace are well documented.

In addition to the psychological devastation for the victim, such as low self-esteem, anger, guilt, insomnia, and depression, there are other impacts.

The graph below from Statistics Canada, General Social Survey (1999), shows that women are more likely than men to be injured or require medical attention due to spousal abuse. That means they may need time off from their daily activities including work to deal with the violence.

The stress of living with family violence clearly affects a person's ability to do their work. When this happens, it impacts on others in the workplace as well.

Other consequences of spousal violence for victims



Source: Statistics Canada, 1999 GSS

Family Violence

It's Your Business

A Workplace Toolkit

This chart outlines some of the ways a person's job performance is impacted by violence at home, how it enters the workplace, and how it impacts on other workers, as well as the employer.

How Family Violence Enters the Workplace	Impact on the Victim	Impact on the Workplace	Consequences for Employer
Abuser sends threatening e-mail, voice messages and/or faxes	fear, inattention, increased fatigue	other staff concerned, annoyed at having to "cover" for colleague who is performing poorly; co-workers may think victim is lazy	poor job performance may affect the entire workplace; low staff morale
Abuser humiliates the victim by criticizing or degrading him or her in front of other staff	low self-esteem, low confidence, anxiety related symptoms such as headaches, nervousness	other staff may become distressed or feel uncomfortable at work	staff take work time discussing situation; less productive because of discomfort at work
Abuser constantly contacts workplace and other staff in an effort to "keep tabs" on the victim; abuser stalks the victim	mistrust other staff because they are giving out information; fear for personal safety	staff are unsure of what information to share and have safety concerns about their own well-being	staff productivity may decrease contributing to increased conflict with others; safety concerns
Abuser is jealous of others in the workplace, the abuser "shows up" at the office	increased anxiety and avoids interaction; fear of losing job; physical symptoms related to anxiety such as ulcers, headaches	staff are afraid of being accused by the abuser; staff may distance themselves from the victim; other staff feel at risk	employer must address safety issues and increased absenteeism for physical symptoms; negative impact on staff relationships
Abuser hits, slaps or pushes the victim at their workplace	victim experiences humiliation and/or shame; anxiety from trying to hide injuries	co-workers may fear for their own safety and require counselling	absenteeism and safety concerns; in some situations staff may be performing job duties that they have not been trained for; employee morale is affected
Abuser physically assaults victim outside work environment or at home	increased anxiety from trying to hide the abuse; physical injuries	staff may not know about the abuse; perceive victim as distant or unfriendly	poor team performance; conflict among staff; victim may miss work because of injuries
Abuser sexually assaults victim	shame, self-blame, self-hatred; victim withdraws from co-workers; unwanted pregnancies; forced abortions; sexually transmitted diseases	staff view victim as distant; communication among staff poor; negative work environment	human resources must address issue of team building and possible staff conflicts
Abuser threatens to kill the victim	victim feels trapped in the relationship; feels nobody cares; may be afraid, isolated or desperate	other staff unaware of death threats and reacts negatively to the victim's anxiety/stress; others may fear for their own safety if aware of death threats against victim	supervisors may have to deal with staff anxieties and fear; productivity drops

This project was funded by the National Crime Prevention Strategy, Government of Canada.