

Preventing & Responding to Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking (DVSAS)

Implementing Supportive Workplace Policies & Practices

Futures Without Violence may adjust this Model Policy based on feedback received from agency adaptations. Please contact workplacesrespond@futureswithoutviolence.org to confirm the latest version.

The information provided herein is for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice from Futures Without Violence, nor is it intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter.

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

- Describe how domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking impacts the workplace;
- Apply trauma-responsive principles when providing support to survivors; and
- Implement workplace policies that are survivor-centered, trauma-informed, equitable, and promote employee resilience.

Group Agreements

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- Be present
- Take space, make space
- Respect confidentiality
- Speak from the "I" perspective
- Take care of yourself
- Others?



National Hotlines

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National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-SAFE (7233)

www.thehotline.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline

800.656.HOPE (4673)

www.rainn.org



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How Violence Impacts Employees and Workplaces

Domestic Violence

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- Intimate Partner Violence: A pattern of coercive and abusive behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.
- Family Violence: Any abusive behavior that occurs between members of a family or household who are not involved in a romantic relationship.
- Can include manipulation, threats, or the actual use of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological, or financial abuse.

Sexual Assault

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- Any action, sexual contact, or behavior that occurs without explicit consent that results in the loss or removal of sexual autonomy for a person.
- A survivor of sexual assault may know the perpetrator, such as a co-worker or a supervisor, and/or may be involved in a dating or marital relationship with the perpetrator, or the perpetrator may be unknown to the victim.
- Lack of consent should be inferred when a perpetrator uses force, harassment, threat of force, threat of adverse personnel or disciplinary action, or other coercion, or when the victim is asleep, incapacitated, unconscious, or physically or legally incapable of consent."

Stalking

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- A pattern of harassing behavior or course of conduct directed at a specific person that would place that person in reasonable fear.
- Stalking behaviors include, but are not limited to, monitoring someone's activities, following someone, leaving unwanted gifts and notes, and making repeated phone calls to someone and/or their family, friends, or workplace.
- Stalking may occur through use of technology, including but not limited to, email, telephone, voicemail, text messaging, and use of GPS and social networking sites.

Employment as a Target

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Eighty-three percent of survivors say that intimate partner violence disrupted their ability to work.

Hess, Cynthia, and Alona Del Rosario. 2018. *Dreams Deferred: A Survey on the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Survivors' Education, Careers, and Economic Security*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Sixty percent of survivors reported being forced to quit or were fired as a result of abuse.

Ridley, Ellen et al. 2005. *Domestic Violence Survivors At Work: How Perpetrators Impact Employment*. Augusta, ME: Main Department of Labor & Family Crisis Services.

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Potential Signs of Surviving DVSA

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- Increased absenteeism
- Inability to concentrate
- Increase in personal calls or visits
- Appearing agitated, angry, sad, or hypervigilant
- Withdraw from typical activities
- Physical signs of injury or chronic illness

Manifestations of Trauma

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Emotional	Physical	Cognitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbness, apathy, withdrawal • Anxiety & fear • Guilt & shame • Anger & irritability • Depression • Suicidal thoughts or ideation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastrointestinal issues • Headaches • Sleep problems • Chronic pain • Panic Attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty focusing or making decisions • Flashbacks • Hypervigilance • Decreased working memory

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Effects on Workers and Workplaces

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- Impaired job performance
- Depression / lack of motivation
- Absenteeism / chronic tardiness
- Frequent contact from person using DVAS
- Job loss / high turnover
- Strained co-worker relationships
- Hypervigilance / hypovigilance



Comprehensive Framework

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Elements of a Model Workplace DVSA Policy

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- Robust purpose statement
- Clear definitions of persons & incidents covered
- Accessible explanation of qualified confidentiality
- Reporting & investigation protocols
- Responses & accommodations available to survivors
- Responses to persons accused or adjudicated
- Available supports & referrals
- Cross-references to related policies

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Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach

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- Safety
- Transparency and Trust
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Peer Support
- Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
- Historic, Cultural, and Gender Issues

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Be Prepared

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- Familiarize yourself with workplace policies related to DVSAAS, available supports, and how to access supports
- Have referral information readily available
 - Employee Assistance Programs
 - Local service providers

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Cultivate a Safer Space

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- Reinforce leadership commitments to better prevent and respond to DV/SAS
- Publicize available supports and resources in multiple formats and mediums
- Use opportunities like Domestic Violence Awareness Month to inform on policies and practices

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Practice Trauma-Informed Supervision

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Leadership Practices

- Clearly communicate your role and responsibilities as supervisor from day one

Team Management

- Establish frequent check-ins to not only monitor progress toward goals, but to assess what employees need to succeed

Employee Support

- Practice open and empathetic listening when receiving reports

Personnel Management

- Provide consistent and constructive feedback related to work performance and create opportunities to strengthen and enhance skills

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ABCs of Reaching Out

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Survivors aren't always going to seek help

Acknowledge Change in Behavior

Be empathetic and supportive

Connect to resources

- "I am worried about you, you haven't seemed like yourself lately."
- "I am here if you want to talk."
- "Is there anything I can do to help?"

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Technical Assistance

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- Create and disseminate culturally-relevant and industry-appropriate **best practices**
- Provide **referrals & background information** on the impacts of DVSA on workers and the workplace
- Facilitate **live and web-based education programs** and training on best practices
- Develop or audit **workplace policies and practices** that prevent and respond to DVSA impacting the workplace

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Additional Resources

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www.workplacesrespond.org

www.workplacesrespond.org/federal

workplacesrespond@futureswithoutviolence.org



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