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.

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

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

National Hotlines

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**
800-799-SAFE (7233)
www.thehotline.org

**National Sexual Assault Hotline**
800.656.HOPE (4673)
www.rainn.org
How Violence Impacts Employees and Workplaces

Domestic Violence

- **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

- 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

- 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

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


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


Potential Signs of Surviving DVSAS

- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Numbness, apathy, withdrawal</td>
<td>• Gastrointestinal issues</td>
<td>• Difficulty focusing or making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anxiety &amp; fear</td>
<td>• Headaches</td>
<td>• Flashbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Guilt &amp; shame</td>
<td>• Sleep problems</td>
<td>• Hypervigilance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anger &amp; irritability</td>
<td>• Chronic pain</td>
<td>• Decreased working memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Depression</td>
<td>• Panic Attacks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Suicidal thoughts or ideation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Effects on Workers and Workplaces

- 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

![Diagram](https://example.com/diagram.png)
**Comprehensive Framework**

- **Realize**
  - Realize the pervasiveness of DVSAS

- **Recognize**
  - Recognize trauma and the impacts of violence

- **Respond**
  - Respond by incorporating an understanding of trauma into workplace practices

- **Resist Re-traumatization**
  - Resist re-traumatization by examining & modifying potentially harmful practices

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**Elements of a Model Workplace DVSAS Policy**

- 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
Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach

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

Be Prepared

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

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

Practice Trauma-Informed Supervision

**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
ABCs of Reaching Out

Survivors aren’t always going to seek help

**A**cknowledge Change in Behavior

**B**e empathetic and supportive

**C**onnect 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?”

Technical Assistance

- Create and disseminate culturally-relevant and industry-appropriate **best practices**
- Provide **referrals & background information** on the impacts of DVSAS 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 DVSAS impacting the workplace
# Additional Resources

www.workplacesrespond.org

www.workplacesrespond.org/federal

workplacesrespond@futureswithoutviolence.org