

The Facts on Gender-Based Workplace Violence

- *A customer threatens to assault a retail clerk.*
- *An employee's ex-boyfriend incessantly calls and visits the employee during shifts.*
- *A restaurant patron fondles a server, commenting "I left you a little something extra for that."*
- *Upon receiving divorce papers, a man shows up to his wife's office and kills her and several of her co-workers.*

These are just a few examples of the wide array of acts that fall within the definition of workplace violence: any violent act or threat of violence directed towards a person at work or on duty. Workplace violence can range from threatening language to homicide, and can be perpetrated by co-workers, supervisors, customers, clients, patients, intimate partners, and any other person who commits or threatens to commit a violent act at a workplace. Workplace violence is also compounded by other issues such as racism, ableism, homophobia that can impact some populations more severely.

Approximately 24% of violent acts committed in the workplace related to personal relationships, which involve situations where an individual gains access to a workplace and commits a crime targeting an employee or customer who is a current or former intimate partner.

Examples include:

- *An employee who harasses, threatens, or stalks another employee with whom he or she had a prior intimate relationship.*
- *A survivor of domestic violence has fled her abusive relationship and is now being followed by her abuser at work.*
- *An abuser purposely withholds paychecks or makes a survivor late to work to keep them from working.*
- *A supervisor sexually assaults an employee in an isolated part of a factory or farm.*

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The Impacts of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Stalking on Workplaces

Domestic Violence

Prevalence

- In the U.S., about one in four (30 million) women and men experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime and reported some form of IPV-related impact.ⁱ
- Women are much more likely than men to be victims of on-the-job intimate partner homicide. Spouses, boyfriends/girlfriends and ex-boyfriends/ex-girlfriends were responsible for the on-the-job deaths of 321 women and 38 men from 1997-2009.ⁱⁱ
- Although all races and ethnicities experience domestic and intimate partner violence, 48% percent of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) and 45% of Black women experience intimate partner violence compared to 37% of White women who experience this type of violence.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Transgender people are more likely to experience intimate partner violence and more likely to believe they are negatively impacted by this type of violence at work, but are less likely to discuss it in their workplaces.^{iv}
- In one study, one in five workers experienced the impacts of intimate partner violence at work. Of these workers, 66% had this type of violence perpetrated in the workplace or on their workplace premises.^v
- According to a 2006 study from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly one in four large private industry establishments (with more than 1,000 employees) reported at least one incidence of domestic violence, including threats and assaults, in the 12 months prior to the survey.^{vi}

Tolls on Productivity

- A 2018 national survey of domestic violence survivors found that 83% of respondents to the reported that their abusive partners disrupted their ability to work. Among those who reported experiencing one or more disruptions, 70% said they were not able to have a job when they wanted or needed one, and 53% said they lost a job because of the abuse. 49% said they missed one or more days of work, 18 % missed

out on a promotion or raise, and 38% said they lost out on other work opportunities.^{vii}

- An analysis of 2012 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey data estimates that U.S. adults experience 741 million lost days of work because of victimizations by an average of 2.5 perpetrators per survivor.^{viii}
- An estimated 50–75% of women with disabilities who have experienced IPV view their mental health as poor and/or actively experience difficulty sleeping, difficulty going to work or school, and PTSD.^{ix}
- A 2005 study of female employees in Maine who experienced domestic violence found that: 98 percent had difficulty concentrating on work tasks; 96 percent reported that domestic abuse affected their ability to perform their job duties; 87 percent received harassing phone calls at work; 78 percent reported being late to work because of abuse; and 60 percent lost their jobs due to domestic abuse.^x
- A 2011 study of domestic violence perpetrators in Vermont found that 23 percent had previously left work or were late to work at least once during the last two years because they were doing something controlling or abusive to their partner.^{xi}

Costs

- The estimated societal cost of violence-based short-term lost productivity was \$730 per survivor, or \$110 billion across the lifetimes of all survivors, in 2016 U.S. dollars.^{xii}
- The longer term estimated impacts are even more staggering. The same authors in a 2014 suggest that the lifetime cost of intimate partner violence was \$1.3 trillion (37%) in lost productivity among survivors and perpetrators.^{xiii}

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is one of the most underreported forms of violence in the U.S., and can range from unwanted sexual touching to rape. Sexual violence can have a lasting effect on the physical and psychological safety of workers, and can negatively impact productivity and earning potential of workers.

Prevalence

- According to a 2015 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 43.6% of women and 24.8% of men in the U.S. have experienced some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime. ^{xiv}
- About one in six women and one in 10 men has experienced sexual coercion at some point in their lifetime. This includes acts such as being worn down by someone who repeatedly asked for sex, sexual pressure due to someone using their influence or authority, etc. ^{xv}
- A 2010 study on victimization by sexual orientation found that 44% of lesbian women, 61% of bisexual women, and 35% of heterosexual women experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. ^{xvi}
- African American females experience intimate partner violence at a rate 35% higher than that of white females, and about 2.5 times the rate of women of other races. ^{xvii}

Tolls on Productivity

- Approximately 22% of federal employees who experienced sexual harassment saw a loss in productivity, 17% used annual or sick leave, and 13% were denied a promotion/pay increase/good performance rating or good reference, as found in a 2016 survey of U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board employees. ^{xviii}
- Detailed interviews with 22 adult sexual assault survivors highlighted that 36% them experienced symptoms of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that interfered with their ability to work effectively. Moreover, 18% of survivors described threats and isolation from coworkers after their sexual assaults. These actions resulted in the participants feeling isolated and fearful on and off the job, especially if the sexual assault occurred in the workplace. ^{xix}

Costs

- Rape and sexual assault have the second highest estimates of tangible (\$41,247 per rape/sexual assault) and intangible (\$199,642 per rape/sexual assault) costs related to victimization, criminal justice system costs and crime career costs in 2008 U.S. dollars. In 2020 U.S. dollars, that represents a total of \$288,432.86 in personal and societal costs per survivor.^{xx}

Stalking

Stalking is the most prevalent form of abuse at work. It poses risks to the physical safety of workers, co-workers, and customers/clients, can lead to property damage, and can negatively affect productivity and morale. In addition, employers could be held liable if an employee uses work time and resources to engage in stalking. Stalking often indicates an increased risk of fatality for those who experience it.

Prevalence

- According to a 2015 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in six women (19.1 million) and one in 17 men (6.4 million) in the U.S. were survivors of stalking at some point in their lifetime.^{xxi}
- Of those who were stalked, nearly seven in 10 knew their offender in some capacity beforehand, such as current or former intimate partner. ^{xxii} 9.2% of survivors knew their stalker from work or school. ^{xxiii}
- The U.S. Department of Justice found that approximately one in four stalking survivors reported some form of cyberstalking such as e-mail (83%) or instant messaging (35%). ^{xxiv}
- A survey of service providers found that 79% of programs reported that abusers monitor survivors' social media accounts, 74% reported that abusers check survivors

by text messages, and 71% reported that abusers scrutinize survivors' computer activities.

Tolls on Productivity

- About 130,000 survivors of stalking in a 12-month period from 2005 to 2006, reported that they were fired or asked to leave their job because of the stalking. About one in eight employed stalking survivors lost time from work because of fear for their safety or because they needed to get a restraining order or testify in court. More than half these survivors lost five days or more from work. ^{xxv}
- In one study, the majority of the women (74.2%) reported that the stalking partner had interfered with their employment more than one half (58.7%) experienced work disruption or a diminished ability to obtain or maintain employment. ^{xxvi}
- Analysis of National Violence Against Women Survey data from 2003 found that survivors of IPV who were stalked lost an average of 10.1 days of paid work per year due to the stalking. ^{xxvii}

Costs

- 27.8% of stalking survivors reported over \$1,000 in lost income with 8% reporting losses over \$5,000. ^{xxviii}
- In addition to lost income, about three in 10 of stalking survivors accrued out-of-pocket costs for things such as attorney fees, damage to property, child care costs, moving expenses, or changing phone numbers to avoid their stalker. ^{xxix}
- Moreover, the mental health costs for intimate partner stalking survivors seeking treatment was \$690, or \$1,177.20 in 2020 dollars. Approximately 32% of these costs were paid out of pocket. ^{xxx}

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