Welcome

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Trauma-Informed Conversations & Investigations
Interacting with Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault & Stalking

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www.workplacesrespond.org
Chat Box Discussion

Why is it challenging to discuss domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking in a workplace context?
Sexual Assault Awareness Month

In an effort to further coordinate awareness & prevention efforts, in 2000, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center & the Resource Sharing Project polled sexual violence coalitions and asked about their preferred color, symbol, & month for sexual assault awareness activities. The results showed that those in the movement preferred a teal ribbon as a symbol for sexual assault awareness, & SAAM as we know it was born.

April 2020 marks the 19th Anniversary of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)

Chat Box Discussion

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Our New Normal: Preventing & Responding to DVSAS

Domestic Violence

• A pattern of coercive behavior, including acts or threatened acts, that are used by a perpetrator to gain power and control over a current or former spouse, family member, current or former intimate partner, current or former dating partner, or person with whom the perpetrator shares a child in common.
  • This behavior includes, but is not limited to, physical or sexual violence, emotional and/or psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, economic control, harassment, threats, physical intimidation, or injury.
  • Domestic violence can occur in any relationship, regardless of socioeconomic status, education level, cultural background, age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion.
  • Domestic violence can occur in heterosexual and same-sex intimate relationships, including marital, cohabiting, or dating relationships that are not dependent on the existence of a sexual relationship.

OPM Guidance for Agency-Specific Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault & Stalking Policies

www.workplacesrespond.org/opm-guidance

Our New Normal: Preventing & Responding to DVSAS

Sexual Assault

• A range of behaviors, including but not limited to, a completed nonconsensual sex act (e.g., rape, sodomy, child molestation), an attempted nonconsensual sex act, and/or abusive sexual contact.
  • Sexual assault includes any sexual act or behavior that is perpetrated when someone does not or cannot consent.
  • 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 survivor.
  • 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 survivor is asleep, incapacitated, unconscious, or physically or legally incapable of consent.

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Stalking

- Stalking refers to harassing, unwanted, or threatening conduct that causes the target to fear for his or her safety or the safety of a family member.

- Stalking conduct may include, but is not limited to, following, spying on, or waiting for the target in places such as home, school, work, or recreation place; leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers for the target; making direct or indirect threats to harm the target, the target's children, relatives, friends, pets, or property; posting information or spreading rumors about the target on the internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth; and obtaining personal information about the target by accessing public records, using internet search services, hiring private investigators, going through the target's garbage, following the target, or contacting target's friends, family, work, or neighbors.

- 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.

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**When Work is Safer Than Home**

Supporting Workers Experiencing Domestic & Sexual Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic

For Immediate Assistance

For some survivors of domestic violence, going to work or school can provide a safe haven and respite from the abuse experienced at home or in interpersonal and familial relationships. And the added stress of close quarters created by social distancing measures may indeed exacerbate violence experienced at home.

[www.workplacesrespond.org/covid19](http://www.workplacesrespond.org/covid19)
Trauma-Informed Conversations & Investigations

Trauma responses are **NORMAL** biological responses to **ABNORMAL** events.
Here's a problem

• Traumatized people have a wide range of behaviors, some are not what we would expect and we may not think is appropriate for the situation
• Many behaviors and statements have been interpreted as “lying” and “inconsistent”
• …but can be the result of trauma

61% of men and 51% of women in the U.S. report being exposed to at least one traumatic event in their lifetime.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Integrated Health Solutions: Trauma. www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/trauma

A 2013 national study estimating exposure to traumatic events and PTSD found that **89.7% of participants were exposed to at least one traumatic event**. Of that:
• 53.1% (58.6% of women and 47.1% of men) experienced interpersonal violence; and
• 29.7% (42.4% among women and 15.8% among men) experienced sexual assault.

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4096796/
Prefrontal Cortex - When Functioning

• Helps us be rational
• We can reason
• Perceived control
• Can have thoughts and behaviors not simply based on habits and reflexes
• Focuses our attention
Normalizing Behaviors

Why do traumatized people minimize or self-blame?

- Human beings have a deep psychological need to return to "normal" after a trauma.

What does this look like?

- “This was just an argument, they didn't hurt me.”
- “I made them mad, everything is good now.”
“Flashbulb” Memories

Is a vivid memory of an emotionally arousing event. This gets your defense circuitry involved. This is why you remember these events more clearly than others.

Non-Traumatized Account

Once upon a time...
Trauma Account
Islands of memory

Responses of the body to trauma
Freeze
Faint
Flee
Fight