Introduction

Whether visible or not, gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) impacts every workplace. Abusive actions taken by harm-doers not only affect the safety and well-being of survivors at work, but their actions also harm the workplace as a whole. These incidents can also be identified in a virtual setting. How workplaces respond to violence can shape the options those experiencing violence have to remain safe at work and can contribute to whether the workplace has an effective culture of prevention, safety, and accountability. Even and especially when those workplaces are virtual.

This video, created by Futures Without Violence and its Workplaces Respond National Resource Center, provides a basic understanding of how violence impacts survivors of GBVH in the workplace and introduces ways in which workplaces and employers can respond to prevent these impacts.

This accompanying discussion guide is meant to develop a greater depth of understanding and help workplaces identify simple changes they could make to improve the workplace for survivors of GBVH.
Facilitation Notes

While this video strives to reduce the risk of re-traumatization, domestic violence is a difficult but important issue to discuss and may re-surface lived experiences of domestic violence or vicarious trauma.

When preparing to facilitate a workplace discussion around this video, be sure to identify related employer policies to share with participants – for example a Comprehensive Gender-Based Violence and Harassment Policy (see here for a model policy); sick and safe leave; employee assistance program; accommodations available to survivors; where, from whom, and how to seek help; and retaliation policies. In addition to workplace resources, share contact information for the Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7233 and www.thehotline.org.

While preparing, you may find it beneficial to reach out to a local survivor-focused organization. These organizations usually have an employee or a volunteer that can 1) help you facilitate this discussion and 2) provide support for individuals who may experience re-traumatization. You can find survivor-focused organizations by state at The Hotline and/or RAINN.

Finally, we want to encourage you and others preparing this conversation to practice self-care. You can find a self-care starter kit from the University at Buffalo School of Social Work here.

Any questions can be directed to the National Resource Center team at workplacesrespond@futureswithoutviolence.org.

Power and the Workplace

Domestic violence is an abuse of power over another individual or individuals to control particular outcomes in a person’s favor. When discussing this type of power-based violence, it is important to remain sensitive to other power dynamics that may be present in the room. Often these have to do with hierarchical structures that are inherent in the workplace, but can also manifest due to the various identities of individuals in the room. Historical, social, and cultural identities and biases we may hold can further impact these power dynamics.

As the facilitator, it is important to understand that any facilitated conversation that occurs in the workplace will mirror the power dynamics present in that workplace. This may impact those who join the conversation and their level of contribution. As you plan to facilitate the below conversation, consider your position within your workplace, the identities that you hold, and how these existing dynamics might impact the conversation.
Questions to Consider

Do you hold a particular form of power within the workplace?
- Can you hire or fire somebody?
- Can you impact their pay?
- Do you have discretion as to their professional development?
- Do you write the schedule?

Will there be people with the above power in the conversation?
- How might this impact the conversation or comfort?
- Should this meeting be divided between supervisors and non-supervisors?
- If not possible, how do you plan to manage this conflict?

Might adding a co-facilitator help balance power dynamics that might be present?

Do you have the power to make any changes that the group might propose?
- Do you have a plan to outline what a timeline would be?
- Could you propose and effectuate a working group?
- Do you have access to people who hold the power to make proposed changes?

Is it appropriate to ask employees for their time in this way?
- Am I using their lunch hour?
- Are they being paid for their time?
- Is this a volunteer or "volun-told" conversation or an opt-in, paid opportunity?

Do you hold identities that are often aligned with holding social power? How might these identities impact people's willingness to participate in the conversation?

We are not asking you to change who you are, but, rather, to consider how your identities and your position may impact the willingness of participants to have an open and transparent discussion. You may find that you're unable to find another person to co-facilitate or facilitate on your behalf; and that is okay. (Remember, you can reach out to a local survivor-centered organization to co-facilitate.) These questions will help you prepare for potential ways that power might manifest within this difficult conversation. Acknowledging that power dynamics are present and that community agreements are there to help each person bring their full, authentic self to the conversation can be incredibly powerful. **Not acknowledging these power dynamics can often manifest as the facilitator trying to hide something and can sow distrust; stalling the conversation before you start.**
Difficult and Growth Conversations

Leading a conversation about domestic violence requires intentionality, socioemotional intelligence, and flexibility. Contributing to the continued learning of adults requires you to create problem-focused and timely opportunities for them to build on their existing knowledge and their own experiences. Your job as a facilitator is to guide bottom-up discussion where the learners create their own understanding. It is not your role to lecture or be the only teacher in the room. However, it is your role to correct misconceptions, admit when you do not know something, and ask for thoughtful and respectful dialogue.

Participants in this conversation will arrive at the discussion with different levels of knowledge about or experience with domestic violence. Some participants are likely survivors of domestic violence – either in their past, supporting someone who is experiencing violence, or currently experiencing violence within their relationship. Unfortunately, some participants may even be a perpetrator of domestic violence. Regardless of their status as survivor or harm-doer, it is important to remember that some participants might be well-informed about the dynamics of domestic violence while others may believe persistent and problematic myths about domestic violence.

As a facilitator, maintaining a space for continued growth and learning while gently pushing back on problematic beliefs and attitudes is essential. All participants must follow the basic expectations of the Community Agreements below. If a participant violates the basic norms of a learning space, the conversation can be disrupted for the remainder of the participants.

If you notice that a participant wants to debate certain myths or ideals that are in opposition to organizational values, you are always welcome to invite them to have a more in-depth conversation after the facilitated discussion. This will allow you to acknowledge their participation while also creating a comfortable space for others. On the flip side, sometimes a problematic comment or aggressive interjection merits curiosity and a correction or reminder about community agreements. And still, other times, this could require the removal of a participant from a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials Needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Person</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Audio-visual equipment to play the video</td>
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<td>Large and small post-its and pens</td>
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</table>
Community Agreements

- Check in with your feelings
- Take care of yourself
- What’s learned here leaves here, what’s said here stays here
- One mic, one voice
- Give space, take space
- Speak for yourself/don’t speak for others
- Be present
- Assume good intentions, but own your impact
- Ask for clarification

Ask participants if they would like clarification on the community agreements or if there is anything they feel needs to be added. Finally, you will want them to verbally agree to uphold these community agreements.

Definitions

Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: an umbrella term that includes a range of behaviors such as dating violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking. These behaviors harm individuals or groups of people based on present or historic unequal power dynamics.

- **Dating Violence**: violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: the length of the relationship; the type of relationship; and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship ([DOJ](https://www.justice.gov/.

- **Domestic or Intimate Partner Violence**: a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological, or technological actions or threats of actions or other patterns of coercive behavior that influence another person within an intimate partner relationship. This
includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone. “Intimate partner” refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners (DOJ).

- **Sexual Violence**: a range of acts and behaviors that constitute unwanted sexual contact: including lewd comments, sexual comments, an uncomfortable situation, unwanted touching, kissing, or forcing or forcing or attempting to force an individual to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when they do not or cannot consent (NSVRC).

- **Workplace-based Sexual Harassment**: includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. These constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment (Code for Federal Regulations).

- **Stalking**: a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact that causes fear or concern for one's safety or the safety of someone close to the victim. Stalking can involve repeated visual or physical proximity, non-consensual communication, and/or verbal, written, or implied threats that would cause a reasonable person fear. Stalking can, and often does, take place in person, through a third party (proxy stalking), or via the technology/internet (CDC).
  - **Technology-Facilitated Stalking**: This can involve the misuse or abuse of technology and can often be referred to as cyberstalking. Unwanted behaviors include: unwanted phone calls, leaving voice or sending text messages, surveillance, tracking, and spying using technology (GPS, Computer Monitoring Software, cameras), sending emails or messages through social media, monitoring social media activity and locations, posting or threatening to post personal information online (BJS).
  - **Stalking by Proxy**: surveillance, harassment, or tracking completed on behalf of or encouraged by the harm-doer. The individuals may or may not know they are complicit with stalking and genuinely think they are just providing a friend information about a friend. Stalking by proxy can be performed by friends, family, coworkers, or any number of individuals who cross paths with both the survivor and harm-doer (Cambridge University Press).

**Harm-doer**: often interchanged with "abuser," "batterer," "offender," or "perpetrator." We opt to use the term harm-doer during this guide to provide an understanding that often those who cause harm may have also been
harm. By taking criminal justice and given-identity language out of our discussion, it helps individuals understand that those who cause harm have the capacity to learn, grow, and change.

**Survivor:** often interchanged with “victim,” “victim/survivor,” or “person who experienced harm.” We opt to use the term survivor during this guide as it refers to someone who has taken steps to heal from the abuse they have experienced. While not all individuals will take these steps nor will those who do refer to themselves as survivors, we find more hope in this term than the other options available.

**Trauma:** an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being ([SAMHSA](https://www.samhsa.gov)).

**Vicarious Trauma:** the cumulative effects of exposure to information about traumatic events and experiences, potentially leading to distress, dissatisfaction, hopelessness and serious mental and physical health problems ([Safe and Equal](https://www.safeandequal.org)).

### Common Misconceptions

"Stalking is very rare. Nobody I work with would experience this at work or home."

- The [2016 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-finalreport-508.pdf) (NISVS) estimated that **nearly one in three women** (31.2% or about 38.9 million) in the United States reported stalking victimization at some point in her lifetime. **About one in six men** (16.1% or nearly 19 million) in the United States reported stalking victimization at some point in his lifetime.
- The [2015 U.S. Transgender Survey](https://transtats.bjs.gov/ Transtats) indicated that 54% of respondents experienced intimate partner violence, 16% of whom were survivors of stalking.

"Stalkers are always strangers."

- The [2016 NISVS](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-finalreport-508.pdf) estimated that **stalking by an intimate partner is most common**, occurring in 43.4% of situations for female victims, **followed by acquaintances** (including coworkers), in 40.6% of situations.
- Workplace supervisors also stalk. **3.7% of women reported stalking by a person of authority** at some point in their lives, usually a boss or supervisor. Similarly, **3.3% of men reported being stalked by a person of authority**.
- In 2019, **16% of stalking survivors** reported meeting their stalker through work, usually a client or colleague.
In a 2019 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, only 18.1% of survivors of stalking reported that the perpetrator was a stranger.

"If you ignore it, it will go away."
- Stalking behaviors are a risk factor for the escalation of violence. A 1999 study found that stalking 76% of femicide victims and 85% of attempted femicide victims were stalked.

"Technology-facilitated stalking isn't that bad."
- In a Bureau of Justice Statistics report, 80% of stalking victims reported being stalked through technology. The most common methods of which were unwanted phone calls and voice and text messages (65.8%) and unwanted emails or messages using the Internet or social media (54.6%).
- A 2017 qualitative study of cyberstalking in the U.K. found that the emotional impact of cyberstalking includes anxiety and depression. Common coping strategies adopted by the survivor’s included avoidant and/or confrontational coping, ignoring the perpetrator, support seeking, and cognitive reframing. These common coping mechanisms can impact how stalking survivors perform at work. Job losses among those surveyed were widespread.

**Key Facts**

Please see the separate Stalking and the Workplace Factsheet document developed through collaboration between the Workplaces Respond National Resource Center and the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center.

The document can also be located [here](#).
Sharing the Video

Instructions: Introduce the video. “This short video was created by Futures Without Violence’s Workplaces Respond National Resource Center. This video highlights how stalking impacts people in their workplace and how the response of coworkers and supervisors can help or cause additional harm. In the video, Juan and Michelle are coworkers. Juan was recently contacted by Michelle’s intimate partner through social media and decides to inform Michelle. This video includes descriptions of stalking which can be upsetting. We want you to feel empowered to care for yourself as needed.”

Prior to playing the video, share relevant workplaces policies and resources, self-care resources, as well as contact information for the National Domestic Violence Hotline. If you’ve invited a local survivor-focused organization, ask them to discuss their resources and that anyone can ask them to speak during or after the video and discussion.

Small Group Discussion

Instructions: In small groups of four to six, have participants discuss each of the following questions in bold text (for question handout, see Appendix B). Each group should elect a note taker to share their feedback with the group as a whole. Allow for 20 minutes for small group discussion and 10 minutes for large group debrief.

The facilitator should provide the questions (via handout or link, Appendix B) and then ask if the group needs any clarification before breaking into small groups. If clarification is needed, use some of the key points and examples to help them understand the task at hand.

Small Group Discussion Questions

***Facilitator tip: practice framing the facilitation points as additional questions that you can ask the group to work through together.***

1. What was your initial response to the video? Was there anything specific that stood out to you?

Facilitation Points:
- It is ok if this is a new topic to you.
- Encourage curiosity about the impacts highlighted in the video.
- Share resources for survivors.
2. How is Michelle's partner's behavior impacting Michelle at work?

Facilitation Points:
- Michelle feels unsafe and scared.
- She is receiving constant calling and text messages, causing her to lose focus.
- She is worried about the impact on her possible promotion.

3. What did Juan do well when he reached out to Michelle to notify her that her partner had contacted him on Facebook? Is there anything he might have done better?

Facilitation Points:
- Strengths:
  - Juan approached the conversation with concern as a coworker.
  - He offers to help her figure things out.
  - He named the behavior - stalking.
  - He researched resources ahead of time and was able to share them with Michelle.
  - He made himself available to support her in the future.
- Opportunities for improvement:
  - Juan could have asked, "Have you considered letting our supervisor know what is happening?" rather than directing Michelle with "I recommend you reach out to our supervisor."
    - The statement fails to promote autonomy and may seem judgmental.
    - The question is left open ended and allows Michelle to think through this option without influence from Juan.
  - Juan may also consider reassuring Michelle that he will keep their conversation private.
  - Juan may also want to encourage Michelle to review workplace policies to see if any accommodations are available.

4. Juan insisted that Michelle reach out to her supervisor. What are the potential risks and benefits of such an action?

Facilitation Points:
- Potential risks:
  - Lack of understanding
Retaliation
- Escalation: particularly if the workplace acts on behalf of Michelle without proper consultation with Michelle (i.e., calling the police).

Potential benefits:
- Workplace accommodations to ensure Michelle's safety in the workplace.
- Access to benefits and support programs.
- Reassurance that Michelle has a supportive network in the workplace.

5. How does Melanie's demeanor impact the safety of not only Michelle but the workplace as a whole?

Facilitation Points:
- Melanie's demeanor is unfriendly and intimidating. Her behaviors indicate that employee issues aren't important to her and, moreover, that issues of personal violence are not a concern of the workplace.
- Employees in need are unlikely to reach out to Melanie when facing very real threats.
- There are also elements of racism ("baby daddy") and a lack of understanding of gender identities (Michelle's partner uses they/them/their pronouns).

Debrief Instructions:
Have each group share what their group discussed, adding to the previous team's responses. Make sure all facilitation points are highlighted during the debrief.

It would be a great idea to either ask someone to capture notes or to capture notes as the facilitator. These notes can serve as the basis of a plan or presentation for workers or employers.
Large Group Discussion [20 minutes]

Instructions: After debriefing the small group discussions, provide participants with the Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Care handout (Appendix C). Give them a few minutes to review while you set up the next activity.

Post six large sheets of flip chart paper on the wall with each of the six principles of trauma-informed care written at the top [Safety; Transparency and Trust; Peer Support; Collaboration and Mutuality; Agency, Voice, and Choice; Cultural, Historical, and Gender]. Alternatively, use Google Jamboard in a virtual setting.

Activity
Prompt: What would a trauma-informed approach in response to Michelle's disclosure look like?

Using sticky notes, have participants write ways they could respond to Michelle that embody each of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed practices and place them on the corresponding flip chart page. After 10 minutes, read out what participants shared and open it up to the group for discussion.

Closing the Discussion

As the facilitator, share your workplace policies and procedures (link or handout). Provide an overview for participants to find these documents as well as any resources they may need beyond Human Resources. Ask if there are additional questions.

If you are able, plan ahead so you have time free after the session in case people want to ask you questions without the other participants present.

Next Steps

Consider how you can better support survivors at your workplace. Please visit https://www.workplacesrespond.org/ for more information.

Contact the Workplace Resource Center at https://www.workplacesrespond.org/contact/ for curated, free support on how to implement strategies for your workplace.
Resources for Survivors

- National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233
- National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673

Additional Resources

- [Addressing the Impacts of Violence Trauma in the Workplace: Promoting Worker Wellness and Resilience through Trauma-Informed Practice](#)
- [Starting the Conversation – Respond: The ABCs of Checking-In When you Suspect a Coworker is Experiencing Violence](#)
- [Tips for Creating a Resilient Workplace](#)
- [The Top 10 Things Co-Workers Can Do right Now to Address Sexual Harassment in the Workplace](#)

For Employers

- [Incident Prevention and Response Strategies](#)
- [Model Workplace Policy](#)
- [Organizational Resources and State Laws](#)
- [Why Is Gender-Based Violence a Workplace Issue?](#)

Want more?

- [Survivor Leadership](#)
- [6 Steps to Create a Trauma-Informed Workplace](#)
- [Principles of Workplace Safety Planning](#)
- [Safe Leave](#)
# Employee Resources

## National Resources

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<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Domestic Violence Hotline</td>
<td>1-800-799-7233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Sexual Assault Hotline</td>
<td>1-800-656-4673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Labor - Worker Rights</td>
<td><a href="https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/workers">https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/workers</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.osha.gov/">https://www.osha.gov/</a> Hotline: 1-800-321-6742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplaces Respond National Resource Center</td>
<td><a href="https://www.workplacesrespond.org/">https://www.workplacesrespond.org/</a></td>
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## State and Local Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Survivor Centered Organization</td>
<td>Phone and website:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide Department of Labor</td>
<td>Phone and website:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Employer Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Director</td>
<td>Phone and email:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Supervisor</td>
<td>Phone and email:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ombudsman</td>
<td>Phone and email:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director</td>
<td>Phone and email:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Assistance Program</td>
<td>Phone and website:</td>
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</table>
Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) introduced the following six principles in *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*.

The below are short summaries from the document.

- **Safety**: People feel physically and psychologically safe in their environments.

- **Trustworthiness and Transparency**: Operations and decisions are transparent and strive to build trust within the workplace and with external partners, including clients.

- **Peer Support**: The workplace learns from workers, especially workers who are survivors, to discover what will work and how they can contribute to workplace safety and respect.

- **Collaboration and Mutuality**: Where possible, practice power-sharing to achieve a collaborative and mutually respectful workplace.

- **Empowerment, Voice, and Choice**: The workplace and decision-makers trust that survivors know what is best for them and work to give them opportunities to recover as they need.

- **Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues**: The workplace and its decision-makers understand the complexity of identity as the identities a survivor holds can impact their risk and protective factors as well as access and barriers to supportive services. Additionally, they understand how historical and intergenerational trauma can compound a trauma survivors experiences. A trauma-informed workplace tries to eliminate barriers and provide equitable access to resources.
Responding in a Virtual Setting: Discussion Guide Question Handout

Small Group Discussion

1. What was your initial response to the video? Was there anything specific that stood out to you?

2. How is Michelle's partner's behavior impacting Michelle at work?

3. What did Juan do well when he reached out to Michelle to notify her that her partner had contacted him on Facebook? Is there anything he might have done better?

4. Juan insisted that Michelle reach out to her supervisor. What are the potential risks and benefits of such an action?

5. How does Melanie's demeanor impact the safety of not only Michelle but the workplace as a whole?

Activity Prompt
What would a trauma-informed approach in response to Michelle's disclosure look like?

Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Care
- Safety
- Transparency and Trust
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Agency, Voice, and Choice
- Cultural, Historical, and Gender