

---

# Domestic Violence and the Workplace

---

Presentation for City and County Human Resources Managers  
October 27, 2010

Laura Marshall, MSW  
Fiscal and Policy Analyst  
Department on the Status of Women

---

# Domestic Violence in San Francisco, FY09-10

- Over 7,000 domestic violence calls to 911
  - Over 4,000 cases to SFPD
  - Over 25,000 crisis calls made to community providers
  
  - 21% of full-time employed adults are victims of domestic violence
  - 96% of employed domestic violence victims experience problems at work due to their abuse or abuser
-

---

# Responding to Domestic Violence

- Understand City policies and procedures and State/Federal laws regarding domestic violence.
  - **Create a Culture of Responsiveness:**
    - Make it safe to talk about domestic violence
    - Put a poster in the lunchroom or safety cards in restrooms.
  - Know how to support a victim in creating a safety plan for the workplace.
-

---

# Safety Planning

- **Getting to and from the Workplace:**

- Is the commute to and from work safe?
  - Are the parking arrangements at work safe? Can s/he be given priority parking near the building and a security escort from her/his car?
  - Can someone walk with her/him to the car or public transit stop? Are there any car pools in the employee's residential area?
-

---

# Safety Planning

- **Leave and Schedule Issues:**

- Is there a need for leave time?
  - Is the work schedule safe?
  - Does the employee need to leave the home for any length of time?
-

---

# Safety Planning

## ■ **Workspace Safety:**

- ❑ Does the employee need a new work phone number or a call screening system at work? Can her/his name and number be removed from automated phone messages or directories?
  - ❑ Is her/his workstation away from public access, stairs, and elevators? If not, can it be moved? Can barriers be placed between the entrance and the victim's workstation?
  - ❑ What alternate escape route exists for use if the abuser comes to the workplace?
  - ❑ Can a code word or other means be established to alert a manager or other personnel about a potentially dangerous situation?
-

---

# Safety Planning

## ■ Restraining Orders:

- ❑ Does the employee have or plan to request a restraining order?
  - ❑ Does the restraining order name the work site as a protected location?
  - ❑ Can the employee provide a photo of the perpetrator to building security, as well as other identifying information, such as car make and model, etc.?
  - ❑ Do others in the office need to know that the restraining order exists, such as an office receptionist, manager, etc.? Do those individuals know how to respond if the batterer shows up?
-

---

# Safety Planning

## ■ **Emergency Contact Information:**

- ❑ What emergency contact information can the employee provide the employer in case a crisis occurs at work?
  - ❑ What important papers or personal items, including medication, will the employee need? How can they be collected and where can they be stored?
  - ❑ Can her/his paychecks or other work-related documents be delivered to another location?
-



---

# Discussing Domestic Violence with an Employee

- Let the employee know that you and the organization believe that verbal, emotional or physical abuse in a relationship is never acceptable.
  - Listen without judgment. Give plenty of time to answer. Do not moralize or criticize.
  - Offer supportive statements: "I believe what you are telling me."
  - Stay focused on safety planning. Do not tell your employee to leave the abusive situation, since you could be placing them in more danger.
  - Allow the employee to make decisions. Do not try to solve the problem for the victim.
-

---

# Discussing Domestic Violence with an Employee

- Victims often resist talking about their situation and are afraid to reveal information for many reasons.
  - Make sure the victim feels safe to talk about the abuse, and knows that s/he will be believed and supported.
  - Remember:
    - The victim knows the situation and its dangers better than anyone.
    - Work may be the only place the victim feels safe.
    - Regaining self-sufficiency requires keeping a job, receiving a paycheck and maintaining medical benefits for the victim and any children involved.
-

---

# Refer, Refer, Refer!

- Community resources have expertise in supporting survivors of domestic violence.
  - You don't have to handle this alone!
-

---

For more information:

Laura Marshall, MSW  
Department on the Status of Women  
25 Van Ness Ave., Suite 130  
(415) 252-2578  
[Laura.Marshall@sfgov.org](mailto:Laura.Marshall@sfgov.org)

---