

Vol. 1 No. 5

Everyone Deserves to be Safe

December 1997

FRAGILE: Handle With Care

An AFS Newsletter on Domestic Violence

From the desk of Sandie Hoback, AFS Administrator:

This month in the newsletter we're looking at the challenges faced by domestic violence victims and survivors who enter the workforce. With the growing success of our efforts to stabilize the lives of these women, more and more will be finding work. But, even if they are out of a violent situation at home, its effects can follow them into the workplace and cause problems that make it difficult for them to be successful.

Therefore, it's very important we recognize the particular need for continuing case management and support services for abused women who find work. It's a time for creative thinking and innovative projects aimed at finding the most effective ways to assist them. Remember, our success in helping these clients doesn't really come in job-placement numbers, but rather in how well the women adapt to employment and continue on the job.

Violence at Home Affects Workplace

Often, an abused woman is a working woman. Women who have been abused take the violence with them to work. It shows in lost productivity, stress, increased health care costs, employee absenteeism and turnover, and sometimes, workplace violence.

Statistics show that 95% of employed battered women experience problems at work due to abuse from their partner. This can have a profound affect on a battered woman's ability to keep a job once she becomes employed. Often women are afraid they will lose their job if they tell their boss about the abuse. Sometimes they lose their job anyway because of frequently being late for work or leaving early or missing work because of actions of the abuser.

An abuser may sabotage his partner's efforts to find or keep a job or complete an education program by:

turning off her alarm clock

failing to look after their children or threatening to harm them

refusing to provide transportation or disabling the car

fighting throughout the night so she is too tired to report to work or class or an interview

cutting off her hair or bruising her face so she is too embarrassed to go out

stalking or harassing her at work or class

When a client with domestic violence issues misses a class, job interview or other appointment, or loses her job, consider the possibility of sabotage. Helping a client identify safe alternatives and strategies to address future acts of sabotage could give her the skills necessary to get, and keep, that next job.

EAP Is A Resource

If domestic violence is affecting your life as a victim, survivor or helper, remember the resource DHR staff have in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). It's confidential, it's there for you and it's free (3 visits per family member per problem).

"People Are Safe" DHR Goal

One of the four Department of Human Resources goals that focuses our work is *people are safe*. The departments outcomes under these goals are:

- Decrease the number of people who are abused.
- Increase the percentage of children who remain free from re-abuse.
- Decrease the rate of preventable deaths due to suicide and injuries.

A recent *Weekly Message* from DHR Director, Gary Weeks included the following. "Those of us in the Department working directly on these outcomes are faced with life and death issues involving our clients. We must not lose sight of ways in which we can support our staff members who deal directly with these crisis situations. It is through support, understanding and the willingness to help out that all of us in DHR can work toward this vital set of outcomes."



QUIZ

1. According to a survey of battered women conducted by the Univ. of Minnesota, what % of battered women reported they had been late to work as a result of being abused?

- (a) 27%
- (b) 41%

(c) 62%

2. In the same survey, what % of the women had lost a job partly because of being abused?

(a) 10%

(b) 24%

(c) 31%.

3. A recent survey of security directors showed that

(a) 27%

(b) 72%

(c) 94% identified

domestic violence as a "high" security problem.

4. According to the US Dept. of Labor, what percent of women will work for pay sometime during their lives?

(a) 63%

(b) 87%

(c) 99%

5. According to a national poll, what percent of Americans have directly witnessed an incidence of domestic violence?

(a) 22%

(b) 34%

(c) 48%

Answers:

(Highlight inside the box below)

Internet Resources

Several months ago, domestic violence shelters in Oregon were contacted about the possibility of an Internet Web Site to allow for easy access to information on DV shelters throughout Oregon. The web site is now up and running. The address is:

http://170.104.17.50/svc_dir/dvmap2.html

Sherry Honza of AFS District 5 came across a great web site on domestic violence which she would like to share with readers. The address is:

<http://www.fvpf.org/>

If you know of other web sites with valuable information on domestic violence or related issues,

please let us know and we will include them in future issues.

Crisis Line Cards

AFS staff can order additional cards through Paula Hansen at Distribution Services. Please send the request in writing by SYSM (HW04887), GroupWise, or Project Request form. If you have questions, you can call her at (503) 373-1024 ext. 326.

Questionnaire

The attached questionnaire is being made available to everyone who receives this newsletter. It can be copied and shared with anyone who is or has been active in the workforce and is a domestic violence survivor. This includes staff, partners, clients, friends, relatives, any survivors.

This information will be used to help develop the next Ed-Net training on domestic violence, so the more completed questionnaires we receive the better.

MYTHS & FACTS

Myth: Domestic violence isn't really a workplace issue.

Fact: New York Victims Service Agency in two surveys of battered women found that 74% were harassed at work by their abuser either by phone or in person.

Fact: Abusive husbands and partners cause 56% of these battered women to be late for work at least five times a month and cause 28% to leave work early at least five days a month.

Fact: 54% of these women report missing at least three full days of work a month because of abuse related issues.

Fact: The study showed that 44% of these battered women had lost at least one job for reasons directly related to the abuse.

Fact: Your workload and work environment are affected by all of the above.

Fact: A decade ago, only about 10% of workplace violence cases involved domestic violence. Now, the figure is reportedly over 55%.
