

VIOLENCE AT HOME. VICTIMS AT WORK.

Employers Confront Domestic Violence



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Erase Domestic Crime Collaborative.

Through community outreach and comprehensive social marketing, the EDCC seeks to increase shelter options, advocates, prevention initiatives and other services to assure a truly coordinated community response that increases community awareness and engagement, encourages victims to participate in the criminal justice system and encourages community members to support victims of domestic violence.

www.erasedomesticcrime.com

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A GROWING RECOGNITION

Many executives believe the issue of domestic violence has no place at work. What happens at home is supposed to stay at home — especially so-called “matters of the heart.” In a survey of 200 CEOs sponsored by Liz Claiborne Inc. in 2010, most executives agreed that domestic violence was a serious issue, but 71% said they didn’t believe it was a problem at their own companies. Only 13% felt that corporations need to play a major role in addressing domestic abuse.

The times are changing. Across the nation employers are finding they may have no choice but to face the reality of the impact of domestic violence at work. Employee attitudes, demographics, and the high-profile efforts of some CEOs are converging to move the DV issue into the corporate sunlight. With so many women in the workforce — and with e-mail, text messaging, and cell phones connecting them to the office around the clock — DV comes to work whether executives like it or not. Most employees already are well aware of this fact.

According to the Liz Claiborne survey, and another conducted for Verizon Wireless about the same time, an overwhelming majority of workers want to see employers develop policies to deal with domestic violence at work.

“What is not in sync here is that the average person on the street knows what’s going on, but company programs have not kept pace to help employees,” says Dede Bartlett, a former senior officer of both Exxon and Altria. Now she is a self-described participant in the “domestic violence underground railroad” which quietly helps women who face abuse at home and fear it will follow them to the office or plant.

“This takes top-down leadership,” she says. “It’s got to start with the CEO.”

There are signs that executives can’t keep their heads in the sand.

A CASE IN POINT

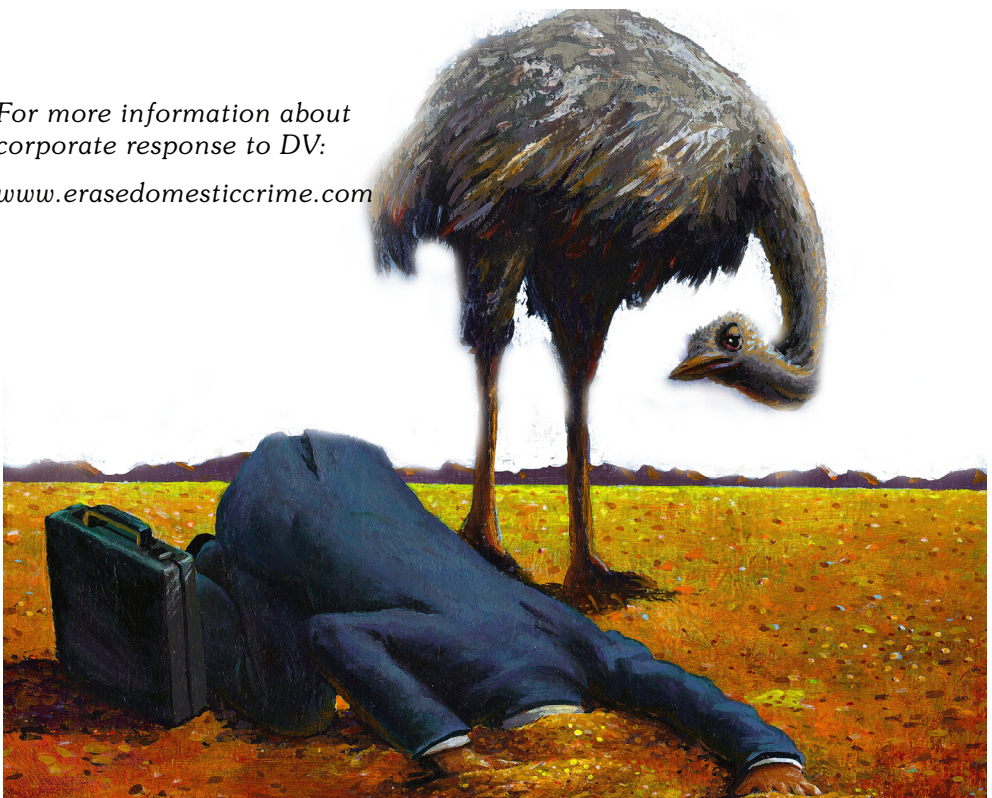
In New Canaan, Connecticut, home to a disproportionate number of top executives, a small army of police officers, volunteers, and high school athletes and coaches showed up at the train station at 5:30 one morning to hand out domestic violence information to commuters bound for Grand Central Station in New York. It's time for business leaders to pay attention, they said.

Now a small but growing group of CEOs — including executives in Tennessee and the Mid-South — is saying that indeed it is time for corporate America to confront the issue head-on. Domestic violence affects the bottom line, they say. It threatens workplace safety. And, as an HR issue, it's more volatile and potentially dangerous than drug addiction or alcoholism.

"I'd like to see more done about this," says Thomas J. Wilson, CEO of Allstate, one of the CEOs who sees domestic violence as a major issue affecting employees, customers, or both. At Verizon Wireless, which handled about 100 abuse cases internally in one recent year and roughly 225 more through its employee assistance programs, "the numbers speak for themselves," says Martha Delehanty, vice president of human resources. "This is an issue we all must address in corporate America."

For more information about corporate response to DV:

www.erasedomesticcrime.com



COSTS TO THE BOTTOM LINE

Tennessee employers are paying at least \$10 million every year in lost paid work time following domestic violence injuries, according to the Tennessee Economic Council on Women.

In Arkansas, researchers from the University of Arkansas discovered that women who were victims of recent domestic violence had 26 percent more time lost to tardiness and absenteeism than non-victims.

Lost work time is just the beginning of the costs to employers. Not yet inventoried but just as real are the costs involved in:

- ***Time off due to courtroom appearances***
- ***Time off for the purpose of obtaining orders of protection***
- ***Time off for making medical and legal appointments***

The costs are real. Statistics are being collected nationally by researchers so that in the future actual dollar values can be estimated. The data so far shows:

- ***1 in 4 full-time employed adults in the U.S. has been a DV victim***
- ***3 of 4 DV perpetrators have used workplace resources to pressure, threaten or “check up” on victims***

For more information on costs: www.erasedomesticcrime.com

LIABILITY AND SECURITY CONCERNS

There are mounting worries nationwide among employers about security and liability issues. For one thing, employers who are accused of having failed to protect their employees when at work are facing civil challenges. Some litigants are winning. Across the country, court awards have averaged between \$300,000 and \$1.2 million.

Furthermore, 94% of corporate security managers rank domestic violence as a major problem for businesses. Now seen as a vital management security concern, a growing number of open discussions, seminars and training workshops are under way.

For updated information on liability/security: www.erasedomesticcrime.com

NEW THIRD-PARTY LAW

Many states are passing or considering new laws protecting the workplace rights of victims of domestic and/or sexual violence.

A recent law in Tennessee allows employers to be third-party participants in obtaining orders of protection (often called restraining orders) from judges, magistrates or commissioners. The Tennessee legislation, which amended an existing law, authorizes an employer “to petition for a temporary restraining order and injunction prohibiting certain violent actions or threats of actions at the workplace or during hours of employment of an employee.”

Tennessee businesses are just beginning to learn about the law and its possible use in making the workplace safer for employees.

Across the nation three types of laws regulate employer policies surrounding domestic violence. These cover (1) the granting of leaves for victims, (2) the provision of job protection for victims of crime, and (3) general anti-discrimination issues.

WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO? PLENTY

• **Learn how to recognize the signs.** The most obvious evidence of abuse is physical — bruises, black eyes, cuts and abrasions. But victims also may demonstrate personality changes, such as talking less than before, crying, even anger and hostility.

Also watch for:

Tardiness or unexplained absences
Anxiety, lack of concentration, changes in job performance
A tendency to remain isolate
Disruptive phone calls, emails, visits from intimate partner
Sudden requests to be moved from public locations
Frequent financial problems indicating a lack of access to money
Inappropriate clothes/accessories
Sudden changes of address
Time off requested for court appearances

• **Set smart and comprehensive policies.** Take a position on domestic violence — how the company regards the issue — and create a thoughtful, written statement that encourages employees to disclose any threats or potential incidents of violence and allows them to seek medical and professional counseling services. Provide for special needs of abused employees, including requests for time off and job performance consideration. Model policies can be found at:

www.workplacesrespond.org/policy_tool/begin

www.safeatworkcoalition.org/workplacepolicy/wheredoistart.htm

• **Educate and train supervisors and all employees.** Provide information booklets about domestic violence and include lists of community resources for help. Consider holding HR workshops that can take the shroud away from the issue and can show that violence and abuse are not just a personal matter. Make sure all employees understand company policies. Train managers/supervisors on their role in responding to an abused employee to assure that an approach is work-focused, supportive, non-judgmental and stays within legal limits.

• **Keep work environment secure.** Create a safe work place. Managers should know what actions should be implemented when there is a threat of violence at work.

• **Provide comprehensive healthcare coverage.** Start or update an employee assistance program (EAP).

• **Help develop a safety plan for individual workers facing DV trouble.** Help her (or him):

- Think about how to protect herself.
- Identify safe areas at home or nearby, places with more than one exit
- Identify trustworthy neighbors in the event their help is needed
- Make sure a phone is always accessible
- Keep money on hand, plus copies of important papers
- Have a change of clothes hidden or in a friend's possession
- Know what to do about children if they are asleep or in school
- Go over the safety plan periodically and update as needed

For details about how employers can help workers: www.erasedomesticcrime.com



FOLLOWING ARE DIRECT RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYERS IN THE MEMPHIS METROPOLITAN AREA:

Circle of Inspiration Outreach Program

Inspirational Faith Lutheran Church

Semi-monthly Christian support group; victim advocacy

(901) 359-8516

3595 N. Thomas Street

Cocaine Alcohol Awareness Program

Serves disadvantaged domestic violence victims; 24-hour crisis line

(901) 367-7550

4023 Knight Arnold Road

Community Legal Center

Legal assistance

(901) 543-3395

910 Vance Avenue

Department of Children's Services

Social services, child protection

(901) 578-4371

170 N. Main Street, 4th floor

Exchange Club Family Center

Comprehensive services for victims, perpetrators and children; lethality

assessments, custodial evaluations

(901) 276-2200 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

2180 Union Avenue

Family Safety Center**

Comprehensive services for families who are victims of domestic violence

www.fscmemphis.com

1750 Madison Avenue*

The Healing Word Counseling Center

Counseling and various services

(901) 370-4673

3910 Tchulahoma Road

Memphis Area Legal Services

Comprehensive legal services to domestic violence victims

(901) 523-8822 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

109 N. Main St., 2nd floor

Memphis Area Women's Council / Erase Domestic Crime Collaborative

Community awareness and education; system coordination, change and support; prevention

(901) 378-3866

2574 Sam Cooper Blvd.

Memphis Child Advocacy Center

Counseling for child victims of sexual and severe physical abuse; houses Child Protection Investigation Team

(901) 525-2377

1085 Poplar Avenue

Memphis Police Department Domestic Violence Bureau*

Assault investigation, transport to victim services

(901) 636-3741

201 Poplar Avenue

Midsouth Sexual Assault Resource Center*

Services 24/7 to victims of sexual assault and abuse

(901) 272-2020 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

2675 Union Extended

Shelby County Citizens Dispute*

Assists victims obtaining orders/warrants

(901) 545-2520 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

201 Poplar Avenue

Shelby County Crime Victims Center*

Court assistance, counseling, support groups, other services
(901) 545-4357 or (901) 545-5164 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
600 Adams Avenue

Shelby County District Attorney General's DV Unit*

Prosecution of DV cases; victim advocacy and links to services
(901) 545-5900
201 Poplar Avenue

Sophia's House

Shelter, other services for women and children victims
(901) 728-4229 or (901) 722-4700

Victims to Victory Incorporated

Support groups for victims of homicide; court advocacy
(901) 274-6828 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
1548 Poplar Avenue

YWCA of Greater Memphis

*Shelter for abused women, children under 12; counseling,
court advocacy, Immigrant Women's Services*
24-Hour Hotline (901) 725-4277

**Shelby County agencies moving to 1750 Madison fall 2011 - see
websites for updated info on phones and hours.*

***Family Safety Center opening late 2011 with multiple co-located
partner agencies. Watch websites for updated hours and phones.*



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For updated content, data and resources go to:
www.erasedomesticcrime.com

or contact

EDCC

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