

The Successful SUPERVISOR

2010

March

Tips from  LifeSolutions

For much of the past year *The Successful Supervisor* has been exploring issues that impact the workplace but often go undetected or present a challenge to address. The focus continues this month with the topic *Partner Violence (PV)* ... also called Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) or Domestic Violence. The business community is affected through direct medical costs as well as absenteeism and presenteeism rates. However, the perspective that partner violence is a personal issue has gotten in the way of businesses' developing a plan to ensure safety and reduce costs. In part one of this two-part series, *The Successful Supervisor* will define partner violence and the costs to employer and employees alike. Part two will present a plan of action.

Material is taken from the 2007 Liz Claibourne study conducted by Penn, Schroen, and Berland, and its corporate partners, Safe Horizon and Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, and from *Supportive Connections, Volume 3, #2, 2008*. We are interested in your feedback to *The Successful Supervisor*. E-mail your questions and comments to the EAP at ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com.

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Partner Violence Affects Women, Men, and Children

Partners may be married, unmarried, living together, separated, or dating. They may be heterosexual, gay, or lesbian. Violence takes many forms and can happen all the time or once in awhile. This is truly an equal opportunity problem.

More females than males are abused, although both men and women are affected. Here are some facts.

- ◆ More than one million people report a violent assault by an intimate partner every year in the U.S.
- ◆ 33% of girls of dating age experience relationship abuse.
- ◆ 21% of full-time employed adults experience intimate partner violence.
- ◆ Children living in homes where domestic violence is present are more likely to be abused or neglected. Even when children are not harmed physically, there is an emotional/behavioral impact.

Partner Violence Is Not on the Radar as a Workplace Issue

A recent survey of large companies highlighted the variability in how they respond to this issue.

- ◆ 54% of surveyed companies do not have formal partner violence policies.
- ◆ Only 4% train their employees on the impact of partner violence in the workplace.
- ◆ Only 12% of corporate executives believe business has a major role to play in addressing the issue.
- ◆ The prevailing view is that:
 - This is a private family matter.
 - Social service agencies are the vehicle to address it.
 - The legal system is the vehicle for action.

Why Employee Partner Abuse Is an Employer Concern

1. Employee partner abuse impacts safety, performance, and productivity by increasing health care costs and decreasing productivity.
 - Direct medical costs exceed \$5.8 billion per year and are reflected in employers' costs for health benefits for employees and dependents.
 - 64% of employees who were partner violence victims reported that their ability to work, even when present on the job, was affected.

2. It is a corporate liability issue.
 - 74% of employed battered women were harassed at work by their partner.
 - Lack of policies and procedures exposes companies to wrongful death suits and other legal actions.
3. It is a workplace safety issue.
 - 25% of workplace violence events are related to partner violence.
4. Partner violence affects both women and men in the workplace.
 - Intimate partner violence can also introduce harassment of employees and violence from partners into the workplace.

Here's What It Looks Like at Work

- ◆ An employee of several years comes to work with a swollen jaw. She says she fell, but you recall past bruises and other reasons for being late to work over the past 6 months.
- ◆ Your employee is getting harassing phone calls at work — 25 or 30 a day. It used to be 2 or 3. Now it's affecting the entire work group.
- ◆ A co-worker comes to you about a team member. She is concerned because this employee is talking about being afraid to go home. She will only say things are not good and turns down an offer to stay with this co-worker.

Like all employees, these employees bring their personal lives with them to work. What they have in common is that they are good workers and committed to the company. What is unique, however, is that both they and their co-workers are being affected by what happens to them outside of work.

The good news is resources are available. Read next month's issue for details.

Online Leadership Support



As leaders, what we do and say can have significant impact on those around us. *LifeSolutions* offers a series of self-guided online courses specifically developed to equip managers and supervisors with the appropriate tools to help make a positive impact in the workplace.

In keeping with the theme of this month's The Successful Supervisor, we offer the following Skill Builder courses:

Conflict Intervention

Defuse a potential morale-draining work environment through successful conflict intervention.

In this course you will learn:

- ◆ How to assess the climate of a conflict
- ◆ Methods to help set the stage for a positive outcome
- ◆ Techniques to broker a resolution and follow-up advice

Managing Disagreement

As an effective leader, you can set the stage for individuals to handle their differences over workplace issues and decisions.

In this course you will learn:

- ◆ The principles and styles
- ◆ How to apply the four-phase process
- ◆ Ways to refine your skills

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Emotional intelligence is a set of skills that enables leaders to understand, anticipate, and deal with our automatic reactions in the workplace.

In this course you will learn:

- ◆ Intelligent thinking about emotions
- ◆ The keys to behaving wisely
- ◆ Techniques for fostering emotional intelligence in others

Follow the steps below to learn more and to get started:

- ◆ Access www.lifesolutionsforyou.com.
- ◆ Click on *WorkLife* login at the top right.
- ◆ Enter your company code. If you do not know your code, call 1.800.647.3327.
- ◆ Locate *Working* on the left-side menu.
- ◆ Click on *Effective Manager*.
- ◆ Click on *Skill Builder*.
- ◆ Click on the title that interests you and review the highlights of each course.
- ◆ You will be able to click on link at bottom (within the Skill Builder highlight) to get started.

If you have questions, call **1.800.647.3327**.
