

**How can employers address violence prevention in the workplace?**

- understanding that violence in personal relationships does affect workplace safety and security
- being aware that violence affects both men's and women's productivity at work and that women are most often the victims of violence. As an employer, you may have both offenders and victims in your workplace
- a top-down commitment to address violence prevention, from the union leadership and company management
- awareness and education programs which are accurate and accessible
- a workplace focus on policies supporting personal safety from violence and supports for workers experiencing abuse
- resource materials for employees and supervisors
- written workplace policies and procedures against violence, harassment, and discrimination
- workplace programs to identify and help employees with violence prevention
- general violence prevention and attention to victim safety
- a "zero tolerance" policy of violence and harassment in the workplace

**Where to get help:**

**Anderson House** ..... (toll free) 1-800-240-9894  
**Charlottetown** ..... 892-0960  
*24-hour service for physically and emotionally abused women and their children. Emergency shelter, food and clothing; crisis telephone service; counseling, emotional support, information and referral. Wheelchair accessible.*

**Child Abuse Line** ..... (toll free) 1-800-341-6868

**Transition House Outreach Services**  
 West Prince: Valerie Smallman ..... 859-8849  
 East Prince: Norma McColeman ..... 436-0517  
 Eastern PEI: Gwyn Davies ..... 838-0795  
 Queens County: Gloria Dennis ..... 566-1480  
*A free and confidential service providing emotional support for women victimized by family violence.*

**PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre**  
 (toll free) 1-800-289-5656, Charlottetown .... 566-8999  
*24-hour crisis line for victims of rape and sexual assault including incest and spousal rape. Trained volunteers answer calls and provide information, advocacy and support.*

**POLICE** ..... 911  
 Charlottetown RCMP ..... 368-9300  
 Summerside RCMP ..... 436-9300  
 Alberton RCMP ..... 853-9300  
 Montague RCMP ..... 838-9300  
 Souris RCMP ..... 687-9300  
 Charlottetown Police Department ..... 629-4172  
 Summerside Police Department ..... 432-1201  
 Borden-Carleton Police Department ..... 437-2228  
 Kensington Police Department ..... 836-4499

**Crime Stoppers** .....(toll free) 1-800-222-8477

**Victim Services**  
 Charlottetown ..... 368-4582  
 Summerside ..... 888-8217  
*Assists victims of crime across the province. Services include: information and referral; short-term counselling; assistance through the Court process; victim impact statements; and criminal injuries compensation.*

**Turning Point** ..... 368-6390  
*A men's group counselling program which is aimed at helping men to stop violence against their female partners.*

# Violence Prevention

## A Supportive Workplace Matters



### Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention



## Why the workplace?

When violence and other forms of abuse occur, a myth persists that it should remain private.

Individuals who have experienced abuse have been expected to minimize the fear and shame. Indeed, many people have been able to do just that - but the costs have been high in terms of personal anguish and often in decreased job performance. Says a staff member "as a victim myself some 20 years ago, I can speak from experience that the effects last a long time."

People who abuse and people who are abused are in our workplaces. The silence about the effects of violence in our workplaces is no longer acceptable. Abuse prevention is a workplace issue.

"it's a subject we don't like to hear or read about but we need to."

Employers who are fully committed to building awareness of it; maintaining a supportive work environment for those affected - and providing information on available help and resources play an important role in abuse prevention.

### Remember This .....

- Nothing "justifies" abusive behavior.
- Abuse occurs in all income and education levels; in all religious, racial, cultural groups and genders
- Alcohol and drugs contribute to abuse but they are not the cause of it.
- Once a pattern of abuse has been established it is very difficult to stop without outside help.
- Abuse has a devastating "domino effect." Children who experience or witness abuse often perpetuate the behavior in future relationships.

## How can I know if a colleague is affected by abuse?

You can't unless they tell you however, behaviors below may be some signs that abuse is happening in their lives.

- frequent injuries explained with "I'm clumsy" or "I'm accident prone"
- upsetting personal phone calls/contacts
- often works after hours (to delay going home)
- frequent absenteeism (to recover)
- unusually quiet, nervous or jumpy
- noticeable change in work habits
- reluctance to attend staff social events

"...only by facing the problem can we bring about some amount of healing."

## How can I help?

- Show concern, for example: "something seems to be going on with you. Can I help?"
- Believe what they say.
- Listen carefully, without being judgmental.
- Respect their privacy. Ask if they are safe.
- Encourage them to seek help and protect themselves and others affected by the abuse. (See the back of this brochure for resources available.)
- Let them know that no one deserves such treatment and they are not responsible for an abuser's behavior
- Never tell them to "try harder." Don't minimize the danger.

## Abuse takes many forms .....

**Psychological/emotional abuse** involves words or disguised behaviors geared to "control" or "punish." It includes:

- threats and intimidation
- constant criticism, name-calling, putdowns
- "mind games" (making someone think they're unworthy), it may also extend to using children and others as pawns, weapons or hostages
- withholding affection or sex
- giving the prolonged "silent treatment."

People experiencing this abuse live in a state of fear, hopelessness or unworthiness; with "all the scars on the inside, where no one sees them."

**Physical violence.** This can be a shove or slap, a punch, kick, choking or beating. Everyday objects may be used as weapons; personal property destroyed; pets threatened; individuals restrained or imprisoned.

**Sexual abuse** is any sexual activity performed against the wishes and without the consent of an individual even within marriage. For an adult it means being forced to perform sexual acts against one's will or having pain or injury inflicted during a sexual act. It can also include being criticized for sexual performance.

**Neglect or abandonment.** This usually applies to children, the elderly or people with a disability who are unable to care for themselves. Knowingly or otherwise, the caregiver fails to meet the person's needs for nutrition, clothing, hygiene, health care, housing, personal safety or emotional support.

**Financial abuse.** This means having no access to the family's money. Individuals may be forced to "turn over" their pay cheques to their abusers, or the abuser may try to prevent the person from working or keeping a job.