

The Cost of Domestic Violence

Domestic and family violence (DFV) has wide-ranging and persistent effects on women's physical and mental health. It also has significant financial implications for Australian businesses and their staff



ECONOMIC COSTS

Existing studies suggest that intimate partner violence is costing Australian businesses. Australian corporate and business sectors lose more than \$13.6 billion¹ through:

- Cost of sick leave for victims is just under \$30m per year .
- Associated staff turnover costs a further \$6 million annually².
- Direct costs such as reduced productivity
- Lost work days through sick leave and absences
- Staff attrition and abuse of workplace resources by perpetrators to harass their partner or ex-partner during work hours.



IMPACT ON PRIVATE AND WORKING LIVES OF EMPLOYEES

Victims of DFV may have performance difficulties at work. Victims report that it impacts on their work in the form of:

- Lateness
- missed work
- keeping a job or career promotions.



BENEFITS OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- Research on factory workers found that after participating in DFV training, there was a 14 times higher rate of employees seeking counselling for abuse.
- Accessing counselling for DFV issues reduced absenteeism.
- Maintaining an income gives victims a choice and may offer a chance to leave an abusive relationship



1 in 3

Australian women have experienced physical violence from a current or former partner.



1 in 4

Australian women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.



1 in 5

Australian women have experienced sexual violence

Strategies around DV to think about for the business community

There are several ways in business and employer groups can become involved in supporting domestic violence initiatives. These include:

- Development of a workplace domestic violence policy
- Supporting and/or partnering with local services who work with victims and perpetrators
- Offering material aid to victims of domestic violence
- Participating in campaigns

It is recognised that a variety of responses will be required because of the varying nature and needs of employers. There are employers who may be challenged by some of the proposals but may wish to participate in others. Some of the approaches which could be put forward are:

1. Propose the development of an employer or business coalition which promotes best workplace practices and responses. Ideally this would be funded by employers and offer outreach to employers and work in conjunction with local domestic violence services to provide training, information and support. Initially it may be a website which provides resources to employers. It is possible that a service like this might be funded through the Dept of Communities initiative *Strengthening NGO's*. However, it is important that there is ownership by employers.
2. Offer to provide information on developing workplace domestic violence policies. Schedule a seminar for employers and HR Personnel on developing a workplace policy on domestic violence
3. Offer speakers for health-related issues which can include a range of both work-related and home-related concerns. While family violence may not be expressly identified by the program facilitators, issues of conflict at home and how it impacts on people at work can be raised. This model provides an opportunity for men and women to be referred to other services should violence-related issues be raised.

Provide information on workplace partnership models A **Partnerships** Model is managing family violence prevention through partnership with a local service offering domestic violence support services. The partnership may take the form of formal training sessions for managers and supervisors run by the local service or ongoing informal visits to the workplace by an outreach worker. In this instance, a worker makes regular workplace visits when staff can speak to the worker on an informal basis.

1. <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/publications-articles/reducing-violence/national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children/economic-cost-of-violence-against-women-and-their-children?HTML#3>

2. https://www.aph.gov.au/about_parliament/parliamentary_departments/parliamentary_library/publications_archive/archive/domviolence

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/PVAW/IPV%20BOD%20web%20version.ashx>