

# Project Safe Staff

presented by  
Manatee County Clerk of Circuit Court  
and  
Hope Family Services



# Introduction

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# Overview

- Defining Domestic Violence
- Identifying Behaviors That May Indicate Abuse
- How Supervisors Can Help
- Safety Issues
- Reviewing Available Services
- Questions

# What is Domestic Violence?

- Legal Definition
- Behavioral Definition

# Legal Definition

- **741.28 Domestic violence; definitions.-**  
-As used in ss. [741.28](#)-741.31:
- (1) "Domestic violence" means any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another who is or was residing in the same single dwelling unit.

# Behavioral Definition

- Battering is a pattern of behavior that seeks to establish power through fear and intimidation. It often includes the threat or use of violence. Battering happens when batterers believe they are entitled to control their partners. They believe that the violence is an acceptable way to achieve desired results.

# What Behaviors May Indicate Abuse?

Does your employee:

- have unexplained bruises or explanations that don't seem to fit the injuries?
- seem distracted or have trouble concentrating?
- miss work often?
- receive repeated, upsetting telephone calls during the day?
- appear anxious, upset or distressed?
- fluctuate in the quality of their work for no apparent reason?
- have a high absenteeism rate?

# How Supervisors Can Help

- Talk about abuse
- Create a supportive and stable work environment
- Temporary changes in job duties
- Temporary adjustment of performance expectations

# Talking about abuse

- Let the employee know what you have observed
- Express concern that the employee might be abused
- Make a statement of support
- Keep information confidential
- Offer referrals for assistance
- Maintain a nonjudgmental attitude
- Never insist the employee leave the abuser

# Create a supportive and stable work environment

- Employee training, newsletter articles, posters and brochures on domestic violence are all ways that an employer can create an environment where employees feel safe and comfortable talking about domestic violence.
- Clear and consistent performance expectations will help an employee achieve her best possible performance.

# Temporary changes in job duties

- If desired by the employee and permitted by the organization, a temporary change in job responsibilities, schedule or location may help the worker focus on essential job functions

# Temporary adjustment of performance expectations

- Encourage the employee to let you know in advance if she can't meet a deadline or can't handle a specific job function (e.g., answering the telephone, when there is a possibility the abuser will call at work).

# Safety Issues

- How safe is the workplace?
- Is the victim in a safe area?
- Are all incidents reported?

# How safe is the workplace?

- How well trained are security officers and employees with respect to workplace violence?
- Examine access to your workplace
- Provide escort to parking area
- Have calls screened

# Is the victim in a safe area?

- Victims who are being harassed or threatened should never sit with their backs to a door, lobby, or street-level window.
- Barriers (desks, dividers, walls, furniture) between the victim and entrances that a perpetrator might use to enter the workplace provide cover and may give the victim a chance to escape
- Notify security or receptionist and provide photograph of abuser

# Are all incidents reported?

- Document each report of domestic violence in the workplace.
- Evaluate reports of threatening or harassing behavior to determine the extent of the risk to the individual and the organization.
- Support the prosecution of the offender.

# What Services Are Available?

- Clerk's Office Violence Protection Advocate
  - (941)741-4024 Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
    - Assistance in obtaining injunctions for protection
    - Assistance in enforcing injunctions
    - Provide free cell phones for 911 calls under SafeCall program
- Hope Family Services
  - 24-hour Hotline (941)755-6805
    - Free Counseling for children and adult victims
    - Emergency Shelter
    - Assistance with emergency food & clothing needs
- Florida Domestic Violence Hotline
  - 24-hour Hotline 1-800-500-1119



# Internet Resources

- <http://www.fvvpf.org/workplace/>
- <http://fcadv.org>
- <http://harrellcenter.hsc.usf.edu/>
- <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo/>
- <http://www.vaw.umn.edu/bip.asp>

