

If your colleague is abused at home

dealing with domestic
violence in the workplace

By Chris Poole



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A product of the EU Daphne project "Abused Women at Work"
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Preface by Jane Korczak

Deputy Chairwoman of the Danish Trade Union, 3F
and Chairwoman of AOF Denmark

The Workplace's Social Corporate Responsibility – Domestic Violence


It is very popular at the moment to talk about corporate social responsibility, and many companies consider it good publicity to be considered socially responsible. "It shows up on the bottom line".

Domestic violence is not always considered a part of a company's social corporate responsibility. I think it is time to begin to do so, and I hope that the Daphne project "Abused Women at Work" and this handbook will help the process.

I am happy that the labour movement can take part in bringing this issue which is surrounded by so many taboos up for debate. For too many years, domestic violence has been considered an individual responsibility; something that takes place within the sanctity of the home. It has been considered something that does not concern anyone other than those involved. Something you do not talk about. Something which used to be spoken of as simply a "domestic dispute".

I am happy that now we do NOT consider domestic violence a problem for the individual man and woman, but see it as a social issue to be dealt with structurally and politically.

Violence against women is a social issue because:
Approximately 28,000 Danish women are victims of domestic violence on a yearly basis. Children often witness the violence.
The violence usually takes place over long periods of time, resulting in the women not being able to be active citizens. They become socially marginalised, both at work and in democracy.



The women have a poor connection to the labour market, are more often on sick leave, and are more prone to depression, all of which result in not only individual and personal expenses, but also result in a significant financial burden for society.

“Violence against women” takes place all over the world, in all countries, and must therefore be considered a fundamental gender equality issue. Men are also victims of violence in the home, but to a much lesser extent. And of course, we have an obligation to fight that kind of violence too.

There are many good reasons why we should all deal with this problem – both politicians, trade unions, public officials, organisations, and institutions. I find it very important that both men and women take responsibility for solving this problem, and this handbook will provide you with inspiration and ideas on how YOU can take action in the workplace.

Some people might ask “how can a workplace policy help the fight against domestic violence?”. The answer is quite simple. A workplace policy sends the message that “in this company we care about you, we do not accept violence, and we would like to help you”.

This can provide the encouragement and energy needed to break out of the cycle of abuse.

You can also help prevent violence by talking about the problem and by taking a clear stand on the issue. In that way we can reduce the taboos and help make it possible for both the victim and the abuser to break with the cycle when a colleague puts up a “mirror”.

A grant from the European Union has made it possible for AOF Denmark, FIU-ligestilling¹, and our European partners² to carry out this project and produce this handbook.

Thank you.

And good luck with the work to all of us!

Jane Korczak
Chairwoman of AOF Denmark
and Deputy Chairwoman of the Danish Trade Union, 3F

¹ Read more about FIU-ligestilling at www.loli.dk

² The Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation and the Spanish Trade Union FIA-UGT

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The author's introduction

This handbook is one of several products of the European Union Daphne project “Abused Women At Work” which is a transnational project and a co-operation between organisations in Denmark, Spain and Lithuania. For more information about the project, visit the website www.awaw.dk.

The handbook is a resource for everyone in the workplace, but it is meant to be a tool especially for trade union representatives or safety representatives. The handbook provides:

- > knowledge about domestic violence, why and how it affects the workplace
- > ideas on how to start debates and develop strategies in the workplace for dealing with and preventing domestic violence
- > real life cases and positive examples of how to handle domestic violence in the workplace

The handbook presents some of the multitude of possibilities the workplace has to take initiatives to break down taboos, as well as actively preventing domestic violence. For example, we can build on our experiences over the past several years on how to deal with problems related to smoking and alcohol.

Domestic violence and violence at work

Both in Denmark and in the European Union at large, there has recently been a lot of focus on the kind of violence which occurs at work. Many initiatives and regulations try to limit, manage, and prevent the violence which takes place while we carry out our duties at work. This could be violent actions committed by clients, patients, or colleagues.



The Daphne project “Abused Women At Work” and this handbook bring attention to a kind of violence that often does not happen at work, that is domestic violence. The reason for this is that domestic violence has serious consequences for both the employees who are the victims of it, and for colleagues and the workplace in general.

Domestic violence is complex and entrenched in taboos, and must be treated with knowledge and sensitivity. Data from several studies show that the workplace can play an important role in helping an abused colleague get away from the violence and at the same time maintain his or her employment, something which will benefit all of the involved parties. This knowledge should be spread to more workplaces and transformed into concrete guidelines that specifically deal with domestic violence.

Diversity networks

The co-operation between the author of the handbook and the diversity network of the Danish Labour Movement has been an important factor in the development of this handbook. The network, which is a cross-professional national network of trade union representatives and activists, consists of 10 networks spread around Denmark. The networks organise meetings and debates which focus on well-being, diversity, and gender equality in the workplace.

The networks have been a part of the Daphne project “Abused Women At Work”. I have met with the networks to talk about domestic violence and was provided with important feed-back and inspiration for this handbook.

Choice of terms

Wife beating, domestic disputes, family violence, domestic violence, intimate partner violence. This widespread and serious type of violence has quite a few names. In this handbook, the term domestic violence will be used most of the time to cover the type of violence which, in most cases, is perpetrated by men against women. In the first chapter the term domestic violence will be defined together with the affect it has on the workplace.

Throughout the handbook you will find illustrations and charts that summarize some of the information. These can be useful tools when negotiating with management.

On the project’s website – www.awaw.dk – you can find reports from Denmark, Lithuania and Spain about the extent and character of violence against women in these countries and the initiatives that have been taken to combat this.

Thanks to all who contributed to the handbook

I wish to thank the many who have read and commented on the different drafts of the handbook. I am also grateful to the people who agreed to be interviewed or otherwise quoted in the handbook.

I myself have over 25 years of experience combating violence against women through teaching and writing books on the subject, focusing mainly on prevention. I have used my own experiences and the experiences of the many abused women I have met through the years, together with input from many professionals and people from the trade unions in my work with the handbook.

Even though I have been active with the issue for many years, my work developing this handbook reminded me again that there is always more to be learned about this very complex area.

I hope the handbook will help start discussions in workplaces everywhere. And that it can especially help to turn resistance into action.

Chris Poole, Consultant in Violence Prevention
September 2010
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“ I wish that someone had taken hold of me and my problems more directly. And that someone could very well have been my union representative. But it is so important how this is done. Even though I’m a 184 cm tall woman, my self-esteem was so small that it could fit into my little toe.

A formerly abused woman



For union representatives

What role can you play as a union representative in dealing with and fighting domestic violence at your workplace?

Dealing with a colleague whom you suspect is being abused may seem a bit overwhelming at first. But there are many ways in which you can make a difference. Here are some ideas how:

- > Increase your knowledge of domestic violence. Especially the chapter just after this can be a help.
- > Take the initiative to spread information about domestic violence and the services available both inside the workplace and outside.
- > Take a look at the staff and safety policies of your workplace and find ways to incorporate initiatives on how to handle domestic violence. Read the chapter “What the workplace can do”.
- > Read the chapter on how to identify and talk to a colleague whom you suspect is being abused or is being abusive to their partner.
- > Discuss the issue with management. Read more about how to do that in the chapter “Involving management”.

It is easier to act if there already is an existing strategy or policy on the issue. But even if you don’t have a policy at your workplace – yet – it should not prevent you from talking to an abused colleague. In the chapter “Attention on the victim/abuser” you can read about how to approach such a conversation.

Your job is not to solve your colleague’s problems, but to help him or her express and define what the problem is and then refer them to relevant professional assistance. And not of least importance, help your colleague keep his or her job. It can mean a great deal to an abused colleague to talk to someone who is empathetic and who is willing to listen.



What is domestic violence? Myths and facts

There are a lot of misconceptions, myths, and ignorance surrounding domestic violence. That is why knowledge is very important if you are an employee, a trade union representative, or a manager who wants to bring the subject up at work.

Statistics alone are not enough, although it is useful to know the extent of the violence. Statistics do not describe the nature of domestic violence. In order to understand domestic violence, you must realize that this type of violence has a whole other character and dynamic than street violence. Violence on the street such as gang violence, robbery, and fist-fights occur suddenly and happen mainly among people who do not know each other in advance. This is the kind of violence which most often appears in films or gets on the front page of newspapers.

Domestic violence differs from street violence in many ways. First of all, domestic violence happens among people, who not only know each other, they usually have a close relationship and the violence mostly takes place at home where no one outside the family sees it. This means that the victim and the abuser are or have been close; maybe they live together and have children.

Secondly, domestic violence has a complex character which often consists of a mixture of different types of violence such as psychological, physical, sexual, material and financial abuse. This means that domestic violence covers very serious abuse as well as milder types of abuse.

The National Board of Social Services in Denmark has the following definition of violence:

➤➤ Violence is an act or a threat that, no matter what the purpose, is meant to hurt another person's integrity or to frighten, hurt, or harm the person – no matter if the person is a child or an adult man or woman. The violence can have the same effect on other people who witness or hear the act. The violence can be a conscious act, or an act that happens in affect. The act also transgresses society's laws and norms ◀◀

A draft of the European Union's convention on preventing and combating male violence against women and domestic violence – which is being negotiated at the moment in the European Parliament – defines violence against women as follows:

- > "Male violence against women" is a form of discrimination against women and a **violation of human rights** and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
- > "Domestic violence" shall mean all acts of physical, sexual and psychological violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or within any other intimate relationship, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim."

¹ Read the whole draft of the convention at: www.epacvaw.org, The European Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women

Different types of violence

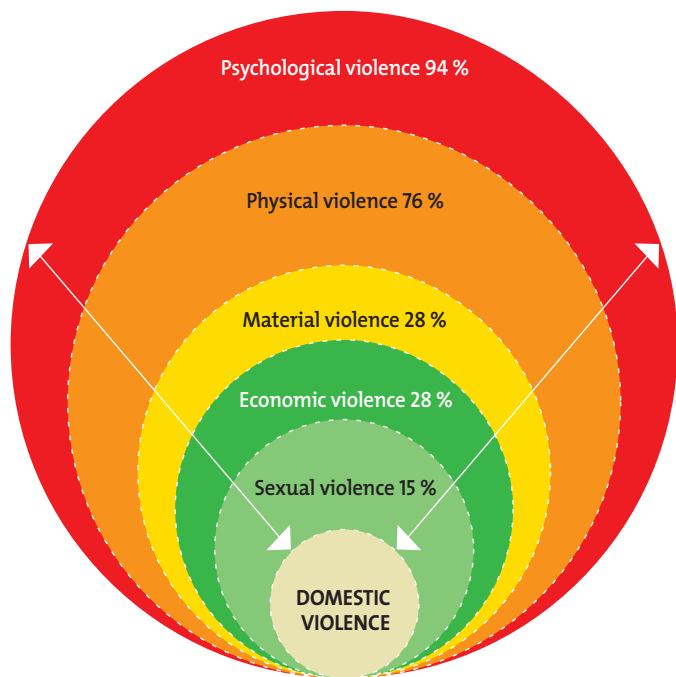
When speaking of domestic violence, most people think only of physical abuse that can result in a black eye, a broken leg, or visible bruises. But domestic violence is also when your spouse or ex-spouse subjects you to one or more of the following types of abuse:

- > **Psychological abuse:** When someone or someone's child is threatened, yelled at, constantly criticised, controlled, demeaned or isolated
- > **Physical abuse:** When the victim is hit, kicked, pushed, thrown around, or victimized with weapons or objects
- > **Sexual abuse:** When the victim is forced to have sex with the abuser or forced to participate in other unwanted sexual acts
- > **Material abuse:** When the belongings of the victim are destroyed or he or she is threatened with them being destroyed
- > **Economic abuse:** When the victim is forced or tricked into debt, or when she or he doesn't have the possibility to spend their own money (such as on food). Without money, the victim ends up in poverty and is isolated from public life.

“My husband treated me like a slave, and I was not allowed to open my own bank account. I had to deposit my salary from my job as a health care worker into his account. He had full control of my finances”

A formerly abused woman





This is an illustration of the different types of abuse according to LOKK (The Danish national organisation of shelters for abused women). The abuser often uses different types of violence which overlap and intensify each other. Especially psychological abuse is almost always present.

Gender and violence

Both men and women can either be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. But most studies, such as the one from the Danish Institute of Public Health, have found that most abusers are men and most victims are women. The same studies show that domestic violence takes place in all social classes, and among people with all types of educational backgrounds, and also in homosexual relationships.

The period leading up to and violence as a process

Another thing which separates domestic violence from other types of violence is that domestic violence often has a long prelude with several stages occurring over a long period of time, sometimes years, as the abuse is repeated with growing intensity and severity. The violence is often progressive which means that it gets worse, happens with shorter intervals and, over time, becomes more serious if it is not stopped.

No one wants to live in a violent relationship. It rarely begins with violence, but it can develop slowly. Different types of psychological abuse are almost always a part of violent relationships. For example, the man uses abusive language when talking to the woman, he criticizes her clothing, views, family, etc. But not all relationships with psychological violence end up with physical abuse. Psychological abuse is serious and destructive to self-esteem and the ability to act in one's own best interest. Also typical for violent relationships, is that the man isolates the woman from her family and friends and blames her for the violence.

Violence never comes like a bolt out of the blue. There is a gradual sliding scale from a normal, peaceful relationship. It can begin with one partner controlling and demeaning the other, like controlling what she wears or when she can see her friends. Some people confuse control with love. That is, the woman thinks that her partner loves her so much that he wants to know what she is doing and where she is all the time.

The abuser may switch between affection and psychological violence, such as insults and isolation from friends and family. Isolation intensifies the effect of the violence, because gradually the woman loses all other points of references than her partner. He becomes the one to decide what is right and wrong. This can result in the woman no longer being able to distinguish between violence and love.

A part of the victim's survival strategy can be to repress or minimize the violence and to perceive the abuser's behaviour as "normal".

” He was nice to me in the beginning, but then he started to send me text messages or call me every 5 minutes to ask me where I was, who I was with, and what I was doing with those persons. And if he didn't like them, he would come and drag me home.

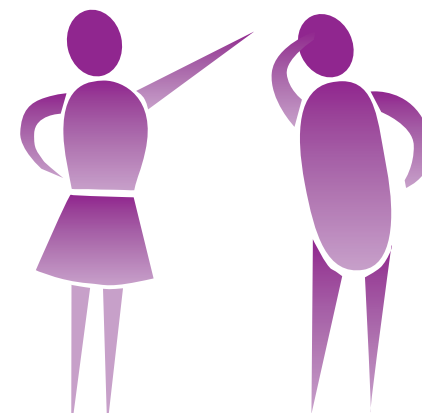
A formerly abused woman

This is an extract from one of many anonymous stories which have been uploaded to the Danish web site www.ditforhold.dk (about dating violence for young people age 14-24). The same story is told again and again. The relationship begins like a dream, but slowly develops into a nightmare. The violence comes gradually, first there is control, humiliation, threats, and later on physical and sexual abuse.

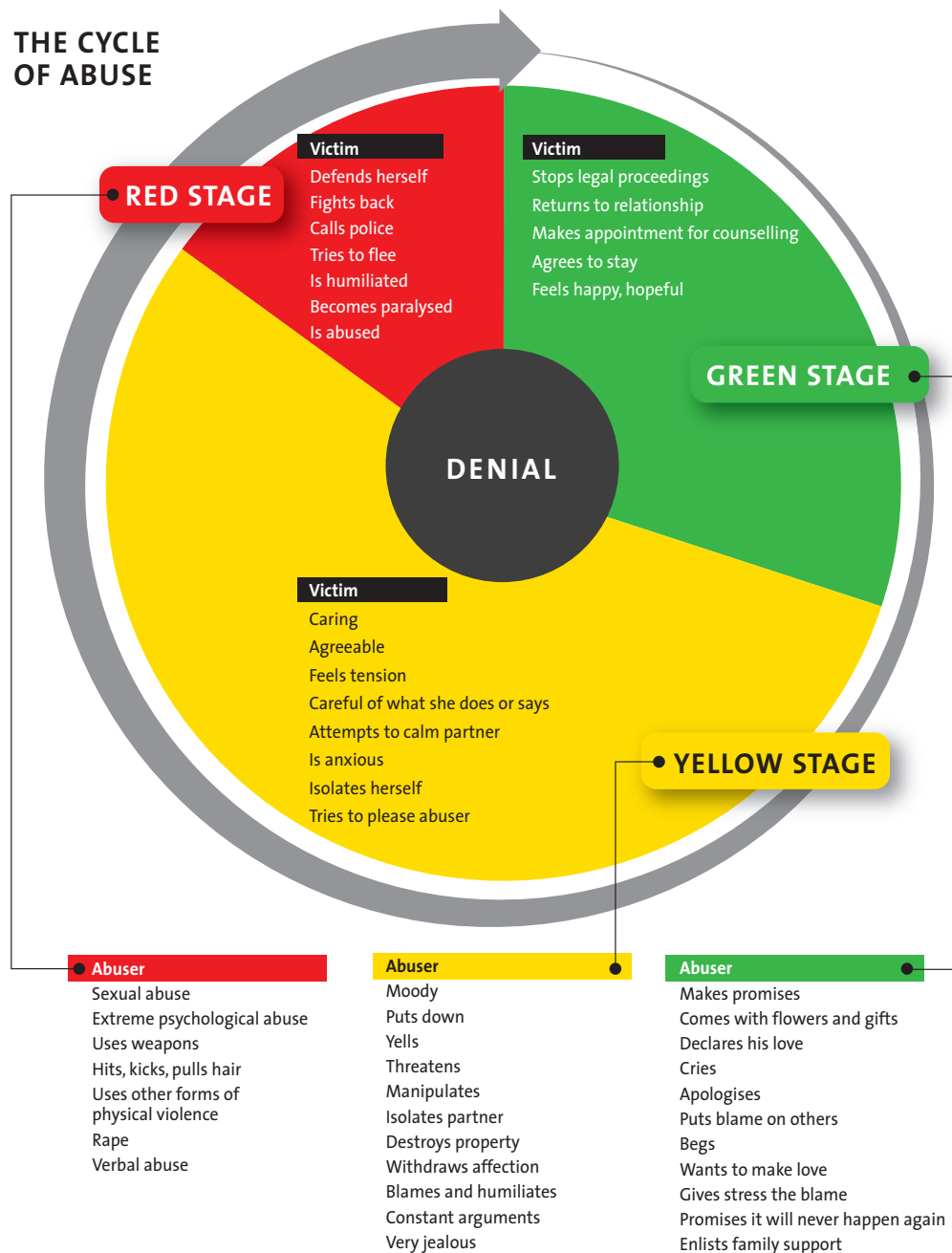
Violence is not constant

Some experts talk about an abuse cycle, spiral, or circle. A violent episode can be followed by periods with an apparently normal relationship. The abuser apologizes, promises it will never happen again, or claims that the violence happened because he was under pressure from exceptional circumstances.

Domestic violence is not an occasional row or a bad temper on a bad day. Domestic violence is violent actions repeated by the same person again and again.



THE CYCLE OF ABUSE



The cycle of abuse is an illustration of a progressive pattern which most people in violent relationships are caught in. The cycle illustrates the different stages of violence and the actions of both the abuser and the victim. The actions of the abuser, which are described outside the circle, have the intention of gaining and maintaining power in the relationship. The actions of the victim, which are described inside the circle, are mainly meant to prevent violence and its consequences. The cycle of abuse also gives a picture of the relative time for each stage.¹

- > The pattern starts in **the green stage**: This is the stage where both partners are happy for each other. In this stage, the relationship is loving and pleasant. Most relationships start in the green stage by falling in love.
- > **The next stage is the yellow** one, in which tension is building up in the relationship. The couple starts arguing and the abuser expresses his frustration and dissatisfaction with his partner. The victim tries to reason with the abuser and calm him and stays away from family and friends in order to concentrate on the relationship. At this stage the abuser frequently puts his partner down. He yells, threatens, and blames his partner, and he may be extremely jealous. At this point the abuser may also stop showing any physical and emotional affection, he is moody and closed. The yellow stage is the longest stage. It can last several days, months or years.
- > **The last stage is the red** one which has the shortest duration and is the most dangerous. In this stage, one small incident can cause an explosion of anger. The abuser may use sexual, physical, or extreme verbal abuse. Some abusers use weapons, tear their partner's hair or humiliate her in public. In this stage the victim may call the police, fight back, leave the home or become paralysed.
- > The abuser quickly moves in to **the green stage** again to dampen or cover up for his behaviour. At this point the abuser brings flowers and gifts, and he declares his love and apologises, and promises never to let it happen again, or maybe even agrees to start therapy. During this stage, the abuser will blame his violent behaviour on work-related stress or other factors, which have nothing to do with him personally. The victim might at this stage stop any legal proceedings, return to the relationship, and promise to work on the relationship, hoping that things will improve.

¹ Inspired by TEAR-Teens Experiencing Abusive Relationships

The cycle of abuse revolves around **denial**. As long as the couple deny the violence, it is impossible for them to stop it without outside help, and the power balance in the relationship becomes more and more one-sided. Even though there can be temporary pauses in motion, the cycle will gradually move faster and faster. In most cases, the violence will become more severe and frequent and it can even result in murder.

No one wants to end up in the cycle of abuse, and the mechanisms which keep it going – denial for instance – are for the most part unconscious. This does not, however, reduce the abuser's responsibility for his violent actions.

When the cycle is in motion, it is very difficult to stop it, but it can be done.

The role of the workplace in breaking down the cycle of abuse and denial

The cycle of violence demonstrates how important it is to intervene and help people who are trapped in the cycle break out of the pattern. We can help to break through denial with sympathy and care. As colleagues, we can help the abused person put her situation into words and further along a process which moves towards the woman finding her way away from the violence, while at the same time keeping her job. It is also possible for the workplace to help a colleague who is abusing to start taking responsibility for his actions and seek help.

All in all, the workplace can play a very important and constructive role. In later chapters you can find inspiration as to how and why, but one thing which is important is to break the silence by putting the violence into words.

The following is a small sample of statistics about men's violence against women in Denmark. You can find more in the report "Abused Women At Work" which can be downloaded in English or Danish from www.awaw.dk/UK.

Statistics for violence against women in Denmark

- Approx. 70,000 women in the age group 16-64 years old – or just under 4 out of 100 adult women – are annually subjected to one type of violence.
- Approx. 32,000 women experience severe physical violence annually.
- The extent of domestic violence has decreased from 42,000 to 28,000 women that are annually subjected to violence from a current or former partner.
- 8,900 men are subjected to domestic violence yearly.
- Approx. 20-22,000 children grow up in a family with domestic violence.
- Approx. 25 women over the age of 15 years are murdered every year in Denmark. It is estimated that at least half of the perpetrators are present or former partners.
- 6,000 women contact a casualty ward as a result of abuse injuries yearly. Emergency room contact has risen from just under 5,000 in 2005 to 6,000 in 2006. The increase is largest among younger women.
- 60 % of all injuries among women with hospital contact occurred at home, and just under 40 % of these injuries are localized to the head and neck – which is characteristic for domestic violence.
- Just under 5,500 women report violence or threats yearly.
- See the sources for these statistics below².

² Men's violence against women – extent, characteristics and the measures against – 2007. The National Institute of Public Health, The Southern University of Denmark and Minister for Gender Equality. Violence Against Men in Denmark – extent and characteristics, 2008. The National Institute of Public Health, The Southern University of Denmark and Minister for Gender Equality.



The two most common myths about domestic violence

Many people who have tried to bring the issue of domestic violence up at work have been confronted with some of the myths that are prevalent. The following will help you be able to replace myths with facts, in case you should encounter any of them among your colleagues or management.

Perhaps two of the most widespread myths about domestic violence are:

1. It does not occur in ordinary families and it does not affect any of **our** colleagues
2. She can just leave him, the violent bully!

Concerning the first myth, studies have shown that domestic violence occurs in all social classes and age groups, regardless of educational background, and it happens in homosexual relationships as well. This is why it is important that all workplaces learn about the issue and set up procedures for helping a colleague who is a victim of domestic violence – preferably before a case shows up.

The second myth implies that “she can just leave him.” Many people have no knowledge of, or do not wish to know anything about the complex and varied mechanisms that keep a woman in a violent relationship. For instance, that violence develops over time. That it begins with control and psychological abuse which intensifies until the woman’s self-esteem and sense of reality are affected. That the abuser often switches between affection and violence. The woman would like to believe the man when he claims that he is sorry and that it will never happen again. She wants to get rid of the abuse – not the man, but doesn’t know how. As previously explained, most abused women are trapped in a so called “cycle of abuse” which is difficult to break out of when in motion. The woman’s self-esteem is destroyed; she blames herself, and no longer knows the difference between normal and acceptable behaviour and that which is not. Her ability to act is drained and the lack of self-esteem keeps her in the present situation.

What about turning this myth upside down and consider giving the women who do leave their abusive husbands, or insist that they get treatment, a medal for bravery? It is very difficult to get out of a relationship when the violence has been going on for a long time. Nevertheless, thousands of women do it every year.

There can, however, be all kinds of financial and practical reasons which make it difficult for the woman to leave home – especially in relationships with children. Some abusers threaten to kill their partner or hurt their children if their partner leaves them. The reason for staying in the relationship could therefore be the woman’s consideration for her own safety or the safety of her children. But why focus so much on what the abused woman does or does not do? Why not put more scrutiny on the actions of the abuser? Ask such questions as: Why do so many men try to control the women they claim to love? Why do these men not seek help or at least leave the woman if the relationship is so trying that they feel compelled to be abusive again and again?

Other myths about domestic violence

The first step towards fighting domestic violence is to dispel the myths surrounding it. Have you heard any of the following myths or have you believed in any of them?

- > **Myth: That the violence occurs suddenly – like a bolt out of the blue.**
Usually there is a long psychological period leading up to physical abuse with different levels where the situation gradually becomes more and more threatening and serious.
- > **Myth: That the abuse could never happen to me – “it only happens to other people or a certain kind of women”.** If you do not know anything about domestic violence, you can easily overlook the danger signals. If you know about the issue, you will be better prepared to recognize that a relationship is developing into a violent one and act constructively in good time.
- > **Myth: That the woman provokes the man into hitting her.** Most abused women do everything they possibly can to prevent the violence. But no matter what, no one can provoke anyone to become violent – there are always alternatives to violence. Using violence is always the abuser’s choice and responsibility. There is no excuse for repeated violence.
- > **Myth: That alcohol is the reason why the partner is abusive.** According to studies, alcohol does not have a greater influence on domestic violence than on other types of violence. And even where alcohol is involved, it can neither be considered a reason nor an excuse for the violence.

All too often, abused women are met by an attitude that directly or indirectly puts the blame on them. This kind of double victimization makes it even harder for a women to seek help or leave an abusive relationship. Furthermore, the views that lie behind these and other myths make it more difficult to hold abusive men responsible for their behaviour. The myths make excuses for and maintain the violence, and they can be partly responsible for some victims keeping quiet and staying in an abusive relationship. Myths should be dealt with whenever you meet them.



“ I needed a break, and I was actually not capable of working. I couldn't do both – be abused and carry out a full-time job. I really needed a time-out, which I got when I broke down with stress. But I didn't tell anyone – they think the stress is work-related.

Interview with a formerly abused woman – from the report:
“Abused Women at Work 2009”



How domestic violence affects the victim, society, and work life

Consequences for the victim and the family

The effects of domestic violence are serious. Besides the physical injuries, domestic violence causes mental health problems and an increased consumption of medication and sedatives. According to the Crime Prevention Council in Denmark, victims of physical and psychological violence have more psychological symptoms; they use more medication and attempt suicide more often than victims of other types of violence.

Violence destroys the livelihood of the women. Compared to other women, victims of domestic violence have a higher risk of health problems like depression and other physical and mental disorders which increase the amount of sick leave. This means that the women risk losing their jobs and social network¹.

Violence seriously affects children in the family as well. If the violence you are subjected to or witness as a child is not exposed and addressed, there is a higher risk of being abused or committing violence later in life. According to the Danish Institute of Public Health, approx. 21,000 children live in families with violence. If these children are not given the opportunity to talk about their experiences, there is a real risk that they will repeat the pattern of violence in their own relationships.

Consequences for society

The human consequences are numerous and so are the socio-economic effects. According to Amnesty International² and Dannerhuset (a Danish shelter for battered women) domestic violence is costing the Danish society DKK 370mil-

¹ The report “Når vold er hverdag – en undersøgelse af mænds vold mod kvinder i nære relationer” (When violence is a daily occurrence”), LOKK and VUC, 2005.

² The report “Når en kollega eller medarbejder er udsat for partnervold” (when a colleague or an employee is victim of domestic violence), Amnesty International and VFC Udsatte, 2006

lion (50m Euros). This figure only includes the costs of accommodation and police assistance. There are no Danish statistics on how much it costs society in the form of lost productivity and earnings. But statistics from other western countries show that the costs are in the billions. Read more about the economic effects in the chapter “Involving management”.

Consequences for the work life

A Danish study from 2007³ on men’s violence against women show that at least 28,000 women are the victims of domestic violence every year. Presumably the same amount of men commit the violence yearly. By comparison approx 8,900 men are the victims of domestic violence. If these figures are all added together, a minimum of 73,800 adult Danes are directly affected by domestic violence on a yearly basis. A large part of these at least 73,800 men and women go to work every day. These colleagues cannot just leave the violence and its effects at home. They bring it to the workplace to some extent, which means that all of us have the possibility of sooner or later coming into contact with a colleague with this problem.

Another Danish report⁴ found, by comparing women who have not been abused with women who have been the victim of domestic violence within the last year, that the abused co-workers are characterised by:

- > having twice as much absenteeism
- > twice as many were unable to work, had switched jobs or were on part-time because of health problems caused by the abuse
- > four times as many had conflicts with their colleagues

³ The Danish Institute of Public Health: www.si-folkesundhed.dk

⁴ The report “Voldsramte kvinders arbejdsliv – et arbejdspapir” (The work life of abused women) by the Danish National Board of Social Services, 2006

Conflicts at work can be the result of the abuse taking so much of the women’s mental and physical resources. The abuse can give concentration problems and a short temper which can easily lead to conflicts. As long as the woman’s colleagues do not know the reason for her behaviour, there is a risk that she will be frozen out of the social network. Or the woman may isolate herself from her colleagues because she feels ashamed of the abuse she experiences at home.

“My colleagues withdrew and left me alone. That was fine for me because I didn’t have the energy for them.

Formerly abused woman

83% of the abused women who participated in the Danish National Board of Social Services’ questionnaire survey⁵ and who had been in employment during the past three years, revealed that the abuse had in one or more ways a negative effect on their work. For example:

- > 71 % experienced fatigue at work
- > 35 % had difficulties making deadlines
- > 64 % had concentration problems
- > 30 % had extra sick leave because of the abuse
- > 55 % worried about what their colleagues think
- > 35 % had difficulties participating in social activities with colleagues

⁵ The report “Voldsramte kvinders arbejdsliv” (The work life of abused women) by the Danish National Board of Social Services, 2009



Why should we address the issue of men's violence against women in the workplace?

We should concern ourselves with the issue because it has a significant effect on job satisfaction in the workplace.



I care about my colleagues. I want everybody to be doing fine and to thrive. Therefore, as a trade union representative, I will act if I suspect that a colleague is the victim of domestic violence.

Trade union representative

Domestic violence is also about safety. An American study found that three quarters of the abused women reported that their partner acted threatening while they were at work. That is, they were a danger to both the women and their colleagues. A Danish study⁶ found that 38 % of abused women had been harassed or directly abused by the perpetrator while they were at work. This could be by threats on the phone or by turning up at the workplace and causing damage. The same report found that 57 % of the women had experienced their partner being jealous of their colleagues. If the woman left the abuser, he might keep her under surveillance while she was at work or turn up during working hours exhibiting threatening behaviour.

The chart⁷ on the next page shows some of the consequences which domestic violence can have on a person's work performance, how it can influence the workplace, and how it can influence colleagues and management.

⁶ The report "Voldsramte kvinders arbejdsliv" (The work life of abused women) by the Danish National Board of Social Services, 2009

⁷ Based on www.toolkitnb.ca



THE CONSEQUENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR THE WORKPLACE:

How Domestic Violence Enters the Workplace	Impact on the Victim	Impact on the Workplace	Consequences for Employer
Abuser sends threatening email, voice messages and/or faxes the victim	Fear, inattention, increased fatigue	Other staff concerned, annoyed at having to “cover” for colleague who is performing poorly; co-workers may think victim is lazy	Poor job performance may affect the entire workplace; low staff morale
Abuser humiliates the victim by criticizing or degrading him or her in front of other staff	Low self-esteem, low confidence, anxiety related symptoms such as headaches, nervousness	Other staff may become distressed or feel uncomfortable at work	Staff uses work time discussing situation; less productive because of discomfort at work
Abuser constantly contacts workplace and other staff in an effort to “keep tabs” on the victim; abuser stalks the victim	Mistrusts other staff because they are giving out personal information; fear for personal safety	Staff are unsure of what information to share and have safety concerns about their own well-being	Staff productivity may decrease contributing to increased conflict with others; safety concerns
Abuser is jealous of others in the workplace, the abuser “shows up” at work	Increased anxiety and avoids contact with colleagues; fear of losing job; physical symptoms related to anxiety such as ulcers, headaches	Staff are afraid of being accused by the abuser; staff may distance themselves from the victim; other staff feel at risk	Employer must address safety issues and increased absenteeism for physical symptoms; negative impact on staff relationships
Abuser hits, slaps or pushes the victim at their workplace	Victim experiences humiliation and/or shame; anxiety from trying to hide injuries	Co-workers may fear for their own safety and require counselling	Absenteeism and safety concerns; in some situations staff may be performing job duties that they have not been trained for; employee morale is affected
Abuser physically assaults victim outside work environment or at home	Increased anxiety from trying to hide the abuse; physical injuries	Staff may not know about the abuse; perceive victim as distant or unfriendly;	Poor team performance; conflict among staff; victim may miss work because of injuries
Abuser sexually assaults victim; abuser threatens to kill the victim	Victim feels trapped in the relationship; feels nobody cares; may be afraid, isolated or desperate	Communication among staff poor; negative work environment; other staff unaware of death threats and react negatively to the victim’s anxiety/stress; others may fear for their own safety if aware of death threats against victim	Management and union representatives must deal with staff anxieties and fear; productivity drops

CASE: AN ABUSED WOMAN AT WORK

The following case demonstrates how domestic violence can impact on the working life of an abused woman.

Lene is a middle manager in a company with 9,000 employees, mainly men, and she is a member of the Union of the Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark (HK).

Lene was 21 years old when she met her husband with whom she has a daughter. Their relationship started like most relationships do, they fell in love and the relationship was reciprocal. Unfortunately her husband turned out to be very controlling, and eventually he became violent. Lene lived with an increasingly abusive husband for 7 years, until she finally took her daughter and moved away from him.

During the violent years, she worked at the same company – not as a manager, but in the sales department where she had contact with costumers. The domestic violence had a huge influence on her work life. She spent 75% of her energy pulling herself together and was often tired and depressed. On many occasions, she had to call in sick at the last minute. She never met with angry reactions from her colleagues, but on the other hand they didn't ask questions about or mention her frequent sick leave either. The reason for this could be that she was hard-working when she was at work.

She knew that people talked about her behind her back, but her colleagues were nice and kind to her. She didn't have the energy to talk to them about the reasons for her illness. Instead, she did everything she could to hide her bruises with heavy make-up and clothes that covered her skin. But the violence intensified and became more difficult to hide.


One Friday evening in November, she had enough. She had lost all feelings for her husband. Lene moved away with her 5 year-old daughter and never came back. Lene took a five day sick leave from work. When she came back, her husband showed up several times at her workplace. She didn't want to make a scene, so she just asked him to leave in a calm and orderly manner. To manage the moving and her expenses, Lene borrowed money from her colleagues during the first period of time after she moved.

Today Lene says that she used the workplace as a “safe haven” while living in the violent relationship. She was happy for the tolerance she met from her colleagues, but looking back now she says, “I wish that somebody had taken hold of me and my problems more directly. And that could very well have been my union representative. But the way this is done is very important. Even though I'm a 184 cm tall woman, my self-esteem was so small that it could fit into my little toe.” Without self-esteem it is very difficult to open up and talk about the violence.

Lene welcomes the Daphne project which will make the issue more visible at the workplace. She says, “I wish that everybody would discuss the issue during lunch time at work, also the ones who have never experienced domestic violence themselves.” That is the only way to reduce the reluctance to deal with the issue. It is also important to be tolerant and respectful to the abused woman and not be judgemental or generalise too much, Lene says.

Based on an interview with the author.



 I did exactly the same thing that most other women who have been beaten up by their husbands do: I tried extra make-up and thought I could hide the bruises. Fortunately I had a nice and tolerant workplace and even if we never talked about it, I know now that they showed a lot of consideration. For instance I could call in sick just an hour in advance of my shift. And even though I didn't live up to my own expectations of a good colleague, it was important for me to keep my job. In that way at least I had something to hold on to in my daily life.¹

A formerly abused woman

What a workplace can do

Every workplace has a tremendous potential to raise public awareness and reduce the taboos surrounding domestic violence by, for example, setting up a staff policy or program to deal with the issue. The workplace also has the potential to spread information about how to get assistance if you are a victim of domestic violence – also about the services available outside the workplace. Many people in abusive relationships can only cope with one day at a time. Some of them are not aware of their options for getting help. We can do something about that by providing information about assistance and services, just like we do with regards to colleagues with alcohol abuse problems.

And just as we can do with an alcoholic, we as co-workers can start a process by asking questions which may result in the victim or abusive colleague getting the help he/she deserves.

There are many different things you can do in the workplace, no matter whether you are an employee, a trade union representative, or a manager – either alone or in cooperation. The following list is not complete, as every workplace has its possibilities and limitations. But here are some ideas for inspiration. The ideas are divided into four categories with suggestions about who can do what. Later in the chapter you will find a summary in the form of a chart where all the ideas are listed. Some positive case stories from workplaces that have dealt with domestic violence are included, and finally, there is an exercise which can be used to kick-start a discussion at work.

Obviously, many of the following suggestions require cooperation with management. The chapter, “Involving management” looks at how to cooperate with your employer to develop procedures and guidelines.

¹ From the Danish article “Kolleger skal hjælpe voldsramte kvinder” by Ulla Gunge Hansen, www.Erhvervsbladet.dk, May 14, 2009

SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKPLACE ACTIONS:

1. Spread information about domestic violence and reduce myths and prejudices

Everyone in the workplace can help raise awareness about domestic violence. The issue is complicated and surrounded by many myths, misunderstandings, and taboos. In the resource section at the end of this book, you will find a list of international resources. Do a little research to find articles, books and films about domestic violence from your country which you can use either together with colleagues at work, or alone, to learn more about the issue.

Other options are to:

- > Arrange lectures, film showings, debate, or other after-work events for all co-workers with an expert from your community who can inform about the issue. Maybe you can contact your local women's shelter to ask if they can hold a lecture for you.
- > Talk about domestic violence at work, both in formal and informal settings.

Informal settings:

- Discuss domestic violence with the colleagues you normally eat lunch with. Make use of reports or pamphlets on the issue. You can use this handbook as a starting point for a discussion as well as the exercise mentioned at the end of this chapter.

Formal settings:

- If you are a union representative or human resource employee, get the issue on the agenda of the meetings where you normally discuss job satisfaction and safety at work. If you are not one of these, you can suggest that your representative do so. You can find ideas for guidelines and procedures later on in this chapter.
- Write about domestic violence in staff magazines, electronic newsletters, etc.

2. Make information available to all co-workers about how to get help

It only requires a minor effort to collect and spread information about where victims and abusers can find relevant assistance outside the company. A way of communicating the information could be through a pamphlet, a flyer, or a poster hanging on all notice-boards.

A poster could for example have the headline: **“Where to get help if you are a victim or an abuser of domestic violence” or “Break the silence and seek help if you are a victim of domestic violence”.**

The poster or pamphlet could give the necessary contact information for the local shelter for battered women and other services in your local community.

Find out if your local municipality has a contingency or action plan to deal with cases of domestic violence. Seek out information about what kind of help our local authorities can offer families affected by abuse and include it in the poster or pamphlet. You can start by contacting the social service department of your municipality.

If your local authorities do not have a contingency plan, you can suggest that the municipality get one. You can put the question to your local politicians or write letters to the editor of the local newspaper.

3. Set up guidelines and procedures on how to handle domestic violence

An European Union agreement from 2007¹ requires all workplaces to have a clear and explicit written declaration that mobbing, violence, and harassment are not tolerated. It could be a separate document or written as part of the staff policy. It has to specify which procedures will be used when a case of domestic violence occurs. Many workplaces already have such a declaration included in a violence prevention policy along with guidelines or contingency plans.

But it is also necessary to have specific guidelines for dealing with domestic violence, because this kind of violence is complex and influenced by taboos. The resources and contingency plans which some companies have made available

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=148&langId=en>

for their employees in crisis, are not sufficient. These guidelines or contingency plans have to be supplemented with information about domestic violence and the fact that it may be the reason why an employee is in a life crisis. The guidelines must include explicit information on how and where an abused colleague can get assistance. In other words, it is necessary to provide management, employees, including human resources employees and trade union representatives at all levels, with guidelines on how to identify, prevent, and deal with domestic violence in order to support an abused colleague and to keep her in employment. A focused and effective strategy to prevent and handle domestic violence needs a clear division of responsibilities and a roadmap for **who** is to do **what**.

3.1 The process is important

The value of the guidelines lies also in the process of developing them. The discussions among colleagues and management during the negotiations are just as important as the final document. It is also important that the guidelines fit the individual workplace and its work culture. Both management and the employees should approve and support the guidelines. And that can take time to achieve.

3.2 The declaration

A workplace could declare that it considers the fight against domestic violence a basic part of its corporate social responsibility. This could be done by including a declaration in the safety or job satisfaction policies such as:


“We at (the name of the company) believe that it is important to prevent domestic violence and to help colleagues who are the victims of domestic violence in order to create security and job satisfaction at our workplace and in society in general.”

A declaration like that sends a strong signal which can make it easier for a victim to seek help. The declaration should be followed up by a procedure about how the workplace will handle a situation with an abused colleague. The procedure should be set up before a situation occurs. Often the procedure can be added to existing contingency plans for colleagues in crisis.

Clarify what opportunities are available at the workplace for taking consideration of special needs, like the need for flexible working hours while the victim is living in a shelter or has to appear in court.

3.3 Pay attention to the process after the violence

When the victim ends the relationship with the abusive partner, there may be a long period of time where she has to find a new place to live, appear in court, start divorce and custody proceedings, etc. During this period the victim might have difficulties working full-time. And it may, as well, take time to recover emotionally and psychologically. In some cases, a gradual return to full-time work would be the most suitable solution.

 Two years went by before I got some rest – he refused to accept the fact that I wanted to leave him. He called and sent messages and emails all the time – he begged me to take him back. He did that for a year. Then he would show up and stalk me. Now he is barred from sending me emails, and I have changed my phone number. In the end I had to close all channels – cancel him, his family, and our mutual friends on Facebook. I was still under a lot of stress and didn’t dare to go outside the house for fear of meeting him. I still feel insecure about going out and avoid places that I know he might go. I want my freedom back – two years have passed now.

Interview with formerly abused woman²

² Daphne report “Abused Women At Work” by Stine Skaarup, AOF Denmark, 2009

3.4 Suggestions for the contents of procedures or guidelines

Guidelines should at least contain – but not necessarily restrict themselves to – the following elements:

1. a declaration like the above-mentioned which declares the aim of the workplace to fight domestic violence. The declaration should also contain:
2. a definition of domestic violence and a recognition of the fact that most victims are women, but men can also be abused and that it can also occur in homosexual relationships;
3. a declaration that the workplace believes that domestic violence is unacceptable and that everybody has the right to live a life without fear and free from abusive relationships;
4. a statement that the workplace has the safety and well-being of the employees as a top priority, and this includes providing assistance so an abused colleague can keep her/his job. This also includes requiring abusive colleagues to take responsibility and get help. Thereby in that way reducing the risk of further violence.

The guidelines can also contain :

- > a commitment to provide training and education about domestic violence. This can be done by arranging lectures or courses yearly for all employees and in-depth training for certain staff members such as managers, trade union or safety representatives, or others;
- > a commitment to spread information to all employees through for example posters or pamphlets about the assistance, resources, and hotlines that exist both inside and outside the workplace;
- > a commitment to distribute information in the workplace about who to contact if employees need to talk to someone about domestic violence;
- > a commitment to offer support to the employees who are victims of domestic violence. This may include the possibility for:
 - counselling, treatment, or psychological help
 - flexible working hours or tasks
 - temporary housing etc.
 - a gradual return to full-time after a leave of absence

- > a commitment to inform of the safety measures that can be set in motion e.g. moving the abused colleague to another department when this is a desire of and a support for the colleague's safety; screening of phone calls or emails; safe transportation to and from the workplace and the possibility of a restraining order against the perpetrator;
- > to set up procedures to monitor, evaluate, and revise the efficiency of the guidelines and to up-date information on assistance, resources, and hotlines etc. on a regular basis;
- > to discuss at regular intervals the handling of domestic violence at staff meetings;
- > to state that it is in the interest of all involved to use complete discretion in order to protect the dignity, privacy, and safety of the involved persons.

4. Other initiatives

- > to educate specific staff members to be resource persons in the workplace, not only for abused colleagues, but also for abusive colleagues. An abused colleague is more likely to feel safe talking to someone in the workplace who they know has knowledge about the issue. The resource person can also be of help if the abused colleague decides to report the violence to the police;
- > to appoint a colleague to be a liaison for an abused colleague who is living in shelter or is on long-term sick leave in order to keep them up to date with developments at work;
- > make enquiries at your local shelter for abused women about how to cooperate and support the shelter. If possible, join the shelter's support group or help collect clothing, furniture, or money, depending on the needs of the shelter. Volunteer to work in the shelter;
- > establish a gender network within your trade union or at your workplace;
- > individually or collectively, contact your local politicians or members of Parliament to get them to put prevention of violence against women higher up on the political agenda.

”WHO CAN DO WHAT”

	Everyone at the workplace	Especially trade union representatives
1. Spread information on domestic violence	Discuss domestic violence in formal and informal situations.	Get domestic violence on the agenda of meetings where the safety and well-being of the employees are discussed.
	Arrange lectures or after-work meetings.	
	Use the exercise in this handbook to kick-start a debate.	Write about domestic violence in staff magazines etc.
2. Make information available for everyone about assistance and services	Produce a pamphlet or poster with contact information on how to get assistance inside and outside the workplace.	
	Find out if the local municipality has a plan of action regarding domestic violence.	
	Write a letter to the editor or to local politicians suggesting that the local municipality develop a plan of action regarding domestic violence.	
3. Set up guidelines and procedures	Put the development of guidelines and procedures on the agenda of staff meetings.	Make sure that everyone at work knows about the guidelines when they have been set up.
	Procedures on how to handle domestic violence could be added to existing procedures on how to handle employees in crisis.	Develop safety plans for an abused colleague at work.
		Clarify how the workplace can be supportive and tolerant towards an abused colleague.
4. Other initiatives	Train employees to become resource persons for abused colleagues.	Train specific staff members to support an abused colleague and to refer to relevant resources.
	Contact to your local shelter for battered women to ask about how you can work together.	Work towards making domestic violence part of the company's CSR (corporate social responsibility).
	Contact your politicians to get domestic violence higher on the political agenda.	

IN GENERAL, WORK TOWARD THE GOAL THAT EVERYONE IN THE WORKPLACE HAS INFORMATION ABOUT:

- What domestic violence is
- How to identify abused colleagues and how to react to them
- What options an abused colleague has for:
 - support inside and outside the workplace
 - flexible working hours and tasks
 - safety measures at the workplace

“Being told that you are not going to be fired is nice, and knowing that you have support and understanding – that makes a huge difference.”

Formerly abused woman

Two cases: Birgitte and Dorte

The following cases are examples of how the workplace can act constructively. The cases are from the report “Voldsramte kvinders arbejdsliv” (The work life of abused women) by the Danish National Board of Social Services, 2009.

BIRGITTE

Birgitte had been abused for years by her partner. After a violent assault, Birgitte talked to her manager about her situation. The manager suggested she go to a shelter for abused women. At first she didn't want to, but the next day the harassment continued on her mobile phone. The manager called the local shelter and found out that they had room for Birgitte. He gave this information to Birgitte, and she decided to accept the offer, and was immediately taken to the shelter. Birgitte was granted full-time sick leave and the workplace appointed a colleague to be her resource person. The colleague visited Birgitte regularly to see how she was doing and to keep her updated about what was going on at work. In the beginning the resource person and the manager were the only people who knew where Birgitte was. This was to prevent her partner from finding her. The workplace also gave Birgitte a new mobile phone in another person's name. They helped her move her things out of the house, and she was offered psychological counselling.

Two months later, Birgitte started working again. Getting into the company requires a password and you have to pass by several employees before reaching Birgitte's office. So Birgitte felt safe while she was at work. She started working part-time until she and her manager felt she was ready to work full-time.

DORTHE

Dorte was the victim of domestic violence for many years, and she has two children with her partner. The violence intensified and she went on sick leave. After a week, a colleague called her at the request of their manager. The consideration the colleague showed by calling was partly responsible for Dorte moving into a shelter with her youngest son the very same evening.

While staying at the shelter she was granted sick leave, and she contacted her trade union representative. The trade union representative and the manager visited her at the shelter. They told her not to worry about her job and to concentrate on recovering. They also agreed that Birgitte would call the human resources manager every two weeks to talk about how she was doing.

Unfortunately, her partner eventually found out where she was living, and she had to move to another shelter in another part of the country. During the next couple of months, Dorte neglected to call the HR manager. As a result, a colleague phoned her at the request of the HR manager to remind her to call as agreed upon. During the conversation with the HR manager, she was asked if she was going to stay permanently in that part of the country. This motivated her to move back to a shelter near her workplace.

By the time Dorte moved back, she had been on sick leave for five months. The HR manager invited her to a meeting and asked if she could start by working part-time. Dorte was surprised by the question and was not sure if she could work, as she had been away for such a long time. But when she did start working, she was really pleased that she was pushed back to work.

During the next period of time, the trade union representative came by regularly to ask how she was doing. He made a point of saying that this was not to put pressure on her to work full-time. And in a similar way, other colleagues showed consideration for her when she needed it.



An exercise:

The following exercise can be used to kick-start a discussion about why it is both sensible and necessary for your workplace to take a stand on and do something about domestic violence.

EXERCISE:

After work and right outside your workplace you witness a colleague who is having an argument with her partner. You see the partner shove her and slap her face hard. The colleague is not someone you know well and there are other colleagues who witness the same incident, but do nothing.

POSSIBLE TRAIN OF THOUGHT:

This is an unpleasant situation. He is very abusive to her. What is going on? Should I say something? But nobody else is saying anything, so why should I? Will he attack me if I say something? What if he has a weapon? And if he treats her like that and she still stays with him..... But not doing anything – isn't that the same thing as accepting his behaviour?

Think about and discuss with your colleagues what you can do individually and as a group.

SOME OPTIONS:

1. Do nothing. It's none of my business.
2. Say something like "What are you doing?" and stay until the situation is calmed down.
3. Talk to the other colleagues/witnesses and get them to hold the abusive partner while you try to get the woman away.
4. Call the police.
5. Talk to the abused colleague later on and tell her what you saw and that you want to help her.
6. Talk to the abuser when he has calmed down and tell him that what he did is wrong and that he should seek help.
7. Later on you could talk about the incident at work and discuss what the workplace can do. In which committees or groups at work would it be most relevant to do something about the issue?
8. Other options?

SUMMARY:

Every situation has many possibilities for action. But no matter what, it would be much easier to act in the situation if you have already discussed domestic violence at work and the workplace has an employment policy on this issue.



Involving management

When you want to discuss how to deal with domestic violence in different committees at your workplace, it might be a good idea to have a strategy prepared about how to talk with management about the issue. Experience has shown that management might have a positive attitude to the issue, but you can also run into the attitude that domestic violence is none of their or the company's business. Management might make the assumption that domestic violence only relates to "private life" and has nothing to do with the workplace.

Here are some figures, arguments, and strategies which can be useful in your discussions with management about domestic violence.

Economy

Right now a Danish study is looking into the costs of domestic violence for the workplace and for society. The results are expected to be made public in late 2010. If we look at the statistics from other countries, we find that the financial costs of domestic violence for the workplace are enormous, maybe even in billions of euros¹. The results of studies conducted for the European Union show that the total yearly financial losses caused by men's violence against women in EU member states can be as high as 34 billion euros².

¹ According to Corporate Alliance against Domestic Violence, studies show that in England the economic consequences of domestic violence within the trade industry have reached £2.7 billion. The report "Costs of Intimate Partner Violence in the United States" state that there are almost \$1.8 billion in indirect costs for lost productivity and income.

² S. Walby, 2004 England.

Other financial factors which can be useful to mention to your management:

- > domestic violence, when it goes unaddressed, results in increased sick leave and lower productivity
- > it costs less to keep an employee than to recruit and train a new one

Also, see the chart on page 37 about the consequences of domestic violence for the workplace.

The company has to meet national and international laws and regulations

It might be helpful to know something about the laws and regulations that apply to the labour market and that can be used in discussions about establishing guidelines for dealing with domestic violence in your workplace. Here is a selection:

Health and Safety at Work Act (Arbejdsmiljøloven)

Chapter 4 of The Danish Health and Safety at Work Act states that it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure a healthy physical and psychological work environment. The act also states that both the employer and the employees are responsible for working together on the health and safety of the workplace and working towards making working conditions physically and psychologically acceptable. Both employers and employees can be punished if they do not live up to their responsibilities. Other countries have similar regulations.

The European framework agreement on harassment and violence at work

In 2007 the European labour market parties came to a framework agreement which defines the responsibility of the employer to protect employees against violence and harassment at work³.

The aim of the agreement is to give employers, employees, and their representatives at all levels, a framework for identification, prevention and handling of violence and harassment at work. The agreement must be implemented by all companies by 2010 at the latest.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=148&langId=en>

UN initiative

Global Compact is a United Nations initiative with the aim of encouraging corporate social engagement and responsibility. The ten principles of Global Compact underline in a simple way the most important aspects of human rights, labour rights, environment and anti-corruption. The UN recommends that companies and organisations endorse the ten principles, implement them into their strategies and policies, and submit an annual report on how well they comply with the principles⁴.

Use the workplace assessment

The Danish Health and Safety at Work Act uses the workplace assessment as a tool to involve all employees in pinpointing possible problems in the work environment. This tool can subsequently also be used from a prevention perspective by the safety committees at work in order to get domestic violence on the company's agenda.

Domestic violence must be mentioned and handled specifically

During the last couple of years, violence that occurs in the workplace has become a labour market issue, and many companies already have an anti-violence policy. You might therefore find management under the impression that domestic violence is already taken care of by the existing regulations. But it is important to point out that domestic violence must be mentioned specifically in the anti-violence policy, because of its complexities and taboos. You can read more about this in the chapter "What is domestic violence – myths and facts".

It might also be effective to point out positive examples of companies which have already taken steps to develop a policy about domestic violence.

In June of 2010 the Danish government presented its **National Strategy for the Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence**. It should be noted that the workplace is mentioned specifically in the strategy plan as a place the Danish government would like to see develop a holistic approach to dealing with an abused employee. According to the government, this would achieve the double goal of helping

⁴ Read more about the ten principles on www.unglobalcompact.org

stop the violence and keeping the victim in employment⁵. If your country has a national strategy on this issue, it can be useful in your negotiations with management.

You can also refer to The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (www.caepv.org) and the British version Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence (www.caadv.org.uk), who have among their members companies like Body Shop International, the accounting firm KPMG, and several British government agencies.

It can help the possibility of a constructive cooperation with management to be specific and well prepared when you want to get domestic violence on the company's agenda. Have arguments, facts, and suggestions ready. You can find suggestions for the content of guidelines in the previous chapter.

Summary

Why should management concern itself with the issue of domestic violence? First of all, because it is the right thing to do. Furthermore, as this handbook has demonstrated, it is also sound business practice to relate actively to this issue. It shows social corporate responsibility to have a staff policy on domestic violence. This will improve the company image, increase productivity, and make it easier to recruit and keep experienced staff members.

CASE: METTE

Mette, a former trade union representative, is now a trade union official and a member of an equal opportunity committee of a large private company with several divisions all over Denmark. It was a former member of the equality committee who first tried to bring domestic violence up with the management of the company. At that time, their response was "None of our employees are victims of domestic violence".

In January 2009 when Mette raised the subject again with management, the attitude had changed to "Domestic violence is part of people's private life, which we don't interfere in".

⁵ "National Strategi til bekæmpelse af vold i nære relationer", page 16, 2010

This did not stop Mette. In May 2009, she held a presentation about violence in the family for the equality committee, where two members of management were present. She also wrote an article for the union website on how domestic violence affects the workplace.

One of the things which was discussed by the committee was which terminology to use. Some of the committee members who were against a staff policy on the matter pointed out that not only women, but also men are sometimes abused. The committee decided to use the term "violence in the home".

In the autumn of 2009 the committee decided that Mette and one of the managers should work out a draft text on violence in the home, which could be released on both the company website and the management intranet. The reaction to the draft was either silence or disagreement from some of the other members of the committee and time went by.

Things first got moving when the deputy chairman of the committee received an email from management which said that a newspaper journalist wanted to use the company as a positive example in an article on how to handle domestic violence in the workplace. Now the management wanted to speed up the process, finish the text, and release it on the website, because it would give the company good publicity.

When the article was printed in the newspaper, the communication committee asked Mette to write an article for the company magazine. The article, which was released in December 2009, describes the company's adopted staff policy on how to identify employees who need help and which resources to refer them to.

What conclusions has Mette drawn from her experience?

It is important to be persistent and have the discussions that may be necessary when you want a staff policy on domestic violence.

Mette's experience also shows that media attention can play a positive role in removing objections and resistance.

Mette also thinks that an important argument for why a company should adopt a policy on this issue is that whatever happens in society will also be reflected in the company.

Based on an interview conducted by the author of this handbook. The name of the interviewee has been changed.

“ I remember the first coworker who asked me if my fat lip was caused by my ex-husband. He may have felt that it didn’t do any good, or that he was wrong to ask. But by asking that question, he planted a seed in my mind that what was happening to me wasn’t right.

A formerly abused woman¹

¹ From “A Women’s Handbook”, Liz Claiborne Women’s Work



Attention on the victim/abuser

Most cases of domestic violence take place when the couple is alone. There are no witnesses to the violence. You will not necessarily see dramatic signs of abuse like bruises and broken bones. So, how do you know that violence is happening? You can start by listening to your gut feeling. If you are worried about your colleague, there probably is a reason for it.

Signs which can mean that your colleague is abused

- > Your colleague’s mood, appearance, body weight or work performance have changed dramatically.
- > Your colleague has a lot of sick days, forgets or cancels your appointments at the last minute and gives unreliable excuses.
- > Your colleague has injuries which she cannot explain or the explanations are not credible (“I bumped into the door” or “I fell down the stairs”).
- > You overhear your colleague’s partner demeaning her (“you are stupid, ugly” or something worse) or he/she calls her negative nicknames like “bitch” or “whore”.
- > The partner reacts with extreme jealousy if your colleague talks with colleagues of the opposite sex, even when it is harmless.
- > The partner keeps an eye on your colleague, calls and texts her all the time, asking who she/he is with etc. Maybe the partner even accompanies your colleague to and from work every day.
- > You have seen the partner become very angry and even abusive to your colleague.
- > Your colleague is always afraid of upsetting her partner.
- > Your colleague often apologizes for her partner’s behaviour.
- > Your colleague is not allowed to participate in social events at work and she is becoming very isolated.

“ I needed someone to ask me about the problems in my relationship. I couldn’t ask for help, because I was too embarrassed about it.

A formerly abused woman

The presence of one or two of these signs does not mean that your colleague is a victim of violence. Some of these signs can be caused by other problems. It is important to be open to the underlying factors, and that violence can be one of many reasons for poor well-being. But something is very possibly wrong, and it is appropriate to share your worries with your colleague or your union or safety representative, or possibly with your manager.

What can we do?

Research¹ has shown that the workplace can play an important role for victims of violence by showing sympathy and offering help. The workplace can be part of showing the way out of violence for victims.

It is often very difficult for victims to talk to their colleagues about domestic violence. Many victims find it even harder to ask for help, and they are relieved when someone offers a helping hand. If you want to help a colleague keep her job and prevent her from being subjected to more violence, you should be the active part and take the initiative to start a conversation.

Many victims of domestic violence feel guilty and ashamed. They blame themselves. It is important to bear in mind that all victims of intimate partner violence have dealt with the situation as well as they could with the knowledge, experience, and resources they had at that time. **It is the perpetrator who has done something both wrong and illegal.**

¹ Working Women making it Work: Intimate partner violence, employment and work support. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, USA, 2007

All of the abused women who were interviewed for a report in 2009 by The Danish National Board of Social Services name the same circumstances which ensure a positive experience when the workplace deals with this issue:

- > confidence that the workplace will show an understanding of their situation.
- > maintaining respect for them.
- > staying in control of their situation.

“ I would consider the question “are you the victim of violence?” as an accusation. At least I think so anyway. You shouldn’t be afraid of talking about the problem, either. But there is a very fine line. I would approach with the question “I can see you’re not feeling well. Is there anything I can do to help?” I would never tell her “leave him“, because it wouldn’t help her. I would tell her that “I’m here for you if you need help, and I want you to know that you always have options”. I would point out her options.

Quote from “Voldsramte kvinders arbejdsliv”

Before a conversation with a colleague

- > think about which specific observations or experiences you have had that make you suspect that your colleague is a victim of violence.
- > find out about the resources at the workplace and in your local community which you can inform your colleague of.
- > create a situation where you can have a confidential and undisturbed conversation.

The conversation

Begin by underlining that your conversation is confidential and nothing will be told to others without the consent of the abused colleague.

You should also pay consideration to the safety of your colleague by having the conversation during working hours.

Here is a chart summarizing some of what to do or say and not do or say during the conversation:

WHAT TO SAY OR DO

What to say or do	What not to say or do
Tell your colleague that you are worried about him or her and why. Be specific.	Speak negatively about your colleague's partner. She might feel the need to defend him.
Ask how she or he is doing and listen.	Put pressure on your colleague to act or leave the relationship.
Show sympathy and consideration.	Be judgemental or ask why she doesn't leave her partner.
Listen to the needs of your colleague and tell her or him how the workplace can help.	Tell your colleague what YOU think she should do.
Refer to resources inside and outside the workplace.	Give advice even though he or she hasn't asked for it.
If your colleague asks you something you don't know, offer to find out about it.	Promise more than you can keep.
Tell her or him that it is not their fault if they are abused. And that there are others in the same situation.	Talk down to your colleague or give her the feeling that she is doing something wrong.
Tell her or him that you would like to talk again whenever there is a need.	Decide when you will talk again.

IF YOUR COLLEAGUE DENIES THAT ANYTHING IS WRONG

What to say or do	What not to say or do
Accept the refusal. You don't know why she or he refuses to talk to you.	Take it personally.
Be patient.	Show that you don't believe her or him.
Follow up on your conversation at another time.	Forget everything about your conversation.

If your colleague confides in you that he or she is a victim of domestic violence, you must take the safety of your colleague into consideration. Ask questions that allow you both to evaluate the safety of your colleague and, if needed, work out a safety plan. E.g. ask if he/she has a safe place to go with his or her children. You can also help your colleague contact the police or a local shelter. You have to trust that your colleague is able to assess the danger.

Maybe your colleague denies that something is wrong. You have to accept this and not take it personally.

The objective of your conversation is to build up your colleague's self-esteem and ability to act. Maybe your colleague has been in an abusive relationship for a long time and is caught up in denial. When the violence has been going on for a long period of time, it may seem normal. The woman might not be able to distinguish between what is normal behaviour and what is abusive behaviour. Many abused women are therefore in doubt about whether they are victims of violence or not.

It can take time to realize and admit to oneself that something is wrong. It is often a long process for the thought of taking action and possibly leaving the relationship to mature. It can also be fear of reprisals from the abuser which makes your colleague reluctant to talk about it. Be patient.

The fact that you break the silence is an important step away from violence.



There is no doubt that my colleagues meant a lot to me when I was in a psychologically and physically abusive relationship. I worked as a cleaner in a hospital, and we had a really good team. For a long time, nobody knew anything about it. I did well at my job, and that was important for me. But as time went by, the abuse from my partner got worse and one day I broke down at work during lunch time. My colleagues asked what was wrong, and when I told them what went on at home, they were very caring and understanding. Half a year went by and my colleagues kept telling me that there was nothing wrong with me, and that what happened to me at home was not ok. For years, my partner had told me so many times that I couldn't manage without him and that I was no good, that I had lost faith in myself.

But after six months of support from my colleagues, also from a male colleague who especially helped me get my self-confidence back, I got the courage to put my foot down at home. It gave me more self-esteem and strength. My colleagues were not only kind to me. They also made demands, but not more than I could live up to. My situation was complicated by the fact that I had two kids with him, but eventually I asked him to move out. He did, but then he tried everything to make me take him back. Again, my colleagues helped me through the hard times.

A formerly abused woman

Conversation with an abuser

It is also important to talk to a colleague whom you either suspect or have seen be abusive to his/her partner. Tell your colleague that you are worried about him and provide him with specific examples of why.

- > Tell him/her what you have heard or seen and that his/her behaviour is not OK. Talk with him/her about the possibility to take responsibility for his/her actions and where he/she can get help.
- > Listen to your colleague, but make it clear that abusive and insulting behaviour is unacceptable, punishable and has to stop.
- > Tell your colleague that his/her abuse has serious consequences for him/her and the partner.
- > Do not accept denial, evasive explanations, and downplaying of the violence.
- > Help him/her realize that violence is not a way to solve problems and conflicts, and that it has serious consequences for him/her like social isolation and imprisonment.
- > Suggest him/her to get help.
- > If the abusive behaviour continues and you assess that his/her partner is in danger, get external assistance e.g. from the police.



You are being abused – what can you do?

It is very possible that some of the people who are reading this handbook right now are in a conflict-filled or even violent relationship. Here are some things that are good to know, if you are one of those people.

- > You are not responsible for the abuse or violence which your partner inflicts on you.
- > It is not your fault even if you drank too much or took drugs.
- > You do not deserve to be abused.
- > You have the right to live safe and secure.
- > You did not want to end up in a relationship with a partner who abuses you.
- > There are legal steps you can take to protect yourself and your children.
- > You have the right to be believed by the authorities.
- > You are the expert in your life and have the right to decide what to do to survive.
- > You have the right to decide if you want to leave your home and your relationship or not.
- > You deserve to be treated with respect and to receive the necessary help that at the same time takes into consideration your age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and background.

If your relationship is conflict-filled or abusive

It is important that you talk to somebody. Maybe you feel lonely, embarrassed, and confused. You may find it difficult to see how you can change your situation. A part of your partner's "power" comes from isolation and secrecy. Maybe you hesitate to talk with other people, because you do not trust them. Maybe you are afraid that they will not believe you, or they would react by rejecting you.

Even if you do feel that way, you should talk to somebody about your situation. This could be a good friend, a colleague, or your trade union representative. You do not deserve to live in silence, fear, and confusion. There may be websites in your community which provide anonymous help and guidance.

Two options

When you have found someone to talk to, you should consider what to do. You basically have two options if you want to stop the abuse:

- > Leave the relationship. You should plan this carefully for your own and your children's safety.

Or

- > Your partner admits that he/she has a problem and will get professional counselling in order to control his/her abusive behaviour.

The violence is not going to stop of its own accord – on the contrary it is most likely to get worse. Therefore it is very important that you do something about it. It might be difficult to handle this alone. Explore if there are places where you can get help inside and outside your workplace.

A lot of victims of domestic violence feel ashamed and blame themselves. Everyone who has been the victim of domestic violence has dealt with the situation as best as they could with the knowledge, experience, and resources they had at the time of the abuse. It is the violent partner who has done something wrong and against the law.

If you need help in an emergency situation, call the emergency services (112 in DK) or go to the police.

It is the police's job to protect you against further violence. It is also the police's job to make a report of the incident, if you want to press charges later. In Denmark, the police can also start an investigation of their own, if they see clear indications of assault.

If the violent incident takes place at home, the police have the possibility of removing the abuser (according to Danish law).

The police are able to refer you to a shelter if you are over 18 years old and female. The police are also responsible for getting you and your children, if any, to the shelter. The police can, in order to protect you from more violence at a later time, accompany you to your home to collect your personal belongings. This can be necessary if you had to leave your home without any or only few belongings.

If there are injuries that require hospitalisation, the police will provide transportation to an emergency ward or a doctor. Make sure that the emergency ward takes photographs of the injuries or take them yourself and make a note of the date and time.

Get help as quickly as possible after physical or sexual abuse

After a **physical assault** you can:

1. Report the assault to the police. Reporting an assault does not necessarily mean that you have to go through a court case, but it allows the police to have accurate statistics for future reference and ensures that they have the necessary information if you do decide to press charges.
2. Ask a friend or family member to go with you to the police station.
3. Write down as quickly as possible everything you can remember about the circumstances surrounding the incident.
4. Get professional help when you get home.
5. If you are not able to report the assault right away, you can report it up to 5 years later (in Denmark). But it is recommended that you report as quickly as possible.

After a **sexual assault** you can contact the nearest rape crisis center as soon as possible, if you have one in your community. Here you will receive help and counselling, no matter whether you decide to report the assault to the police or not.



Prevention

Historically, men's violence against women has been considered a "woman's problem". Until now, the focus has tended to be on the last part of the phrase "violence against women" and not on the fact that it is men who commit the violence. The global tragedy, which men's violence against women represents, is much more about men and their problems than about women. It is, of course, important that we as a society take on the social responsibility of helping abused women and children, as well as offering treatment to the men who are abusing in the home. But it is equally important to develop strategies and methods so that boys do not grow up to become abusive men. We – men and women – must find ways to break down the "food chain" that produces the violence with all of its consequences.

Maybe we should start by spreading the idea that **prevention** of men's violence against women **is actually possible**. The violence has been going on for so long that we sometimes forget that it is possible to do anything other than offer help to the women and children who are already abused.

But we can draw inspiration from the way in which we as a society approach other difficult problems, like lung cancer or cardiovascular diseases. Here we are not content with campaigns that inform the public about how big the problem is and how many people are affected by these diseases yearly. We are not only content with establishing new hospital wards and educating more staff to take care of people who suffer from these diseases. Yet this is just about all we do with violence against women. We focus mainly on collecting and spreading information about the extent of the violence and on how to help the victims and their children e.g. by creating more accommodations and services for abused women at shelters, etc. This is, of course, important work, but not enough.

Besides information and treatment for serious illnesses, society has for years invested directly in primary prevention by identifying and reducing the factors that make people vulnerable to diseases like cancer or cardiovascular diseases in the first place. Society has worked on prevention in many ways. One example is reducing smoking. Think about the many national campaigns that have been invested in with the goal of reducing smoking, thereby reducing the diseases smoking is related to. Yet when it comes to men's violence against women, we have only in minor ways prioritised and found the resources for primary prevention.

In any case, focusing broad public attention on the serious social problem of men's violence against women should not be restricted to a couple of days a year like on November 25, the United Nations' "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women" or March 8th, "International Women's Day". We must work continuously on all levels of society focusing also on primary prevention.

Primary prevention in the workplace

As individuals and as a society we should not only react after the violence has taken place, but we should also be active with regards to primary prevention. Primary prevention is about all the things we can do before violence takes place and which prevents violence from happening at all. There is a growing realization in society that we need to develop a range of strategies in this area, just like we have done and are doing with the prevention of diseases. The objectives of these strategies can be:

- > to change the attitudes and norms that support domestic violence;
- > to challenge the unbalanced power relations between men and women which create or sustain the violence;
- > to promote non-violent relationships both in families and workplaces.

We can, as an example, participate in creating an environment and team spirit at work where personal boundaries are something which everyone is aware of and take seriously. And where physically and psychologically abusive behaviour is not tolerated. This has to do with treating our colleagues with respect and demanding respect from others.

Workplaces are situations where social norms, values, and behaviour are shaped and where they can be changed – hopefully for the better. Workplaces are also

circumstances where it is possible to communicate with people who do not necessarily have a large network, many social contacts, or who are not active members of associations or other organisations.

Empowerment

We can use the term "empowerment" as a guide in the overall work with primary prevention of domestic violence in workplaces. Empowerment means processes which improve the ability of individuals or communities to create and use their mental, material, social, and cultural resources. Individual empowerment is about feeling able to have a positive effect on your own life and about appreciating and taking care of others. E.g. we can empower each other to act in relationship to the prevention of domestic violence and to find ways to deal with it in the workplace. We can start processes which "empower" the abused colleagues we meet at work and their counterparts, the ones who abuse.

The next generation

We must also look to future generations. We can teach our children about healthy relationships, mutuality in sexuality, prevention of dating violence, and sexual abuse, and especially about the difference between control and love.

A study which was published in Denmark in April 2008 found that intimate partner violence in Denmark is already extensive among young people in the age group of 16-24 year olds.

As a result of this study, The Danish Crime Prevention Council launched a website for young people in the same age group, which is called www.ditforhold.dk (your relationship). On this website, young people and adults as well can find information and advice on what can be done about dating violence. This is one of several projects for young people with the goal of informing about and preventing intimate partner violence.

Resistance must be transformed into action

Imagine all the energy, creativity and initiative that would be unleashed, ready to be invested in our workplaces, trade union work and society in general, if we eliminate men's violence against women and all of its consequences. Let us work together towards a future without domestic violence.



Epilogue By Britta Thomsen, Member of the European Parliament

Violence against women must be fought globally

The struggle to eliminate violence against women is not an individual fight to be fought by the individual woman alone. It is a battle which we have to fight together across cultures and nationalities. The United Nations (UN) has made November 25th everyone's "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women". The nomination of an international day with this focus is the result of the fact that the UN estimates that seven out of ten women experience violence from men at some point in their lives. We live in a world today where more women die or are handicapped by men's violence than by malaria, traffic accidents, terror or war put together!

In Denmark in the year 2010, 28,000 women are beaten by their partners or ex-partners each year. Even though the number of abused women has decreased in recent years, new statistics show that all in all, violence against women in Denmark has increased. At present there are approx. 70,000 incidents of violence against women – at home, at work, in the street and other places. An average of 25 women out of the 70,000 die from the violence. They are literally beaten to death. In other words, there are 70,000 good reasons why we should deal with this issue, and if you look at the efforts made within the borders of Europe, it is very clear that some countries take the problem more seriously than others.

Through my daily work in the European Parliament, I come into contact with women from all over Europe, and it is always an interesting and enriching experience to hear about how other countries fight violence against women. That is because even though violence is a local problem, there are tremendous gains and important experiences to be made by listening to my European colleagues.

The government of France plans to introduce new and more severe legislation for men who are abusive to their ex-partners. They have also included studies on the effectiveness of GPS leg irons for men who have restraining orders. In 2008

alone, 157 French women lost their lives as a result of domestic violence, so a stricter legislation is very much needed.

England has, in a similar way, started tackling the issue of violence against women. Initially, they have introduced a strategy to change attitudes towards violence against women. It is still too often the abusive person in the relationship who stays in the home, while the victim has to leave. Changing this situation requires a change in the mindset of the whole legal and public system.

In both Austria and Norway, they are implementing trial arrangements with GPS leg irons for men convicted of violence. The country which is on the forefront of fighting violence against women is Spain. Since the Spanish Social Democrats (PSOE) came to power in 2004, Spain has taken the issue very seriously. The Socialist leader José Zapatero won the election with the slogan “Zapatero feminista” and since then, violence against women has been ranked as a threat to society alongside terrorism. The same year, Zapatero’s government introduced a special legislation package with 72 initiatives fighting violence against women. The legislation included everything from increased penalties to a prevention strategy. The problem’s increased visibility created a public spirit where there were torchlight processions in the streets every time a woman was killed because of domestic violence. Now, six years later, Spain has collected immense experience with fighting violence against women.

As a member of the gender equality committee of the European Parliament and on the basis of experiences from the member states, I have been pressing on with an EU directive on fighting violence against women. Such a directive would ensure that all European women who are victims of violence have legal rights of protection and help. At the same time, I think we should establish a common European public violence observatory (as a supplement to the one which already exists at a NGO level), as a knowledge bank and a center for the exchange of experience. Thirdly, the directive would secure that all EU states establish help measures for abused women such as hotlines.

I am extremely happy that an EU grant has made it possible to carry out this Daphne project at the Danish trade union, 3F’s initiative. The workplace is the focal point of many people’s lives and a cornerstone in the effort to break down the taboos surrounding violence and of course the violence itself. It has been very interesting to observe the project, and I am very impressed and happy about the effort everyone has put into the project. I am sure that this handbook will become an invaluable help for many women in the future.

Eliminating gender-based violence is one of the most important challenges of the new decade. This challenge can only be met by a strong cooperation across nationalities and cultures.

Britta Thomsen, Member of the European Parliament
Bruxelles, May 2010

Resources about domestic violence and the workplace

Abused Women At Work – EU project’s website: www.awaw.dk.
Has English, Spanish and Lithuanian versions.

www.caepv.org, The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence

<http://endabuse.org>, a national non-profit organization that focuses on domestic violence education

www.loveisnotabuse.com, the website of Liz Claiborne Inc.

www.safeatworkcoalition.org, Safe@Work Coalition,

www.endabuse.org, The Family Violence Prevention Fund

www.whiteribbon.ca, White Ribbon Canada, men fighting violence against women

Literature

When violence happens every day – a study of male violence against women in their intimate partnership, Danish National Organisation of Shelters for Battered Woman and their children (LOKK), 2005.

Men’s violence against women – Extent, characteristics and measures against, Minister for Gender Equality, Denmark, 2007.

The Macho Paradox – Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help, Katz, Jackson, Sourcebooks, 2006.

International reports:

Spanish and Lithuanian reports about abused women’s working life in these countries, 2009 can be found on www.awaw.dk

Working Women making it Work: Intimate partner violence, employment and work support. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, USA, 2007



"If your colleague is abused at home" is a handbook about domestic violence for everyone in the workplace. But it is especially meant to be a tool for trade union and safety representatives.

In the handbook you will find:

- > information about domestic violence and why and how it affects our workplaces
- > suggestions for concrete actions to take and guidelines on how to help and support colleagues who are affected by domestic violence
- > positive examples and cases of how some workplaces have dealt with domestic violence.

The handbook sheds light on the many possibilities workplaces have to take initiatives both to break down taboos and to actively prevent the violence. We can, for example, build on the experience we have gained from dealing with smoking and alcohol in the workplace.

The handbook is one of several products of the "Abused Women at Work" project, financed under the European Union Daphne program.

"I find it very important that both men and women take responsibility for solving this problem, and this handbook will provide you with inspiration and ideas on how YOU can take action in the workplace."

Jane Korczak, Deputy Chairwoman of the Danish Trade Union, 3F and Chairwoman of AOF Denmark

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