

Experts: Domestic violence a leading cause of violent incidents in the workplace



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For survivors of domestic abuse, going to work can offer a safe respite from the chaotic home life they experience while trapped by their abusers. But what happens when domestic violence comes to the workplace? A shocking 65 percent of employers don't have a plan for violent situations that come to work. October is Domestic Violence Prevention Month and experts are urging employers to take action.

"Over 27 percent of workplace violence incidents are linked to a domestic violence situation, including a stunning 67 percent of workplace shootings," said Doc Elliot, Founder of violence prevention and de-escalation training company Phoenix Training Group (<https://phoenixtraininggroup.com/>). "Women are disproportionately affected by workplace violence and are more likely to die in a violent incident at work, nearly always due to a domestic violence situation," he said.

According to Elliot, the COVID-19 pandemic (<https://azbigmedia.com/business/rising-covid-cases-leading-arizona-toward-exponential-growth-expert-warns/>) has only exacerbated the pandemic of domestic violence affecting the safety of workers. Amid stay-at-home orders, unprecedented stress and financial strain, incidents of domestic violence are up nearly 30 percent. According for the CDD, one in 4 women and one in 10 men experience domestic violence, and violence can take various forms: it can be physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological.

Addressing potential domestic violence threats the workplace presents a unique challenge for employers. "Domestic violence victims often go to great lengths to conceal abuse which can make it hard to detect and difficult to discuss," Elliot said.

While it can be difficult to address domestic violence concerns, Elliot says it's critical to address these issues when employee safety is at risk.

"Too often an incident like a shooting occurs without warning, but proper anti-violence training can help identify the signs and symptoms before an incident takes place," he says. "It can be an uncomfortable discussion, underscoring the urgent need for specific training to identify and address domestic violence situations in a sensitive yet effective manner," he said.

Phoenix Training Group utilizes a proprietary training system that teaches people how to identify the psychological and behavioral changes that can indicate violent behavior as well as signs to look for that may mean trouble at home for someone at work.

Here are some warning signs to look for:

- Change in job performance: poor concentration, errors, slowness, inconsistent work quality.
- An unusual number of phone calls/text messages, strong reactions to those calls/text messages, a phone/text messages.
- Co-workers receive insensitive or insulting messages intended for the colleague experiencing abuse.
- Disruptive personal visits to workplace by present or former partner or spouse.
- Questions about whereabouts, company and activities from a spouse or former spouse.
- Absenteeism or lateness for work.
- Requests for special accommodations such as requests to leave early or to change schedules.
- Reluctance to leave work.
- Obvious injuries such as bruises, black eyes, broken bones, hearing loss — these are often attributed to "falls," "being clumsy," or "accidents."
- Clothing that is inappropriate for the season, such as long sleeves and turtlenecks — also wearing sunglasses and unusually heavy makeup.
- Minimization or denial of harassment or injuries.
- Isolation; unusually quiet and keeping away from others. Emotional distress or flatness, tearfulness, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Signs of anxiety and fear.
- Sensitivity about home life or hints of trouble at home — comments may include references to bad moods, anger, temper, and alcohol.
- Fear of job loss.
- Lack of access to money.

As the trend of domestic violence continues to rise, employers are implementing a variety of protocols to protect workers and maintain a violence-free zone. From de-escalation training to security enforcement, Phoenix Training Group is the nation's premier anti-violence workplace training program focused on the education of violence prevention and de-escalation tactics.

"When it comes to domestic violence endangering workers, it's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when, statistically speaking," Elliot said.

Employers must be proactive in their efforts to curtail violent incidents that affect the safety and well-being of their employees and violence prevention training is the first step.

For more information about Phoenix Training Group or to request information on workplace violence prevention training visit www.phoenixtraininggroup.com (<https://phoenixtraininggroup.com/>).