

# Effects of Domestic Violence

## Introduction

Often what starts at home spills over into the workplace. Spousal assault at work is common because the workplace is the one place where the victim can usually be found. Employees can change phone numbers and move, but most cannot just switch jobs to avoid a stalker.

## Recognizing domestic violence

Recognition of behaviors that are part of domestic violence is not always easy, even for victims themselves. This is, in part, because domestic violence is much more than physical abuse. Many victims who live in danger and fear have never been physically assaulted.

Unfortunately, most supervisors and coworkers do not recognize the signs of domestic violence until too late. The most obvious are visible signs such as burns, bruises, broken limbs, or wearing long sleeves in hot weather. In addition, the victim becomes evasive and secretive; self-confidence and self-esteem are very low; and absenteeism usually increases.

## Checklist of behaviors

The following checklist of behaviors may help you decide if someone you know is being abused by a spouse or partner. Below are questions a supervisor, coworker, or employee may consider to determine if domestic violence exists.

### Does the spouse or partner . . .

- V**erbally insult, demean, or threaten the person?
- I**solate the person from friends, family, or other people?
- O**rganize schedules to follow or harass the person?
- L**imit the person's mobility or access to money?
- E**xplode into a rage and physically or sexually assault the person?
- N**egate the person's word, abilities, ideas, and actions?
- C**hoke, punch, slap, kick, or otherwise hurt the person?
- E**xcuse each attack and promise to stop?

## Agency liability

In the case of domestic violence or stalking, the potential liability exposure to the agency is often greater because someone working with that person is usually aware of the conflict between the employee and the person intent on revenge. Once on notice, however, the manager is obligated to take reasonable precautions to protect the employee and his or her coworkers.