



MIDDLESEX YMCA

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

How can we help?

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience domestic violence or intimate partner violence (IPV). This means that there's a good chance that you work with someone who is living this experience right now. With so many people unemployed or working from home, many of these individuals are trapped in the home with their abusers. For someone who is working from home, domestic violence is literally happening in the workplace. For those who are coming to your workplace, abuse may take the form of harassing phone calls, emails, and even physical monitoring or visits. IPV happens to people of every gender, class, race, and sexual orientation. It can and does "happen here."

So what can we as employers and co-workers do to support employees who are experiencing IPV? Here are a few suggestions, courtesy of Mary-Jane Foster, CEO of Interval House in Hartford, whose [presentation](#) to the HR Association of Central CT I was fortunate to receive a copy of:

- 1) Check in with your co-workers. Isolation is the abuser's first strategy. Make sure no one on your team falls out of touch. You don't need to ask probing questions, just "How are you doing?"
- 2) If you suspect or know a co-worker is being abused, resist the urge to take action on the person's behalf; attempts to rescue the person could actually increase the danger to them and their children. Call the Interval House hotline for advice (1-888-774-2900) or review their guidance for [helping someone](#).
- 3) Refrain from judging those who are abused by asking, "Why did you stay so long?" or "Why don't you leave?" The abuser's second strategy is destroying the victim's self-esteem. Don't pile on. Respect the individual's decision-making about if, when, and how to leave.
- 4) Add a policy to your Employee Handbook highlighting your company's support of employees experiencing IPV, employees' right to time off from work to take care of IPV-related matters, and other resources such as your Employee Assistance Program.
- 5) Have a procedure in place to respond to an abusive partner who shows up at the workplace.
- 6) [Learn more](#) about IPV.
- 7) Consider [donating](#) money or items on the Interval House wish list.
- 8) Contact me if you want to talk about what you can do as an organization or if you want to talk over a specific situation.

Those involved in domestic violence have powerful motivations to hide what is happening, which makes it easy for others to believe it's not happening. It IS happening--in our workplaces, to our employees. We can help make it a little safer for them to show themselves.

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