

Everybody's Business

Spring 2003 Volume 7, Issue 1 the quarterly newsletter of the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence

SPOTLIGHT

Getting buy-in and support.

Man with a plan

Michael Lynch, Manager of Corporate Security at DTE Energy, shared his process for initiating and implementing a partner violence policy at his company.

1. Quantify the problem. We keep detailed records on workplace assaults, vandalism, stalking and other incidents that can be related to domestic violence—so I calculated the number of cases we experience on an annual basis.

2. Take the initiative. I started behaving as if we had a policy on domestic violence, even though we didn't. In other words, we encouraged supervisors to provide a supportive environment and do things like offer time off work for court appointments or change the employee's work location to provide a safe work environment.

3. Draft a formal policy. Eventually, we put together a policy and took it to management. By this time we had "success" stories from people we had already helped and those stories became the proof that the problem existed and something could be done about it.

4. Hit the road. I told the story outside the company at shelters, city councils, etc., which generated more interest, promoted the company as "employee friendly" and helped create further inertia for the policy/program.

5. Put it in writing. I thought we had a good story that could help others, so I wrote an article and had it published in Security Management.

6. Get press. Local newspapers heard about our model workplace, got interested and wrote stories—which created even more enthusiasm.

7. Spread the word. I created presentations and told the story every chance I got and distributed our policy to anyone that was interested.

With all that, management buy-in was never an issue. We have a culture that begins with our CEO who is very employee-focused and allows for the creativity and initiative that was behind this issue. If the culture was different or stifling, these pieces would have never been allowed to coalesce.

Partner violence isn't a pretty subject. For decades, it's been deemed a family matter or a private problem. So how do you get your employer to acknowledge and support the cause—either through internal programs and policies for employees or community education and outreach? How do you transcend the stigma? How do you justify the expenditure of time and resources in these challenging economic times? To find out, we asked a variety of CAEPV members, "How do you get buy-in for your partner violence program?" This is what we heard.

"At Liz Claiborne, we've been speaking out against partner violence for 11 years. So it is critical that we have everything in place internally to support our own employees. In terms of a rationale for partner violence initiatives, when our CEO speaks to businesses he focuses on liability issues and the adverse and disruptive effects that domestic violence has on worker morale. He also points out that in publicly held companies, the responsibility goes beyond employees and extends to shareholders who do not want to pay the price for lower productivity, greater absenteeism and higher healthcare costs."

Jane Randel
Vice President, Corporate Communications
Liz Claiborne Inc.

"In 2001, 85% of the almost 700,000 assaults by intimate partners were committed against women. Because CIGNA's employee population is more than 70% women, and the effects of domestic violence can threaten workplace safety, we've placed our partner violence initiatives under the umbrella of violence in the workplace. It's much easier to sell a safe work environment than to try to get buy-in on a 'social issue.'"

Julie Van Noord
Local EAP Manager
CIGNA

"At Texas Health Resources, we look at this issue from a variety of perspectives. As an employer, we view it in practical terms. We have approximately 16,000 employees and about 80% of them are women. Since statistics suggest that 1 in 4 women are victims of partner violence, that means that potentially, we may have up to 3,200 of our own employees who may be victims. It's tough to ignore numbers like that. Because we are a healthcare provider, we have also positioned this issue as a public health problem, not just a societal issue—which has helped with buy-in, both internally and in the community."

Cheri Lee
Director, Family Violence Prevention
Texas Health Resources

"At Verizon Wireless, we're lucky. Buy-in hasn't been an issue for us, since our CEO, Denny Strigl, has been a strong advocate for the partner violence issue since the inception of our company. Numerous corporate programs are available, but we're encouraged to put together our own initiatives on a regional basis. In accomplishing this, my secret weapon is our CAEPV membership. Joining the Corporate Alliance was the smartest decision I ever made. It's made my job so much easier. It's been well-worth the investment of the membership fee."

Carolyn Schamberger
Public Relations Manager
Verizon Wireless, Illinois/Wisconsin Region

Corporate
Alliance
to End Partner
Violence



MEMBERS

RECOGNITION

Congratulations to CAEPV members **American Express** and **Liz Claiborne Inc.** They were each ranked #1 Most Admired Company in their respective industries (consumer credit and apparel) in Fortune Magazine's list of America's Most Admired Companies for 2003. Companies were measured on eight key attributes: innovation, employee talent, use of corporate assets, social responsibility, quality of management, financial soundness, long-term investment value and quality of products/services.

NEW MEMBERS

CAEPV welcomes **Lifetime Television** as our newest member. Lifetime educates, informs and supports its viewers with original programming (documentaries, series and movies) and special public outreach campaigns, including a major initiative to Stop Violence Against Women. Lifetime Television is the first CAEPV member representing the media sector.

We welcome our first member in the healthcare system: **Texas Health Resources**. With 13 hospitals serving 5 million people in 29 counties, they are one of the largest faith-based, not-for-profit, healthcare systems in Texas. Healthcare is a critical component in addressing partner and family violence issues, so we are especially pleased to be in partnership with this progressive organization.

We also welcome the **Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape** (PCAR). The mission of PCAR is to work to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of sexual assault. We are pleased to have their partnership as an employer that is "in the field" and recognizes the importance of addressing family violence within the workplace.

Anni Rocks in Austin



On March 9, our *GirlsAllowed* web site (www.girlsallowed.org) received the top award in the "Grrl" category at the 6th Annual SXSW Web Award ceremony in Austin, Texas. The award recognizes the best sites that have been created in the past year. The site was up against several commercial sites (including Nike Goddess and Zanadi Jeans) and was judged on its technical merits and design. The SXSW (South by Southwest) Festival is internationally recognized as the place for new bands and music to be discovered, and CAEPV is honored that Anni was "discovered" there, too!

OPINIONS

A valued partner

Since its inception in 1997, the City of Chicago's Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence (MODV) has been striving to make domestic violence everyone's business, according to Leslie Landis, MODV Project Manager. She writes, "While we have achieved real advances in our criminal justice system and law enforcement responses to the crime of domestic violence, we find that many victims of domestic violence do not go to the formal systems or institutions for assistance. Instead, they turn to their informal support networks: friends, family, faith leaders, coworkers and employers. So we have been working to help businesses recognize that domestic violence is their concern—and this has linked us to CAEPV in numerous ways. Their expert assistance and partnership has facilitated our local efforts with many Chicago employers. Most recently, on March 27, 2003, Kim Wells appeared at a press conference with Mayor Daley, the MODV and several corporate leaders. After the Mayor announced his support for domestic-violence-related workplace legislation and other initiatives, Kim explained why this effort is so important—not only for victims, but for the employer's bottom line. We value the CAEPV materials, newsletter, website and the personal relationship that our office shares with CAEPV staff. Keep up the outstanding work!"

contact

This is your newsletter. The more you share your opinions and experiences, the more we all benefit. To this end, we welcome all news, suggestions, impressions and stories.

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HEADLINES

News and events shaping public policy and opinion

■ Partners responsible for 1/5 of violence against women; 1/3 of murders

Current or former spouses, boyfriends and other intimate partners were to blame for 20% of the nonfatal violence against females age 12 and older in 2001, according to a recent government report. Aggravated and simple assaults were the most common of the 588,490 violent acts recorded. In contrast, there were 103,220 nonfatal violent offenses committed by spouses, girlfriends or boyfriends against males that year—just 3% of the total such crimes against men. The report also found that 1,247 women were killed by intimate partners in 2000, representing 33% of all murders of women that year. During the same period, 440 men were killed by intimate partners, representing 4% of all male murder victims.

■ Study finds intimate partner violence underreported in two California newspapers

A study released in February 2003 by the Berkeley Media Studies Group found that most intimate partner violence goes unreported by two prominent newspapers in California. In the study, researchers analyzed all articles on partner violence that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *San Jose Mercury News* during the year 2000. They found that partner violence is reported on less frequently than other forms of violence and that the coverage is more murder-oriented. To correct this, the report encourages researchers and advocates to build relationships with crime-beat reporters, prepare spokespeople to talk to reporters, share local data about intimate partner violence, create news about intimate partner violence that is not linked to homicide, and use editorial venues (such as letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, or editorial board meetings) to discuss the issue.

■ Men in female-dominated professions more likely to be violent with intimates

Men who work in female-dominated professions, such as clerks and classroom aides, are 47% more likely to lash out in violence against their wives or live-in girlfriends than white-collar managers—according to a research conducted by a sociologist at the University of California, Riverside. This is just one of the surprises found in a national data set study that compared various blue-collar occupations with white-collar workers. After adjusting for differences in income, age and education, the researcher found that men in the following occupations have higher rates of violence at home than men in managerial occupations:

- Men in “female-dominated occupations” (i.e., clerical workers), 47% higher
- Men in “physically violent occupations” (i.e. police, military, correctional), 43% higher
- Men in “dangerous occupations” (i.e., working with explosives, mining, emergency workers), 23% higher.

To explain the findings, the author theorized that society’s pressure and expectations about the role of men in the work world might mean that men in female-dominated occupations are ridiculed for doing “women’s work” and thus brings that extra stress home.

■ Anti-domestic violence stamp coming

In November, the U.S. Postal Service will issue a new fundraising postage stamp aimed at reducing family violence and increasing awareness about the problem. The stamp—called a semi-postal—will sell for 45 cents. For each stamp sold, 37 cents will cover postage and 8 cents will go to the Department of Health and Human Services for programs to reduce family violence. The *Stop Family Violence* stamp will be the nation’s third postage fundraising effort. The first such stamp, released in 1998, has raised about \$29 million to combat breast cancer. *Heroes of 2001*, issued last June, has raised about \$9 million for the families of those killed in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

■ Domestic violence a major risk to pregnant women

Violence during pregnancy is a major risk to mothers and their fetuses, and health professionals should screen for it as they do for smoking and high blood pressure—according to British researchers reporting in the March issue of the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. Confidential questionnaires answered by 475 pregnant women at a clinic in England showed that 17% reported being victims of domestic violence, including 3.4% during the current pregnancy. Punching and slapping were the most common forms of violence and single women were the most likely victims.

■ Military task force issues final report on domestic violence

In March, the Defense Task Force on Domestic Violence released its final report—a nearly 200-page document that calls for a cultural shift in the military regarding domestic violence. It proposes the establishment of a victim advocate program, a fatality review process, and better training and more collaboration between the civilian and military communities. It also calls for the creation of a second task force to evaluate the proposals and programs that have been implemented. Some military installations have started implementing certain task force recommendations, but the Defense Department has not applied any recommendations universally.

■ One Russian woman dies from domestic violence every 40 minutes

Amnesty International estimates that 14,000 Russian women are killed by intimate partners each year—compared to approximately 1,000 women victims in the U.S. “Every day, 36,000 women in the Russian Federation are beaten by their husbands or partners,” the London-based human rights group said, “and a woman is killed every 40 minutes.” Amnesty urged the Russian authorities to take concrete steps to protect women and show that domestic violence will not be tolerated.

RESOURCES

acrossthe country



June The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community presents *African American Children and Domestic Violence: Prevention and Intervention* on June 5 and 6 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For more information, visit <http://www.dvinstitute.org/June2003.htm>.

July The 8th International Family Violence Research Conference takes place July 13 – 16 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. For more information, visit <http://www.unh.edu/fri/conference2003/index.html>.

July Jewish Women International presents *Pursuing Truth, Justice and Righteousness: The First International Conference on Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community*. The conference takes place July 20-22 in Baltimore, Maryland. For more information visit <http://www.jwicalltoaction.org> or call JWI at 1-800-343-2823.

inthe bookstore



[50 Strategies to Prevent Domestic Violence Crime](#) by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC). This resource outlines “best programs” in 36 different states that address domestic violence through unique community partnerships. The publication can be ordered online through NCPC’s web site, www.ncpc.org, in the “Publications” area.

[Violence in Families: What Every Christian Needs to Know](#) by Reverend Al Miles. Domestic violence is often glossed-over by church leaders, and the warning signs can be disregarded or hidden. With an honest and down-to-earth tone, Reverend Miles confronts the issues surrounding family violence, its causes, and possible solutions. Available at Amazon.com.

onthe web



<http://www.vaw.umn.edu/library/dv/> — This link takes you to Violence Against Women Online Resources, an extensive searchable database of articles and resources related to domestic violence maintained by the US Office on Violence Against Women and the Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse.

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/factsht/rohypnol/index.html#street> — This link to the ONDCP Web Site provides comprehensive information on the “date rape” drug Rohypnol—including street names, trends, usage, etc. The site also provides information on GHB (Gamma hydroxybutyrate), another commonly used “date rape” drug.

<http://www.nowldef.org/html/pub/pubs/CreatingSolutions.pdf> — This link leads to *The Impact of Violence in the Lives of Working Women: Creating Solutions - Creating Change*, a publication of the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund. The American Express Foundation and Liz Claiborne Foundation funded the publication.

<http://www.usda.gov/da/shmd/aware.htm> — This *Domestic Violence Awareness Handbook* is featured on the U.S. Department of Agriculture web site, and includes links to other helpful guides, such as *A Manager’s Guide: Traumatic Incidents at the Workplace* created by Office of Personnel Management.

onthe air



Lifetime May 22, 10:00 PM ET/PT – Lifetime Television presents *Lifetime’s Achievement Awards: Women Changing The World*. Join Lifetime in this inaugural star-studded television special honoring inspiring, empowered women.

wellaware

Dos & Don’ts to Minimize Violence

Violence can erupt unexpectedly, even at work. But sometimes, our personal behavior can help to minimize or de-escalate potentially violent situations. Here are a few suggestions.

DO:

- Project calmness. Move and speak slowly, quietly, and confidently.
- Be an empathetic listener. Encourage the person to talk and acknowledge their feelings
- Ask for small, specific favors, such as asking the person to move to a quieter area.
- Establish ground rules if unreasonable behavior persists. Calmly describe the consequences of any violent behavior.
- Use delay tactics, which will give the person time to calm down. For example, offer a drink of water (in a disposable cup; a glass could be used as a weapon).
- Be reassuring and point out choices. Break big problems into smaller, more manageable problems.
- Accept criticism in a positive way. When complaints might be true, use statements like, “You’re probably right,” or “That was my fault.” If the criticism seems unwarranted, ask clarifying questions.
- Arrange yourself so a visitor cannot block your access to an exit. If possible, also try to arrange yourself so that the agitated person has an “out” as well.

DO NOT:

- Communicate in ways that generate hostility, such as apathy, a “brush off,” coldness, condescension, strictly going “by the rules,” or giving someone the run-around. Notice the tone, volume, and rate of your speech.
- Reject all of the complainant’s demands or try to minimize the situation.
- Pose in a challenging stance, make physical contact or engage in long periods of fixed eye contact.
- Challenge, threaten, or dare the individual, belittle the person, or attempt to make him/her look foolish.
- Attempt to bargain with a threatening individual.
- Make false statements or promises you cannot keep.
- Invade the individual’s personal space. Make sure there is a space of 3’ to 6’ between you and the other person.

DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Minding the bottom line.

In tough economic times, it is more important than ever that companies address intimate partner violence as a workplace issue. Why? Because domestic violence is often made worse by stress, layoffs and financial pressures—all of which are exacerbated during downturns. Furthermore, the costs and consequences of a violent incident at work could cut deeply into margins that are already slim. Above all, companies need to maintain their commitment to intimate partner violence now—and always—because human lives are at stake. And because our efforts can and DO make a real difference in our employees' lives. Let me share a story that helps to bring this to life.

"The red plastic burst into pieces; my chair breaks. I am angry at my father for breaking my chair, but I never say a word."

In 2000, an employee approached a CIGNA executive and shared her domestic horror story—which began early in the marriage. The executive listened intently and guided the employee to all the help, services and support the company had to offer. Using these resources, the employee was able to get away from her husband. Her daughter escaped as well—and channeled the experience into a powerful college entrance essay that helped earn her a four-year all-expenses-paid scholarship. This is that essay.

My earliest memory is of a red plastic chair. A picture of a girl carrying an umbrella is taped to the seat. The lamination is starting to peel away. I am sitting, next to my chair. A hand lifts my chair. The chair sails across the room, with a whizzing noise. The red plastic burst into pieces; my chair breaks. I am angry at my father for breaking my chair, but I never say a word. I just sit down quietly and cry. My little palms can't stop the onslaught of tears. At the age of four, I understand the reality and terror of domestic violence.

The years progress, as does the intensity of the violence. I work in the basement on an English essay and the lights turn off. I finish my homework by the computer lighting- an experience I will never forget. My father threatens suicide often: he says he will lie outside in the snow and catch pneumonia. If he kills himself ingeniously and accidentally, he thinks my family will receive insurance payments. He also wants to frame my mother; he cuts himself and bleeds all over my white down comforter. He does this with intentions of imprisoning my mother for homicide. All these events lead to a horrible culmination of violence.

The night of December 17, 1999, my father beats my mother and circumstances are worse than ever before. My father takes out a knife and threatens murder. There is a struggle and a silver blade flashes between my parents. The telephone appears before me. My head is a jumble of conflicting thoughts, blurring actions and consequences. Despite the risk of alienating my father, I stand up for what I believe in. I dial the numbers, 9-1-1. The operator responds, my voice wavers- as does my strength. I reconsider, but I know I have to do the right thing. I make the most difficult decision of my life, at the age of fourteen.

I complete the call. I put the receiver down with a clunk that I feel in the pit of my stomach. Within two minutes, there is a rap on the door. I pull it open. As the door opens, so do the floodgates: I feel like I am four. My father leaves the house in handcuffs.

That night was an epiphany. It changed my life. Now, I can appreciate the difficult lessons I have learned through my father. He has shown me just how hurtful some people's actions can be. He has taught me how not to cause pain. Through this, he has made me understand my personal need for control. I realized that I am a driver. I need to be in control of my life: on December 17, 1999 I took control. When the peasants rebel, they want the front seat for themselves. I now occupy the front seat.

You see, after the events of December 17, 1999, the employee knew she could go to the CIGNA executive—and that the company would do all it could to help. CIGNA

created a workplace culture that helped this employee know she would be safe in asking for assistance.

This is the reason you do what you do—regardless of economics or the challenge of selling your program to management. This young woman will go on to do incredible things and will change the lives of many others—much of it thanks to her mother's employer and their commitment, like yours, to making partner violence their business. ■



Kim Wells
Executive Director
Corporate Alliance to End
Partner Violence

The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence is a leading force in the fight against domestic violence. It is the only national organization of its kind founded by business leaders and focused on the workplace. Since 1995, the Alliance has brought together dozens of progressive companies who exchange information, collaborate on projects, and use their influence to instigate change.

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Sojourner Center
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South Suburban Family Shelter, Inc.
Tompkins Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Women Empowered Against Violence, Inc. (WEAVE)
YWCA of McLean Co. IL

Our mission is to aid in the prevention of partner violence by leveraging the strength and resources of the corporate community. We believe that business plays an essential role in raising awareness of the issue and that our sustained efforts will help reduce and ultimately eliminate partner violence.

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