



Domestic abuse and the workplace

Training and solutions

Your workplace. Their safe space.

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Organisations don't talk enough about domestic abuse.

We hear more about domestic abuse than ever before. It's on our screens and newsfeed, played out in film and television, podcasts, and radio as survivors share their stories; it's on the political agenda, as the government works on the domestic abuse bill and contemplates support for survivors at work. Yet most organisations don't talk enough about domestic abuse.

That's why we're here. At Solace, we've been supporting survivors for nearly 45 years to live safe lives, free from violence and abuse. So we know what survivors go through at work to hide their experiences, fearing stigma, judgement and potentially losing their jobs.

What would it look like if workplaces were supportive? What difference could this make to survivors? How could this lower the risks of harm to them and their colleagues? The evidence tells us – supporting survivors of abuse at work is good for survivors, good for their colleagues, and good for business.

Our training and consultancy services can help your organisation take a whole systems approach to supporting survivors, supporting you to implement new or improved policies and processes, put in place support that works for survivors and raise awareness of domestic abuse across the whole organisation.

Read on to find out how we can help.

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What is domestic abuse?

There is a lot of stigma and misunderstanding around domestic abuse, which affects how we understand abuse and how we respond. Here are the facts:

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse”, which might involve physical, emotional, psychological, financial and sexual abuse.

An important element of domestic abuse is Coercive and Controlling behaviour, which is defined as: “An act or pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation or abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim” including isolation, exploitation, deprivation of independence, and regulating behaviour.

5 key things to remember

It can affect anyone

Regardless of age, gender, ability, sexuality, class, income, race, ethnicity or religion. However, such factors will impact and intersect with their experience.

Difference matters

Stigma about domestic abuse and experiences of discrimination such as racism, homophobia or ableism can mean people don't feel safe to disclose

It's not always from partners

Abuse can happen from partners, former partners or family members, including children and grandparents

It's not always violent

Emotional, psychological and financial abuse are common ways of exercising power and control

It's everyone's business

We can all make a difference by listening to survivors, believing them and offering support

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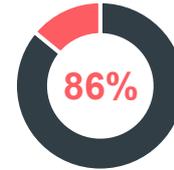
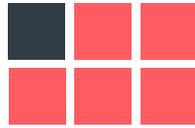
Domestic abuse at work – the facts

Domestic abuse affects an estimated **2.4 million people** each year. Approximately:

1 in 4 women



1 in 6 men



reported direct and indirect impacts at work

It impacts survivors

40% were prevented from going to work, due to physical injury, restraint, threats, or removing means of transportation
81% were harassed at work through calls and emails
47% said their partner physically turned up at work
51% reported taking time off to seek professional support

It impacts colleagues

90% reported tension and conflict with other colleagues as a result of the abuse
25% reported co-workers were harmed or threatened
46% reported an impact on other colleagues' productivity

It impacts business

£14 billion: the estimated annual cost to businesses from the impact on productivity and time taken off work

Employers have a duty to ensure all staff work in a safe environment, free from harassment and abuse. If a staff member is experiencing domestic abuse, employers must ensure that they, their colleagues and their managers are safe. These rights are covered under four main areas of health and safety legislation:

- Health and safety at work act (1974)
- Management of health and safety at work regulations (1992)
- Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations (1995)
- Health and safety (consultations with employees) regulations (1996)

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Taking the first steps

We know that there is no 'one size fits all' approach. Each organisation has its own unique culture, structure, ways of working and systems of support. It's important that each organisation takes the approach that best works for them.

It all starts with a decision to take domestic abuse seriously. Here's what our level 1 training package looks like:

Level 1 – raising awareness and understanding

Webinar – understanding domestic abuse

Webinars strike a balance of being able to reach staff across the organisation in a time and cost-effective way, whilst offering an opportunity for meaningful engagement. This webinar offers participants the opportunity to develop their understanding of domestic abuse and its impacts, breaking down commonly held misconceptions, and raising awareness of support available internally and externally.

Training for key staff teams – recognising abuse, responding to disclosures and offering support

Staff in key positions, such as HR, line managers, wellbeing teams or mental health first aiders are more likely to be in positions to providing support to survivors and need the skills to be able to do so.

Through two, interactive and engaging online workshops, tailored to people's roles and responsibilities; staff will develop their understanding of the impacts of abuse, and know how to recognise the signs, open up a conversation around abuse and provide meaningful and effective support for survivors.

Being a leader for change

Senior leaders are central to organisational responses to domestic abuse. We work with senior leaders to explore what this means from a leadership perspective and how to influence and enact change in this area. These sessions vary in length and format depending on best fit for the team.

Pricing for our level one training starts at £4500.

All training is tailored to your organisational needs, size and structure.

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Creating change that lasts

Raising awareness of domestic abuse is just the first step. We know that organisations who are committed to implementing meaningful support for domestic abuse will want to go much further.

Our Level 2 and 3 training and consultancy service will enable organisations to develop and shape policy and process; create clear guidance and support structures for survivors of abuse; and work towards sustainable, meaningful change.

Level 2 – strengthening organisational response

Key staff members and teams have additional training to be able to support survivors; policies are implemented to support this. This includes all of the training from level 1, plus:

- Training for HR to manage complaints and issues related to domestic abuse
- Training for line managers and wellbeing staff to provide effective support for survivors and perpetrators of abuse
- Development of workplace guidance and policies related to domestic abuse, including best practice for supporting survivors, and working with perpetrators

Level 3 – building ongoing sustainable change

Steps are taken to embed learning across the organisation and develop plans to maximise investment in the learning taken so far. This includes all the training from level 1 and 2, plus:

- Developing workplace champions to be able to support survivors and advocate for best practice in the workplace
- Action learning with senior leadership – developing sustainability strategies
- Domestic abuse awareness embedded across the organisation and available to staff, e.g. in inductions for new starters and information on the company intranet.

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Why choose Solace?

We are experts in supporting survivors

Each year we support 25,000 survivors to move on to lives free from abuse. We know what works, and we draw on that knowledge and expertise to inform our training.

We are experts in training

Last year we trained over 2000 people to provide more effective support to survivors of abuse. Our training is flexible to your needs, delivered online, through mixed modes of delivery.

We are leaders in best practice

We create safe spaces within the workplace, balancing the needs of the survivor with the needs of the business, building equal and inclusive workplaces where survivors are supported.

“After our training with Solace we now feel that we have the tools to deal with emergencies correctly and a domestic abuse policy fit for purpose.”

Hilary Pannack, CEO, Straight Talking

Our ethos and approach

We don't make judgements or assumptions. We work with each client on a one to one basis to find out where you are now and where you'd like to be, to map out a journey of how to get there.

We tailor our solutions for the size and structure of your organisation, to build whole-systems approaches to creating lasting change.

Inclusivity is one of our main priorities. If solutions don't work for the most marginalised people, they don't work. We make sure they do by consulting people across the organisation, creating opportunities for input and feedback, and taking an agile approach to testing and adapting solutions as we go.

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Take a stand. Support survivors of abuse.

Contact us

For a free consultation and to find out more:



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training@solacewomensaid.org



solacewomensaid.org/workplace

Do you need help?

If you're affected by domestic abuse, support is always available:

- **Solace Advice Line – 0808 802 5565**
Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm. Tuesdays 6pm - 8pm.
Email: advice@solacewomensaid.org
- **24hr National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247**
[Webchat](#) available 10am - 2pm Monday – Friday
- **Men's Advice Line – 0808 8010327**
Monday – Friday 9am – 8pm. Email: info@mensadvice.org.uk
[Webchat](#) available 10 – 11am; 3 – 4pm Wednesday-Friday

If you are in immediate danger call 999

References

- Home Office (2019) the economic and social costs of domestic abuse Research Report 107. Accessed from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772180/horr107.pdf
- TUC (2014) Domestic Violence and the Workplace. Accessed from: https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/Domestic_Violence_And_The_Workplace_0.pdf
- Westmarland, N for the Vodafone foundation (2017) Domestic Violence and Abuse: Working together to transform responses in the workplace. Accessed from: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/criva/WestmarlandVodafoneDomesticViolenceWorkplaceReport.pdf>

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“ We want to create a place where everyone can thrive. That’s why we make sure we have support in place for anyone who is experiencing domestic abuse ”

Eric

Head of partnerships
Introduced paid leave for survivors of domestic abuse

#workplacesafespace

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