

CREATING A POSITIVE WORKPLACE

A positive workplace improves teamwork, employee morale and overall productivity, and helps to reduce stress experienced by employees. A positive workplace is one that considers the psychological wellbeing of employees, which is supported through workplace policies, programming, and overall workplace culture (see [Supportive Workplace Policies, Practices and Programs](#)). The goal is to create a work environment where employees feel safe, supported, respected, and valued. Employees subjected to domestic / intimate partner violence (DIPV) but who feel safe at work will be more likely to seek help from a trusted colleague or leader, which is an important step in ending the abuse.

Employers can help to create a positive work environment by:

- Promoting psychological wellbeing
- Modelling respectful behaviour throughout the workplace
- Introducing policies and programs to support employee morale and alleviate stress
- Promoting employee awareness of domestic and intimate partner violence issues

Promoting Psychological Wellbeing

The [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) is a useful guide to creating a work environment that promotes psychological wellbeing. This Standard identifies 13 factors that contribute to a psychologically safe work environment. Each factor highlights an important component of a positive workplace. The 13 factors are: organizational culture, psychological and social support, clear leadership and expectations, civility and respect, psychological demands, growth and development, recognition and reward, involvement and influence, workload management, engagement, balance, psychological protection, and protection of physical safety. Some employers are choosing to implement the standards in their companies. Resources to help employers assess and address the 13 psychological factors are noted in the references section below.

Modelling Respectful Behaviour

“Civility and Respect” is one of the 13 psychological factors that contributes to a positive workplace. Respectful behaviour involves a constant appreciation, care and consideration for everyone associated with the workplace. When the employer models respectful behaviour, a DIPV program is given the opportunity to succeed. Employees who may be experiencing violence will feel safer and supported to approach their employer for assistance.

Management should proactively support employees by:

- Being understanding and approachable
- Protecting the confidentiality of employees
- Respecting the decisions made by the employee who is experiencing DIPV
- Letting the employee who has experienced violence know that they are a valued member of the workplace
- Addressing job performance problems in constructive ways and offering options to support in finding counselling options
- Meeting with the staff regularly to discuss job performance
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of any DIPV policies
- Remaining flexible when dealing with employees experiencing issues related to DIPV
- Working with unions to address the problem of DIPV in the workplace
- Being supportive of an employee who is taking steps to lead a violence-free life
- Ensuring that workplace responses are culturally sensitive and appropriate

For more tips, refer to:

- [Being a Trauma-Informed Employer](#).

Introducing Policies, Practices and Programs to Support Employee Morale and Reduce Stress

Employers can help create a positive workplace and improve employee morale through policy and program support. Workplace policies that focus on creating a positive workplace set the tone for expected behaviour and prioritized programming.

Such policies can include:

- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy
- Wellness Policy

Practices and programming focusing on boosting employee morale and reducing stress can be developed. Programming can include :

- Workplace wellness committees
- Education sessions that focus on mental and physical wellbeing
- Offering wellness and stress reduction initiatives, such as mindfulness and meditation training
- Encouraging physical activity such as noon hour walks, yoga, or other exercise classes
- Supporting employee appreciation initiatives

See [Supportive Workplace Policies, Practices and Programs](#) for more information.

Promote Employee Awareness of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Issues

Employers can create awareness of DIPV issues and educate staff about how to deal with DIPV when it enters the workplace. Here are a few examples of steps employers can take:

- Provide employee training:
 - Invite guest speakers such as [domestic violence outreach workers](#), [shelter staff](#) or members of the [It's Your Business committee](#) to the workplace to speak about DIPV and how to address it in the workplace
 - Invite guest speakers such as police officers, security personnel or other professionals to the workplace to speak on workplace violence and safety
- Put up DIPV prevention posters and displays
- Post a [list of DIPV community resources](#), such as service agencies, phone numbers and addresses in safe spaces, such as washroom or lunch rooms
- Have a professional development day for management and staff to review company policies dealing with DIPV and the workplace
- Circulate monthly messages about DIPV. Messages can be circulated to all employees by sending out email messages, newsletters, updates to company intranet pages, and posts on announcement boards



Additional Resources:

- [Guarding Minds at Work](#)
- [Mindful Employer Canada](#)
- [On the Agenda: Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#)

**IT'S
YOUR
BUSINESS**
A Domestic & Intimate
Partner Violence
Workplace Toolkit



**C'EST
VOTRE
AFFAIRE**

Une trousse d'outils sur la violence
conjugale et entre partenaires
intimes pour les milieux de travail