

Violence against women and the workplace

Violence against women – whether it occurs in or beyond the workplace – impacts on the health and safety of women at work, their wellbeing and their productivity.

Violence is also a workplace health and safety issue. If the perpetrator of violence uses the workplace as a place to harass or stalk the victim, it can put victims and their colleagues in danger.



1 in 3 women experience physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by someone known to themⁱ



1 in 5 women experience harassment in the workplaceⁱⁱ



94% of employees agree employers should take a leadership role in educating their workplace about respectful relationships between men and womenⁱⁱⁱ





What can workplaces do?

An Australian survey revealed that 48% of respondents who had experienced domestic violence disclosed it to a manager or supervisor, and only 10% found their response helpful.^{iv}

Workplaces have an important role to play in ending men's violence against women and supporting women experiencing or escaping violence.

For many women experiencing domestic violence, abuse or control, the workplace provides a space and network away from the abuser. It is critical that workplaces understand violence against women, so that these women can stay in work and so workplaces can help them access the support they need.

Workplaces also have a pivotal role in addressing the underlying causes of men's violence against women by promoting gender equality.

Workplaces can:

- offer pathways to support, by creating a culture that supports women to disclose their experiences of violence, including referring women to appropriate support services and offering domestic violence leave
- provide a source of income and financial independence, especially if a woman decides to leave the abusive relationship
- create a zero-tolerance environment that responds to sexual harassment in the workplace and holds perpetrators to account

- provide information to employees on what to do when they see or hear about violence, abuse or harassment
- promote gender equality: conduct a gender audit, offer flexible work arrangements and critically examine the different roles men and women play in the workplace.

More information

Visit the White Ribbon website at www.whiteribbon.org.au for more information on how your organisation can stop violence against women in the workplace.

ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2013). *Personal Safety, Australia, 2012* (no. 4906.0). Retrieved from: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4545E1A0AF026AD5CA257C3D000D820D?opendocument>

ⁱⁱ Australian Human Rights Commission. (2008). *Sexual Harassment Guide*. Retrieved from: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/guides/sexual-harassment>

ⁱⁱⁱ Pennay, D & Powell, A. (2012). *The role of bystander knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in preventing violence against women: A full technical report*. The Social Research Centre. Melbourne.

^{iv} McFerran, L. (2011). *Safe at Home, Safe at Work? National Domestic violence and the workplace survey*. Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse. Retrieved from: https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/FASSFile/National_Domestic_Violence_and_the_Workplace_Survey_2011_Full_Report.pdf p. 13.