



## How to Recognize Domestic Violence Among Your Coworkers

*The domestic violence that [Sonja](#) was experiencing at home affected her ability to do her job, and as a result her hours were cut back, making it almost impossible for her to provide for her family. When Sonja's employer learned that it was domestic violence that was compromising Sonja's reliability, they worked with her to provide a more flexible schedule, more hours, and time off when needed to address her situation.*

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. If someone you work with is experiencing domestic violence, you can help. Here are five ways to recognize it:

- Anxious, distressed, or depressed emotional state; avoidance of coworkers; references to trouble at home
- Absences or tardiness at work, decrease in productivity and concentration, increase in sick days
- Financial issues including wage garnishment, overdrawn accounts, foreclosure, or eviction
- Legal problems like divorce and child custody issues, involvement in child abuse investigation, frequent court dates
- Unexplained or hidden injuries such as bruises, black eyes, sprains, broken bones or teeth

### **Here is what you can do:**

**Educate Yourself:** Learn more about domestic violence and the workplace [here](#)

**Listen:** Let your coworker know what you have seen and that she can talk to you. Tell her that it is *not her fault*.

**Offer Information, Not Advice:** Give your coworker the phone number to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-SAFE, or your local domestic violence intervention program.

**Keep It Confidential:** Don't tell others what your coworker told you. However, if there is a direct threat of violence at work, your employer needs to be informed.

**Be There:** Dealing with abuse takes time. Your coworker may not want to discuss the situation right away. Let her know you are there to help if she asks for it.

**Spread the word about combating domestic violence!** Encourage your employer to develop a workplace response to domestic violence. Please forward this email to five

coworkers, friends, or family members.

Provided to you by Volunteers of America - [Home Free](#)

Source: *Domestic Violence in the Workplace*, December 2002. Developed by the Multnomah County Domestic Violence Coordinator's Office.