## 2024: Reimagine…

a culture where victims of partner violence feel safe and supported; where they can earn a fair wage and have sufficient resources and tools to be able to get out (and stay out) of their current situation.

The workplace is often the only safe place for a person experiencing partner violence. Therefore, the employer is essential in helping someone thrive and become a survivor. How do employers help?

- Understand the ways that the trauma of partner violence can show up in the workplace.
    - With 1 in 4 women, 1 in 7 men, 1 in 2 transgendered persons, and 1 in 2 disabled people[1] being the victims of partner violence, no workplace can claim "that doesn't happen here." These statistics make clear that someone in your workplace is, was, or will be a victim or perpetrator of partner violence.
    - If you don't have much experience with this issue, recognizing and responding to signs of partner violence may be challenging. Violence isn't always physical, so it is important to educate yourself on emotional, financial, spiritual, and psychological abuse.
- Be aware of your legal obligations.
    - Review local, city, state, and federal laws around partner violence and be certain they are factored into your workplace safety policy. For example, here is the City of Pittsburgh ordinance requiring employers to have a policy in place.
- Advocate for your employer to become more aware and sensitive to the issue.
    - If your workplace policies addressing partner violence in the workplace are not robust, don't hesitate to bring it up to leadership.
- Reduce the stigma.
    - Create a psychologically safe culture where all employees feel comfortable sharing their experiences without reprimand or judgment.
- Ensure awareness-raising, resources, and support are a dynamic investment by your organization, not just a once-a-year event.
    - Provide posters/handouts in employee gathering areas and on your intranet, and plan and host educational/information sessions throughout the year.

As a leader, you have the power to create a work environment that supports the well-being, safety, financial stability, and equity of all employees, especially those who may be experiencing violence from a partner.

STANDING FIRM provides experienced consultative services and award-winning training to help your organization help with all of the above. With two membership options offering more value and services than ever before, this year is your year to join the STANDING FIRM Employer Alliance Against Domestic Violence. Together, let's strengthen your response to partner violence in the workplace.

Visit our website today to learn more or contact us at contactsf@standing-firm.org.

[1] *https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-factsheet508.pdf*

STANDING FIRM continues to work in support of the PA Family Care Act. The original PA Paid Family Leave bill scheduled for a vote in the PA House in November did *not* have language that included safe leave or supported victims or survivors of DV. Because financial stability (including paid leave) is so important to those experiencing DV, we advocated for a safe leave amendment to the bill's language at the House and Senate level. The amendment was approved In November, and it is anticipated that the House will take a final vote on the bill in March. The Senate bill mirrors the language of the House and is expected to be voted on by the Senate in April. If these bills are passed, PA will join at least a dozen other states who have passed Paid Family Leave bills, many with provisions for those experiencing DV. Job security and economic stability are critical to survivors seeking a life free from abuse.

In their report *Paid Family and Medical Leave,* Children First PA asserts that "a state paid leave program will boost the capacity of businesses to recruit and retain talent and increase productivity and profitability." We encourage you to read this report, share it with others, and reach out to your local representatives in support of this bill and the survivors and their families it will benefit. **Need help? Click here to find your legislator.**

We welcome and say "Thank You" to our new and renewing Employer Alliance Against Domestic Violence Members:

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| African American Chamber of Commerce of Southwest PA | Beaver County Chamber of Commerce | Calgon Carbon Corporation |
| Citrin Consulting | Dollar Bank | Dress For Success Pittsburgh |
| FISA Foundation | Goodwill of Southwestern PA | Life Solutions (WorkPartners) |
| Maher Duessel | The Heinz Endowments | The Pittsburgh Promise |
| United Way of Southwestern PA | UPMC/UPMC Health Plan | Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh |

## January is National Stalking Awareness Month

Stalking is a pattern of unwanted behavior, directed at a specific person, which is causing that person to feel afraid, anxious, or in danger. Stalking often causes the person impacted to change their routine or behavior. Stalking may

impact the physical and mental health of victims and can lead to anxiety and depression. Stalking can be perpetrated by current or former dating/intimate partners, colleagues, or acquaintances.

Some examples of stalking include (but aren't limited to):

- information gathering from friends, online, social media, family.
- repeated, non-threatening mail, email, texts, DM, and phone calls.
- waiting outside work, residence, or next to the person's mode of transportation.
- Making false reports to authorities, spreading rumors, giving misinformation or secrets to friends, family, or supervisors, or professors.
- disparaging messages or images online.
- sabotage of work (or school); a stalker may not know where a victim resides, but often knows where they work
- threatening mail, email, notes, text messages and/or phone calls (threats direct, implied, or symbolic); stalking is a very dangerous sign of possible lethality in DV

Quick Stats:

- 1 in 3 women & 1 in 6 men experience stalking in their lifetime
- Approximately 1 in 2 female & male victims first experience stalking before age 25
- Over 50% of female & male victims experience threats of physical harm during lifetime [2]

What Can Employers Do?

Listen to and work with the victim. Some options to protect the victim might be:

- Moving work location
- Changing phone number or email address; screening phone calls
- Allowing for alternate/flexible schedules
- Providing security to vehicle
- Provide a photo of stalker to workplace security/front desk staff
- Vary breaktimes and other routines
- Work with victim and safety officer to create a workplace safety plan
- Provide resources to local DV services advocates to create a personal safety plan
- Help victim file appropriate reports to law enforcement

If an employee is changing their life to avoid or contend with harassment/unwanted contact, being followed, or unwanted emails/messages, support and resources are available.

The following sites provide additional information:

SPARC

CDC: Preventing Stalking

A Proclamation on National Stalking Awareness Month

PCADV: Stalking Isn't Romantic

[2] *https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs/nisvsStalkingReport.pdf*