



# Addressing Family Violence and the Workplace

## The Impacts of Family Violence in the Workplace

Family violence can enter the workplace when an abuser attempts to harass, stalk, threaten, or injure a victim at work. This can endanger co-workers and clients as well as victims, putting an entire workplace at risk. The implications of family violence can range from reduced employee productivity to serious injuries and even death.

*A common piece of advice given to victims is to leave their partner, but telling them to leave a relationship before they are ready and have safety measures in place can be dangerous.*

*A female victim is at greatest risk of homicide around the time she leaves or is preparing to leave an abusive partner.*

Although we sometimes think of family violence as a private, family problem, it does not stop when an employee goes to work. Workplace incidents involving family violence can have severe consequences.

People experiencing family violence may feel isolated due to shame and fear, and may be reluctant to ask for help. The silence surrounding this kind of violence can put other workers and the workplace at risk. Creating opportunities for workers to feel more comfortable talking about family violence can help to prevent it from entering a workplace and can assist with your plans to address violence should it arise.

## Conversation Guidelines for Managers and Supervisors

- **Listen and provide support.** Tell your employee, “Help is available. I am here if you need me and there are programs with special expertise that can help.”
- Since it can be difficult to identify someone experiencing family violence, approach conversations with caution. **Remember to bring up family violence only in a safe and private environment.**
- If the victim discloses abuse, **show that you are supportive, remain non-judgemental when you ask questions, be clear, and be sensitive.** You could ask: “What can we do to help you feel and be safer at work?”
- **Choose your words wisely.** Certain statements might make victims feel like you don’t believe them or that you are blaming them for allowing their situation to continue.
- **Be careful with your advice.** Experts advise that victims of family violence should not be encouraged to leave a relationship before they feel ready and have assessed that it is safe.
- **Discuss individual needs and resources** with employees experiencing family violence.
- **Discuss any existing protection orders** such as restraining orders, peace bonds, or bail conditions.
- **Keep lines of communication open.**
- **Follow up and monitor the situation.**

*Keep communication open and look for opportunities to help or connect them with resources*

## Support Guidelines for Managers and Supervisors

- **Offer to help employees experiencing family violence connect with local service providers** — keep a list of victim support services on hand, including police, local victims' service and antiviolence programs, transition house programs (shelters), and other resources.
- **Respect your employees' privacy as much as possible without compromising workplace safety:** every situation is different and privacy issues must be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- **Labels matter.** People experiencing family violence are most commonly referred to as victims or survivors. Asking what kind of language your employee is most comfortable using creates an opportunity to help them feel empowered, valued, and heard.
- **Keep it confidential.** If there is a threat to the workplace, tell your employee that you will only share the information on a need-to-know basis. If you do need to share information, a more empowering approach is to tell them you will try to do it when they are present, or ideally allow them to share the information.
- **Invite the employee to participate in creating a personal safety plan for their time at work.** They should also be encouraged to contact a local victim support program, such as Family Violence Prevention Services or Victim Services, to get additional information and support to create a personal safety plan with trained professionals.



*"If you feel unsafe starting a conversation with someone experiencing violence, contact a professional for help. Safety is your primary concern and you should not put yourself or anyone else in your organization in a situation that seems unsafe."*

## Services Available in Prince Edward Island for Public Service Employees

<b>Employee Assistance Program (EAP)</b> Telephone: 902-368-5738 • Toll free: 1-800-239-3826 <a href="http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/psc_eaphandbook_1.pdf">www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/psc_eaphandbook_1.pdf</a>	
<b>Anderson House</b> 1-800-240-9894 (toll free) • (902) 892-0960 (Charlottetown) <a href="http://www.fvps.ca/services">www.fvps.ca/services</a>	<b>Chief Mary Bernard Memorial Women's Shelter</b> 1-855-297-2332 (toll free) • (902) 831-2332 (Lennox Island) <a href="mailto:womensshelter@lennoxisland.com">womensshelter@lennoxisland.com</a>
<b>Victim Services</b> Charlottetown: (902) 368-4582 • Summerside: (902) 888-8218 <a href="http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/victim-services">www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/victim-services</a>	<b>Outreach Coordinators</b> Family Violence Prevention Services Inc. West Prince: (902) 859-8849 • East Prince: (902) 436-0517, (902) 888- 3310 Eastern PEI: (902) 838-0795 • Queens: (902) 566-1480 ext. 224 <a href="http://www.fvps.ca/outreach-services/">www.fvps.ca/outreach-services/</a>
<b>Catholic Family Services Bureau</b> (902) 894-3515 Charlottetown <a href="http://www.catholicfamilyservice.ca">www.catholicfamilyservice.ca</a>	<b>Community Legal Information Association (CLIA)</b> 1-800-240-9798 (toll free) • (902) 892-0853 (Charlottetown) <a href="http://www.cliapei.ca">www.cliapei.ca</a>
<b>Community Mental Health Services</b> Charlottetown: (902) 368-4430 • Bilingual services available: Summerside: (902) 888-8180 • Montague: (902) 838-0960 Souris: (902) 687-7110 O'Leary: (902) 859-8781 • Alberton: (902) 853-8670	<b>Family Service PEI</b> Charlottetown: (902) 892-2441 • Summerside: (902) 436-9171 <a href="http://www.familyservice.pe.ca">www.familyservice.pe.ca</a>
<b>Turning Point for Men</b> Turning Point Coordinator (902) 368-6392 <a href="http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/turning-point-program">www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/turning-point-program</a>	<b>Anger Management Program</b> Clinical Therapist (902) 569-7613 <a href="http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/anger-management-program">www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/anger-management-program</a>

This is a summary of the **Guidelines for Addressing Family Violence and the Workplace** document. To see the full guidelines document, please go to

[http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/hrppm\\_s9.06.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/hrppm_s9.06.pdf)