

What is **OPEN TALK?**

You want what's best for your business, workplace
AND your employees.

What happens when one of your employees is suffering privately with domestic violence?

Although we sometimes think of domestic violence as a private and personal issue, it does not stop when your employees or co-workers come to work. The reality is, domestic violence can have real financial impacts on a business and affect work place morale.

Financial and morale impacts on the workplace; victims of domestic violence:

- May need time off due to injury, for counselling or for legal purposes.
- May experience a drop in productivity.
- Their attention may be focused elsewhere.
- May experience post traumatic stress.
- May require time to find new living arrangements or settle children into new schools.

Victims of domestic violence have their lives turned upside down and inside out as they deal with issues of violence and seek to change their circumstances.

Your work place may also experience disruption due domestic violence because:

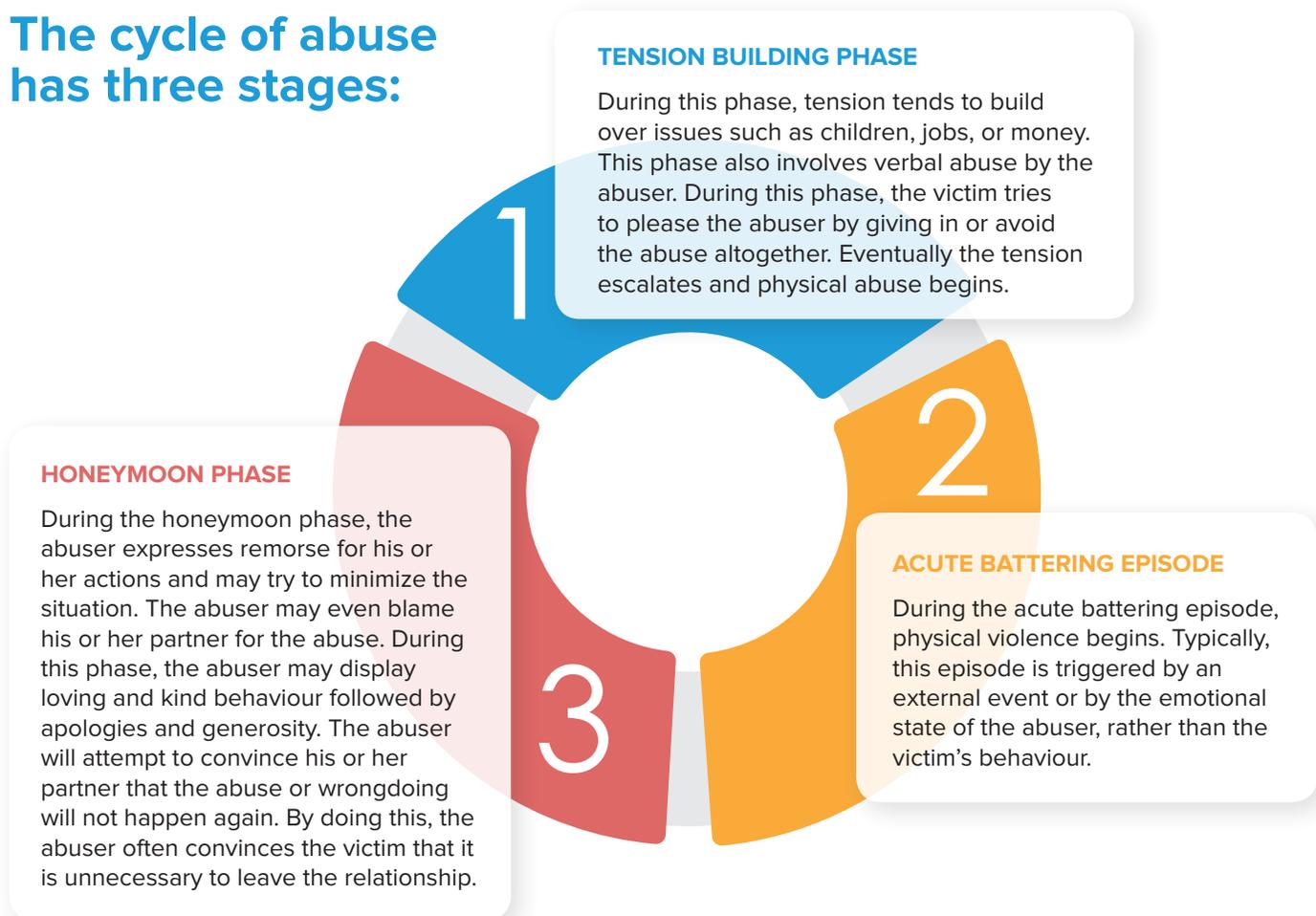
- Perpetrators may come to the workplace causing disruption.
- Local law enforcement may become involved and attend at your place of business.
- Victim's co-workers may be harassed or may be called to give testimony.

OPENTALK is a campaign to ensure your workplace is a safe and supportive environment for you and your employees. If you, an employee or a co-worker encounter a domestic violence situation and don't know what to do, this website can help.

It's not your job as an employer to fix it... It is your job to:
validate the situation, listen, support and guide your employees to seek assistance.

There are many organizations in your community that can help you and your employee. Visit www.opentalkworks.ca and click on the community resources section of this website for more information and contacts.

The cycle of abuse has three stages:



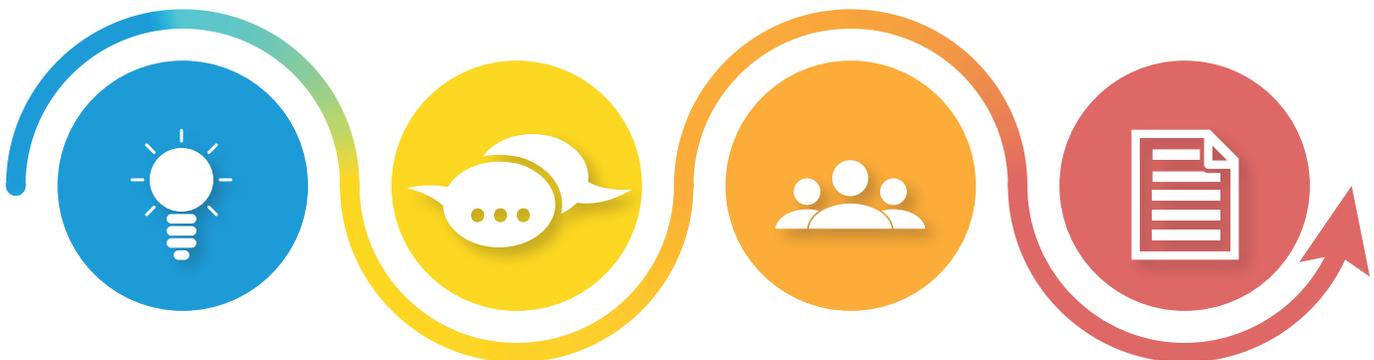
Impacts of Abuse in the Workforce

There are many impacts of domestic violence in the workforce, including:

- Reduced employee productivity
- Increased absence from work
- Higher costs to replace, recruit, and train employees when victims are wounded or dismissed for poor performance on the job
- Higher health expenses for the company
- Strained relationships among co-workers
- Potential harm to customers, employees, and/or coworkers when abusers enter the workforce and become violent
- Liability costs in the event that someone is harmed at the workplace (OHSCO, 2010)
- Disruptive phone calls, threats, harassing emails, inappropriate visits from the abuser, violent confrontations
- Reduced employee motivation
- Loss of focus, thereby leading to an increased risk of injury
- Co-workers are vulnerable, too (individuals who witness domestic violence are at a greater risk of suffering health consequences). This could result in high costs to the employer if co-workers take time off work and are less productive when they are at work.

Ensuring Employees Well-being

It's important to ensure the well-being of employees who are experiencing domestic violence, and their co-workers. To support employees, it is necessary to listen to the employee, support the employee, and guide him or her to various services.



RECOGNIZE

It is important to be able to recognize the warning signs of domestic violence, as well as abusive behaviour, and understand the risk factors for domestic abuse.

RESPOND

All workers should have an understanding of their legal responsibilities and know how to respond appropriately.

REFER

Workers should be aware of the services available to them, both within the organization and within the community.

REPORT

Workers should be aware of the formal and informal procedures in regard to reporting suspected or actual domestic violence.