

Best Practices by the Top Companies

Leading from the top – Companies with effective partner violence programs have a strong commitment from executives and upper-level management. Without it, managers and supervisors are unsure about the scope of their responsibility and authority to assist victims.

Setting policies and enforcing them – These companies have sound policies that do not allow anyone to commit threats or acts of violence—including domestic violence—while on work time or while using company property. They know that responding to domestic violence is “new” to the workplace, and it needs special attention in their policies for their programs to be effective.

Training management – These employers find creative ways to train managers—whether through “in person” training courses, web-based tools, or written communications or booklets. They know that “once is not enough” and they continue to draw managers’ attention to domestic violence issues as they address other complementary issues related to employee benefits, absenteeism, work-life issues, etc.

Creating a culture – It is one thing to have a policy and program. It is quite another to create a workplace where victimized employees actually believe they will get help and trust they will not be fired or discriminated against for sharing this information with a supervisor or manager.

Offering real-life answers – A promise of support isn’t enough. There need to be real processes and tools for employees to use— the ability to use benefit time flexibly, to get help finding a place to live, legal assistance, etc.

Wrestling with tough issues – There are no easy answers in balancing employee privacy with a desire to assist in cases of domestic violence. It is hard to know when or how you may ever discipline or dismiss a batterer. Employers that are committed to best practices are not afraid to wrestle with these delicate issues, and to keep the dialogue going within their own stakeholder community (management, human resources, communications, medical, EAP, legal, security, etc.)—even when they don’t know what the answer is.

Communicating creatively – Employers committed to this issue understand that while some employees have heard the message before, many employees are new and need to know about domestic violence as a workplace issue. They use many forms of

communication—posters, e-mails, intranet sites, newsletters, brochures, videos, faxes and more—to share information with all employees on a regular basis.

Integrating education – Domestic violence awareness and education programs should be intertwined with other programs that are complementary: for example, wellness fairs, workplace safety programs, and family issues seminars are all effective venues for sharing domestic violence information.

Reaching out – Employers implementing best practices are willing to network with other businesses and ask them how they handle the tough and delicate issues and challenges. They are committed to reaching out to the community to engage local service providers in training their staff or EAP. They also engage employees in volunteer activities for service providers.

Source: Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence