

Three Ways to Educate and Engage Others about Domestic Violence in the Workplace

Having and keeping a good job is key to achieving and maintaining economic security. However, domestic violence can undermine a woman's ability to succeed in the workplace. Attendance, productivity, health, and safety can all be undermined by domestic violence and too often employers don't have the tools they need to provide appropriate support to employees in trouble. You can help through Higher Ground, NCJW's campaign to end domestic violence by improving the economic status of women. Businesses and organizations need help developing and implementing policies to address the workplace effects of domestic violence, and you can help ensure that they have the resources they need to be able to respond in supportive, safe, and effective ways. **Below are three ways you can work with local businesses and community members to minimize the effects of domestic violence in the workplace.**

- **Explore.** Every day, each of us interacts with a wide variety of employers. But how much do we really know about the bakery where we buy our bread or the department store where we buy our shoes? The first step in improving the response to workplace violence is learning what folks in your community are already doing. Reach out to three businesses or universities with whom you have relationships and schedule meetings with their Human Resources departments or other appropriate staff. Share with them the goals Higher Ground and your interest in ensuring that all victims of violence have the support they need in the workplace. Discuss possible policies and practices to improve safety and offer to serve as a resource. *Note: If you identify businesses that already have policies and practices that support employees who are victims of domestic violence, consider thanking those businesses for their role in ending domestic violence through improved economic security and ask if they would be interested in sharing their policies with other businesses.*
- **Educate.** Op-eds are a great way to raise awareness about the issue of workplace violence. Submit a letter to your local paper discussing the effect domestic violence can have in a workplace and inspire your community to take action. Consider collaborating with a local domestic violence service provider who can serve as a resource for employers.
- **Advocate.** **Call your Members of Congress and Urge them to Support Violence Against Women Act Programs.** The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), first enacted in 1994, established the first federal law acknowledging domestic violence and sexual assault

as crimes and provided federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combating violence. Its reauthorization have continued to improve the foundation established by VAWA 1994. Over the years, VAWA has incorporated key provisions designed to ensure that a victim of abuse does not have to choose between a roof over her head and the safety of herself and her children. Urge your senators and representative to fully fund the programs in the Violence Against Women Act immediately. Then, tell your friends to also speak out for this key funding.

NCJW staff and volunteers are ready and eager to assist you to ensure the continued success of your Higher Ground campaign efforts. Contact Lindsay Morris at lindsay@ncjwdc.org for more information and to report on your activities.