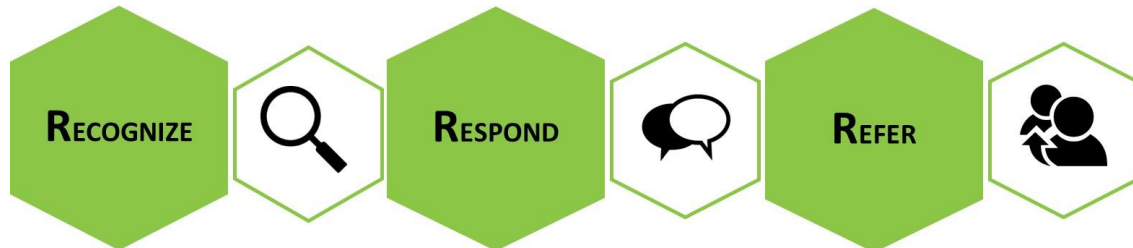


Employee: Respond Guide



Always share your concerns and observations with your manager or Human Resources if you think a coworker may be a victim of partner violence.

Respond

If you think a coworker may be in an abusive relationship, there are a number of things to keep in mind:

First, you need to make sure you approach this situation as an employee of the organization, not a friend. This can be hard because we are concerned about our coworkers and personal friendships develop. Your role is to recognize that a coworker may be in an abusive relationship, but it is not your responsibility to resolve the individual's situation – there are expert resources that can guide the individual with safety as the priority. It is important that you do not inadvertently put a coworker, yourself, or the workplace in more danger by assuming responsibility for a coworker's personal situation.

Always review your organizational policy and consult with your manager for support. Your manager has been trained on how to effectively approach an employee who may be in an abusive relationship.

Finally, the safety of the workplace is the priority and trumps a victim's desire for confidentiality. If you are concerned there may be a threat to the workplace, tell your manager, human resources or security and, in the case of an immediate threat, call 911.

What to do and say when you suspect a coworker is a victim of abuse:

Express concern:

- "I am worried about you."
- "I am afraid for your safety."

Show support:

- "I believe you."
- "You are not alone. There are many people who have gone through this."

- “I care about you and I know it is hard to talk about this.”
- “You don’t deserve to be hurt, you’ve done nothing wrong.”
- “This is not your fault.”
- “How can I help?”

What NOT to say when you suspect a coworker is a victim of abuse:

- “Why don’t you just leave?”
- “Why did you return to your partner?”
- “What did you do to provoke your partner?”
- “Why did you wait so long to tell someone?”
- “You can come to my house and stay for a little while.”
- Don’t use labels - “You’re crazy to stay with your partner.”
- Don’t tell the person what to do – “You need to leave your partner today.”

Remember: She/he may deny any abuse exists or say everything is okay. Do not force people to disclose abuse. Privacy needs to be respected. Keep the lines of communication open.

Why is it so important to never advise a victim to leave the abuser? When a victim leaves their abuser or threatens to leave, the power and control issues motivating the abuser may kick into high gear, causing an escalation in violence. In fact, this is the most dangerous time for a victim of partner violence. Lethality increases the moment a victim says they are leaving, so never advise a victim to leave their partner who hasn’t established a safety plan with the help of a trained partner violence advocate.



Offer referrals to resources:

- Refer your coworker to the appropriate workplace and community resources. This applies whether or not your coworker has disclosed that they are in an abusive relationship. So it is very important that you know both the workplace and community resources that are available to assist in the situation.
 - Workplace resources include human resources, security, safety, the organization’s Employee Assistance Program (if applicable). Your organizational policy and procedures will also provide you with guidance.
 - Community resources include 24-7 hotlines, domestic violence programs and shelters and legal assistance. If you need assistance in identifying the local resources in your community, contact your manager or Human Resources staff for assistance.

Remember, even if a coworker does not disclose, you should suggest to them potential resources. And make sure your coworker knows that these resources are confidential.