Domestic/Relationship Violence Prevention Guidance

**From Human Resources**

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Domestic/relationship violence occurs when an individual uses a pattern of emotional, verbal, sexual, and/or physical abuse to control an intimate partner. Domestic/relationship violence can affect anyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, age or religion. Disagreements develop from time to time in relationships. Domestic/relationship violence is not a disagreement; it is a pattern of behaviors that may cause psychological harm or physical injury and/or be criminal in nature.

Domestic/relationship violence may begin with insults, name calling, shoving, or throwing and breaking objects, then proceed to driving recklessly to endanger or scare another person, isolating family members from others, and controlling resources like money, vehicles, credit, and time. More physically violent behaviors include threats of violence or suicide, threats to take children from the abused person, hurting pets, kidnapping, stalking, hitting, and strangling/choking. Abuse is a learned pattern of behavior and without intervention becomes more destructive and sometimes lethal over time. Abusive individuals may have a need for power or control over someone else to compensate for their own low self esteem, insecurity, fear, and confusion. Abusers or those concerned that they may become abusers should contact the EAP.

**Relationship Violence Warning Signs**

A partner who:

• Makes all the decisions in the relationship; tries to control you by being bossy and giving orders. You might feel like you’re walking on eggshells around the abuser.

• Loses his or her temper and then blames you for causing this loss of control; says you provoked them, led them on, made them do it; twists your words and makes you feel like you’re the “crazy one.”

• Checks up on you frequently - listens in on phone calls, checks your e-mail, constantly asks about your whereabouts, calls you at work, checks your car mileage, always wants to be with you to the exclusion of anyone or anything else in your life.

• Is jealous and possessive of you and/or won’t accept breaking up.

• Doesn’t take your opinion seriously - puts down your thoughts or feelings, calls you names.

• Threatens you, your friends or family or pets - uses or owns weapons, scares you because you are unsure of how he/she will react to the things you say or do. Says they can’t live without you and may threaten suicide.

• Is violent - this may include “just” grabbing too hard or pinching up to serious physical violence, such as choking and hitting behaviors. They may have a history of fighting or losing their temper quickly, and brag about mistreating others.

• Engages in reckless behavior, including dangerous driving, abuse of alcohol or other drugs - may pressure you to take them also.

• Has a history of bad relationships - blames the other person for problems in the relationship(s).

• Your friends and family have warned you about or told you they were worried for your safety.

• “Too good to be true” - at least in the beginning.

• Can’t stand to be away from you - this can include jealousy, possessiveness and stalking

• Manipulative behaviors - makes you feel guilty or embarrassed to say no.

• After a violent episode, the abuser is apologetic, sends flowers, etc., and promises to never do it again, then repeats the same behavior.

**Steps to Increase Your Safety**

1. Tell someone you trust what is happening; a friend, relative or contact a counselor at the EAP.

2. Report the situation to you local Security Coordinator

3. Alert your supervisor of the situation.

4. Develop a plan with a range of options for your safety. Keep this plan in a safe, private place away from your abuser. Do not tell anyone about this plan unless he/she is a part of it. Do not leave notes, addresses, appointments, or other clues lying around.

5. Talk to schools and childcare providers about who has permission to pick up the children.

6. Find a lawyer knowledgeable about family violence to explore custody, visitation, and divorce provisions that protect you and your children.

7. Practice different exits from your home or office. Know what doors, windows, elevators, or stairwells to use. Plan how you are going to get to safe places.

8. Have options for who you can call, where you can stay, and items you may need, such as money, clothing, medication, driver’s license, birth certificate, Social Security card, credit cards, insurance cards, police reports, any orders of protection you have filed, address book, car/house/bank keys, and photos of any of your injuries.

9. Consider packing a bag in advance and leaving it with a friend, as well as an extra set of car/house keys.

10. Always have someone walk you to your vehicle at night

11. In an emergency call 911.

12. File a protection order if you leave an abuser

**Steps to Follow if You Are Being Stalked**

1. Be clear that the relationship is over. Tell the stalker “no” once and only once. The more you respond (even to say “no”), the more the stalker is encouraged.

2. If the stalker has your phone number, do not change it. If you change your number this may upset the stalker and result in worse behavior. Always let calls go to voicemail and get another unlisted number. If he/she leaves messages, this can help your police case.

3. Report stalking behaviors to the police.

4. Report the situation to your local district/Central Office Workplace Security Coordinator.

5. Alert your supervisor of the situation.

6. Keep a detailed journal of all incidents and suspicious occurrences. Keep all e-mails, voice-mails, etc. Make sure to keep your records in a safe place.

7. Let co-workers and neighbors know what is happening and give them a detailed description of the stalker and any vehicles he/she uses. Have them alert you if they see the stalker.

8. Get to know the locations of police precincts, fire stations and all-night convenience stores. If you are being followed, do not go home. Go to one of these locations to get help.

9. Find more resources online.

**Resources**

• Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; ww.mocadsv.org

• United Way; www.unitedwaycemo.org, www.stl.unitedway.org

• National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7233

• National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-4653