

# Newsletter Spring 2016



**Make It Our Business**  
[www.makeitourbusiness.ca](http://www.makeitourbusiness.ca)

## Congratulations to our Workplace Champions!

Recently, Make It Our Business (MIOB) recognized 100 Organizations who completed workplace trainings. Since we launched our Make It Our Business (MIOB) workplace training program five years ago, over 400 companies have participated in our trainings to learn how to recognize and respond to domestic violence in the workplace!

Across Canada many organizations from the private, public and non-profit sectors have demonstrated their commitment to combating domestic violence at work. Manufacturing plants, federal and provincial government departments, sports teams, health care facilities and many more workplaces have made preventing and responding to domestic violence their business. We are very excited to share their names with you.

A few of our Champions who completed our trainings in the past 2 years are:

- Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, [@MountSinai](https://twitter.com/MountSinai)
- Muslim Resource Centre of Social Support and Integration [@mrcssi](https://twitter.com/mrcssi)
- Réseau-femmes Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board
- Meridian Lightweight Technologies Inc.
- Durham Region Health Unit [@DurhamHealth](https://twitter.com/DurhamHealth)
- Conference Board of Canada [@confboardofcda](https://twitter.com/confboardofcda)
- Toronto Blue Jays [@BlueJays](https://twitter.com/BlueJays)

For the complete list of recent Champions:

<http://makeitourbusiness.ca/recognizing-workplace-champions>

Our trainings engage organizations at four levels:

- **Develop Awareness** with all employees about company policies, procedures and where to find help
- **Basic Education** requires all employees to receive the core content in a (minimum) one hour presentation. A three hour session is available for managers and supervisors
- **Basic Leadership** introduces leaders to their responsibilities for preventing and responding to domestic violence in the workplace
- **Leadership Development** for supervisors and managers who are responsible to protect workers
- **Organizational Readiness** provides the most comprehensive training support for leaders to acquire critical knowledge necessary to develop and drive a company-wide program of action

See more about our trainings and how your organization can become a champion:

<http://makeitourbusiness.ca/training/training-options>



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Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Middlesex  
*Mental health for all*

## CMHA Middlesex Achieves and Maintains Organizational Readiness for Domestic Violence

Canadian Mental Health Association, Middlesex (CMHA M) in London Ontario has a comprehensive Organizational Readiness Approach to Domestic Violence and has used Make It Our Business (MIOB) training and resources to achieve this.

Patricia Verkley, Manager, Human Resources at CMHA M conducts a presentation to each staff team on an annual basis regarding Domestic Violence. MIOB interviewed Patricia, you can view the video interview on our MIOB website. The presentation is thorough. She teaches how to recognize warning signs in a person's social and work behaviour that indicates they may be experiencing abuse and provides many strategies for supporting them.

The training presentation they created begins by addressing Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Legislation, amended by Bill 168, which added a section about domestic violence in the workplace:

*"If an employer becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence that would likely expose a worker to physical injury may occur in the workplace, the employer shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the worker."*

The presentation is thorough, reflecting the preparedness of the workforce and commitment of the organization to address domestic violence as noted:

*"CMHA Middlesex is committed to developing a workplace culture that ensures safety and dignity for all employees, and is based on the values of respect and non-violence."*

*CMHA Middlesex is committed to supporting an employee who may be at risk of domestic violence by providing accessible workplace programs and a supportive work environment."*

Of course awareness and commitment alone cannot keep someone experiencing domestic violence safe at work. CMHA Middlesex has an Organizational Readiness Approach to domestic violence that is demonstrated by:

- Basic Education for all staff on the dynamics of power and control
- Learning to recognize warning signs of domestic violence in social settings and at work
- How to respond to disclosures for coworkers, Managers and HR
- Organizational commitment for staff to access supports without judgment
- Policies and procedures, including a customized safety plan to meet the needs of the individual and their circumstances
- Suggestions for talking to the abuser; particularly if they work in the organization
- A Violence Response Team, comprised of staff with Leadership Development training in domestic violence
- Referrals to local resources and support organizations

The training has useful tools embedded such as "Talking to the Victim" a video from WorkSafe BC, demonstrating to staff approaches to talking with a person experiencing abuse.

The Make It Our Business workplace education program would like an opportunity to assist your workplace in being safe and meeting legislation requirements. Contact us and begin to make work safe for those who may not be safe at home.



*Excerpt from WorkSafe BC's "Talking to the Victim" training video*

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## Pan-Canadian Survey on DV in the Workplace

The cost of domestic violence to Canadian business is startling. It's estimated Canadian employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence (DV). The cost to individuals, families and society go far beyond that.

Until very recently, very little was known about the scope and impacts of this problem in Canada. The evidence linking economic independence, being in paid employment and DV has been steadily developing, and we now know that women with a history of DV have a more disrupted work history, have lower personal incomes, have had to change jobs more often, and more often work in casual and part time roles than women without violence experiences. We've also learned that being employed is a key pathway to leaving a violent relationship; the financial security that employment affords can allow women to escape the isolation of an abusive relationship, and maintain, as far as possible, their home and standard of living.

In an effort to gather more Canadian data, The University of Western Ontario partnered with the Canadian Labour Congress to conduct a pan-Canadian survey on DV in the workplace. Survey results were released last month.

The survey report titled "[Can Work be Safe When Home Isn't?](#)" reveals some startling statistics. More than one third of workers across the country have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime, and for more than half of those affected, the violence followed them to work. 6.5 percent of survey respondents indicated they are currently experiencing domestic violence.

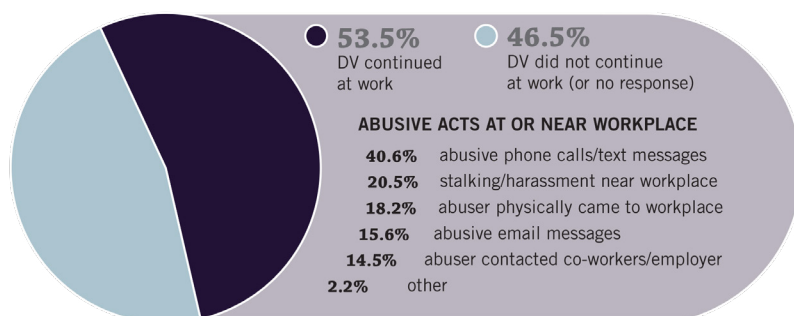


Figure 3 of "Can Work Be Safe When Home Isn't" survey

Among those exposed to domestic violence:

- 38% reported that the violence affected their ability to get to work.
- Fully 8.5% of those affected had lost a job due to domestic violence.
- Over half reported that the violence continued at the workplace in some way, for example, harassing phone calls from the abuser, and stalking.
- The vast majority reported that it affected their work performance in some way, for example, due to being distracted, tired, or unwell.

Ultimately, stronger evidence confirms that impact and cost of DV in Canadian workplaces and will help to shape legislation, policies and practices that results in progressive change. It will help promote violence prevention and safety in workplaces; hold abusers accountable; and lift the burden from victims so they don't have to deal with domestic violence alone.

Survey results reinforce the fact that employers can make a difference by [taking action on domestic violence](#). Learn the [warning signs](#) of DV and [how to create a safe workplace](#).

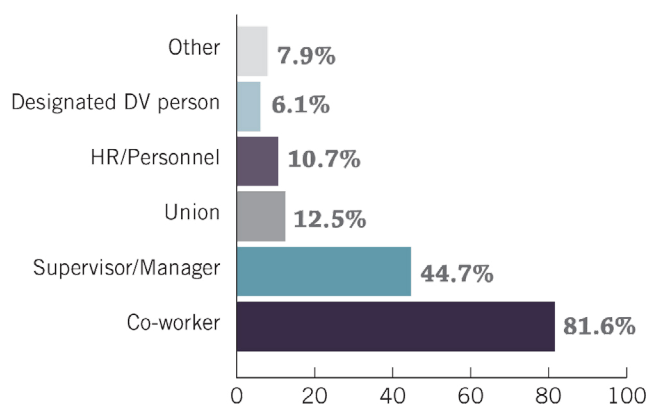


Figure 5 of "Can Work Be Safe When Home Isn't" survey

## Make It Our Business Interview with The Conference Board of Canada's Charles Boyer, Research Associate II, Workplace Health, Wellness and Safety Research Group

The Conference Board of Canada is an independent, evidence based Not For Profit that does not lobby for specific interests and is funded through service fees charged to the private and public sectors. They are experts in: conducting, publishing and disseminating research; forecasting and economic analysis; organizational capacity building and performance as well as public policy, to name a few areas of expertise.

Over the past year the Conference Board has been very active promoting and raising questions regarding Domestic Violence in the workplace. Through its network and website they have promoted or created:

- **Blogs on Domestic Violence at work**
  - [From Home to Office: Canadian Workplaces Are Stepping Up to Protect Employees Who Are Victims Of Domestic Violence](#)
  - [Does Your Workplace Have a Reactive or Pro-active Approach to Domestic Violence?](#)
- **Links to studies**
  - [Domestic Violence and the Role of the Employer](#)
- **Webinars and trainings offered across Canada**
  - [Domestic Violence and the Role of the Employer](#)
  - [Domestic Violence in the Workplace: The Impact on Canadian Workers](#)

MIOB posed some questions to The Conference Board of Canada's Charles Boyer, Research Associate II, Workplace Health, Wellness and Safety Research Group.



One of the most impactful activities The Conference Board of Canada conducted was a survey of its members and a report on the findings.

### 1. Why is The Conference Board of Canada working to raise awareness of Domestic Violence in the workplace with members?

Our work in this area started around the same time Western University's Pan Canadian survey, which focused on employee experiences with domestic violence, was wrapping up. Along with the Western University study, there was a lot of media coverage around high profile athletes and

domestic violence. Members of Executive Networks within our Leadership and Human Resources Research group began asking questions about what resources were available to help employers address domestic violence. Specifically, one of our Executive Networks, the Council on Workplace Health and Wellness, which I manage, had a meeting to discuss domestic violence as part of a larger conversation on creating a respectful workplace. Through engaging with our members we realized there was a gap that we could help fill by surveying our members on what current policies and procedures they implement in cases of domestic violence.

*Continued on next page..*

## **2. What was the most surprising information you have learned from your survey?**

One key finding was how receptive organizations were to the notion of the need to support individuals who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. For instance, 96% of employers in our survey believe domestic violence impacts the performance and productivity of employees.

However, while most organizations recognize the need to support victims, few offer training and education on how managers and co-workers should react when they discover a co-worker experiencing domestic violence. Previous research has shown that among employees who disclose domestic violence to someone at work most will choose to disclose to a manager or co-worker. Our results show that while most employers with a domestic violence policy have roles and responsibilities for both managers and co-workers, few employers actually offer training and education for them.

## **3. What does The Conference Board of Canada hope members will do with the information that has been provided?**

We hope that this information will help our members and other Canadian employers to better address domestic violence in the workplace. The report contains survey data as well as practical tools employers can use to develop a domestic violence policy.

## **4. Has The Conference Board of Canada advocated for and changes in government level policies regarding domestic violence at work, or are there plans to do so in the future?**

No we have not advocated for government changes, but laws like Bill 168 in Ontario are steps in the right direction to give employers a roadmap to better understand what their

responsibilities are in situations involving domestic violence. Aware and supportive employers may help employees feel more comfortable about coming forward with issues of domestic violence.

## **5. Have any members shared a story to demonstrate your promotion of resources and training has made a difference?**

We have received positive comments from experts in the field, as well as employers, about our work in this area. Already, the report has been downloaded 191 times from our website. The report is a great step towards better understanding what employers have in place to support employees experiencing domestic violence. As we outlined in the report, while many employers understand that domestic violence impacts the performance and productivity of employees, there is still a lack training and education in workplaces on how to best address these situations.