

Intimate partner violence and the workplace

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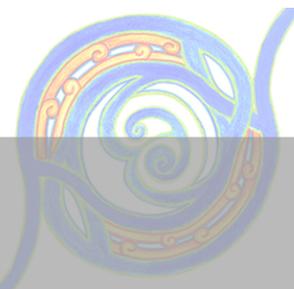
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Key Messages

- Intimate partner violence is common.
- Many victims and perpetrators are in paid work.
- Workplaces provide an ideal place for intervention and raising awareness about intimate partner violence.
- Barriers to action by workplaces can include: a lack of understanding of the size, nature and impact of the problem and not knowing how to respond to the issue; not recognising the high cost to their businesses.
- Active adoption of strategies to support those who experience intimate partner violence is important to secure their long-term safety. There are local and international examples of these strategies. These include:
 - Adopting workplace practices and policies (e.g. flexible work hours, flexible work locations, security practices, awareness raising)
 - The inclusion of entitlements that support victims' safety in collective agreements
 - Partnering with specialised family violence agencies to support in-house training and facilitate referrals
 - Legislation, related to work leave, anti-discrimination and occupational safety and health.
- By actively engaging with the realities of intimate partner violence, organisations can avoid taking on the financial and resource costs associated with its occurrence and impacts in the workplace. Most importantly, it will help establish healthier and more equitable workplaces for all employees.



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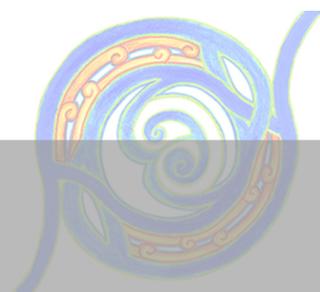
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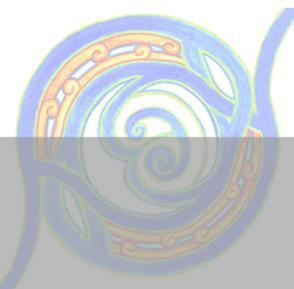
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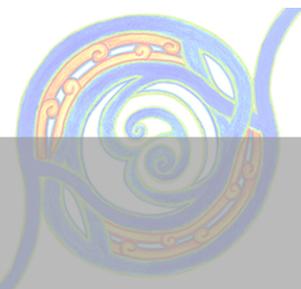


Terminology

Term	Definition
Intimate partner	Includes spouses, cohabiting partners, dating partners, boyfriends/girlfriends and separated or divorced partners.
Intimate partner violence	Includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, damage to property and threats of physical or sexual abuse towards an intimate partner.
Family violence	Violence and abuse against any person whom that person is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with. This can include sibling against sibling, child against adult, adult against child and violence by an intimate partner against the other partner.

A note on terminology

Internationally, the term ‘domestic violence’ usually refers only to intimate partner violence. However in New Zealand’s *Domestic Violence Act 1995*, ‘domestic violence’ is used to cover violence occurring in a range of intimate, family and other relationships such as flatmates. In this paper, we have used ‘intimate partner violence’ to avoid confusion. When citing other studies or documents, where necessary we have used the terminology they use.



1. Introduction

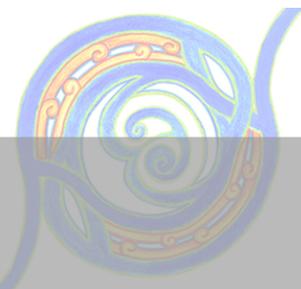
The aim of this Issues Paper is to raise awareness of intimate partner violence (IPV) as a matter that has serious implications for the workplace. The paper highlights the need for employers to see the *perpetrator's* behaviour as the problem rather than penalising or holding the victim accountable. It also highlights emerging approaches that can be used by employers and the government to fulfil their responsibilities to employees and to wider society.

Much of the population spends a significant amount of time in the workplace. In New Zealand, 72% of the population between the ages of 15 to 64 are in paid employment, spending anywhere from a few hours to upwards of 40 hours per week working.¹ Women are estimated to make up 47% of the labour force, with 67% of all women doing some form of paid work.^{1,2}

Intimate partner violence is common. The World Health Organization estimates that on average 30% of women experience intimate partner violence.³ Similarly, the New Zealand Violence Against Women Study reported that 1 in 3 ever-partnered women between the ages of 18 and 64 experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, and that about 1 in 20 had experienced such violence in the past year.⁴ The New Zealand National Crime Victimization Survey found that 21% of women who had ever had a partner had experienced physical violence in their lifetime.⁵ While IPV can affect both men and women, the majority takes place between opposite sex intimate partners, with men offending most frequently against women victims.³⁻⁶ The Family Violence Death Review Committee found that of all intimate partner related homicides in New Zealand between 2009-2012, 76% were committed by men.⁶ Men account for the majority of intimate partner violence arrests and women apply for 90% of protection orders.⁷ Accordingly, in this paper 'he' is generally used for perpetrators and 'she' for victims.

The *New Zealand Women's Safety Survey*, conducted in 1996, provided a more in depth look at the experiences of women who had experienced violence from their male partners. This study reported that 17% of study participants had experienced stalking by their ex-partners outside their workplace or house.⁸ Coupled with the international research that shows that partners and ex-partners who stalk are more likely to become physically violent, the findings suggest that IPV can have serious implications for women and their workplaces.⁹⁻¹²

While IPV is quite common within the population, it is an issue that is seldom recognised in work settings. The US Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence surveyed a random sample of 200 CEOs and 500 employees of Fortune 1500 companies. They found that while CEOs and employees think intimate partner violence is a serious social problem and believe it can have harmful effects for the workplace, most CEOs significantly underestimated the impact of intimate partner violence within their company.¹³ CEOs believed that approximately six per cent of their employees were victims of intimate partner violence, while employees estimated the number to be nearly 18%. This suggests



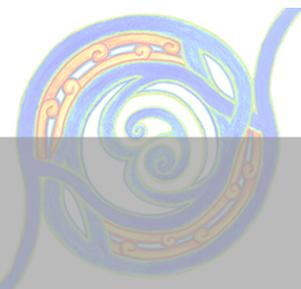
that other employees are more likely than senior management to recognise the impact of intimate partner violence on their co-workers.

Women who experience IPV often want to keep the abuse secret, because they feel shame and embarrassment, and fear losing their job if they disclose what is happening.¹⁴ This can inadvertently reinforce senior management belief that intimate partner violence is rare among their employees.¹⁵ Compounding the issue of underestimation of prevalence, is the issue of overestimation of risk. Senior managers may have had limited opportunity to learn about IPV, so may base their understanding on high profile cases of extreme violence in the workplace. This has the potential to lead employers overestimating the risk of an attack at the workplace when they discover they have an employee experiencing intimate partner violence. This belief, if not tempered by more accurate information on IPV, can result in employers responding to victims in ways that do not support their safety (e.g. by dismissing the woman from employment, if she is harassed or stalked by a perpetrator).¹⁵

This limited understanding needs to be addressed because employment, and the workplace, can be crucial supports for women exposed to violence. Employment and the subsequent economic security that can arise from employment can help to create pathways out of the violence. Rothman, Hathaway, Stidsen and de Vries identified six ways employment can assist victims: improving their finances, promoting physical safety, increasing self-esteem, improving social connectedness, providing mental respite, and providing motivation or a 'purpose in life'.¹⁶ The economic security that can be provided by employment can give victims a stronger sense of self and feelings of competence. Furthermore, women who had experienced IPV reported that the workplace acted as a respite from their perpetrators, providing important stretches of time where they had physical safety and could make plans to leave their abusive relationships.

However, if women who experience IPV do not get adequate support from their workplace, they can be at increased risk of staying in the abusive relationship, because they are reliant on the perpetrators of the violence for financial support.¹⁷ This can result in serious occupational, health, safety, and economic consequences for both workers and workplaces.

This paper seeks to outline how the actions of perpetrators of intimate partner violence impact on the lives of workers, their colleagues and workplace. It also outlines some of the impacts at the social and economic level. It is hoped that this knowledge will support and encourage workplaces to adopt policies and procedures that will protect the employment and safety of women who are abused, and help the employers support and retain valuable workers.



There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that as well as the potential for breaking the cycle of domestic violence, the introduction of workplace protections for people affected by domestic violence both saves employers costs (recruitment, retention, re-training, health and safety) and increases productivity.

A framework was developed by Kahui, Ku and Snively, designed to specify the workplace protections, calculate the costs and assess the changes in productivity.⁷⁰

They reported that:

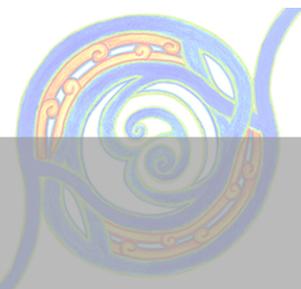
- Domestic violence is estimated to cost employers in New Zealand at least \$368 million for the June year 2014.
- If nothing is done, projections indicate that the total costs will be at least \$3.7 billion dollars when combined over the next ten years.
- A growing body of evidence suggests implementation of domestic violence specific workplace protections in the workplace leads to increased levels of production and productivity.
- Although these protections will cost employers to begin with, the net benefits will outweigh the net costs.
- The value of implementing specific workplace protections will offset the current (hidden) costs of domestic violence and the projected costs of the implementation of workplace protections: productivity gains from workplace protections have the potential to more than compensate for the costs of the protections to address domestic violence.

Kahui S, Ku B, Snively S. Productivity gains from workplace protection of victims of domestic violence. Wellington: Public Service Association; 2014.

1.1 Structure of this paper

This paper summarises findings from international and local research on the ways in which intimate partner violence affects employees, colleagues and the wider workplace. It also examines how the gendered organisation of work affects the way intimate partner violence is viewed and handled by employers.

The paper concludes by looking at literature on interventions and policies that could be helpful in reducing the harm and costs of intimate partner violence for both workers and employers, and describes some promising local initiatives that can be accessed to support employers in responding to IPV within the workplace.



2. Intimate partner violence and work

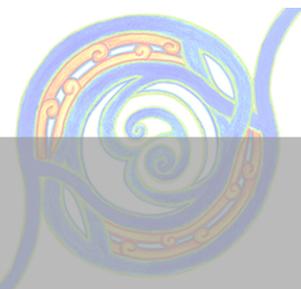
2.1 Impacts on work functioning and ability to acquire and maintain work

Multiple studies have shown that the abusive behaviours perpetrators engage in have consequences for victims' ability to function effectively at work and maintain employment. At its most extreme, intimate partner violence can pose a serious risk to workplace safety for victims, and potentially for colleagues. In the United States, while there has been an overall decline in workplace injuries and fatalities, the rate of murder of women at work has increased, with workplace homicide being a leading cause of occupational death for women.¹⁸ Tiesman et al report that in the US, from 2003 to 2008, 33% of workplace homicides of women were committed by someone the victim was close to, and that of these, 78% were committed by an intimate partner.¹⁹

Intimate partner violence frequently includes actions by perpetrators that are intended to disrupt the victim's employment and sabotage their independence. Women who experience IPV report feeling distracted, tired and unwell, needing to take time off for medical or legal reasons, being forced to take time off by the perpetrator, being late for work, and being too upset to work.²⁰⁻²⁴ These effects can jeopardise the person's employment and have the potential to impact on their safety and the safety of those around them.²⁵ Perpetrator actions can include a wide range of behaviour affecting the victim's ability to focus at work, and may result in causing the victim to either quit or be terminated from their role.²⁶ If responses to perpetrator actions do not prioritise victims' safety, then employers may experience lost productivity, worker tardiness and absenteeism, perpetrator disruptions in the workplace, and even acts of violence against the primary victim of the intimate partner violence and/or co-workers.²⁵

In addition to these immediate impacts, abusive tactics by perpetrators can impact on victims' ability to stay in or return to work. Many women who have left their abusive partner have reported that they were unable to look for work or accept a position because they were afraid the perpetrator would be able to find them and cause them harm.¹⁴ In addition, studies have shown that women who experience intimate partner violence have difficulty maintaining consistent employment, as frequently they are forced to resign, or their positions are terminated because of the way intimate partner violence interferes with work.^{22, 27} In New Zealand, Pouwhare also found that experiencing intimate partner violence severely limited the participants' ability to find and maintain employment.³⁹

A study by Lloyd found that women who had experienced abuse were significantly more likely to have had periods of unemployment and have more health problems than those with no experience of intimate partner violence.²⁸ These effects can be long-term. Frequently victims of intimate partner violence have reduced annual work hours and have difficulty with job retention for years after the abuse has ended.^{17, 27, 29}



Having a work history that is filled with frequent job changes can also make it difficult to obtain work as time goes on, as many employers are unwilling or unable to take on the cost of hiring and training a new employee, only to have them leave the job shortly thereafter.²⁴ Loss of regular employment contributes to women experiencing greater levels of poverty, stress and ill health effects, which can create far reaching impacts for the woman, her family, and wider society.^{24, 30-33}

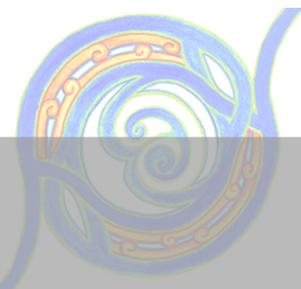
Further, intimate partner violence affects the overall economic wellbeing of victims and their families, and the consequences of the violence can lead to increased consumption of goods as well as the erosion of savings.³⁴ For example, victims are more likely to have additional medical expenses, incur costs associated with having to relocate, need to replace destroyed property, and need to pay for legal advice or representation.³⁴ Thus, perpetrator behaviours mean that women in abusive relationships tend to have a harder time meeting financial demands and experience more difficulty providing for the basic needs of their families compared with women who are not in abusive relationships. It is not unusual for women who experience intimate partner violence to have trouble paying for utilities, experience food insecurity or face eviction from, or foreclosure on, their housing.^{31, 35-37}

In addition to the economic insecurity that stems from the financial costs associated with intimate partner violence, women exposed to intimate partner violence also frequently face reduced incomes. They are more likely to have partners who do not want them to work compared to women with no experience with intimate partner violence.³⁸ Perpetrators can interfere with women's work by limiting their access to resources or by using violence and harassing behaviour to either stop the woman from working or make working difficult.^{39, 40} As a result, women exposed to violence may experience significant reduction in wages as a result of taking time off work or job loss.

The US National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) estimates that intimate partner violence costs US\$1 billion annually, through lost productivity from employment and household work.⁴¹ A study by Smith found that women who experienced intimate partner violence at any time as an adult, earned on average US\$3,900 less per year than women who had never experienced abuse.⁴² In another study, Greenfeld et al found that American victims lose approximately US\$18 million income each year.⁴³ In addition to lost wages, the instability created by the abuse often results in women being unable to stay with a single employer for an extended period of time, contributing to significant losses in future promotions and benefits that come with longer employment.²⁴

2.2 Perpetrator tactics

Perpetrators of intimate partner violence may subject their partners to a range of abusive and disruptive behaviours designed to harm the woman or interfere with her ability to work. Workplaces may be targeted by perpetrators because it is likely to be one place where she can be reliably located, either by phone or in person (e.g. a place that she arrives to and leaves from at the same time every day).^{14, 44}



2.3 Recognising the effects of perpetrator tactics on work

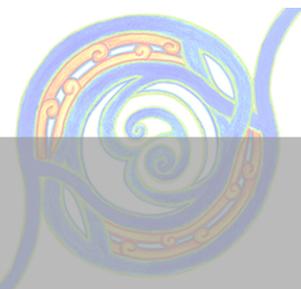
Swanberg, Logan and Macke group the tactics that perpetrators may use into three categories: *sabotage*, *stalking* and *on the job harassment*.^{26, 45} *Sabotage* consists of actions the perpetrator takes to either stop the victim from going to work or that cause them to arrive late. These behaviours usually take place while the victim is at home with the abuser.^{26, 46-48} *Stalking* involves the perpetrator behaving in threatening ways directed at the victim.^{26, 45} *On the job harassment* consists of behaviours that directly interfere with the victim working.^{28, 33, 48, 49} It differs from stalking in that harassment involves the perpetrator actually entering the workplace, or making contact with the victim in the workplace, whereas stalking involves menacing behaviours just outside of the workplace.^{27, 30, 50} Specific examples of these tactics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Abusive tactics by perpetrators of intimate partner violence

Sabotage	Stalking	On-the-Job harassment
Disabling the victim's vehicle	Watching victim while she works	Making a scene at the victim's workplace
Failing to arrive for or interfering with childcare	Lurking outside of the workplace	Not allowing the victim to finish her work
Hiding or destroying work uniforms or clothing	Waiting for the victim to finish work	Threatening the victim or her co-workers
Hiding car keys or taking transport money	Meeting the victim on her route home	Repeatedly calling or texting the victim
Physically restraining, harming	Following the victim to or from work	Physically assaulting the victim or her co-workers

Source: Swanberg J, Logan T, Macke C. Intimate partner violence, employment, and the workplace consequences and future directions. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 2005;6(4):286-312

Similar abusive tactics have been noted in New Zealand research. Through interviews and focus groups with 30 women recruited from refuges across New Zealand, Pouwhare examined the impact of intimate partner violence on Māori women's ability to work.⁵¹ Most participants had been in long-term employment and many were the sole income earners in their households. She found that the women experienced many different abusive behaviours aimed at limiting their ability to work. This included the perpetrator: not following through on promises to provide childcare, harassing the women at work, threatening the women's colleagues, destroying the woman's work clothes and using physical violence to restrict participants from going to work. Pouwhare's study focused specifically on Māori women and took into account many of the overlapping issues (e.g. ageism, sexual



harassment, colonisation and racism) that contribute to the marginalisation of Māori women experiencing IPV.

2.4 Work interference

The actions of perpetrators can have implications for workers (both the person experiencing IPV and the person's colleagues), and the employer. These are summarised in the section below, and in Table 2.

At home

Perpetrators use a variety of tactics to impede women's employment, the most common tactic being to sabotage the victim's ability to go to work or find work. Perpetrators frequently stole victims' car keys or transportation money to prevent victims from going to work. In a study of 518 women who had been employed within the last year and also had current protection orders for intimate partner violence, 85% of the participants reported experiencing some kind of work interference by their partners.²²

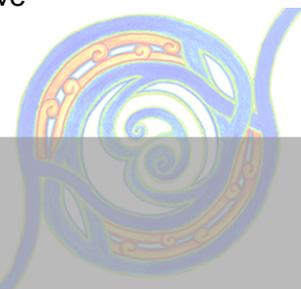
The Australian Domestic Violence Rights and Entitlements Project²¹ surveyed 3,611 people from six different employment organisations and unions. Nearly one third of those who participated had personal experience with intimate partner violence and of these, almost half reported that their ability to get to work had been affected. Approximately 67% of those who reported that their ability to get to work was affected said that physical injury or restraint was the reason. Other tactics reported included perpetrators: hiding or stealing car keys or transportation money (28%), refusing to show up to care for children (22%) and women having personal documents hidden or stolen (21%).

At work

In the study by Swanberg et al, 17% of participants reported that perpetrators engaged in abusive behaviours against them while they were at work. When victims were harassed at work, 62% reported they received repeated phone calls, and 40% reported the perpetrator physically turned up at the workplace and harassed or threatened them. Almost half of those who were physically harassed at work said that it occurred multiple times.

Stalking

Thirty five percent of women who participated in the Swanberg et al study reported being stalked and the majority of women who experienced it reported that it was a recurrent behaviour.⁵¹ In another study, the majority (95%) of women who were stalked also experienced harassment and interference in the workplace.²² Stalkers may also use significantly more harassing tactics, and the stalking may continue longer for employed women: one study reported that stalking lasted three times longer for employed women than it did for women who were unemployed at the time they were stalked.⁵² Stalking may also make violence at work more likely.⁵³ This increased risk of violence in the workplace is frequently attributed to the fact that, while a woman will usually take extensive



precautions to avoid running into her stalker in other aspects of her life, perpetrators take advantage of the fact that her workplace is the one place that he can be generally be sure to find her.⁵³ Further, the physical presence of a perpetrator at the workplace can have severe repercussions, as on rare occasions, perpetrators may become physically violent towards their victims and the victim's co-workers. This can lead to injuries and sometimes even homicide.^{19, 54}

2.5 Effects on colleagues

Perpetrators' abusive actions towards women have effects that reach beyond the immediate impacts and can extend into the broader work environment. Anyone connected with the victim's workplace could potentially be affected. Witnessing another person experience violence is distressing in and of itself, and can be compounded if co-workers and bystanders are also directly harassed, threatened or harmed.⁵⁵⁻⁵⁷

While potential violence in the workplace is frightening, it is an extreme example of the consequences experienced by the colleagues of victims of intimate partner violence. More commonly, co-workers experience fallout from the person having to take time off from work or being distracted while at work. The person's responsibilities must then be given to co-workers, thereby increasing the colleague's workload, which can potentially decrease the colleague's overall productivity.²⁵ Co-workers also often provide emotional support and advice to victims, and will sometimes be the ones who intervene if an abuser is harassing their partner at work.^{25, 58} These experiences can cause some level of trauma and could have financial repercussions for both the co-worker and the organisation with which they are employed.

2.6 Effects on employers

Employers also shoulder economic and resource costs associated with intimate partner violence. As discussed in previous sections, workers experiencing intimate partner violence frequently have to take time off from work, are tardy, change jobs often and have decreased concentration leading to poor productivity.^{27, 58} A US study reported that productivity by victims of intimate partner violence can be reduced by as much as 49%.⁵⁹ This loss in individual employee productivity (e.g. through missed work), and also lead to greater overall organisational losses in productivity.³² Johnson cites an article by Levin in which it was estimated that intimate partner violence cost employers US \$3 to \$5 billion dollars annually.^{44, 60}

The effects of intimate partner violence on both physical and mental health can also cost employers more in terms of sickness and annual leave benefits, as employees seek to recover from or respond to the violence.⁶¹ In addition to the direct costs and losses to businesses, companies can also suffer from a damaged reputation and the loss of clients when the quality of goods or services being bought is affected or, more drastically, when a perpetrator disrupts or harms people at the workplace.⁶²

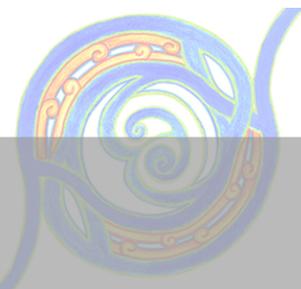


Table 2: Results of abusive tactics

Perpetrator actions	Sabotage	Stalking	On the Job harassment
Effects on employee	Unable to get to work, loss in earnings, facing disciplinary actions at work, being fired from work	Feeling fearful and/or distracted at work, being unable to come and go freely	Being prevented from completing assigned tasks or focus on work, being fearful/distracted at work, physically harmed or threatened
Effects on employer	Loss in productivity, being short staffed, loss in potential income	Having distracted employees, loss in productivity, disturbing clients/customers	Lost productivity and income, busy phone lines, damaged property, fearful employees and clients/customers, violence in the workplace
Effects on colleagues	Pressure to cover victim’s missed shifts and compensate for missed work	Feeling fearful/distracted at work, having to give support to victim	Being prevented from completing assigned tasks or work, feeling fearful/distracted, physically harmed or threatened

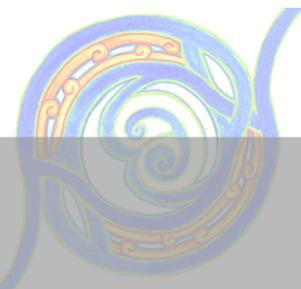
Source: Swanberg J, Logan T, Macke C. Intimate partner violence, employment, and the workplace consequences and future directions. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 2005;6(4):286-312

2.7 Employing perpetrators

In addition to the costs and threats that perpetrators generate for the person and employers of the abused person, it should be noted that perpetrators can also place a significant burden on businesses due to using work time or equipment (e.g. company mobile phones, company car, work email) to engage in abusive behaviours.¹⁵

Rothman and Corso explored the relationship between being a perpetrator of intimate partner violence and work absenteeism and loss in productivity.⁶³ They found that perpetration of intimate partner violence was correlated with missed work and decreased productivity. Specifically, 75% of perpetrators missed at least one day of work and 46% reported being late for reasons related to engaging in intimate partner violence. These reasons included going to court or speaking with the police. Additionally, 78% of perpetrators reported that they used work time and resources to threaten or harass their victims. Schmidt and Barnett found similar results, reporting that one third of their participants took either paid or unpaid days from work to either engage in abuse or deal with issues stemming from being abusive, such as going to court.⁶⁴

Most perpetrators in the Rothman and Corso study stated that they faced no repercussions at work for their actions; rather their employers were supportive of them and sometimes provided assistance



including posting bail or speaking on the abuser's behalf in court.⁶³ While being supportive of employees is important, this needs to be done in ways that does not condone or support the violent behaviour.

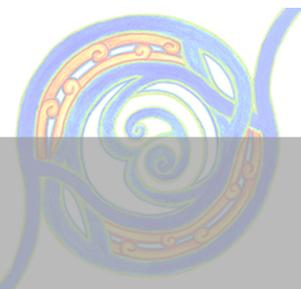
3. Economic consequences for society

Several authors have estimated the economic costs of violence to society.^{34, 41, 65, 66} While the absolute economic cost is difficult to determine for a variety of methodological reasons, many researchers try to estimate both direct and indirect costs. Day et al divided the economic costs of intimate partner violence into four categories: *direct tangible costs*, *indirect tangible costs*, *direct intangible costs* and *indirect intangible costs*.³⁴ *Direct tangible costs* are the costs that can be immediately counted from goods and services consumed as a result of the violence. *Indirect tangible costs* are the costs associated with lost potential, such as lost income. *Direct intangible costs* are costs that have no monetary value but come directly from intimate partner violence, such as pain and suffering. *Indirect intangible costs* are costs that come indirectly from intimate partner violence and that have no monetary value, such as the emotional impact on children from witnessing intimate partner violence.

In New Zealand, a 1994 study by Snively looked at the total economic costs of intimate partner violence, including violence against women and children.⁶⁷ Snively examined data from multiple agencies about the costs expended on intimate partner violence related services and created an estimated accounting of the financial impact of intimate partner violence on New Zealand. Snively estimated that the total costs from intimate partner violence to the New Zealand economy were between NZD \$1.2 billion and NZD \$5.3 billion per year. In today's terms, it is estimated that these costs would be approximately \$8 billion per annum.^{68, 69} A more recent study estimated that domestic violence costs employers in New Zealand at least \$368 million for the June year 2014.⁷⁰

Snively's study is consistent with international studies that quantify the economic costs of intimate partner violence. A study from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated the costs from intimate partner violence towards women at more than US\$5.8 billion each year.⁴¹ A study from Canada calculated the economic costs of intimate partner violence as CA\$1.5 billion per year.⁷¹ In Australia costs of intimate partner violence are estimated to be about AUD\$8.1 billion per year.⁷² The UK estimates the cost of intimate partner violence at £23 billion per year.⁷³

Overall, it is clear that costs of intimate partner violence are shouldered by multiple groups including victims, perpetrators, witnesses, employers, government and society overall.³⁴ Costs are incurred through responding to perpetrators and caring for victims of intimate partner violence, but also through the loss in economic stimulus from the taxes which work-impaired victims are no longer contributing to the Gross National Product (GNP).^{34, 72} Intimate partner violence also slows economic growth by diverting financial resources that would otherwise have been spent elsewhere, towards goods and services needed to deal with the impact of violence. Work impairment from



experience of IPV contributes to lowered standards of living, reduced productivity, and lost investments and savings.³⁴ Moreover, the damage to the GNP is increased by the economic multiplier effect, which makes the income lost from intimate partner violence exponentially greater than the initial costs. In other words, each dollar spent on the effects of intimate partner violence, is a dollar not being invested in or spent on increasing human capital or creating long term interest.⁷⁴

These costs represent conservative estimates of the economic price of intimate partner violence. Clearly these costs do not represent good investment for individuals or society. Fostering understanding and awareness of the 'misspend' resulting from IPV can direct our thoughts to identifying more productive ways of supporting victims, responding to perpetrators, and minimising costs to employers.

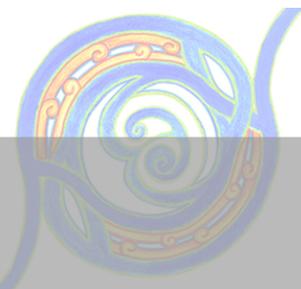
4. Workplace interventions

Workplaces provide an ideal place for intervention and raising awareness about IPV, because it is a location where managers and co-workers may have sustained interaction with victims while they are away from the perpetrators of the abuse.^{25, 75} Employers have the opportunity to reach a significant number of victims because even though perpetrators often do not want their victims to work and engage in tactics interfering with work, many victims are nonetheless involved in paid employment out of necessity to support their families.^{51, 76} Further, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that as well as the potential for breaking the cycle of intimate partner violence, the introduction of workplace protections for people affected by domestic violence both saves employers costs (e.g. in recruitment, retention, re-training, health and safety) and increases productivity.⁷⁰

Active adoption of strategies to support those who experience IPV is important to secure their long-term safety. Both formal and informal strategies and responses need to be in alignment. For example, while some businesses are very supportive of employees, others are less supportive in relation to life issues interfering with work, even when there are stated formal policies surrounding work life balance.⁷⁷ An organisation's culture can also influence whether or not a victim of intimate partner violence is able to access support; if the culture has firmly entrenched gender divisions in the workplace, support can be more difficult to access.⁷⁷

4.1 Gendered organisation theory

Swanberg and Macke also note how gendered expectations about the impact of home life on work and work performance can impede responses to those experiencing IPV.²⁴ Gendered organisation theory, first described by Acker, explains that traditionally, men were able and expected to engage in paid employment that often made significant demands on their time, keeping them away from the domestic sphere.⁸³ The result of this gendered view of work is that businesses have developed in such a way that values an unencumbered and openly available worker; the demands of the workplace can require employees keep schedules and meet productivity demands that treat them as



though work is their sole obligation. Swanberg argues that these demands exist in their current form because employment practices predominantly recognise a male employee archetype, which is the underpinning of the practices and organisational structures that make up businesses.⁸⁴

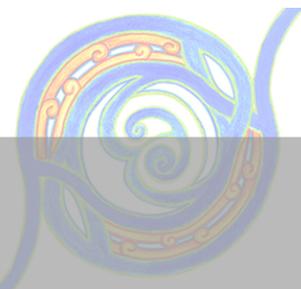
Swanberg and Macke posit that gendered organisation assumptions mean that employers can be unable and unwilling to accept that what happens in an employee's home life will invariably come to work and impact on performance.⁴⁷ This perspective can contribute to a general lack of awareness around the impacts of intimate partner violence on workers and the workplace and limit the ways in which businesses are willing to respond to the unique and complex demands of women experiencing intimate partner violence. Several researchers have found that there is often workplace conflict when intimate partner violence begins interfering with a women's ability to perform according to expectations in her employment role.^{7, 76, 77, 88}

Businesses can also contribute to community-based campaigns to end violence. In 2008, the Ministry of Social Development's It's Not OK Campaign commissioned research seeking to better understand business attitudes towards community-based initiatives, particularly family violence programmes. Interviews were conducted with 10 chief executives of large businesses operating in New Zealand.⁹⁸ Findings include:

- Business leaders are positive towards supporting community-based initiatives, including family violence programmes. Many said their involvement in such initiatives was important to their company's success and to strengthening New Zealand communities.
- Business leaders are concerned about family violence. Almost all expressed a willingness to be involved in addressing the issue but were unsure where to begin. This was combined with comments about the complexity of family violence.
- The key to successful partnerships between businesses and community-based organisations is "brand fit." This can include a preference for delivering a "positive" rather than a negative (or "anti") message.

The business leaders said their customers and staff are the most important audiences for partnerships between businesses and community organisations.

Senate Communications. Business attitudes to tackling family violence. Ministry of Social Development/ Campaign for Action on Family Violence; 2009.



4.2 Recognising that intimate partner violence is occurring

Provision of support from workplaces is often contingent on disclosure of IPV. However, many women are reluctant to tell their managers or co-workers they are being abused, because of feelings of shame and fear,¹⁴ compounded by fear that disclosure will result in further difficulties in maintaining employment.^{22, 50} While employers and others in the workplace may see potential signs of intimate partner violence in the forms of poor work performance and tardiness, marshalling an appropriate response requires recognising that these may be signs of abuse, not failings on the part of the worker. Knowing potential signs of IPV can help managers and co-workers to know what is going on, and to know when and how to offer assistance.⁷⁸

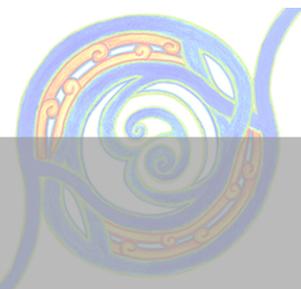
Barriers to action by workplaces can include: a lack of understanding of the size, nature and impact of family violence; the belief that family violence is none of their business; not feeling comfortable and not knowing how to respond to the issue; not recognizing the high cost to their businesses. While some employers may act out of concern for staff or because they are community minded, many will not. Accordingly, the information and benefits considered most likely to engage businesses were: that family violence is prevalent in the community and may be present among your staff, what happens at home affects what happens at work, and what is good for your staff is good for your business (e.g. productivity gains).⁷⁹

4.3 Responding to intimate partner violence in the workplace: Implications for practice

At present, increasing numbers of employers in New Zealand are recognising that domestic violence is a workplace problem, yet few workplaces currently have programmes in place to deal with the impact of domestic violence.^{25, 70} Further, Kahui, Ku and Snively reported that workplaces currently have “limited awareness of, access to or inclination to take advantage of the tailored workshops and training programmes available to them.”⁷⁰

Training about IPV can help senior management to recognise signs that someone may be dealing with violence, and could make supervisors more willing to make small alterations to schedules, duties, and work locations. These small variations can make an enormous difference to a victim’s ability to access services and feel supported. In addition, this flexibility can help keep all employees safe. Workplaces which are rigid in their rules about time off and extra accommodations for employees can create significant problems for victims trying to maintain employment.^{77, 80} Training and raising awareness can help to give managers and employees the knowledge necessary to recognise the signs of issues that may lead to workplace violence or conflict.⁸¹

Having an understanding of intimate partner violence can also help contribute to the skills needed to communicate effectively about the issue and helps those in leadership positions respond appropriately to the needs of employees. In addition to knowledge of intimate partner violence,



managers need clearly defined guidelines detailing their responsibilities pertaining to the identification, referral and support of intimate partner violence victims.⁸² Managers should not think they are responsible for ‘solving’ an employee’s problems with intimate partner violence, however workplace policies can provide guidance how to approach an employee who may be experiencing IPV, how to deal with workplace harassment from perpetrators, and, importantly, how to make referrals to specialised services that can provide appropriate help. Having resources available like pamphlets or posters detailing intimate partner violence policies and personal employment rights, as well as having information or training detailing how to contact community intimate partner violence support services and Employee Assistance Programmes can also be helpful for those who experience IPV.^{15, 83}

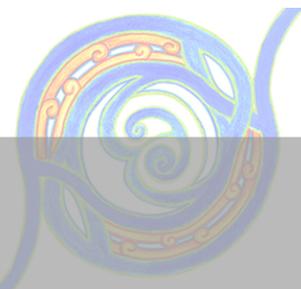
4.4 Responding to intimate partner violence in the workplace: Implications for policy

Encouraging workplaces to incorporate intimate partner violence policies into their existing policy arrangements can also be beneficial. For many organisations, particularly small businesses, it is valuable to be able to shape their intimate partner violence policies to fit their organisational structure as well as the needs of employees and clients.^a Intimate partner violence policies fit well with policies that most businesses already have, such as occupational health and safety policies and anti-discrimination policies.⁷⁵

For example, intimate partner violence can be addressed as part of a regular training seminar on workplace safety or with the addition of information about local support services in an organisation’s handbook. Existing human resource structures can help tailor workplace policies around the values of the organisation,⁷⁵ for example, intimate partner violence policies fit well with philosophies supportive of work life balance and family friendliness. Thus inclusion of steps like providing flexible leave, varied shifts, access to information on local support services, and additional security can be seen as part of the existing organisational model, rather than a special side policy. This can help to make employment provisions for responding to intimate partner violence part of normal operating procedures, and to make these provisions a more comfortable fit for organisations.⁷⁵

According to Murray and Powell, steps can include having a formal written policy about violence in the workplace and having open discussions about the effects of intimate partner violence.⁷⁵ Putting these policies into action can be relatively simple, yet still increase safety for employees. Examples include having visitors check in at the receptionist’s desk when they arrive, referring victims to

^a Small businesses may experience unique challenges, particularly if they employ both victim and perpetrator. In these cases the support of specialised family violence agencies may be especially helpful.



women's refuge services or other intimate partner violence experts and making sure to offer all employees a basic level of respect and dignity when they are experiencing trauma.⁸⁴

4.5 Support from specialist agencies

Organisations can also partner with existing intimate partner violence experts and specialist social services. Examples include organisations inviting someone from an intimate partner violence service to come to the workplace to give a presentation, or provide information and offer services to employees.⁷⁵ This approach has the added benefit of giving employees and managers direct contact with an expert, which can facilitate contact later.

In New Zealand, government, local government, non-government organisations and a business association offer resources, support and/or training on addressing family violence for employers – see the box below.

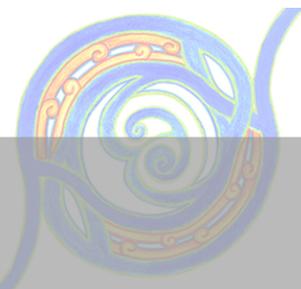
The [It's Not OK Campaign](#) has created a "Good for staff, good for business" toolkit on how employers can increase understanding of family violence and support employees affected by family violence. It includes information on how family violence affects the workplace, the benefits of workplace responses and what employers can do to make a difference. A short leaflet "Family violence: How employers can help" and a series of six workplace posters are also available.

In Auckland, the North Harbour Business Association in conjunction with the It's Not OK Campaign, New Zealand Police, the North Shore and Rodney Family Violence Networks, Shine and the North Shore Women's Centre have partnered to promote the ways businesses can support employees experiencing violence. The partnership has produced free resources designed to help businesses increase their understanding of family violence and be able to take simple actions without a significant time or financial commitment. Also called [Good For Staff, Good For Business](#), resources include a publication setting out the impact of family violence and what a business can do to help; a sample family violence policy; information on workplace safety plans; a series of YouTube clips and a list of local service providers. Training for businesses is also available.

Shine (Safer Homes in New Zealand Everyday) has developed [DVFREE](#), a programme supporting employers to develop an effective workplace response to domestic abuse. Shine staff provide this workplace policy consultation and training. A sample workplace policy is also available.

Tauranga City Council has produced [Family Violence: It's your business: A workplace toolkit](#). The toolkit contains a series of fact sheets, a model family violence policy, safety plans and messages, a list of family violence services and resources and a Powerpoint presentation. It is available on CD-ROM through the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse library.

The White Ribbon Campaign, an organisation that seeks to engage men in helping to end violence against women, is also beginning to take steps to work with businesses on intimate partner violence issues.⁹⁹



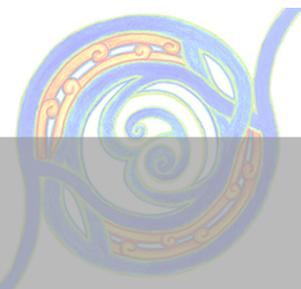
While these programmes are a good starting point, Kahui, Ku and Snively state that “As the programme providers themselves would agree, ideal programmes would be both longer and train more staff than current programmes do. The programmes to date have been designed within available resources and to encourage employers to take them up by being made available at relatively low cost.”⁷⁰ Embedding these programmes in overall systems approaches will help promote sustainability.⁸⁵

4.6 Working with unions

Internationally, many unions have begun addressing the issue of intimate partner violence and advocating for entitlements to support and protect workers who are victims. In the UK, unions have actively been tackling intimate partner violence with workplace interventions including bargaining for policies preventing discrimination against victims of intimate partner violence, encouraging employers to keep educational materials visible, and beginning several pilot programmes focused on the training of management and the monitoring of perpetrators.^{86, 87} Unions in the US make training materials and resources for victims available to employers.⁸⁸ Australian unions have proactively bargained for entitlements designed to address intimate partner violence and it has become standard in a number of workplaces for employees to have access to 20 days of paid leave for any activity related to dealing with intimate partner violence.^{89, 90}

Intimate partner violence support and prevention resources can be adopted into existing union benefit negotiations and agreements with employers as part of established policies surrounding occupational health and safety or anti-discrimination.⁷⁵ Unions have the ability to advocate for benefits that employers would otherwise be reluctant to grant due to upfront costs.⁹¹ Union delegates can also be trained on issues involving intimate partner violence and can include intimate partner violence as a topic during presentations or meetings with employers. One of the major benefits of training union delegates on intimate partner violence awareness, prevention and policies is that union representatives may have access to workplaces that intimate partner violence specialists may not. This way there are professionals with advanced training who can advise on appropriate workplace practices dealing with intimate partner violence as well as provide resources for victims.⁷⁵ However, in areas where unions are not strong or in industries that lack adequate union support, the ability to negotiate for certain policies could be limited and intimate partner violence may not be seen as a sufficiently important issue compared to other occupational safety issues and collective benefits.^{75, 91}

Building on the Australian Safe at Home, Safe at Work project, New Zealand’s Public Service Association (PSA) is working to get clauses for the support of victims of family violence into collective agreements and to develop resources and training materials for employers, unions and workers. The PSA has also made a [video](#) describing the importance of family violence as a workplace issue.



5. Legislative interventions

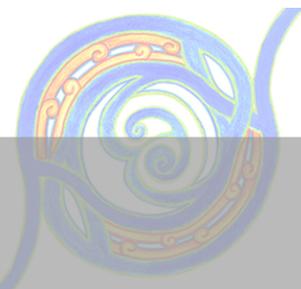
Legislation can serve a vital role in ensuring appropriate responses to intimate partner violence in the workplace. Although there are examples of organisations taking proactive steps to deal with the impacts of intimate partner violence on workers and the workplace, it is not always widely accepted that intimate partner violence is a workplace issue.⁸³ Unless businesses understand the financial and resource costs associated with intimate partner violence and find that it is in their financial interests, they are not likely to institute policies explicitly dealing with intimate partner violence.³² Legislation can ensure that all employees have appropriate protections. Legislative policies typically fall into three broad categories: *work leave policies*, *anti-discrimination employment policies*, and *workplace awareness and safety policies*.⁸³

5.1 Work leave policies

Several states in the US have legislation ensuring work leave policies in workplaces, for example ensuring victims can take time off from work to attend to legal issues pertaining to intimate partner violence.^{15, 83} In Australia, as of July 2013, the Fair Work Act⁹² allows victims of intimate partner violence to negotiate for a 'flexible working arrangement' with their employers.⁹³ Work leave policies are beneficial in that they can be drafted to allow leave entitlements for needs outside of medical or legal appointments, such as to move house or meet with social workers. They protect employees from workplace sanctions resulting from having to take excess time off and ensure that other benefits, such as holiday time and sick time are not depleted.¹⁵

5.2 Anti-discrimination employment policies

Anti-discrimination employment policies provide job security and prevent employers from reacting with prejudice against victims as the result of the victim's situation.¹⁵ Most of these laws prevent employers from firing workers because of their victim status or because they request time off to deal with intimate partner violence related issues. These laws are often crafted as part of anti-discrimination legislation or are added on to existing legislation and establish 'victim of intimate partner violence' as a protected class of person.¹⁵ For example, in Australia the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Age Discrimination Act 2004 and Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 are all pieces of legislation that provide protections to workers based on certain attributes.⁹⁴ Smith and Orchiston⁹⁴ argue that gender, family responsibilities, and disability are all characteristics that can be used to argue for employment protections for intimate partner violence victims under existing anti-discrimination legislation in Australia. A similar argument could be made for intimate partner violence victims in New Zealand under the Human Rights Act 1993. In the US, several states have anti-discrimination laws directly pertaining to intimate partner violence.^{15, 83} Many of these states also impose fines on workplaces should they be found noncompliant with the laws.⁸³



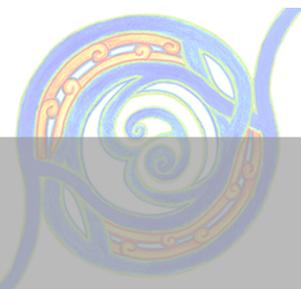
Another important area covered by anti-discrimination employment policies is unemployment benefits. In the US, women who become unemployed because of intimate partner violence may be denied unemployment insurance if it is found that they quit or were fired ‘with good cause’, or denied welfare benefits if they are unable or unwilling to look for new work.⁸³ In Australia, ‘Welfare to Work’ policies have pushed many women into low paid, less secure work and off government assistance.⁹⁵ In New Zealand unemployment benefits have recently undergone reforms changing them to Job Seeker Support, requiring those in need of assistance to actively look for a new job. While people leaving family violence can apply for a temporary exemption from work test obligations,⁹⁶ few people have accessed this provision.¹⁰³ This suggests that awareness of it may be low and that Work and Income staff may need to more actively inform clients about their entitlements.¹⁰⁴ Otherwise, this can have disastrous consequences for women who lose their jobs because of intimate partner violence and cannot seek government assistance to buffer the loss in income.⁹⁷ As a result of unemployment and a lack of governmental assistance, victims of intimate partner violence have a higher chance of finding themselves experiencing food insecurity or homelessness.³³

5.3 Workplace awareness and safety policies

In addition to legislation protecting intimate partner violence victims against discrimination and ensuring leave for victims, several US states (New York, Illinois and Oklahoma) have enacted workplace awareness and safety policies that also require employers to provide training to employees and managers about the rights of victims of intimate partner violence and available resources.⁸³

According to Swanberg et al (2012), several US states have begun allowing businesses to apply for restraining orders against perpetrators of intimate partner violence, similar to the protection orders victims receive. Restraining orders provide protection for workers any time they are at the workplace or somewhere that work is performed. Employer-initiated restraining orders take the onus off victims to prevent perpetrators from harassing them, their colleagues or disrupting the workplace, and provide a platform for reporting perpetrators if they violate these orders. In addition to assisting to provide protection of the workplace, these restraining orders have the added benefit of reframing a perpetrator’s harassing behaviour as being a crime against the workplace, rather than just against an individual employee (i.e. making it clear that the problem is caused by the perpetrator and not the victim).¹⁵ Swanberg et al explain that employers can apply for a restraining order regardless of whether or not a victim has a current protection order; however, many states do require that there has been a credible threat towards an employee.

In New Zealand, intimate partner violence has also been recognised as a workplace health and safety issue. Kahui, Ku and Snively note that, “If a victim is being stalked at their workplace and is (or a co-worker is) subsequently injured, or even killed, the employer will be liable. Employers must, by law, provide a safe working environment for their employees. This means they have to take every reasonable step to identify and eliminate potential hazards to their employee’s safety. Ignorance is



not a viable excuse, because it could be argued that there is little to no difference between ignorance and negligence, in terms of prevention of injury.”⁷⁰

6. Recommendations

As cited earlier in this paper, there have been several recent New Zealand reports exploring the issue of intimate partner violence in the workplace, from an economic perspective, and from the perspective of employers and senior managers. The recommendations arising from these reports are consistent with emerging best practice internationally, and supported by theory and research evidence. In the interests of consistency of message, these recommendations are reproduced below, with the permission of the authors.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the insights gained from the framework developed to examine the cost of workplace protections and the productivity gains, Kahui, Ku and Snively’s recommendations are:⁷⁰

- “To inform and seek acknowledgement by employers, unions and peak bodies^b that domestic violence is a work issue with impacts that are potential workplace hazards which also generate costs of recruitment, retraining and retention
- That employers create and implement tailored domestic violence human resources policies that can be integrated with existing health and safety policies, including induction and training to accurately inform employees:
 - about domestic violence in the workplace
 - of their rights in relation to domestic violence in the workplace
 - of the protocols and procedures surrounding domestic violence in the workplace
 - That unions and employers collaborate in workplaces on developing protocols advocating for victims of domestic violence and relevant induction and training programmes, as has been the case in Australia.
- That an on-line induction module be prepared that is freely available to all organisations which includes knowledge about domestic violence and to work with large employers to implement the domestic violence information section into their induction processes as soon as possible, both for new and long serving employees

^b A ‘peak body’ is an advocacy group, an association of industries or groups with allied interests. They are generally established for the purposes of developing standards and processes, or to act on behalf of all members when lobbying government or promoting the interests of the members. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peak_organisation. Footnote not in original.



- To work with peak bodies to motivate take up of existing programmes focused on training to recognise, respond to and reduce domestic violence
- Based on successful overseas practice, develop and implement a national policy that entitles victims of domestic violence to up to 10 days special leave (non-accrued) for specific requirements to address and resolve domestic violence problems
- To align the national policy with a monitoring tool based on the framework developed for this project to understand what does and does not contribute to workplace gains for victims and employers and to assess the costs and benefits of the leave entitlement and other workplace protections
- Set up an evaluation process to identify effective workplace protections and to inform the specification of replacements for ineffective ones.”

6.2 Legislative recommendations

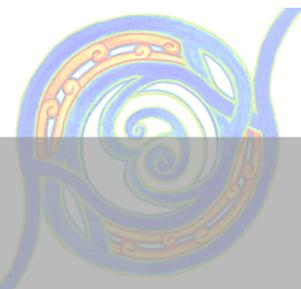
There have already been preliminary efforts to outline legislative solutions with regard to supporting workplace responses to those exposed to intimate partner violence. These are consistent with law changes in other countries. We recommend that this Bill be enacted into law. Key points in the proposed Bill are outlined below:

Domestic Violence-Victims' Protection Bill

This Member's Bill, proposed by Member of Parliament Jan Logie, is an omnibus Bill. It would amend the Domestic Violence Act 1995, Employment Relations Act 2000, Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, Holidays Act 2003, and Human Rights Act 1993 with a view to enhancing legal protections for victims of domestic violence.

This Bill would create a system to support businesses to respond effectively. It would:

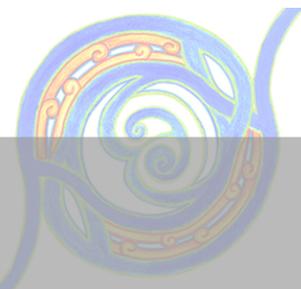
- Provide for flexible working arrangements for employees who are victims of domestic violence.
- Amend the Employment Relations Act to add, as a prohibited ground of discrimination, being a victim of domestic violence.
- Require an employer taking all practicable steps to ensure that employees are not exposed to hazards, as required by section 6 of the Health and Safety in Employment Act, must deal with the hazard of an employee suffering domestic violence at work.
- Require employers to have policies on handling situations arising from the hazard of an employee suffering domestic violence.



- Require employers to take all practicable steps to ensure that employees who are union delegates or trained health and safety representatives receive training in supporting employees who are victims of domestic violence.
- Allow victims of domestic violence to request up to 10 days of paid domestic violence leave.
- Amend the Human Rights Act to add, as a prohibited ground of discrimination, being a victim of domestic violence.

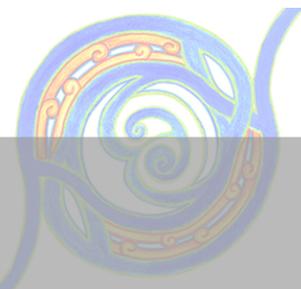
7. Conclusion

Intimate partner violence has profound negative repercussions for the person experiencing abuse and their ability to maintain employment and achieve professional success, the productivity of businesses, and ultimately on the social and economic wellbeing of women and society. Managers need to make sure that workers are supported and safe while they are at work. This benefits not only those experiencing intimate partner violence but also the economic bottom line for businesses. Furthermore, addressing intimate partner violence as a workplace issue protects human rights. All people deserve freedom from discrimination and to have access to financial security. By actively engaging with the realities of intimate partner violence, organisations can avoid taking on the financial and resource costs associated with its occurrence and impacts in the workplace. Most importantly, it will help establish healthier and more equitable workplaces for all employees.

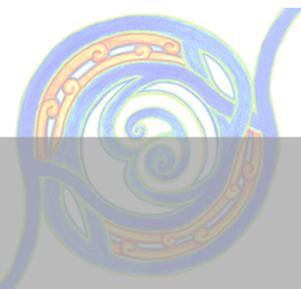


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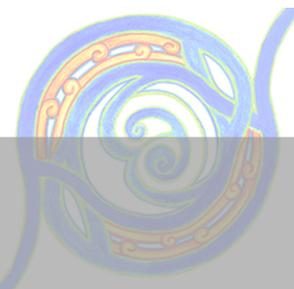
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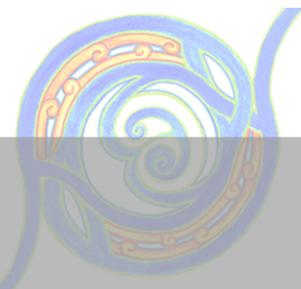
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