

# Family violence and the workplace



# Summary of the presentation

- Introduction
- Reasons for the toolkit
- Defining family violence
- Why employers should care about family violence
- Taking action
- Conclusion / Discussion

# Introduction

- Funding – Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy
- The kit has been developed based on current research and information about family violence and The Workplace Research Team and other leading experts.

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## Why did we form?

Recognized the need for developing a unified and coordinated approach to dealing with the issues surrounding Family Violence

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# A Workplace Toolkit

The Toolkit was developed by the New Brunswick Family Violence and the Workplace Committee

Membership includes:

- Cendant Canada
- Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research
- Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation
- Fredericton Chamber of Commerce
- NB Power
- Office of Human Resources, Government of New Brunswick
- Public Legal Education and Information Services of New Brunswick
- River Valley Health
- University of New Brunswick

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# Reasons for the toolkit

## The objectives of the toolkit are :

- ✓ To educate and raise awareness of the need for early intervention in situations where family violence may have an impact on the workplace;
- ✓ To strengthen the relationship between business and community;

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## ...Reasons for the toolkit

- ✓ To develop practical, flexible training tools that will help employers deal with the impact of family violence on the workplace;
- ✓ To promote practices, policies, and procedures that support victims of family violence in the workplace;

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## ...Reasons for the toolkit

- ✓ To support businesses large and small in meeting their social responsibility to prevent family violence from spilling over into the workplace;
- ✓ To help create safer and healthier work environments.

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The toolkit is intended to provide employers, unions and employees with information and resources for recognizing and responding to family violence situations that enter the workplace.

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# Defining family violence

Family violence takes many different forms.

## Types of family violence :

- *Physical Abuse* : hitting, pinching, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking, burning, stabbing, shooting, etc.

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## ...types of family violence

- ***Psychological Abuse*** (*emotional or verbal abuse*) : put-downs, name calling, jealousy, isolation, threats (leave the relationship, suicide, etc.) etc.
- ***Sexual Abuse*** : unwanted touching or sexual activity, control, forced pregnancies or abortions, transmission of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD).

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## ...types of family violence

- *Financial Abuse* : The use of finances to control another individual ; forcing a person to hand over all or part of their salary or by denying someone access to their own finances.
- *Spiritual Abuse* : Use of religious or spiritual matters to control another ; forcing another to follow a particular faith or give up their religion.

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Family violence can happen to anyone. Family violence is characterized by a power imbalance, where one person tries to control another. The aggressor often uses intimidation, fear and abuse to maintain that control.

## Why is the FV & WP toolkit important?

- Approximately 3 women die every week in Canada at the hands of a partner
- Women are abused an average of 30 times before contacting the police
- 62% of ALL women murdered in Canada are victims of Family Violence
- 94% of Corporate Security Directors rank Family violence as a high security problem at their company

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## Why is the FV & WP toolkit important?

- Co-workers are often the first to notice something is wrong
- Family Violence is one of the leading contributors of violence in the workplace (the abuser knows where and when to find their victim)
- 75% of Family Violence victims face harassment from an intimate partner while at work

# Why is the FV & WP Tool Kit Important to Employers?

## Domestic Violence Leads to:

- Increased absenteeism
- Impact On Employee Morale
- Increased risk for other employees
- Lost productivity
- Increased use of workplace benefits (potentially resulting in millions of dollars in lost revenue per year).

# Why is the FV & WP Tool Kit Important to Employers?

In 1995, one of first study on family violence estimated the economic costs to Canadians at \$4.2 billion per year.

(Greeves, L., Hankivsky, O. & Kingston-Riechers, J. (1995). Selected Estimates of the Costs of Violence Against Women. London, Ontario: Research Centre for Violence against Women and Children.)

# Everyone Pay\$ For Family Violence

## Services to Support Abused Women and Children Find Housing \$

Transition houses  
Second-stage shelters  
Rent-to-income housing  
Volunteer programs  
YWCA  
Emergency housing

## Use Justice System \$

Family court  
Assessments  
Criminal court  
Legal aid  
Victim/witness programs  
Probation services  
Parole services  
Incarceration



Criminal injuries compensation  
Men's counselling programs

## Struggle with Employment \$

Time off work  
Loss of productivity  
Retraining programs  
Lost tax revenues due to death, injury or incarceration

## Contact Police \$

Police surveillance/response  
Police investigation  
Access to reports

## Seek Educational Support \$

Special education  
Violence prevention programs  
Tutor services  
Social work services

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# Everyone Pay\$ For Family Violence

## Contact Social Agencies \$

Counselling programs  
Mental health services  
Sexual assault centres  
Child welfare services  
Foster care  
Youth services  
Education & prevention programs  
Volunteer programs  
Kids Help Line  
Aboriginal women's centres  
Immigrant & visible minority women's services  
Disabled women's services  
Daycare

## Seek Medical Help \$

Ambulance service  
Emergency medical care



Hospital stays  
X-rays, lab work  
Doctors' appointments  
Dental treatments  
Drug and alcohol centres  
Chiropractors  
Prescription drugs  
Eating disorder clinics  
Psychiatric institutions  
Community health clinics  
Services for children labeled as having attention deficit disorder

## Seek Income Assistance \$

Welfare  
Mother's allowance  
Unemployment insurance  
Enforcement of child support payments

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<p><b>Family Violence</b> C'est votre business</p> <p>• Interested in learning about the impact of family violence on the workplace? • Interested in learning what your employer can do to help? <b>Make it your business to care!</b></p> <p>Check out our 1907 Toolkit and Resource at <a href="http://www.ovv.ca">www.ovv.ca</a></p>		<p><b>La violence familiale</b> C'est votre entreprise</p> <p>• Vous voulez savoir comment la violence familiale affecte votre entreprise de travail ? • Vous voulez savoir comment votre entreprise de travail peut aider ? <b>Faites-en votre affaire !</b></p> <p>Consultez notre kit d'outils et ressources à <a href="http://www.ovv.ca">www.ovv.ca</a></p>
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## Imagine....

- You overhear a co-worker on the phone crying and asking their partner to please stop calling he/she at work
- You are witness to a heated exchange between a co-worker and their
- Your co-worker confides in you that they are presently involved in an abusive relationship

# Imagine....

- Your co-worker confides in you that they have recently left their partner and are afraid they may be in danger
- You notice that a co-worker has an unusual number of unexplained or vaguely excused absences
- Your co-worker appears to be fearful of their partner when he/she arrive to pick them up from work

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# IMAGINE

Aggressor	Victim	Employees	Employer
Abuser sends threatening email, voice messages and/or faxes.	Fear, inattention, increased fatigue.	Concerned, annoyed at having to “cover” for colleague who is performing poorly.	Poor job performance may affect the entire workplace, low staff morale.

# IMAGINE

<b>Aggressor</b>	<b>Victim</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Employers</b>
<b>Abuser humiliates the victim by criticizing or degrading him or her in front of other staff.</b>	<b>Low self-esteem, low confidence, anxiety related symptoms such as headaches, nervousness.</b>	<b>Distressed or feel uncomfortable at work.</b>	<b>Staff will take work time discussing situation ; less productive because of discomfort at work.</b>

# IMAGINE

<b>Aggressor</b>	<b>Victim</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Employers</b>
Abuser constantly contacts workplace / staff in an effort to “keep tabs” on the victim; stalks the victim.	Mistrust other staff because they’re giving out information; fear for personal safety.	Unsure of what information to share and have safety concerns about their own well-being.	Staff productivity may decrease contributing to increase conflict with others; safety concerns.

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# IMAGINE

Aggressor	Victim	Employees	Employers
Abuser is jealous of others in the workplace, the abuser “shows up” at the office.	Increased anxiety and avoids interaction; fear of losing job; physical symptoms related to anxiety (ulcers, headaches).	Afraid of being accused by the abuser; staff may distance themselves from the victim; other staff feel at risk	Employer must address safety issues and increased absenteeism for physical symptoms; negative impact on staff relationship.

# Components of the Toolkit

## ➤ Components include:

- Fact sheets on the relevant topics
- Family violence services (focus on NB)
- Resources – videos, pamphlets, links
- Family violence “messages” for the workplace
- Poster to hang in workplace
- Bookmarks to share with employees
- “Model” Family Violence policies and safety plans
- User’s guide
- Promotional brochure and post cards
- Feedback from (evaluation)
- Website that shares what others are doing

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# Can Employers Make a difference?

- *...when my shift was over Sam would come to pick me up and if I wasn't standing outside waiting for him he would lean on the horn...the manager said to me, 'your husband shouldn't treat you like that. It's disrespectful and abusive....' It hit me like a ton of bricks. Somebody thinks that I am worthwhile...."*

*An excerpt from*

*Doherty, D. And Hornosty, J. (2004) "Abuse in A Rural and Farm Context",*

*In Understanding Abuse; Partnering for Change, edited by S. Sterling, M. Cameron. A Nason-Clark, N. And Miedema, B.  
University of Toronto Press*

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# What Can Employers Do?

1. Develop or adapt supportive policies and practices that deal with family violence when it enters the work place.
2. Deliver public education about family violence and create a positive work place.
3. Strengthen existing policies or programs or add new ones – safe walk, benefits and leaves, threat assessment, etc.

Check out the “Model Family Violence Policy” included in the Toolkit!

# Create Positive Work Place

- Create awareness – noon hour speakers, messages to employees, pamphlets, posters and resources.
- Model respectful behaviour everywhere in the workplace (stop workplace bullying!)
- Boost employee morale and reduce stress

# Make It Your Business To Care

- Treat family violence seriously
- Recognize its impact on the workplace
- Take action to make your workplace safer and more supportive for all employees
- Use the Toolkit to help you take action
- Contact us to let us know what you are doing in your workplace
- Check our Website often ([www.toolkitnb.ca](http://www.toolkitnb.ca))
- Be sure to complete the evaluation form that we send you.

# Conclusion

The toolkit provides many practical and concrete suggestions for the development of short and long-term actions and responses to family violence when it enters the workplace. You can use the information (fact sheets, posters and messages) in the toolkit; or, you can make use of the information directly from our Internet site...

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## Presenter

Rina Arseneault, Associate Director Muriel McQueen Fergusson  
Centre for Family Violence Research

“At the end of the day it just doesn’t make economic sense to ignore the issue.” (The Body Shop Canada)

- For more info: You can order resources or get more information by calling 1-888-236-2444, email [info@toolkitnb.ca](mailto:info@toolkitnb.ca) or contact the Committee c/o Public Legal Education & Information Service of New Brunswick, PO Box 6,000, Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

[www.toolkitnb.ca](http://www.toolkitnb.ca)

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