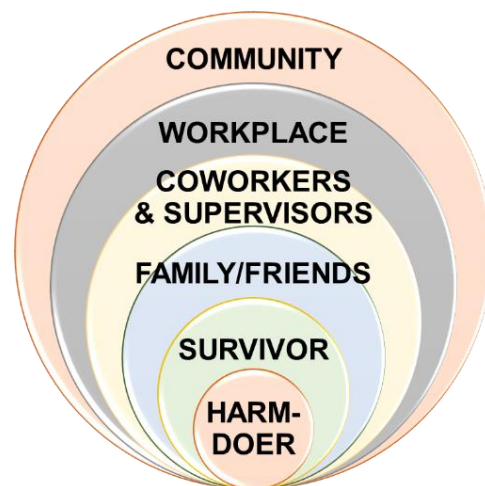


Four Rs of Trauma-Informed Responses: Realize

By **realizing** the traumatic effects of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and harassment (DVSASH) and how they show up in the workplace, **recognizing** the elements of trauma, **responding** in a survivor-centered way, and **resisting** policies and practices that lead to **re-traumatization**, workplaces can ensure safer, more productive, and resilient workplaces for all workers.

In the United States 52.2 million women and 27.6 million men will experience sexual violence; 19.1 million women and 6.4 million men will be stalked; and 43.6 million women and 37.3 million men will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime.ⁱ We spend most of our waking hours in the workplace and bring our whole selves to work. So whether domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or stalking, DVSASH touches every workplace. Abusers' actions not only affect the safety and ability of survivors¹ to thrive at work but can also threaten the workplace as a whole.

The DVSASH Ripple Effect



Impact on Survivors

- Perpetrators can **sabotage survivors' employment** by making harassing calls and texts, showing up at the workplace, causing the survivor to be late, or depriving them of sleep.ⁱⁱ

¹ Individuals who experience DVSASH will be referred to as "survivors" to focus on their power and agency rather than the victimization they experienced.

- Survivors of intimate partner violence **lose over seven paid days of work in year** because of abuse, whether to recover from the physical aspects of violence, seek safety, or participate in the civil or criminal justice system.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological abuse can lead to **long-term adverse health impacts** and psychological changes that can negatively impact job performance.

Impact on Coworkers

- Co-workers often report feeling **concern for their own safety** when perpetrators continually call or show up at the workplace to stalk, harass, or threaten another; others report **feeling some resentment** towards the survivor because of the impact their abusive partner has on the workplace.
- Nearly 20 percent of perpetrators of intimate partner violence reported **causing or almost causing a serious accident** at work because they were distracted.

Impact on Workplaces

- **Perpetrators use employer's resources** – phone, laptops, and more – to control and threaten their targets.^{iv}
- **One in three female workplace homicides were committed by a personal relation**, most of whom were intimate partners. In many cases, bystanders were also killed.^v
- **Domestic violence costs U.S. businesses nearly \$1.27 billion** (adjusted for 2019 dollars) in productivity losses.^{vi}
- Businesses, in some circumstances, may bear **legal liability for incidents that occur on-site that were foreseeable, or for wrongful termination** of survivors, both of which can potentially result in penalties and damages from civil lawsuits.

Harm perpetrated against employees – whether at work or at home – has the potential for dangerous consequences for everyone in the workplace. The impacts of experiencing and/or witnessing such violence must be recognized and addressed in both workplace policies and interventions.

How workplaces respond to DVSASH can shape the options survivors have to remain safe and contributes to whether the workplace has an effective culture of prevention, safety, and accountability.

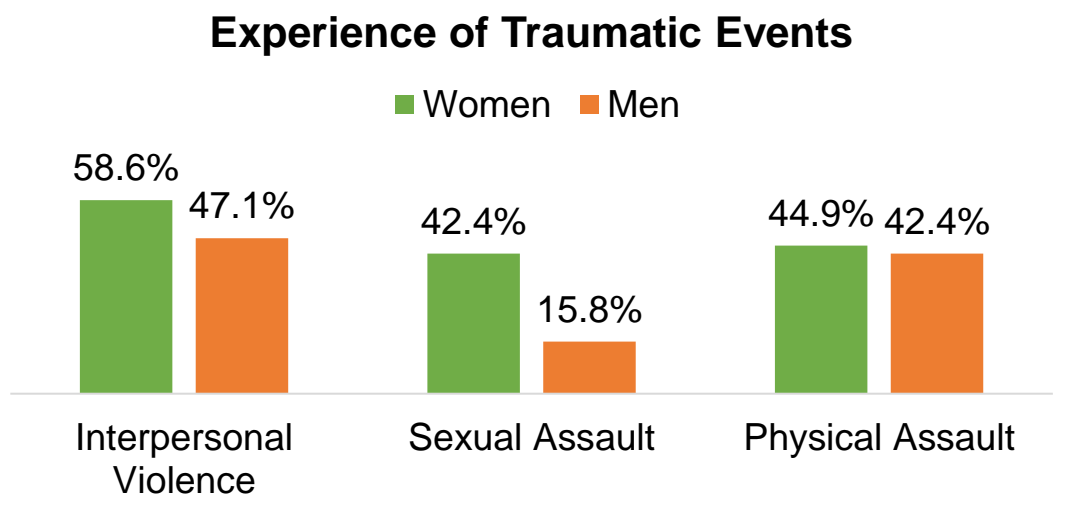
Realize the prevalence of trauma among employees

Trauma is defined as “an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”^{vii}

A national study found that 89.7% of U.S. adults had been exposed to at least one traumatic event in their lifetime^{viii}

People may experience a wide array of trauma in their lifetime.

Traumatic events can include near death experiences, the loss of a loved one, witnessing a violent act, experiencing child abuse, histories of discrimination, hate-crimes, and experiencing or exposure to DVSASH and human trafficking.



We bring our whole selves to work. Exposure to threats or acts of violence and the impacts of trauma can shape how individuals perceive and relate to their surroundings. What impacts us outside of the workplace is carried with us and affects how we relate to the workplace and our jobs. The effects of trauma are not limited to the individual experiencing it. Trauma can undermine a workplace’s ability to fulfill its mission. **Realizing** that employees have likely experienced one or multiple forms of trauma is the first step workplaces can take to build the buy-in and support necessary to implement trauma-informed policies and practices for a safer and more

supportive workplace. When employees feel safe and supported, the entire workplace succeeds.

Workplaces Respond provides technical assistance to workplace stakeholders seeking to better prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and harassment impacting the workplace. Scan this QR code to access the Resource Center.



This project is supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-22-GK-04852-NRCW awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed herein or in any materials herein, are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

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ⁱ Breiding, M.J., Chen J., & Black, M.C. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence in the United States — 2010. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

ⁱⁱ Postmus, Judy L., Sara-Beth Plummer, and Amanda M. Stylianou. 2016. “Measuring Economic Abuse in the Lives of Survivors Revising the Scale of Economic Abuse.” *Violence Against Women* 22 (6): 692–703.

ⁱⁱⁱ Smith, Sharon, Jieru Chen, Kathleen Basile, Leah Gilbert, Melissa Merrick, Nimesh Patel, Margie Walling, and Anurag Jain. 2017. *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey — 2010–2012 State Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/12362>

^{iv} Ibid

^v Tiesman, Hope M., Kelly K. Gurka, Srinivas Konda, Jeffrey H. Coben, and Harlan E. Amandus. 2012. “Workplace Homicides Among U.S. Women: The Role of Intimate Partner Violence.” *Annals of Epidemiology* 22 (4): 277–84.

^{vi} National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, “Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States,” (Atlanta, GA: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003) <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipvbook-a.pdf>.

^{vii} Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014. <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma14-4884.pdf>.

^{viii} Kilpatrick, Dean G, Heidi S Resnick, Melissa E Milanak, Mark W Miller, Katherine M Keyes, and Matthew J Friedman. “National Estimates of Exposure to Traumatic Events and PTSD Prevalence Using DSM-IV and DSM-5 Criteria.” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 26, no. 5 (October 2013): 537–47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.21848>.