



Developing Workplace Strategies to Prevent and Respond to Domestic Violence

National conference on intimate partner violence and its impact on the workplace

SUMMARY

The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence convened employers and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) providers for a national conference November 6–7, 2008, to discuss workplace strategies to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

The project produced conference proceedings, a Blueprint for Action and five webinars addressing intimate partner violence issues.

Context

Intimate partner violence affects up to 21 percent of full-time adult employees, a 2005 national survey found, yet little is known about the effectiveness of workplace interventions to reduce or manage it.

An EAP is a confidential, short-term counseling service for employees with personal problems affecting their work performance. Since EAPs are available to employees and their immediate family, they are a promising point of entry to develop and strengthen strategies to prevent intimate partner violence.

The Vulnerable Populations team at Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has identified prevention of intimate partner violence as a key priority and believes that encouraging collaboration between EAPs and employers has the potential to reach large numbers of high-risk employees.

Key Results: The Conference

- Some 135 people representing 69 corporations, EAPs, research groups, and nonprofit organizations across the United States and Canada attended the *National S2—Safer, Smarter Workplace Conference* on November 6–7, 2008, in San Francisco.
- Allstate Foundation sponsored:

- A pre-conference webinar on October 28, 2008, that laid the conceptual groundwork for the conference and provided opportunities for attendees to interact with experts on intimate partner violence. Some 135 people attended.
- A post-conference webinar on February 24, 2009, that reported on progress since the conference and included three mini-presentations from conference attendees about interventions and assessment tools being used to combat domestic violence as a workplace issue. These presentations were a direct result of the conference. Some 70 people attended.
- The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence hosted three additional post-conference webinars:
 - *Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: An EAP/Employer Partnership*, November 12, 2009, explored EAP/employer collaboration to address incidents of domestic violence. Some 300 people attended.
 - *Dealing with Batterers in the Workplace*, May 12, 2009, discussed the importance of recognizing batterers, in addition to victims, as part of a comprehensive response to intimate partner violence. Some 200 people attended.
 - *Domestic Violence and the Workplace—A Multi-Disciplinary Approach from Liz Claiborne Inc.*, August 25, 2009, discussed the company's use of a Domestic Violence Response Team. Some 200 people attended.

Key Results: Information Dissemination

- A *Blueprint for Action*, initiated at the conference, gives recommendations on how employers and EAPs can address intimate partner violence effectively. Recommendations include:
 - Make the business case for addressing intimate partner abuse and violence to the CEO/upper management, including the cost to business of doing so and not doing so, liability issues, legal mandates and corporate social responsibility.
 - Encourage employers and brokers to ask about an EAP's capabilities for identifying and addressing domestic violence issues in the workforce when soliciting proposals, and encourage EAPs to proactively share their domestic violence programs as value-added strategies for employers when bidding for their business.
 - Educate around what abuse is—by defining it as "domestic violence," people may not consider that as "what is happening to me."
 - Integrate the expertise of the domestic violence service providers into the referral network offered by the EAP to the employer, and provide those resources on brochures, posters and so on, in addition to the EAP.

- Conference proceedings, the *Blueprint for Action* and summaries of the five webinars are available for review on the project [website](#). Users may reproduce the *Blueprint for Action* but must obtain permission to reproduce all other materials. See the [Bibliography](#) for usage details.
- From January 1, 2009, through March 15, 2010, there have been 3,181 visits to the project website, including to its documents.

Lessons Learned

1. When convening groups that are competitors (in this case, Employee Assistance Programs), get guidance. You need to "get invitations to those who can make a difference and to get the right mix of people in the room to inspire change," Project Director Kimberly Wells said. "We ... had a planning committee with those leaders."
2. A pre-conference webinar is an effective way to "level the playing field" on topics about which attendees may not be uniformly knowledgeable. "Because we had people coming from so many different levels of awareness regarding this issue [intimate partner violence], it was very important we did this," said Project Director Wells, "so that time was not spent getting everyone on the same page regarding statistics, etc."

Funding

RWJF provided a \$299,040 grant to support this *unsolicited* project.

The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence also received funding from the Health Care Service Corporation (\$20,000), the Allstate Foundation (\$20,000), Texas Health Resources (\$5,000), Blue Shield of California Foundation (\$22,460) and the Verizon Foundation (\$7,500), as well as an in-kind contribution from the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault discounting pre- and post-conference webinar services in the amount of \$6,980.

Afterward

The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence plans to maintain the S2 Safer, Smarter Workplace website and to continue offering webinars. It also will continue a Safer, Smarter listserv.

Prepared by: **Nina Berlin**

Reviewed by: Kelsey Menehan and Molly McKaughan

Program Officer: Marianna Sachse

Grant ID # 000000

Program area: Vulnerable Populations

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Current as of date of the report; as provided by the grantee organization; not verified by RWJF; items not available from RWJF.)

Education and Instruction

The Allstate Foundation Pre-conference Webinar to acclimate conference attendees to the conference experience, October 28, 2008. Materials include agenda, speaker biographies, and webinar presentation as PDF. They are available [online](#) for review only. Please contact caepv@caepv.org for usage permission.

S2 Post-conference Webinar: Dealing with Batterers in the Workplace, May 12, 2009. Materials include agenda, sample guides, and audiovisual recording of the Webinar. They are available [online](#) for review only. Please contact caepv@caepv.org for usage permission.

S2 Post-conference Webinar: Domestic Violence and the Workplace—A Multi-Disciplinary Approach from Liz Claiborne Inc., August 25, 2009. Materials include agenda, Webinar presentation as PDF, resources, and audiovisual recording of the Webinar. They are available [online](#) for review only. Please contact caepv@caepv.org for usage permission.

S2 Post-conference Webinar: Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: An EAP/Employer Partnership, November 12, 2009. Materials include Webinar presentation as PDF, text chat from Webinar participation, audio and visual recording of the Webinar. They are available [online](#) for review only. Please contact caepv@caepv.org for usage permission.

Presentations and Testimony

Proceedings of the Safer, Smarter Workplace Conference: National Conference on Domestic Violence for Employers and Employee Assistance Program Providers, November 6–7, 2008. Available [online](#) for review only. Please contact caepv@caepv.org for usage permission.

Reports

Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence. *S2 Blueprint for Action*, November 7, 2008. Available [online](#).

Grantee Websites

www.caepv.org/action/S2.php. Website created to facilitate access for employers, Employee Assistance Programs, researchers, and other interested groups regarding all outputs of the S2—Safer, Smarter Workplace Conference and webinars. Note that all materials on the website, with the exception of the Blueprint for Action, are available for review only. Please contact caepv@caepv.org for usage permission.