



www.itseverybodysbusiness.ca

WHAT IS "IT'S EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS"?

In April 2005 Women's Place and Niagara Regional Police convened the Leadership Summit on Family Violence to provide business, political, community, and education leaders with information on the effects of family violence. Two hundred business, community, education and political leaders came together to discuss the impact of family violence in our communities. Models were presented to demonstrate what a community can do to increase awareness of family violence and how to work towards prevention.

Following the Summit, a regional task Force against Family Violence was formed with representatives from community sectors. The Task Force members work within their specific sectors to increase awareness about family violence and its impact in the workplace. Workplace toolkits have been developed to assist employers address the issue of family violence when it enters the workplace.

"It's Everybody's Business" is working with the Niagara Community to provide education to change public attitude so that everyone, whether an employer, a colleague, a friend or neighbor, will view Family Violence as unacceptable and will act appropriately.

VISION

The vision of "It's Everybody's Business" is to eliminate Family Violence from the Niagara Region.

MISSION

"It's Everybody's Business", a community based and driven initiative, will promote change in the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and responses to Family Violence in Niagara Region by developing community based solutions to raise the awareness and educate the community on the issues and costs, both financial and societal, of Family Violence.

DEFINITION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family Violence is an abuse of power and is used to control the victim. Family Violence includes many different forms of abuse and violence experienced between adults in intimate relationships. Children are directly impacted even when witnessing violence. Abuse, either actual or threatened, may occur in many different forms including emotional, sexual, psychological, physical, financial or material.

Family Violence may be present in all types of relationships – straight, gay, lesbian, married, separated, living together or dating. Many who are victims of Family Violence do not see themselves as victims, and most of those who abuse do not see themselves as abusive.

WHY IS IT "EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS"?

Consider some of the following costs of Family Violence in Niagara:

- In excess of 2 million dollars - the cost to operate three shelters for women and children who have experienced abuse per year.
- In excess of 11 million dollars - the estimated annual social services costs related to Family Violence in the Niagara Region per year.
- In excess of 10% of the Niagara Regional Police Services budget – the amount spent on responding to Family Violence per year.
- In excess of 70 million dollars - the estimated medical, legal, and lost-productivity costs of family violence in Niagara
- 70% of children are affected or witness domestic violence

Family Violence is a societal issue, not just a women's issue. It is our goal that Family Violence will be eliminated when significant changes in understanding and tolerance of this behavior are made in individuals communities, institutions and systems. Family violence is a crime. All perpetrators of Family Violence must be held accountable for their actions by the authorities, the community, and by their extended family. *The safety of victims is of paramount importance.*

- ✓ An early, collaborative, consistent and respectful response between employers, social services, the community and family members will increase safety for victims and offender accountability
- ✓ Both men and women can be victims; however, the overwhelming majority of Family Violence involves men abusing women
- ✓ Children are often the victims of Family Violence even if the violence or abuse is not directed at them. Witnessing Family Violence has a different yet equally profound effect on children, leaving them with distinct needs which have to be addressed.

Employers can create awareness of Family Violence issues and educate staff about how to deal with Family Violence when it enters the workplace.

RESOURCES

- ✓ ***We' Got a Problem Niagara...Family Violence*** - introductory power point presentation (5 minutes)
- ✓ ***Family Violence in Niagara "It's Everybody's Business"*** - public education power point presentation (20 – 30 minutes)
- ✓ ***Family Violence: It's Everybody's Business – A Workplace Toolkit***
- ✓ **Website:** www.itseverybodysbusiness.ca
- ✓ **Handout for Employers– "It's Everybody's Business"**
- ✓ **Website:** www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca **resource information for training, recognition and safety planning brochures**

Gillian's Place
(St. Catharines and North Niagara)

905-684-8331

Serenity Place
(Welland and South Niagara)

905-788-0113

Nova House
Niagara Falls

905-356-5800



ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS

"It's Everybody's Business" offers a short presentation to organizations wishing to learn more about the impact of Family Violence within the workplace in Niagara. Its goal is to help employers recognize and respond to family violence situations that enter the workplace. The presentation will cover the topics listed below:

1. What is the cost of Family Violence to employers?

- lower employee productivity
- higher rates of absenteeism
- lower employee morale
- higher security and liability risks

2. Why should employers invest in Family Violence prevention?

- to protect profits and productivity
- to increase employee satisfaction
- improved health and safety for employees
- improved public perception of your organization
- may assist in meeting Occupational Health & Safety Regulations for federally regulated employers regarding workplace violence
- to stop crime

3. How Employers can make a difference.

- show respect and offer support
- develop supportive policies and programs in your workplace
- keep yourself and your staff updated about family violence resources in your community
- don't tolerate abusive behavior / don't minimize the situation
- be open minded / ensure confidentiality

4. Policy considerations.

- develop employee assistance programs
- develop anti-harassment policies
- discuss company policy on family violence issues as part of new employee orientation
- offer work hour flexibility
- establish safety procedures

If this presentation motivates you or your organization to learn more specifics about how employers can deal with the impact of Family Violence when it enters their workplaces, "It's Everybody's Business" can provide further policy and procedures, information, training and resources.

WORKPLACE TOOLKIT

The Workplace Toolkit is intended to provide Niagara employers, unions, and employees with information and resources for recognizing and responding to Family Violence situations that enter the workplace, and help them take action to address the impact of Family Violence on the workplace.

Specifically, 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 develop practical, flexible training tools that will help employers deal with the impact of Family Violence on the workplace
- to create safer and healthier work environments
- to support businesses large and small in meeting their social responsibility to prevent Family Violence from spilling over into the workplace
- to promote practices, policies, and procedures that support victims of Family Violence in the workplace

The **Workplace Toolkit** can be accessed at:

www.itseverybodysbusiness.ca .

To request a presentation please contact:

"It's Everybody's Business"
Project Co-ordinator
Susan Speck
iebpc@wpsn.ca

or call
905-356-3933 ext 224