DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE
EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES

Canadian Labour Congress Women’s Committee Meeting
May 13, 2012
Domestic Violence and Work

- Internationally, the links between economic independence, being in paid employment and the impact of domestic violence have been steadily developing
The Impact on Women Workers

*Women with a history of domestic violence – have a more disrupted work history – are consequently on lower personal incomes – have had to change jobs more often – are employed at higher levels in casual and part time work

(Family Violence Prevention Fund, 1998)

*Many earlier studies focused on women only.
A Protective Effect

• Being in employment is a key pathway for women to leave a violent relationship

• The financial security that employment affords
  – helps to prevent women becoming trapped and isolated in violent and abusive relationships
  – helps them to maintain their home and standard of living

(Patton, 2003)
Escalating Risk

- Perpetrators who extend their abuse to the work setting are increasing the number of domains in which they control their partners.

- By harassing, stalking, and threatening the target at work, offenders may succeed in getting the victim fired and thereby increase the victim’s dependence.

*(Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 1997; Gemignani, 2000, Reeves, O’Leary-Kelly, Farmer, Paetzold, & Tiefenthaler, 2001)*
Offenders in the Workplace

- 80% of respondents said their job performance was negatively affected by their domestic violence.
  - Not paying attention to what he was doing because of his relationship issues
  - Preoccupied by thoughts about his partner, such as a previous fight they had
  - Angry or upset about his partner
  - Waiting for his partner to call or on the phone with his partner

- 19% caused or almost caused an accident at work.

(Schmidt, 2012)
Cost Estimates to Workplaces

• Canada 77.9 million annually
  (Zhang, Hoddenbagh, Susan McDonald, Scrim, 2013)

• New Zealand $368 million annually
  (Kahui, Ku, Snively, 2014)

• Introduction of workplace protections for people affected by domestic violence both saves employers costs (recruitment, retention, re-training, health and safety) and increases productivity
DV@WorkNet

• Goal

• To mobilize knowledge about domestic violence and its impacts on workplaces and workers
  – Use knowledge to create strategies to support survivors of domestic violence in the workplace
Audiences

• Researchers
• Policy actors
• Legislators
• Labour organizations
• Employers
• Worker and domestic violence advocates
• Survivors of domestic violence
• Domestic violence can affect attendance, performance and safety at work for workers and their co-workers.

• Domestic violence negatively impacts the productivity of workplaces.

• Domestic violence is a workplace issue that requires enforceable and standardized industrial/workplace responses.
Strategies

1. Build an evidence base through research
2. Bargain for domestic violence clauses in collective agreements
3. Include domestic violence protections in employment legislation
4. Include protections from discrimination related to domestic violence in anti-discrimination legislation
5. Include and strengthen protections for workers experiencing domestic violence in occupational health and safety legislation
6. Education
7. Share best practices
Membership

Sectors
- Unions
- Academics
- Women’s Advocates

Geographic Regions
- Canada & U.S.A.
- Australia & New Zealand
- Europe
- Philippines
Cross Country Comparison of National Survey Results

- **Australia**: Ludo McFerran (Centre for Gender Related Violence Studies - University of New South Wales)
- **New Zealand**: Margaret Rayner-Thomas, Robyn Dixon, Janet Fanslow (The University of Auckland)
- **Turkey**: Sevda Alkan, Melsa Ararat (Sabanci University)
- **UK**: Scarlet Harris (Trades Union Congress)
- **Canada**: Barb MacQuarrie, Nadine Wathen, Jen MacGregor (CREVAWC, FIMS - Western University), Canadian Labour Congress
## Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Canada†</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>Turkey‡</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Size</strong></td>
<td>3611</td>
<td>8429</td>
<td>1626</td>
<td>1715</td>
<td>3449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex/Gender (female)</strong></td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (45+)</strong></td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed permanently, full time</strong></td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>68%</td>
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† Results are preliminary and should not be distributed. Report will be released in December, 2014.

‡ Pilot results only. Main survey results will be released in December, 2014.
### Prevalence of DV

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any DV experience</strong></td>
<td>30%*</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>48.5% (overall)</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75% (women)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recent DV experience</strong></td>
<td>5%*</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(current and/or past 12 months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past DV experience</strong></td>
<td>25%*</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(over 12 months ago)</td>
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* Predominantly intimate partner violence but also includes other family violence, such as from adult children.
### Impact of DV at Work

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV affected ability to get to work (yes) (most common reason)</td>
<td>48% (physical injury or restraint)</td>
<td>38% (physical injury and/or restraint)</td>
<td>38.2% (physical injury or restraint)</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>43.5%* (physical injury or restraint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV continued at workplace (yes)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12.5%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work performance affected by DV (yes)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>80%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took time off due to DV (yes)</td>
<td>10%**</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>57%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Approximate  ** Among those whose work performance was affected by DV.
## Workplace Supports

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<tr>
<td>Discussed DV with someone at work (yes)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top workplace disclosure recipients</td>
<td>Primarily Co-worker or Friend</td>
<td>Co-worker (82%), Supervisor/Manager (45%)</td>
<td>Co-worker (69%), Supervisor/Manager (54%), Friend (50%)</td>
<td>Co-workers (78%), Manager (54%), H.R. (9%)</td>
<td>Friend (54.4%<em>), Manager (46.1%</em>), Colleague (39.4%*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Approximate
## Workplace Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disclosure recipient helpful (yes)</th>
<th>Australia</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend (23%), Co-worker (17%), Manager (10%)</td>
<td>Friend (23%), Co-worker (82%), Supervisor/Manager (72%), Union (76%), HR (58%)</td>
<td>Managers most often identified as most helpful</td>
<td>Most were satisfied with help from friends at work and managers</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
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### Workplace Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome of Discussing DV at work</th>
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</table>
| Most found **nothing changed** or outcome was **negative** | Mostly positive – 52.2%  
Mostly negative – 7.0%  
Pos./Neg. equally – 18.3%  
Nothing – 18.7%  
No response – 3.8% | Positive things – 62.4%  
Negative things – 2.6%  
Nothing happened – 30.8%  
No response – 4.3% | Mostly positive | Positive things – 45.8%*  
Negative things – 4%*  
**Nothing** really changed – 50.2%* |

* Approximate
## Workplace Supports

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<tr>
<td><strong>Believe DV can impact work lives of employees</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>83.8%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Believe workplace supports can reduce impact of DV in workplace</strong></td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>68.7%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Approximate
Main Findings

• DV prevalence rates similar across countries

• Impact at work
  – Over a third report ability to get to work affected
  – Majority of victims report performance affected, but not in Australia
  – Time off and whether DV continued at work varies
Main Findings

• Workplace supports
  – Co-workers, friends most common recipients
  – Managers disclosed to less often in Australia, not at all in Turkey, and perceived as less helpful in Australia
  – Negative outcomes infrequent except in Australia (these results gathered before 2 million workers covered by collective agreements with dv entitlements)
Main Findings

- Vast majority agree that DV can impact employees’ work lives, and that workplace supports can reduce impact of DV at work (not in Turkey)
Conclusions

• Great start, but there are gaps
  – Other parts of the world
  – Male, female (and other) workers who may be victims and perpetrators
  – Various types of employment and work settings

• Ideally, authors continue to connect and share knowledge prior to designing and launching new surveys – maximize comparative ability
Next Meeting

- November 10, 2015
- Meeting space provided by the ITUC
- Brussels