



Neighbours, Friends & Families

Domestic Violence in the Workplace

An introduction:
what everyone needs to know...

Why are we here?

In almost every case of domestic homicide, we found that the people around the victim knew what was going on – but didn't know what to do about it...

Al O'Marra
(Former) Chief Counsel Coroner's Office of Ontario



Why are we here?

Workplaces are also unprepared to respond to domestic homicide and workers have been killed at work.



Workplace Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is considered workplace violence under the terms of the Ontario OHSA

Under section 32.0.4 of the Act

- if an employer **is aware or ought to be aware** that domestic violence that **is likely to expose a worker to physical injury** may occur in the workplace, the employer must **take every reasonable precaution to protect** the worker



Reduce Isolation & Increase Safety

- Understand domestic violence
- Recognize warning signs and risk factors
- Respond safely and effectively in the community and the workplace



What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is **a pattern of behaviour** used by one person to gain **power and control** over another with whom he/she has or has had an **intimate relationship**.

Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario
(OHSCO)



Patterns of Abusive Behaviour

Physical: slapping, choking, punching, threats

Sexual: threats, force used for sexual acts

Verbal: making degrading comments or forced acts

Emotional: confinement, threats to children, pets

Economic: stealing/controlling money/possessions

Spiritual: using beliefs to manipulate / control

Stalking: persistent, unwanted following or watching, use of electronic devices to monitor



Domestic Violence

- Happens across all social classes in all type of workplaces
- Perpetrators can be in positions of power
 - professionals, managers, police, judges,
- Also occurs in same sex relationships
- Lifelong impact on children



Domestic Violence – 3 Types

Situational couple violence

- most common / arguments escalate to violence

Coercive control*

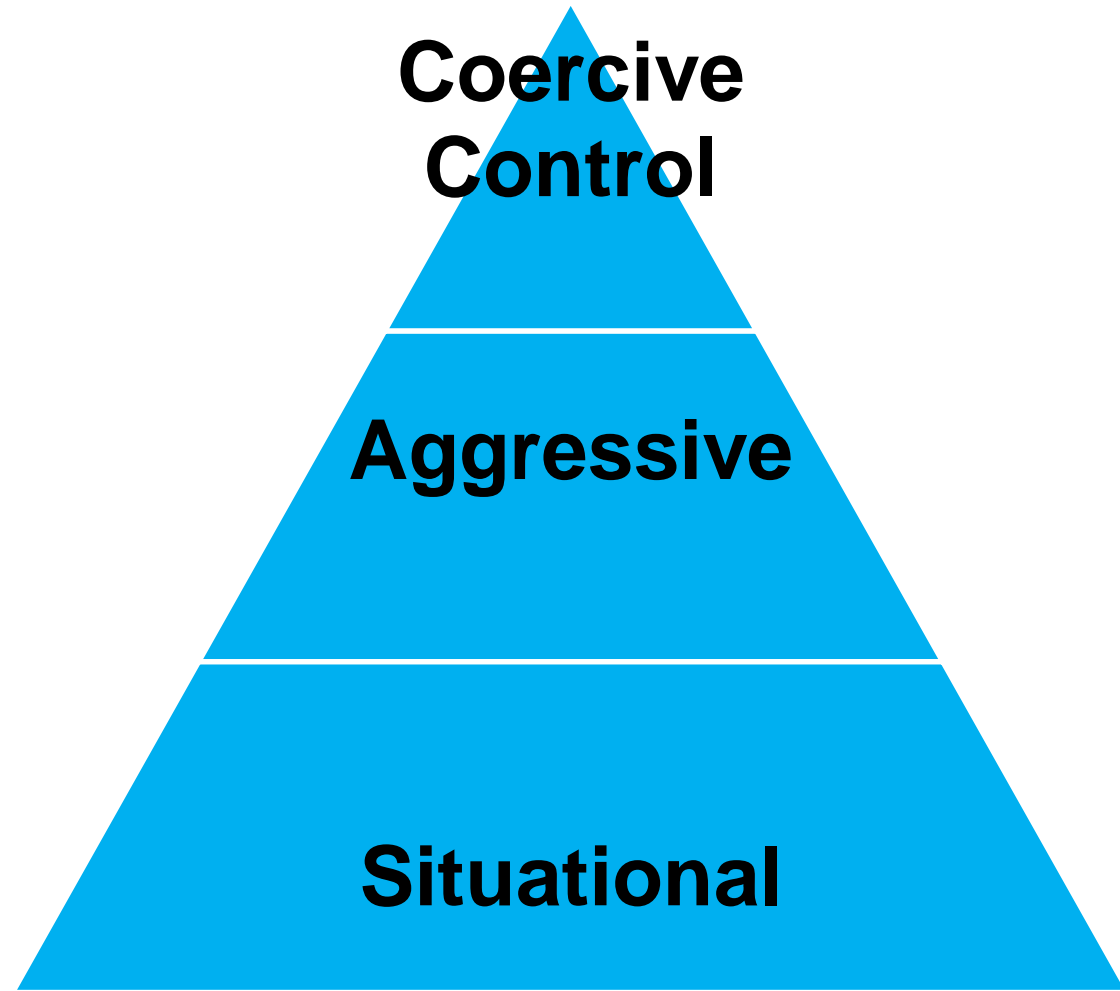

- abusive partner controls and coerces
- pattern of behaviour

Violent Resistance

- victim of coercive control fights back

*Male
Dominant*


*Gender
Proportions*



(Johnson et al., 2002; LaViolette, 2005; Martin et al., 2006)

High

Risk



Lower



Focus on coercive control

Abusive partner uses violence as a tactic to control and coerce

Woman Abuse

There are men who experience coercive control. They also need to be supported and encouraged to seek help.



Why Woman Abuse?

- Highest risk cases (DVDRC)
- Most serious injuries (Stats Can)
- Can't change what you can't name
- Preventable (because predictable)



Ontario Death Reviews

Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

Homicides with Domestic Violence Involvement (2002-2009)

- 203 domestic homicide and domestic homicide-suicide cases resulted in 295 deaths
- 71% of the cases were homicides
- 29% of the cases were homicide-suicides
- 80% of deaths were homicide victims
- 20% were perpetrators who committed suicide or were otherwise killed (e.g. shot by police).



Ontario Death Reviews

Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

Homicides with Domestic Violence Involvement (2002-2009)

80% of the homicide victims were adult females

12% of the homicide victims were children

8% of the homicide victims were adult males

97% of the perpetrator deaths were adult males



A Common Misconception

Woman Abuse/Domestic Violence **is a private issue**

In Canada, woman abuse in the workplace has
been invisible



How Common is Domestic Violence at Work?

- 24% of employees have experienced domestic violence
 - 70% of people experiencing domestic violence are victimized at work
 - 54 % miss three or more days of work a month
- 22 % of workers report that they have worked with someone who has been a victim of domestic violence



Recognizing the Warning Signs

Abusive behaviour in relationships:

- Put downs
- Dominates the conversation
- Checks up on her all the time
- Suggests he is the victim
- Isolates her
- Acts as if he owns her
- Lies to make himself look good



Recognizing Risk Factors

The most common risk factors are:

- Actual or pending separation
- A history of domestic violence
- Obsessive behaviour by perpetrator
- The level of violence is increasing
- Stalking behaviour
- Depression of the perpetrator
- Threat to kill



Domestic Violence Death Review Committee (2010)

79% of the cases had 7 or more risk factors

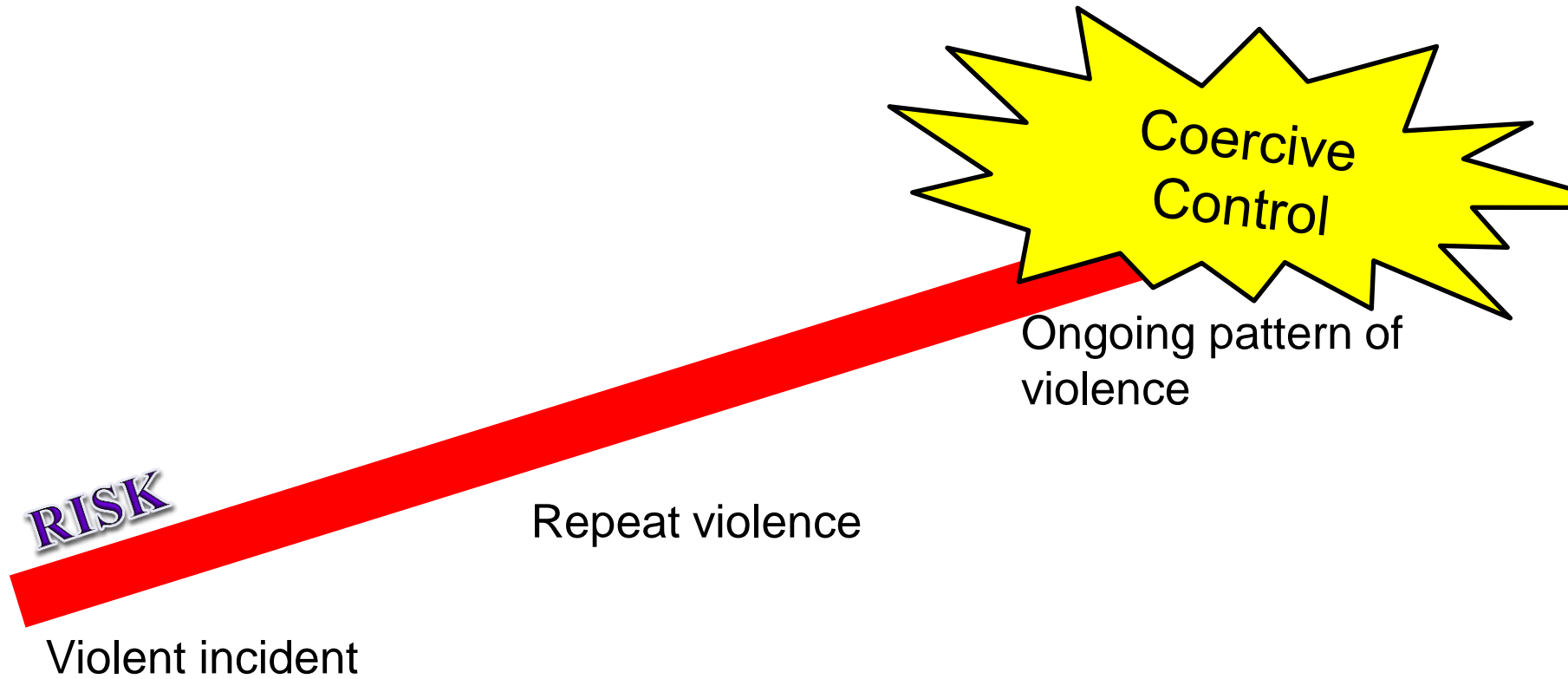


Understanding Risk

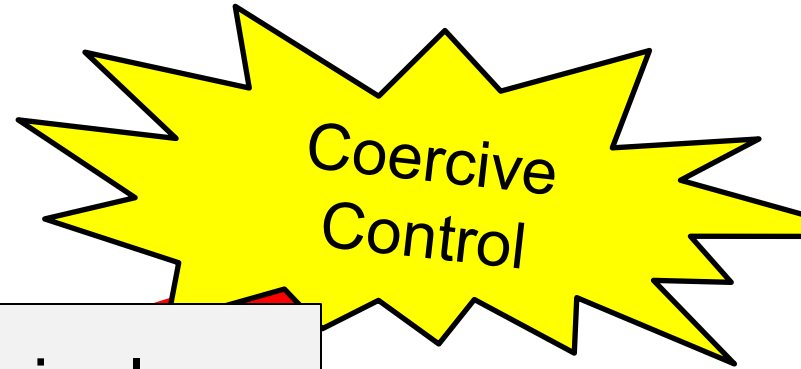
- All domestic violence is harmful
- Coercive control presents the highest risks
- Situations can escalate suddenly
- A single incident can be dangerous
- Leave risk assessment to trained experts
- Men and women experience violence differently



A Continuum of Violence



A Continuum of Violence



Violence may be physical or non-physical. Sometimes abusive partners only use non-physical forms of violence to maintain their control.

RISK



Lived Experience

Documentary

“What everyone should know about woman abuse.”

WATCH for WARNING SIGNS & RISK FACTORS



What warning signs did you see?

What are the high risk factors?



Workplace Warning Signs

- Bruising that cannot be explained
- Missing work, sick or late more often
- Sad, lonely, withdrawn and afraid
- Trouble concentrating on a task
- Receiving upsetting phone calls
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope
- Requesting accommodations such as leaving early



Why Workplaces Need to Be Involved

Perpetrators choose her workplace as a means to access her because often this is a factor in her life that remains unchanged and predictable.

Even if she has changed residences to isolate herself from the perpetrator, she may still experience the negative actions at work.

Zachary, 2000



Stalking

The danger of stalking / criminal harassment

- 76% of women murdered were stalked by their intimate partners in the year prior to murder
- 21–24% of all stalking cases actually begin in the workplace
- 87% of stalkers are male

National Stalking Resource Center
Kong, 1997; Pathe *et al.*, 2000



Aysegul Candir

December 10, 2004

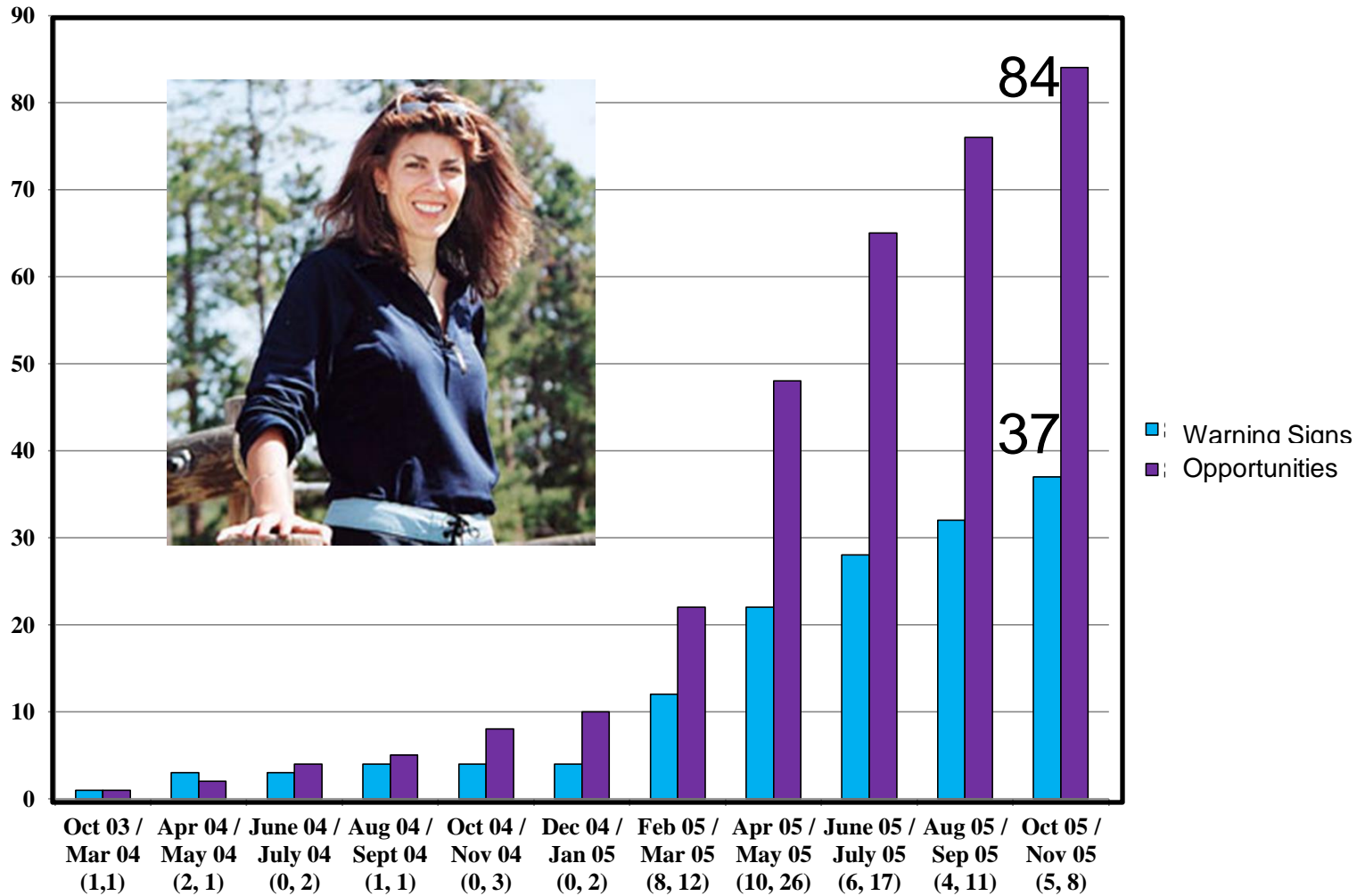
Shot in the parking lot of her workplace, she later died in hospital.



Warning Signs & Risk Factors in the Workplace

- **Warning signs**
 - Visible warning signs and risk factors
 - Should raise possibility of danger
- **Opportunities to intervene**
 - Can be missed because of uncertainty or missing information
 - Organizations and individuals are unprepared

Warning Signs & Missed Opportunities Dupont Inquest



What Can I Do?



The Power of Isolation

Isolation is a factor that is always present in situations of woman abuse

...It could even be considered a necessary condition

As the abuse escalates – the isolation becomes more profound



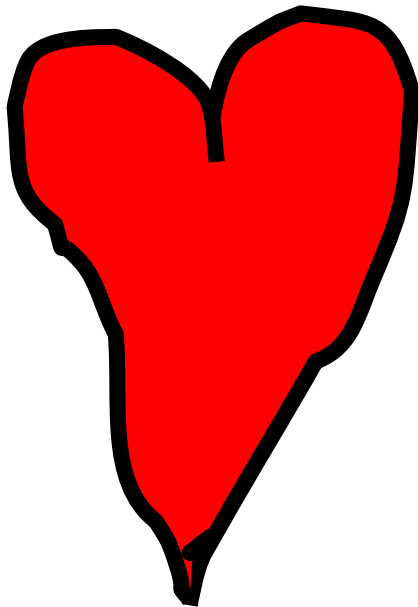
Interrupt Isolation

1. **SEE it** - warning signs and risk factors
2. **NAME it** – overcome your hesitation
3. **CHECK it** – Ask questions, seek help, take appropriate action – refer / resources

SEE it – NAME it – CHECK it



How do we prepare ourselves?



Start with Heart

You can't go wrong if you intervene from a place of genuine concern and care...



Practice

SEE it / NAME it / CHECK it

- If it would help, think about someone you know
- NO MORE THAN 3-4 SENTENCES
- Turn to your neighbour – try it out!
- Reverse roles, do the same thing
- Go!



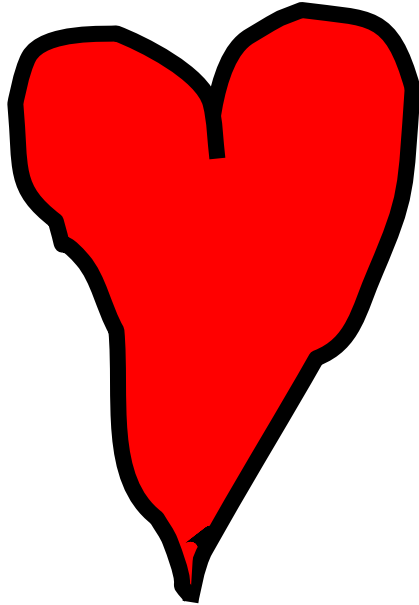
Practice

SEE it / NAME it / CHECK it

1. I saw him sitting outside waiting for you. I am worried about you. Is there anything I can do?
2. I heard yelling. Are you hurt? I am worried about you. Would you be willing to talk to someone about getting help?



How did that go?



Start with Heart

Thumbs up – did you hear the concern
in the practice?

Remember - you can't go wrong if you
start from a place of genuine concern
and care...

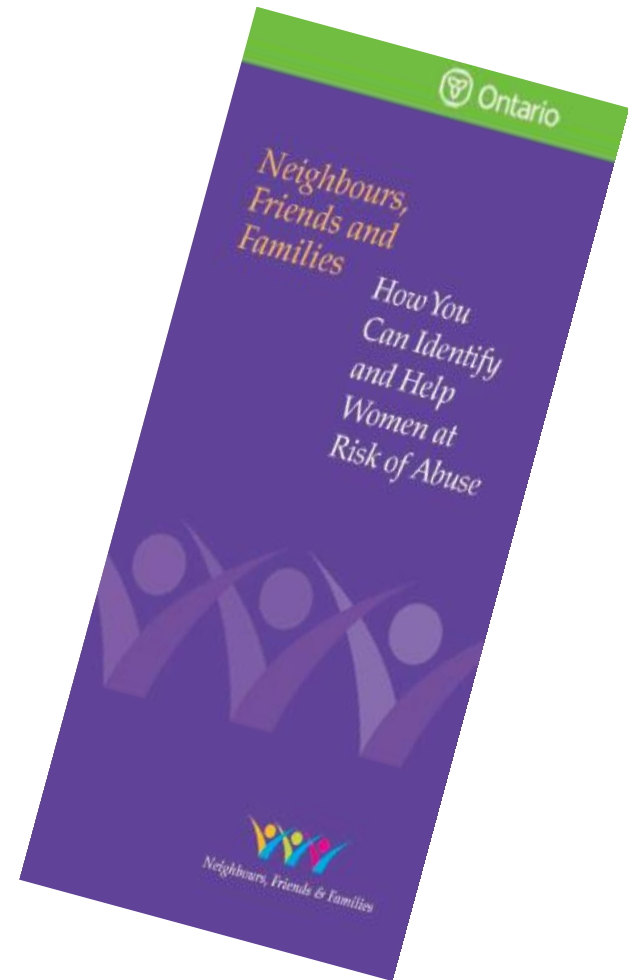


How Can I Support Her?

Tell her you believe her and that it is not her fault

Provide information about safety

Know where to find help in your community



Why Doesn't She Leave?

Understanding the Traps:

- History of abuse – grew up in abusive home
- Afraid to be on her own
- Blames herself for the abuse
- Economic uncertainty - poverty
- She loves him – believes he can change
- She doesn't want to move the children
- Pressure from her family / cultural norms



Women at Greater Risk

- Aboriginal women
 - 8 times more likely to be killed
 - 582 missing/murdered women in Canada
- Women with disabilities (15.5% of pop)
 - 60% experience some form of violence
- Young women (16 – 24)
 - 66% of all female victims of sexual assault are under 24 / 11% are under the age of 11



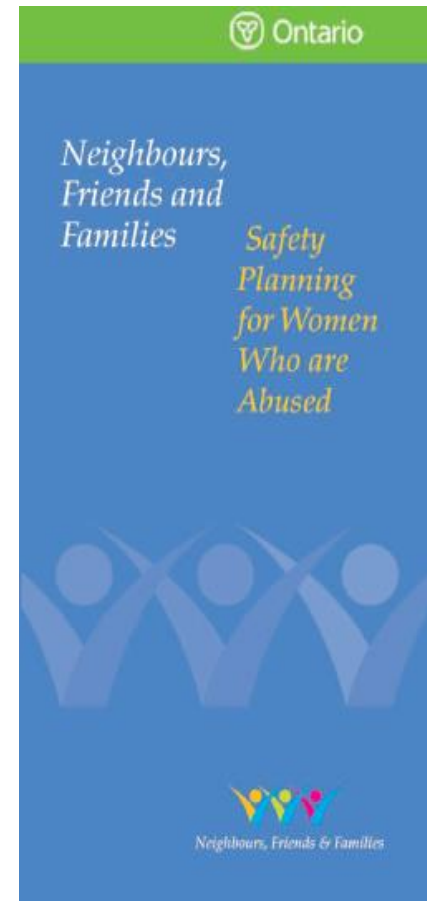
Women at Greater Risk

- Immigrant women
 - Do not experience higher rates but may be more vulnerable due to economic dependence, language barriers, lack of knowledge of community services
- Women in Rural Communities
 - Isolation, lack of transportation, long response time for police, firearms in the home, responsibilities for livestock



Safety Planning for Women

- Develop a Safety Plan – it's critical!
 - Getting Ready to Leave
 - Leaving the Relationship
 - After Leaving



Assaulted Women's Helpline

- 24-hour telephone support and crisis line
- Anonymous and confidential
- Available in many languages
- TTY line and staff trained to work with women with disabilities

Local Resources

- Women's Shelters
- Sexual Assault Centres
- Victim Services
- Partner Assault Response Programs (PAR)
- SA/DV Treatment Unit – some hospitals
- Police



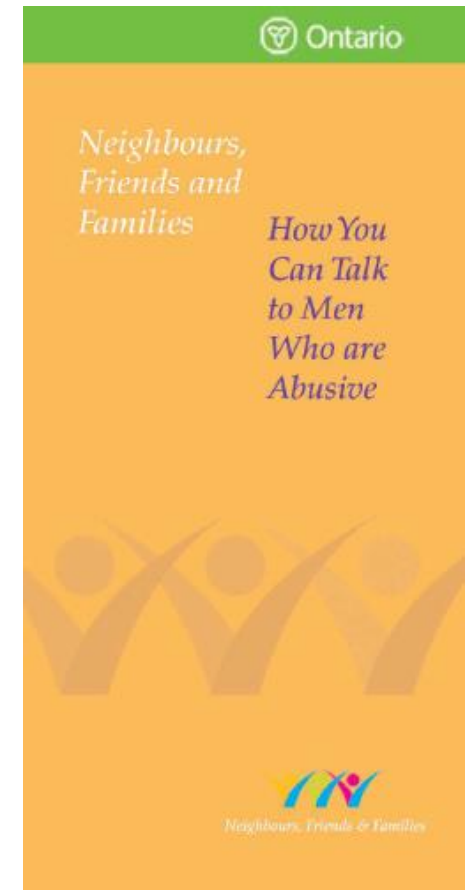
What Can I Say?

When someone you care about is acting abusively:

Approach him when he is calm

Tell him that you are concerned for the safety of his partner and children and that there is help for him

Recognize that confrontational, argumentative approaches may make the situation worse and put her at higher risk



Summary

- Domestic Violence / Woman abuse
- Warning signs
- Risk Factors
- SEE it / NAME it / CHECK it



...and in my workplace?

What do I need to know about my organization's policies and procedures?

- Who do I talk to when I see warning signs or risk factors?
- How do I report if I see an incident, attempt and/or threat of violence?
- What else do I need to know about my responsibilities at work?



Everyone has a role to play

You don't have to be a hero or fix the situation.
Little things you do can make a big difference.
Take the warning signs seriously.

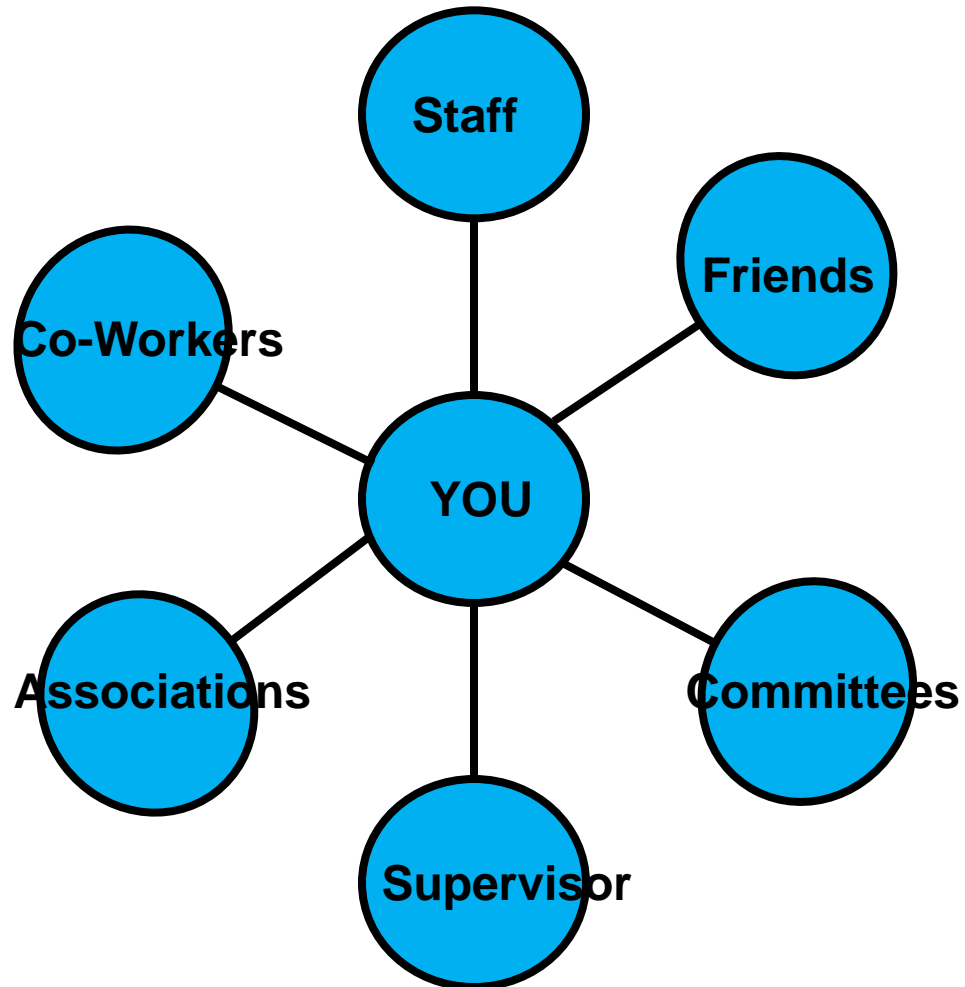
Learn more at:

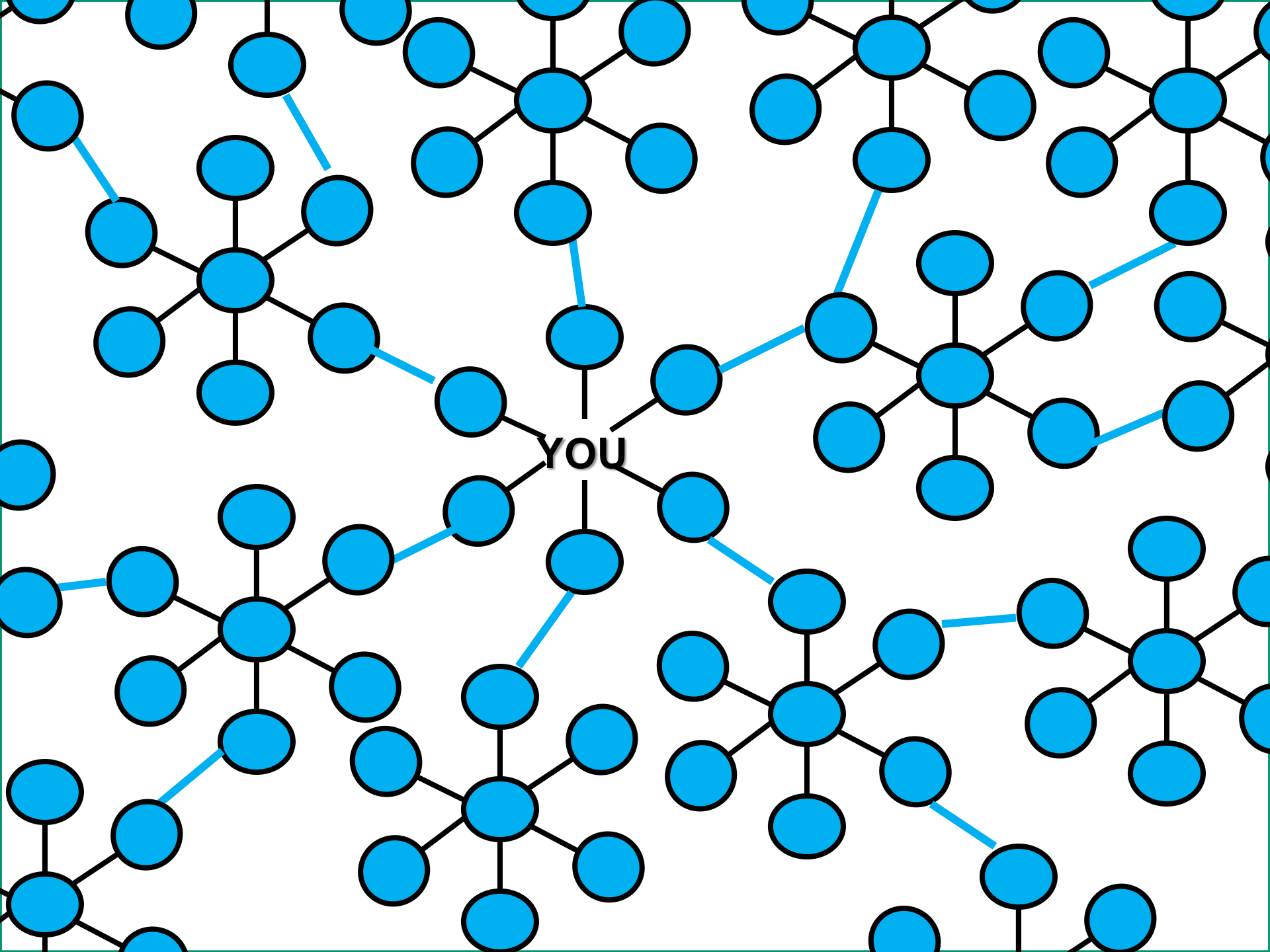
<http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca>

<http://www.makeitourbusiness.com>



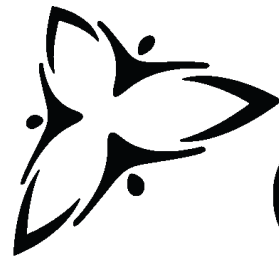
With your relationships: reduce isolation...increase safety







Centre for Research & Education
on Violence against Women and Children



Ontario

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NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES @ WORK

