Supporting Employee Mental Health
Substance Use and Intimate Partner Violence

Thank You to Our *SAFER* Sponsors

NSC is grateful to the following lead sponsors for their generous support of the *SAFER* effort:

Thank you to our partner sponsor:

FirstGroup

Today's Speakers

Rachael Cooper
Senior Program Manager
National Safety Council

Where Are We Now?

- **20.8 million** people in the US are living with a substance use disorder
- Preliminary 2019 data
  - 70,980 total overdose deaths, **50,042 due to opioids**
- COVID-19 → **40 states** have seen significant increases in overdose deaths since March
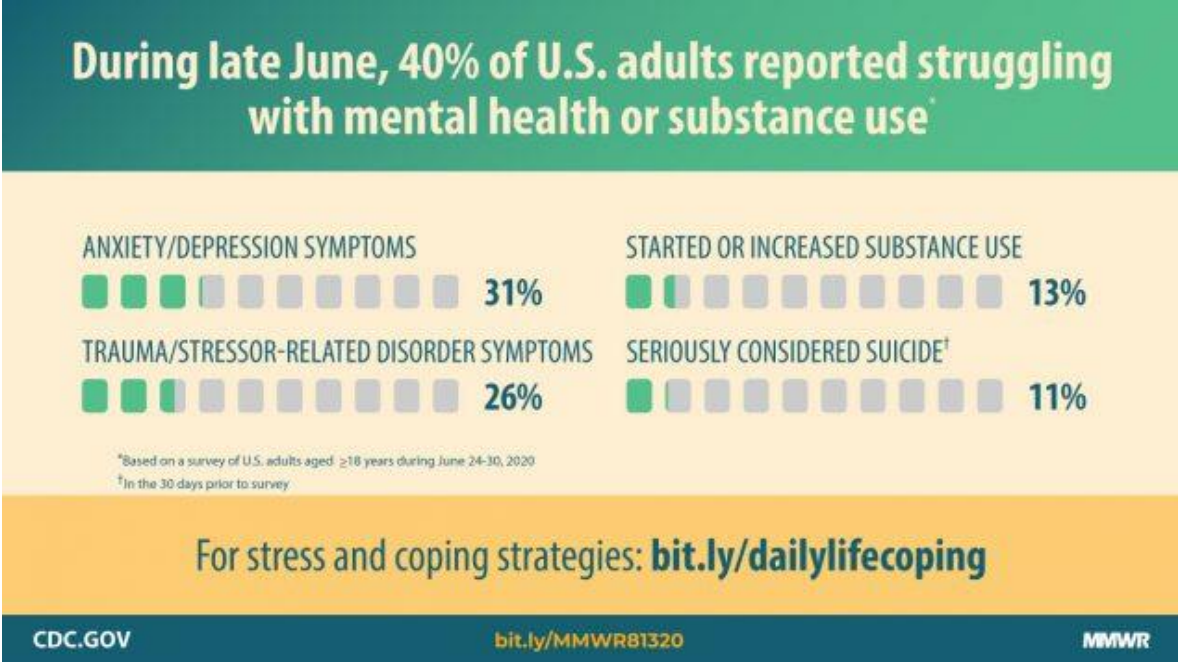
In The Workplace

- Workplace overdose deaths involving drugs or alcohol have increased annually by **at least 25%** for five consecutive years
- **95%** of opioid ODs occur in working age adults
- **75%** of people with a SUD are in the workforce
- Impacts the bottom line, safety and wellbeing of the workplace and workforce

nsc
National Safety Council

COVID, Substance Use & Mental Health

- Economic vulnerability is associated with increased mental health distress
- Impacts of the pandemic will not disappear quickly
- Impacts of grief and trauma
- Impacts on treatment and recovery
- High levels of stress and poor coping choices
- Fear of attending treatment
- Suspension of programs (varying distancing requirements; financial disruptions)

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

During late June, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use

ANXIETY/DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS
31%

STARTED OR INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE
13%

TRAUMA/STRESSOR-RELATED DISORDER SYMPTOMS
26%

SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE[‡]
11%

*Based on a survey of U.S. adults aged ≥18 years during June 24-30, 2020
[‡]In the 30 days prior to survey

For stress and coping strategies: bit.ly/dailylifecoping

CDC.GOV
bit.ly/MMWR81320
MMWR

Key Recommendations for Employers

- Obtaining senior leadership engagement and support

- Engaging and educating employees

- Training supervisors on the role they can play

- Encouraging Human Resources to create compassionate, comprehensive policies

Key Recommendations for Employers

- Learning about and addressing unique workplace needs

- Updating employer health care plans and pharmacy benefit programs

- Creating a safe, hazard free workplace

- Developing a workplace culture of health and wellness to reduces stigma and support recovery

In the Time of COVID-19…

- Lead with compassion
- Build resiliency into each and every process; prioritize worker wellbeing
- Break down barriers to care; encourage employees to ask for help when they need it
- How does stress manifest when working remotely?
- Communicate – be open, honest and transparent
- Know your workforce

Today's Speakers

Susan DeGregorio
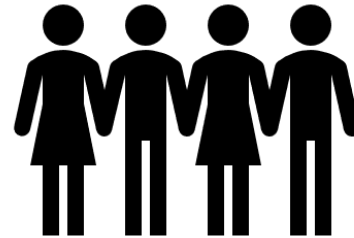## Employer Services Coordinator
Standing Firm

National Safety Council

Partner Violence: Recognition & Response

Planning for the Next Normal

STANDING FIRM®
The Business Case to End Partner Violence
A National Program of Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

STANDING FIRM

- A membership organization of employers dedicated to addressing partner violence impact in the workplace.

- Prepare employers to address the **financial, safety and human costs** of partner violence in the workplace.

- Equip employers with the tools necessary to take action.

Planning for the Next Normal

Partner Violence

Workplace Safety/Recall Procedures

Remote Work

Policy Changes/ Business Continuity

Partner Violence

Next Normal

Partner Violence

Employee Communications /Training

Employee Benefits/ Compensation

Compliance

Partner Violence

14

Obstacles to Awareness

It is an important issue but it won't happen here.

- We don't look for what we don't believe is there. The first step to addressing partner violence in the workplace is to acknowledge the issue.

- No workplace is immune.

This is a personal issue.

- Partner violence is a workplace issue, not just a 'personal' issue. Even if the violence occurs away from work, it has significant impacts on the workplace.

- OSHA General Duty Clause.

We are not equipped to address this issue.

- And that's true, but an employer is not expected to be the expert. It is about being able to respond effectively.

- Recognize, Respond, Refer.

COVID-19 and Partner Violence

- Stay at home is not safe at home.

  - Quarantine, isolation and stressors, such as job loss and financial insecurity increase the risk of partner violence.[1]

- Partner violence tends to increase during emergencies and early indicators point towards the same tendency with the COVID-19 pandemic.

  - Compared with 2017-2019, the incidence of physical intimate partner violence in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic is **1.8x higher**.[2]

- **1 in 4** women experience and report severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

- And **1 in 7 men**.[3]

[1] Source: Moreira, Diana Nadine, and Mariana Pinto da Costa. "The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the precipitation of intimate partner violence." International Journal of Law and Psychiatry 71 (2020): 101606-101606.
[2] Source:Gosangi, Babina, Hyesun Park, Richard Thomas, Rahul Gujrathi, Camden P. Bay, Ali S. Raja, Steven E. Seltzer, Marta Chadwick Balcom, Meghan L. McDonald, Dennis P. Orgill, Mitchel B. Harris, Giles W. Boland, Kathryn Rexrode, and Bharti Khurana. "Exacerbation of Physical Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19 Lockdown." Radiology (2020)
[3] Source: *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey;* https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-factsheet508.pdf

Partner Violence and its Impact

83% of partner violence victims report that the abuse affected their ability to do their job.

Health care costs for physically abused victims are **42%** higher than non-victims.

Almost 1/2 of victims missed one or more days of work.

2/3's of partner violence victims suffer from mental health symptoms.

99% of all partner violence cases include financial abuse.

53% of partner violence victims report losing at least one job because of the violence.

Lacking financial resources is the #1 indicator of whether a victim will stay, leave, or return to an abusive relationship.

Workplace Safety: Onsite

- Almost 30% of workplace violence has roots in partner violence.[1]
- As employees in abusive relationships are asked to return to the office or worksite:
    - Returning may be the victim's first opportunity to escape his or her abuser.
    - The employee's return to the worksite may represent a loss of control to the abuser acting as a trigger: presenting an elevated concern for risk of violence at the workplace.
    - The perpetrator may prevent the employee from returning to the worksite.

As employers, continue operations and/or bring employees back to the worksite, emphasis should be placed on promoting a culture that emphasizes the overall safety of their employees.

Clearly communicate the organization's policies and resources for individuals who are victims of partner violence. Creating a culture where disclosure and reporting are encouraged and supported is critical.

Ensure, as applicable, there is a workplace safety plan and/or a personal workplace safety plan for employees who are victims of partner violence who are in or returning to the worksite.

[1] Source: Department of Labor; https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/human-resources-center/policies/workplace-violence-program

Workplace Safety: Remote

- Victims may be experiencing heightened physical and emotional abuse.
- For some, workplaces and schools function as protective environments.
  - The loss of work and school as an escape valve and the increased stress created by job losses, financial setbacks and forced contact can increase the risk of violence and abuse.
- Perpetrators may use restrictions due to COVID-19 to further reduce access to services, help, and psycho-social support from both formal and informal networks.

As an employer you may have the greatest opportunity to help – you have the chance to 'go behind closed doors' and check in with people via a phone or video call.

We build strong and trusted relationships through work. These relationships may be the only connection vulnerable workers have with the outside world, even if limited to video chats, emails, and phone calls.

Employers have access to workplace resources and accommodations which can alleviate pressure around work responsibilities and arrangements which may be contributing to heightened risks for the victim.

Resources

- COVID-19 Resources
  - https://www.standingfirmswpa.org/resources/covid-19-response-and-resources/
- Manager Training for Remote Workers
  - https://standingfirmswpa.org/covid-19-manager-training/#/
- Resource Kit
  - www.standingfirmswpa.org/resources-for-victims
- Model Policy and/or eLearning Courses (demos)
  - Contact: **sdegregorio@standingfirmswpa.org**

Reminder

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

- It provides an opportunity for employers to communicate in a broader context.

- Raising awareness is the most important first step to creating a culture where victims are comfortable disclosing.

- STANDING FIRM is available to assist with consultation and collateral.

RECOGNIZE   RESPOND   REFER

www.standingfirmswpa.org

Mental Health Resources

- [Stress and Mental Health Playbook](#)

- [Mental Health Issue Brief](#)

- [Managing Employee Stress and Anxiety](#) (and [accompanying webinar](#))

- More resources at [nsc.org/mentalhealth](#) (includes opioid resources as well)

Opioid Resources

- [Opioids at Work Employer Toolkit](#)
  - Includes information for leadership, HR, supervisors, communications, and more

- [Substance Use Cost Calculator](#)

SAFER Reminders

- Risk Assessment Workshops
  - Future Dates: September 21, October 6, November 10
- Organizational Vulnerability Assessment Tool
- Employee Perception Surveys
- COVID and Technology Webinar Series

SAFER Safe Actions For Employee Returns

nsc
National Safety Council

Thank you!
nsc.org/SAFER
safer@nsc.org

Rachael Cooper
rachael.cooper@nsc.org

SAFER Safe Actions For Employee Returns

nsc
National Safety Council