

# KEY FINDINGS – Safe at Home, Safe at Work? National Domestic Violence and the Workplace Survey (2011)

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Between February and July 2011, the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse (ADFVC) at the University of New South Wales conducted a national online domestic violence and the workplace survey. The survey on the impact of domestic violence at work was completed by over 3600 union members. A full copy of the report is available on the website: [www.dvandwork.unsw.edu.au](http://www.dvandwork.unsw.edu.au)

- The majority of the respondents were women (81%), two-thirds were in fulltime employment and nearly two thirds (64%) of the respondents were aged 45 and older.
- Nearly a third of respondents (30%) had personally experienced domestic violence.
- Nearly half those who had experienced domestic violence reported that the violence affected their capacity to get to work; the major reason was physical injury or restraint (67%), followed by hiding keys and failure to care for children.
- Nearly one in five (19%) who experienced domestic violence in the previous 12 months reported that the violence continued at the workplace
- The major form the domestic violence took in the workplace was abusive phone calls and emails (12%) and the partner physically coming to work (11%).
- The main reported impact was on work performance, with 16% reporting being distracted, tired or unwell, 10% needing to take time off, and 7% being late for work.
- 45% of respondents with recent experience of domestic violence discussed the violence with someone at work, primarily co-workers or friends rather than supervisors, HR staff or union representative.

*“ Hiding mobile phone, deadlocking the door, taking house keys, taking the home phone out of wall and taking it with him. ”*

*“ The need to evacuate the family home with children at a moment's notice without ability to collect belongings, and the need to stay overnight with family or friends that complicated usual routines e.g. getting kids to childcare before getting to work. ”*

*“ Phoning work to say if I'm not home in 10 minutes, the children would be at home by themselves. ”*

- 48% of respondents who had experienced domestic violence did disclose the violence to a manager/supervisor, though only 10% found them helpful.
- For those who did not discuss the problem at work, the major reason given was 'privacy', followed by reasons of shame and fear of dismissal.
- Over one third of all respondents who had experienced domestic violence reported the violence to the police. 25% of all respondents who had experienced domestic violence had obtained a protection order, but less than half (41%) included their workplace in the order.
- Only 14% of those who had experienced domestic violence are still living in the relationship, and only 40% are still living in the family home. Below average numbers (54%) of the respondents who had experienced domestic violence were currently living in mortgaged homes; above average (32%) were living in rented properties.
- All respondents thought that domestic violence can impact on the work lives of employees (100%) and a high percentage (78%) believed that workplace entitlements could reduce the impact of domestic violence in the workplace.

*“ Partner transferred to same workplace, becoming my manager, rostered me on same shifts, took same breaks, and shared travel. ”*

*“ Having to lie to hide injuries, cancelling appointments, social isolated from friends/ family. ”*

*“ I live in a small town. My partner has mental health and alcohol issues exacerbated by unemployment. I did not want everyone to know, affecting his chances of work, recovery and fathering our son again. ”*

*“ (Co-workers) were very supportive of me, and this included accompanying me to court, inviting me to stay at their homes, signing affidavits. ”*

*“ My workplace swept the whole incident under the carpet - I felt totally unsupported. ”*

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