

February 2010 *LifeSolutions* Corner

My friend and I work in the same department. Her boyfriend calls her at work several times a day, even though she says she broke up with him. I can tell she's scared. I've seen bruises on her arm and awhile back she had a black eye. She said it came from a fall. Can *LifeSolutions* help?

Yes, we can. What you're describing is partner abuse, which affects nearly 25% of women in the U.S. Both men and women are abused, although more women are affected — with two million reported injuries each year. In addition, 33% of girls who are of dating age experience relationship abuse as well.*

Partner abuse also impacts the workplace. Seventy-four percent (74%) of employed women say they have been harassed at work.* Repeated or threatening phone calls, finding an abuser waiting outside the workplace, or noticing the abuser following them to or from the work are examples of harassment.

Breakups can be a potentially dangerous time. Harassment may escalate, and increase the risk of physical harm.

The good news is that resources are available 24 hours a day to explore safe places to stay and to offer support in figuring out what to do next.

- ◆ *LifeSolutions* will work with your friend to help her be safe and find a way to manage this very difficult situation.
- ◆ We have 24/7 phone access and are just a phone call away at 1-800-647-3327.

***LifeSolutions* is also available to help you figure the best way to provide support to your friend as well as how to suggest that she get help. Some tips to consider:**

- ◆ It often takes time for the partner being abused to take action. Change can be very threatening.
- ◆ It can be frustrating for those who watch and can't figure out why the person doesn't just leave.
- ◆ Friendship may be tested when a person is in an abusive situation. Some friendships don't last. We'll work with you so you can do what you think is best over time.
- ◆ How you approach your co-worker and friend is important. We can assist you in fine-tuning what you want to say and even help you create a script if that would be beneficial.

Finally, this situation is impacting your workplace. It's not only a personal matter for your friend, but it's also affecting her co-workers. To ensure everyone's safety, we suggest you contact your Human Resources (HR) Department and confidentially share your workplace concerns.

- ◆ *LifeSolutions* can help you prepare for a call to HR as well as decide whether to let your friend know what you are going to do and how to tell her.
- ◆ When you contact HR, ask about the company's violence policy, which would include how this issue is handled.
- ◆ If there is no policy, HR can assist you in thinking through the best way to proceed.

The situation you describe is serious. By asking the question, you have taken the first step in finding a way to address your concerns. *LifeSolutions* is here to support you in deciding what to do next.

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