

Getting Help

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, help is available.

- Talk to your personal physician or other health care professional
- Contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at your workplace
- Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800.799.7233 or TTY: 800.787.3224

The *silentWitness* stories are available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. To read all of them, obtain further resources, or get more information on what Kaiser Permanente is doing to prevent domestic violence, visit:

www.kp.org/domesticviolence

“I went to EAP, which helped me identify what I was going through and gave me resources to move forward.”

silentWitness

The silentWitness display is dedicated to the memories of



*Lisa
Munoz*
1976 – 1999,
Optical
Services



*Cassandra
Floyd, MD*
1966 – 2001,
OB/GYN



*Stephanie
Zalot*
1966 – 2003,
Quality
Outcomes

and to all Kaiser Permanente employees who are or have been victims of domestic violence.

silentWitness

The Problem

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior in which one person in an intimate relationship attempts to control another by means of threats or actual use of physical, sexual, verbal, or psychological abuse.

In the U.S., 1 in 4 adult women, and 1 in 14 adult men will be physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Domestic violence affects people of all ages, ethnicities, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, educational backgrounds, and income levels. As one survivor says, “Domestic violence happens to those whom you would least expect. People thought we were the perfect family...”

The Effects

The effects reach far beyond any physical injury. The stress related to domestic violence can lead to depression, anxiety, and other chronic illnesses. Children are also affected when they see a parent being yelled at, insulted, pushed, or hit.

The costs of domestic violence exceed \$5.8 billion each year; \$4.1 billion of this is for direct medical and mental health care services, much of which is paid for by the employer. Other workplace costs include absenteeism, reduced productivity, and loss of experienced employees. As one survivor says, “I was worried about losing my job. Thank goodness I had a co-worker and a boss...who were supportive.”

When it comes to preventing domestic violence, Kaiser Permanente is part of the solution.

“I never told anyone. It was too embarrassing. I had too much shame.”

What Can Be Done?

Kaiser Permanente, America’s leading integrated health care organization, is committed to being an active partner in the solution to domestic violence by increasing the awareness and available resources among our physicians, employees, members, and the communities we serve. One survivor says, “Even though I am a physician and frequently counsel patients in similar circumstances, I did not recognize that I was experiencing domestic violence.”

The silentWitness Display

The *silentWitness* display is a large multi-panel exhibit of stories contributed by Kaiser Permanente physicians, medical staff, and employees who have dealt with domestic violence. The display was developed to raise awareness about the impact of domestic violence and show the vital and positive role that colleagues and the workplace can offer. Accompanying the display are informational brochures for employees available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

The project evolved through the volunteer efforts of a small but committed group of employees, the *silentWitness* display committee, who represent the diversity of the Kaiser Permanente workforce. The efforts were encouraged by the leadership, Employee Associations, and Family Violence Prevention Program of Kaiser Permanente in Northern California. In 2005 the *silentWitness* display received the R. J. Erickson Diversity Achievement Award.

The Stories Break the Silence

The real life experiences highlighted in the display encourage victims to feel comfortable discussing domestic violence. The following are excerpts from the *silentWitness* display.

“Once I decided to get help, that was my turning point. I went to EAP [Employee Assistance Program], which... gave me resources to move forward. My site manager also helped...I’m still seeing a counselor...which allows me to see each day as a positive.”

— 35-YEAR-OLD EMPLOYEE

“I’ll never forget the office visit when my physician said, ‘I am concerned about you—I’m afraid that if your husband doesn’t kill you, the stress will.’ The physician’s words were part of what it took for me to finally leave.”

— 42-YEAR-OLD PSYCHOLOGIST

“I had the support of all my co-workers...which was a tremendous help.”

— 51-YEAR-OLD PHYSICIAN

Courage, Survival, and Hope

“I have a sense of pride that I survived and started over. I had to give up the outward appearances and realize that this can happen to anyone, no matter who you are.”

— 60-YEAR-OLD EMPLOYEE

“I’m at a point now where I can talk about what happened to me and encourage others to get out of similar situations.”

— 50-YEAR-OLD EMPLOYEE AND UNION VICE PRESIDENT

“I can only hope that by telling my story, someone will realize that they are not alone and support is available.”

— 43-YEAR-OLD REGISTERED NURSE

“I was fearful that my colleagues would see me as less competent or less professional if I disclosed that I had experienced domestic violence.”