



UNITED STEELWORKERS'

GUIDE TO VIOLENCE

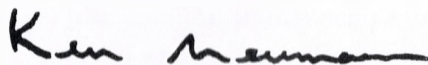
PREVENTION



Reading this guide takes you one step closer to putting the issue on the table. Making it available and helping people to "break the silence" is another. Sections of this guide and a series of shorter leaflets can be copied, posted and distributed. Invite a speaker to a unit or local meeting. Participate in events on December 6th, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Help raise money for services for victims of violence. Ask candidates running for political office what they will do to help reduce and end violence in our communities.

Finally, thank you. Your help in raising issues of abuse and violence will make a difference. Helping to "break the silence" may help to protect a child or adult from abuse and violence. Protecting the health and safety of workers and their families is something we can do together.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Neumann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Neumann
Canadian National Director

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Let's put it on the table*

Put the sounds on the table:

The sound of a slap as hand meets flesh.
The sound of a crack as head meets wall.
The snap of a bone breaking.
The sound of silence as people turn their backs.

Put the statistics on the table:

39 per cent of women 16 and over have been sexually assaulted.
1 in 4 women is physically and/or sexually assaulted by her spouse or live-in partner.
51 per cent of women have been victims of at least one act of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.

A woman who calls the police is likely to have been assaulted 30 times before actually calling.
It's estimated that 50 to 90 per cent of women have at some point been harassed in the workplace.
In the U.S., homicide is the leading cause of occupational deaths for women.

Put the excuses on the table:

"We just treat her like one of the boys."
"When I come home from a hard day at work I don't want to have to listen to kids screaming."
"I saw the way she looked at that guy. Does she think I'm stupid?"
"I just had a fight with my boss and I was in a bad mood."
"I get enough hassles at work. When I get home I want a little respect."
"It's part of the job."

Put the questions on the table:

Why do some people think it's O.K. to tell jokes that demean and demoralize others?
Why do some people think it's O.K. to harass others at work with sexual comments?
Why do some people think it's O.K. to yell at or touch their waitress, cashier or health care aide?
Why do some men think it's O.K. to beat their partners?

Put the responsibility on the table:

Who listens to the degrading and demoralizing jokes?
Who ignores the sexual comments made about a co-worker?
Who ignores sexist, racist or hateful pin-ups and graffiti?
Who hides in silence when they see or hear about violent acts against women, men and children?
Who believes the myth that it's just part of the job?
Who believes the myth that violence against women is a women's problem?

Let's put it on the table:

Violence against women is not a women's problem.
It's our problem.
Violence against another is not just their problem.
It's our problem.

**Revised 2004*

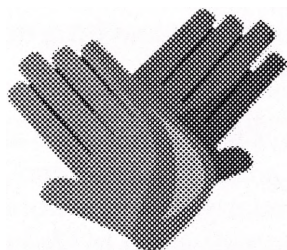
Preventing violence at work

While there are no Canadian national statistics collected on workplace homicides or assaults, data collected in the United States for 2002 shows that assaults and homicides account for 1449 occupational deaths. The majority of female homicide victims worked in retail, service, administrative, transportation, communication or public utility jobs. Homicide is the leading cause of occupational death for women.

At a health and safety workshop, participants initially said violence was not a problem in their workplaces. However, when asked whether they had seen or handled fights or arguments in the workplace, everyone put up their hand. Bullying, floor fights, parking lot confrontations, harassment of servers in restaurants and hotels we visit, and abuse from nursing home residents are all acts of violence. We need to learn how to identify them, deal with them and prevent them from happening.

Who is at risk? Why?

Everyone is at risk, especially people delivering goods or services. Security guards, people working with money and people working alone are especially vulnerable to acts of violence. Health care workers, counsellors, retail workers and taxi drivers are at risk. These people are often on the "front line", hearing the frustration and anger of those who may feel particularly powerless due to unemployment and poverty. Cut backs and under-staffing may lead to delays experienced by those who need help. That anger gets taken out on the worker. No one likes to be restricted behind barriers, work under constant surveillance or in a locked booth; and yet, without adequate staffing and workplace policies to address the risks of violence, personal safety may depend on it.



What is workplace violence?

Physical assault: pushing; hitting; slapping; burning; grabbing; using a weapon; rape; forcing unwanted sexual acts; throwing objects; using work equipment as weapons.

Verbal abuse: humiliating, demeaning and degrading comments; sexist or racist jokes; threatening to harm friends or family; threatening to jeopardize immigration status; threatening to reveal sexual orientation to employer, co-workers and family; threatening to disclose HIV status.

Abuse or the use of violence is a weapon of power. It is the tool used by one to exercise power and control over another. It may be as overt and sudden as a physical slap or punch, or it may build over time and be less obvious, like stalking, degrading graffiti, repeated phone calls, threatening e-mails or mail that intimidates, scares and poisons the workplace.

Is violence part of the job?

Health care workers in an extended care unit in British Columbia recorded 2,778 incidents of punching, slapping, pinching, kicking, tripping, biting, head-butting and hair pulling during a 100-day period. Many workers in long-term care facilities, day care centres, hospitals and group homes face violence or abuse from patients or clients as well as from the family members of patients. Violence is not part of any job, but establishing procedures and protocols for dealing with violent or abusive clients or the public should be. While changes in the physical lay-out of a workplace and hiring sufficient staff may help, the establishment of procedures can help workers deal with families and patients to reduce and prevent violence.

In Canada, employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace. Employees have the right to refuse unsafe work. However, until workers start to report and document incidents of violence and assert their right to a safe workplace, those responsible for enforcement of safety standards may believe that violent behaviour is part of the job, or the worker has done something to cause the abusive or violent reaction.

Impact of violence

We take more than our lunch to work or school. And we bring home more than our pay cheques. No matter how much we try to leave work at work, and home at home, feelings cannot be turned on and off.

How do victims of violence feel? Afraid. Powerless. Depressed. Guilty. These feelings lead to a loss of self-esteem, withdrawal from activities in the workplace, the union and in the community and can sometimes lead to drug or alcohol abuse. It may also become difficult to concentrate on work, resulting in accidents or injury risks to oneself and/or others.

What happens to children? Children take their feelings to school. A loss of sleep and poor appetite lead to difficulties in concentrating and completing assignments or tests. Children may feel responsible or guilty, leading to low self-confidence. They'll have a hard time connecting or interacting

with other children or adults. Poor attendance and drug or alcohol abuse may also occur.

Boys who experience abuse are more likely to abuse their partners when they grow up. Similarly, girls are more likely to accept abuse as a fact of life in their relationships if they grow up in an abusive environment. Children who grow up watching adults act violently and see violence used as a way of dealing with problems, may grow up believing that violence is normal. Violence doesn't have to be a part of our lives.

The impact and cost of violence on co-workers, friends, extended family members and community services is high. We all pay for counselling, health care, legal aid, police intervention, emergency housing and child care supports that may be needed after a violent incident. ***Violence against another is not just their problem, it's our problem.***

Is your workplace safe?

Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace. Joint health and safety committees can help to prevent violence in the workplace by developing clear policies on harassment and violence. Workers, customers, clients, patients and family members of patients should be made aware of the policy. Make it visible in your workplace.

Health and safety activists know how to conduct tours and audits of their workplace. Working with your local union officers, committees, you can look at elements in your work and in the design of your workplace that could be changed to reduce the risk of violence.

Prevention checklist:

Does the public have access to your workplace?

Are reception areas and work stations designed to be welcoming but safe for workers?

Are there things in waiting areas to avoid boredom and reduce frustration for clients and their children?

Are there procedures for dealing with abusive or violent clients? Are you trained in following these procedures?

Do staffing levels allow you to spend adequate time with clients, patients or customers?

Do you work alone? How do you get help in the event of an emergency? Are you required to frequently check in with security or another worker? Is there a buddy system in place for isolated or remote areas?

If you handle money, what safeguards are in place to protect you in the event of an attempted robbery?

Is there adequate lighting in and around the workplace? Are entrances and parking lots well-lit and monitored?

Are washrooms and shower facilities accessible, safe and secure?

Does protective clothing fit properly? Is it available in different sizes?

Have piece rate and quota systems been removed to reduce competition between workers?

Are there policies for the investigation of harassment complaints?

Is there a policy to remove pin-ups and sexist, homophobic or racist graffiti from the workplace?

Do you know where to go for help in the event of harassment or an incident of violence? How are incidents reported and recorded?

Are there clear emergency procedures, understood by every worker, and systems of follow-up reporting?

Dealing with complaints of harassment: Tips for Local Union Activists

1. Assure the person that you take their complaints seriously. Let them know that you are aware how difficult it is to come forward with a complaint. Be a listener not a judge. If the situation was bothering her or him, it is the right thing to come forward.
2. Ask if the person is comfortable discussing the problem with you. Assist them in contacting one of the union's designated counsellors.
3. If applicable, provide them with a copy of the union and company policy.
4. Let the person know the options available in pursuing a complaint. These options include:
 - a union to investigate and attempt to mediate a resolution
 - b union to approach management to investigate
 - c union to file a grievance
 - d filing a complaint with the Human Rights Commission in some circumstances
 - e criminal or civil charges with police investigation
5. Confidentiality. Reassure the person that your discussions and their comments will not be shared with the alleged harasser or any witnesses. If the complaint becomes a formal grievance or complaint, some parts of the case may need to become public.
6. Ask the person to document the incident(s) in writing. The documentation should include:
 - a time and place of incident(s)
 - b names of witnesses (if any)
 - c what the harasser did and said (word for word if possible)
 - d what they did or said and how she/he felt about it
7. Make sure that there are some union members or community counsellors who can provide emotional support to the person.
8. In some cases, the victim may need to take sick leave or file a workers' compensation claim or, if absolutely necessary, a temporary work re-assignment could be made. After discussing this with the victim, make sure that you obtain help to facilitate this process as quickly as possible.



Preventing Bullying in the Workplace

Bullying is about power. The workplace bully controls and overpowers people with their size, status or privilege. Bullying is an act of aggression. Any behaviour that intimidates, threatens and humiliates another should not be tolerated – in a schoolyard, a workplace or in the union.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1999 identified workplace violence as one of the most serious problems facing the workplace. The ILO defines workplace violence including bullying as:

“... any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. These behaviours would originate from customers, co-workers, at any level of the organization. This definition would include all forms of harassment, bullying, intimidation, physical threats, assaults, robbery and other intrusive behaviours.”

Bullying can include:

- ◆ Repeated mistreatment and intimidation
- ◆ Spreading of malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo
- ◆ Exclusion or isolation
- ◆ Undermining or obstructing someone's work
- ◆ Physical threats and abuse
- ◆ Constantly changing work guidelines
- ◆ Establishing impossible deadlines
- ◆ Giving wrong information or not giving necessary information
- ◆ Jokes that are obviously offensive verbally or by email
- ◆ Spying or stalking
- ◆ Underwork that makes someone feel useless
- ◆ Yelling or swearing
- ◆ Constant criticism
- ◆ Unwarranted punishment
- ◆ Blocking applications for training, leave or promotion
- ◆ Tampering with a person's personal belongings or work equipment

Is it bullying or just tough management?

Bullying should not be “part of the job”. No one should have to be treated in a disrespectful or intimidating manner to earn a pay cheque. Bullying is not “tough” management. It is inappropriate and illegitimate behaviour. And, it rarely stops with one victim. When not handled quickly and effectively, bullying can “poison” the workplace.

A recent study estimates that one in six workers in the United States have directly experienced destructive bullying in the past year.

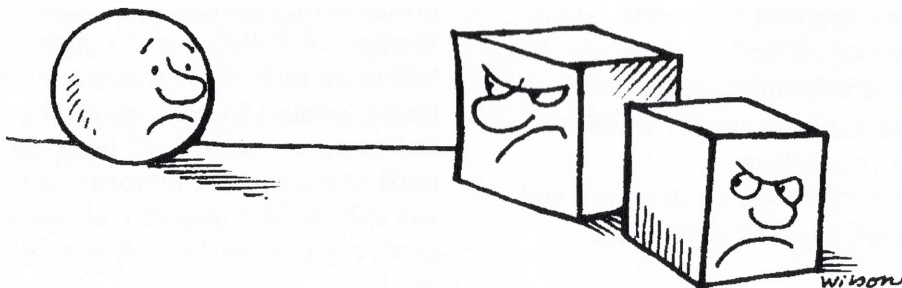
Bullies want to control one individual or a group of individuals. According to the Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute, half of all bullies are woman. Women bullies target women 84 per cent of the time; male bullies target women 69 per cent of the time, making women the majority of targets in the workplace. The majority of bullies (81 per cent) are bosses; less often they are co-workers.

What can you do if you think your being bullied?

1. Tell the person to stop. If you are not comfortable doing this on your own have a co-worker or union representative go with you or on your behalf to speak to the person.
2. Keep a journal or diary. Record the date and time and what happened in as much detail as possible, the names of any witnesses and the outcome or impact of the event. Remember it is not just the character of the incidents, but the number, frequency and especially the pattern that can reveal bullying or harassment.
3. Keep copies of any letters, memos, e-mails, faxes, etc. received from the person.
4. Report the harassment to the union, person identified in your workplace policy (if applicable) or identified in the collective agreement language.
5. Try to remain in control and not retaliate.

What can the union do?

1. Treat all complaints seriously.
2. Establish a violence prevention program to address incidents of bullying or other forms of harassment and violence in the workplace.
3. Encourage everyone to treat each other in a respectful and professional manner.
4. Have a workplace policy in place that includes a reporting system.
5. Educate all workers union and non-union about what is considered bullying, and whom they can go to for help.
6. Try to work out all situations if possible before they get out of control.
7. Act quickly and confidentially when doing investigations.
8. Establish a committee of individuals to deal with and investigate incidents of harassment or bullying. These individuals must be given training to carry out their role confidently.



Bullying and Kids

Bullying is not just a workplace problem. Unfortunately, many children and teenagers witness bullying behaviour in our schools, playgrounds, recreation centres and places where young people “hang out.” In the last few years, communities across Canada have had to deal with incidents of bullying that have led in the extreme to acts of violence – suicide and homicide.

Bullying is a conscious, willful and deliberate activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression and create terror. Bullying is not about anger, it is about contempt. It is an excuse to put someone down so the bully can feel up.

***Bullying is
challenged when the
majority stands up
against the cruel
actions of the
minority.
Barbara Coloroso***

“The Bully, The Bullied and The Bystander”, based on the work of Barbara Coloroso

Facts about bullying:

- ◆ Parents and teachers greatly underestimate the frequency of bullying
- ◆ Kids who are bullied spend most of their time thinking about how to avoid the trauma and do not have much energy left for learning
- ◆ Unheard victims may turn to violence against themselves or others
- ◆ People are outraged by final acts of violence but often do not properly react to the events that lead to these acts

What can be done?

1. Support school and community policies. Most school boards and districts have adopted strong policies on bullying and harassment. But simply stating that there is “zero tolerance” of incidents won’t necessarily stop offensive behaviour. In addition to education and training, we all need to support positive conflict resolution and problem solving skills.
2. Work with the victim or victims to get help to stop the bully.
3. Monitor TV viewing, video games, music and computer activities. Kids regularly exposed to media violence are more apt to become desensitized to real life violence or imitate what they see and hear.

Preventing violence against women

Almost 1.2 million Canadians – 8 per cent of women and 7 per cent of men – faced some form of violence in their marriage or common-law relationship between 1995 and 1999.

Women were generally more severely victimized – that is, beaten or choked – while men were slapped, kicked, bitten, hit or had something thrown at them. More than a third of women in violent unions feared for their lives.

Women younger than 25 and men between 25 and 34 were most at risk of victimization, as were those living in common-law relationships, with a heavy drinker or with an emotionally abusive partner. Individuals reported more severe and more frequent episodes of violence by a former partner than a current partner.

There are no social, cultural, religious, financial, geographic or occupational related barriers to being abused or behaving abusively.

Although only a small fraction of men act violently against women, most of us - men and women - fail to act or speak out. We can no longer be silent.

Statistics tell us that whether we are aware of it or not, we all know a woman who has been abused or is being abused right now. She may be our neighbour, our doctor's wife or the woman working right next to us.

In 2001-2002, 55,901 women and 45,347 children were admitted to shelters. The majority of children were under the age of ten.

Violence against women has existed for centuries, approved by church, custom, and law. In English common law, the 'rule of thumb' was established in the eighteenth century and maintained into the 20th century. This rule held that a man could beat his wife provided the stick was no wider than his thumb.



The issue of violence against women cannot be isolated from issues of power and control. Our society, based on unequal wealth, status, opportunity and power is a breeding ground for abusive behavior. Because of their lack of economic and political power, women are especially vulnerable to acts of violence. Doubly disadvantaged women - women with disabilities,

lesbians, aboriginal and visible minority women - are doubly vulnerable to acts of violence.

Government defence and weapons' programs, television cartoons, advertising and pornography send a message that violence is acceptable. Children are especially vulnerable. We are inundated with images celebrating violent male heroes, and violence as an acceptable way of resolving conflict. Pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry that promotes

the myth that women want to be dominated, that they enjoy being hurt and degraded. Pornography demeans and degrades all women because it reduces women to sexual objects.

Between 1991 and 1999, 617 women and 165 men were killed in Canada by a current or ex-spouse. Stalking behaviour was associated with 12 per cent of the homicides committed by men.

How to Help An Assaulted Woman:

Know the facts.

Do not give advice or judge. Talk to her about her options.

Physical safety is the first priority. If you believe she is in danger, tell her. Help her plan an emergency exit and phone the police.

Respect how she feels and support her decisions. Let her talk about the caring aspects of the relationship. Don't try to diminish her feelings about her partner. Don't criticise her for staying with him, but share information on how abuse increases over time without intervention.

Let her know she is not to blame for the abuse and that she doesn't have to put up with it. Reassure her that she isn't alone.

Discuss how violence affects children and the home.

Although police can be asked to accompany a woman going back home to retrieve personal belongings, encourage her to be prepared for the possibility of leaving home in a hurry. She should have necessary documents or photocopies ready, as well as important items like:

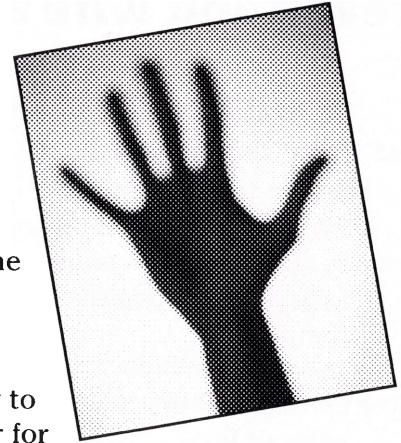
- ◆ credit cards, cash, bank books
- ◆ passport, birth certificates, citizenship papers
- ◆ house keys
- ◆ medication
- ◆ children's favourite toy, clothes, medication, etc.

Ensure the victim has a source of income. Help her apply for WCB, sick benefits or social assistance.

Never recommend joint family or marital counselling in situations of emotional or physical abuse. It is dangerous for the woman and will not lead to a resolution that is in her interest. Encourage separate counselling for the man and the woman if they want counselling.

Be encouraged that every time she reaches out for help she is gaining emotional strength needed to make effective decisions. She may be too fearful and immobilized or confused to take any step immediately.

Do not place yourself in danger by confronting the violent person.



For women to think about: Preventing wife assault

You may be a victim of abuse:

- ◆ Do you feel that you have to “walk on eggshells” to keep him from getting angry? Are you frightened by his temper?
- ◆ Do you feel that you can't live without him?
- ◆ Have you stopped seeing friends or family, or given up activities you enjoyed because he doesn't like them?
- ◆ Are you afraid to tell him your worries and feelings about the relationship?
- ◆ Do you find yourself apologizing for your partner's behaviour?
- ◆ Do you stop expressing opinions if he doesn't agree with them?
- ◆ Do you believe that his jealousy is a sign of love?
- ◆ Have you been shoved, kicked, or had things thrown at you by him when he was jealous or angry?
- ◆ Do you believe that there's something wrong with you if you don't enjoy the sexual things he makes you do?

If you are abused:

You're not alone and aren't to blame. You can't control his violence, but there are ways you can make yourself safer:

- ✓ Call the police if you have been assaulted. Charging abusive males is a necessary step in reducing physical violence.
- ✓ Tell someone and keep a record of all incidents for evidence.
- ✓ Write down the details for yourself as soon as possible after the assault. Keep it in a safe place.
- ✓ Develop a safety plan. Memorize emergency numbers. Keep spare house and car keys handy. Know where you can stay in an emergency.
- ✓ Consider ending the relationship as soon as possible. Without intervention, his violence will increase in frequency and severity as time passes.
- ✓ Recognize that no one has the right to control you and that it is everyone's right to live without fear.

Source: Education Wife Assault

For men to think about: Is your behaviour abusive?

- ◆ Are you excessively jealous of your partner or wife?
- ◆ Do you criticize her about what she wears or does?
- ◆ Do you like to scare her by driving fast or doing reckless things?
- ◆ Do you become very angry about trivial things or have an explosive temper?
- ◆ Do you become angry or violent when using alcohol or drugs?
- ◆ Are you often depressed or withdrawn but won't talk about your feelings?
- ◆ Are you protective of your partner to the point of becoming controlling?
- ◆ Do you make threats about hitting her, her friends or pets, or about killing yourself?
- ◆ Have you thrown or deliberately broken things?
- ◆ Have you ever hit her, no matter how sorry you are afterwards?
- ◆ (for some people) Were you physically or emotionally abused or have you witnessed abuse in the family?

If you think you're abusive:

- ✓ You aren't alone. Many men have a problem and use violence or the threat of violence to control women's behaviour. You should consider:
- ✓ Taking responsibility for your own behaviour. Your partner doesn't make you hit her.
- ✓ Your violence will increase if you don't take steps to stop it. You may destroy your relationship or family, or seriously injure someone you care about.
- ✓ Blaming your violence on drugs, alcohol or sickness and apologizing after the violence will not solve your problem.
- ✓ Physical violence and threats of violence are crimes. You will face fines or imprisonment, if convicted.
- ✓ You can get help.

Source: Education Wife Assault

Preventing violence against immigrant and visible minority persons

What if you are an immigrant or visible minority person?

Many immigrant women and visible minority people are afraid to get help.

You may not know what your rights are or how the court systems work.

You may be afraid of the police.

You may be afraid that people will use the abuse as another reason to treat you differently, blaming your race rather than your abuser.

You may be afraid of being deported.

You may be afraid that his family and your friends will punish you for getting help.

You may be afraid of losing your children.

You may feel you lack the language skills to get help.

You may be afraid that an emergency shelter will not accommodate your specific needs.

You may be afraid that a shelter is like a refugee camp.



What do you do?

It's important to get help. Violence and abuse are unlikely to stop on their own. In fact, the violence can get worse. Seek help from someone you trust. Find the social and legal services that understand the challenges faced by immigrants and visible minority members of the community.

Develop a safety plan just in case. Identify a safe place where you and your children can go. Make sure you have some money; citizenship papers and birth certificates; health card numbers; medication if necessary; and favourite toys and clothing for yourself and your children.

How can friends or co-workers help?

If you suspect a co-worker or friend is being abused, privately tell them you are concerned and are willing to help. The loss of traditional supports of extended family, friends and advisors from their country of origin weighs heavily on some of these women and compounds their isolation. Some wives have never experienced abuse until they come here, when the trauma of adjusting economically and socially to the new country disrupts family life. You may be able to help find assistance and support networks that are sensitive to the needs and issues of immigrants, refugees and visible minority communities. Let the person know that you'll respect her confidentiality and her decision about stopping the abuse.

Preventing violence against same-sex partners

Common myths about abuse in lesbian and gay relationships:

"Women are not abusive - only men are."
Anyone can choose to be abusive or not.

"Gay men are rarely victims of abuse by their partners." Men can be and are abused. This myth makes it particularly hard for men to come forward for help.

"When violence occurs between gay men in a relationship it's a fight - it's normal; boys will be boys." Using violence or "taking it" is not normal; it is an unhealthy way to relate to others.

"Lesbian abusers have been abused/oppressed by men and are therefore not as responsible for what they do." This is an excuse; abuse will only stop when responsibility is taken for the abuse.

"It is easier for a gay man or a lesbian to leave their abusive partners than it is for a heterosexual man or woman to leave their abusive partner." It is never easy to leave an abusive relationship.

Regardless of sexual orientation, abuse is wrong. Abuse is a crime. Victims who are gay or lesbian, like any victims, feel shame, fear, depression and powerlessness. It's difficult to leave abusive relationships and in many cases it's much more difficult for a gay man or lesbian to get help than it is for a heterosexual man or woman. There are very few services for abused lesbians and gay men, particularly outside of urban centres.

If you're an abused woman, you may fear that shelters won't be sensitive to same-sex abuse. You might also feel unsafe because your same-sex partner could also access the shelter. If you're a gay man, the only safe place may be with a friend or family member.

You may fear that homophobia in institutions and society will make it difficult for your situation to be taken seriously and objectively. You may fear not being believed by the professionals you turn to for help or by friends and family.

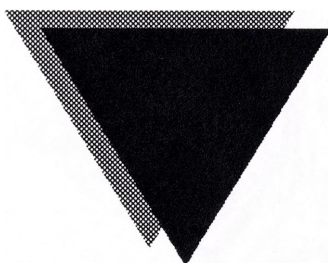
What do you do?

It's important to get help. Violence and abuse are unlikely to stop. In fact, the violence can get worse. Seek help from someone you trust and find the social and legal services that understand the challenges faced by lesbian and gay members of the community.

Develop a safety plan just in case. Identify a safe place where you can go. Make sure you have some money; identification; your health card; medication if necessary and; clothing and toys for your children.

How can friends or co-workers help?

If you suspect a co-worker or friend is being abused, privately tell them you are concerned and willing to help. You may be able to help find assistance and support networks that are sensitive to the needs and issues of the gay and lesbian community. Let them know that you will respect confidentiality and respect their decision about stopping the abuse.



Preventing violence against persons with disabilities

What if you are a person with a disability?

People with disabilities face greater risks of harassment and violence. People with disabilities may find it difficult to report or challenge harassment or abuse because they may be physically and/or economically dependent on a family member, care giver, driver or attendant. In a 1989 study by the Disabled Women's Network (DAWN Canada), 64 per cent of respondents had experienced verbal abuse; 40 per cent had been raped, abused or assaulted.

You may be afraid that people will not believe you.

You may be afraid that people will use the abuse as another reason to treat you differently, blaming your disability rather than your abuser.

You may be afraid that coming forward will isolate you from your family.

You may be afraid of losing friends and support.

You may be afraid that you will not be able to get away if there is an emergency.

You may be afraid that a shelter or community program will not be sensitive to people with disabilities or be able to accommodate your special needs.

What do you do?

It's important to get help. Violence and abuse are unlikely to stop on their own. In fact, the violence can get worse. Seek help from someone you trust. Find the social and legal services that understand the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

Develop a safety plan just in case. Identify a safe and accessible place where you and your children can go. Make sure you have some money; necessary legal documents and birth certificates; health card numbers; medication if necessary; and favourite toys and clothing for yourself and your children.

How can friends or co-workers help?

If you suspect a co-worker or friend is being abused, privately tell them you're concerned and willing to help. You may be able to

help find assistance and support networks that are sensitive to the needs of people with disabilities. Let them know that you will respect confidentiality, and their decision about stopping the abuse.



Preventing child abuse

Many of us know a friend, relative or co-worker who was abused as a child. The effects of child abuse are long-lasting, undermining confidence in relationships and self-esteem. Abuse may be physical or emotional. It hurts to be hit and it hurts to be constantly criticised or put down. Being abused by adults teaches a child that violent behaviour is acceptable in relationships.

Two out of every five girls are sexually assaulted before they turn sixteen. Boys are sexually abused too. Sexual abusers of children are usually family members or people known by the family. Most abusers are male. Since most abusers are known by the children, the long-term effects on one's ability to trust, love and feel safe can be devastating.

What can the union do to prevent child abuse?

There's no test required to become a parent. And there's no easy-to-read manual to pick up and follow. Many parents struggle to provide the basics: food, shelter and affection for their children. A shamefully high number of children live in poverty. As families struggle to cover the basics, support systems are being stretched to the limit. Children may spend most of their time with other care givers, older relatives, day care providers, teachers and siblings.

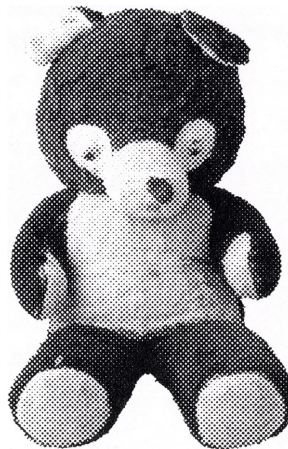
Organizing classes or workshops on parenting may help to give us an opportunity to learn new skills to balance work and family demands as

well as providing an opportunity for sharing stories and problem-solving.

Talking about abuse and the effects of violence and sexual abuse will raise awareness about the consequences. In turn, teaching how to recognize signs of abuse and how to raise the issue with children may help to prevent and stop child abuse.

Supporting programs in the community and through the schools on child abuse and prevention will help children understand that there are people who can help and there are safe places they can go. Children must get the message that they are not responsible for the abuse. Abuse is not a sign of love or affection. It is wrong. Children need to learn how to come forward safely and get away from an abusive situation.

Many survivors of incest or child abuse may never tell anyone of the abuse. Helping to "break the silence" by dealing with issues of violence and abuse as union issues may help a survivor reach out for help. Listen. Don't judge. Provide support and assist the worker in getting help to heal.

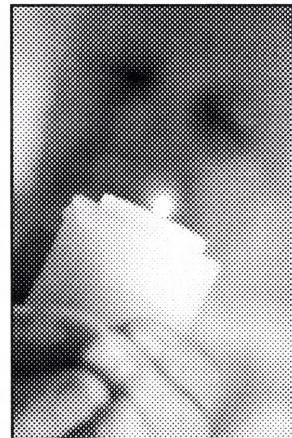


Adapted from: Taking Action: A Union Guide to Ending Violence Against Women

Preventing elder abuse

It's a known fact that the largest population group in Canada is getting older. The decline of affordable and accessible housing, together with the privatization and deregulation of services, puts many elderly at risk of neglect and violence.

Elder abuse can be physical or verbal and may include the holding back of money or use of money for reasons against the wishes of the senior. Elder abuse can happen to both men and women, across cultures and class. Like any victim of violence, a victim of elder abuse feels shame, fear, blame and powerlessness. They're afraid to report abuse because they fear being left alone or rejected by their families and friends.



Recognizing abuse

If you notice any of the following, contact a community service for help:

- ◆ frequent bruises, cuts, grip marks, unexplained injuries
- ◆ fear and nervousness around caregiver or family member
- ◆ exclusion of elder from decisions and discussions
- ◆ shouting, demeaning and degrading comments by caregiver
- ◆ cashing of cheques without authorization
- ◆ bills not paid
- ◆ sudden revision of will or granting of power of attorney under unusual conditions
- ◆ malnutrition of elder
- ◆ decline in personal hygiene
- ◆ lack of needed medication or medical attention

What can the union do?

Given our aging population, you may find yourself looking after an elderly relative or friend. In many cases, that person will be living with you. The demands of balancing work and family responsibilities can be challenging. Without supports at work and in the community, the “balancing act” can be extremely difficult.

Put it on the table:

- ✓ Negotiate personal leave provisions for attending medical appointments or assisting a sick elderly dependent.
- ✓ Negotiate membership in SOAR: the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees. Staying active and in touch with other retirees helps to develop a support network. And, members of SOAR can continue to have a voice in the union, passing on knowledge and advice.
- ✓ Support community services that reach out to the elderly, helping with the daily routine and providing “friendly visits” to maintain social interaction.
- ✓ Ensure information on aging is available to workers and their families.

Adapted from: Elder Abuse

Put it on the union table:

United Steelworkers Harassment Policy - the “yellow sheet”

At each union meeting, school or conference, Steelworkers are asked to read and refer to the “yellow sheet”. The policy printed on bright yellow paper is a message to all activists that the union will not condone or tolerate behaviour or attitudes that humiliate, degrade or demean others. Complaints must be investigated and if substantiated, the alleged harasser will be removed from the event.

As the “yellow sheet” says, protection of human rights and solidarity are two fundamental principles of the labour movement. Harassment strikes at the heart of both. While we can't make people like each other, we can promote tolerance and mutual respect.

Mutual respect. That's what it's all about. We work better when we work with people we respect and who respect us. Our workplace is a healthier and safer place to be when we can concentrate on the task at hand and not have to worry about harassment. And we are better members of our union because we can concentrate on helping each other out on the job rather than trying always to protect ourselves.

United Steelworkers' Guide to Preventing and Dealing With Harassment

The “yellow sheet” is reproduced on the following page. Copy on bright yellow paper for distribution at union events.

UNITED STEELWORKERS ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY



Steelworker members are entitled to a harassment free environment at all union activities, events and meetings.

There are two principles fundamental to the labour movement: human rights and solidarity. Harassment strikes at the heart of both.

Steelworkers will not tolerate nor condone behaviour that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual, or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. As Steelworkers we must speak out against harassment and stand together to protect human rights.

Harassment is not a joke. It is an expression of perceived power by the harasser over another person, usually for reasons over which the victim has little or no control. Prohibited grounds under Human Rights Codes across Canada can include sex, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, political or religious beliefs, and place of national origin.

Harassment can be defined as any action (verbal, psychological or physical) on a single or repeated basis which humiliates, insults or degrades and is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome by the victim of the harassment.

Harassment can include but is not limited to: unwanted comments, slurs, racist or sexist jokes, pictures or posters, bullying or intimidation, graffiti, physical contact of any kind, remarks about a person's appearance or personal life, unwelcome sexual advances or demands, suggestive looks or gestures.

Steelworkers take harassment complaints seriously. Complaints of harassment at Steelworker activities will be investigated by one of our anti-harassment complaints counsellors and reported to the Canadian National Director for any necessary follow-up. A substantiated complaint will result in action by the Union which could include the removal of the harasser from the event. A letter outlining the reasons for the removal will be sent to the local union.

"We can't make people like each other. But we can, through concrete action, promote tolerance and mutual respect in our union."

Checklist for union events:

- ✓ Are there enough copies of the “yellow sheet” for each participant?
- ✓ Is there someone who feels comfortable reading or referring to the “yellow sheet” at the beginning of the event?
- ✓ Is there a local anti-harassment counsellor available if necessary?
- ✓ At a school, you may want to include an exercise on “setting the atmosphere”. Ask participants what kind of atmosphere they would like to have at the school, during the workshop, etc. Answers may include: honest, open, respectful, non-judgemental, fun, understanding.
- ✓ Post these answers on flip chart paper and tape it to a wall. If necessary, you can refer back to it if there is discomfort in the group.
- ✓ Setting the atmosphere helps everyone feel comfortable and establishes an environment of mutual respect.
- ✓ Do you have names, addresses and phone numbers for community health and counselling centres?
- ✓ Do you have phone numbers for shelters and emergency services for victims of violence?



confidential counselling and support services paid for by the employer. Trained representatives advise and assist victims of harassment and violence. They can refer victims and their family members to community agencies.

Hours of work: There are times when risks of violence are increased. Are staffing levels adequate during evenings and weekends? Are staff changeover times staggered in health care or counselling facilities to cause the least amount of disruption to service and care? Is there flexibility in scheduling to assist victims in the event of an incident of harassment or violence?

Paid leave for recovery: The effects of violence and harassment are long-lasting. It takes time to heal and learn how to deal with the effects. It may never be possible to forget the feelings of fear, loss of control, humiliation, self-blame and anger, but it is possible to move on and re-establish a sense of confidence and self-esteem. Whether the incident happened inside or outside of the workplace, the health and safety of the worker and his or her co-workers is affected if the worker is afraid, upset and unable to concentrate on the task at hand. Negotiating paid time to recover may make a difference in how effectively someone can return to the workplace, protecting the health and safety of the worker and others.

Personal or family leave: There are things we can do to ease the stress of dealing with work and family demands. Providing personal leave to attend medical appointments or to look after a sick dependent may help in the “balancing act.”

Policies and procedures: Employers in British Columbia and some employers in Saskatchewan are required to develop statements of policies on preventing violence and dealing with acts of violence. In health care and counselling services, a policy on violence prevention will help workers, clients and the family members of clients understand that violence is not “part of the job” and that it can be avoided and stopped.

Right to refuse unsafe work: While many jurisdictions include the right to refuse unsafe work in their health and safety laws, right-wing governments may remove these rights, bowing to pressure from multinational companies who see health and safety regulations as barriers to profits. Let your employer know that your health is not for sale. Bargain your rights into your contract.

SOAR: Negotiate membership for retirees in the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees. Encourage retirees to stay involved with activists in the union and in the community.

Workers' compensation and return to work: Negotiate a return to work program for people who have been assaulted or injured at work. The victim's personal safety in the workplace is the priority. Check the design of the workplace to reduce risk of violence. Ensure appropriate counselling and support measures are available for victims of workplace violence.

Putting it on the family and community tables

Raising awareness of harassment and issues of violence in our workplaces helps us talk about these issues with our children, neighbours and friends. Sharing our knowledge and resources may help another worker or future worker identify risks in her or his workplace, or may give them the confidence to challenge actions or behaviour they find offensive.

Do sports, recreation or community organizations you belong to have anti-harassment policies or procedures to deal with incidents of violence?

Are there organized community programs for youth? Do these programs raise issues of harassment and violence, encouraging a climate of mutual respect?

Do your children entering the workforce understand that their employer must provide a safe and healthy work environment?

Are there posters in community centres, arenas, schools and libraries that provide information on how to get help if you are abused?

Speaking to our children

What we see in the media, news, school playgrounds, neighbourhoods and sports leaves the impression that violence is an acceptable way of handling disagreements and conflict. Whether its the cartoons you see on Saturday morning television or the gangs in the shopping malls, we see the "cool" guys often as intimidating, tough and powerful. Special effects in movies, even

those rated for family viewing, glorify weapons and the technology to devastate and destroy. Anyone who has children or has lived near young children will know that, despite our best efforts, there is a fascination with guns and firearms that is impossible to ignore - just go to any toy store.

What can you do?

- ✓ Show children there are ways of handling conflict that do not involve yelling, shouting, threatening and physical violence.
- ✓ Talk to your children about the images they see on television or in advertising. Talk about what messages they are being given and the effect of those messages.
- ✓ Encourage your children to question and think about what they read, see and hear.
- ✓ Encourage children to play without using toy weapons.
- ✓ Use videos and colouring books that model non-violent behaviour.
- ✓ Tell bedtime stories that reinforce a positive message.
- ✓ When you see a program or advertising image you think is encouraging an acceptance of violence, call the network or advertising company.
- ✓ Support teachers in the classroom to raise and discuss issues of violence.
- ✓ Spend time with your children and listen.



Talking to teens:

When teens are struggling to establish their own sense of who they are, acts of violence can be confusing and devastating. If you suspect your teenage son or daughter is in an abusive relationship or if you know a teen who has experienced assault or abuse, let them know you're willing to listen and help. They may feel more comfortable talking to a teacher, counsellor or health professional. Call a community health centre for advice.

Abuse in relationships isn't a sign of love. It isn't a sign of sickness. It's a crime. Teenage relationships can be full of caring too and we need to help teens talk about the positive aspects of the relationship. After all, they care for the person and made the choice to spend time together.



Help the teen understand she's not alone in her situation. Abuse happens to many young women, in all social classes, in all religious, racial and cultural groups. You may want to explore legal options to control the abuser's behaviour. Help the teen stay involved with activities inside and outside of the school, ensuring they are safe and not alone.

Encourage teens to "break the silence". Helping young people talk about abuse and the effects of abuse may help to create a safe and non-violent learning and social environment. Help young people to talk about the images and messages they see in music videos, television and advertising and help them speak out against images that demean individuals and promote violence. Organized opposition to a violent culture

may help to reduce and end violence for the youth of the next century.

In school:

The Toronto Board of Education, the Women's Habitat (a shelter for battered women) and Education Wife Assault launched a project to help teachers raise the issue of violence in the art class curriculum. High school youth in a few Toronto schools identified issues, discussed the effects of violence and then produced posters to illustrate their message.

The posters are a powerful tool. A number of them were on display in a downtown Toronto office building corridor. Judging from the number of phone calls received about the images, the message was received loud and clear. Not all the calls were favourable. There are still many

people who believe that laws against violence and abuse have no place inside the bedrooms and walls of our homes. They are wrong.

No one deserves to be abused. No one has the right to hurt or abuse another. That is the message in the posters and one that can be delivered in each community.

Talk to your teachers about how they model and teach alternatives to violence and abuse. Support their efforts to assist youth in building links with groups in the community who are helping to "break the silence" and end violence.

20 Things You Can Do To Make A Difference

1. Join your community co-ordinating committee to fight violence against women.
2. Share information with women and men about abuse.
3. If you know a woman who's being abused, tell her about shelters and resource centres in your community.
4. If you find a television commercial or a magazine sexist/offensive, write a letter to the station manager/editor.
5. Write an article on violence against women for your community bulletin.
6. Don't purchase magazines that portray women in demeaning ways.
7. Don't watch television shows and advertisements where women are portrayed in sexist roles, and talk to your children about them.
8. Talk to your children about solving problems in non-violent ways.
9. Write to your M.P.P./M.P. about cuts to women's programs.
10. Volunteer at a women's shelter.
11. Donate clothing, household belongings or money to shelters for women and children.
12. Be a friend to a woman living with abuse.
13. Offer child care to women who can't access child care.
14. Learn more about abuse by reading, taking a course, or asking questions.
15. Don't tell or listen to jokes that put women down.
16. Challenge other peoples' incorrect beliefs about abuse, and share facts and information.
17. Join or start a social action group to prevent violence in your community.
18. Write a letter to the editor in your local newspaper expressing your views about violence in our society.
19. During elections, ask the political candidates what they plan to do to fight violence against women.
20. Participate or attend community activities that celebrate women's accomplishments in your community.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

MARCH 21 marks the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa when peaceful demonstrators against apartheid were wounded and killed.

In 1966 the United Nations declared March 21 the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in commemoration of this tragic event. On December 20, 1983, the General Assembly of the UN called upon all states and organizations to participate in the Program of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

What Can You Do?

- ✓ Post anti-racism information on your workplace bulletin board.
- ✓ Post something on your bulletin board at work that recognizes the significance of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
- ✓ Invite a speaker to your women's committee meeting to discuss the issue of racism.
- ✓ Get space at your local mall and set up a table to distribute Steelworker leaflets and posters on preventing and dealing with racism.
- ✓ Negotiate the Steelworkers Policy on Racial and Sexual Harassment in your collective agreement.



National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women

DECEMBER 6, the anniversary of the Montreal massacre of fourteen women at the Ecole Polytechnique, is now recognized by an Act of Parliament as a **National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**. The brutal murder of these women jolted Canadians into acknowledging the extent of violence against women in our country. Shock and outrage gave way to determination to make change. First we mourned. Then we organized.

What Can You Do?

At the 1992 National Policy Conference, Steelworker delegates adopted a strong policy on preventing violence against women. The policy as well as the award-winning poster and cards for recording emergency telephone numbers are available in Area offices across the country.

On December 6th, many Women of Steel distribute copies of the union's policy and cards in their locals and units. In addition, they take up a collection and make a donation to a local women's shelter or community based agency helping victims of violence. Unfortunately, support services for women and children are often the first targets of government cutbacks. The support of Steelworker members is greatly appreciated.



While the majority of acts of harassment and violence against women are committed by men, the actual number of men who commit acts of violence is very small. In solidarity with women against violence, men have worked hard to help other men learn how they can actively prevent violence. Many men wear white ribbons on December 6th in support of the White Ribbon Campaign. In some communities, men hold workshops or "walks" against violence.

- ✓ Post the Steelworker policy and poster on your bulletin board at work.
- ✓ Distribute the violence prevention cards to women in your workplace and local.
- ✓ Invite a speaker from a community agency to your Area Council meeting to speak about violence against women and what people can do to prevent violence?
- ✓ Help your Labour Council or community groups organize a demonstration to protest cutbacks to women's programs and services for victims of violence.
- ✓ Write to the Prime Minister, your MP, your Premier, your MPP, your Mayor, and your City Councillor. Demand programs, adequate financial resources and improved legislation.

Harassment Counsellors:

The Steelworkers has trained anti-harassment counsellors and facilitators to assist in the mediation of complaints. In addition, the union offers training on handling harassment. For the name of a counsellor, please contact your area office or one of the District Offices.

You may also want to contact your unit or local steward for help in filing a grievance or mediating a resolve to a complaint.

District 3:

Western Provinces and Territories
3920 Norland Avenue, Suite 300
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4K7
Phone: 604-683-1117
Fax: 604-688-6416
Contact:

District 6:

Ontario and Atlantic Provinces
200 Ronson Drive, 3rd floor
Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 5Z9
Phone: 416-243-8792
Fax: 416-243-9573
Contact:

District 5:

Quebec
565 boulevard Crémazie Est
Bureau 5100
Montréal, Québec H2M 2V8
Phone: 514-382-9596
Toll free: 1-800-361-5756
Fax: 514-382-2290
Contact:

Canadian National Office:

234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 800
Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K7
Phone: 416-487-1571
Fax: 416-482-5548
E-mail: uswa@uswa.ca
Contact:

For information and help:

Alberta

Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
<http://www.acws.ca/>
(780) 456-7000
Legal Aid Society of Alberta (403) 297-2260

British Columbia

B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses
<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/bcysth/>
(604) 669-6943

Legal Services Society of B.C.
(604) 601-6000

Manitoba

Manitoba Assoc. of Women's Shelters Inc.
<http://www.crm.mb.ca/lifestyl/advoc/maws.html>
(204) 326-6062

Legal Aid Services of Manitoba
(204) 985-8550

Province wide crisis line: 1-877-977-0007

New Brunswick

New Brunswick Coalition of Transition Houses
http://www.sjfn.nb.ca/community_hall/N/newx7570.html
(506) 648-0481

Legal Aid Program
(506) 853-7300

Public Legal Education:
(506) 453-5369

Newfoundland

Provincial Assoc. against Family Violence
(709) 739-6759

Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland
(709) 722-2643

Northwest Territories

Arctic Public Legal Education and Information Society
(403) 920-2360

N.W.T. Assoc. of Family Violence Prevention Unit
(403) 667-3581

N.W.T. Shelters
(867) 777-3877

Nova Scotia

Transition House Assoc. of Nova Scotia
(902) 429-7287

Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission
(902) 420-6573

Ontario

Ontario Assoc. of Interval and Transition Houses
(416) 977-6619

Community Legal Education Ontario
(416) 408-4420

Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island Transition House Assoc.
(902) 894-3354

Community Legal Information Assoc. of P.E.I.
(902) 892-0853

Saskatchewan

Provincial Assoc. of Transition Houses in
Saskatchewan
(306) 522-3515
http://www.hotpeachpages.org/paths_info/paths.html

Public Legal Education Assoc. of
Saskatchewan
(306) 653-1868

Quebec

Fédération de ressources d'hébergement
pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du
Québec
<http://www.fede.qc.ca/>
(514) 878-9757

Regroupement provincial des maisons
d'hébergement et de transition pour femmes
victimes de violence conjugale
<http://www.maisons-femmes.qc.ca/>
(514) 977-6619

Yukon

B.C./Yukon Society of Transition House
(604) 669-6943

Yukon Public Legal Information
1-800-668-5297

Disabled Women's Network (DAWN)

Canadian Co-ordinator Eileen O'Brien
(604) 873-1564

Barbara Anello (Ontario)
(705) 494-9078

<http://dawn.thot.net>

Education Wife Assault

Phone (416) 968-3422
Fax (416) 968-2026
Website:
<http://www.womanabuseprevention.com/>

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence

Phone: 1-800-267-1291
Fax:(613) 941-8930
Website:
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence/>

National Film Board

Phone:(416) 973-9606 or 1-800-267-7710
Fax:(416) 973-9640
Website: <http://www.nfb.ca>

S O S Femmes

Crisis Line 1-800-387-8603

Source: Abuse is wrong in any language

Publications used as reference for this document:

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Canadian Network on School Violence Prevention
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Education Wife Assault:
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For Women to Think About...
How To Help An Assaulted Woman***

Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile; Statistics Canada Cat. # 85-224, 2003

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence:
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Wife Abuse
Health Effects of Family Violence***

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***Nowhere to Turn? Responding to Partner Violence Against Immigrant and Visible
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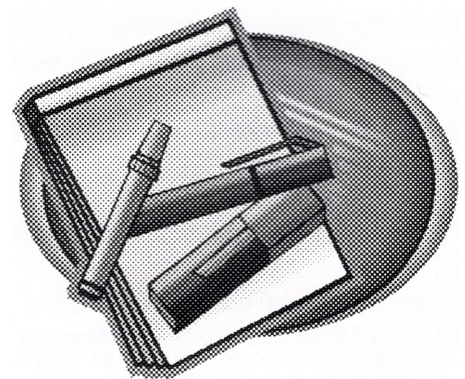
United Steelworkers, ***Sexual and Racial Harassment and Violence Against Women: Policy
and Prevention***

Violence in Same-Sex Relationship Information Project, Abuse In Same-Sex Relationships

Women's Research Centre and B.C. Federation of Labour, ***Taking Action: A Union Guide To
Ending Violence Against Women***



Notes:





For information about the
United Steelworkers, please call:

United Steelworkers National Office

234 Eglinton Avenue East

Suite 800

Toronto ON

M4P 1K7

416 487-1571

E-mail: usw@usw.ca

District 3

3920 Norland Avenue

Suite 300

Vancouver BC

V5G 4K7

604 683-1117

310-JOIN (5646)

District 5

565, Crémazie Est

Bureau 5100

Montreal QC

H2M 2V8

514 382-9596

1-800-361-5756

District 6

200 Ronson Drive,

Suite 300

Etobicoke ON

M9W 5Z9

416 243-8792

USW.ca