

AN EMPOWERED FUTURE: CAREER DECISION MAKING AND JOB READINESS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Domestic Violence is...

- A pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors used by one person to gain and maintain power and control over the other (fcadv.org)
- The leading cause of injury to women in the U.S.
- Victims of domestic violence lose nearly 8 million days of paid work annually (the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs-and almost 5.6 million days of household productivity each year) (CDC, 2003).

Why do I need to know about this as a career practitioner?

- One of the most common barriers survivors face is financial instability
- Often do not leave because they cannot afford to
- Career services personnel may not be aware of the lasting effect domestic violence has on career development

Cues/Things to Look for:

- Gaps in employment history
- Education does not match experience
- Incongruent legal trouble/arrest record that does not “fit” with the rest of the person’s history, e.g., an individual who has one “Battery” charge or one “injunction/restraining order” and no other criminal history
- Unwillingness to disclose
- Asking permission excessively
- Visible injury
- Wearing inappropriate clothing for weather
- Lack of ID/address/email address
- Sick a lot
- Unable to eat/sleep well
- Believes that she/he cannot do better or make it on her/his own

What can you do as a career practitioner?

- Let her/him know she/he is not alone
- Let her/him know it is not her/his fault
- Remind her/him of her/his options WITHOUT telling her/him what to do
- Remember she/he is the expert on her/his own life
- Meet her/him where she/he is...what are HER/HIS goals, not YOUR goals FOR her/him
- Remember they are not unlike other career clients...they just have added complexity

Safety Planning Tips:

- 9-1-1 techniques (“A MAN is attacking me”...not, “My BOYFRIEND/HUSBAND is attacking me”)
- Emergency shelter
- Area crisis hotline (e.g., 211)
- Injunction for protection
- PO Box (if planning to leave, get a PO Box for all mail)
- MEMORIZE important phone numbers or write them down in a secure place if possible
- Copies of important documents, items of sentimental value, meds, etc.
- If currently employed, it is a good idea to change work schedule/hours (if possible).

Examples of Useful Activities:

- Creating a functional resume
- Identifying skills activities
- Exploring values
- Sharing dress for success techniques

Sample Resources:

- United Way 2-1-1: <http://www.211.org/>
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (24 hours)
- Florida Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-500-1119
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence: www.ncadv.org
- ACCESS: Advancing Career Counseling and Employment Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence: <http://www.access-dv.org/>
- Educating Employers: American Institute on Domestic Violence: <http://www.aidv-usa.com/>
- When abuser is a law enforcement officer: <http://www.dwetendorf.com/>
- Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/>

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