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## February 2011 *LifeSolutions* Corner

***“I broke up with my boyfriend six months ago but he keeps calling and texting me, and he’s come to my workplace once. I’m scared and don’t know what to do. Does the EAP help with this kind of thing?”***

Yes, the EAP works with partner violence and is a good place to start. The EAP counselor will work with you to stay safe and develop a plan to move forward.

It may help to know that you are not alone. *Standing Firm* reports that 1 in 5 full-time employed adults have experienced partner violence. The mission of this organization, which is housed at the University of Pittsburgh, is to engage employers in addressing partner violence as a workplace issue. (<http://standingfirmswpa.com/>).

Partner violence is a pattern of behavior aimed at controlling a partner. It includes calling and texting as well as physically coming to the workplace to intimidate or cause physical harm or sometimes even death. You realized that the relationship wasn’t working for you and left. For many people, that is very hard to do; perhaps it was hard for you as well.

- ◆ Many partners believe the abuse is their fault. They think they did something to provoke the perpetrator. This just isn’t true. This behavior is about control and is not caused by what you did. People make mistakes, and in a respectful relationship, mistakes are addressed without emotional or physical abuse.
- ◆ Many partners love the abuser and are hoping to go back to a time when the relationship was better. While this is an understandable goal, it often means the partner is ignoring personal safety and other areas which contribute to a good and healthy quality of life.

This type of violence is not just personal. It comes to work with the affected partner and affects co-workers and witnesses as well. *Standing Firm* reports that abused employees’ work productivity often declines over time (57%); that they are often harassed by the abusive partner at work (40%); that some do not complete assignments on time (24%) and that some fear losing their jobs (21%). Not only that, abusive partners who also work often use workplace resources like computers, phones, and even automobiles to harass their partners. Co-workers are concerned and confused about how to help, and over time they can become fearful for their own safety.

The EAP works with those who are abused as well as with the perpetrators of abuse. EAP’s goal is to be a partner to support you moving forward at your own pace. Safety is always the first concern. You can call 24/7 and speak with someone immediately if an emergency develops and you need help. Beyond that, your EAP counselor can assist you in connecting with both workplace and community resources to get what you need. Call 1.800.647.3327 now if you need help.

- ◆ At work, we can involve security if you need to develop a workplace safety plan. We can connect you to Human Resources if you need to explore a leave of absence. These contacts are made only with your OK and with a signed release of information.
- ◆ The EAP can provide community resources for safety, housing, job training, child care services, and other issues which can be involved when there is partner violence. We look for the right fit for you so that the resource makes sense, taking into account your goal and readiness to move ahead. You stay in charge of the help.

More information is also available at [www.lifesolutionsforyou.com](http://www.lifesolutionsforyou.com). Click on the *WorkLife* portal and enter the company code. If you don’t know it, call 1.800.647.3327. Locate Site Search on the right side and type in “Partner Violence” or “Domestic Violence.” Check the middle of the screen for categories of resources.

Nothing in this information is a substitute for following your company policies related to information covered here.

