



Identifying and Reporting Abuse

Legal Requirements in Ontario Regarding Report of Abuse

In Ontario we all share the responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect for any child who is or appears to be under the age of 16. The details of this responsibility are outlined in [Ontario's Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017](#). Professionals who work closely with children, such as healthcare professionals, teachers, principals, social workers, religious officials, childcare centre workers, etc., have the same duties as the general public but are considered to have special awareness of signs of child abuse and neglect. They may be fined if they fail to report obtained information. Below are links to some relevant resources for professional groups.

- Education Sector: [Access Here](#)
- Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies [Access here](#)
- College of Physiotherapists [Access Here](#)
- College of Early Childhood Educators [Access Here](#)
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario [Access Here](#)

Do I have to Report Intimate Partner Violence?

The simple answer is no. There is no mandatory obligation to report intimate partner violence or domestic violence. It is the woman's right to choose if she wishes to seek help or involve the police. However, there are steps that you can take in your professional practice to think about how your organization could support women experiencing domestic or intimate personal violence. An example of this is the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario Best Practice Guideline for [Women Abuse Screening, Identification and Initial Response](#)

Here are some other steps that you and your organization could consider.

Provide Education

Ensure that your staff know about the signs and symptoms of domestic violence. Consider providing comprehensive trauma-informed training on how to recognize the signs and how to respond appropriately and in accordance with your organization's policies and procedures.

Create a Supportive Environment

Make information about local resources such as counselling and other community resources easily available. Ensure that you have created a supportive environment where victims feel comfortable coming forward. This can be done by creating trauma informed policies and procedures for responding to disclosure and ensuring protocols prioritize the safety, autonomy, and wellbeing of victims. Ensure that your workplace offers flexible work arrangements for staff who may be victims of domestic violence and provide the support they need to seek help.

Collaborate with Community Organizations

Learn about community organizations who specialize in providing domestic violence prevention and support. Engage these organizations to provide information sessions for your team so that they develop a better understanding of the available community resources and the supports that victims of domestic violence may be seeking.

Provide Resources and Support

Make information and resources about domestic violence readily available in your workplace. This includes hotline numbers, local shelters, counselling, and legal services. Additionally, make sure there are simple resources available that describe the warning signs of domestic violence and how to seek help. Ensure staff know where these resources are and can access them or help victims of domestic violence access them.

Participate in Awareness Raising

Raise awareness about intimate partner abuse and violence through educational sessions that are open to your community members. You may also want to actively participate in awareness campaigns, and discussions within the community. These types of activities demonstrate your willingness to lead by example and help to reduce stigma in the community.

While there is not a legal duty to identify and report domestic violence, by taking these steps you can support yourself and other leaders in your community by playing a crucial role in supporting victims of domestic violence and helping to prevent future incidents. Start the conversation today in your workplace and identify how you can be leaders in domestic violence prevention.

Learn more at www.abusehurts.ca/prevention