**Workplace Violence Prevention**

**Conversation Starters for Home Care Professionals**

**Scenario 3:** Domestic Situation:

*An employee reports that they were involved in a domestic violence incident with their spouse.  A protective order was issued against their spouse, and they went into an emergency shelter. Due to threats made by their spouse, the employee is concerned that the spouse may show up at their workplace or at a client’s home while they are at work. The employee believes the spouse may know where some of the clients are located since the couple, until recently, shared location data on their phones. The employee has shared a picture of their spouse with their employer.*

1. Who is the appropriate person for the employee to report this information to?
2. Where is the balance between the privacy of the employee and the safety of other staff?
3. How do we foster an environment where:
	1. Employees feel safe sharing personal information of this nature with us.
	2. We show that employee safety is important.
4. What steps can we take to protect this employee’s safety?
5. What other steps do we need to take to protect our other employees?
6. Does the protective order cover the physical place of work or just the employee?

**NOTES:**

**Facilitator Notes:**

1. Employees should understand where to report.  In this case, the employee may not report to their direct supervisor.  They may go to someone they are friends with or have a more personal connection with.  Ensure that employees all understand what to do with information that may endanger other employees. Remember that the spouse may show up at the brick-and-mortar agency office and could pose a threat to employees there. Consider using an “outside” chain such as Human Resources (HR) for reporting these sorts of issues.
2. Training all employees in domestic violence awareness and response can be beneficial not only personally but professionally as well.  In those trainings, it’s important to note victim privacy. What information we release and how we release it should be dictated by the victim, if possible.
3. This is a point for discussion and idea sharing.  Facilitator should create an open dialogue where these two questions can be discussed.
4. This is a point for discussion and idea sharing. Ideas include things like changing the employees’ client assignments and/or route schedule, partnering them temporarily with another employee, reassigning them to another office or district.  Remind them that this should all be done with consent and cooperation of the victim employee.
5. Sharing information without violating privacy.  This can be done with a statement like “This individual has made threats toward one of our staff members.  If you see him in one of our offices or near a client home, please call (?) immediately.  Do not approach him or give him any information about the company or any of our employees.”  Sharing a photo if given.
6. Protective orders can be written in a variety of ways to exclude contact with a person via a variety of means and may even include specific addresses like a workplace or home.  The victim employee should understand what is in their protective order.  If they do not, find the contact for your local victim / witness advocates office to assist.

See Example on next page.

**Example:**

**Domestic Violence Center of Howard County, Inc.**
5457 Twin Knolls Road, Suite 310
Columbia, MD 21045
410-997-0304 phone
410-997-2272 hotline (24 hour)
800-752-0191 hotline (toll-free 24 hour)