



Reduce harmful work stressors.
Improve job quality and health.

Healthy Work Strategies

A training program for workers and managers on reducing male bullying and workplace violence (U.S.)

A joint management-labor initiative between Verizon Communications and the Communication Workers of America (CWA) District 1 and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) determined it was a priority to engage work sites with mainly male workers to address violence in the workplace. This workplace program, called *Men and Women as Allies*, was facilitated by the Worker Institute at Cornell and CONNECT, NYC, a community service provider. The program:

- linked issues of domestic violence to male bullying and workplace violence.
- challenged social stereotypes about gender
- taught skills to engage ally peer behavior
- provided information on how to seek help from union, workplace and external community resources

Training program

Roughly 1,500 union members and 125 management employees in a mostly male workforce participated in job site educational workshops over two years. The program was facilitated by male/female teams to model a public accountability and leadership role for men and women.

The program addressed the following questions: (a) why do men batter? (b) what is a man, what is a woman and who defines these roles? (c) linking domestic violence to bully behavior and workplace violence and (d) what is an ally? What are ally behaviors? What are the benefits to being an ally? To be an ally against violence against women or bullying is to not be a silent bystander, collude unwittingly or support the violence, but to be informed about union, workplace and community resources.

The workshop also incorporated case studies customized to the unique nature of the target workplace. A new norm of a workplace culture of safety and respect was introduced to prevent and resolve incidents of workplace violence. Participants had an

opportunity to practice appropriate strategies within the framework of collective bargaining and company policies.

Evaluation of training program

Results are based on 339 completed surveys (23% of total participants). 67% of participants reported they would change their response (positively) towards a union member or employee experiencing domestic violence. Of those who would not have done anything to help before the training, 7 of 10 said they would now do something to help because of what they learned in the training. The great majority of survey respondents said they would talk with other men, and take a leadership role to stop bullying behavior and violence against women (see Table 1).

Table 1. Training program evaluation survey results		
Question	Response options	%
As a result of this workshop, I will be more willing to.....		
talk with other men about men's role to stop violence against women	Very true	28
	True	48
	Somewhat true	21
take a leadership role to stop violence against women	Very true	35
	True	44
	Somewhat true	20
take a leadership role to stop bullying behavior and workplace violence	Very true	34
	True	49
	Somewhat true	16

If you are interested in this curriculum:

Please contact KC Wagner, The Worker Institute at Cornell, 570 Lexington Avenue @ 51st St, 12th floor, New York, New York 10022, tel 212-340-2826, kcw8@cornell.edu. A new curriculum is being developed and a new report will be out soon.

Reference:

Wagner KC, Yates D, Walcott Q. Engaging men and women as allies: A workplace curriculum module to challenge gender norms about domestic violence, male bullying and workplace violence and encourage ally behavior. *Work* 2012; 42:107-113.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22635154>.