

A RECAP OF THE RIPPLE EFFECT CONTINUING THE SERIES OF ARTICLES ON WORKPLACE AND DOMESTIC ABUSE BY FIONA BOWMAN, EIDA AMBASSADOR

This time let's look at some of the impacts of domestic abuse, particularly on work colleagues and in the community, because domestic abuse doesn't just affect that one person who is the victim. There is a "ripple effect" which permeates out to affect so many other people.

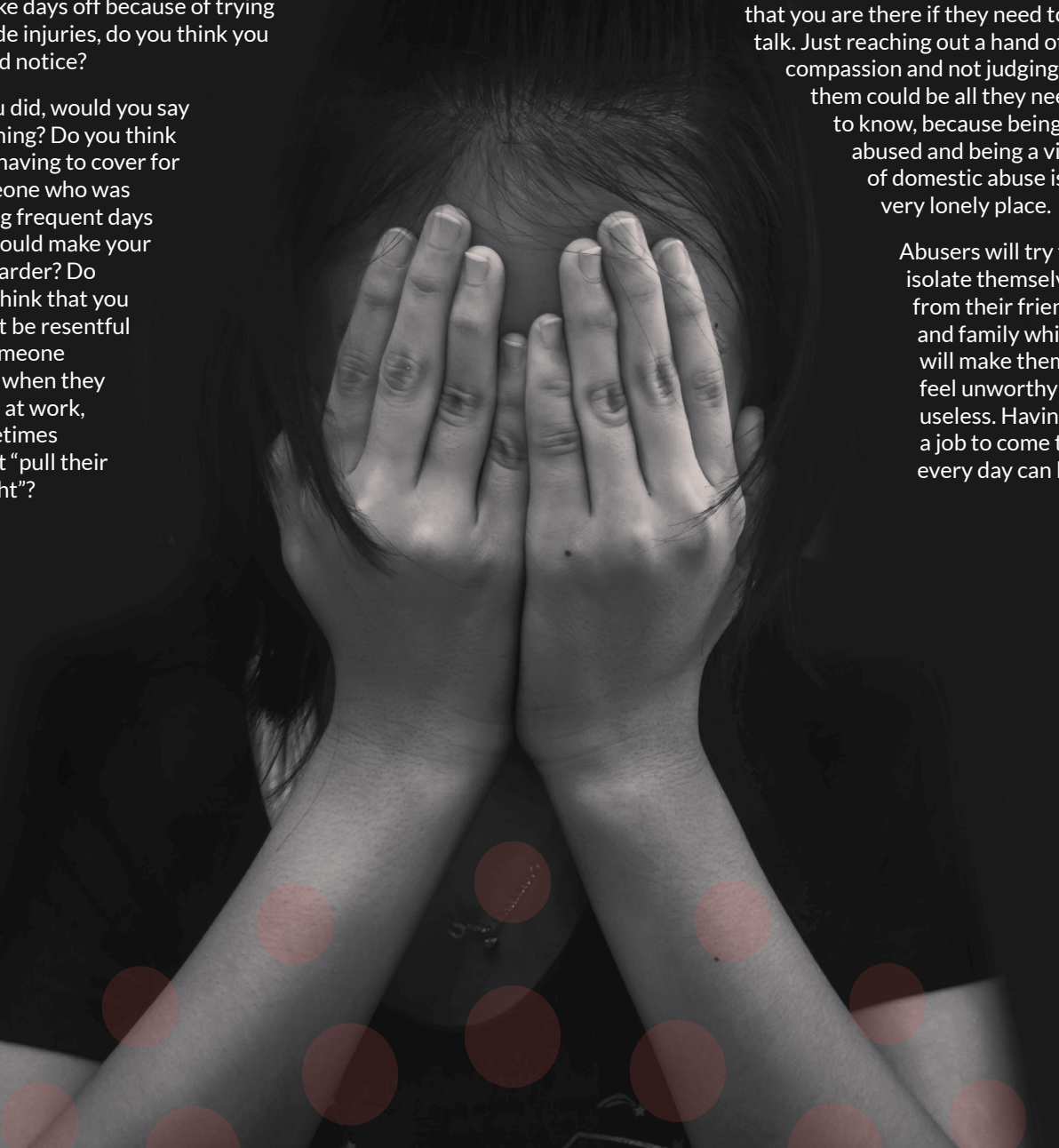
If you think about your workplace, if there was someone who was in an abusive relationship and was having to take days off because of trying to hide injuries, do you think you would notice?

If you did, would you say anything? Do you think that having to cover for someone who was taking frequent days off would make your job harder? Do you think that you might be resentful of someone who, when they were at work, sometimes didn't "pull their weight"?

Well, a victim of domestic abuse will be trying to hide any evidence of the abuse from work colleagues and friends. They might wear more makeup to hide black eyes, or they might have to wear clothes that would cover up bruises, like a polo neck jumper in summer. They may have to take time off at short notice if they have been assaulted. Plus, they will make up all sorts of excuses to cover the truth.

If they are getting abusive phone calls or texts from their partner, they may have to go away from their work area to take the calls, because they are embarrassed. If you were to hear someone being verbally abused by a partner, would you feel able to say anything? Because often victims won't admit to being abused. They won't admit that things in their lives are chaotic and that life for them is really difficult. But as a friend, or a work colleague, just let them know that you are there if they need to talk. Just reaching out a hand of compassion and not judging them could be all they need to know, because being abused and being a victim of domestic abuse is a very lonely place.

Abusers will try to isolate themselves from their friends and family which will make them feel unworthy and useless. Having a job to come to every day can be



a real lifeline and if employers have domestic abuse policies in place to help staff who are affected, you would be able to direct them to your Manager, HR Department or a Domestic Abuse Champion in your workplace who will be trained to signpost a victim to the help that is out there in the community.

Sometimes when colleagues know that there is something going on, they are afraid to say anything, they might feel that it is none of their business. But we know that domestic abuse is everyone's business! If something happens to the person and they are injured, not having said anything leaves people with a sense of guilt. So always share your concerns with a Supervisor or Manager and let them deal with the situation.

You must never try to step in to help the person without first talking to your manager. Being sympathetic and kind is always a good place to start, but don't expect the person to open up and tell you what is going on. Sometimes the best-intentioned intervention can put the victim in even more danger. And everything has to be done at the pace of the victim. Remember, you cannot "fix this situation". Domestic abuse is a complex subject. But always remember that if the person, or a colleague is in imminent danger of harm, call 999 immediately.

Often perpetrators will try to discredit their victim to work colleagues, damaging their reputation, insinuating alcohol abuse, drug abuse or that they are failing in their childcare responsibilities.

Sometimes perpetrators will hang around the workplace and will quiz members of staff and colleagues about their partner. Don't give out information and make sure you report the incident to your manager and security.

If a victim has managed to flee the relationship, the perpetrator will know that the victim will be at work and will come and try to find them there. Your workplace may be helping that individual so don't ever share information with the perpetrator, their friends or family. Family members may try to get information by phoning up or coming to the workplace and showing concern. Pass on any reports of calls or approaches to your manager.

RIPPLE EFFECT



Nowadays there are lots of support services for a victim to access. Many landlords will have special procedures in place to deal with victims of abuse who need to flee the home and the relationship. Doctor's surgeries and Hospitals have trained IDVAS (Independent Domestic Violence Advocates) who will help to signpost victims to the help they need.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse and need immediate help, ask for 'ANI' in a participating pharmacy. 'ANI' stands for Action Needed Immediately. If a pharmacy has the 'Ask for ANI' logo on display, it means they're ready to help. They will offer you a private space, provide a phone and ask if you need support from

the police or other domestic abuse support services. They will have a private room where the victim can call domestic abuse services or the police. Domestic abuse services locally have trained staff who can meet a victim out in the community and offer them help and support. To find your local service look on your local police website under domestic abuse.

Please email me if you require any further advice or assistance on this crucial matter: Fionabowman57@gmail.com



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