

# Building a Support System At Work



Most people prefer to keep their professional and personal lives separate. However, if you're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, this separation can be complicated. We know it can be hard to tell anyone about your situation, but talking to your coworkers may help keep you safe. Here are some ways to create a support system at your workplace.

## Confide in a Coworker

A coworker can provide emotional support and play a role in your safety. Before confiding in someone, consider the same steps we suggest for selecting family support. Make sure the person is really trustworthy and supportive.

Tell the coworkers you trust what your partner looks like, so they know not to let him or her into your workplace. Also, ask them not to reveal your work schedule so your abusive partner won't show up unannounced or know your daily routine. If you don't want to share your personal information with everyone at work, make sure to tell your trusted coworkers to keep your situation private.

If you feel comfortable talking to your boss or someone of authority at work, you may find out there's a policy in place or a friendly manager designated to assist you. Also, you can provide those you tell with a copy of your protection order if you have one, and they can then help you enforce it by calling the police if your abusive partner shows up.

## Make Friends with Building Security

If you feel your abusive partner may come to your job, leave their picture with the security guard and ask they never let your partner into your workplace. Also, consider asking to be walked out of the building if you don't feel safe.

## Find Accommodations

Does your company or organization have additional job sites? It may be possible for you to switch locations without any penalties to your status at work. If you relocate, it will be harder for your abusive partner to find you. You may also be able to ask for time off for court hearings or counseling without losing your job.

## Know Your Rights

Some states consider domestic violence as "good cause" to leave a job. If you live in a state where this is true, you may qualify for unemployment benefits if your abusive relationship is interfering with your ability to work. If you are in an abusive same-sex relationship and fear disclosing your situation will cause you to be discriminated against at work, there may be laws in your state protecting you. Chat with a peer advocate to learn more about the laws in your state.

## Safety Plan

Do you know what to do if your abusive partner shows up at your work? What will happen if they call while you're working? Be prepared -- create a safety plan.

## Get Support Other Places

If you don't feel connected to anyone at work, try turning to someone at home or in your community. As always, we're ready to answer your questions 24/7 via chat, text and phone.

connect now!

chat at [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org)

SMS text "loveis" to 22522

call 1-866-331-9474

Discuss your options confidentially.  
Peer advocates are available 24/7.

For more information, visit [www.loveisrespect.org](https://www.loveisrespect.org)

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