



STOP Domestic
violence

Community matters!

Guideline – show civil courage

against domestic violence

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Civil courage

1. Civil courage and domestic violence/partner violence

Introduction

This StoP guideline was developed in 2021 by the neighbourhood project “StoP Domestic Violence Community Matters!” in Austria, with the aim of encouraging as many people as possible and helping them to take active action against domestic violence and to act in a civilly courageous manner. Civil courage has many facets and there are a number of ways and methods to use it. This guide is intended for general education and information and can also be used as a basis for workshops, courses, reports and campaigns.

What is StoP Domestic Violence Community Matters!

StoP is a community-based approach to prevent domestic violence. StoP is also a movement that directly addresses society, mobilizes and organizes local communities and aims to engage people of all genders and background to bring about social change and stop femicides and domestic violence against women and children.

Women who experience violence by their partner often find it difficult to go to an official counseling center and often remain silent for a very long time out of fear and shame. StoP therefore relies on those who are closest to the victims and perpetrators: their neighbours, friends, acquaintances and relatives, as it is precisely these people who can suspect, hear or know something. Violence in partnerships is not a private matter – there are alternatives to powerlessness and looking the other way. By pointing out support options, people are to be empowered to provide help themselves or to get help – without forgetting self-protection.

They are also encouraged not to tolerate violence and to take a clear stand against domestic violence. If people from the environment know how, they can prevent serious violence and murders – StoP shows them how.

The StoP concept was developed by Prof. Sabine Stövesand at the University of Hamburg - Faculty of Business and Social Affairs/Department of Social Work. It is protected by copyright, so in order to establish it, a training to certify as a StoP Organizer by Sabine Stövesand and team is required.

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What does civil courage mean?

Civil courage means overcoming one's own shyness, intervening in situations and supporting people who need help. It means taking a stand and setting an example. This doesn't mean that you have to get involved in a physical altercation or perform heroic deeds at all times, but rather adapt to your own setting. Civil courage is always voluntary and can never be caused by coercion.

Many imagine civil courage as an acute situation in which spontaneous and rapid action must be taken. Spontaneity often goes hand in hand with civil courage, but not necessarily, because civil courage is required in acute and one-off threatening situations, as well as deliberate, planned or organized action.

What is domestic violence?

The term domestic violence describes violence that is perpetrated by a person against his or her partner and includes not only existing, but also former or non-continuous partnerships. Domestic violence encompasses a larger circle of possible victims – all people who live in a household and experience violence in it, both through direct involvement and through witnessing violence: children in particular, but also siblings or grandparents can be affected. Violence does not only mean punches, kicks or other physical injuries. It can also be exercised on the psychological (e.g. humiliation, prohibitions), sexual (e.g. sexual harassment, rape) or financial (e.g. unequal disposal of money) level. Domestic violence against women can also be perpetrated by other family members, by sons, by stepfather or, in larger families, by the grandfather. Sometimes they are mothers-in-law or people who also live in the household who are perpetrators.

Recognising domestic violence/partner violence

Recognizing violence is often the most difficult thing! Many victims of violence report that it seems incomprehensible to them that neighbors are unaware of the violence. They have the feeling of being left alone, of being ignored and that the violence that is done to them is trivialized by others. This makes it all the more important to deal with the topic a lot and to inform yourself so that you can also act preventively. This means learning how to deal mindfully with people and their behavior in the immediate environment. It is not about reporting and reporting everything, but about a conscious, responsible and sharpened view of one's own environment. It helps to know warning signs that indicate that the apartment next door is a place of violence. StoP does not want to develop vigilantes or denunciation under any circumstances and control, report and report everything.

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Red Flags:

- You hear loud noises, arguments or even screams coming from a flat, staircase or house, furniture is knocked over, doors are slammed.
- You never see your neighbour leave the house without her partner.
- The child(ren) in the house make a sad impression on you.
- The child(ren) are always out alone, always playing alone in the park.
- Your neighbour seems very insecure, nervous or irritable, avoids eye contact, seems intimidated or is afraid to talk to anyone.
- The neighbour seems very dominant, yells at home or in the house, or is aggressive towards other people.

Some warning signs become particularly clear when you are in a closer relationship with the person concerned, these signs may include:

- The woman is not allowed to make any decisions independently and must always discuss all steps with her partner first.
- The woman does not have her own bank account or direct access to money.
- Meetings with friends are very often cancelled by the woman without clear reasons.
- You notice injuries whose causes seem unrealistic (may be in different stages of healing). The victim tries to hide the injuries.
- The child(ren) have no friends, are not allowed to invite them, celebrate birthdays together, etc.

Why is civil courage needed against domestic violence?

Experiences of violence are often still associated with shame and are still far too often tabooed, concealed or dismissed as "private". Women who are abused by their partner are often frightened and do not dare to seek or get help. In order to enforce mostly male claims to power, perpetrators typically develop increasing dominance and oppressive behavior, which is based on possessiveness and control over the partner and ranges from verbal, psychological, digitalized violence to physical, sexualized and financial violence. Children are always affected, whether directly or indirectly as witnesses of violence. The longer the violence experienced is kept silent, the more difficult it becomes to oppose it. Without intervention or help from outside, it is often difficult for those affected to find a way out. With every minute, the acceptance of the situation unconsciously increases and this also contributes to the fact that it continues to be socially accepted. This is exactly why it is important to look, not to accept violence and to act!

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2. Show civil courage too

Everyone can show and do civil courage! The best protection against domestic violence in a society is to convey to the perpetrators of violence that the behavior is unacceptable. All of us, those affected and supporters, must stick together, look out for each other and provide help. Civil courage requires knowledge, it must be learned and practiced, only then can courage become a responsible routine. The more you know, the more you will be able to intervene quickly and appropriately. It is important to know how to behave in crisis situations and how to assess and deal with conflicts, threats and violence.

Basics of civil courage

2.1. Maintain self-protection

The highest rule in civil courage: self-protection! Don't put yourself in danger, observe the situation closely and, if necessary, act from a distance, preferably before the situation comes to a head. It is important to maintain your own boundaries and not to exceed them when helping others. Civil courage does not need heroic deeds: Only do what you dare to do!

2.2. Trust your intuition

Often it is the gut feeling that tells us that something is wrong, long before we can cognitively assess situations. A "strange" feeling is usually justified - take it seriously. If in doubt, you can always ask, get expertise and act if you are (more) sure.

2.3. Get expert advice

The way out of a violent relationship is a very difficult one and often associated with many hurdles and setbacks. Partner violence and domestic violence are very complex, which is why cooperation and the involvement of experts from victim protection or non-binding information from the police is very important. In order to be able to better assess possible courses of action, it is therefore always advisable to obtain information. A call to the police, a women's helpline or a national helpline can save lives:

- ✓ Call a national helpline against violence that provides 24/7, free and anonymous information. Experts provide concrete assistance or, in an emergency, try to find a place in a women's shelter.
- ✓ If you are unsure, also ask the police service point - if available.
- ✓ A list of national women's help hotlines in Europe can be found on the WAVE website at [Find Help - WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EUROPE \(wave-network.org\)](https://www.wave-network.org)

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2.4. Think about it, but don't hesitate too long

The longer you hesitate, the more difficult it will be to act – both for you and for those affected. One's own insecurity can lead to a delay in intervening to the detriment of those affected – they feel left alone and often do not dare to confront the perpetrator without support for fear of more violence.

2.5. Look around

As soon as you enter a building or house, orient yourself. Where can you flee in case of an emergency or a suspicious smell? And where is the fire extinguisher located in the event of a fire? Where are emergency exits?

WHAT TO SAY. WHAT TO DO.

Overview of possible courses of action in general

There is not one right course of action or the only right solution to act with civil courage in violent situations, but many different ones. What they all have in common is that it is first and foremost important not to look away, not to ignore signs, but to take them seriously and to act. Therefore, the civil courage motto of StoP is: What to say. What to do.

2.6. Civil courage through a clear stance

It doesn't always have to be an acute situation for you to show civil courage. Civil courage also means taking a clear position and taking a clear stance against violence against women. Or to position oneself clearly in front of or near the person concerned. Civil courage can even be a sentence or a word. You too can show your face and position yourself clearly against any form of violence in everyday life.

- **Talk about domestic violence**

You can set an example by entering into dialogue with others, calling it in the open and bringing domestic violence as an issue into social discourse. Talk and discuss with your neighbours, family members, friends and colleagues to draw attention to the problem, uncover patriarchal structures and develop ways to prevent violence. Many people have experienced violence themselves or know people who are affected by violence and do not know how best to support them.

- **Don't laugh along with sexist jokes**

Out of politeness or insecurity, we often laugh along with sexist, misogynistic and defamatory jokes or sayings. But if you don't laugh along and make it clear that it's neither funny nor appropriate, everyone involved will take notice. This is particularly important because silence and inaction are often misinterpreted as consent. "StoP - I'm not joking about women and certainly not about violence against women" could be a sentence that can be used.

2.7. Hanging up notices in the stairwell

You can also download notices on civil courage from the StoP Toolbox and hang them up in the stairwell, on the bulletin board or on the front door. In this way, you create awareness, you signal that there is help in the event of violence and that residents and neighbors can also act. The notice is available in many different languages.

2.8. Dissemination of information materials

By putting up and hanging up information materials (posters, stickers, flyers, brochures, etc.), you can also sensitize people outside your personal environment. You can also use social media to raise awareness by sharing posts and information.

WHAT TO SAY. WHAT TO DO.

In case of suspicion of domestic violence

2.9. Addressing those affected

If you suspect that a person around you has been affected by domestic violence, you should talk to them. This is not always easy and must be practiced. There are a few things that can help you to approach them:

- Ask yourself whether you are really prepared for a potentially difficult conversation. If you don't feel ready yet, you can have the conversation at a later time.
- In addition to the right time, find a safe place for the conversation. One where you are undisturbed and the person you care about feels safe. If the person dodges or cancels a meeting with you, you should respect that. It could be that the abuser monitors the woman and prevents her from meeting with others, or that she is punished if he believes that his wife, daughter, child or

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sister is seeking help. Or it may be that she is afraid and will be deported to her country of origin.

- The right starting approach is often decisive.
- **Helpful phrases can be:**
 - “Could it be that you are afraid of someone?”
 - “Do you feel safe at home?”
 - “I'm a little worried about you and your children, is everything okay at home?”
 - “Are you afraid to go home?”
 - “Need help?”

Stick to the facts! Try to explain objectively what you noticed and convey to the affected person that you are concerned about their safety. Always refer to the facts and try to avoid assumptions.

- **Helpful phrases can be:**
 - “I noticed that your husband is always yelling at you. That's not okay, you don't have to put up with it.”
 - “You seem so stressed, can it be that you don't feel comfortable at home?”

Keep up your offer to talk! You can convey to the affected woman that you are there for her at another time, that she can talk to you another time when she feels ready. It is important to remain empathetic and sensitive at all time.

2.10. Inform affected women and parties

You can refer to counselling and support services by providing specific addresses, opening hours and telephone numbers (e.g. women's helpline).

2.11. Offer support

Most of the perpetrators stop when they realize that the person being attacked is receiving support. Your support can also be an important source of encouragement for the victim. **It is best to ask them yourself what kind of help they would like.** You can also offer to accompany the victim to the police, doctors or lawyers, or offer your help in everyday life, e.g. for childcare. You can give them your telephone number and ask them to call you if things become threatening and dangerous at home.

2.12. Offer telephone chains

If the affected woman or neighbour is not yet ready to take action and decides against calling the police or does not want to go to a women's shelter - which she can decide for herself - you can **form a telephone chain with your neighbours or agree who and when the neighbour can call in a dangerous or difficult situation, especially at night.**

WHAT TO SAY. WHAT TO DO.

In acute situations of violence:

- ✓ **If you witness acute and dangerous domestic violence, do not hesitate to call the police emergency number (112 is the European number).**

2.13. Interrupting violence - through a paradoxical intervention

Turn down the TV or switch it off completely if you hear shouting from the neighbouring flat or in the house and act with courage. A single sentence signaling that you are against the violence is often enough to stop the assault. Interrupt the violent behaviour by ringing the doorbell, knocking and asking for something innocuous, such as food or other items:

- “Do you have any milk or sugar?”
- “I've run out of flour, do you have anything for me?”
- “Have you seen my cat?”
- “Has the mail carrier left a parcel for me?”

In acute violent situations and if you witness acute and dangerous domestic violence, you should not hesitate to call the police. Experience has shown that the police do not always arrive so quickly, or if you are unsure about the situation and want to get an impression, you can first use paradoxical intervention. You don't necessarily have to wait until someone opens the door - especially if you are alone and don't necessarily want to be recognized as a neighbour. You can also ring the intercom downstairs. This often helps to interrupt the situation.

Violence may also happen in a hotel room. Here too, you can use this method and knock on the door. But you can also inform reception that violence is suspected. Cameras can also be installed in hotels, which can serve as documentation and later evidence. This is a so-called paradoxical intervention, it thrives on an element of surprise - something different happens than expected, something that may not be appropriate to the situation,

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which nobody actually expects, but in this way **you signal to the perpetrator that the neighbourhood is listening in and does not accept this behaviour, and you signal to those affected that help is available and that they are not alone.**

2.14. Activate other people and seek support

Many people find it uncomfortable or unsettling to act alone. Encourage others to show civil courage by seeking local support. Activate neighbours and take action together. The more specific you are and express the urgency, the more likely people will feel addressed and it will create commitment in your neighbour.

- **Helpful sentences can be:**
 - “Have you also heard these cries?”
 - “I need your help/support.”
 - “We need to help together now.”

2.15. Observe carefully

Observe the events closely, you are an important witness and your knowledge can be helpful and important later if you report the incident to the police or the child and youth welfare office. So try to remember all the important things and, if necessary, write a memory log. It is always advisable to pay attention to certain physical characteristics of the perpetrator and memorize them carefully, then you can offer yourself as a witness.

2.16. Make a police report

Domestic violence/partner violence should be reported to the police. You can therefore advise the person concerned to contact the police or offer to accompany her. It is important to support and encourage the woman concerned, but you should not act without her consent or against her will.

Affected persons have the right to call in a trusted person when making a complaint, so you can offer to stay and observe as a witness.

WHAT TO SAY. WHAT TO DO.

In the event of sexual violence/partner violence in public spaces

In cases of violence against women in public spaces, there are usually several witnesses. This often leads to individuals feeling less responsible and thinking that someone else will intervene. In the end, often no one takes action. This phenomenon is generally known as the bystander effect. It is therefore all the more important to intervene in public spaces if you witness violence.

In addition to the options for action listed above, there are other things that you should consider, especially in public spaces, in order to provide the best possible support to those affected:

Attract attention: By screaming or shouting loudly, you can interrupt the violence and throw the perpetrator off balance. Sometimes this is enough to stop the assault. If you report the situation to the police/emergency services, you can also shout to the perpetrator that you have called the police.

Paradoxical intervention: It can also be effective in public by distracting the perpetrator or suddenly throwing them off balance and pointing in one direction while shouting. E.g. “Look, there are lots of witnesses here who can see everything” or “Look, the police are coming, I'll stop them and call for help”

Involve others: Even in public spaces, it is important to secure support from other people. The more specific and concrete you are, the better. For example, you can ask a person to call the police or contact public transport staff.

Avoid provocation: Your actions should always contribute to de-escalation and not exacerbate the situation, which is why you should not attack the offender verbally or physically. It is also best not to get in the way of an escape attempt.

Contact the victim: Speak directly to the person concerned and signal to them that you are there for them. You can ask what the person needs and how you can help them.

WHAT TO SAY. WHAT TO DO.

In case of cyber violence against women

Younger people in particular are often affected by cyber violence. In the case of digital violence, perpetrators attack online - for example via social media, chat or email. Digital platforms create new spaces for violence: the possibility of being online around the clock or the anonymity behind which perpetrators can hide. The most common forms of digital violence against women and girls* include Defaming, ostracising, insulting, threatening, secretly photographing or filming, threatening or passing on private recordings without permission, sending pornographic material, or digitally monitoring a person. Furthermore, digital violence is closely linked to analogue violence. This is particularly evident in forms such as digital jealousy, dickpics or cyberstalking.

In addition to the options for action mentioned so far, there are additional things you can do in cases of cyber violence against women* if someone forwards defamatory photos of a person to you or if you witness cyber violence. If you receive personal or defamatory information about a person by email or via social media, there are ways in which you can stop digital violence:

- **Save evidence:** Take a screenshot and document the evidence, preferably on a separate data carrier. (Caution: except for child pornography! This may neither be held nor stored). Documenting the phenomenon makes it more visible and therefore easier to combat.
- **Report content:** On some apps (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Tinder, etc.) you have the option of reporting or blocking content or entire profiles.
- **Do not share information:** Even if you want to discuss further action with other friends, acquaintances or colleagues, you should always protect the victims and not share the posts or recordings.
- **Do not leave online violence against women unanswered:** You can also support those affected on public profiles by taking a clear stance against the attacks and posting a post or commenting on the post yourself. In this way, you can set an example against violence against women
- Track online content and motivate others to take action

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3. Tips/advice on how to deal with perpetrators and victims correctly

Dealing with perpetrators

3.1. Self-protection comes first

Self-protection is a priority here: if you ring the neighbour's doorbell, keep your distance while you wait for the door to be opened. The perpetrator may also act aggressively towards you. Call the police immediately in an emergency or if the situation escalates!

3.2. Pay attention to your language

Verbal provocation should be avoided. Always address perpetrators politely, to create a verbal distance. **Address the perpetrator's behaviour based on objective information (e.g. I heard, I see)**, not the person himself. By naming the situation and saying what happened, you make everyone aware of it.

- **Helpful phrases can be:**
 - “Stop shouting right now! Violence is a criminal offence.”
 - “If this violence against your wife and child does not stop immediately, I'll have to call the police!”

Avoid the words “please” and “why”

“Please stop shouting and screaming!” - This sentence does not sound firm enough and could come across as ridiculous to the perpetrator.

Starting a sentence with “Why?” is to be avoided in civil courage and is not advisable. It invites a discussion and a situation that you may no longer be able to control because perpetrators of violence are often very manipulative. For example, they shift the blame to the women and children. Perpetrators have a lack of awareness of injustice. This could lead to victim blaming, i.e. a perpetrator-victim reversal. This may be fatal as it protects the perpetrators and portrays them as victims at risk when they are the perpetrators who have to be made accountable for their behaviour.

Dealing with affected persons/women

Experience has shown that affected women and children first seek help from people close to them, such as friends and relatives. If an affected person turns to you for help, it is important as a trusted person to take them seriously, to listen to them, not to doubt their account and to believe them.

You can say:

- “I believe you and am listening to you. Thank you for confiding in me”
- “How can I help you? I am here for you.”
- “What would you like me to do?”

Those affected are afraid, insecure and often in shock. They must not be left alone. Try to make eye contact with those affected, this will reduce their anxiety. Speak to them directly and signal that you are there for them and will help them. Give them the feeling that they can confide in you. Listen carefully and take their words seriously. It is important for those affected to be able to talk; you may be the first person they confide in. Show your sympathy by taking a stand, clearly condemning the violence and holding the perpetrator responsible.

3.3. Sensitive handling

Always pay attention to your body language and tone of voice during a conversation. You should always be considerate and calm towards the person concerned and not confrontational or angry. It can also be off-putting if you stage the conversation as an intervention. Kindness, caring and empathy have a supportive effect.

3.4. Take into account the needs of those affected women

It is very important not to decide anything over the heads of the person concerned, but to discuss all the steps together and to consult together about what the child or woman concerned wants. **Decisions that are made too quickly or alone can pose an additional risk to those affected.**

3.5 Do not push affected women

If the woman you're worried about doesn't want to talk, don't try to force her to. Even if reactions are not what you expect, you should respect this and not impose your views on her. It is up to the person concerned to decide for themselves whether and to what extent and at what pace they want to receive help. This does not mean that it is wrong for you to offer your help, but only that the person concerned may not yet be ready for it.

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3.6. Expect rejection

Reactions can vary greatly and sometimes the help you offer and your intervention may be met with rejection. In this case, you should accept this and not act against the wishes of the person concerned. Ultimately, it is up to the person concerned to accept the help offered or not - it is their decision. In acute danger, you should always contact the police. **You can also keep repeating your offer of support. If those affected react negatively to your help, it doesn't mean that they want partner violence, but that they may be afraid of further violence and need more time.** Keyword: Stockholm syndrome; this is when victims have positive feelings toward the perpetrator.

Dealing with affected children and young people

Civil courage is particularly important for children and young people. If you notice that a child is being shouted at or hit by a parent, you should intervene immediately.

- **Helpful phrases can be:**
 - “Stop hitting/shouting at the child immediately!”
 - “Stop! That's violence!”
 - “It is not okay to shout at the child like that!”
 - “Violence against children is a criminal offence!”

By doing so, you are signaling that violent behaviour towards children is not normal and has no place in parenting. Parents who hit once usually hit again and again. It is therefore important that you act quickly and empower children and young people against domestic violence.

In public spaces, for example, you can stand on their side or in front of them to protect them. It is **important to teach children that they are never to blame for violence in the family**. They have a right to protection and support. Accordingly, it is also important to provide children and young people with sufficient information about special counselling centers. Decisions that affect children should not be made over their heads. They should be involved in procedures and considerations in the same way as adults affected by violence. **Informing the child and youth welfare office is only a good idea if the child is already safe from danger. Children at risk must be approached at an early stage and offered professional help. Violence spreads!**

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Dealing with the police

Calling the police is always the right thing to do in acute danger!

Police officers are important partners in the protection and prevention of violence. They are obliged and tasked with protecting citizens from violence, both in private and in public. It is their job to do this, so their work makes a significant contribution to protecting those affected. Unfortunately, however, it also happens that the police are called to domestic violence and then - nothing happens. How can that be? When victims are asked next to the perpetrator whether everything is okay, they often answer 'yes' **out of fear that they may otherwise be exposed to even worse things as soon as the police have left. Police officers are obliged to carry out a risk assessment and prevent repeated acts of violence.**

If you notice during a police intervention that police officers quickly give up, only carry out a so-called 'dispute resolution' or play down a violent situation even though fear of the perpetrator still prevails, speak to the police officers. Ask what you can do. Ask how safety and protection can be established for those affected.

3.7. Important tips/advice

- ✓ It is your right to know the police officer's badge number and to inform them or their superiors of their obligation to protect those affected.
- ✓ In some situations, asking for the service number can be provocative. It is also sufficient to note down the place and time. Afterwards, you can still use the obligatory police protocol to find the service number by calling the relevant police station.
- ✓ If you **call the police, make sure that you insist on your anonymity.**
- ✓ It is permitted to film police officers or make a sound recording (*not to be published) as long as the official action is not disturbed. If police officers perceive the filming or audio recording as a disturbance, you must stop the recording, but you are not obliged to delete the recordings that have been made up to this point. The audio/film recordings can be used in the form of a transcript when reporting the offence or in criminal proceedings.

WHAT CAN I DO AS ...

What can men do?

Men can be role models for others by not condoning or tolerating domestic violence/partner violence. Even if their own involvement is not the main focus, it is still important for men to show solidarity with women and children. Because only when established or learned dominant images of masculinity are questioned and patriarchal structures are seen by those who are favored by them can a strong public and a strong neighbourhood emerge in which violence no longer has a place.

Civil courage for you as a man:

- Speak respectfully about women in your life.
- Show your strength by speaking out against men who perpetrate violence.
- Don't let films, music or other people define what it means for you to be a man.
- Ask questions and pay attention to your partner's needs.
- Make other men aware when they say something sexist.
- If you also want to deal with (your) masculinity in our society and show solidarity, come along to the StoP men's tables organized by StoP.

What can companies and organizations do?

- Companies or organizations can also take a stand against partner violence/domestic violence and thus do a lot for the safety of those affected and actively counteract (further) violence.
- Civil courage can also be exercised here, according to the motto "Look instead of looking away"

3.8. Civil courage within a company

- Companies can acquire or deepen their knowledge about recognizing and addressing violence through training courses or information events. Also knowledge about legal measures, low-threshold contact points and support centers can also be integrated into the company.
- Contact persons for the topic of partner violence/domestic violence can be established within the company who have been sensitized and trained in advance, e.g. works councilors, gender officers, safety officers, staff representatives, inhouse violence officers, etc.
- In cooperation with experts, companies can offer ongoing training programs on the topic of sexual violence/domestic violence.

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- Information material can be put up on site (posters, stickers, flyers, brochures, etc.)

3.9. What can be done beyond this?

- **Media:** responsible reporting; articles on measures and opportunities to combat partner violence/domestic violence on all communication channels
- **Public space:** put up banners, flags or posters, etc. Install memorials against femicide in every district or neighbourhood. A central square in the district can be unnamed. It bears the name of a woman who was murdered by her husband*.
- **Hairdressers,** coffee shops, supermarkets, pharmacies, doctors' surgeries: put up posters, (multilingual) flyers and brochures. Telephone numbers of the police, the women's helpline, women's shelters and advice centers can be displayed in shop windows.
- **The district council and sports centers/sports clubs** can offer self-assertion and de-escalation training in cooperation with experts. The StoP logo can be displayed on jerseys, for example, to draw attention to the issue of violence.
- **Schools and kindergartens** can integrate the topic into lessons and incorporate it into teacher training.
- **The police take responsibility** for perpetrators of violence and work closely with victim protection organizations and men's counselling centers.
- **Always and everywhere** make domestic violence a public issue.

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4. Information on the Protection against Violence Act and on refraining from providing assistance

Violence Protection Act

In 1997, Austria enshrined protection against violence in law so that violence in the private sphere is no longer seen as a 'trivial offence' but can be punished. Since then, the police have been authorized and obliged to remove perpetrators of violence from the home. It is not the women and children affected who have to flee their homes, but the person perpetrating the violence. Violence against partners and children has therefore long been a problem for society as a whole.

Failure to provide assistance in cases of domestic violence

If you do not intervene in cases of domestic violence, you are not liable to prosecution, but you should definitely call the police in acute situations.

Example: Regulation Austria:

- **§ Section 95 para. 1 StGB states:** Anyone who, in the event of an accident or common danger (Section 176), fails to provide the assistance obviously required to save a person from the danger of death or considerable physical injury or damage to health shall be punished with imprisonment of up to six months or a fine of up to 360 daily rates, but if the failure to provide assistance results in the death of a person, with imprisonment of up to one year or a fine of up to 360 daily rates, unless the offender cannot reasonably be expected to provide assistance.
- **§ Section 95 para. 2 StGB:** In particular, assistance is not reasonable if it would only be possible at the risk of life or limb or at the expense of other significant interests.

What is the legal situation in your own country?

5. If you yourself are affected by violence ...

It is important for you to know that you are not alone. You can call the women's helpline 24 hours a day, from anywhere in Germany, free of charge and anonymously.

Experts will help you, advise you on your situation and, if necessary, arrange a place in a women's refuge for you and your children. If the situation is acute, call the police Euro emergency number 112!

If it is a long-term problem and you want to separate from your partner, we recommend that you collect and store all your important documents, including those of your children. You can pack an emergency suitcase with documents and the most important things and keep it safe (possibly also with a neighbour/friend).

6. Get help in case of violence (enter the most important numbers here for the respective country)

- ✓ National women's helpline against violence
- ✓ Regional women's refuge helpline
- ✓ Online counselling, if available
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Police information service
- ✓ Men's helpline
- ✓ Children's helpline
- ✓ Counselling center for older women/people
- ✓ Counselling center for women/people with disabilities
- ✓ Counselling center for LGBTQ+
- ✓ Other country-specific numbers

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