



Good food, Good life

Global Guidance for Providing Support to Employee Victims of Domestic Violence or Abuse



Nestlé

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Guideline
Recommended

General Use

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Human Resources

Approver

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All Nestlé *Principles and Policies, Standards and Guidelines* can be found in [NestleDocs](#)

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Purpose

Domestic Violence is a universal problem that affects millions of individuals of all social strata worldwide. It is too often considered a “private issue” and minimized as a personal matter although the impact of being emotionally or otherwise abused can impair the full enjoyment of life and fundamental rights and freedoms by victims and survivors.

In line with the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), Nestlé is committed, as a business, to be a force for good and contribute to and even lead efforts to help face and mitigate this challenge that impacts our employees.

According to the Nestlé Policy against Discrimination, Violence and Harassment at Work, Nestlé denounces domestic discrimination, violence and harassment and strives to locally support employees who are victims; for example, through Employee Assistance Programs, referral to specialized support organizations and awareness campaigns.

Objectives

At Nestlé, we are committed to foster a workplace culture of openness, empathy and dialogue, where employees experiencing domestic violence are heard and allowed to disclose their abuse in a discreet, non-judgmental manner.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence or abuse regardless of their sex or gender identity, cultural heritage or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, educational background or income level. In addition to physical violence, abuse can be emotional, sexual and/or psychological. It can profoundly impact the well-being of the victim and may also affect their ability to perform their duties or how safe they feel at work. Some offenders may try to harass the victim at or near the workplace, creating an environment of fear and also placing colleagues in a potential harmful situation.

Domestic violence has a devastating impact on individuals and their families. As an organization and employer, we want to increase the understanding and awareness for all employees on such issues, to support employees who are victims of domestic violence and provide HR Business Partners, People Managers and Nestlé employees with the necessary tools to assist individuals who need support in addition to the Employee Assistance Program and other local market resources available to employees.

This document aims to:

- Serve as a guidance for Markets on the adoption and implementation of measures of support for employees who are experiencing or surviving domestic violence, through internal and external resources, in accordance with local laws and regulations;
- Raise the awareness of all employees on domestic violence and remove fears of stigmatization at work for individuals experiencing domestic violence;
- Provide guidance to HR Business Partners and People Managers when supporting individuals in these situations.

Scope

This Guidance applies to all Nestlé Group Companies (each individually the “**Company**” under the present Guidance) who are encouraged to proactively support their employees, no matter their level or form of employment, who have experienced and may experience domestic violence. The present Guidance provides Nestlé Group Companies with, advice, recommendations, and examples on how to address domestic violence within their organization.

It is however expressly outlined that, within the remit of local applicable laws and regulations, the Markets remain free to adopt resources and support measures contained under the present Guidance and adapt them to their respective social-cultural environment.

Third party providers are equally encouraged to proactively support their employees who are victims of domestic violence.

Principles

Non-discrimination – Nestlé should not discriminate against anyone in their employment who has been or is subject to domestic violence. It can affect people, regardless of their sex or gender identity, cultural heritage or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability educational background or income level.

Confidentiality and right to privacy – Domestic violence cases should be managed with discretion and handled confidentially. Information relating to the employees and persons involved should be duly protected, except if disclosure is required for the purposes of protecting children or vulnerable adults at risk (e.g. to social services, police, etc.) or the safety of our employees and/or as otherwise required or permitted under local applicable law and regulations. Where the Company believes that a disclosure of confidential information to third parties, in particular to the competent authorities, is absolutely necessary, the Company is highly encouraged to seek prior specialist or legal advice from a counsel in its Market.

Personal Data Protection – As a general rule and subject to applicable local laws and regulations, the Company shall not collect or retain any personal data in relation to domestic violence.

Local laws and regulations – The Company shall take into consideration the necessary actions and resources in accordance with applicable local laws and regulations, which shall prevail in any event should they provide for more stringent actions of the employer and/or more protective measures than foreseen under this Guidance and abide by its legal obligations thereunder.

Definitions and potential signs of domestic violence

Defining domestic violence

“Domestic violence” (also defined as “domestic abuse”) includes acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence or abuse that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.

Examples of domestic violence

- Physical assault or threats of physical assault (such as slapping, pushing, kicking, punching, stabbing or destruction of personal property);
- Sexual assault or threats of sexual assault;
- Emotional or psychological abuse (such as intimidation, verbal abuse, humiliation, not allowing friends or relatives to visit);
- Denial of rights or restriction of personal freedom (such as withholding passport, money or medical help);
- Movement deprivation;
- Forced marriage.

Additional examples can be found on: [What Is Domestic Abuse? | United Nations.](#)

Potential signs of domestic violence

The signs of domestic violence can show themselves in many ways. An individual experiencing domestic violence could display any one or more of the following:

- A change in working pattern - such as absences or frequent lateness;
- Missing deadlines or a reduction in the quality/quantity of work in general;
- Many personal calls/texts, avoiding calls or a strong reaction to calls/texts/emails;
- Spending an increased number of hours at work for no reason;
- Frequent visits to, text messages or calls at work by their partner, which may indicate coercive control;
- Conduct out of character with previous behavior;
- Changes in behavior: for example, becoming very quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, or depressed;
- Being isolated from colleagues or family / friends;
- Obsession with leaving work on time;
- Worried about leaving children at home;
- Visible bruising or single or repeated injury with unlikely explanations;
- Change in the pattern or amount of makeup used;
- Change in the manner of dress: e.g. clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries;
- Partner or ex-partner stalking them in or around the workplace or on social media;
- Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule;
- No/limited access to money.

Employees have the right to choose whether to disclose information about being the victim of domestic violence. They are encouraged to liaise with their Line Manager, their HR Business Partner and/or their employee representatives or any other person they entrust to liaise with an HR Business Partner on their behalf.

Our role

As an Organization: Nestlé acknowledges the important role companies play in supporting employees who are victims of domestic violence. These acts are a violation of an individual's human rights. Furthermore, it can significantly impact an employee's employment or access to employment due to economic and emotional implications resulting directly from abuse.

As People Managers, HR Business Partners and Nestlé employees: People Managers, HR Business Partners' and generally Nestlé employees' role is not to resolve the situation, but, to the extent possible, direct the employee who is a victim of domestic violence to available resources, whilst providing a non-judgmental and supportive environment. As such, their role is to assist and support employees who are victims of domestic violence by:

- Being aware and understanding what domestic violence is and its impact on individuals and their families;
- Fostering a culture of dialogue and openness that enables team members to share any concerns they may have and in particular with respect to domestic violence;
- Listening without intrusion, while trying to understand what the employee faces and the potential concerns they may have for their children and other family members who may be victimized by any perpetrator/offender;
- Understanding that disclosure cannot be forced, nor should domestic violence be presumed;
- Recognizing the limitations of their role (managers are not professional counsellors or experts);

Protecting confidentiality in line with Nestlé's principles:

- Referring the individual to the appropriate internal or external source of help and support, for example HR or the organization's confidential point of contact or external agency;
- Adapting the employee's work arrangements during a difficult period in their private life and giving them access to the Company's support measures whenever necessary;
- Understanding that in certain circumstances the perpetrator/offender could also be a Nestlé employee and that such situations pose unique and extraordinary challenges that would need to be appropriately addressed by the Company.

As employees who are victims of domestic violence – Employees who experience domestic violence are encouraged to understand that abuse by others can compromise their physical and emotional well-being. They are also encouraged to share and seek support with regard to their situation and if they fear that they, themselves, their children, family and/or work colleagues could be at risk. In particular, Employees should share any fear and/or concerns that they may have with respect to their own security and that of their colleagues at the workplace, so as to support their employer in taking the appropriate measures to minimize such risk of violence. In this regard, employees who are victims of domestic violence should liaise with their People Manager, their HR Business Partner and/or their employee representatives or any another person they trust within the Company to liaise with an HR Business Partner on their behalf.

Resources, security planning and support measures

Resources

Nestlé recognizes that developing a life free from abuse is a process, not an event, and aims at providing ongoing support for employees who have shared and sought support on such abuse from their employer.

Nestlé should respond empathetically, confidentially and effectively to any employee who discloses that they are experiencing any form of abuse and/or violence. In this context, the Company may make available the following resources without limitation:

- Declaring domestic violence as part of the local equality and social responsibility commitment;
- Raising awareness within the Company and our employees about domestic violence;
- Setting-up relationships with local domestic violence support organizations (e.g. non-profit organizations, shelters, law enforcement agencies, etc.);
- Ensuring referrals to external support;
- Setting up counseling as part of the Employee Assistance Program or as a separate program;
- Ensuring support through the internal local medical assistance if available (e.g. nurse, counselor, etc.).

Security planning

Where there may be an immediate threat to the employee or their colleagues in the workplace, it may be necessary to act urgently. A security plan should be discussed and assessed based on the employee's need of protection and any potential legal orders and determine if such orders cover the workplace. To the extent possible, depending on each Company's individual resources and if appropriate, aside from People Managers and/or HR Business Partners, other relevant teams (e.g. Employee Services, employee representatives, Security and/or Legal) may be included in drawing up and carrying out a security plan together with the employee. Security measures might include but are not limited to the following:

- Suggest an individual protection plan for consideration by the employee;
- Enhance building security and surveillance in the workplace;
- Divert phone calls, email messages and look to change a phone extension or numbers if the employee is receiving harassing calls with the approval of the employee;
- Check that the employee has arrangements for getting to and from work safely;
- Provide assistance in enforcing protective/restraining orders.

Support measures

Where an employee is recognized to be a victim of domestic violence, or who reports with fact-based information being a victim, and upon request of said employee for Company assistance, support measures and conditions for granting, to be defined at a local level, may be offered and may include, without limitation, the following:

- If possible and if necessary, provide for reasonable changes to working conditions, like working times and patterns, changes to specific duties which would help to keep the employee safe or relocation to a different work area or team;
- Relieve the employee from public facing or visible roles;
- Use existing flexible working policies to assist with relevant appointments, for example, with support agencies, attorneys, childcare, housing, police and court;
- Ensure contact persons' details are up to date and inform HR of any necessary changes, etc.;
- Grant leave for victims – paid or unpaid according to the local applicable laws and regulations as well as the individual context;
- Route paychecks to be delivered in an alternative format if requested by the employee;
- Accommodate for changes in pay-cycle.

Implementation

Many of the countries and Markets we operate in have laws and regulations covering domestic violence, but not all. Therefore this Guidance serves as an aid for local Markets to:

- Raise awareness about domestic violence within their organization;
- Adopt as much as possible the appropriate documents, support measures and resources, in accordance with applicable local laws and regulations and in consultation with employees and their representatives as required locally;
- Implement such local documents, support measures and resources in relation to domestic violence at the latest by the end of 2023.