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WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

Violence has always been part of working life. Millions of workers are scarred by it on all continents. Shootings, assaults, and other incidents of workplace violence routinely make the news. The issue of safety at work cannot be tackled without looking at new forms of enterprise organization and management and their potential and actual effects on workers' physical and moral integrity. The rise in workplace violence and its corollary, stress, is no doubt one of the most visible signs of this trend. Any organization, large or small, will be far better able to spot potential dangers and defuse them before violence develops and will be able to manage a crisis better if one does occur, if its executives have considered the issue beforehand and have prepared policies, practices, and structures to deal with it. Workplace violence is now recognized as a specific category of violent crime that calls for distinct responses from employers, law enforcement, and the community. The present paper explains the various types of conduct that may constitute workplace violence, circumstances when the use of force in the workplace may be justifiable, work policies on workplace violence and what actions an employer should take when investigating an allegation of workplace violence.

KEYWORDS

law enforcement, stress, violent crime, workplace violence, work policies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence at work is now an alarming phenomenon worldwide. Every few days, there is another story on the news. One day, it may be a convenience store shooting; the next, a sexual assault in a company parking lot; a few days later, it's a disgruntled employee holding workers hostage, or a student attacking a teacher. Not surprisingly, the incidents of workplace violence that make the news are only the tip of the iceberg. What its victims all have in common is that they were *at work, going about the business of earning a living, but something about their workplace environment - often something foreseeable and preventable - exposed them to attack by a customer, a co-worker, an acquaintance, or even a complete stranger.*

Violence at work can take a number of different forms. It can be in the form of physical assaults or threats, or it can be psychological - expressed through bullying, mobbing or harassment on many grounds, including gender, race or sexual orientation. Sexual harassment, a problem most commonly affecting women, is one of the most offensive and demeaning experiences. Violence can come from outside as well as from inside the workplace. It can come from colleagues and acquaintances as well as strangers such as clients. Certain types of violence tend to happen more in specific sectors. *Health care, education and retailing sectors* are among the occupations suffering a high incidence of external physical violence.

The **World Health Organization** defines workplace violence as, "*Incidents where staff are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, including commuting to and from work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.*"¹

A commonly cited definition of workplace violence is "any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by fellow employees or by a member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his or her employment."²

Buss (1961)³ identified eight types of aggression:

- Verbal-passive-indirect (failure to deny false rumors about target, failure to provide information needed by target)
- Verbal-passive-direct ("silent treatment", failure to return communication, i.e. phone calls, e-mails)
- Verbal-active-indirect (spreading false rumors, belittling ideas or work)
- Verbal-active-direct (insulting, acting condescendingly, yelling)
- Physical-passive-indirect (causing others to create a delay for the target)
- Physical-passive-direct (reducing target's ability to contribute, i.e. scheduling them to present at the end of the day where fewer people will be attending)
- Physical-active-indirect (theft, destruction of property, unnecessary consumption of resources needed by the target)
- Physical-active-direct (physical attack, nonverbal, vulgar gestures directed at the target)

In a study performed by **Baron and Neuman**,⁴ researchers found pay cuts and pay freezes, use of part-time employees, change in management, increased diversity, computer monitoring of employee performance, reengineering, and budget cuts were all significantly linked to increased workplace aggression. The study also showed a substantial amount of evidence linking unpleasant physical conditions (high temperature, poor lighting) and high negative effect, which facilitates workplace aggression.⁵

In responses to the **National Crime Victimization Survey**, a Justice Department report estimated that an average of 1.7 million "violent victimizations," 95 percent of them simple or aggravated assaults, occurred in the workplace each year from 1993 through 1999.⁶ (Table I) Estimates of the costs, from lost work time and wages, reduced productivity, medical costs, workers' compensation payments, and legal and security expenses, are even less exact, but clearly run into many billions of dollars.

TABLE I
Average annual number, rate, and percent of workplace victimization by type of crime, 1993–99

Crime Category	Average annual workplace victimization	Rate per 1,000 persons in the workforce	Percent of workplace victimization
All Violent Crime	1,744,300	12.5	100%
Homicide	900	0.01	0.1
Rape/Sexual assault	36,500	0.3	2.1
Robbery	70,100	0.5	4.0
Aggravated assault	325,000	2.3	18.6
Simple assault	1,311,700	9.4	75.2

Sources: Homicide data are obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. Rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault data are from the NCVS.

2. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: TYPES, POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS, POTENTIAL PREVENTION MEASURES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

Workplace violence takes several forms, including verbal threats, threatening behavior or physical assaults. It can be classified as to “type” depending on the relationship of the assailant to the worker or the workplace. Their specific characteristics are described below:

TYPE 1: VIOLENCE BY STRANGERS

This is violence committed by an assailant who has no legitimate business relationship to the workplace or the worker. For example, the person enters the workplace to commit a robbery or other criminal act. Workplaces at risk of violence by strangers commonly include late night retail establishments and taxi cabs and accounts for most of the fatalities related to workplace violence.

TYPE 2: VIOLENCE BY CUSTOMERS OR CLIENTS

This is violence committed by an assailant who either receives services from or is under the custodial supervision of the affected workplace or the victim. Assailants can be current or former customers or clients such as passengers, patients, students, inmates, criminal suspects or prisoners. The workers typically provide direct services to the public, for example, municipal bus or railway drivers, health care and social service providers, teachers and sales personnel. Law enforcement personnel are also at risk of assault from individuals over whom they exert custodial supervision. Violence by customers or clients may occur on a daily basis in certain industries; they represent the majority of non-fatal injuries related to workplace violence.

TABLE 2: POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS

<p>Type 1: Violence by Strangers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with money Working alone Working late at night Isolated worksite Poor visibility into worksite Poor lighting outside of worksite High crime area 	<p>Type2: Violence by Customers or Clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in isolation Working after regular work hours Lack of controlled access to worksite Dealing with customers with past violent behavior Potential weapons ¹ (such as scissors) easily visible and accessible Lack of a quick communication mechanism to security personnel Lack of alternate escape route
<p>Type3: Violence by Co-workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High stress in the workplace (impending layoffs, for example) and outside, non-work related stress Lack of appropriate management protocols for disciplinary actions Individual with a history of violent behavior Lack of appropriate training for supervisors 	<p>Type4: Violence by Personal Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual with history of violent/threatening behavior Lack of controlled access to the worksite No communication policy regarding restraining orders Domestic violence

TYPE 3: VIOLENCE BY CO-WORKERS

This involves violence by an assailant who has some employment related involvement with the workplace, for example, a current or former employee, supervisor or manager. Any workplace can be at risk of violence by a co-worker. In committing a threat or assault, the individual may be seeking revenge for what is perceived as unfair treatment. Fatalities related to violence by co-workers have received much media attention, but account for only a small proportion of all workplace violence related fatalities. Strangers cause most workplace violence fatalities.

TYPE 4: VIOLENCE BY PERSONAL RELATIONS

This includes incidents of domestic violence at the workplace by an assailant who confronts an individual with whom he or she has or had a personal relationship outside of work. Personal relations include a current or former spouse, lover, relative, friend or acquaintance. The assailant’s actions are motivated by perceived difficulties in the relationship or by psycho-social factors that are specific to the assailant.

TABLE 3: POTENTIAL PREVENTION MEASURES

<p>Type 1: Violence by Strangers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training (include de-escalation techniques appropriate to your industry) Post signs stating cash register only contains minimal cash Leave a clear, unobstructed view of cash register from street Have a drop safe, limited access safe or comparable device Address adequate outside lighting Examine and address employee isolation factors Provide security personnel Communication method to alert police/security Increase police patrol in the area Post laws against assault, stalking or other violent act 	<p>Type2: Violence by Customers or Clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training (including de-escalation techniques appropriate to your industry) Control access to worksite (e.g., posted restricted access, locked doors) Examine and address employee isolation factors Quick communication method to alert security Eliminate easy access to potential weapons Client referral/assistance programs Set up worksite so employees are not trapped from exiting Provide security personnel Post laws against assault, stalking or other violent acts
<p>Type3: Violence by Co-workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training (including de-escalation techniques appropriate to your industry) Enforced policy on no tolerance for workplace violence Management strategy for layoffs Management policy for disciplinary actions Access to employee assistance program or other counseling services Policy prohibiting weapons Provide security personnel Post laws against assault, stalking or other violent acts 	<p>Type4: Violence by Personal Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic violence training (including de-escalation techniques) Enforced policies on handling/preventing violence situations Restraining orders Control access to worksite Access to consultation with employer, employee assistance program or other counseling program Enforced policy prohibiting weapons Reporting procedures Relocating within worksite where possible Necessary staff notification Provide security personnel Post laws against assault, stalking or other violent acts

3. EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: A CASE STUDY

The occurrence of workplace violence may be related to other psychosocial problems. Take the following case study as an example:

A group of workers in a health care facility has been working together for a number of years. They come from the same community and share the same extended family. One of the individuals was recently diagnosed as being HIV positive. Due to a lack of understanding among his co-workers, he is now eating alone in the

canteen and the colleagues are keeping their distance, out of an unnecessary fear of infection. The anxiety of knowing he has HIV, the isolation and the stigmatization, as well as increased financial pressure on the family to purchase new medications, have created increased levels of stress. He has now started to smoke and consume more alcohol. Sometimes, leaving the workplace and drinking alone at lunch, he has been observed becoming more and more abusive towards his colleagues and friends. He repeatedly insults or cajoles individuals about their work or their private lives. He has now been accused of bullying and faces possible disciplinary action.

This case, although fictitious, is close to reality (Figure1). There is clear evidence that psychosocial problems are causal factors of other psychosocial problems. HIV/AIDS, stress, alcohol and violence are interrelated and they can reinforce each other in a most negative way.⁷

FIGURE 1: THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS



(Source: Di Martino et al., 2002)

4. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, 1993-2009: NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY AND THE CENSUS OF FATAL OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

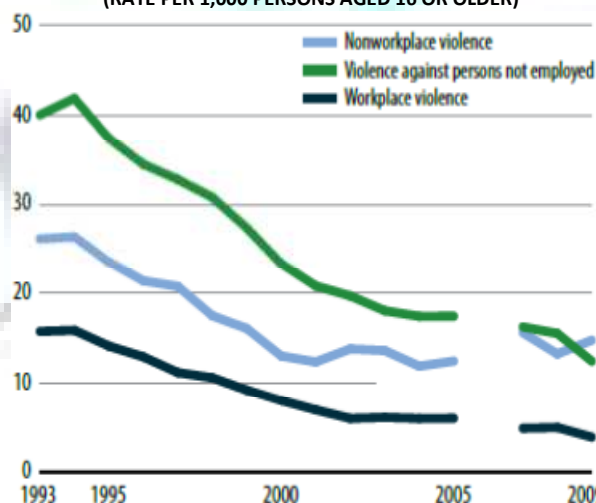
This report presents data on rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault against persons aged 16 or older while they were at work or on duty as measured by the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Respondents to the NCVS aged 16 or older are asked to select one occupation that best describes their job. Data on workplace homicide were obtained from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The National Safety Council has adopted the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries figure, beginning with the 1992 data year, as the authoritative count for work related deaths.

In 2009 approximately 5,72,000 nonfatal violent crimes (rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault) occurred against persons aged 16 or older while they were at work or on duty, based on findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). This accounted for about 24% of nonfatal violence against employed persons aged 16 or older. Nonfatal violence in the workplace was about 15% of all nonfatal violent crime against persons aged 16 or older. The rate of violent crime against employed persons has declined since 1993. According to 2009 preliminary data, 521 persons age 16 or older were victims of homicide in the workplace. In about a third of workplace homicides from 2005-2009, the victim worked in a sales or office occupation. The data on homicides in this report are based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI).

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE REPORT

1. In 2009, an estimated 4 violent crimes per 1,000 employed persons aged 16 or older were committed while the victims were at work or on duty, compared to 6 violent crimes per 1,000 employed persons age 16 or older in 2002. In 1993, the rate of nonfatal violence was 16 violent crimes per 1,000 employed persons while at work, a rate 75% higher than in 2009 (figure 2).

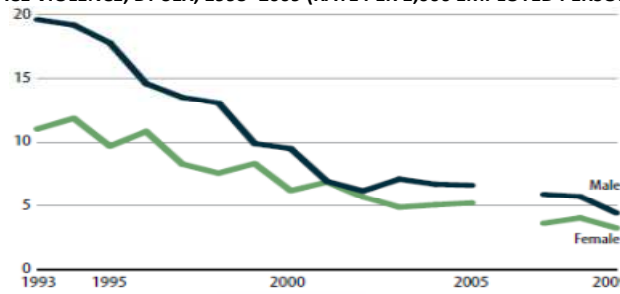
FIGURE 2: WORKPLACE AND NON WORKPLACE NONFATAL VIOLENCE AGAINST EMPLOYED AND PERSONS NOT EMPLOYED AGED 16 OR OLDER, 1993–2009 (RATE PER 1,000 PERSONS AGED 16 OR OLDER)



Source: National Crime Victimization Survey. (Data from 2006 not included)

2. Workplace violence declined more rapidly than non workplace violence from 1993 to 2009. The 2009 workplace violence rate for males was 29% lower than the 2002 rate (figure 3). The rate for females in 2009 was 43% lower than their 2002 rate. The rate of workplace violence against males was 69% lower in 2002 than in 1993. In comparison, the rate of workplace violence against females was 48% lower in 2002 than in 1993. There was no statistically significant difference detected in the 2002 or 2009 rates of workplace violence for males and females.

FIGURE 3: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, BY SEX, 1993–2009 (RATE PER 1,000 EMPLOYED PERSONS AGE 16 OR OLDER)



Source: National Crime Victimization Survey. (Data from 2006 not included)

3. Workplace violence was less likely to involve an offender under the influence of alcohol or drugs than non workplace violence. A smaller percentage of workplace violence (25%) involved an offender under the influence of alcohol or drugs than Non workplace violence (37%), according to victims (table 4). About 40% of workplace violence did not involve an offender under the influence of alcohol or drugs, compared to about 22% of non workplace violence.

TABLE 4: PERCEIVED OFFENDER DRUG/ALCOHOL USE IN WORKPLACE AND NON WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, 2005 -2009

Offender drug/alcohol use	Percent of nonfatal violent victimizations in—	
	Workplace	Nonworkplace
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Perceived to be using drugs or alcohol	24.5	36.6
Not using drugs or alcohol	39.5	21.9
Do not know	36.0	41.5

Source: National Crime Victimization Survey

4. The most common reason why workplace violence was not reported to the police was that the incident was reported to another official. About 38% of workplace violence was not reported to the police because the incident was reported to another official, compared to about 7% of non workplace violence (table 5). Similar to the percentages of non workplace violence that were not reported to police, about 22% of workplace violence was not reported to police because the victim thought the incident was a personal matter. About 24% of workplace violence was not reported to police because the victim believed that the incident was not important enough to be reported.

TABLE 5: REASON FOR NOT REPORTING CRIME TO POLICE, BY WORKPLACE AND NON WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, 2005–2009

Reason not reported	Percent of victims in—	
	Workplace	Nonworkplace
Reported to another official	37.8%	6.7%
Personal matter	22.4	26.1
Not important enough	23.7	26.3
No insurance	0.2*	0.3*
Found out too late	0.4*	0.4*
Cannot recover property	—*	0.2*
Lack of proof	2.3	5.6
Police would not help	8.6	18.5
Protect offender	3.0	8.3
Advised not to report	0.5*	0.5
Fear of reprisal	3.8	6.4
Too inconvenient	2.1	7.9
Other	13.8	12.5
Does not know	0.3*	0.8

(Source: National Crime Victimization Survey)

(Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% because victims may have reported more than one reason. *Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.--Rounds to less than 0.05%.)

5. Robbers and other assailants accounted for the majority of workplace homicide offenders. From 2005 through 2009, about 38% of workplace homicide offenders were robbers (table 6). Work associates accounted for about a fifth, and customers and clients represented about 10% of all workplace homicide offenders. Current and former coworkers committed 11% of workplace homicides. Spouses constituted about 3% of offenders in workplace homicides. Homicide remains the third leading cause of fatal occupational injuries for all workers and the second leading cause of fatal occupational injuries for women.

TABLE 6: WORKPLACE HOMICIDES, BY OFFENDER TYPE, 2005–2009

Offender type	Percent of workplace homicide victims age 16 or older
Total	100.0%
Robbers and other assailants	70.3%
Robbers	38.3
Other assailants	32.0
Work associates	21.4%
Co-worker, former coworker	11.4
Customer, client	10.0
Relatives	4.0%
Spouse	2.9
Other relatives	0.8
Other personal acquaintances	4.3%
Current or former boyfriend or girlfriend	2.0
Other acquaintances	2.3

(Source: Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Note: Excludes strangers or assailants who were unknown. Includes 2009 preliminary data.

5. PREVENTING VIOLENCE: PLANNING AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

(A) PLANNING PRINCIPLES

As with most other risks, prevention of workplace violence begins with planning. Also, as with other risks, it is easier to persuade managers to focus on the problem after a violent act has taken place than it is to get them to act before anything has happened. If the decision to plan in advance is more difficult to make, however, it is also more logical. Table 7 and table 8 depicts the Acts of violence against a person’s work and Acts of violence against a person. In forming an effective workplace violence strategy, important principles include:

- There must be support from the top. If a company’s senior executives are not truly committed to a preventive program, it is unlikely to be effectively implemented.
- There is no one-size-fits-all strategy. Effective plans may share a number of features, but a good plan must be tailored to the needs, resources, and circumstances of a particular employer and a particular work force.
- A plan should be proactive, not reactive.
- A plan should take into account the workplace culture: work atmosphere, relationships, traditional management styles, etc. If there are elements in that culture that appear to foster a toxic climate - tolerance of bullying or intimidation; lack of trust among workers, between workers and management; high levels of stress, frustration and anger; poor communication; inconsistent discipline; and erratic enforcement of company policies - these should be called to the attention of top executives for remedial action.
- Planning for and responding to workplace violence calls for expertise from a number of perspectives. A workplace violence prevention plan will be most effective if it is based on a multidisciplinary team approach.
- Managers should take an active role in communicating the workplace violence policy to employees. They must be alert to warning signs, the violence prevention plan and response, and must seek advice and assistance when there are indications of a problem.
- Practice your plan! No matter how thorough or well-conceived, preparation won’t do any good if an emergency happens and no one remembers or carries out what was planned. Training exercises must include senior executives who will be making decisions in a real incident.

TABLE 7: ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST A PERSON’S WORK

A. Evaluation of work 1. Unjust or exaggerated criticism of work 2. Negative evaluation of work, internal memos 3. Excessive work monitoring 4. Excessive medical monitoring	B. Assignment of tasks 1. Withdrawal of work tasks 2. Overwork 3. Absence of work 4. Proliferation of different/new tasks 5. Tasks inappropriate to the victim’s skills level or state of health 6. Pointless or absurd tasks
C. Career management 1. Blackmail concerning employment, promotion or transfer 2. Compulsory transfer 3. Withdrawal or redistribution of work equipment (offices, fax machines, computers, telephones, etc.) 4. Discrimination regarding leave, working hours, work burdens or training requests 5. Verbal incitements to give up the job	D. Professional communication 1. Distortion or concealment of the information needed to perform the work, sabotage of the work 2. Discrediting the victim’s work in front of Others

Source: April 2003. [tp://meta.fgov.be/pdf/pd/frdd43.pdf](http://meta.fgov.be/pdf/pd/frdd43.pdf)

TABLE 8: ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST A PERSON

A. Verbal violence 1. Intrusions into private life (asking indiscreet questions, listening in to phone calls, reading the victim’s emails, subjecting the victim to phone calls or registered letters at home, etc.) 2. Criticizing the victim’s private life 3. Verbal bullying, shouting at the victim 4. Remarks impinging on a person’s dignity (mockery, misplaced humour, racism, sexism, nicknames, etc.) 5. Disparaging a person in front of others 6. Refusing to cooperate with the victim 7. Manipulation of verbal communication (denying an oral agreement, lying, vague or shifting comments, emotional blackmail, manipulation of feelings) 8. Forbidding other workers to talk to the victim 9. Spiteful rumours, unfounded accusations	B. Physical violence 1. Aggressive gestures (door-slamming, table-thumping, etc.) 2. Threats of physical aggression 3. Physical aggression (jostling, spitting, stepping on the victim’s feet, molestation, etc.) 4. Damaging or destroying the victim’s work equipment or personal property 5. Stalking (following the victim in the street, staking out the victim’s home, etc.) 6. Extortion of money/racketeering through physical intimidation 7. Hazardous working conditions (repetitive exposure of the victim, but not of others, to dangerous products; repeated handling of objects that are too heavy, etc.)
C. Sexual violence 1. Sexual violence without physical contact (making advances, allusions or remarks with sexual connotations, undressing the victim with one’s eyes, etc.) 2. Sexual violence with physical contact (brushing up against somebody, deliberate physical contact, groping, etc.)	D. Behavioural violence 1. Minor vexations, mean tricks (turning off the heating, hiding things, etc.) 2. Offensive gestures (turning one’s back, refusing to say hello, refusing to shake hands, shrugs, sighs, heavenward glances, etc.)

Source: April 2003. <http://meta.fgov.be/pdf/pd/frdd43.pdf>

Exercises must be followed by careful, clear-eyed evaluation and changes to fix whatever weaknesses have been revealed. Reevaluate, rethink, and revise. Policies and practices should not be set in concrete. Personnel, work environments, business conditions, and society all change and evolve. A prevention program must change and evolve with them.

(B) ELEMENTS OF A WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

As noted by many professionals working on the workplace violence issue, violent acts generally occur in predictable types of worksites or settings, are associated with identifiable risk factors, and may be eliminated or controlled through effective prevention strategies. Programs to prevent workplace violence, just like other workplace hazard prevention programs, often include the following key elements:

- (a) Management Commitment:** To ensure an effective program, managers and employees should work together, perhaps through a team approach, to provide the motivation, commitment of resources, and feedback to address workplace violence issues.
- (b) Hazard Assessment :** Hazard assessment involves a step-by-step, common sense look at the workplace to find existing or potential hazards for workplace violence. This can include:
 - Analyzing and tracking records of violence at work.

- Examining specific violence incidents carefully.
 - Surveying employees to gather their ideas and input.
 - Periodic inspections of the worksite to identify risk factors that could contribute to injuries related to violence.
 - The hazard assessment should examine vulnerability to the four categories of violence previously described - violence by strangers, violence by customers or clients, violence by co-workers, and violence by personal relations.
- (c) **Hazard Prevention and Control:** Once existing or potential hazards are identified through the hazard assessment, then hazard prevention and control measures can be identified and implemented.
- These measures may include (in order of general preference):
 - Engineering controls, such as locks and alarms.
 - Administrative/work practice controls, such as sign-in procedures for visitors and employee assistance programs.
 - Personal protective equipment, such as bullet-proof vests for police and security personnel.
 - Posting applicable laws, such as those prohibiting assaults and stalking, in visible locations may serve as a prevention measure.
- (d) **Training and Instruction:** Training and instruction on workplace violence ensures that all staff are aware of potential hazards and how to protect themselves and their co-workers through established prevention and control measures.
- (e) **Reporting Procedure:** A reporting procedure for violent incidents should be developed for all types of violent incidents, whether or not physical injury has occurred. Violence other than physical injury would include, for example, verbal abuse or threats of violence. This procedure should be in writing and should be easily understood by all employees. It should take into account issues of confidentiality. Employees may be reluctant to come forward otherwise and they should not fear reprisal for bringing their concerns to management's attention.
- (f) **Record Keeping:** Record keeping is essential to the success of a workplace violence prevention program. Good records help employers determine the severity of the problem, evaluate methods of hazard control, and identify training needs.
- (g) **Evaluation:** As part of an overall program covering workplace violence, employers should evaluate their safety and security measures. Management should share the evaluation results with all employees. Any changes in the program should be discussed at regular meetings of the safety committee, with union representatives or other employee groups.

6. PERSONAL CONDUCT TO MINIMISE VOILENCE⁸

Follow the suggestions given in table 9, in your daily interactions with people to de-escalate potentially violent situations. If at any time a person's behavior starts to escalate beyond your comfort zone, disengage.

TABLE 9: PERSONAL CONDUCT TO MINIMIZE VIOLENCE*

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project calmness, move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently. • Be an empathetic listener: Encourage the person to talk and listen patiently. • Focus your attention on the other person to let them know you are interested in what they have to say • Maintain a relaxed yet attentive posture and position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front of the other person. • Acknowledge the person's feelings. Indicate that you can see he/she is upset. • Ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area. • Establish ground rules if unreasonable behavior persists. Calmly describe the consequences of any violent behavior. • Use delaying tactics which will give the person time to calm down. For example, offer a drink of water (in a disposable cup). • Be reassuring and point out choices. Break big problems into smaller, more manageable problems. • Accept criticism in a positive way. When a complaint might be true, use statements like "You are probably right" or "It was my fault." If the criticism seems unwarranted, ask clarifying questions. • Ask for his/her recommendations. Repeat back to him/her what you feel he/she is requesting of you. • Arrange yourself so that a visitor cannot block your access to an exit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use styles of communication which generate hostility such as apathy, brush off, coldness, condescension, robotism, going strictly by the rules or giving the runaround. • Reject all of a client's demands from the start. • Pose in challenging stances such as standing directly opposite someone, hands on hips or crossing your arms. • Avoid any physical contact, finger pointing or long periods of fixed eye contact. • Make sudden movements which can be seen as threatening. Notice the tone, volume and rate of your speech. • Challenge, threaten, or dare the individual. Never belittle the person or make him/her feel foolish. • Criticize or act impatiently toward the agitated individual. • Attempt to bargain with a threatening individual. • Try to make the situation seem less serious than it is. • Make false statements or promises you cannot keep. • Try to impart a lot of technical or complicated information when emotions are high. Take sides or agree with distortions. Invade the individual's personal space. • Make sure there is a space of three feet to three feet to six feet between you and the person.

7. CONCLUSION

We must not fall into the error of regarding violence and stress as inevitable. It is quite possible to combat them effectively, provided that the tripartite partners play the game by establishing effective social dialogue.

Ahmed Khalef, Bureau for Workers' Activities

Workplace violence is a growing concern for employers and employees nationwide. Workplace violence is receiving increased attention thanks to a growing awareness of the toll that violence takes on workers and workplaces. Despite existing research, there remain significant gaps in our knowledge of its causes and potential solutions. Even the extent of violence in the workplace and the number of victims are not well understood.

Workplace violence affects us all. Its burden is borne not only by victims of violence, but by their co-workers, their families, their employers, and by every worker at risk of violent assault - in other words, virtually all of us. Although we know that each year workplace violence results in hundreds of deaths, more than 2 million injuries, and billions of dollars in costs, our understanding of workplace violence is still in its infancy. Much remains to be done in the area of research, particularly in data collection and in intervention. Without basic information on who is most affected and which prevention measures are effective in what settings, we can expect only limited success in addressing this problem. The first steps have been taken. With the help of a broad coalition, a number of key issues have been identified for future research. However, research funding focused on a much broader understanding of the scope and impact of workplace violence is urgently needed to reduce the human and financial burden of this significant public health problem. Psychological violence (be it bullying, mobbing or

emotional violence) between coworkers and between workers and management, can and does happen in just about any profession, but it is more difficult to measure and it is often not reported.

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