



Workplace Violence

Accessibility Course Script

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Introduction

Health care workers are a vital part of our health care system. These individuals are skilled, caring and dedicated to their duty of care. However, all too often they experience acts of violence in the workplace. The impact is great and affects everyone.

Violence in the health care sector needs to be addressed and should not be accepted as part of the job. Therefore, we must understand what workplace violence is and take proactive measures to ensure a safer workplace and quality patient care.

What is Workplace Violence?

Workplace Violence Defined

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) defines workplace violence as:

- a. The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker
- b. An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker,
- c. A statement or behavior that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace that could cause physical injury to the worker

Examples of workplace violence may include:

- Punching
- Hitting
- Shaking fists
- Groping
- Pinching
- Biting
- Choking
- Spitting
- Shoving
- Pushing
- Stabbing
- Kicking
- Throwing objects
- Sexual assault and threats of assault

Types of Workplace Violence

Violence in the workplace can arise from 4 primary sources:

Type I (External Perpetrator):

The violent person has no relationship to the worker or workplace

For example, a perpetrator attempts to break into a hospital pharmacy department seeking narcotic medications and hits a worker.

Type II (Client/Customer)

The violent person is a client (or their family) at the workplace who becomes violent towards a worker or another client

For example, a resident with dementia in long term care is frightened during bathing and strikes a worker who is helping with bathing.

Type III (Employment Related)

The violent person is a worker or has had some type of job-related involvement with the workplace

For example, two workers in community care argue over holiday coverage for the same time period and one worker threatens to assault the other worker if they do not get the days off they want.

Type IV (Domestic Violence)

The violent person has a personal relationship with an employee or client.

For example, a worker's partner enters a workplace threatening other workers with a weapon if they cannot see their partner immediately.

Impact of Workplace Violence

For many healthcare workers exposure to workplace violence results in significant injuries that require medical treatment and time off work. When workplace violence of any type is present, it can cause poor health, stress and fear, psychological trauma, low productivity/performance and even death.

Being physically or psychologically assaulted at work also has repercussions for co-workers, not to mention the quality of healthcare overall.

Workplace violence not only impacts an individual

Workplace violence can also impact the organization and society in a number of ways.

The organizational impact is that workplace violence can lead to:

- Decreased workplace morale
- Poor public image

- Higher turnover
- Higher absenteeism
- Increased financial costs
- Poor quality of care

Workplace violence can impact society and lead to:

Increased health care costs for post- incident treatment and programming

Increased demands to support the employee and their family

Lowered interest in health care jobs/careers

Summary

Workplace violence in the workplace is NOT acceptable, is NOT part of the job and CANNOT be tolerated.

Safe workers means better care.

Let's work together to reduce violence in healthcare.

Contact Info

Keep in touch. Contact and social media information:

Website: www.pshsa.ca

For information and resources on workplace violence visit: www.workplace-violence.ca

Twitter: @pshsaca

Linkedin: Public Services Health and Safety Association on LinkedIn

Youtube: youtube.com/PSHSA

Phone: 416-250-2131 or Tollfree: 1-877 250-7444

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