



Occupational Health Clinics
for Ontario Workers Inc.

Workplace Violence

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Presentation Overview

- Definition
- The Perpetrator
- Who is affected
- Workplace Factors that Increase Risk
- Health Effects
- Statistics
- The Law
- Prevention
- Strategies for Change



VIOLENCE

DEFINITION

“Any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, injured in the course of, or as a direct result of his or her work.”

Source: ILO



Workplace Violence Includes:

- Threatening behaviour
- Verbal or written threats
- Harassment
- Verbal abuse/assaults



Source: WHSC



Workplace Violence Includes:

- Sexual abuse
- Sexual assault
- Physical attacks/assaults
- Poisoned work environment



Source: WHSC



Workplace Violence Includes:

- Psychological Violence
 - Bullying
 - Verbal insults
 - Sexual or racial harassment
 - Intimidation



Source: WHSC



Risk Factors Include a Person Who:

- Experiences violence as a normal and accepted behaviour
- Has a history of violence
- Feels targeted or done wrong
- Is intoxicated, on drugs, or psychologically inhibited
- Seeks approval for violent behaviour

Look For



- Raising of the voice
- Flushed skin, accompanying a rise in blood pressure
- Sweating
- Clenched jaw or fists
- Fast breathing

Source: CUPE



Who Are Affected?



- Health care workers
- Educational assistants, teachers, librarians
- Guards, security officers and police
- Retail workers, etc.



Diffusion

- Listen to your gut; stay calm
- Don't stare at the perpetrator; it makes him nervous
- Approach with two people, if possible
- Don't argue with the perpetrator
- Speak before moving – explain what you're doing, for example, "I am going to move to the counter now."
- Don't move suddenly
- Don't go with the perpetrator. Tell him, "I'll give you the money, but I have to stay here."
- Follow emergency procedures as practiced.
- On the phone, say " I am going to hang up and talk to you when you have calmed down"; then hang up.



Workplace Factors that Increase Risk



- Working with members of the public
- Handling money, valuables or prescription drugs
- Understaffing
- Workers not given enough training in recognizing and defusing violent situations
- Providing service, care, advice or education



Workplace and Other Factors that Increase Risk

- Working where alcohol is served
- Working in isolated or low traffic areas
- Working in community-based settings
- Having a mobile workplace
- Persons in shock or frustrated with the system lash out at closest person; often a worker
- Concept that violence is “part of the job”



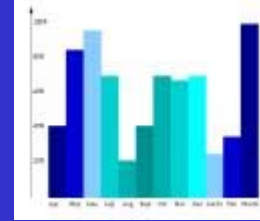
Health Effects



- Acute injuries
 - bruises, lacerations, broken bones, death
- Chronic effects
 - Anger, fear anxiety, low self-esteem, depression – may lead to drug abuse, family break-ups, & suicide
 - PTSD

Source: WHSC





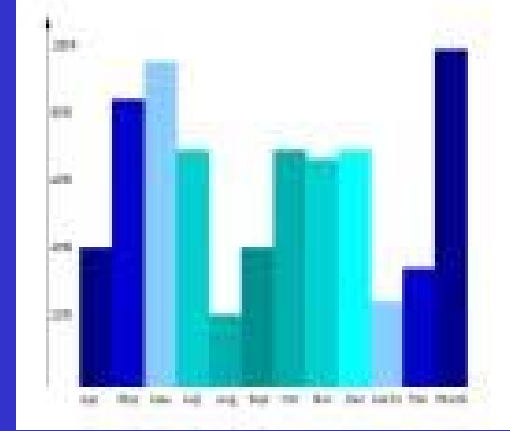
Problems with Statistics

- Many injuries require minimal treatment therefore not reported to WSIB
- Reluctance to report incident – fear of being blamed
- Don't consider incidents worth reporting
- Victims may consciously or unconsciously blame themselves or feeling ashamed

Source: CUPE



Statistics



In 2002:

- 1,747 lost-time claims in Ontario

This is an ↑ of 10 to 15 % over each of the previous six years.

- Ontario stats show biting is the 3rd most common kind of workplace violence, behind hitting and kicking.

Source: CUPE



The Law



- No regulation in Ontario for violence
- OH&S Act 25:2 (h) requires employer to take every precaution reasonable under the circumstances to ensure a safe and healthy workplace
- OH&S Act 43:3 Right to refuse



Other Jurisdictions



- Quebec
 - Amendment to Labour Standards Act
- British Columbia & Saskatchewan
 - Specific workplace violence prevention legislation

Source: WHSC



Federal Legislation



(Part II of the Labour Code)

- Tripartite group has drafted a “Violence Prevention Regulation”
- Has been submitted to the Justice Department

Source: WHSC



Prevention



- Identify the problem in the workplace
 - JHSC
- Management commitment and development of workplace violence policies
- Work organization & workplace layout
- Education and training



Prevention



- Keep minimum funds in cash register
- Security
- Install communications
- Assigning two workers in high-risk areas

Source: WHSC



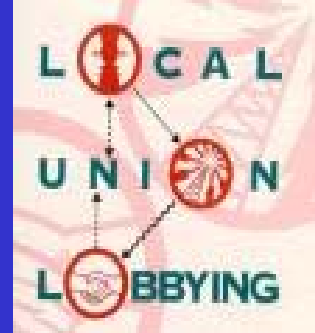
Prevention



- Workplace violence training
- Provide support for victims
- Mandatory detailed reporting and investigation
- Inspect workplaces regularly



Strategies for Change



- OFL Violence in the workplace conference January 2006. Contact Vern Edwards (416)441-2731
- Unions place violence language in collective bargaining. Contact CUPE
- Lobbying for legislative change
- Public awareness campaigns
- Forming coalitions with groups whose concerns overlap

