Welcome to:

Workplace Violence: Myths and Realities
Workplace Safety and Insurance

• Goal 1 Improve Outcomes for Workers and Employers
  – Establish and communicate best practices
  – Promote attitude and behaviour change
  – Support adoption of best practices
  – Encourage change re poor performers
  – Strategic evaluation
Workplace Violence

Objectives

• Evaluate some of the Myths surrounding Workplace Violence
• Provide an understanding of Workplace Violence
• The basics of performing a Hazard Analysis and developing a Violence Prevention Plan
Workplace Violence

MYTH:

• “It’s only violence if someone gets hurt!”
Workplace Violence

Violence is actually broader and may include:

• the attempted, threatened, or actual conduct of a person that endangers the health or safety of an employee

• includes threatening statements or behaviour that causes an employee to believe they are at risk
Workplace Violence

MYTH: “Workplace Violence is not a Health and Safety Issue, it’s a police problem”
Effects of Workplace Violence

• mental or physical disabling of affected employees, or death
• stress and fear among other workers
• lost productivity
• negative corporate image and publicity (hospitality or trade image orgs)
• legal costs
• higher compensation premiums
• higher employee turnover
Not a Health and Safety Issue?

- OHSA 13(1)a Every employer shall take every precaution that is reasonable… to ensure the health and safety of persons at or near the workplace
- 13(1)c provide information, training and facilities necessary…
- 13(1)f conduct the undertaking so employees are not exposed to hazards
- 28(2) Program requires hazard identification and control
Not a Health and Safety Issue?

How does exposure to violence differ from exposure to unguarded machinery?

• Machinery can be guarded
• Violence involves people as part of the hazard
  – unpredictable
  – emotional
  – impacted by environment, relationships
  – perceptions vs reality
Workplace Violence

MYTH: “Violence is not an issue here in Nova Scotia”
“It’s not an issue here in Nova Scotia”

- Violence is generally under-reported
  - In 2004, 293 “Acts of Violence” reported to WCB in N.S. (all employers not covered by WCB)
  - 1/3 of N.S. Social Workers reported an incident of violence within a two year timeframe

- At your table, discuss who has been exposed to, or is aware of a case of workplace violence

- Report: # and worst incident
“It’s not an issue here…?”

– McDonalds in Sydney
– Store clerk in Halifax attacked with a baseball bat
– Convenience store / taxi driver / gas station fatalities
– Nurse, home and health care assaults
– teachers

• % of non-robbery incidents reported??
Workplace Violence

MYTH: “Violence isn’t widespread, it’s really just a robbery issue”
“Violence isn’t a major problem”

- U.S. statistics indicate homicide is the second leading cause of death in the workplace, second only to car crashes
  - Workers most at risk of homicide: Taxi drivers, sheriffs, police / public service, gas station workers, security
“Violence isn’t a major problem”

• Most non-fatal assaults occur in service settings: hospitals, nursing homes and social service agencies
  – Workers most at risk of nonfatal assault: nursing homes, social services, hospitals, grocery stores and eating / drinking places
Workplace Violence

MYTH: “It’s usually someone from outside the organization who commits the violent act”
“It’s usually someone from outside the organization”

Who commits workplace violence?

- Employee >>>>>>>>>>>> Employee
- Client / Customer >>>>>>>>>>>> Employee
- Stranger (Robbery / Random) >>>> Employee
- other >> courier / domestic / relationship
“April 6, 1999 Pierre LeBrun drove… up to…the OCTranspo garage…” 4 fatalities  

OHS Canada
Workplace Violence

MYTH: “It’s only violence if it is intentional”
“It’s only violence if it is intentional”

• Many incidents are unintentional, particularly those in long term health care where the client may not recognize the impact of their actions.

• Incidents may also result from a lack of action, such as locking up the dog.
Workplace Violence

MYTH: “Women and men are equally at risk”
“Women and men are equally at risk”

• U.S. Statistics indicate homicide as the leading cause of death for women in the workplace
• Sexual Assaults are generally against women
• High risk professions such as nursing, social work, and home care are female dominated
Workplace Violence

MYTH: “You knew the job was dangerous - live with it!”
“You knew the job was dangerous - live with it!”

- Uncritical acceptance of violence inhibits effective management, ignores the law
- Law enforcement agencies train and equip staff for the expected violence
- High risk professions such as nursing, social work, and home care often accept a level of violence

CUPE study of care facilities.
Workplace Violence

MYTH: “There’s nothing we can do to prevent violence anyway!”
Hazard Assessment

• With the JOHSC / Rep. or staff, conduct a Hazard Assessment to determine:
  • IF hazards exist;
  • and if so, the level and nature of risk
Hazard Assessment Considerations

• previous experience of violence in the workplace,
• occupational experience of violence in similar workplaces, and
• the presence of factors that may predict potential for violence in the workplace: money or drugs, power or control over people, troubled clients, inspecting or assessing fees...
Hazard Assessment Determinations

• Determine if there is a significant risk of violence in the workplace. Is it likely something will happen?

• If a significant risk of violence exists, determine the nature of the risk. If something happens, what is it likely to be?
Completion of Hazard Assessment

• If you have never done one, do it now!
• When a new type of violence occurs in similar workplaces;
• at the start of operations at the workplace;
• significant change affecting the work site or activity at the work site;
Exercise

• In your workplace is there potential for violence? (Client, Employee, Stranger, domestic)
  – What would it look like?

• Select one example from your group and determine
  – What the consequences would be for the victim, business, manager, families?
  – What could be done to reduce or eliminate the risk?
Significant Risk = Prevention Plan

• If your Hazard Assessment determines that there is a significant risk of violence develop a written workplace Violence Prevention Plan

• Recognize violence as a hazard in writing, indicate violence is unacceptable, and commit to eliminating / minimizing the risk.
Purpose of Violence Prevention Plan

• Eliminate or minimize the risk to employees of violence in the workplace.
  – Eliminate the Hazard
  – Engineering Controls (barrier between the worker and the hazard)
  – Administrative Controls (policies or practices that reduce risk)
  – Special Measures (eg cell phone and call in schedule)
Getting Started

• Assess the workplace for hazards:
  – robbery potential - cash, drugs, weapons
  – troubled employees
  – care or control of clients
  – working alone, extended hours
  – history of this and similar employers
  – nature of clients, type of service delivery
Violence Prevention Plan: Practices and Procedures

• Work practice and procedure considerations:
  – physical layout and condition of the workplace;
  – work organization such as working alone, location, practices such as visiting homes re meter readings
  – availability of security controls and personal protective equipment and devices; and
  – training of employees in appropriate responses to incidents of violence in the workplace.
Employee Information and Training

• provide employees with information about the nature of the risk
• train and supervise employees who may be exposed to a significant risk of injury from violence in the workplace
• give them permission to “work safely”
• provide support in the event of an incident
Train employees

• Provide information on potential threats and how to respond
  – potential robbery, do not resist
  – threatened, leave the area and report to manager

• Recognize violence is unacceptable

• Link discipline to harassing behaviour

• dealing with difficult people / personal escape strategies
Workplace Layout

- Avoid hidden areas, use natural surveillance
- lock exits, control client access
- avoid darkened parking areas
- install barriers as appropriate based on your hazard assessment
- isolate work areas from reception
- provide employee escape route
- avoid trapping employees with furniture
Security

• Avoid large amounts of cash
• ensure safe method of cash deposits - secure courier, taxi, buddy...
• consider need for security staff, cameras etc.
• evaluate late hours operations and special needs
• avoid employees working alone
Employees Off Site

- ensure someone knows where you are
- have a scheduled check in
- provide a means of communication
- meet in neutral areas if risk involved
- ensure a clear means of exiting
- know when to leave a situation
- If travelling, know where you are going, don’t appear lost
If an Incident Occurs

• Care for and support the employee
• secure the area and call for help
• conduct an investigation with the JOHSC / Representative or staff.
• Identify root causes and possible controls
• Brief staff and retrain as necessary
• Implement controls and evaluate effectiveness
• Reinforce Permission to Work Safely!
If an Incident Occurs

Do Your Staff Know What to Do???