



# Workplace Harassment & Violence Training

March 2021

*Building healthy  
communities*



# Outline

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- Workplace Harassment
  - What is Workplace Harassment
  - Types of Workplace Harassment
  - Examples of harassment in the workplace
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  - Responsibilities of employees, supervisors and the Association
- Workplace Violence
  - What is Workplace Violence
  - Statistics of violence in NL workplaces
  - Identifying threats
  - Risk factors & preventative measures
  - What to do if a situation arises



# Learning Objectives

- Understand the definition of Workplace Harassment and Workplace Violence
- Be able to identify risk factors
- Be able to distinguish what actions or behaviours are considered workplace harassment and violence
- Know what steps to take if you are found in a situation of workplace harassment or violence
- The responsibilities of you, your supervisors and the Association
- Our policy on Workplace Harassment



# What is Workplace Harassment?

**Workplace Harassment** means inappropriate vexatious conduct or comment by a person to an employee that the person knew or ought to have known would cause the employee to be humiliated, offended or intimidated.

Intent 

It includes:

- discrimination
- personal harassment
- sexual harassment
- violence

What harassment is *not*:

- reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the day to day management of an employee's duties or other supervisory responsibilities such as performance evaluation, training, and disciplinary action.



# Types of Workplace Harassment

**Discriminatory Harassment** is a distinction or decision is made which adversely affects an individual or group in circumstances where that distinction or decision is based:

- race
- colour
- nationality
- ethnic origin
- social origin
- religious creed
- religion
- age
- disability
- disfigurement
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- gender expression
- marital status
- family status
- source of income
- political opinion
- and conviction for a criminal offence unrelated to the person's employment



# Types of Workplace Harassment

**Personal Harassment** (sometimes referred to as bullying) means any inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action or gesture by a person that:

- adversely affects an employee's psychological or physical well-being
- the perpetrator knows or ought to reasonably know would cause the employee to be offended, humiliated or intimidated; and
- constitutes a threat to the health and safety of an employee.
- Typically involves repeated occurrences

Personal harassment may include:

- verbal or written abuse or threats
- insulting, derogatory or degrading comments, jokes or gestures
- personal ridicule or malicious gossip
- interference or sabotage of another's work
- refusing to work or co-operate with others
- interference with or vandalizing personal property.



# Types of Workplace Harassment

**Sexual Harassment** means any comment, gesture, contact or other conduct of a sexual nature at or related to the workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known is unwelcome, is likely to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation, or might be perceived by an individual as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment, promotion, other work-related advantage (quid pro quo).

Sexual harassment may include:

- a direct or implied threat of reprisal for refusing to comply with a sexually-oriented request
- unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes, etc about a person's body, attire, sex or sexual orientation
- displaying pornographic or sexually explicit pictures or materials
- unwelcome physical contact
- unwelcome invitations or requests to engage in behavior of a sexual nature
- refusing to work with or have contact with employees because of their sex, gender or sexual orientation.



# Impacts of Workplace Harassment

- ↑ Absenteeism
- ↑ Sick Leave
- ↑ Health Issues
- ↑ Insurance Costs
- ↑ Training Costs
- ↓ Productivity
- ↓ Poor Morale





# Harassment Prevention Plan

## *Harassment Prevention Plan Statement:*

Every employee is entitled to employment free from workplace harassment. The Association is committed to eliminating where possible, or otherwise, minimizing the hazard of workplace harassment to ensure employees are able to complete their duties and responsibilities in a safe, healthy and productive work environment where they are treated with respect and dignity. It is also committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all clients, members, volunteers and visitors.



# Your Responsibilities

As an employee, you are are responsible to:

- Comply with our Harassment Prevention Plan
- Not engage in Workplace Harassment
- Report observations or experiences of Workplace Harassment
- Participate in education and training with respect to harassment prevention
- Cooperate in any investigation being conducted
- Maintain confidentiality as required



# Your Supervisor's Responsibilities

In addition to their responsibilities as employees, supervisors are responsible to:

- Ensure the health and safety of employees including the supervisor's obligation to apply and comply with this Plan
- Foster a culture of a respectful workplace through leading by example
- Ensure that all employees that fall under their supervision have knowledge of and understand this Plan.



# Our Association Responsibilities

Our Association is committed to:

- Participate in training relating to harassment prevention
- Ensure training is provided to employees
- Ensure an investigation is conducted with respect to complaints of Workplace Harassment
- Report the findings of an investigation
- Protect employees from retaliation and provide support to employees should the Workplace Harassment occur
- Review the Harassment Prevention Plan on an annual basis or as required, in consultation with the Association's OHS Committee.



# What to do when harassment happens

## Informal Resolution

- If you feel comfortable, address the harasser and tell them that the behavior is unwelcome

## Formal Resolution

- Report the situation to your supervisor (or CEO if the alleged harasser is your supervisor)
- Complete the complaint form






# Next Steps

- The complaint is reviewed and the employee who complained will be followed up with to determine the nature of the complaint and if it is workplace harassment.
- If the complaint does meet the criteria under workplace harassment
  - The respondent will be notified of the complaint and will have an opportunity to respond
  - Other people who may be involved in the complaint as a participant or a witness will be contacted for their statement
  - All information will be confidential, except where disclosure is required as part of the investigation process
  - The complainant and the respondent will be advised of the results of the review
  - Applicable performance management will occur



# Test Your Knowledge

Which of these situations would be considered workplace harassment?

-  A manager advises an employee that if they continue to underperform, they will be given a verbal warning
-  During a staff meeting, a manager tells the group that if they want to succeed at failing, they should read Lorraine's most recent business report
-  An employee teases another employee about their speech impediment, laughing at her every time she speaks



# Where can you find more information?

- YMCA of Newfoundland & Labrador Personnel Policy
  - Section 4.2 - Harassment Prevention Plan (pg. 12)





# What is Workplace Violence?

**Workplace violence** is any act in which a worker is abused, threatened, intimidated or assaulted in their employment by a person, and believes they are at risk of injury.

It includes:

- **Threatening behaviour** – destroying property or throwing objects.
- **Verbal or written threats** – any expression of an intent to inflict harm.
- **Verbal abuse** – swearing, arguments, insults or condescending language.
- **Physical attacks** – hitting, shoving, pushing, kicking, rape or murder.
- **Property damage** – vandalism, sabotage, theft or arson.
- **Harassment** – any behaviour that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms, verbally abuses a person, inflicts psychological trauma, or is known or would be expected to be unwelcome.



# Types of Workplace Violence

There are four types of assailants of workplace violence:

- Strangers (e.g. while committing a crime)
- Customers
- Fellow employees/volunteers
- People with whom employees/volunteers have relationships outside the workplace



# Provincial Workplace Violence Statistics



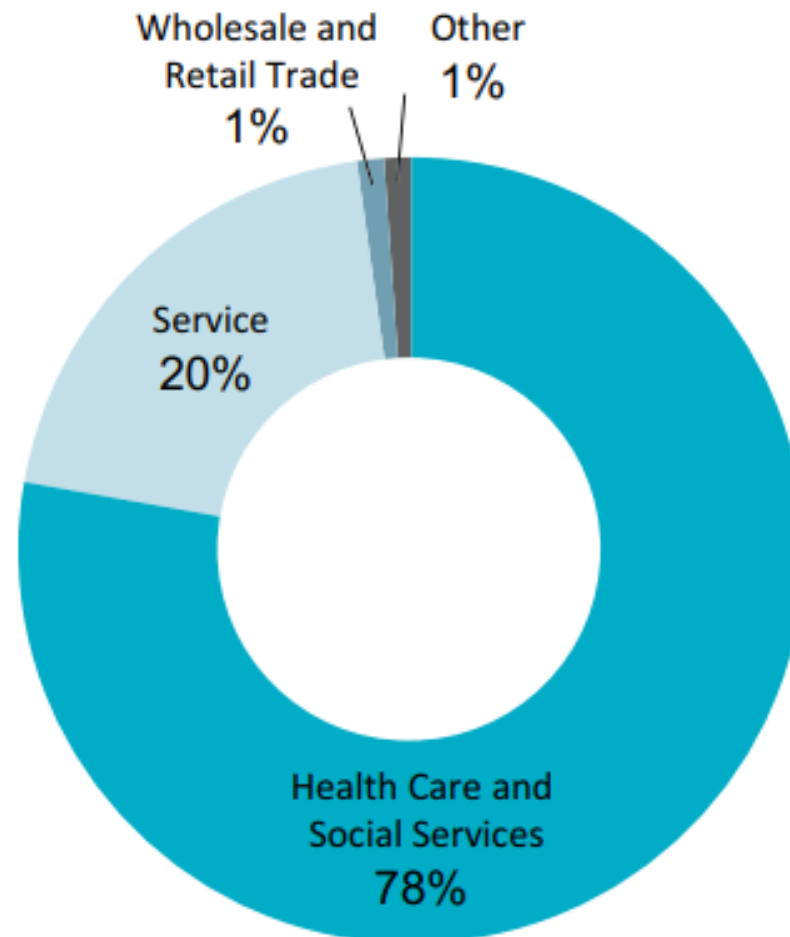
The injury rate for assaults and violent acts has increased 117% from 5.2/10,000 employees in 2012 to 11.3/10,000 employees in 2019.



# Provincial Workplace Violence Statistics

## Assaults and Violent Acts

Total claims by Industry - Newfoundland and Labrador 2012 - 2019



# Risk Factors

There are several factors that increase the risk of violence

- Providing service, care, advice or education. ✓
- Working with volatile persons.
- Handling money, valuables or prescription drugs. ✓
- Carrying out inspection or enforcement duties.
- Working in premises where alcohol is served.
- Working alone, in small numbers, or in isolated or low traffic areas. ✓
- Working in community-based settings. ✓
- Having a mobile workplace. ✓



# Risk Mitigation

What are some ways we mitigate these risks at the YMCA?

- Working in pairs
- Security (system, guards, cameras)
- Proper lighting
- Not carrying large amounts of cash
- Training on policies and procedures
- Ensuring spaces are secure (locked doors, proper barriers, office layout)



# Workplace Violence Triggers

- Bad performance reviews
- Lay-off
- Termination
- Substance abuse
- Personal issues
- Interpersonal conflicts



# Identifying Threats

## Stage 1:

- Calling names
- Lack of respect for authority
- Disregarding rules
- Alienation from others
- Depression
- Poor personal hygiene
- Substance abuse issues
- Deterioration of work ethic
- History of violence

*Most important stage to recognize*





# Identifying Threats

## Stage 2:

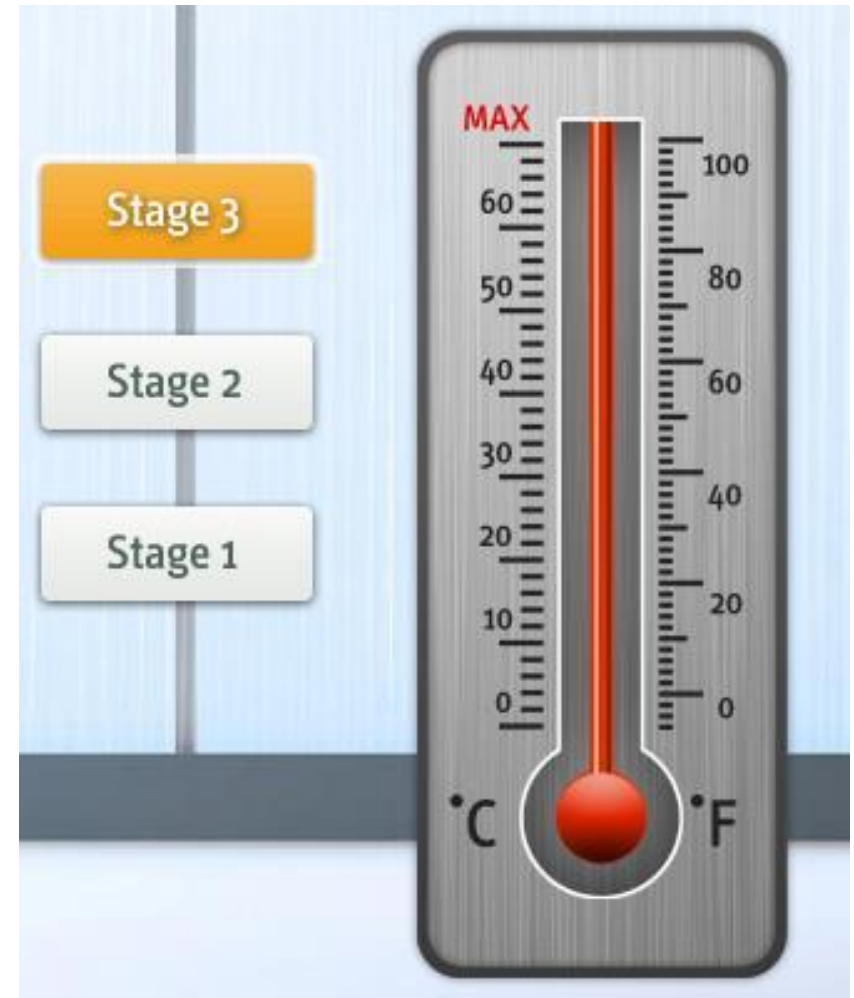
- No longer masks aggression
- Highly confrontational
- Shows contempt



# Identifying Threats

## Stage 3:

- Openly aggressive
- Hurts other or themselves
- Potential display of a weapon



# What to do if a situation occurs

- Protect yourself - Keep safe
- Stay at a distance
- Don't try to disarm
- Keep still, show hands
- Obey instructions (unless harmful)
- Keep voice and interactions calm
- Try to get away if possible
- Try to alert others
- Report any experiences that occur to your manager or supervisor



# Test Your Knowledge

Which of these situations would be considered workplace violence:

- ✓ Joan's husband walks into her assistant's office and spits in her face for losing an important client
- ✓ Mary's husband comes into her office and threatens to assault her, and then leaves without doing anything
- ✓ A nurse is attacked by a patient who refuses medication
- ✓ A police officer tried to apprehend a mugger and is shot in the leg
- ✗ Jason is using the photocopier at work. When it jams, he is so frustrated he kicks the photocopier and breaks it



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- ✓ Know what steps to take if you are found in a situation of workplace violence or harassment
- ✓ The responsibilities of you and your leadership team
- ✓ Our Harassment Prevention Plan

