

VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

These are incidents involving work-related abuse, threats or assaults among health workers including physical, sexual, verbal and psychological abuse and workplace harassment.



Key facts

- ✓ Violence and harassment affect all health worker groups and work settings in the health sector.
- ✓ Up to 62% of health workers have experienced workplace violence.
- ✓ Verbal abuse (58%) is the most common form of non-physical violence, followed by threats (33%) and sexual harassment (12%).

Preventive measures:

- ✓ Recognize violent incidents and identify risks of violence.
- ✓ Take measures to improve work organization:
 - ensure optimal staffing levels, working time, supportive work teams and improved working conditions;
 - prevent staff from working alone and minimize patient waiting time;
 - provide timely information to patients and family to reduce stress;
 - restrict movement of the public in health facilities; and
 - alert security personnel if violence is threatened.
- ✓ Provide security measures:
 - good lighting, security cameras, alarms and panic buttons, emergency signalling;
 - security escorts to the parking lots at night; and
 - lock drugs and valuables.
- ✓ Prepare and support workers:
 - train workers in conflict resolution and managing assaults;
 - provide counselling to recognize the danger of violent behaviour and assistance to change the conduct/attitude; and
 - maintain physical fitness and emotionally stable psychical conditions.
- ✓ Respond quickly and appropriately to incidents if they occur.
- ✓ Encourage reporting, recording and monitoring of all incidents.
- ✓ Ensure a confidential complaint or grievance procedure.
- ✓ Monitor violence trends and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

Source:

<https://www.who.int/tools/occupational-hazards-in-health-sector/violence-harassment>

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<https://www.who.int/activities/protecting-health-and-safety-of-health-workers>

