

# Workplace violence

Sociology



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Workplace Violence Premise ment Workplace violence is caused by the presence of demotivating factors that result in toxic working environments.

### Problem Statement

Recent years have seen an increase in the reporting of workplace violence, and it is believed that violence at the workplace would continue to increase. Employers do not dedicate sufficient resources to analyze and prevent violence at the workplace, and training has been underemphasized. This results in employers missing cues or warning signals until someone is victimized by a random act of workplace violence. The development and implementation of a workplace violence prevention program should include a thoughtful approach (risk based) and encourage support. This includes the development of policies and procedures for addressing issues that may be present at the workplace (Nater, 2009).

An evaluation of a workplace has been envisaged. A survey would be conducted to assess factors that may be present at the workplace, which could be a risk for workplace violence. A risk based approach would be adopted to develop recommendations from the study.

### Definitions

Demotivators are those nagging, daily occurrences that frustrate employees and cause them to reduce, consciously or unconsciously, the amount of productive energy they use in their jobs. Demotivators include competition for scarce resources, confusing messages, unproductive meetings, inconsistency between words and needs, poor planning and communication, not satisfying employees' information needs, and low quality standards (Perspective, 1997).

Factors causing workplace violence include economic conditions, layoffs, job

stress security, authoritarian workplaces, drug and alcohol problems, effects of domestic disputes that flare up at work, and contributing factors such as easy availability of weapons and songs, books, movies and television shows glorifying violence (Whitmore & Kleiner, 1999).

Stress is a mental and physical condition that affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work. Stress is characterized by heavy workloads, deadlines and constant attention to customer needs. Stress in the workplace could be caused by downsizing/rightsizing, environmental stressors, underprepared workers, and discrimination and sexual harassment (Johnson, & Indvik, 1996b).

Toxic work environments are characterized by an authoritarian management style and changeable/unpredictable supervision; an atmosphere where the work and dignity of employees are undervalued; and, an environment that includes frequent invasions of privacy, a high degree of secrecy, more demands, and less support (Johnson, 1994).

Workplace violence includes physical assault, threatening behaviour and verbal abuse. Violence is prevalent in certain types of work such as fast food outlets, security services and banks. Workplaces that could be considered intrinsically hazardous have characteristics including exchanging money with the public, working in small numbers or alone, working during early morning hours or late at night, working in high-crime areas, guarding valuable property or possessions, or working in community settings (cab drivers, police, etc.) (Whitmore & Kleiner, 1999).

## References

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