

OUR HEALTH. OUR SAFETY. ONTARIO NEEDS A VIOLENCE REGULATION NOW

People in workplaces right across Ontario deserve full protection from violence. It's time that the Ontario government introduce a Violence Regulation as part of the province's *Health & Safety Act*. It would:

- **Define violence** as any incident in which a worker is abused, harassed, threatened, injured or assaulted as part of their employment;
- **Demand that employers fulfill their responsibility to protect workers** and help eliminate violence. Input from Health and Safety committees or Health and Safety representatives plays a vital part in this process;
- Require assessments of workplaces to be performed; **establish policies and procedures to eliminate violence** that are reviewed by Health and Safety committees or representatives on an annual basis;
- Ensure all violence or potentially-violent incidences are **reported, investigated and documented**;
- Provide **instruction and training** on violence policies and procedures to employees and managers.

Experts on violence agree that psychological forms of violence, like harassment and bullying, must be included in violence regulations. These behaviours, if caught early, will help stop violence from escalating.

CONTACT YOUR MPP NOW. PUT ANTI-VIOLENCE IN OUR HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT.

To find your MPP, check www.cupe.on.ca or call the Ontario Legislature at 416-325-7500.



ANTI-VIOLENCE: MAKE IT A PRIORITY IN YOUR WORKPLACE

EVERY WORKER HAS THE RIGHT TO:

- REFUSE WORK YOU BELIEVE IS UNSAFE BECAUSE OF A VIOLENT SITUATION (some workplaces have a limited right to refuse work—talk to your workplace health and safety rep);
- KNOW ABOUT ALL HAZARDS IN YOUR WORKPLACE, INCLUDING VIOLENCE;
- WORK IN A SAFE, VIOLENCE-FREE WORKPLACE, WHICH EMPLOYERS HAVE A DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE;
- PARTICIPATE IN HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES, WHICH MUST BE CONSULTED BY EMPLOYERS WHEN SETTING ANTI-VIOLENCE POLICIES.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE OR WITNESS A VIOLENT ACT...

Report it immediately to your employer, your union and your Health and Safety Committee representative.

If you are injured, fill out an injury report; send a copy to your union, your Health and Safety Committee/ Representative and your employer.

Report any incident that has the potential of becoming more serious. By telling your employer and union, you can help prevent a more serious event from occurring.

Report the incident to the police.

IN YOUR LOCAL, CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE!

Educate your members that violence is not part of the job. Employers must consult with Health and Safety activists to conduct appropriate training on how to recognize violence and what to do.

Encourage and support co-workers to report violent incidents that they experience or witness. Deal promptly with incidents.

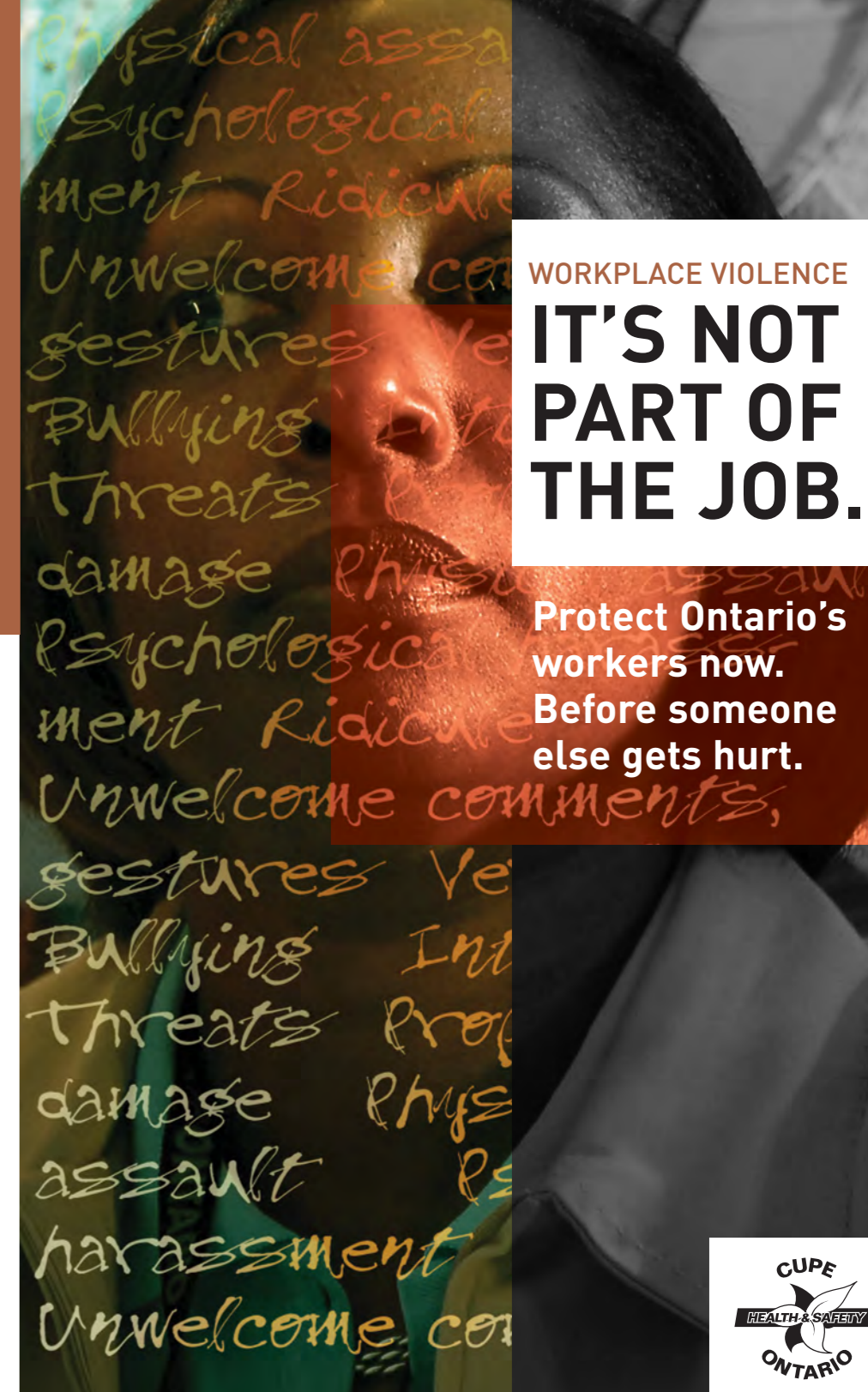
Hold your employer responsible for fostering a health and safety culture in every workplace that is free from violence.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. FOR UPDATES SEE
WWW.CUPE.ON.CA

References:

1. Criminal Victimization in the Workplace, 2004. Stats Canada Study released Feb. 16/07
2. "Workplace Safety and Insurance Board" (WSIB), 2005 Statistics.
3. CUPE Ontario, deputation to Ontario Standing Committee on Health hearings on Bill 140, the *Long-Term Care Act*, February 2007.
4. CUPE Ontario, survey of 4,000 Educational Assistants, winter 2007.

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WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

IT'S NOT PART OF THE JOB.

Protect Ontario's
workers now.
Before someone
else gets hurt.



VIOLENCE: NOT PART OF THE JOB

IT'S NEVER BEEN IN ANYONE'S JOB DESCRIPTION THAT VIOLENCE IS A PART OF THE JOB. YET INCREASINGLY, MORE AND MORE ONTARIANS ARE EXPERIENCING INJURIES, STRESS, LIFE-THREATENING SITUATIONS AND LOSS OF LIFE BECAUSE OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.



ONE-IN-FIVE VIOLENT ACTS OCCUR AT WORK

Workplace violence can happen to anyone. Increasingly, those who work with the public, like members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), are at greater risk.

Workplace violence isn't just about physical assault. It is any incident in which a worker is abused, threatened, injured or assaulted as part of their employment. Violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical assault
- Psychological harassment
- Ridicule
- Unwelcome comments, gestures
- Verbal abuse
- Bullying
- Intimidation
- Threats
- Property damage



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE CAN'T BE DISMISSED AS A CASE OF ABERRANT BEHAVIOUR BY A FEW. HERE'S WHY...

WORKPLACES: AN INCREASINGLY VIOLENT SCENE.

- 1 IN 5** NUMBER OF REPORTED VIOLENT INCIDENTS—INCLUDING PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT AND ROBBERY—OCCURRING IN OUR WORKPLACES.¹
- 2,149** NUMBER OF REPORTED LOST-TIME CLAIMS FOR VIOLENCE—INCLUDING PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE—ALLOWED BY THE WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD (WSIB) IN 2005.²
- 24.5** NUMBER OF REPORTED DAYS PER 1,000 WORKERS EACH YEAR LOST IN HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICE SECTORS BECAUSE OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS³.
- 84%** PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS REPORTING VIOLENCE INCIDENTS AT WORK. MANY HAVE MISSED WORK OR BEEN HOSPITALIZED BECAUSE OF INJURIES—STEMMING FROM A LACK OF RESOURCES AND POLICY SUPPORTS FOR WORKING WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN.⁴

LEADING CAUSE: CUTBACKS, LACK OF TRAINING AND UNDERSTAFFING

Downloading, restructuring, cutbacks, privatization and contracting out have left workers overburdened and stressed. The result:

- Injured workers are not replaced—or they're replaced by casual workers who don't know the job.
- Workers end up working alone—putting themselves in dangerous situations.
- Contracting out means that services are provided by less-qualified people.
- Productivity goes down; absenteeism increases.

All these conditions lead to reduced service—leaving clients and the public rightfully frustrated. That's when workplace violence can begin to escalate.

OUR AIM IS TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE. ADEQUATE FUNDING AND PROPER GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS CAN GO A LONG WAY TO PREVENT IT.

THEY WERE JUST DOING THEIR WORK.

“She was working alone on the hospital floor and about to give him his meds. Suddenly he attacked and began punching her in the face.”

WHY WE DON'T REPORT VIOLENCE...

It is estimated that less than 10% of workers report violent incidents. At the same time, some reports show that clients in health care, schools and social services are experiencing twice the amount of violence as workers.

“I can't report that my vulnerable client hit me. They probably didn't mean to do it.”

That's true, but it's not the client's fault. Too often children, the elderly, ill and vulnerable clients are frustrated because they are not getting the service they need and deserve because of underfunding.

“I don't want to get my student in trouble.”

Reporting violent incidents provides both the union and employer with a measure of what changes need to be made in terms of staff resources, training and supports to truly meet clients' needs.

“I love my patients and my work. The violence is just part of my job.”

Workers' rights are every bit as important as the rights of patients and residents. Employers and the government must recognize that violence is a Health and Safety issue and act to prevent it.

“I work part-time serving customers. If I complain, my employer will just stop giving me shifts and I'll be out of work.”

Violence is never going to stop until we all say that it's not okay. We all need to press employers to foster a workplace culture that is free from violence.