

**CUPE Ontario
H&S Committee
Violence Campaign
Personal Submissions**

Kristie

Was working at the front counter at an Ontario Works office. There were no barriers/glass separating myself from the clients. The employer revoked the barriers because they felt it negatively impacted client service. On this particular day, a client became irate and reached across my workstation and grabbed my phone receiver then proceeded to beat himself in the head with my phone. He bloodied his own face. It was terrifying and could have been so much work. I actually think I got off easy

Leila

As a paramedic, we experience violence & potential for violence DAILY. We understand that there are medical issues which can confuse and frustrate people in need of our care, but it does not make us immune to violence or potential violence. Every day is different. Every call has the potential for violence we attempt to diffuse, dissuade and avoid confrontation but still are subject to it regularly. We've come to accept it...and that is **NOT** acceptable.

Minister of Labour, **increase enforcement** of workers health & safety laws. **Ensure** employers follow Right to know laws. **Ensure** appropriate staffing ratios to manage situation **before** they become violent.

Maggie

As a shelter staff at a homeless shelter, we are continually subjected to various acts of violence, including but not limited to, threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, sexually explicit comments, and threats with weapons including knives and guns. Only recently have we been given double staffing and not all shift have double staffing and remain single staffed. What this means is that as well as residents we also have outreach clients thus, our numbers are often 30 high needs clients to one staff member. Ensuring appropriate staffing ratios is essential to our health and safety standards. There also needs to be increased health and safety laws to ensure the safety of all staff impacted by violence in the workplace.

Clare

Client attacks on support workers. I personally have been bitten, hair pull literally loss some of my hair. Spat on, kicked

Rhonda

While working in one of our residential houses I have sustained a couple of injuries, chipped tooth, dislocated finger, bites and scratches. I've been pushed, kicked and verbally abused by youth, some with mental health issues and some whom are autistic.

Donna

- Grabbed & slapped by client while driving her & her staff to our home

- Spat at by client while supporting him & get dental care
- Grabbed by client while doing personal care

Dianna

In our workplace we are being expected to care for and provide quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

With the introduction of Passport funding the individuals we support are changing agency goals are to gain those individuals with those dollars. The problems are they come with either untrue or no background information.

These individuals – specially transitioning teens come from homes, foster care and jails/detention centres.

I have seen staff thrown across rooms, slapped, punches, verbally abused, there have been hospital visits and critical injuries. There is no support by CLT on legal info shared with the injured worker chair.

Jacquelyn

I had been working in a very small basement 1:1 with a violent (known) individual, because it was a basement of a small group home, doors had to be locked at all times, requiring a key to get out. When I was working he began to escalate, I turned to unlock the door he grabbed my hair pulled me back and began punching me and kicking me, I then put arm up to contain my hair and he began to bite my arm – I managed to struggle out, I left the apartment, went upstairs and called on-call supervisor as it was after office hours, she told me to fill out an incident report and that was that. I could not seek medical attention, finish shift alone and go back the next day like nothing happened – incidents like this occurred at LEAST weekly for a year until I applied to another location.

Bev

I have had 2 major incidents myself. Both times I was off work for a period of time. One time for 3 weeks and 1 for almost six months. I had a client attack me from behind which caused neck/shoulder injury (off for 3 weeks). Another time a client hit me over the head with snowmobile boot, caused a concussion & neck injury. Off on WSIB for almost 6 months.

Have witnessed incident of violence especially verbal on many occasions

Valerie

Work with developmentally disabled adults & often they display behavioural aggressions. Weekly myself & other staff experience aggressions in the form of hitting, punching, kicking, hair pulling, spitting, and verbal abuse. Our employer doesn't do enough to ensure our safety as they believe because the people we serve are handicapped "it's not their fault, it is part of them"

The behavior support plans that the ministry mandates, don't work. More need to be done, to ensure our members are safe.

Patricia

I do VAW support work. Often times men who are charged with domestic assault will verbally abuse the women I am supporting – moving on to myself when I put the women’s safety as my priority – standing up to ABUSERS – I move the women to safety within the courthouse. The abusers often follow us – scare us – Court constables are not in every area of the courthouse – when I can access officers I do. I worry that one of my women or myself will be assaulted or killed. Similar events have happened recently. I do not want to be a statistic or have one of the women I server murdered. I also am the health and safety co-chair.

Lee Ann

Being a long term employee with community living the numerous acts of violence towards co-workers throughout the years are countless. Now that they are integrating more and more individuals with “dual diagnoses” the violent acts are more frequent and becoming more aggressive slapping, hair pulling biting, spitting, name calling, swearing, biting, kicking, grabbing worker’s body parts and not releasing which results in bruises and marks being dug into the skin, throwing items. This issue needs to be dealt with and more support for workers is needed.

Kimberley

This did not occur with my current employer

At the beginning of my career I was supporting a client in a group home that provided intensive behavioural therapy. I was walking into his peer’s room across the hall fro his. He was standing on a chair, naked. As I passed by he jumped on me, grabbed my hair and brought my face down on to his knee. I hit me in the face several times with his knee, because I had corrections training I was able to position my face so that only my forehead was hit, but he pulled out chunks of hair. It took 3 co-workers to pull him off of me. I did not lose time however my scalp was badly bruised. There was nothing done at the time to rectify the situation or ensure that I was ok.

Glenda

I experience/witness/or am informed of incidents of violence at work every day. I am a PSW/Housekeeper, FT, who left nursing 8 months ago to move to housekeeping. I still pick up OT shifts in nursing. I have been – bit, kicked, tripped, slapped, punched, pushed, spit upon, had my hair pulled. I have had my foot run over by an electric chair from an angry resident and walker shoved into my legs. One resident pulled the foot pedals off a wheelchair and attached another worker. Another incident – a long-term resident punched a worker in the head. That worker was hurt and not allowed to work that unit (safety precaution). My own experience – I responded to a code white on our dementia unit. The floor was flooded by 2 taps left on while the residents were dining. The aggressive resident ripped the grab bar off the wall and threatened staff. We had to hold the door handle to keep the door closed while beat the handle with it until police came.

Veronica

3 yrs ago a new resident punched me twice at close range on my left side of my face my face was swollen and my tooth hurt like I had a tooth ache. Union member who I was working with notice the swelling on my face and told me to fill out an incident report form. There was none on the unit so I went to the unit next door but the nurse said they had run out. The union member on my unit said to call the assistant DOC and leave a message on her phone about what happened to me. I did so. The following

day I was unable to work due to the pain I was feeling & a couple of days later when the pain became unbearable I went to the doctor and he gave me time off work and had me go for an MRI the doctor when he push pressure where I got hit I told him it hurts he told me that it's the nerve due to the hit I sustained. I was told by my family doctor to visit the dentist and when he took an xray he said that my tooth was shift and I was put on soft food for several weeks. I informed the workplace of my medical situation and WSIB as well as my union members. My president said to me over the phone "you think I was going to come to you and ask you anything you need to come to me even though I heard what happened". Another union member said oh the resident just slapped you other workers said it's just a hit nothing big and the union member who work with me the night said nothing management said or did nothing except lie to WSIB. I got nothing out of being injured. I was so hurt I develop a hatred toward the union and management I have taken 2 MRI and still suffer from head pain due to the incident. I wish CUPE would look out for the workers I felt alone and still do. The same resident has continue to hurt other workers they told WSIB the nurse who was present at the time of the incident no longer work for the company and had her work under a nurse who was on sick leave the nurse is still working there in management (LIED)

Anonymous

One story – I was hit in the side of the head by a resident in my home I work in. The resident gave no inclination or warning that he was going to do that. I just asked the resident if he could get up from sitting on a chair that was not sturdy. The resident after striking me went after me and it took 3 staff from stopping him and have him back down. At the time I didn't know much of the reports and that the only which was done was my co-worker charting it. After management never once asked how I was. They months later after talking about that incident told me. We changed the chairs on the floor because of it. Still not even speaking on how this resident started with me initiating violent acts on staff before they sent this resident out. This is one of many stories I can speak to.