

# Preventing & Managing Violence: Tips and Tools for Nurses

## Purpose:

This Tips and Tools guide is designed to assist you to better understand and learn how to prevent and manage violence in your work environment. The information

is based on the **RNAO Healthy Work Environment Best Practice**

**Guideline: Preventing and Mitigating Violence in the Workplace.**

## Why is this important?

Violence in the workplace is believed to be on the rise, despite evidence of significant underreporting. Sustained exposure to violence in the workplace, including aggression, abuse, and bullying can have serious physical and psychological consequences that affect the ability to provide quality care and engage in collaborative relationships. In addition, aggression in the workplace has been identified as a factor contributing to attrition from the profession (RNAO, 2009).

## Types of Violence in the Workplace:

**Type I** (Criminal intent): perpetrator has no relationship to the workplace

**Type II** (Client or customer): perpetrator is a client at the workplace who becomes violent toward a worker or another client

**Type III** (Worker-to-worker): perpetrator is an employee or past employee of the workplace

**Type IV** (Personal relationship): perpetrator usually has a relationship with an employee (e.g. domestic violence in the workplace)



## Facts:

Workplace violence is “an incident of aggression that is physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or psychological that occurs when nurses are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work” (RNAO, 2009).

Violence in the workplace involves a misuse of power and control and it may take the form of physical, psychological or sexual abuse; and/or harassment, mobbing, bullying, or aggression. It may involve action or withholding action. It may be done unintentionally or intentionally. It often involves interactions between people in different roles and power relationships (RNAO, 2009).

Studies indicate that nurses are at a higher risk of violence in the workplace than other health-care providers and other workers. In particular, nurses experience violence from patients / clients or their families. Nurses who work alone are those at the greatest risk (RNAO, 2009).

## Safety Tips for all nurses, employees, physicians, volunteers and students:

- Acquire the knowledge and competencies to prevent, identify, and respond to potential violence.
- Engage in self-reflective practice and examine how your behaviour impacts others and how the behaviour of others impacts you.
- Practise and collaborate with team members in a manner that fosters respect, trust and prevents violence. This includes refraining from actions such as gossiping, bullying, harassment, socially isolating others, pushing, throwing objects, or any other behaviours that constitute aggression.
- Contribute to the development of organizational strategies to prevent, identify and respond to violence.
- Fully adhere to organizational policies, procedures and practices related to preventing, identifying and responding to workplace violence.
- Follow organizational processes related to mandatory reporting, seeking support and providing support to others when potentially violent situations are identified or violent situations occur.

# Workplace Violence Employee Survey (OSACH 2006)

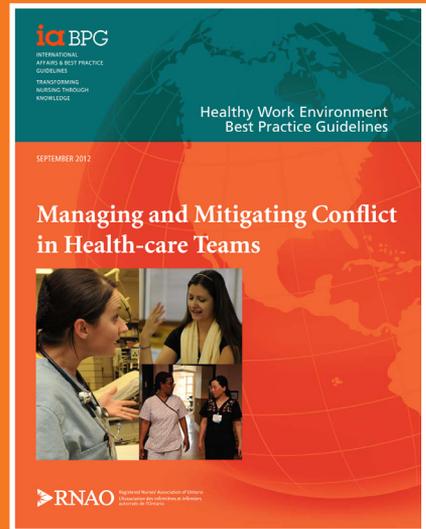
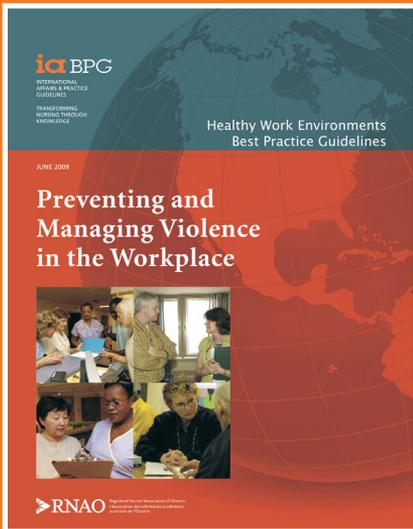
Complete the following questionnaire at it relates to you and your role at work. On completion of this assessment tool - if you answered "No" to any of the following questions and you have concerns about workplace violence you should share the results with your immediate supervisor.

Workplace Violence Employee Survey		
Yes	No	Do you feel safe while at work?
Yes	No	Do you think you are prepared to handle a violent situation, threat, or responsive and escalating behaviours exhibited by clients while at work?
Yes	No	In your opinion, has the employer provided you with every necessary control and measure to protect your safety?

Violence Prevention Policy		
Yes	No	Is there a written violence prevention policy for your workplace?
Yes	No	A. If yes, have you ever seen a copy of the policy?
Yes	No	Are there written procedures for violence prevention that deal with your work area?
Yes	No	A. If yes, are they easy to understand and follow?
Yes	No	B. Have you ever seen a copy of the procedures?

Education and Training		
Yes	No	Have you received training in recognizing, preventing and dealing with workplace violence?
Yes	No	Have you received training in psychiatric, behavioural and physiological conditions associated with escalating behaviours?
Yes	No	Have you received training in self-defense measures that are respectful to the clients you are caring for?
Yes	No	Have you received training in communication and care strategies?
Yes	No	A. If yes, do you feel that training was adequate?
Yes	No	Is your training tailored to the particular job that you do?
Yes	No	Do you know what protocols (policies and procedures) exist in your workplace to deal with violence and its consequences?
Yes	No	Do you know what standard of care your employer expects you to deliver when a patient or client is abusive or threatening toward staff?

**Note:** This survey has abbreviated content, to view the entire assessment tool and/ or to find other resources please go to the online version of the RNAO Preventing and Managing Violence in the Workplace BPG.



Link to the full version of these guidelines

Preventing and Managing Violence in the Workplace BPG  
[www.RNAO.ca/bpg/workplace\\_violence](http://www.RNAO.ca/bpg/workplace_violence)

Managing and mitigating Conflict in Health-care Teams BPG  
[www.RNAO.ca/bpg/conflictmanagement](http://www.RNAO.ca/bpg/conflictmanagement)