
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
Sectoral Activities Programme

**Draft code of practice on
violence and stress at work
in services: A threat to
productivity and decent work**

**Report for discussion at the
Meeting of Experts to Develop a Code of Practice
on Violence and Stress at Work in Services:
A Threat to Productivity and Decent Work
(8-15 October 2003)**

Geneva



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Preface

Violence and stress at work currently affect millions of workers in services sectors around the world, and have become a threat to quality of service, productivity and decent work in a variety of industries. The harmful impact of workplace violence and stress is felt in both industrialized and developing countries; across a far-reaching range of occupations and work settings; and both in the public and private sectors. The huge costs of these phenomena for the individual, the workplace and the community are becoming increasingly apparent through working days lost, increased security measures, health care, long-term rehabilitation and indirect social costs. Violence and stress can impair the quality of services, disrupt efficient and effective workplaces, blight interpersonal relationships and trust among colleagues, and make the workplace bleak, unwelcoming and sometimes dangerous.

In services sectors, the problem of violence and stress is wider than in primary or secondary industries, because of the direct contact between workers and their customers/clients or the general public.¹ Most work environments are exposed to such problems, but some sectors (for example, services sectors such as education, health, hotels, entertainment and transport) and occupational groups (including taxi drivers, emergency services workers, nurses and teachers) are particularly exposed to violence and stress. This code of practice is addressed specifically at services sectors, but many of the suggestions contained in it could also be applied, with appropriate modifications, to manufacturing and other industries.

Violence includes both physical and non-physical or psychological violence, in the form of verbal abuse, physical assault up to and including homicide, bullying, mobbing, harassment and mental stress. Workplace violence can be *internal* (within the enterprise, among managers, supervisors and workers); but there is also *external* violence (between workers and intruders, as well as between staff, clients, patients, students, suppliers, and the general public).

Stress is not necessarily a negative phenomenon. Some stress is considered to be normal and necessary to perform work in a satisfactory manner. However, if stress is intense, continuous or repeated, and if the person is unable to cope or if support is lacking, such stress has adverse effects, sometimes leading to physical illness and psychological disorders. Occupational stress can be characterized as the harmful physical and emotional responses occurring when the job requirements, work environment or work organization do not match the worker's capabilities, resources or needs. The main sources of workplace stress are the demands of the job, lack of control over one's situation, change, conflicting roles, interpersonal relationships, lack of support at work, and the balance between work and life. When the term "stress" is used in this code, it usually refers to negative, harmful forms of stress.

Violence and stress can reinforce one another and are often interrelated, but there is no automatic connection between the two phenomena (although harassment is a form of stress *and* of violence). In tackling stress and violence, comprehensive approaches through which the health, safety and well-being of workers become an integral part of a process of continuous improvement of services are increasingly successful. The full range of causes

¹ It should be pointed out that this direct contact between workers and their customers or the general public is often also a positive factor in terms of job satisfaction and a reason for choosing employment in the services sectors in the first place.

that generate stress and violence requires analysis, and various intervention strategies need to be adopted to address them. It should also be recognized that violence and stress at work are not limited to a fixed workplace – some services workers (transport and postal delivery workers, for example) have a mobile workplace. There is also a risk of violence or stress that originates at home or during commuting that can severely affect the workplace; in turn, violence or stress at work can spill over during commuting and into the home, the family and the community.

Stress and violence are increasingly noted at the sectoral level. In the *education sector*, dramatic incidents of firearms-related violence have attracted considerable public attention, and the increase in more widespread, less spectacular problems of violence and stress is of major concern. Since health and safety in schools – for students, for teaching staff and for the learning environment itself – is of particular concern to employers, workers and stakeholders in that sector, violence and stress must be included in analysis and preventive action. In the *health sector*, violence is so common among those working directly with people in distress that it may be considered an inevitable part of the job; in fact, about a quarter of work accidents involving violence occur in health services. In most forms of *transport* (railways, urban transport, planes, taxis), aggression against employees and passengers has worsened considerably in recent years. *Hotels and restaurants* are strongly affected by occupational violence, since risk factors include late night and early morning shifts, working alone and in premises where alcohol is served and money exchanged in public. Workers in the *postal, banking and commerce sectors* have also been identified as being at heightened risk of violence and stress. Brief analyses of violence and stress in selected services sectors or subsectors are provided in Appendix K. Conclusions of ILO sectoral meetings in recent years² have confirmed the need to examine violence and stress in the context of sectoral occupational safety and health.

On the basis of these considerations, the Governing Body of the ILO agreed at its 279th Session in November 2000 that a meeting of experts should be held in 2003 to develop a code of practice on violence and stress in services sectors. At the 284th Session of the Governing Body, in June 2002, it was agreed that the meeting of experts should be held from 8 to 15 October 2003, and that the meeting would have the following composition: 12 experts nominated by governments, 12 experts nominated after consultations with the Employers' group of the Governing Body and 12 experts nominated after consultations with the Workers' group of the Governing Body. The 12 government experts would be nominated by the governments of the following countries: Algeria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States. The governments of the following countries were placed on the reserve list: Austria, Brazil, Burundi, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland and Zimbabwe. It was also decided that the purpose of the meeting should be: to consider and review a draft and to adopt a *Code of practice on violence and stress at work in services sectors: A threat to productivity and decent work*.

This draft text has been developed by the ILO for circulation to member States for comments in May 2003, before the meeting of experts, and those comments will be collated and summarized for distribution to the experts in September 2003.

The practical recommendations of this publication are intended to provide guidance to ILO constituents and all those responsible for addressing violence and stress in services sectors. It is based on an analysis of the extent, nature and causes of violence and stress in

² For example, the conclusions of ILO: *The changing roles of educational personnel*, Joint Meeting on Lifelong Learning in the Twenty-first Century, Geneva, 10-14 April 2000; and *Social dialogue in a changing environment*, Joint Meeting on Public Emergency Services, Geneva, 27-31 January 2003.

public and private services, and of the potential interrelationship between violence and stress. It identifies the roles and responsibilities of governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and of the general public, customers and clients. Through the processes of identification, recognition, assessment, recording and notification of violence and stress in services sectors, the code lays the foundations for risk assessment, prevention, reduction, management and coping strategies to address these problems. It concludes with an emphasis on the development of policy on occupational violence and stress in services sectors, through dialogue and cooperation between the social partners, training, continuous improvement, and joint assessment, monitoring and evaluation of workplace policies and practices. The appendices to the code include a bibliography, a selection of published guidelines on violence and stress, a listing of relevant legal sources and a glossary of additional terms.

Following the meeting of experts, it is planned that the code will be widely disseminated by the ILO, and social dialogue activities encouraged and facilitated to put the code into practice around the world. It is intended that the provisions of the code will assist in reducing or eliminating stress and violence at workplaces in services sectors around the globe.

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1. General provisions

1.1. Purpose and use of the code of practice

1.1.1. Purpose

The objective of this code of practice (hereinafter referred to as “the code”) is to provide general guidance in addressing the problem of workplace stress and violence in services sectors. The code is intended to serve as a basic reference tool for stimulating the development of similar instruments at the regional, national, sectoral and workplace levels, specifically targeted at and adapted to different cultures, situations and needs.

The code covers the following key areas of action on workplace violence and stress:

- Identification.
- Risk assessment.
- Prevention.
- Policy.
- Training.
- Management and mitigation of the impact.
- Care and support of workers affected.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

1.1.2. Use

This code should be used to:

- develop practical responses at the workplace, enterprise, sectoral, national and international levels;
- promote processes of dialogue, consultation, negotiation and all forms of cooperation among governments, employers and workers, employers’ and workers’ organizations, as well as other professional bodies, specialists in workplace stress and violence, and relevant stakeholders such as consumers’, users’ and patients’ groups;
- give effect to its contents: in national laws, policies and programmes of action; in workplace, enterprise and sectoral agreements; and in workplace policies and plans of action.

1.2. Scope

This code applies to all areas of economic activity in the public and private services sectors, in relation to internal and external acts of violence at work and to workplace stress.

1.3. Definitions

For the purposes of this code the following definitions are used (or proposed):

1.3.1. Stress

Stress is a pressure, tension or demand exerted on the adaptive capacity of the body and mind.

1.3.2. Stress at work

The physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job, the work environment or the work organization do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker.

1.3.3. Types of workplace stress

Positive stress is stress that is normal and necessary to perform work in a satisfactory manner.

Negative stress is stress that is intense, continuous or prolonged, and can lead to physical illness and psychological disorders.

1.3.4. Workplace violence

Any action, incident or behaviour in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, injured or humiliated in the course of, or as a result of, his or her work because of the action of another person.

1.3.5. Types of workplace violence

All behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct and involves, among other things:

- intentional behaviour aimed at physically injuring or assaulting a person, leading to actual physical or psychological harm;
- verbal abuse, including swearing, insults or condescending language;
- aggressive body language indicating intimidation, contempt or disdain;
- harassment, including mobbing, bullying, racial and sexual harassment;
- expression of intent to cause harm, including threatening behaviour, verbal and written threats.

In services sectors, workplace violence can be *internal* (within the enterprise, among managers, supervisors and workers); or *external* (between workers and intruders, as well as between staff, clients, patients, students, suppliers and the general public).

1.3.6. Other relevant terms

Client/customer

For the purpose of this code, the terms *client* and *customer* refer to an individual who receives a personalized service,¹ as opposed to the general public.

Competent authority

A minister, government department, or other public authority having the power to issue regulations, orders or other instructions having the force of law.

Employer

A person or organization employing workers under terms of employment that establish the rights and duties of both parties, in accordance with national law and practice. Governments, public authorities, private enterprises and individuals may be employers.

Perpetrator

Any person who engages in violent behaviour(s), as described under the above definition of *workplace violence*.

Services sectors

For the purposes of this code, the services sectors include: commerce; education; financial and professional services; health services; hotels, catering and tourism; media and entertainment industries; postal and telecommunications services; public service; transport; and utilities.

Social dialogue

All types of negotiation, consultation or exchange of information between representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.

Victim

Any person who is the object of act(s) of violence or violent behaviour(s) as described under the above definitions.

Worker

Any person who has an employment relationship and performs services for an employer.

Workers' representative

A person who is recognized as such by national law or practice, in accordance with the Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135).

¹ For example, patients, passengers, users or audiences.

Any location controlled by an employer, or the activities of employees in sites not under the employer's control, in relation to the provision of services, whatever the size or location of the workplace, and whatever the type of service provided.

1.4. Guiding principles

1.4.1. *Respect for cultural differences*

While workplace stress and violence have a universal significance, their perception and understanding may vary among different cultures. This cultural difference should be taken into account and properly addressed by:

- the use of appropriate terminology that reflects the commonly used language in a specific culture;
- special emphasis on forms of workplace violence that have a particular relevance in a specific cultural context;
- efforts to identify and uncover situations of workplace violence that are difficult to detect and accept as a reality, because of specific cultural backgrounds.

1.4.2. *Gender equality*

In services sectors, women and men are both affected, although in different ways, by workplace stress and violence. Women may be more exposed to stress and violence because they work in sectors and occupations that are particularly stress-related, because the lack of family-friendly work arrangements may expose women to greater stress when they have family responsibilities, or because they are particularly exposed to certain types of violence, such as sexual harassment. Greater gender equality could help to reduce stress and violence at work.

1.4.3. *Non-discrimination*

In the context of harassment, stress and violence can be closely linked to discrimination. Policy or action against workplace stress and violence should also be directed at promoting decent work and mutual respect, and combating discrimination at the workplace.

1.4.4. *Social dialogue*

The successful implementation of anti-stress and anti-violence policies and programmes requires cooperation and dialogue between employers, workers and their representatives, and with government, where appropriate, with the active involvement of the workers concerned.

1.4.5. *Healthy work environment*

The work environment should be healthy and safe, in so far as is practicable, for all concerned parties, in order to prevent workplace violence and manage stress, in accordance with the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). A healthy work environment facilitates optimal physical and mental health in relation to

work, and the adaptation of the amount and nature of work to the capabilities of workers in the light of their state of physical and mental health.

Prevention consists of strategies to avoid workplace violence and minimize the incidence of negative stress, with the emphasis on risk assessment, elimination of the causes, and a long-term evaluation of each intervention. Preventive measures to improve the work environment, work organization and interpersonal relationships at the workplace have proved particularly effective, emphasizing teamwork and workers' involvement in the improvement process. The social partners are in a unique position to promote prevention efforts, particularly in relation to efforts to change people's attitudes and behaviours through the provision of information and education, and addressing socio-economic factors.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. Governments

2.1.1. Preventive interventions

The competent authorities should provide the necessary framework for the elimination of workplace violence and the reduction of workplace stress in services sectors. Governments should assume leadership in the development of preventive interventions, including:

- *Guidelines.* Governments should offer guidelines to assist employers and workers in the implementation of preventive interventions at the national and sectoral levels. Governments should also ensure that prevention strategies and programmes apply to all workers in services sectors, irrespective of employment status, ethnicity, age and gender. Governments could also promote efforts in civil society to encourage a reduction in violence, stress and harassment within services on the part of customers and users as well as workers and employers.
- *Legislation.* In order to move towards a preventive orientation, governments, in consultation with relevant social partners and experts in the fields of occupational violence and of stress, should review the regulatory framework and, where necessary, revise health and safety, labour, environmental and other legislation.
- *Financial resources.* Governments, where possible and in consultation with the social partners and other stakeholders, should estimate the financial costs of occupational violence and stress, and seek to mobilize funding locally and nationally for the implementation of effective preventive interventions.
- *Regional and international collaboration.* Governments should promote and support collaboration at regional and international levels, and through intergovernmental agencies and all relevant stakeholders, so as to focus international attention on occupational violence and negative stress in services sectors.
- *International assistance.* Governments should enlist international assistance where appropriate in support of national preventive programmes. They should encourage initiatives aimed at supporting international campaigns to improve access to information about preventive interventions on occupational violence and stress.

2.1.2. Enforcement and inspection

The competent authorities should supply technical information and advice to employers and workers concerning the most effective way of complying with legislation and regulations designed to further the prevention of occupational violence and the reduction of workplace stress. Governments should strengthen enforcement, advisory and inspection structures and procedures, such as the skills and knowledge of the occupational health and safety inspectorates and the powers of labour courts and tribunals.

2.1.3. Mitigation

Governments should promote care and support to the victims of occupational violence and stress through public health care programmes, access to treatment where appropriate, social security systems and/or other relevant government initiatives.

2.1.4. Vulnerability

Governments should take measures to identify groups of workers who are vulnerable to occupational violence or stress, adopt strategies to overcome the factors that make them vulnerable, and examine the sectoral aspects of this vulnerability. Governments should also endeavour to ensure that appropriate prevention programmes are in place for these workers. When designing and implementing such programmes, governments should give particular attention to:

- *Workers in precarious employment.* In designing and implementing preventive interventions, governments should take into account changes in the labour market whereby an increasing proportion of the workforce work in small businesses and under contract, subcontract, self-employed or casual conditions. Governments should extend their occupational violence and stress prevention programmes – including training programmes, information provision, and on-site assistance – to such workers.
- *Children and young persons.* In programmes to eliminate child labour, governments should ensure that attention is paid to the particular vulnerability of children and young persons to occupational violence and stress.

2.1.5. Research

In order to achieve coherence between countries, to mobilize the social partners, to ensure that workers' compensation insurance schemes remain viable, and to facilitate prevention, the competent authorities should encourage evidence-based policy development. Governments should fund and support research studies, as well as identifying and publicizing case studies of best practice. The research should include gender-sensitive analysis. Data should, to the extent possible, be sector-specific, disaggregated by gender, occupation, age, employment status, geographical area, and be done in a culturally sensitive manner. The underreporting of incidents of occupational violence and information on stress should be allowed for in data analysis.

2.2. Employers and their organizations

2.2.1. Policies and procedures

Employers and their organizations should provide and promote a workplace that is free from violence and avoids excessive or prolonged stress. In fulfilling these objectives, employers should consult with workers and their representatives to develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures to eliminate the risk of workplace violence and reduce exposure to occupational stress. These policies and procedures should include:

- *Risk reduction and management.* Employers should ensure that continuous risk assessment is conducted at their workplaces. Employers, workers and their representatives should also work together to develop appropriate strategies to assess risks, and respond appropriately to the economic and social impact of occupational violence and stress on the individual, the workplace, the organization and customers/clients. Employers, in consultation with workers and their representatives, should take measures to ensure that the additional risks attached to working on high-risk tasks, in particular circumstances, or at specific times of the day or night, are mitigated by additional preventive interventions.

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- *National, sectoral and workplace/enterprise agreements.* Employers should endeavour to include provisions on the prevention of all forms of occupational violence and stress in national, sectoral, workplace and enterprise agreements.
 - *Personnel policies.* Employers should adopt personnel policies and practices that promote mutual respect and dignity at work. To support behavioural change by individuals, employers should also ensure that commitment to preventing occupational violence and stress is rewarded and that it is assessed during performance reviews.
 - *Grievance and disciplinary procedures.* Employers should have procedures that can be used by workers and their representatives for work-related grievances. Allegations of all forms of violence should, as far as possible, be kept strictly confidential until such time as investigations have been completed.

2.2.2. Information and training

Employers should initiate and support programmes at their workplaces to inform, educate and train workers about the prevention of occupational violence and stress, about the enterprise's policy and strategies in place, and about support for workers if stress or violence arise.

2.3. Workers and their organizations

2.3.1. Risk reduction and elimination

Workers should take all reasonable care to reduce and eliminate the risks associated with workplace violence and stress. In fulfilling this objective, workers and their organizations should:

- Cooperate with employers to develop appropriate risk assessment strategies and prevention policies. These policies and strategies should recognize the right of workers and their representatives to take up compliance and related issues at their workplaces through grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- Support and encourage employers in creating and implementing personnel policies and practices that discourage all forms of workplace violence and negative stress.
- Endeavour to include provisions on the prevention and control of workplace violence and stress in national, sectoral and workplace/enterprise agreements.
- Use existing union structures as well as community-based safety organizations to provide information on workplace violence and stress prevention, including regularly updated information on workers' rights.
- Develop training courses for workers' representatives and collaborate with employers in the design and organization of training courses for all workers on workplace stress and violence.
- Ensure that factors that increase the risk of occupational violence and/or stress in particular workplaces or when carrying out specific activities are addressed by workers and their health and safety representatives in consultation with employers.

2.3.2. Advocacy and information activities

Workers and their organizations should work with employers, their organizations, customers and governments to raise awareness about the risks of occupational violence and stress in services sectors, and about preventive strategies. Workers' organizations should also build solidarity across national borders by using sectoral, regional and international groupings to highlight the risks of workplace stress and violence, and to include it in occupational health and safety and workers' rights campaigns.

2.4. General public, customers and clients

Customers, clients and the general public are key stakeholders in the prevention of occupational violence and negative stress in services sectors. Representatives of the major public, customer and client groups should be included, where appropriate, in the development of policies and strategies to prevent occupational violence and reduce negative stress. Support and participation should also be encouraged, where appropriate, from the media, research and educational institutions, specialists in workplace violence and stress, consumer advocacy groups, the police and other criminal justice professionals and NGOs active in the area of workplace violence, stress, health, safety and human rights. This enlarged community should contribute to efforts to:

- create a network of information and expertise in this area;
- raise awareness of the risks of workplace violence and negative stress;
- develop coordinated policies and procedures to combat workplace violence and reduce negative stress;
- initiate continuing training and education on key issues associated with the prevention of workplace violence and stress;
- establish support structures for the prevention and management of incidents of workplace violence and problems associated with occupational stress.

3. Information, assessment, identification, recording and notification of violence and of stress in services sectors

3.1. Collecting information

A great deal of information is usually available from official and unofficial records and should be properly exploited. This includes:

- judicial authorities' information about occupational homicides, assaults, mobbing and bullying;
- equality bodies' information on complaints of harassment;
- police data on occupational homicides, assaults, threats, and mobbing or bullying;
- occupational health and safety authority data on prosecutions for breach of laws relevant to violence and stress;
- data on workers' compensation claims data relating to incidents of violence and stress;
- company records including those on violent incidents, sickness absence, workforce turnover, grievance procedures, insurance claims and disciplinary action;
- workplace inspection records.

3.2. Risk assessment

Step 1: Policies and strategies

Employers, workers and their representatives should ensure that appropriate policies and strategies are in place to deal with workplace violence and with stress, and that these are followed. Key components of these are: a mission statement; a policy statement; regular violence and stress risk assessment audits; data collection; complaint procedures; training and monitoring. These policies and strategies need to be individually tailored to the specific risks at each worksite, and to take full account of external sources of violence and stress. Some guidelines on policies to address violence and stress are provided in Appendix B.

Step 2: Regular assessment

Risk assessment should be conducted, including development of a protocol for regular and objective violence and stress auditing, with participation and support from employers and workers. Audits should identify the extent of the risk in particular areas and the circumstances under which they arise. Checklists of areas or aspects that should be considered for stress management and violence risk assessment at the workplace are a useful tool, and should be developed jointly, based on adaptations of appropriate models

for the workplace concerned.¹ Audits should be scheduled regularly, especially in higher risk areas or sectors.

Step 3: Evaluation

All the available data should be formally and periodically evaluated by employers, workers and their representatives. During this process, data on occupational stress and violence at each specific worksite and unit should be reviewed. This evaluation should identify those measures that have been successful in reducing stress and violence, and any requirements for additional preventive policies and strategies to reduce the risks.

3.3. Identifying situations and occupations at special risk

Some work situations and occupations may increase the risk of exposure to workplace stress or violence, and some services sectors are especially at risk (see Appendices D and E). In practically all services sectors, workers are exposed to a wide range of such circumstances. In order to fully assess the specific relevance of situations at special risk in different workplaces, an analysis should be conducted of the presence of such situations within each workplace and each category of worker employed there.

3.4. Risk factors for individuals, groups, workplaces, enterprises and organizations

A number of personal, interpersonal and organizational factors may increase the risk of exposure to workplace stress and violence (see Appendices F, G and H), some of which are specific to services sectors. However, in considering such risk factors, care should be taken to avoid any “labelling” of individuals.

3.5. Signals indicating a risk of violence; symptoms of stress

A number of signals may indicate a risk of exposure to workplace violence, whether from within the workforce or from an external source. These can take the form of early warning signs, signals of escalated risk or hints of imminent danger of violence, as listed in Appendix I.

Characteristic symptoms of negative stress, which would not be indicative of high stress levels unless they were found in combination with each other, are given in Appendix J.

3.6. Recording and notification at the workplace

Patterns of occupational stress and workplace violence should be recorded by an organization in an accurate and timely manner. Proper documentation of *all* incidents of violence and indicators of stress are important for an organization to learn by its

¹ Some examples can be found in texts cited in Appendix B, including Mayhew, 2000; OSHA, 1998; USOPM 1998; OSHA and Long Island Coalition, 1996; and ALARM, 2002.

experiences. Employers, workers and workers' representatives should review this experience in order to identify patterns and trends, including:

- identifying sources of workplace violence or stress as being internal or external, where possible;
- categories of severity;
- incidence of violence and of stress in particular area/task categories;
- stress indices and their overlap with violent incident reports;
- stress sufferer characteristics;
- perpetrator and victim characteristics;
- form of violence;
- possible causes and contributing factors, such as delays in service provision;
- situational contexts (home visits, "over-the-counter" services, conditions outside work premises);
- other risk factors such as time of day or night.

Frequent staff turnover in a particular job task or area may be a warning sign that violence or stress is occurring. Another key indicator is excessive levels of sick leave due to stress.

3.7. Recording and notification at sectoral, national and international levels

At the sectoral, national and international levels, a comprehensive approach involving governments, employers, workers and their representatives is required, to collate and assess data from a range of sources about occupational stress and violence in services sectors.

- Subsectors and occupations at major risk of violence or with high stress levels should be identified in services sectors.
- Data on occupational violence collated by those working in the criminal justice system should be integrated with those collected by the occupational health and safety authorities and harassment data from equality bodies, as well as with human resources data from individual organizations.
- Standardization of subcategories used in recording procedures, such as "abuse", "threat" and "assault", should be pursued.
- When substantive national data are available, government authorities should chart trends and evaluate the effectiveness of different prevention initiatives.
- Privacy and confidentiality issues should be recognized in all cases.

4. Strategies for preventing, reducing, managing and coping with violence and stress

4.1. Developing strategies to tackle violence and stress at the workplace

In developing policy and strategies on violence and stress at the workplace, special consideration should be given to the following.

- Workplace violence and negative stress are detrimental to the functioning of the workplace and the quality of services, and action taken against such problems is an integral part of organizational development and the promotion of decent work.
- Since workplace violence and stress can sometimes be closely interrelated, and the means of action to address workplace stress and violence are sometimes the same, effective strategies should address these problems jointly where this approach is supported by risk assessment, but separately when this is justified by the nature of the risks.
- The full range of causes that generates stress or violence in a specific situation should be analysed, and targeted strategies developed for each situation.
- Preventive measures have proved to be particularly effective and should be given priority whenever possible.
- Short-, medium- and long-term objectives and strategies should be identified at the earliest stages so as to organize action towards realistically achievable goals within agreed time frames.
- Action should be articulated in a series of fundamental steps that includes workplace stress and violence recognition, risk assessment, intervention, monitoring and evaluation.

4.2. Advocacy, cooperation and partnership on combating violence and stress

4.2.1. Advocacy

Governments, employers, workers and their representative organizations should be actively engaged in making the reduction of stress and elimination of violence in services sectors a workplace priority, including measures aimed at:

- enhancing recognition of workplace violence and negative stress as major threats to health and safety, service efficiency, productivity, equal treatment and decent work;
- disseminating information on all forms of workplace stress and workplace violence in services sectors;
- establishing clear codes of conduct for staff, the public, clients, suppliers and visitors;

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- monitoring and examining all forms of stress and violence in services sectors and providing opinions, proposals and considerations to government, legislative institutions and the community.

4.2.2. Cooperation and partnership

Governments, employers, workers and their representative organizations should pursue local, regional and international cooperation in the endeavour to reduce workplace stress and eliminate violence at work. Since the quality and efficiency of services depend on interaction with customers and users, partnerships with stakeholder organizations and local communities should be actively sought and enhanced.

4.3. Information and training on issues relating to violence and stress

4.3.1. Information

The competent authorities and employers, in collaboration with workers' representatives, should, as appropriate, provide all workers, supervisors and managers with information on workplace violence and on occupational stress. That information should include:

- information on the nature, causes of and interaction between workplace stress and violence in services sectors;
- information on the extent and areas of concentration of workplace stress or violence in services sectors;
- suggested measures to prevent such problems from occurring and best practices for their reduction and elimination;
- information on gender, multicultural diversity and discrimination to develop sensitivity to such issues;
- information on the laws and regulations covering stress and violence which have general application, as well as those which are specific to a given workplace or service;
- information on the services available to assist workers exposed to workplace stress or violence, including information concerning assessment and referral, counselling, treatment and rehabilitation programmes.

4.3.2. Training

Training to cope with workplace stress and violence in services sectors should be based on a set of policies and provided on a continuous or periodical basis, depending on specific needs. It should be provided, as appropriate, by the employer alone, by the employer in cooperation with workers and their representatives, or by workers' organizations alone, to all workers and their representatives, supervisors and managers.

4.3.2.1. Training for workers

Specific training for workers in services sectors in relation to violence and stress could include:

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- improving the ability to identify potentially stressful or violent situations;
 - improving the capacity of event appraisal, active coping and problem-solving;
 - instilling interpersonal and communication skills that could prevent and defuse a stressful or potentially violent situation;
 - enhancing positive attitudes towards creating a supportive environment;
 - preparing a “core group” of workers who can take responsibility for more complicated interactions and provide peer counselling;
 - assertiveness training or empowerment;
 - where appropriate, self-defence training, as required, according to risk assessment.

More generally, training for workers should include:

- orientation to the workplace environment, management policies and procedures relevant to these issues; and
- developing competence in the particular functions to be performed.

Guidelines for specific sectors and occupations should further identify the special training needs and skills required for preventing or coping with workplace violence under particular circumstances.

4.3.2.2. Training for supervisors, managers and workers' representatives

In addition to participating in the information and training programmes that are directed at all workers, supervisory and managerial personnel as well as workers' representatives should receive supplementary training to enable them to:

- explain and respond to questions about the organization's policy regarding stress and violence;
- identify changes in staff performance and behaviour that may indicate a risk of workplace stress or violence;
- assess the working environment and identify working methods or conditions which could be changed or improved to prevent, reduce and eliminate workplace stress or violence;
- support recovering workers, provide advice and help them with administrative procedures;
- ensure that any information on workers exposed to or suffering because of stress or violence is kept confidential;
- manage staff and teams and create a work environment based on mutual respect.

4.4. Improving work organization

4.4.1. Working time

To prevent or defuse workplace stress and violence and enhance the quality of the service, management of working time should:

- arrange working-time schedules so that staff are used in the most effective way, while ensuring that workers have adequate time to respond to family and care commitments;
- avoid excessively long hours of work, discourage extensive recourse to overtime, and provide adequate rest periods;
- arrange predictable working-time schedules, avoiding unsocial hours where possible;
- keep consecutive night shifts and split shifts to a minimum, as far as possible, and ensure that such arrangements are scheduled in a healthy manner and coupled with other measures to ensure worker well-being.

Such arrangements on working time should be reached in consultation with the workers.

4.4.2. Job design

Job design is an essential factor in limiting stress and violence at the workplace. An efficient design should ensure that:

- tasks are clearly defined, meaningful, varied, and allow for an appropriate degree of autonomy in delivering the service;
- assignment of tasks reflects the skill and experience of the staff, taking into account the characteristics and difficulties of the different operations of the service;
- staff rotation is arranged for particularly demanding and dangerous jobs and for workers who are new to the job;
- sufficient feedback on task performance and opportunities for the development of staff skills is provided;
- job planning is continuously improved to better meet the needs of the service and the workers.

4.4.3. Communication

Improved communication can greatly reduce the risk of workplace violence and negative stress.

Communication with the public, clients and interest groups can be improved if:

- timely and adequate information is provided to the public and clients on changes, delays or disruptions in the running or delivery of the service;
- the public and clients are given opportunities to comment on the quality of the service;

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- comments are given attention and taken into proper consideration;
 - conflict reduction, mediation and customer service units are established to deal with complaints and reduce potential sources of violence or stress.

Communication between management and workers and among workers can be enhanced when:

- communication channels are established on an ongoing basis for sharing information and facilitating the solution of problems related to service delivery;
- special communication channels are established in periods of reform and organizational change;
- feedback procedures are put into operation;
- workers are encouraged and given opportunities to work in formal or informal, temporary or permanent groups;
- time is available for dialogue, sharing information and problem-solving;
- opportunities are offered to the staff to contribute ideas, in particular in the planning and organization of their own work.

4.4.4. Work practices

Improving work practices is an effective and inexpensive way of defusing workplace stress and violence while improving the quality of the service. Improved work practices should aim to ensure that:

- adequate presence of staff, in terms of numbers and qualifications, is provided at all times in response to the needs of the service and its users;
- services to the public and to customers are tailored to suit the capacities and resources of the service;
- classes in schools, caseloads of health workers, and equivalent indicators in other sectors, are kept to an acceptable size;
- crowding is avoided and waiting times are kept to a minimum;
- workers are given margins of flexibility so that rules and policies are not interpreted by the public and customers as intolerable constraints;
- workplans recognize and optimize the experience gained by individual workers or working teams in dealing closely with the same client(s) over a protracted period of time;
- community-based workers, those working alone or with valuables, and those working in isolated or dangerous premises and areas, are provided with emergency communication devices and assisted by emergency procedures in case of need;
- handling cash or valuables is reduced to a minimum;
- night workers, if at all possible, work together or in close proximity to each other;

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- services and responsibilities are decentralized so that managers, supervisors and workers become more aware of the specific needs of the service and are better able to respond to the expectations of the general public and customers.

4.4.5. Improving the way in which new technology is introduced

In order to reduce or eliminate the build-up of stress, tension and violence that may be associated with the introduction of new technology, measures should be adopted to ensure that:

- new technology is introduced in a phased way;
- new technology is spread by successful examples, starting with critical applications and demonstrable benefits;
- new technology is introduced with the broad involvement of those concerned;
- the pace of work, working arrangements and breaks are human-centred rather than technology-driven;
- new and increasing tasks and functions for workers resulting from technological innovation do not become an excessive burden;
- the higher mobility in tasks and functions made possible by technological innovation does not affect the clear identification of jobs and roles within the organization.

4.5. Improving the work environment

4.5.1. Improving the physical environment

The physical features of a workplace are key factors in reducing occupational stress and defusing workplace violence. In particular:

- levels of noise should be kept to a minimum to avoid stress, irritation and tension among workers, public and clients;
- good lighting should be maintained to facilitate working activities and to improve visibility in all areas;
- measures should be taken to provide and maintain appropriate temperature, humidity and ventilation at the workplace, especially in crowded areas and in hot or cold climates;
- a system should be put in place to recognize, report and eliminate work hazards.

4.5.2. Improving workplace design

To minimize the risk of workplace stress and violence in services sectors, special attention should be given to the design of workplaces in relation to comfort and security.

Comfort

- Adequate workspace should be provided to facilitate the provision of services.

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- There should be sufficient space among workers, and among clients and customers, to reduce personal interference and the build-up of stress and tension.
 - Spacious waiting areas should be provided, with adequate seating, especially where long waiting is involved.
 - Workstation design should conform to ergonomic criteria.
 - Rest areas should be provided for workers, particularly for night workers and those engaged in stressful or dangerous jobs.
 - Where smoking is permitted, non-smoking and smoking areas should be clearly identified.

Security

- Areas at special risk should be identified, labelled by level of risk and targeted for action.
- Safe access to and from the workplace should be ensured, including secure parking areas and transport facilities.
- Security services should be in operation, as required.
- Visual observation by workers, members of the public and clients should be facilitated by eliminating impediments to a clear view of the workplace.
- Restricted areas should be clearly indicated.
- In potentially dangerous areas, cameras and alarm systems should be installed.
- Weapons should be banned, except as an inherent requirement of specific jobs, and checking for weapons should be implemented when required.
- Restrictions should be considered on alcohol, legal and illegal drugs in the workplace.¹
- Staff and other authorized persons should be provided with identity cards when required.
- Visitors should be identified and required to sign in and out, when appropriate.
- People committing violent acts (perpetrators) should be given warnings where appropriate, with clear indications about potential consequences, and appropriate disciplinary measures should be taken against perpetrators in accordance with section 4.7.1. below.

¹ See Ch. 5 of *Management of alcohol- and drug-related issues in the workplace: An ILO code of practice* (Geneva, ILO, 1996).

4.6. Focusing on the individual: Medical and other interventions

In addition to training and enhanced communication, the following interventions should be developed to reinforce the capacity of individuals to contribute to the prevention of workplace violence and the reduction of negative stress.

4.6.1. Promotion of well-being

Employers, in consultation with workers' representatives, should encourage regular physical exercise, proper eating and sleeping habits, relaxation techniques and leisure activities.

Dealing with the often overlapping and conflicting demands of the workplace and the family can be very stressful and generate tension and dissatisfaction. Providing the means to reconcile work and family responsibilities, such as flexible working-time arrangements, crèches at the workplace, temporary family leave measures (e.g. parental leave, family medical leave) or special assistance for single parents, can help to reduce workplace stress.

4.6.2. Medical treatment

Appropriate medical and psychological treatment should be available to all workers (including those working unsocial hours), and its existence should be made known to all those affected by workplace violence and stress.

In the case of enterprises that have medical services, the employer should refer those who appear to have violence- or stress-related problems to those services, as appropriate, if this is within the competence of the professionals engaged in such services.

When companies do not have such services or the caseload exceeds the competence of in-house professionals, the employer should refer workers to appropriate treatment outside the enterprise.

4.6.3. Counselling

Counselling should be made available by the employer as required, in consultation with workers' representatives, to all those affected by workplace violence and stress. It should include:

- initial counselling to help individuals recognize the danger of stress and violence in their present behaviour, and to change their conduct and attitude;
- counselling when stress and violence have manifested themselves, to help them to cope with these problems;
- peer counselling provided by co-workers, where appropriate.

4.6.4. Debriefing

Debriefing as required should be made available by the employer, in consultation with workers' representatives, to all those affected by workplace violence, critical incidents or post-traumatic stress. It would include:

- sharing personal experience with others, to defuse the impact of violence;

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- helping those affected by workplace violence to understand and come to terms with what has happened;
 - offering reassurance and support;
 - getting people to focus on the facts and give information;
 - explaining the help available.

4.6.5. Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation should be made available, and its existence made known to all those affected by workplace stress and violence.

The employer, in collaboration with workers' representatives, should provide support to workers during the entire period of rehabilitation and allow all necessary time to recover.

Whenever possible and convenient, workers should be encouraged to return to work, avoiding too much stress at first, special working arrangements being made when necessary to facilitate reintegration.

4.7. Grievance and disciplinary procedures, response plans, management support, representation

4.7.1. Grievance and disciplinary procedures

Governments, employers, workers and their representative organizations should act in collaboration to develop grievance and disciplinary procedures to deal with complaints of workplace violence (including sexual and racial harassment, bullying and mobbing). These procedures should include:

- Informal resolution measures designed to resolve problems before a situation – particularly among workers, supervisors or managers – deteriorates further. These measures may consist of informal meetings between the complainant and an appropriate line manager or a facilitator. Meetings to clarify matters with the alleged perpetrator or any other relevant person, with the assistance of a workers' representative, an ombudsman or a colleague, may also be arranged. These measures can offer opportunities for conciliation and prevent violence or further violent incidents.
- Formal complaint mechanisms to be used if informal mechanisms fail to resolve a complaint (the choice between informal and formal complaints should normally be a matter for the victim to decide). These mechanisms should provide a route for the complaint to be lodged before a competent authority under occupational health and safety laws, workers' compensation provisions, anti-discrimination legislation and related laws designed to maintain a work environment free from violence, bullying and harassment. If the complaint includes allegations of misconduct constituting a criminal offence, it may also be appropriate to notify the law-enforcement authorities. Such action should also be planned as a part of any response to a critical incident involving criminal violence at a workplace.
- A fair and equitable process for the investigation and resolution of complaints. This process should ensure that a person who is the subject of a complaint knows the

details of the allegations and who made them, has the opportunity to respond to the allegations and has the benefit of an impartial, independent and fair hearing by a decision-maker who has not prejudged the issue; that victimization is prevented; and that confidentiality and time limits are respected.

- A range of disciplinary sanctions up to and including dismissal. The use of dismissal may create a potential threat of violence from the member of staff concerned who may feel aggrieved or resentful. Employers and workers should be made aware of the risk, and appropriate measures put in place to manage such a dismissal in a humane and equitable way. Employers should also have other disciplinary options at their disposal, reserving dismissal as a sanction of last resort for the most serious forms of misconduct.

4.7.2. Response plans

Management plans for handling situations of workplace violence and excessive stress, and for helping individuals affected by workplace violence to deal with the after-effects of violent incidents or behaviour, should be made available and tested in advance. These plans should include measures to prevent severe psychological or medical problems from developing.

4.7.3. Management support

Management should provide immediate and continuing support to all those affected by workplace stress or violence. In particular, management should:

- deal with the immediate aftermath of violence or excessive stress;
- minimize the impact of workplace violence or excessive stress by facilitating or advising on provision of leave, assisting with costs and addressing legal issues;
- provide information and support to the families of those affected;
- initiate a timely internal investigation;
- follow up the case for as long as is deemed necessary.

4.7.4. Representation and legal aid

Workers' organizations, professional organizations and, where appropriate, colleagues, should be involved in providing representation and legal aid. This should involve:

- assistance and support with police procedures;
- consultation with sources of legal advice in relation to options available in specific cases;
- attending meetings, investigations and hearings;
- access for union stewards to training on legal issues relating to workplace violence and stress;
- representation for union members from an ethnic or other minority community group by a steward from a similar background, if that is requested.

4.8. Privacy and confidentiality

Governments and employers should ensure that any information relating to grievances and disciplinary procedures, medical treatment, debriefing, counselling and rehabilitation is kept confidential. Special care should be exercised when dealing with victims of sexual offences at the workplace, since the medical examination can be reminiscent of the offence itself and therefore particularly distressing.

5. Development of policy on violence and stress at the workplace in services sectors

5.1. Dialogue and cooperation between the social partners

Social dialogue can make an important contribution to the definition of solutions to workplace problems among social partners, offering a means for consensus building and cooperation in the development and reform of services sectors, for improvement of the quality of work and services, and for the prevention and resolution of labour disputes. As such, social dialogue can play a major role in the reduction of occupational stress and the elimination of workplace violence in the sector.

Special attention should be paid to capacity building for social dialogue and the development of effective means of action at the operational level.

5.1.1. Capacity building

Governments should facilitate and promote the process of social dialogue by encouraging strong, independent and responsible social partners in services sectors, and by optimizing the legal and structural framework for institutions of social dialogue.

Employers' and workers' organizations should commit themselves to constructive engagement in agreed processes of dialogue, and to respect their side of negotiated outcomes.

Dialogue with relevant stakeholders should be encouraged as appropriate.

5.1.2. Means of action

The social partners should include workplace stress and violence among the economic, social and labour issues covered within the scope of social dialogue in services sectors.

- Social partners should engage in social dialogue on violence and stress in services sectors at various levels (national, sectoral, enterprise, workplace), in various forms (negotiation, consultation, exchanges of information) and ways (formal, informal), in accordance with national needs and labour relations systems, and the social partners should try to ensure representation of groups who tend to be particularly at risk of workplace violence or stress.
- Social dialogue on violence and stress in services sectors should be developed as a continuous process aimed at the long-term protection of individual dignity and health, and at the improvement of services.
- The early involvement of the social partners in social dialogue on violence and stress in services sectors – enabling such partners to discuss issues and participate in decision-making long before the issues become urgent – should be encouraged and promoted.

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- Social partners should monitor and evaluate the process of social dialogue on violence and stress issues in services sectors, based on pre-established indicators to measure the effectiveness of such dialogue.

5.2. Joint assessment of violence and stress at the workplace

Employers and workers and their representatives should jointly assess the effects of stress and violence in the workplace. The following indicators, among others, should provide useful information for identifying and assessing the nature and magnitude of the problem at a given workplace:

- national and local surveys on the extent of stress and of violence in the community where the service is carried out;
- surveys that have been carried out in similar workplaces/types of services;
- absenteeism (unauthorized leave and lateness);
- use of sick leave;
- accident rates;
- personnel turnover;
- opinions of supervisors and managers, workers and their representatives, safety personnel, occupational health and social services personnel.

5.3. Basic contents of policy on violence and stress at the workplace

The employer should, in cooperation with workers and their representatives, develop in writing the organization's policy on workplace stress and violence, as part of a comprehensive workplace policy on human resources management, work organization, safety, health and working conditions.

5.3.1. Policy values

Priority should be given to the development of a workplace culture based on decent work, safety, mutual respect, tolerance, equal opportunity, cooperation and quality of service. This should include:

- clear organizational objectives as to the key role of human resources in achieving a quality service;
- an emphasis on the organization and staff sharing common objectives;
- management commitment to preventing workplace violence and minimizing stress.

A clear policy statement of intent should be issued by the top management, recognizing the importance of efforts to eliminate workplace violence and reduce stress.

5.3.2. Core issues

The policy should contain at least the following:

- a clear definition of violence and of stress, agreed by the social partners, so that people know exactly what is being referred to; and an understanding of the concepts of victim, perpetrator and stress sufferer;
- a statement that no violent behaviour will be tolerated, whether from within the workforce or from clients and customers;
- an engagement in support of any action targeted at creating an environment free from violence and negative stress;
- the provision of an independent and fair complaints system that is free from retaliation and that protects against abusive complaints;
- information, education, training and any other relevant programmes;
- measures to eliminate violence and reduce stress at the workplace;
- measures relating to intervention, treatment and rehabilitation;
- recognition of equal opportunities;
- a commitment to effective communication of the policy.

5.3.3. Allocation of responsibilities

The policy should in particular include:

- a statement that supervisors and managers have a positive duty to implement the policy and to demonstrate leadership by example;
- an engagement to provide managers with the ability and the means necessary to carry out the policy at all levels within the organization;
- an assignment of responsibility to individuals or teams with appropriate training and skills for the implementation of the policy.

5.3.4. Awareness raising

The policy should be communicated effectively to all those concerned and should be accompanied by initiatives to raise awareness among the management, supervisors and staff, the general public, clients and suppliers. These initiatives should illustrate the deleterious effects of stress and of violence at the workplace, and the advantages of undertaking immediate action to eliminate or reduce these problems.

5.4. Monitoring and evaluation of workplace policies to address violence and stress

The employer should, in cooperation with the workers and their representatives, evaluate the effectiveness of anti-violence and anti-stress policies. This should include:

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- monitoring, on a continuous basis, and regular dissemination of the results of measures introduced;
 - developing criteria for evaluation and receiving regular feedback to check how well the policies and measures are working, and to make modifications as necessary;
 - organizing periodical joint meetings of management and workers to discuss the measures put in place;
 - reviewing the management plan on a regular basis, including the assessment of policy implementation.

5.5. Organizational learning on issues related to violence and stress

The employer should, in cooperation with the workers and their representatives, develop a strategic learning process on issues relating to workplace stress and violence which includes:

- learning from the lessons gained from the design, implementation and evaluation of workplace policies;
- re-assessing the workplace culture, work organization and the quality of the work environment to effectively respond to workplace stress and violence;
- activating a risk management cycle that makes the elimination of workplace violence and negative stress and the improvement of the work environment an ongoing process within the organization.

Such an approach can also contribute to enhancing quality of service, productivity and decent work.

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Published guidelines on violence and stress – A selection

Guidelines for occupations or situations at special risk

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- UNISON: *Working alone in safety – Controlling the risks of solitary work* (London, 1993).
- United States Departments of Education and Justice: *Early warning, timely response: A guide to safe schools* (Washington, DC, 1998); <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/Products/earlywrn.html> .
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- Work Cover Corporation of South Australia: *Guidelines for aged care facilities* (Adelaide, 1996).
- WorkSafe Western Australia Commission: *Working alone* (West Perth, 1999).

Guidelines for special types of violence

- Australian Public Service Commission: *Eliminating sexual harassment: Personnel management guidelines* (Canberra, 1990).
- : *Eliminating workplace harassment: Guidelines* (Canberra, 1994).
- Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin: *Streß im Betrieb? Handlungshilfen für die Praxis* (Dortmund, BAUA, 2001); <http://www.baua.de/down/gs20.pdf> .
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- Commission of the European Communities: *How to combat sexual harassment. A guide to implementing the European Commission code of practice* (Brussels, 1993).
- Department of Employment: *Sexual harassment in the workplace: A guide for employers* (London, June 1992).
- Equal Opportunities Commission: *Sexual harassment at work: Consider the cost* (London, Oct. 1994).
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- National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health, Ireland: *Code of practice on the prevention of workplace bullying* (Dublin, 2002).
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- Trades Union Congress (TUC): *Beat bullying at work: A guide for trade union representatives and personnel managers* (London, 1998).
- : *Racial harassment at work: A guide and workplace programme for trade unionists* (London, 1993).
- : *Guidelines: Sexual harassment at work* (London, 1992).
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- : *Bullying at work: Guidelines for UNISON branches, stewards and safety representatives* (London, 1996).
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- WorkCover Authority of Victoria: *Proposed code of practice for the prevention of bullying and violence* (Melbourne, 2001).
- Working Women's Centre: *Stop violence against women at work* (Adelaide, June 1994).

Guidelines for more general audiences

- ALARM (National Forum for Risk Management in the Public Sector in the United Kingdom): *Recognizing and managing stress at work: A toolkit for risk managers* (London, 2001); <http://www.alarm-uk.com/downloads/stressatwork.pdf> .
- California Division of Occupational Safety and Health: *Guidelines for workplace security* (San Francisco, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, State of California, 1995); http://165.235.90.100/DOSH/dosh_publications/worksecurity.html .
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- Cherry, D.; Upston, P.: *Managing violent and potentially violent situations: A guide for workers and organizations* (Melbourne, Centre of Social Health, 1997).
- Commission of the European Communities: *Guidance on work-related stress: Spice of life or kiss of death?* (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000).
- Confédération des syndicats nationaux: *La violence en milieu de travail: Tolérance zéro* (Montreal, CSN, 1997).
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- HSE: *Violence at work: A guide for employers* (London, 1997).
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Occupational Safety and Health Service: *A guide for employers and employees on dealing with violence at work* (Wellington, New Zealand, 1995).

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Unión General de Trabajadores: *Guía para la prevención de riesgos laborales. Estrés laboral* (Madrid, Comisión Ejecutiva Confederal de UGT, 2002); <http://www.ugt.es/slaboral/estres.pdf> .

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United States Office of Personnel Management (USOPM): *Dealing with workplace violence: A guide for agency planners* (Washington, DC, Feb. 1998).

Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia: *Take care – How to develop and implement a workplace violence programme: A guide for small business* (Vancouver, 1998).

WorkSafe Western Australia Commission: *Workplace violence: Draft code of practice* (Perth, 1999).

Appendix C

Legal texts relevant to workplace violence and stress

The situation concerning the regulation of workplace violence and stress is extremely varied and frequently changing. In some countries there is specific legislation tackling these problems; elsewhere, the existing criminal, civil, work environment and health and safety legislation is considered sufficient. At the other end of the regulatory spectrum, some countries are using non-legislative measures such as codes of practice, regulations and collective agreements, while others have only made initial efforts to regulate workplace violence. The following listing is to be developed further (it was prepared in March 2003).

International level

ILO

Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and Recommendation (No. 164)
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

United Nations

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965
[Article 5]

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979
[Article 7]

European Union

EC Treaty amended through the Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997 [article 13 (gives powers to Council regarding discrimination issues)]

Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin

Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions

Americas

Interamerican Convention to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará) [article 1 (prohibition of Violence), article 2 (inclusion of sexual and psychological violence); Signatories: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela]

National level

Argentina

Buenos Aires State Law of 15 October 2001 regarding sexual harassment, No. 12.764 [regulation limited to public servants working for the State of Buenos Aires; similar provisions exist for the State of Santa Fe]

Austria

Federal Act to amend the Equality of Treatment Act (BGBl. I No. 44/1998) [introduction of “mobbing”]

Federal Act to amend the Equality of Treatment Act (BGBl. I No. 129/2001) [introduces favourable time lines for victims]

Employees’ Protection Act (BGBl No. 450/1994) [articles 3 and 4 provide for risk assessment and employer’s general duty of care]

Belgium

Law of 11 June 2002 – Law relating to protection from violence, moral harassment and sexual harassment at the workplace

Brazil

São Paulo State Law prohibiting moral harassment in public functions No. 0422/2001, 11 September 2002 [regulation limited to public servants and other employees working for the State of São Paulo; similar law exists for the State of Rio de Janeiro]

Costa Rica

Law No. 7476 of 3 February 1995 against sexual harassment at work and in education.

Denmark

Consolidation Act on equal treatment of men and women as regards access to employment and maternity leave, etc., No. 213 of 3 April 1998 [articles 2-6 (equal treatment), article 19 (penal sanctions regarding articles 2-6)]

Act to prohibit all discrimination based on race, etc., No. 289, February 1998

National agreement signed in 2001 by the Danish Working Environment Authority, the employers’ confederation DA and the trade union confederation LO [covers bullying and harassment]

Finland

Act on equality between men and women, as amended by Law No. 206/1995 of 17 February 1995

Occupational Safety and Health Act (738/2002, June 2002)

France

Law No. 2002-73 of 17 January 2002 on social modernization [numerous changes to Penal and Labour Codes targeted to eradicate moral harassment]

Law No. 2003-6 of 3 January 2003 on collective bargaining with regard to redundancies for economic reasons [changes to Labour Code, concerning moral harassment]

Germany

Constitution (Basic Law) of the Federal Republic of Germany [article 1 (protection of human dignity), article 3 (equality)]

Second Act to protect employees from sexual harassment at work, 24 June 1994 [article 4 (positive action to increase gender equality), article 12 (prohibition of less favourable treatment)]

German Penal Code [current provisions are deemed to adequately cover stress and violence]

German Civil Code [current provisions are deemed to provide adequate indemnification to victims of stress and violence]

Second Law regarding changes to indemnity provisions [changes regarding time lines and scope of indemnities to improve the legal position of a victim of stress and violence at the workplace (entry into force 1 August 2002)]

Collective Agreement on fair conduct at work at Volkswagen AG, Wolfsburg, 1997

Collective Agreement for Fraport AG (Frankfurt Airport), Frankfurt/Main 22 March 2001 [addresses bullying and racist behaviour]

Collective Agreement for City of Munich employees, 14 October 1997 [addresses bullying]

Employment Appeals Tribunal of Thüringen, ruling 5 Sa 403/00 of 10 April 2001 [landmark case that concluded that bullying represents an infringement of personal rights]

Greece

Greek Civil Code [article 57 (damages for insulting behaviour), article 281 (abuse of rights), article 662 (safety and health of workplaces)]

Ireland

Employment Equality Act 1998

Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989

Labour Relations Commission, Code of Practice (Statutory Instrument SI No. 12/2002) [Statutory Instrument providing guidance on prevention of bullying]

Unfair Dismissals Act 1977 [article 6 (no discrimination, etc.)]

Shanley v. Sligo County Council, High Court 11 October 2001 [landmark case awarding damages on basis of bullying]

Italy

Constitution of the Italian Republic [article 41 (human freedom and dignity)], Italian Civil Code [article 2087 (guidance on employer's behaviour)]

Law 125/91 on Equal Opportunities and Positive Action 1991

Law 30/70 Worker's Statute 1970 [article 15 (prohibits discriminatory actions)]

"Work Culture Agreement" signed at Azienda Transporti Municipali (Municipal Transport Company), Turin, 2001

Luxembourg

Sexual Harassment Act of April 2000 (A-2000/0526/LOI)

Collective Agreement aimed at combating moral and psychological harassment [essentially bullying] at the Bram retail company, 2001

Malta

Employment and Industrial Relations Act 2002 [prevention and punishment of harassment during industrial action]

Netherlands

Act of 2 March 1994 laying down general rules for protection against discrimination

Act of 29 June 1994 to amend the Working Environment Act in connection with sexual intimidation and aggression and violence

Working Conditions Act, 1998 [article 4 (addresses violence and harassment)]

Civil Code (major revision in 1992) [article 611 of Book 7 (obligation for employers and workers to behave well towards each other)]

Norway

Act No. 4 of 4 February 1977 respecting workers' protection and the working environment, as amended to Act No. 2 of 6 January 1995 article 12, paragraph 1 [addresses psychological harassment]

Paraguay

Law No. 496/94 changing the Labour Code – article 84 [amends Labour Code, Law No. 213/93, so that sexual harassment or libel can be grounds for termination of employment], 1994

Philippines

Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, 1995 [sets out employers' liability for acts committed at work]

Portugal

Law No. 61/91 to guarantee adequate protection for female victims of violence, 1991

Spain

Law No. 11/1999 modifying the Penal Code [article 2 (sexual harassment and violence)]

Law No. 10/1995 modifying the Penal Code [Title 8 (sexual offences), Title 11 (libel and related issues)]

Law No. 31/1995 of 8 November on prevention of workplace risks [article 25, protection of workers especially sensitive to specific risks]

Sweden

Equal Opportunities Act, 1991 [section 6 (sexual harassment), section 15 (discrimination)]

Work Environment Act 1977 [amended several times; most recent amendment was 2000; key provisions found in Chapter 3, section 2]

Work Environment Ordinance (SFS 1977:1166) 1977 [statutory powers are given to the Work Environment Authority in section 18]

Ordinance of the Swedish National Board of Occupational Safety and Health on measures for the prevention of violence and threats in the working environment (14 January 1993)

Ordinance of the National Board of Occupational Safety and Health – Victimization at work (21 September 1993) [Statutory Instrument]

United States

Occupational Safety and Health Act 1970 [article 20(a)(1) proposes surveys on psychological factors at work]

United Kingdom

Sex Discrimination Act, 1975

Protection from Harassment Act, No. 40, March 1997 [article 1 (prohibition), article 2 (definition of harassment), article 4 (putting people in fear of violence), articles. 3, 5 (civil remedies, orders)]

Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 [article 47 paragraph 6 (mental damages), article 53 (extends personal injury to mental damage)]

Employment Rights Act, 1996 [article 95(1)(c) (harassment constitutes a reason for dismissal)]

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Statutory Instrument 1999 No. 3242 [risk assessment on individual basis]

Lancaster v. Birmingham City Council (1999) [awards compensation for work-related stress]

Uruguay

Law on Serious Offences at Work, 12 April 2000 [article 1 (Prohibition of all types of violence and harassment)]

Appendix D

Situations and occupations at special risk from stress

(Referred to in section 3.3 of the code.)

Stress is more pronounced among those working nights; shifts, particularly rotating and split shifts; long or awkward hours, particularly overtime; unpredictable hours; short, irregular hours; unsocial hours; across different time zones; or on inflexible work schedules. Other problems include:

Working under excessive, hectic or unbalanced work demands

- Excessive numbers of clients or customers
- Work overload
- Tight deadlines
- No clear working procedure
- Performing more than one job
- Work of high complexity
- Staff shortages or uneven patterns of staffing
- Unreasonable performance or sales targets
- Extra responsibilities
- Excessive class sizes (for teachers) or caseloads (for health workers, etc.)

Working in dangerous or unhealthy environments

- Lack of means of controlling risks (for practical, financial or other reasons)
- Poor lighting
- High levels of noise
- Uncomfortable temperatures
- Awkward work postures
- High risk of physical injury
- Risk of critical incidents in service
- Risk of aggression or violent intrusions

Working in an unsatisfactory human environment, characterized by (for example)

- High levels of harassment/bullying or mobbing
- Poor communications or lack of consultation
- Poor problem solving
- Widespread misbehaviour, indiscipline, underachievement and lack of motivation
- Isolation from colleagues in an unsatisfactory workspace
- Exclusion from work-related and social meetings with colleagues

Working with insufficient control over one's own job

- Erratic, unclear or conflicting tasks or demands
- Lack of autonomy and control over one's own work
- Fragmented work
- Poor opportunities to learn new skills or influence working methods
- Poor opportunities for self-development
- No clear role at work
- Excessive personal or electronic monitoring
- Excessive paperwork

Working without recognition

- Being undervalued at work
- Career uncertainty or stagnation
- Precarious work
- Work of low social value
- Poor pay or pay inequality
- Job insecurity
- Declining standards

Appendix E

Situations and occupations at special risk from violence

(Referred to in section 3.3 of the code.)

The following situations/occupations appear to be at special risk of workplace violence:

- Workers in workplaces located in dangerous, isolated or deprived areas or in services infiltrated by illegality.
- Those working alone, such as nightworkers, home care and community workers, workers in small shops, petrol stations and kiosks, taxi and bus drivers, police officers, journalists, especially investigative reporters, postal delivery workers, cleaners, maintenance and repair staff.
- People working in contact with the public, for example hotel staff, emergency services workers, police officers, waiters, bar staff, social service workers, journalists, hospital and other health service staff, shop workers, transport workers, performers.
- Those working with valuables or in security or crime prevention, e.g. cashiers, bank workers, post office workers, workers dealing with the dispensing and storage of drugs, workers selling or transporting valuables, police officers, security personnel.
- Those working with people in distress, e.g. hospital and other health service staff, workers in emergency units, psychiatric care workers, police officers, social workers, workers in old-age and terminal care, drug-abuse rehabilitation workers and emergency services workers.

In addition, the following factors (also mentioned in Appendix D) are often associated with a risk of conflict that may lead to (or fail to prevent) violence:

Working under excessive, hectic or unbalanced work demands

- Excessive numbers of clients/customers
- Work overload
- Tight deadlines
- No clear working procedure
- Staff shortages or uneven patterns of staffing
- Excessive class size for teachers, caseload for health workers, etc.

Working in dangerous or unhealthy environments

- Lack of means of controlling risks (for practical, financial or other reasons)
- High levels of noise
- High risk of physical injury
- Risk of critical incidents in service
- Risk of aggression or violent intrusions

Working in an unsatisfactory human environment

- Autocratic organization
- High levels of harassment, bullying or mobbing
- Poor communications or lack of consultation

-
- Poor problem solving
 - Widespread misbehaviour, indiscipline, underachievement and lack of motivation
 - Isolation from colleagues in an unsatisfactory workspace
 - Exclusion from work-related and social meetings with colleagues

Working with insufficient control over one's own job

- Erratic, unclear or conflicting tasks or demands
- Lack of autonomy and control over one's own work
- Poor opportunities for self-development
- No clear role at work
- Excessive personal or electronic monitoring

Working without recognition

- Being undervalued at work
- Career uncertainty or stagnation
- Poor pay or pay inequality
- Job insecurity

Appendix F

Violence and stress risk factors for workplaces, enterprises, organizations or groups

(Referred to in section 3.4 of the code.)

Several personal, interpersonal and organizational factors may increase the risk of exposure to workplace stress and violence. However, in considering risk factors, care should be taken to avoid any “labelling” of individuals, and the presence of one or more such factors does not necessarily imply that stress or violence will arise.

1. Risk factors for workplaces, enterprises or organizations

While most organizations and workplaces in services sectors are potentially exposed to occupational stress and violence, some of them are at higher risk of violence and/or stress, such as those that:

- provide services in direct contact with members of the public, especially early in the morning or late at night;
- are located in high-crime areas;
- operate from relatively insecure premises;
- are small and physically isolated;
- are understaffed;
- are affected by reform, downsizing or major change;
- function in a culture of tolerance or acceptance of stress and violence;
- are characterized by a climate of discrimination, including gender and racial discrimination;
- prohibit or restrict smoking or drinking; or lack appropriate rules;
- have drugs, alcohol or weapons available onsite.

2. Groups at particular risk

Special attention should be given to the likelihood of workplace stress or violence for particular groups of workers (or managers). These may include, but not be limited to, immigrants, people of different ethnic origin or of different sexual orientation, those in ill health, or those from minority groups of any kind.

Appendix G

Risk factors of stress for individuals

(Referred to in section 3.4 of the code.)

A number of personal, interpersonal and organizational factors may increase the risk of exposure to workplace stress, and the following lists give examples. However, the presence of one or more such factors does not necessarily imply that stress will arise. In considering such risk factors, care should be taken to avoid any “labelling” of individuals.

Interpersonal factors

- Poor relationships with the public or clients and exposure to angry members of the public or clients, especially when the service does not meet expectations
- Lack of social support from colleagues
- Conflicts with other staff
- Social or physical isolation
- Poor relationships with supervisors and managers
- Lack of control over one’s situation
- Lack of involvement or participation in decisions
- Exposure to death and suffering
- Inadequate guidance by superiors

Personal factors

- Being the victim or the perpetrator of violence
- Difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities
- Inadequate preparation for dealing with more or different work
- Family and community stressors

Appendix H

Risk factors of violence for individuals

(Referred to in section 3.4 of the code.)

A number of factors may increase the risk of becoming a perpetrator or victim of violence, and the following lists provide examples. In considering such risk factors, care should be taken to avoid any “labelling” of individuals. The presence of one or more such factors does not necessarily imply that violence will arise.

Risk of becoming a perpetrator

Personal interface with circumstances or situations related to the provision of the service

- Being subject to excessive negative stress, tension or irritation
- Being treated unfairly or in an arrogant, dismissive, uncaring manner by the service provider
- Being forced to wait and experience the irritation and frustration this can cause
- Not obtaining timely, satisfactory response from the service

Personal factors

- Difficulties experienced in childhood, including troubled family relationships and low levels of school achievement
- History of violent behaviour
- Impulsiveness and low self-control
- Substance abuse, including excessive alcohol use
- Certain mental illnesses if symptoms are not adequately controlled through therapeutic regimes
- Having been the victim of violence and not properly treated and supported
- Easy access to weapons
- Perceived intrusions into private life at the workplace
- Low self-esteem because of reprimands, downsizing, layoffs and similar occupational experiences
- Prejudice, whether racial or sexual

Risk of becoming a victim

Real or perceived vulnerability

- People in training or on placement
- Workers in precarious job situations
- Young people
- Older workers
- Ethnic and racial minorities
- Women in predominantly male working environments or working for male supervisors
- Single, separated, widowed or divorced women

-
- Inexperienced workers
 - New recruits
 - Having previously been the victim of violence and not properly treated and supported

Personal factors

- Display of unpleasant, irritating attitudes
- Inadequate coping skills
- Loneliness
- Workers who do not subscribe to the explicit or tacit group norms

Appendix I

Signals indicating a special risk of violence

(Referred to in section 3.5 of the Code.)

Violence warning signals may include the following:

- ***Early warning signs***: rapid breathing, clenched fists and teeth, flared nostrils, being flushed, talking loudly, restless repetitive movements such as pacing, pointing or threatening gestures, verbal abuse and excessive swearing.
- ***Escalated risk***: arguing frequently and intensely, marked change in personality and behaviour, hyper-vigilant, obsessive behaviour, throwing items, history of violent behaviour, verbal threats to hurt workers, rage-type reactions to frustration, or forwarding violent comments via email, telephone or letter.
- ***Signs of imminent danger***: substance abuse, fascination with weapons, exotic claims (which may indicate loss of touch with reality), and drastic changes in personality.

Appendix J

Symptoms of stress

(Referred to in section 3.5 of the Code.)

Stress symptoms may include:

- dry throat, muscle tension, headaches, indigestion, tics, insomnia, chest pains and high blood pressure;
- irritability, impulsive behaviour, difficulty in making decisions, lack of discernment, sudden increase in smoking or alcohol use;
- excessive worrying, feeling of worthlessness, brooding, forgetfulness, being easily startled, daydreaming.

Such symptoms are not indicative of high stress levels unless they are found in combination with each other; however, their presence may warrant further investigation and risk assessment.

Appendix K

Sector-specific information on violence and stress

This appendix provides several short studies on specific services sectors or subsectors, but makes no attempt to be exhaustive or cover all relevant sectors. Sectoral working papers on the subject of violence and stress in a number of sectors have been, or are currently being prepared.¹ In services sectors, downsizing, salary freezes or cuts, increasing workloads and rising performance targets, longer hours, and more subcontracting and temporary work are among the potential stressors that can foster a climate of tension driven by uncertainty, exasperation and vulnerability. Work stress and workplace violence negatively affect the performance and efficiency of organizations, mainly through increased sick leave, absenteeism and staff turnover, lower quality of service, productivity and motivation, and professional dissatisfaction. In addition to preventive action on violence and stress, legal and medical assistance can be offered to staff who are victims of violence; legislation and practical measures can be adopted to punish violent acts; and community or national campaigns can be organized to spotlight and reduce sources of violence in services.

Commerce

Little research has been conducted into the extent of workplace violence and stress in commerce. However, surveys in the United Kingdom (one of the few countries in which such research has been carried out) indicate that shop assistants are among the workers most vulnerable to occupational violence. A 2000 study by *Independent Retail News* found that a quarter of those who work in off-licences, newsagents and post offices across the United Kingdom have come face-to-face with robbers, while nearly 50 per cent of independent shop owners have fallen victim to violent attacks. On a daily basis, retailers and their staff face assault, verbal abuse and other forms of intimidation. On average, at least one shop worker is attacked every hour of the working day, 25 per cent of all attacks involve a weapon, while four in ten attacks lead to hospital treatment, a visit to a doctor or time off work. Almost half the shops that had suffered violence had been victims more than once. Over 40 per cent of shopkeepers who had been attacked reported high stress levels, and many of them were considering closing their businesses. Not surprisingly, the increase in crime also causes further problems for retailers, because of increased insurance premiums and greater staff turnover; 37 per cent of staff had left their jobs after being attacked.

A 1998 cross-sectoral study in Australia revealed that 46 per cent of all Australians had experienced either verbal or physical abuse from a co-worker or manager in their working lives. Commerce, which accounted for 21.4 per cent of all victims of workplace violence (18.3 per cent for retail) was second only to manufacturing, with 29.8 per cent of the total.

In Denmark, shop robberies involving violence or threats of violence are a growing problem. Crime registration data indicate that shop and petrol station robberies rose from 622 cases in 1996 to 768 in 2001. Denmark's sectoral social partners responded to this situation of increasing violence and consequent stress by organizing an information and awareness-raising campaign in 2001 to enhance the safety of the retailing work environment. Among other things, the campaign provided

¹ These include the following draft papers, which may be published in 2003: Bert Essenberg: *Violence and stress in the transport sector* (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming); Helge Hoel and Sabir Giga: *Violence and stress in the hotel and catering sector* (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming); Sabir Giga, Helge Hoel and Cary L. Cooper: *Work-related violence and stress in the postal sector* (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming); Sabir Giga, Helge Hoel and Cary L. Cooper: *Work-related violence and stress in the performing arts and in journalism* (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming); Sabir Giga, Helge Hoel and Cary L. Cooper: *Work-related violence and stress in financial services* (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming); Richard Verdugo: *Workplace violence in the education sector: Issues, solutions and resources* (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming); and Benjamin Paty, Dominique Lassarre and Anne Jolly: *Violence et stress au travail dans le secteur de l'éducation* (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming). Further papers may be prepared on public service, telecommunications services and utilities (water, gas and electricity).

guidance to employers and workers on how to reduce the risks of workplace violence through measures such as improved store layout and limits on amounts of cash on premises.

Education

The education environment

Teachers, the largest job category in the education sector, bear the brunt of violence and stress affecting employees. Along with school principals, teachers are also those with the most interaction with internal users (students) and external users (mostly parents) of the service. The intensive interactions between school heads, teachers and students over learning methods and outcomes, and pupil indiscipline that is often due to external factors, create tensions that are sources of violence, particularly in secondary schools. The isolation of teachers, who work alone with students in most classrooms, also plays a role. Teachers may also be perpetrators of violence against students. Moreover, harassment and bullying among students themselves at virtually all levels of education, and external factors such as drugs, poverty and ethnic, racial or religious conflict, create a climate of violence which may have repercussions on staff. Violence occasionally involves firearms used against students and staff either by disaffected students or individuals from outside school, who gain entrance to what is often an unprotected workplace.

Stress affecting education staff arises from many of the same work environment sources: the intensive interpersonal relations which condition educational work; deep-seated changes in the content and modes of delivery of educational services; lack of autonomy; and demands for accountability about academic performance from educational users – students, parents and political leaders.

Scope and impact of violence and stress

Trends in violence within education are not uniform. Some countries (for instance the United States) appear to show a decline in recent years, despite some dramatic instances of firearms-related violence. In other countries and regions, acts of violence appear to be on the upswing. Some OECD countries report that 15-20 per cent of students in different age categories experience some form of violence in schools, and the figure may be higher in some cases of violence in other countries (sexual violence against girls in South Africa, for example). Bullying among students ranges from 4 to 15 per cent in most OECD countries that provide such statistics. The number of teachers targeted by violence is generally lower, in the 2-6 per cent range in several countries (Japan, France, United States). These figures also vary according to urban, suburban or rural settings, and according to the type of violence – higher in the case of threats than actual acts of violence.

The effects of violence are felt essentially in the teaching and learning environment, which may become poisoned, with educational outcomes reduced. Fear and apprehension affect students and teachers alike. However, staff targeted by violent acts tend to have higher rates of absenteeism, may be obliged to stop work, and make claims on educational employers for medical treatment and social assistance, all of which directly impact on operating costs. They may also request reclassification or early retirement, thereby provoking loss of skilled professional labour, with negative implications for student learning.

Workplace stress in education also principally affects teachers and school heads. Somewhat differently from violence, stress levels are related more to individual fears and anxieties (feelings of inadequacy or lack of training for tasks), internal work organization factors and the physical environment (excessive working requirements and long hours, poor organization of tasks, student indiscipline and inadequate administrative support or communication), lack of autonomy and high levels of accountability for results, combined with constant changes or reforms. Although the subject is widely discussed, reliable statistics are difficult to come by. Mid-1990s estimates researched for the ILO nevertheless suggest that between 25 and 33 per cent of teachers in most OECD countries experience high levels of work-related stress. New entrants to teaching appear to be more at risk than others. The consequences take the form of more anxiety and depression among teachers, increased physical ailments provoked by high levels of negative stress, and increased drug and alcohol consumption. Highly stressed teachers may feel overwhelmed by their tasks and withdrawn from students and their work. Absenteeism rates increase, particularly as stress turns into burnout; in extreme cases, stress may lead to suicide. The negative impact on teaching and learning

outcomes can be quite severe, and in any case counterproductive for dynamic working and learning environments, as schools face increasing challenges in knowledge-based societies.

Reporting and monitoring

Information and reporting on violence are still very disaggregated and unsystematic in all but a few countries. Where statistics exist, they are often subsumed under general workplace and illness figures. Psychological harassment, including mobbing by fellow staffers, may not be reported at all in many countries. A recommended first step in addressing problems of violence and stress is to undertake a school or site evaluation of the extent, nature and sources of these problems, and ensure that this is communicated to staff and students.

Risk assessment, prevention, reduction, management and coping measures

Approaches to preventing, reducing, managing and coping with violence and stress in education depend on the nature of the problem, but generally imply involvement of a range of actors at different levels. School and higher level management, teachers' union representatives, medical and insurance staff, but also affected individuals, all have roles to play in addressing violence, stress and both. At the individual level, solutions to violence and stress emphasize training to recognize potential problems and symptoms, counselling and support for victims and sufferers, and transfers to other less stressful or violent environments. Initiatives to promote school or organizational health – the soundness of organizational coherence and its integration of objectives, tasks, problem-solving skills and development efforts – can moderate teacher stress levels, and reduce negative impacts on their health and work behaviour. Organizational interventions to help manage stress in education include redesigning work, ergonomics measures, teacher training and counselling to assist teachers in coping, and organization of school teams to help restore organizational health.

In addition, special measures to prevent violence include developing safe schools policies and programmes, redesigning school access (screening for weapons, installing gates and cameras, and adopting extra security measures), creating a safer physical environment (improved lighting, changing the layout to reduce isolation), redesigned work (team teaching, open parent-teacher meetings), establishing crisis management teams, and interpersonal violence prevention training for students and staff.

Financial services; professional services

Workforce cutbacks within banking, finance and insurance organizations are a major concern for employees: 78 per cent of a sample of union safety representatives reported cutbacks as the major complaint raised by union members. In a poll among members of UNIFI, Europe's largest finance sector union, on the effects of work-related stress in financial services (2000) 83 per cent of respondents reported feeling ill effects from work, including health problems, lack of self-confidence, relationship problems and anger; 79 per cent felt routinely overloaded or burned out, 76 per cent admitted to "cutting corners" because of workload; 74 per cent reported that staffing levels had fallen over the last 12 months; 77 per cent worked unpaid overtime averaging up to four hours a week; 21 per cent had suffered from illness caused by work-related stress; and 9 per cent were reaching or exceeding the levels set by health and safety working time regulations. Research conducted in the financial services sector showed that stress can also increase the likelihood of mistakes and confrontation as workers cut corners to achieve targets – 81 per cent believe anger in the workplace has a negative effect on morale, 74 per cent are less productive when in a bad mood, and 15 per cent work slower (for fear of making a mistake) when their boss is angry. Fear of violence is often on the minds of individuals who handle cash on a regular basis and can be a major cause of mental and physical distress.

Bullying in organizations can be perpetrated in subtle and devious ways, making individuals feel demotivated and worthless. It remains a significant cause of stress at work – mentioned by 30 per cent of Trades Union Congress (TUC) safety representatives who reported stress as a problem. Furthermore, bullying as a cause of workplace stress is reportedly high in banking and finance, at 43 per cent (TUC Focus on Health and Safety Survey, 2000). Accounting for nearly half of all stress-related sickness absences, bullying is particularly prevalent in pressurized sectors such as finance (UNIFI poll of members on understaffing issues in the banking and insurance sector, 2000).

The financial services sector has traditionally been dominated by male workers, particularly in senior management posts, and this can create hostile working environments for female employees. Sexual harassment, particularly within the banking sector, is prevalent in several European countries, according to a European Commission survey (1998). Focus group interviews revealed that participants considered it to be widespread and many had personally witnessed or experienced cases. However, they often found the term “sexual harassment” unsuitable, as related harassing behaviours are frequently perceived as “normal”. Moreover, women were often unwilling to challenge unacceptable sexual behaviour, as this was viewed as risking their employment within the bank.

Health services

The health service environment

Several health sector occupations, such as doctors, nurses and social workers, appear high in the list of occupations with high stress levels,² and health-care workers are particularly at risk of workplace violence – almost one-quarter of all violent incidents at work are concentrated in this sector.³ Ongoing restructuring in the health sector, varying from country to country and situation to situation, exacerbates this risk. People’s access to health care is endangered if health workers feel under strain in work situations where staff shortages, low pay, shift work, transport to work, and other conditions make them particularly vulnerable to stress and violence; many leave the profession for such reasons.

Scope and impact of violence and stress

For health workers, who have direct contact with people in distress, experiences of stress and violence are so common that they may be considered an inevitable part of the job.

In the United Kingdom, recent reports show that between one-quarter and one-half of National Health Service (NHS) staff report significant personal distress, with many stressors being unique to health care. Levels of occupational stress are reportedly higher in the NHS than in otherwise comparable professions, with 28 per cent of nurses suffering at least minor mental health problems, compared to 18 per cent in the general employed population. The costs are high in terms of sickness rates (5 per cent, costing the NHS £700 million each year) and loss of staff: over 30,000 nurses left the profession in 1996 alone, increasing the strain on those who remain.⁴

Violence at work against health personnel is a widespread problem in developing, transition and industrialized countries. While ambulance staff are reported to be at greatest risk, nurses are more likely on average to experience violence at the workplace than other occupational groups. Since the large majority of the health workforce is female, the gender dimension of the problem is evident.

According to recent country surveys, a majority of health-care workers experienced at least one incident of physical or psychological violence during the previous year: 75.8 per cent in Bulgaria; 67.2 per cent in Australia; 61 per cent in South Africa; in Portugal, 60 per cent in a health centre and 37 per cent in a hospital; 54 per cent in Thailand; 46.7 per cent in Brazil.⁵ In several countries, the pattern seems to be that patients are the main perpetrators of physical violence, while staff are the main perpetrators of psychological violence. The country surveys confirm the difficulty of establishing a profile of people committing acts of workplace violence, and highlight the risks associated with generalization and stereotyping in this area. Psychological violence is more

² On a stress rating scale of 0 to 10, elaborated by the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, Di Martino (2003) found that occupations with high stress levels, equivalent to 6 or above, include dentists (7.3), doctors (6.8), nurses (6.5) and social workers (6).

³ Di Martino, 2003.

⁴ Cottrell, 2000.

⁵ Di Martino, 2002.

prevalent than physical violence, and is widespread throughout the health services: verbal abuse was the main area of concern, reportedly experienced by between 27 per cent and 67 per cent of respondents, followed by bullying and mobbing, reported by between 10 and 30 per cent of respondents.

Workplace violence is recognized as an important generator of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). According to surveys, between 40 and 70 per cent of its victims report significant levels of PTSD symptoms, such as being super-alert and watchful, trying not to think or talk about what happened, feeling chronic fatigue or being bothered by repeated memories of the incident. An Australian study identified a significant relationship between exposure to bullying at work and emotional injury, highlighting the importance of psychological violence in stress generation.⁶

This correlation between violence and stress is significant not only in assessing the overall impact on the individual but also in determining their global impact in terms of cost and efficiency for organizations and effectiveness of health systems. According to a survey of the American Nurses Association, 76 per cent of 7,251 responding nurses reported increased patient load, and 75 per cent said this was resulting in declining quality of care.⁷ An American Medical Association report notes that many nurses leave their job, that nurses' burnout rises with growing caseload, and that high nursing caseloads may account for 20,000 unnecessary deaths per year.⁸

Causes

The reasons for workplace violence and stress are identified at organizational, societal and individual levels, showing complex interrelationships. The accumulation of stress and tension in demanding health occupations – under strain from societal problems and the pressure of health system reforms – contribute to emerging violence. At an individual level, health workers tend to rank patients' personality as the leading factor generating violence, followed by the social and economic situation in the country and, well behind, work organization and working conditions. However, when categorized into individual, societal and organizational factors, all three contributing factors appear to be of equal importance in the analysis of risks of violence and stress, with organizational factors playing a key role.

Reporting and monitoring

Regarding workplace violence, international studies indicate that reporting procedures are often lacking, there is no proper investigation (e.g. in 63 per cent of cases in Thailand), the perpetrator is not prosecuted (e.g. 50 per cent of cases in Australia), and the victim feels dissatisfied about the way the incident is handled. Weak response structures and lack of victim support lead to significant underreporting (e.g. only 8-12 per cent of incidents in Australia were reported). Victims of workplace violence do not report incidents because they think it would be pointless, feel humiliated or fear negative consequences (e.g. Bulgaria: 57 per cent, 66 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively).

Strategies addressing stress and violence

Analysing the origins and risk factors in health sector workplaces is a precondition for developing policies and action in an appropriate way, identifying priority areas and allocating resources. With regard to workplace violence, current measures focus on a more immediate response, such as security measures and improvement of the physical environment, rather than on strategic and organizational factors. In the event of a violent incident, the support of victims should

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ American Nurses Association: *Analysis of American Nurses Association staffing survey* (2001). See web site www.nursingworld.org/staffing/ana_pdf.pdf.

⁸ "Dying for lack of nurses", in *New York Times*, 25 October 2002.

have first priority, providing medical and psychological aid at different stages, including peer and management support, as well as complaint procedures, legal aid and rehabilitation measures.⁹

Recommendations from country reports on how to address workplace violence in the health sector reflect an approach that integrates interventions at the organizational, societal and individual levels, with a clear focus on preventive action. Interventions should focus on: (a) general conditions in society and the legal framework; (b) normative interventions, such as guidelines and management competencies; and (c) interventions at the environmental and individual levels. In many countries, strategies could start by raising awareness and building understanding among health personnel and other parties concerned at all levels. The crucial role of social dialogue in defusing work-related stress and violence at work in the health sector is increasingly recognized. Consequently a participatory approach, whereby all parties concerned have an active role in designing and implementing anti-stress and anti-violence initiatives, is highly recommended.

Hotels and catering

The hotel and catering industry has been identified as one of those most at risk of physical violence within the European Union and EFTA countries. Staff may have to work in highly stressful conditions, with frequent contact with intoxicated clients and customers. Exposure to violence and sexual harassment is sometimes viewed as being a regular occurrence and a part of the job in the sector. Half of all recorded incidents of violence, for example in Norway, happen inside or directly outside hospitality industry establishments and are largely connected with alcohol or drugs abuse.

Other specific factors conducive to violence in this industry are unusual working hours and a generally sexualized environment; the large number of persons working alone; and the vulnerability of the workforce, which is made up largely of young, part-time or transient workers, with little experience and limited training, most of them female and including many ethnic minority or migrant workers.

Stress factors in the hospitality industry include: intensive interaction with customers; increasing customer demand for highly diversified and personalized services; tight requirements in terms of timely delivery of services, especially in kitchens and restaurants; unclear roles in a customer-dominated environment; and lack of training for supervisors. These factors result in low control of employees over their work. The health status of workers in the hospitality industry is worse than that of the general population, especially in terms of mental health.

Incidents are reported less frequently than in other industries. Reasons include: the prevalence of small and medium-sized enterprises in the sector that have little capacity to support workers exposed to violence and stress; weak social dialogue in the industry; and a general expectation that violence and stress are part of the job.

Measures proposed to improve the situation in the hospitality industry are based on empowering employees to better cope with the broad variety of customer demands and work situations, and improving their general level of skills, including the personal skills needed in this industry.

Media and entertainment

Scope and impact of violence and stress

Physical violence in the media and entertainment sector particularly affects front-line journalists, and to a lesser extent actors, dancers and musical performers. Psychological violence, harassment and stress are prevalent in acting, dancing, musical performance, broadcasting and journalism. Although the characteristics of such jobs differ widely, there are some common sectoral concerns about violence and stress.

Owing to the nature of their work which involves direct contact with the public and coverage of issues such as public disorder, war, acts of violence and abuse of power, front-line journalists face being shot at, beaten, imprisoned and even killed in the line of duty. War correspondents in particular, in getting as close to the action as possible, face the added danger of being caught in

⁹ Richards, 2003.

crossfire. Their work in bearing witness to acts of violence and the need to treat such events impartially and in detail to raise public awareness, may sometimes lead to post-traumatic stress disorder.

Performance anxiety (stage fright) is a common manifestation of stress among actors, musicians, artists and other performers when auditioning, rehearsing or performing. Furthermore, lack of artistic integrity and social tension has been reported to increase distress for some performers, while control and critique of performance can be a major source of stress; while often intended to improve their performance and artistic excellence, it can under certain circumstances be very hurtful and construed as bullying. From a sample of 162 performers from institutions such as the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Opera House and English National Opera, about one-third of actors, dancers and singers, and half the musicians, reported suffering from performance anxiety. Dancers also report high rates of depression (38 per cent).

Few media and performing arts sector workers have regular hours, eight-hour days, or set lunch breaks, and many are on short-term, intermittent and precarious contracts. For media workers, time constraints and pressures to produce up-to-date information round the clock have meant varying work patterns including working at night and shift work. Performers also report unsocial hours and time spent away from home on tour or travelling as major strains on their personal relationships.

Bullying appears to be particularly prevalent among dancers. From a nationwide survey of bullying in the United Kingdom, 14.1 per cent of respondents from the profession reported being bullied in the last six months, and 29.6 per cent reported being bullied in the last five years; 75 per cent of perpetrators were identified as managers, 33 per cent as colleagues and 8.3 per cent as subordinates. High levels of “unwanted sexual attention” are also reported among dancers (14.4 per cent) as compared to other professions; the comparable figure for banking was 3.8 per cent. Some dancers report social disillusionment and increased health problems resulting from: costume and appearance restrictions; dirty working environments; coercion by management and customers to perform particular types of dance; sexual harassment; physical assault; forced sex; and the effects of stigmatization. Their problems are compounded by alleged “victim blaming”, failure of the authorities to take action and victims feeling responsible for their own state of affairs.

Stage and film actors face the mental and physical stresses associated with performing including accidents, voice strain, excessive stress, unrealistic demands on private lives and, once they achieve success, constant public scrutiny. As a result, excessive smoking, drinking and drug abuse is widespread, and the careers of many talented individuals have suffered as a result of addiction. The main causes of stress for popular musicians have been identified as: a need to reach or maintain high standards (51 per cent); instruments/equipment not working properly (45 per cent); playing or reading a difficult part (42 per cent); lack of work (39 per cent); inadequate practice and rehearsal time before performing (38 per cent); loud noise (37 per cent); long-distance travelling whilst being tired (33 per cent); inability to obtain decent recording or management contracts (32 per cent).

The British Health and Safety Executive advises broadcasting workers to consider the following precautionary measures in situations of public disorder or civil disturbance:

- if possible, find a high, safe vantage point. This may also offer a better view of the situation;
- do not allow lone employees to work in situations where violence is likely;
- identify methods and means of getting in and out of a given location;
- avoid filming or recording conspicuously;
- be ready to leave if the situation is inflamed or prolonged;
- travel in marked vehicles;
- work with someone who knows the local area;
- agree communication channels;
- make use of protective clothing and equipment;
- cooperate with other broadcasting agencies;
- make use of security agencies.

Risk assessment, management and counselling strategies

Information collection and reporting of violent incidents varies considerably between different media and entertainment occupations. The risks faced by journalists and media staff working in dangerous situations and conflict zones are well-known. More than 1,000 journalists and media staff have been killed on duty over the past ten years. Similar statistics are generally not compiled for other occupational groups in the sector. Many journalists are killed, injured or harassed in war zones – either targeted by one side or another or caught in crossfire. Others are the victims of premeditated assault and intimidation by criminals, terrorists or security forces acting secretly and illegally. Journalists or media organizations cannot avoid some casualties, but they can reduce risks by ensuring adequate preparation, training, health care and social protection for journalists in dangerous situations. The International Federation of Journalists has published a “survival guide for journalists”.¹⁰

The International News Safety Institute, the initiative of the world’s largest journalists’ group, the International Federation of Journalists and the International Press Institute, which represents editors and media executives, is campaigning against attacks on media and violence against journalists. Representatives from many countries identified the need to tackle the growing worldwide tide of violent incidents against journalists and media staff, by raising awareness and lobbying for safety. The International Federation of Journalists has called on journalists’ groups, media organizations and all relevant public authorities to respect the following international code of practice for the safe conduct of journalism:¹¹

- (1) Journalists and other media staff shall be properly equipped for all assignments including the provision of first-aid materials, communication tools, adequate transport facilities and, where necessary, protective clothing.
- (2) Media organizations and, where appropriate, state authorities shall provide risk-awareness training for those journalists and media workers who are likely to be involved in assignments where dangerous conditions prevail or may be reasonably expected.
- (3) Public authorities shall inform their personnel of the need to respect the rights of journalists and shall instruct them to respect the physical integrity of journalists and media staff while at work.
- (4) Media organizations shall provide social protection for all staff engaged in journalistic activity outside the normal place of work, including life insurance.
- (5) Media organizations shall provide, free of charge, medical treatment and health care, including costs of recuperation and convalescence, for journalists and media workers who are the victims of injury or illness as a result of their work outside the normal place of work.
- (6) Media organizations shall protect freelance or part-time employees. They must receive, on an equal basis, the same social protection and access to training and equipment as that made available to fully employed staff.

Postal services

Scope and impact of violence and stress

Postal workers have been identified as a “high risk” occupation in terms of exposure to violence and stress. Indeed, in the United States the term “going postal” has become synonymous with severe acts of workplace violence such as homicide. However, less severe and therefore less generally conspicuous acts of violence, such as threats and psychological abuse, occur far more frequently.

The nature of postal work means that employees face the risk of violence and stress emanating from outside the work environment. This was demonstrated recently in the bio-terrorism incidents

¹⁰ Peter McIntyre; International Federation of Journalists, 2003; <http://www.ifj.org/hrights/safecontents.html> .

¹¹ <http://www.ifj.org/ifj/safee.html> .

involving anthrax in the United States, where emergency precautions were taken in response to the threat. These events highlight the omnipresent dangers postal workers face while processing mass volumes of mail, and the need to remain particularly vigilant to suspect devices such as bombs and incendiary devices. Postal workers also face aggression from the public, dangers associated with handling valuables, as well as heightened stress due to organizational reforms and the impact of mergers and acquisitions, globalization, new technology, new work practices, business performance and the like. These factors have strained relationships between managers, employees and workers' organizations, have given rise to job insecurity, dissatisfaction and conflict among the workforce, and can lead to workers feeling unable to cope with the demands of work and an increase in tensions.

According to a stress survey carried out in 2001 by the Communication Workers' Union in the United Kingdom, the leading causes of stress were as follows: bad management 44 per cent, excessive workload, 42 per cent; staff shortages, 20 per cent; job insecurity, 17 per cent; monotonous work, 16 per cent; long hours, 13 per cent; bullying, 11 per cent; lack of control over work, 11 per cent. Stress is high among workers who experience regular acts of violence or threats of violence. In particular, younger workers and workers on fixed-term contracts report violence as a major cause of stress in the workplace; 24 per cent perceive work-related stress as a main health and safety concern and 84 per cent feel more stressed now than they did five years ago. From a sample of postal workers, 14 per cent saw the threat of violence as serious or very serious.

In a nationwide study on workplace bullying in the United Kingdom in 2002, the highest incidence rates were reported in the postal and telecommunications sector, with 16 per cent of the sample reporting that they had been bullied regularly and 27 per cent in the past five years (as compared to a population norm of 14.6 per cent). Managers were identified as the perpetrators in 79.1 per cent of reported bullying incidents and colleagues were perpetrators in 37.2 per cent of cases (as there can be more than one perpetrator, the total does not equal 100).

The prevalence of sexual harassment and the level of underreporting is evident from a regional survey of women postal workers in Italy, in which 20 per cent of the respondents stated that they had rejected sexual advances from their supervisors and colleagues. Although 45 per cent reported being victims of sexual harassment or had witnessed such an event occurring among work colleagues, only 0.5 per cent took any further action by filing a complaint.

Causes of workplace violence and stress

Intense technological progress and moves towards globalization, along with organizational change and substantial efforts nationally, regionally and globally to regulate postal services have left former postal monopolies facing competition for the first time and being forced to consider diversification. These sudden changes in certain circumstances have caused industrial relations to deteriorate, conflict often arising as a result of new management initiatives, and workers feeling a sense of injustice and betrayal. Furthermore, work-related stress is usually associated with jobs that are highly demanding while allowing little control; many areas of postal work correspond to this model, whereby individuals have heavy workloads but little autonomy in completing their assigned tasks.

Information collection and reporting

The American Postal Workers' Union and the Communication Workers' Union in the United Kingdom, in partnership with other organizations, have both recently attempted to gather workplace violence and stress information in the postal sector. National-level health and safety endeavours have also contributed to identifying the extent, causes and consequences of violence and stress in postal services.

Illustrative cases of violence and stress

Contrary to some reports in the press, especially in the United States, workplace homicide in the postal sector is infrequent, while less spectacular forms of psychological violence such as verbal abuse and bullying are much more prevalent. This concentration on "extreme" acts of physical violence may allow some more subtle acts to fester and end in equally tragic circumstances. For example, victims may be unable to cope with abuse and eventually suffer severe health problems.

The recent case of Jermaine Lee, a 27-year-old postal worker from Birmingham in the United Kingdom who hanged himself after years of racial harassment from work colleagues, is particularly pertinent, as the events leading to his death demonstrate the effects of relentless abuse on an individual's self-esteem. Mr. Lee's family were awarded damages for racial abuse at an unprecedented posthumous tribunal. An internal investigation into the matter carried out by Royal Mail identified a "macho" culture of bullying and prejudice.

Risk assessment, management and counselling strategies

The British Post Office's corporate stress risk assessment process depicts an example of reducing worker exposure to hazardous working conditions, improving the quality of the physical environment, moderating job demands, improving skill levels and increasing worker authority, by assessing risk factors that have the potential to cause stress (regardless of the role, type of work and individual factors). The aim is for psychological risk factors to be approached on the basis of a risk assessment and prevention model involving evaluations at the corporate, business and unit levels. The Post Office also conducted a systematic evaluation of a three-year employee counselling programme on stress, reporting a reduction of 66 per cent in days of absence and a saving of £100,000 for every 175 workers counselled. The programme reportedly cost around 15 per cent of the total savings it made for the organization.

Public emergency services

Scope and impact of violence and stress on emergency services

Although *workplace violence* is reported to be increasing even in places that have hitherto been relatively safe, emergency services workers have always faced violence in one way or another, some more than others. For example, a study on ambulance staff in South Africa reported that 70 per cent of them had been subjected to verbal abuse, 50 per cent to physical violence, bullying and mobbing, 40 per cent to racial harassment and 30 per cent to sexual harassment.¹² In Northern Ireland in 2001, there were 376 attacks on fire-fighting crews.

Many studies on *occupational stress* among emergency services workers have found that organizational and administrative factors cause more stress than aspects specifically related to their tasks. In a study of emergency medical service workers,¹³ sources of stress included rotating shift work, interference with family life and fear of contracting a disease such as HIV/AIDS or hepatitis. Research on stressful and rewarding aspects of police work in the Netherlands similarly revealed that organizational stressors were more prevalent than task-related stressors. Burnout was associated with a lack of reciprocity between investment and outcomes in relations between officers, citizens, colleagues and their organizations and was positively related to attitudes towards the use of violence and officers' use of violence while on duty.¹⁴ Again, a study of potential sources of stress among Scottish police officers¹⁵ indicated that stressors stemming from organizational aspects, such as perceived staff shortages, inadequate resources, time pressures and lack of communication, were more significant than those relating to police work itself. It found that stress possibly had an adverse effect on the development and maintenance of working relationships with the public, and that officers under stress could pose a real threat to their own safety and that of others. A study on police stress in the United States also found that the key stressors were more related to organizational

¹² Di Martino, 2002.

¹³ E. Boudreaux and C. Mandry: "Sources of stress among emergency medical technicians (Part I)", in *Prehospital and disaster medicine* (Carlsbad, California), 11 (1996), pp. 296-301.

¹⁴ N. Kop et al.: "Burnout, job stress and violent behaviour among Dutch police officers", in *Work and stress*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1999, pp. 326-340.

¹⁵ F.H. Biggam et al.: "Self-perceived occupational stress and distress in a Scottish police force", in *Work and stress*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1997, p. 123.

factors than to the dangers faced in police work or encounters with human misery.¹⁶ Research on perceived sources of stress among firefighters in New South Wales, Australia¹⁷ revealed that the most stressful incidents were motor vehicle accidents, deaths, major fires and incidents involving children. Dealing with injured persons was the other most frequently mentioned stressful aspect of their work, while administrative and organizational factors could not be ignored as stressors.

Many studies refer to high suicide rates among police officers. This might be associated with the availability of means, and the suicide rate among police in the United States was found to be 1.8 times that of those in all occupations combined. Suicide accounted for 13.8 per cent of police deaths, as opposed to 3 per cent in all other occupations. In fact, more officers killed themselves than were killed by others. A mortality study of police officers in Rome also indicated a higher suicide rate among police, which was 1.97 times higher than that of the general population.¹⁸ Stress or inability to cope adequately with stress might be a contributing factor leading them to take such drastic action. Other studies also point to a high risk of police officers taking their own lives.¹⁹ If stress is left untreated, the consequences can be tragic, both for the police officers concerned and for the general public who rely on them for protection.

Harassment within emergency services has been recognized as a problem, particularly in multi-ethnic societies, many of which are now adopting various policies to recruit more officers representing minority communities. Harassment is reported to have often led to premature resignations of staff. The very low representation of women in fire-fighting and police workforces may be partly due to harassment, and female firefighters may encounter sexist attitudes among male colleagues. In a nationwide survey of female firefighters in the United States, over half the respondents reported experiencing sexual harassment. While 43 per cent of them noted sexual stereotyping in task assignments, 16.5 per cent experienced acts of violence to themselves or their property. The study revealed that sexual harassment is a legitimate problem in fire departments, contributing to firefighter stress that may seriously affect the emotional and physical well-being and morale of all concerned. While individual employees are to be blamed for harassment, the study underscored the interplay between organizational context and individual characteristics that not only produces certain workplace behaviour patterns but also perpetuates sexist attitudes.²⁰

Risk assessment, management and counselling strategies

Stress management and counselling is a key issue for emergency services workers, many of whom are seriously affected psychologically by critical incidents specifically related to their jobs, such as death, serious injuries and life-threatening situations. For those who have dealt directly with or survived such incidents, there is often a period of denial, followed by critical incident stress (CIS) or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which may include symptoms such as anger, recurrent recollections or dreams of the event, hyper-vigilance, diminished interest in activities, estrangement from others, difficulty in concentrating and memory problems. Emergency services workers have high rates of PTSD, especially when people have died because it was impossible for rescue workers to save them, in spite of their best efforts.²¹ To address this problem, many services now provide critical incident stress debriefing as part of an organizational stress management programme.

¹⁶ J.E. Storch and R. Panzarella: "Police stress: State-trait anxiety in relation to occupational and personal stressors", in *Journal of criminal justice*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1996, pp. 99-107.

¹⁷ C.C. Moran and E. Colless: "Perceptions of work stress in Australian firefighters", in *Work and stress*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1995, p. 410.

¹⁸ J.M. Violanti: "Violence turned inward: Police suicide in the workplace", in VandenBos and Bulatao, 1996, p. 238.

¹⁹ See *Suicide et vie professionnelle: Les risques du métier*, XXVIII meeting of GEPS, Poitiers-Futuroscope, 30-31 May 1996.

²⁰ E. Rosell et al.: "Firefighting women and sexual harassment", in *Public personnel management*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1995.

²¹ ILO: *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety* (Geneva, 1998), pp. 5.12-5.15.

Affected workers discuss the event in detail, including their feelings, usually in the presence of a trained mental health worker. Debriefings have proved effective in preventing or mitigating PTSD following critical incidents. Organizational stress management programmes may be provided during initial training, as general counselling, and specifically for management of critical incident stress. The study on firefighters in New South Wales reported that about 30 per cent of respondents had experienced stress severe enough to seek help, but 39 per cent of these did not seek help for various reasons. Only 9 per cent reported that information on the availability of such help was given to them during initial training. Although firefighters perceived their jobs as stressful, they also believed that their chances of being psychologically affected were below average. The study noted growing acceptance of stress management programmes.²² The police department in New South Wales, Australia, now uses staff psychologists to provide debriefings for affected individuals within the first 72 hours after a critical incident, because providing assistance quickly may prevent the onset or continuation of more serious problems. Such debriefing normally involves seven steps: (1) establishing ground rules and emphasizing confidentiality; (2) participants describing the incident from their own perspective; (3) describing their thoughts about the event; (4) discussing emotional reactions; (5) assessing their physical and psychological symptoms; (6) learning about stress reaction and responses and coping strategies; and (7) re-entry at the end of debriefing.²³

Transport

Scope and impact of violence and stress

The occupational risks of violence and stress in the transport sector have attracted increasing attention over the years, particularly when workers go on strike after colleagues have been attacked. Staff working in international and national transport services – including plane, ferry, train, bus, taxi and airport services – are potentially those most at risk of violence. Taxi and bus drivers face a number of dangers including working alone at night, in high-crime areas and with cash; they are often targets of robberies and assaults. It has been estimated that taxi drivers have up to 15 times the average risk of exposure to occupational violence, and the taxi business is also highly stressful. Ever-increasing competition over prices, speed and efficiency in the transport sector has led to corresponding pressure on transport staff and operators to go beyond what is permitted in laws, rules and standards; this is a source of stress for many in the sector, and may be compounded by bullying, harassment and even physical violence.

Transport workers are confronted with at least two leading factors of “dangerous workplaces”: public frustration over waiting times or services, and dealing with members of the public who have been drinking or taking drugs. Their main tasks include the transport itself, the provision of information to the public and supervision of the “social safety” of the travelling public, ticket control, and the prevention of vandalism and violent behaviour. In many countries, fare evasion is one of the most important factors related to violence against public transport employees.

Railway and airline staff are more prone to experience prolonged contact with abusive or disruptive passengers during journeys. They may be considered trapped by such passengers in aircraft or train carriages, and the strain can become more pronounced. A study on work-related stress among bus drivers found that it was an occupation with high risks for health and well-being, with comparatively high rates of absenteeism and work-related disability. Lorry, bus, minicab and taxi drivers in many countries also complain of harassment and extortion by members of the armed forces, police officers and customs agents. Workers in the taxi industry are at very high risk of violence on the job, being reportedly 60 times more likely to be murdered at work than workers in other fields.

A distinct aspect of violence in the transport sector is that such behaviour is often directed against passengers and staff alike. While public transport companies are mainly faced with external violence, there are also reports of internal violence, i.e. by managers, colleagues and others.

²² Moran and Colless, op. cit.

²³ R. Leonard and L. Alison: “Critical incident stress debriefing and its effects on coping strategies and anger in a sample of Australian police officers involved in shooting incidents”, in *Work and stress*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1999, pp. 144-161.

Furthermore, railway workers, in particular train drivers and (senior) conductors, are sometimes confronted with suicides and violent deaths. These can be a major cause of post-traumatic stress disorders that can last for years.

Reports from several countries indicate that the number of incidents of violence and aggression against transport workers in all subsectors has increased over the past decade, perhaps due in part to the increased attention given to the issue by the media and by transport companies. However, there is also considerable underreporting, particularly with regard to verbal abuse. In order to better understand the magnitude of the problem and its personal and financial consequences, as well as to develop and implement prevention programmes, governments or concerned employers' or workers' organizations have commissioned surveys or special studies targeted on violence in the transport sector.

Appendix L

Glossary of relevant terms

The following terms may have a variety of meanings depending on the context, the person using the term, the geographical location and the language being used.

Abuse

All behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct and involves the misuse of physical or psychological strength. It includes, among others:

- verbal abuse, including swearing and insults;
- aggressive body language indicating intimidation, contempt or disdain;
- harassment, including mobbing or bullying, racial and sexual harassment.

Assault/attack

Intentional behaviour aimed at physical injury or attack on a person, leading to actual physical or psychological harm. It includes beating, hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, slapping, stabbing, shooting, biting and sexual assault.

Bullying

Repeated or persistent physical mistreatment of a victim by a relatively stronger person, at the workplace or in connection with work, that hurts, humiliates, offends or intimidates the victim. The term is also used to refer to psychological violence, intimidation and persecution, and hence is sometimes used as a synonym for *mobbing* (see below).

Discrimination

Any distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin that impairs equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation, as defined in the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). It includes:

- *Direct discrimination*: Where one person is treated less favourably on the above grounds than another individual is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation; and
- *Indirect discrimination*: Where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put people at a particular disadvantage on one of the above grounds compared with other people, unless that provision, criterion or practice is an inherent requirement of the job and its application is appropriate and necessary.

Harassment

Any act, conduct, statement or request, at the workplace or in connection with work, that is unwelcome to a victim and could, in the circumstances, reasonably be regarded as harassing behaviour of a discriminatory, offensive, humiliating, intimidating or violent nature, or an invasion of privacy. This can include:

- *Racial or ethnic harassment*: Any unwanted conduct, at the workplace or in connection with work, related to racial or ethnic origin, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- *Sexual harassment*: Any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, in a workplace or in connection with work, that makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated, discriminated against or offended.

Mobbing

Systematic, repeated or persistent verbal or psychological action against a victim by several people, at the workplace or in connection with work, that hurts, humiliates, offends or intimidates the victim. Sometimes used as a synonym for *bullying* (see above).

Sufferer

A person who is experiencing symptoms as described under Appendix J, as a result of workplace stress (see the definition in section 1.3.2 of the code).

Threat

Any expression of intent to cause harm, including threatening behaviour, verbal and written threats.