

# WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY TOOLKIT FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

## MODULE 1: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE



# WHAT IS OHS?

## MODULE 1

### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

#### OHS

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is responsible for enforcing OHS laws. These OHS laws, or legislation, establish minimum standards for safe and healthy practices in Alberta workplaces. OHS legislation include specific requirements to help prevent workplace harassment or violence and handle incidents when they happen.

The OHS Contact Centre is open 24 hours a day for Albertans to report workplace incidents or to file a complaint.



# WHAT IS WORKPLACE HARASSMENT?

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### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

#### DEFINITION

Alberta OHS defines workplace harassment as behaviour intended to intimidate, offend, de-grade or humiliate a particular person or group. In other words, it is any behaviour that a person knows or should know that causes offence, embarrassment or humiliation to a worker or group of workers. It is possible to accidentally offend those you work with, so never say or do anything if you are not sure how it will be received.

Workplace harassment is also known by the names on the right.



**19%**  
of women in  
2016

**13%**  
of men in  
2016

**Verbal  
Abuse**  
most common

**Mobbing**

**Workplace  
Bullying**

**Workplace  
Abuse**





# EXAMPLES OF WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

## MODULE 1

### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

#### EXAMPLES

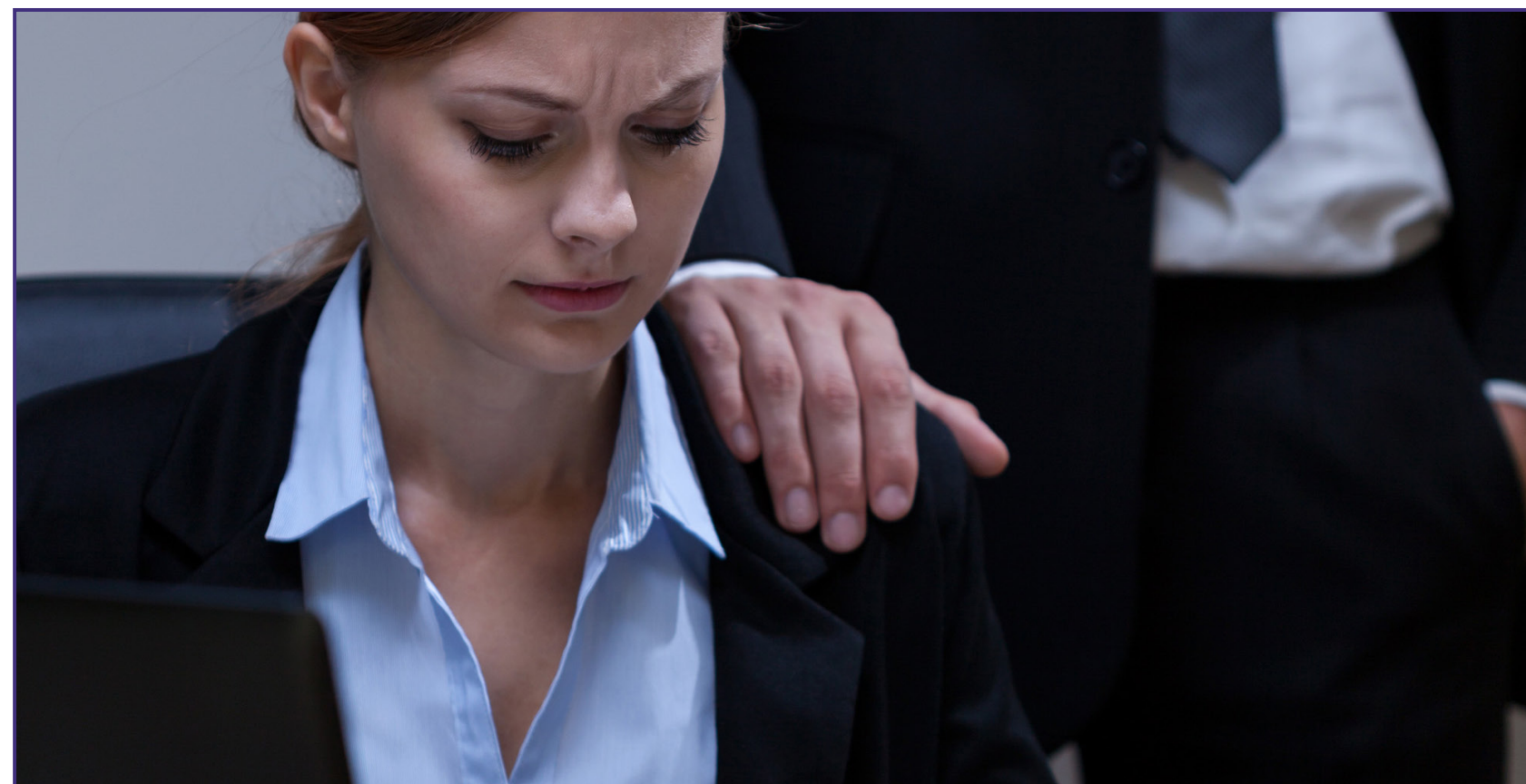
Offensive actions may include, but are not limited to:

**Physical:** Hitting, pushing, groping, tripping, kicking, punching, unwanted touching, or insulting gestures.

**Verbal:** Unwelcome remarks, jokes, name-calling, swearing, insults, threats, teasing, or spreading rumors.

**Psychological:** Avoiding, stalking, staring, preventing from joining an activity, hiding or taking another's property, displaying objectionable pictures.

**Intimidation:** Use physical or organizational power to force a person to perform an action, feel humiliated or fearful. Includes cyber-bullying, sexual harassment, insults and put-downs, lashing out against an employee by yelling and cursing, and threats of violence.



Physical

Verbal

Psychological

Intimidation





# WHAT IS WORKPLACE VIOLENCE?

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#### DEFINITION

OHS defines workplace violence, whether at a work site or work-related, as the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence;

Source: OHS Act, section 1(yy)



# EXAMPLES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

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### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

#### EXAMPLES

Offensive actions may include, but are not limited to:

**Physical attack or aggression:** hitting, punching, shoving, pushing, kicking or spitting; throwing an object at someone; kicking an object the worker is sitting or standing on.

**Threatening behaviour:** shaking a fist in someone's face, trying to hit, showing a weapon at work, trying to run someone down using a vehicle, destroying property or throwing objects.

**Verbal or written threat:** verbally threatening to attack someone, leaving threatening notes or sending threatening emails with intent to harm.

**Domestic violence:** physical, verbal, emotional, economic, religious, reproductive, or sexual abuse in a domestic setting.

**Sexual violence:** sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, sharing sexual photographs without permission, unwanted comments or jokes.



Physical attack  
or aggression

Threatening  
behaviour

Verbal or  
written threat

Domestic  
violence

Sexual  
violence





# HOW TO HANDLE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

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### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

#### STAMP

Stamp out violence and aggression. Watch for these signs if someone's behavior is escalating:

- Staring and eye contact
- Tone and volume of voice
- Anxiety
- Mumbling
- Pacing

\*\*Make sure you are able to leave and get help if the situation continues to escalate.



# HOW TO HANDLE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

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#### DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES:

##### VERBAL

- Don't raise your voice. Use a low tone
- Express concern and be respectful
- Be understanding
- Don't be defensive or argumentative

##### NONVERBAL

- Act calm and confident
- Keep your distance
- Maintain non-threatening eye contact
- Keep hands open and visible
- Avoid laughing/smiling
- Be alert and trust your instincts





# REPORT ALL INCIDENTS

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### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

#### RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS:

##### EMPLOYERS

- Ensure that workplace violence is considered as a hazard.
- Develop a policy and procedures for potential workplace violence.
- Ensure workers are instructed in the recognition, reporting and response to workplace violence.

Reference: OHS Code, Part 27.

##### EMPLOYEES

- Avoid causing or participating in workplace harassment or violence.
- Be familiar with and follow the procedures in place to protect yourself from workplace harassment or violence.
- Participate in workplace violence prevention training.
- Raise any concerns about harassment.
- Immediately report any incident to the appropriate person.





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