

# What do we mean by violence and psychological harassment?

The International Labour Organization defines violence as anytime a person is "assaulted, threatened, harmed, or injured in the course of their work." "The Act Respecting Labour Standards defines psychological harassment as "repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures, that affect an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that result in a harmful work environment for the employee."

Violent and harassing behaviours may be committed by superiors or co-workers, as well as by students, patients, or even parents, men and women.

According to surveys conducted with members of our Centrale, co-workers are most often identified as the alleged harassers.



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**Violence and psychological  
harassment**



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## What should a workplace free from violence and psychological harassment look like?

For a workplace to be free from violence and psychological harassment:

- ✓ It must be assessed to identify the potential risks for violence to occur.
- ✓ Any individual who is a victim of violence or witnesses a violent incident must report it.
- ✓ Personnel must be adequately informed of the risks related to work.
- ✓ Access to the workplace must be controlled at all times.
- ✓ The work must be organized to ensure that workers are not physically isolated from others and without the ability to communicate in case of emergency.
- ✓ An emergency plan must be developed, regularly updated and be known by all personnel; simulation exercises must also be conducted regularly.
- ✓ The employer (or institution, as applicable) must have a zero tolerance policy regarding rudeness, bullying, psychological harassment, or any other form of violence.

## What do violence and psychological harassment look like?

Violence and psychological harassment can manifest in different ways. For example, victims may experience:

- assault and battery;
- bullying;
- insinuations;
- negative looks or gestures;
- hateful words about them;
- superiors or other individuals who prevent them from expressing their opinions;
- others who continually question their judgment;
- constant attacks about their work;
- verbal threats.

## What are the risks?

Tolerance and inaction open the door to escalating violence and psychological harassment. They create workplaces that are harmful to your health. Workers exposed to violence or psychological harassment run a higher risk of experiencing:

- psychological distress;
- symptoms of depression;
- consuming psychotropic substances;
- musculoskeletal problems.

## How can the situation be improved?

Acting alone to address violence and psychological harassment in the workplace is not easy.

**TALK TO YOUR UNION.**

By raising the subject with your union, you alert them to your situation. They may already be aware of other workers experiencing the same problem and be able to put you in touch with them. Together with you and other affected workers, your union can analyze the situation and devise a strategy to remedy the issues arising from the organization of work.

**The problem is not in your head. The organization of work is at fault and it can make you sick.**

**Together, we have the power to act.**