Canadian Perspectives on Conceptualizing and Responding to Workplace Violence

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Although archival data suggests that workplace violence existed in the 1920s, the topic has only begun to receive worthy attention. Despite the efforts of academic pioneers in the 1980s to raise topical awareness, it was not until a series of infamously tragic events in the 1990s that workplace violence became a subject of discussion. This article offers a Canadian perspective on the emerging conceptualization with implications for legislative and organizational responses. The necessity of emphasizing prevention and reaction in a comprehensive model that addresses workplace violence is underscored, particularly before benign actions potentiate into more serious forms of violence. A hierarchy of legislatively informed prevention initiatives is provided, as is a continuum of workplace violence that emphasizes the recognition of psychosocial acts. The relationship between a well workplace and a violence-free workplace is illustrated thematically throughout.

KEYWORDS   workplace violence, psychosocial, continuum, prevention, responses

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental characteristics of a well workplace is that its employees, customers, and visitors are not subjected to actions or events that jeopardize their safety. Fortunately, the responsibility to mitigate foreseeable threats

is a value typically espoused at all levels of an organization. To this end, it is generally understood that this responsibility is best executed as a uniform venture among all involved. Unfortunately workplace violence is not a rare occurrence, with more than one half of organizations with greater than 1,000 employees in the United States acknowledging at least one incident in the year 2005 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006), and despite best efforts and intentions, not all actions are foreseeable and preventable. This then necessitates workplaces to develop an understanding of the range of actions that constitute workplace violence and a corresponding range of prevention initiatives.

DEFINING VIOLENCE IN A WORKPLACE CONTEXT

Each day, workers face potential threatening experiences including but not limited to bullying, harassment, or physically aggressive acts by coworkers, supervisors, clients, or people extraneous to the work environment (Edwards, 2009). Like many social phenomena, *workplace violence* lacks a uniform definition and resultant theoretical framework. It also suffers from what Crawshaw (2009) calls a "growing problem of conflicting terms and definitions" (p. 263). Indeed, just some of the behaviors and activities that have been subsumed under this category include homicide, terrorism, tyranny, interpersonal violence, armed robbery, verbal threats, sexual harassment, spreading gossip, needlessly consuming required resources, stalking, performing initiation rites, theft, vandalism, shaking fists, throwing property, humiliating or annoying a person, swearing, using condescending language, engaging in pranks, or spreading rumors (Ashforth, 1994; Baron & Neuman, 1998; Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety [CCOHS], 2012; Mayhew & Chappell, 2007). In an effort to uncover the patterns and consequences, researchers have borrowed and applied conceptual frameworks to the workplace in more prominent areas of concern such as bullying (Monks et al., 2009), emotional abuse (Keashly, 1998), interpersonal violence (Ontario Safety Association for Community and Healthcare, 2009), and sexual harassment (Barling, Rogers, & Kelloway, 2001).

The Canada Labour Code (1985),which guides Canada's federal employment standards, defines *workplace violence* as "any action, conduct, threat or gesture of a person towards an employee in their work place that can reasonably be expected to cause harm, injury or illness to that employee" (s. 20.2). The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2003) offers the following definition: "Any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, injured in the course of, or as a direct result of, his or her work" (p. 4). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) defines *violence* as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high

likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (p. 5).

All too often, violence is conceptualized only as a physical action, such as an assault, and in fact, many current legislative guidelines use this limited definition. Fortunately, however, there is growing recognition that violence is physical and psychological and can originate from inside or outside the

TABLE 1 Four Types of Workplace Violence

Type	Persons Involved	Actions or Characteristics	Risk Factors	Response Strategies
I	Employee and an external perpetrator (e.g., robber)	• Physical violence by unknown criminal with no tie to the organization • Robbing a bank or convenience store, or mugging or robbing a taxicab driver	• Handling or exchanging money with the public • Working alone • Working at night or early in the morning • Working in secluded locations	• Emphasis on physical security • Employee training • Limit or eliminate single-staffing practices
II	Employee and a client (or a patient, family member, or customer)	• Acts that typically occur during the worker's normal course of employment • Perpetrator has a legitimate connection to the organization, even if only temporary (e.g., bus patron)	• Emotionally charged environment • Health care and emergency medical response workers; social service employees	• Regular training in preventive measures
III	Two coworkers (can be current or former employees)	• Harassment, stalking, and bullying • Most likely to present observable warning signs to other employees • Perpetrator often targets the person he or she perceives as responsible for some wrongdoing	• Employees with trait anger, emotional dysregulation, or personality style • Perceived organizational injustice	• Attend to warning signs and implement prevention programs • Consistent disciplinary procedures
IV	Two employees in a personal relationship	• Victims of intimate partner violence whose situation manifests at work	• Abusive relationship • Economic stress • Work-home interference	• Support, not punishment, for victims of intimate partner violence

Source: Baron, Neuman, & Geddes, 1999; Castillo & Jenkins, 2004; Douglas & Martinko, 2001; FBI, 2004, 2011; Grayson, 2010; LeBlanc & Barling, 2005; Lieber, 2007; Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 2009; Public Services Health and Safety Association, 2010.

workplace (French, 2008). Neuman and Baron (1998) recognized this ambiguity and proposed that the term *workplace violence* should be limited to cases of direct physical assaults between persons. They did not, however, ignore the psychosocial acts but merely argue that the phrase workplace aggression more appropriately encompasses this broader range of behaviors. Indeed, this is captured in the title of a similar publication in which they refer to *workplace aggression* as "the iceberg beneath the tip of workplace violence" (Baron & Neuman, 1998, p. 447). Equally important, Greenberg and Barling (1999) note that nonphysical aggression occurs more frequently than physical aggression in workplace settings (p. 905) and the family violence literature underscores the fact that nonphysical aggression often precipitates physical actions (Koss et al., 1994; Stets, 1991; Tolman, 1992). Thus primarily physical definitions of *violence* (Jenkins, 1996; LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002) are generally utilized for conceptual clarity rather than to dismiss nonphysical acts as forms of violence. However, more holistic definitions do exist (CCOHS, 2012; Mantell, 1994) that subsume different severities of aggressive acts within a broader framework that pinnacles at violence even if the acts themselves are not inherently so. By adopting such a definition, the magnitude of discreet and often psychological or social behaviors that are also harmful to a person's psyche are validated, thus fitting with the ecological model of employee wellness. It also supports the contention of psychology and criminology literature that contends that crime victimization can have negative emotional and affective consequences, even if a physical injury is not endured (Gabor & Normandeau, 1989; Leymann, 1985; Miller-Burke, Attridge, & Fass, 1999). The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2004) states that all "forms of conduct that create anxiety, fear, and a climate of distrust in the workplace…are part of the workplace violence problem" (p. 13). Most contemporary classifications of workplace violence use a model that consists of the following four categories or typologies (see Table 1).

DETERMINING THE EXTENT OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Violence has occurred at the workplace since organized labor was incepted. Indeed, newspaper archives dating back to 1926 and 1934 describe the workplace shootings orchestrated by James Hannigan and Rosaire Bilodeau (Postal employee runs amok, 1926; Crazed gunner shoots eight, 1934). The academic study of workplace violence traces back to psychiatrist Carroll Brodsky's (1976) *The Harassed Worker,* but despite being novel and extensive, these ideas remain virtually disregarded for prior to 1980 concepts such as violence in the workplace and occupational homicide did not exist (French, 2008). This is not because they did not occur but rather because of a lack of systemic examination and to an extent disinterest (Muchinsky, 2000). In 1986, psychologist Heinz Leymann, a family therapist, expanded his professional

interest in interpersonal conflict to include the workplace and wrote about mobbing, the collective bullying against an individual and workplace psychological violence. However, it was not until the late 1980s, amidst a series of U.S. Postal Service (USPS) shootings, that the North American public began to become mindful of the possibility that violence can occur within their work settings. Between 1983 and 1993, 11 shootings involving current and former USPS employees resulted in 35 deaths and catapulted the phrase *going postal* into the vernacular (Johnson, 1993), though research by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (NCASA; 2000) indicated that the homicide rate among postal service employees is not higher than the general workforce. The report did, however, note that the rate of overall workplace violence in the United States was unacceptably high as, in 1999, "one in twenty workers was physically assaulted, one in six was sexually harassed, and one in three was verbally abused" (p. 1). What could not be discerned, however, was whether this was an emerging trend or a longstanding occurrence.

In Canada, workplace fatality statistics are maintained by provincial workplace compensation boards that until 1993 were neither mandated nor regularly provided data to Statistics Canada. The data that is now collected however remains limited as it only includes workers and occupations covered by a provincial compensation boards omitting violence affecting self-employed workers, unpaid family member employees, and professional independent contractors (Marshall, 1996). Presently, Statistics Canada continues to collect and publish workplace violence data, but even its own statistician acknowledged that "given the lack of national data…the nature, severity and prevalence of the problem has been difficult to quantify" (de Léséleuc, 2007, p. 7). Thus, in the absence of a national framework, unions including the Canadian Auto Workers (2007), Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Federation of Nurses (2007), and the Ontario Public Sector Employees Union (2009) have undertaken roles of public awareness and education regarding the detrimental effects of workplace violence, including the physical and psychological stress responses that workers can encounter because of the fear or anticipation of violence even in its absence (Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2011).

Nevertheless, with improving data collection practices throughout North America, prominent criminologists, academics, and the media alike were quick to note that workplace homicide was the fastest growing category of murder in America having tripled during the 1980s (Baron, 1993; Bowen & Formisano, 2000; O'Boyle, 1992). By the turn of the century, workplace violence had become a significant issue of public concern and social policy. The early 2000s witnessed the emergence of academic and popular press books in the field (Barling, Kelloway, & Hurrell, 2006, Futterman, 2004; Namie & Namie, 2000), but unfortunately, this reinforced the historical information gap between the rich and poor as workplace violence policies and data is continually sparse in developing nations (French, 2008).

If one was to judge solely by the actions that are portrayed by the popular media, it would appear that physical violence, including assault or even homicide, is a regular occurrence. Indeed, Leonard and Sloboda (1996) caution against interpreting workplace violence data at face value since a distinction between coworker-on-coworker violence is rarely made. In fact, in their review of 90 articles published between 1987 and 1995, 26% discussed violence between current or former coworkers but reported homicide figures that included crimes occurring at work but outside of the employer's control such as robberies. For clarity, the term *intraorganizational violence* (Barron, 2000; Merecz, Rymaszewska, Mościcka, Kiejna, & Jarosz-Nowak, 2006) has been used in the literature to refer to violence between current or former agents of an employer. The following are three such cases that were prominent in Canada during the time of the USPS employee shootings. In 1996, Theresa Vince, an administrator for Sears Canada in Chatham, Ontario, was murdered by her supervisor after a lengthy history that included harassment and stalking. In 1999, Pierre Lebrun, a bus driver for OC Transpo in Ottawa, Ontario, killed four employees and two others after being taunted for years because of a speech impediment. Lastly, in 2005, nurse Lori Dupont of Windsor, Ontario's Hotel Dieu Hospital was stabbed to death by her former partner, Marc Daniels, a physician who was also employed at the facility. Although these tragedies would ultimately lead to legislative changes at the provincial and federal levels, it is critical to ask whether these events accurately capture the nature of workplace violence (Leonard & Sloboda, 1996).

According to Canadian data from 1988 to 1993, only 2% of fatal workplace injuries were attributed to violent acts. Instead, more than one half of all work-related deaths were caused by exposure to harmful substances (20%), transportation accidents (19%), or being struck by an object (18%; Marshall, 1996). In the United States, 2007 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the lowest incidence of workplace homicide since reporting practices began in 1991 and a 50% decline since the peak in 1994 when 1,080 workplace homicides occurred. Although this incidence rate is higher than Canada's, where 13% of fatal occupational injuries result from assaults and violent acts (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007, p. 7), it still remains fourth behind transportation accidents, falls, and being struck by an object as the leading cause of workplace fatalities. Thus, though violence at work resulting in fatalities is undoubtedly tragic, it is equally important that toxic exposure and environmental safety are addressed, and proper equipment and adequate training are in place to protect workers from all potential causes of occupational death.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSES TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN CANADA

Legislative deterrents of workplace violence exist in a number of forms that often vary by jurisdiction. The most basic yet widespread in Canada is known as the general duty provision, often contained within a province's

occupational health and safety legislation, which requires that employers take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of employees" (CCOHS, 2012). Beyond this provision, many Canadian jurisdictions have adopted specific definitions and legislative requirements for employers to address workplace violence, harassment, bullying, and mental distress. This is crucial and timely given that psychological intimidation such as bullying is estimated to account for 18% of work-related illness (Serantes & Suarez, 2006). Table 2 provides an overview of legislative requirements by Canadian jurisdiction. It is interesting to note that though there are occupational health and safety statutes, there are no legislated definitions of *workplace violence* and/or *harassment* in Canada's one officially bilingual province, New Brunswick, or the three Canadian territories. Additionally, the newest territory, Nunavut, does not have a specific occupational health and safety act, but per the 1993 Nunavut Act, it follows the occupational health and safety provisions of the Northwest Territories from which it succeeded.

Edwards (2009) notes that more progressive legislation is moving toward a "growing recognition that violence extends beyond physical acts to include psychological violence" (p. 2). She notes that recent amendments to the Canada Labour Code expanded the definition of violence beyond physical injury, and in the case of Manitoba's provincial legislation, for example, *violence* is defined "any threatening statement or behaviour that gives a person reasonable cause to believe that physical force will be used" (p. 2). This proactive rather than reactive definition does not require that an act has already occurred to be considered violence; the threat of it happening provides employees with recourse and mechanisms to promote their safety. In addition, Manitoba's legislation contains broad provisions to promote

TABLE 2 Legal Provisions by Canadian Jurisdiction

	General Duty	Definition of Violence	Interpersonal Violence	Harassment on *Code* Grounds	Personal Harassment	Working Alone
Federal	x	x		x	x	
British Columbia	x	x		x	x	
Alberta	x	x				
Saskatchewan	x	x		x	x	
Manitoba	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ontario	x	x	x	x	x	
Quebec	x			x	x	
New Brunswick	x	x				
Nova Scotia	x	x				
Prince Edward Island	x	x				x
Newfoundland	x	x				
Yukon	x					
Northwest Territories	x					
Nunavut	x					

workplaces that are free from harassment, and similar labor standards exist in Quebec, Saskatchewan, and most recently, British Columbia. Some jurisdictions have also adopted requirements for employers when employees are working alone, and many labor ministries have produced guidelines that are specific to occupational groups at an increased risk for violence. Having all Canadian jurisdictions adopt comprehensive provisions beyond physical acts of violence should be the next step toward a preventive and responsive model of workplace violence.

THE CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE: INCLUDING PSYCHOSOCIAL EVENTS

The continuum of violence is a theoretical construct that recognizes that physical, psychological, social, and even spiritual violence are equally important forms of workplace violence to consider. This continuum validates the experiences of victims of all forms of violence, not just physical, which are only now beginning to develop recognition as legitimate forms. Lippel and Quinlan (2011) posited that the relative invisibility of psychosocial effects and outcomes compared to obvious physical or illness-related risks might explain the absence of regulatory frameworks in this domain. Nonetheless, though the consequences of physical violence are frequently the most visual all expressions and forms of violence are harmful, and ultimately detrimental to employee and organizational wellness. The continuum model recognizes the fluidity of violence risk, which can change unexpectedly based upon fluctuations in any number of occupational, environmental, and personal characteristics of the workforce.

The continuum model itself is not new and draws upon well-established scholarship in the fields of women's studies (Osborne, 1995), intimate partner violence (Leidig, 1992; O'Keeffe, Brockopp, & Chew, 1986; Sugarman, Aldarondo, & Boney-McCoy, 1996), child abuse (Wolfner & Gelles, 1993), racial discrimination (Sanders-Phillips, 2009), and military/conflict studies (Cockburn, 2004; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). Within this field Mantell (1994) developed a workplace violence spectrum that describes unwanted behaviors ranging from covert—anonymous letter writing—to overt—intimidation—to dangerous, assault. Similarly, Neuman and Baron's (1997) three-factor model of workplace aggression provides conceptual overlap with the continuum of workplace violence (Figure 1). In this model, behaviors are sorted into three factors: (1) expressions of hostility, (2) obstructionism, and (3) overt aggression. Furthermore, behaviors may be delineated by their visibility or covertness. Expressions of hostility can include staring or dirty looks, belittling opinions, ignoring "the silent treatment," obscene gestures, public ridicule, unfairly negative performance reviews, verbal harassment, or spreading rumors. Acts of obstructionism, likely to interfere with

		Physical Actions	Verbal Actions
	Overt aggression	• Physical assaults • Weapons offenses • Theft • Rape • Arson • Biting • Murder	• Inflicting psychological trauma • Hateful expressions of anger
	Mobbing	• Sabotage • Stalking	• Spreading rumors • Taunting
	Bullying		• Organizing actions against the victim
	Harassment	• Pranks • Property damage • Sexual	• Insults • Sexual • Discrimination
	Threatening behavior	• Throwing objects • Destroying property	• Statements that elicit alarm or threaten a person's welfare
Escalating expressions of violence	Intimidation	• Shaking fists or other gestures	• Statements that instill fear or alarm
	Disrespect	• Eye rolling • Laughing at a person	• Swearing • Using condescending language

FIGURE 1 Continuum of workplace violence. *Source*: Buss (1961), CCOHS (2012), Crisis Prevention Institute (2012a, b). Mantell (1994), Neuman and Baron (1998).

work productivity itself, include causing delays, failing to respond to phone calls, memos e-mails or texts, interfering with the person's work, needlessly consuming resources required by the person, or directly refusing to assist. Lastly, overt aggression would include physical attacks, theft or destruction of personal property, destroying work-related property or messages that the worker needs, or threatening violence.

From a similar but distinct theoretical perspective, earlier work by Buss (1961) proposed three overlapping dimensions, rather than discrete categories, of aggression. He proposed that an act of aggression could be plotted according to its location on these dimensions: physical-verbal, active-passive, and direct-indirect. Ramirez and Andreu (2006) described each of these dimensions:

> The physical-verbal dimension distinguishes between whether one uses physical means or words to harm another person.…The active-passive dimension refers to the extent to which the aggressor actively engages in a behavior aimed at harming someone, with passive aggression referring to causing harm by not doing something…Direct aggression involves face-to-face confrontation between the aggressor and the target. It is defined as any behavior aimed at the goal of harming another living being…Indirect aggression is defined as any behavior aimed at the goal of harming another living being that is delivered circuitously through another person or object, even if it must nevertheless be intended to harm someone. (p. 6)

Lastly, the component of lateral violence is included in the continuum given the important distinction between externally-motivated and intra-organizational violence.
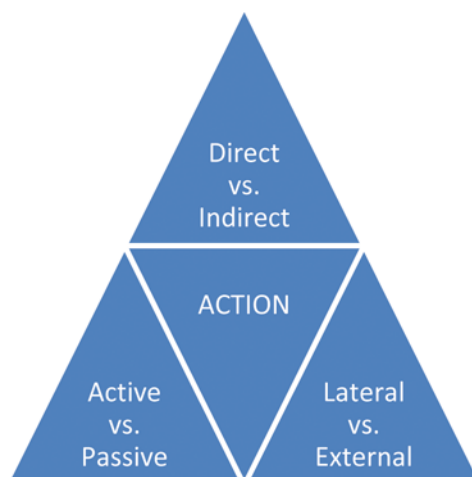
FIGURE 2 Relationship between the factors in the continuum of workplace violence (color figure available online).

Each physical or verbal action also needs to be analyzed along three distinct domains:

1. Active versus Passive
   - Active: engaging in a behavior aimed at harming someone
   - Passive: Causing harm through an act of omission
2. Direct versus Indirect
   - Direct: A personal confrontation between the aggressor and victim
   - Indirect: Any behavior intended to cause harm that is delivered circuitously (e.g., by using an accomplice or mechanism)
3. Lateral (Intraorganizational) versus External
   - Lateral: violence within an organization perpetrated by an employee
   - External: Primarily Type I violence that is perpetrated externally onto the workplace.

Thus, each violent occurrence is comprised of four components: the action itself and each of the three domains identified above as illustrated in Figure 2.

EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS, INTERVENTIONS, AND RESPONSES

As with any problem, a focus on prevention must accompany a reactive response to ensure a comprehensive and thorough plan to address the concern (Figure 3). The foundation of workplace violence prevention is the establishment of policies and procedures to protect employees from known occupational hazards and mitigate risks of violence among occupational
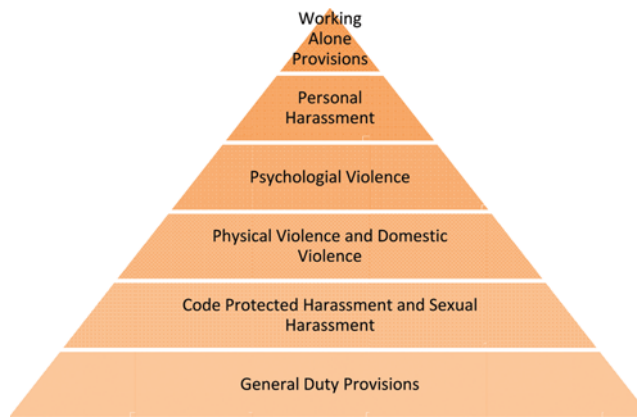
FIGURE 3 Hierarchy of workplace violence prevention initiatives (color figure available online).

groups that could potentially be exposed to such threats. This requirement is already mandated by the general duty provisions common to most occupational health and safety statutes (Table 2). The next level represents the importance of developing antiharassment policies that prohibited work-related discrimination related to prohibited grounds under the Canadian Human Rights Act (1985). Prohibited grounds include race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, criminal history (pardoned conviction), and sexual orientation. Additionally, the Canada Labour Code (1985) requires all employers to have policies related to sexual harassment in the workplace (s. 247.4). Employers can mitigate their risk of civil liability by ensuring that written policies explicitly prohibiting harassing conduct, along with remedies for victims, are made available to all employees. Although having a policy itself will not grant immunity, it is a necessary tool that, when developed properly and used in conjunction with responsive practices, will mitigate an employer's risk of civil liability against an employee's claim (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2002).

The third level represents the current minimum standard of workplace violence legislation: physical violence. All jurisdictions and employers should have a clear program that defines, assesses, warns and prevents, and reacts to threats and acts of physical violence in the workplace. Also included at this level are interpersonal violence provisions based upon the argument that coworkers are ideally suited in many cases to identify this category of violence. The fourth level expands upon these approaches but is based upon legislation and policies that include threatening psychological actions as violence. This level reflects the multivariate expressions of violence reflected in the continuum of violence (Figure 1).

In the Canadian Human Rights Code, protected harassment represents the minimum standard of antiharassment prohibition. Although employers are obligated to ensure that employees are free from sexual and harassment

based upon prohibited grounds, contemporary policy statements should also include bullying, mobbing, and similar misconduct under the term *personal harassment*. Disrespectful behavior, including actions such as touching or pushing, comments including inappropriate jokes and name-calling, or displays like posters and cartoons that "a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome" (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2006, p. 3) defines personal harassment. Some employers already explicitly prohibit this type of conduct in their corporate policies, and the next step is for this to become uniformly applied and enshrined in legislation.

Finally, at the peak of the pyramid we suggest working-alone provisions. All employers are encouraged to examine the occupational risks associated with having employees work independently, especially in isolated settings. Although workers in many high-risk occupations, such as law enforcement or health care, already benefit from regularly working with peers, this security is not extended to all. Frequently, employees at an increased risk of experiencing Type 1 violence, including taxi operators, security guards, home care workers, and convenience store clerks, function independently. Working-alone provisions encourage a full assessment of the nature of independent employment, including the location, job tasks, and potential interaction with the public; the characteristics of the employee(s) who will be working alone, including any medical conditions that may increase their vulnerability; and the consequences of an emergency should it occur in this occupational setting. For instance, flashing rear lights on taxis that alert other motorists to call 911 provide a measure of mitigating risk and vulnerability for the driver who works alone. Similarly, scheduling higher risk activities during times when more employees are available to assist with the task or respond to an emergency, or establishing a check-in procedure for lone workers, are potential considerations in a company's working alone provision (CCOHS, 2006).

We are not suggesting that all employees in all settings be scheduled in tandem, as this is impractical and cost-ineffective for a number of operations. We do, however, argue that ongoing risk assessments of these employment situations should be mandated to best ensure the safety of employees and members of the public who are also affected by workplace violence. In fact, these same considerations should be extended to all occupations to promote safe practices. With consideration and support of this model, we encourage all organizations and legislative bodies to embrace a more comprehensive and contemporary model of workplace violence and harassment prevention given the increasing complexity of the phenomenon.

DISCUSSION

The importance of adequate training about workplace violence topics as well as implementation of effective policy enactment cannot be overemphasized. Implicating bystanders as nontargeted and non-neutral parties

in harassment prevention, for instance, is one area of training that can be effective and supportive for the overall working environment (van Heugten, 2011). Another area of training should focus upon educating workers on their right to refuse unsafe work when they suspect an imminent risk of workplace violence. Although this idea still varies largely by jurisdiction, employers and employees alike should be apprised of the work refusal process related to workplace violence in their province, territory, or state. Stress management training for employees, and ideally access to external counselling resources, should be standard practice and incorporated into the organization's Employee Assistance Program (Byers, 1987) given that there is significant overlap between workplace violence and psychosocial factors that are detrimental to employee health. In fitting with the ILO's (1986) position, investigating "interactions that prove to have a hazardous influence over employees' health through their perceptions and experience," related to "job content, work organisation and management, and other environmental and organisational conditions" (Leka, Jain, Iavicoli, Vartia, & Ertel, 2011, p. 558), should also be a priority. Best practices in this area continue to develop and evolve, as this is a new and increasingly complex area; however, the development of and adherence to written zero-tolerance policy, safety audits, ongoing awareness and training for staff, mock exercises, and a unified stance among all company parties against all forms of workplace violence are recommended (Premier's Action Committee for Family Violence Prevention, n.d.).

Ultimately, the future of recognizing all forms of workplace violence across the entire continuum as a legitimate occupational hazard requires a national framework and a commitment to well workplace cultures. Within this endeavor is the necessity of further evidence-based research related to outcomes of workplace violence and the development of a comprehensive data set similar to that in place in the United States. Although recent improvements to both the Canada Labour Code and provincial health and safety legislations are necessary and timely, further education and accountability is required to ensure that violence and harassment across the continuum is addressed in all workplaces regardless of the sector. The breadth of Manitoba's legislation, the emphasis on bullying and harassment as form of work-related mental distress embraced by the Government of British Columbia, and Quebec's recognition of psychological harassment as a form of workplace violence are all worthwhile pillars on which other legislation can be amended. Similarly, the national standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace, published by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (2013), reflects a growing trend toward recognizing the breadth of conduct that can be subsumed under workplace violence. Equally important, however, is a firm commitment by management, unions, and employees toward the prevention of and response to the continually evolving and complex manifestations of occupational violence. This requires a thorough

assessment of cultural, organizational, and the environmental factors of work that may create and perpetuate violence. To echo Hutchinson (2012), "prevailing theorizations and policy definitions emphasize the individual aspects of bullying and overlook the significance of organizational, employment and cultural factors" (p. 637). In much the same way we strive for workplace wellness, we maintain that the dominant perspectives on occupational violence must turn from a focus on individual pathology to a better appreciation of social context and the need for systemic change and prevention. Only then can employees function in healthy workplaces with a strong conviction that the risk of violence in all its forms has been mitigated.

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