

Violence in the Healthcare Workspace

Violence in the workplace is, unfortunately, a phenomenon not uncommon to the healthcare community. Whether you report to work in a lab coat, a badge, or a necktie, the (perhaps eye-opening) fact remains that healthcare personnel are 5x more likely to experience workplace violence than all other industries combined.¹

While we operate in various capacities within the healthcare environment, consistent among us all is the likelihood that each of us has experienced and/or witnessed an incident of workplace violence. And when that happens, the impact can be widespread and lasting.

Workplace violence is not created equal, nor is it always self-evident. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)² identifies four categories of workplace violence:

Type 1 - Criminal Intent: The disruptive individual has no relationship to the business or its employees; violence is typically associated with a crime (e.g., a robbery).

Example: A trespasser commits a violent act in a hospital cafeteria.

Type 2 - Customer/Client: The disruptive individual has a relationship to the business and directs violence toward its employees. This is the most common type of workplace violence in healthcare settings.

Example: A patient is verbally abusive to his or her provider due to dissatisfied service.

Type 3 - Worker-on-Worker: Violence between co-workers.

Example: An employee threatens his or her colleague who was selected for promotion over the employee.

Type 4 - Personal Relationship: The disruptive individual has a relationship with the employee of a company that extends into the workplace.

Example: An estranged partner stalks an employee at their workplace and stages an assault on the premises.

When an incident occurs, whether you experienced the behavior directly, witnessed the behavior, or learned of the behavior, you have a responsibility to report. Robust, accurate, and timely reporting of workplace violence promotes the opportunity to identify trends, right-size employee training and staffing, and proactively contribute to a safer workplace.

WHAT to Report: Report any behavior that has taken place on KP premises that causes a concern for safety.

HOW to Report: Check with your manager and/or local security team for information on local reporting mechanisms, processes, and relevant Points of Contact.

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<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11284571/#:~:text=More%20recent%20data%20indicate%20that,rates%20for%20all%20industries%20combined>

² https://wwwn.cdc.gov/WPVHC/Nurses/Course/Slide/Unit1_5