

Workplace Violence: A Global Epidemic?

Annual NASA Occupational Health Conference

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June 28, 2005

Lake Tahoe, Nevada



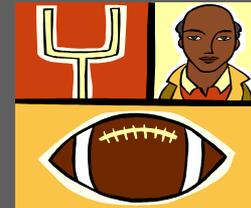
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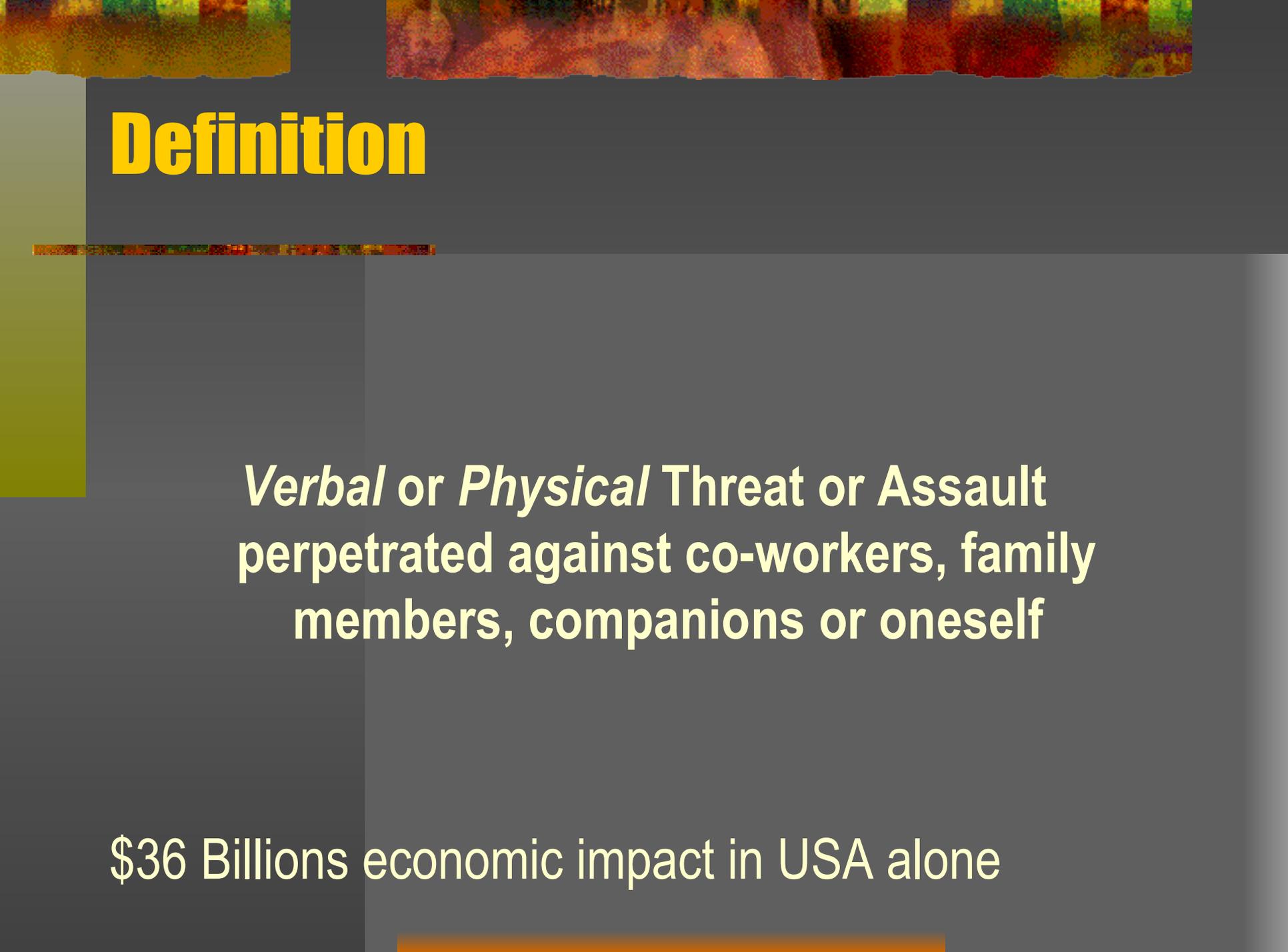
Historical Perspectives

■ Cultural and social acceptance of professions fostering violence “the entertainment industry”

- Roman gladiators
- South American “ball games”
- Knights and jousting
- Modern sports
- Extreme Sports



Only 1% of the US workforce with a fatality rate of 22/100000 or 5 times that of other occupations in 2002



Definition

Verbal or Physical Threat or Assault
perpetrated against co-workers, family
members, companions or oneself

\$36 Billions economic impact in USA alone

How Complex is the Situation

■ Societal perception

- Management (Includes HR)
- Employees and families (victims and perpetrators)
- Labor Unions
- Legal and Medical Professions

■ Organizational Issues

- Economic Drivers
- Hiring Practices
- Workforce Productivity

In 2000 16% of 5,915 occupational deaths were due to violence in the workplace

An Early Start¹ : Past History is Important

- Children who bully others, or who are bullied, are more likely to engage in violent behavior
- Data from 15,686 U.S. children - grades 6-10 who were part of the World Health Organization's Health Behavior in School-aged Children survey
 - Bullying or being bullied was associated with each of four violent behaviors--carrying a weapon, carrying a weapon in school, frequent fighting, and being injured in a fight (Arch. Pediatr. Adolesc. Med. 157[4]: 348-53,2003)
 - 70% of boys and 30%-40% of girls involved in bullying reported carrying a weapon in the month prior to the survey
 - Among boys, frequent fighting and being injured were strongly associated with bullying and being bullied both in and out of school
 - Among girls, frequent fighting and being injured were strongly associated with bullying others both in and out of school.

Promoting Violent Behavior (Estimates)

INDUSTRY (2004)

Valuation (B \$)

 World Wrestling Entertainment	.375
 Martial Arts	3,3
 NFL	.733/Team
 NHL	4,0
 NBA	4,9
 World Soccer Cup	2,5 (UK)



USA TODAY Article 11-7-2004

Stephanie Armour, USA TODAY, following an investigation of 224 fatal workplace incidents reported that:

4. Managers are not well prepared to deal with violence in the workplace
2. One employee is killed and 25 seriously injured weekly in the workplace by co-workers or ex-coworkers
3. In 8 out of 10 instances could have been prevented if attention would have been paid to the warning signs

Media and Violence

- American children between 2 and 18 years of age spend an average of 6 hours and 32 minutes each day using media
- The National Television Violence study evaluated almost 10 000 hours of broadcast programming from 1995 through 1997 and found that
 - 61% of the programming portrayed interpersonal violence, much of it in an entertaining or glamorized manner
 - The highest proportion of violence was found in children's shows.
 - Of all animated feature films produced in the United States between 1937 and 1999, 100% portrayed violence,
 - the amount of violence with intent to injure has increased through the years.
 - More than 80% of the violence portrayed in contemporary music videos is perpetrated by attractive protagonists against a disproportionate number of women and blacks
 - ***American media, in particular, tend to portray heroes using violence as a justified means of resolving conflict and prevailing over others***
- ***Research has associated exposure to media violence with a variety of physical and mental health problems for children and adolescents, including aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, fear, depression, nightmares, and sleep disturbances***

Media and Violence

■ Interpersonal violence, as victim or as perpetrator, is now a more prevalent health risk than infectious disease, cancer, or congenital disorders for children, adolescents, and young adults.

■ Homicide, suicide, and trauma are leading causes of mortality in the pediatric population, resulting in cumulative death rates of

■ 22.8 per 100 000 in those 5 to 14 years of age and

■ 114.4 per 100 000 in those 15 to 21 years of age.⁶⁸

■ Among urban youth, interpersonal violence is the most prevalent cause of injury (33%), and the incidence of gunshot wounds has increased dramatically in the past decade.

■ Gun violence is now a leading killer of children and adolescents

■ Each year, 3500 adolescents are murdered and more than 150 000 adolescents are arrested for violent crimes.

■ Nonwhite children and adolescents, particularly black males, suffer the effects of violence in their communities as aggressors and as victims.

■ The number of murderers 15 to 17 years of age increased by 195% between 1984 and 1994, when 94% of juveniles arrested for murder were male and 59% were black.

■ The murder rate of young black males rose 300% during the 3 decades after television's introduction in the United States

By Bar-on, Miriam E; Broughton, Daniel D; Buttross, Susan; Corrigan, Suzanne; Et al Pediatrics

Available on MerckMedicus November 01, 2001

Magnitude of the Problem

■ In the U.S.A.

- 3rd leading cause of fatal occupational injuries
- In 2001, 639 fatal injuries out of 8,736 due to violence (Dept. of Labor)
- About 20 workers are murdered weekly
- 1 to 2 million assaults per year
- Specific occupations: deliveries, handling money, dealing with the public etc.
- Post 9/11 and anthrax letters: concern about high profile and densely populated vulnerable targets such as politicians and media offices, banks, mass transit, shopping centers, etc.

Domestic Violence in the Workplace

Definitions

- Spouse abuse
- Dating violence
- Relationship violence

Impacts

- 95% of cases involves women
- Leading cause of death for women in the workplace
- \$5 Billions /year for
 - Absenteeism
 - Health care cost
 - Loss of productivity
 - Litigations

■ A study of domestic **violence** survivors found that 74 percent of employed battered women were harassed by their partner while they were at work

■ Between 1993 and 1999 in the United States, an average of 1.7 million violent victimizations per year were committed against persons age twelve or over who were at work or on duty.

■ Homicide was the second leading cause of death on the job for women in 2000.

■ More than 29,000 acts of rape or sexual assault are perpetrated against women at work each year.

■ More than 1 million women are stalked each year in the U.S., and over a quarter of them report missing work as a result of the stalking.

■ Of the 4 million **workplace** crime incidents committed against females from 1993 through 1999, only 40 percent were reported to the police.

■ In a 1997 national survey, 24 percent of women between the ages of 18 and 65 who had experienced domestic **violence** said that the abuse caused them to arrive late at work or miss days of work.

National Crime Victimization Study 1992-1996

■ Percent in the workplace

- 0.05 – Homicide
- 2.5 – Rape & sexual assault
- 4.2 – Robbery
- 19.7 – Aggravated assault
- 73.6 Simple assault

■ Percent for all events

- 0.2
- 4.3
- 11.7
- 21.7
- 62.0

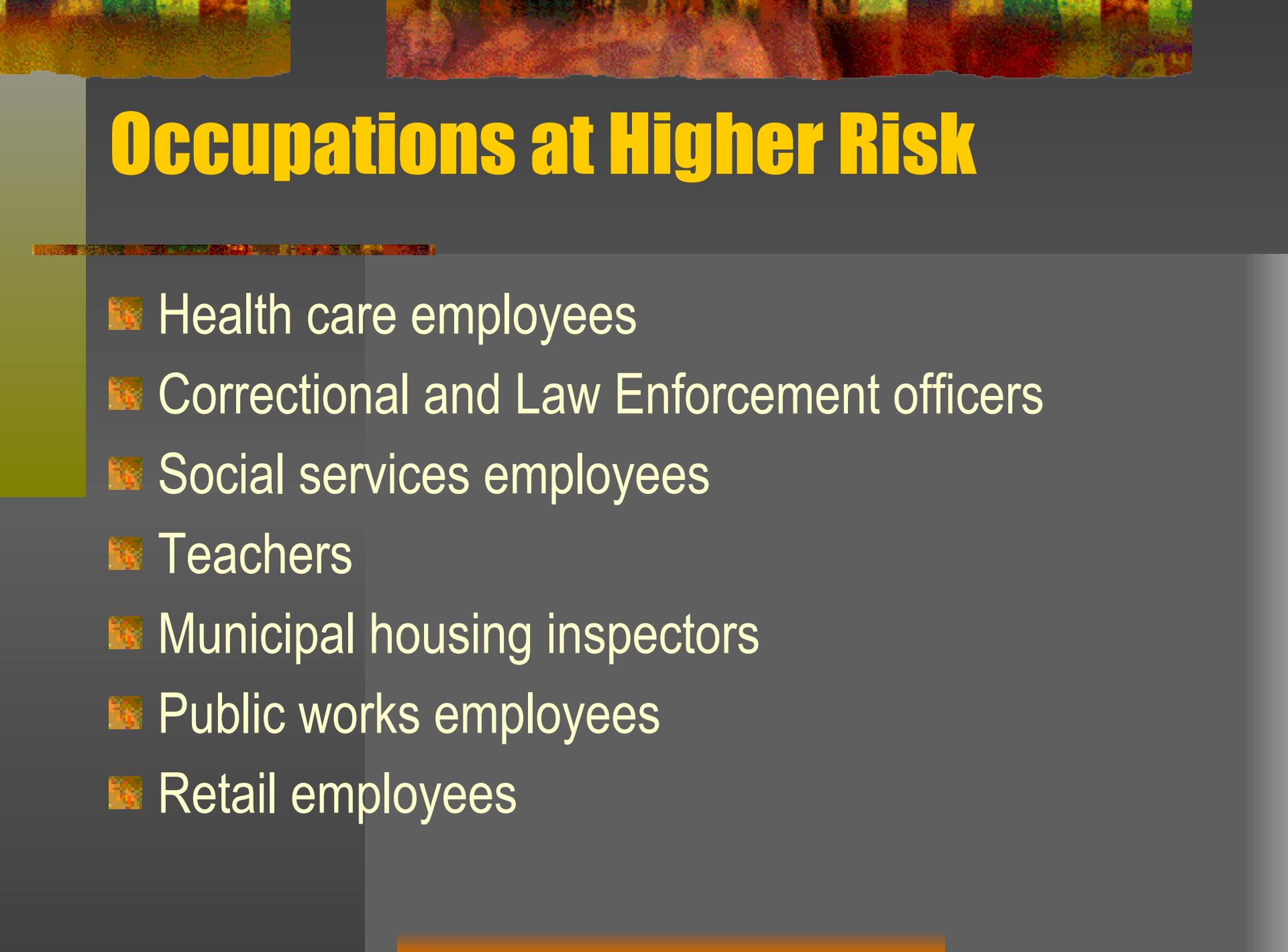
*Adapted from Workplace Violence a Report to the Nation. IPRC, Iowa U. 2001

Of the occupations examined, police officers experienced such crimes at the highest rate (260.8 per 1,000), whereas college or university professors and teachers had the lowest rate (1.6 per 1,000). Government employees had violent victimization rates (28.6 per 1,000) that were higher than those people who work for private companies (9.9 per 1,000 workers) or self-employed people (7.4 per 1,000).

Occupation	Average Annual Rate per 1,000 Workers
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Law enforcement officers	260.8
Corrections officers	155.7
Taxicab drivers	128.3
Bartenders	81.6
Mental health custodians	69.0
Special education teachers	68.4
Gas station attendants	68.3
Mental health professionals	68.2
Junior high school teachers	54.2
Convenience store workers	53.9
Bus drivers	38.2
High school teachers	38.1
Nurses	21.9
Physicians	16.2
All workers	12.6

U.S. Bureau of Justice
1993-1999



Occupations at Higher Risk

- Health care employees
- Correctional and Law Enforcement officers
- Social services employees
- Teachers
- Municipal housing inspectors
- Public works employees
- Retail employees

Demographics Categories at Higher Risk

- Gender
- Race or Ethnic Background
- Age
- Self –employed



Hostile Work Environment (Severity Level)

Less (verbal)

- Verbal harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Intimidation
- Shunning
- Bullying

Moderate (non fatal)

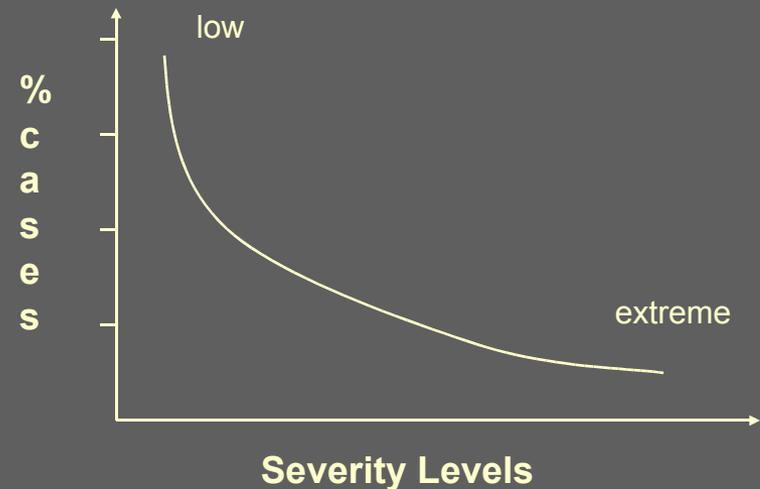
- Physical harassment
- Stalking
- (Domestic violence)
- Rape

High (permanent impairment)

- Rape
- Physical or mental disability

Extreme

- Homicide
- Terrorism



If not remediated effectively hostile environment can become an established pattern at work

Threats and violence clusters

Personal

- Tax return season
- Financial or marital troubles
- Holidays such as X-mas
- Pay days
- Family problems

Work Related

- Performance appraisals
- Stress in the workplace (employees and environment related)
- Management and employee communications (i.e. shelter in place, emergencies, access to restricted areas, change in workplace policies, etc.)
- Dissatisfaction with and blame of management practices
- Late hours of the night or early hours of the morning
- Reorganizations and job elimination/transfers and other personnel actions



What is Considered Violence?

- Verbal or Physical Expressions
- Intimidation
- Profiling
- Discrimination
- Improper Behavior affecting others
- Bullying
- Mobbing
- Assault
- Homicide

Further Definitions

- ***Threatening behavior*** - such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects.
- ***Verbal or written threats*** - any expression of an intent to inflict harm psychological or physical.
- ***Harassment*** - any behavior that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms or verbally abuses a person and that is known or would be expected to be unwelcome. This includes words, gestures, intimidation, *bullying*, or other inappropriate activities such as stalking.
- ***Verbal abuse*** - swearing, insults or condescending language.
- ***Physical attacks*** - hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking.

International WHO Report 2002

Workplace Violence a major issue at the 2001 NAFTA Conference in Montreal

Violence at work is becoming an alarming phenomenon worldwide. Affecting the dignity of millions of people, violence is a major source of *inequality, discrimination, stigmatisation and conflict in the workplace.*

It is a central human rights issue. The enormous cost of workplace violence for the individual, the workplace and the community is becoming more and more apparent.

Recent information shows that the current knowledge is only the tip of the iceberg.

While workplace violence affects practically all sectors and all categories of workers, *the health sector is at major risk: more than half of all workers in this sector may have experienced violent incidents at some point.* Ambulance and pre-hospital emergency staff are reported to be at greatest risk.

Nurses are three times more likely than other occupational groups to be affected.

The International Labour Office (ILO), the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the World Health Organization (WHO) and Public Services International (PSI) launched in 2000 a Joint Program to develop sound policies and practical approaches for the prevention and elimination of violence in the health sector

International

- ILO recommended a CODE to deal with violence in the workplace, 2003
- Canada is developing implementing Standards to handle violence in the workplace
- In addition to abuses against “Health and Relief Workers”, WHO estimates that about ½ of the workforce experiences abuses or violence at work
- Globally mostly children and women are at risk
- ILO estimates that the cost ranges from to 1-3.5% of the GDP , based on randomly collected/reported data by several countries



Consequences

- Economic
 - Emotional
 - Psychological
 - Physical
 - Societal
- 



Laws and legislations

- OSHA has published voluntary guidelines for workers in
 - Late-night retail
 - Health care
 - Taxi cabs
- States publishing regulations for specific industries
 - California
 - Florida
 - Virginia
 - Washington

Federal Policy

- Currently there are no specific Federal/ OSHA standards to address these problems,
- The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act), in Section 5(a)(1), provides that "each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees." In a workplace where the risk of violence and serious personal injury are significant enough to be "recognized hazards," the general duty clause would require the employer to take feasible steps to minimize those risks. Failure of an employer to implement feasible means of abatement of these hazards could result in the finding of an OSH Act violation.
- The occurrence of acts of violence which are not "recognized" as characteristic of employment and represent random antisocial acts which may occur anywhere would not subject the employer to a citation for a violation of the OSH Act
- Whether or not an employer can be cited for a violation of Section 5(a)(1) is entirely dependent upon the specific facts, which will be unique in each situation. The recognizability and foreseeability of the hazard, and the feasibility of the means of abatement are some of the critical factors to be considered.

Excerpts from Roger Clark, Director, Letter dated 12/10/92

Union Views (excerpts)

- Violence in the workplace has become an epidemic. Not only is workplace violence increasing in those workplaces where violence is expected, such as corrections, enforcement, and mental health, but it has become a danger in almost every occupation that deals with the public. Many AFSCME members face the threat of violence every day.
- Workplace violence is a serious and deadly hazard; one that can cause not only physical injury, but ***serious psychological*** damage as well. Injuries and deaths related to workplace violence cannot be tolerated any more than any other workplace injury or death. Most violent incidents are predictable and preventable.
- ***As with other workplace hazards, such as asbestos or noise, it is the employer's responsibility to take reasonable measures to minimize the risks for workplace violence***
- Since workplace violence is a workplace issue, the union representative can play a role in urging employers to reduce the risks to violence in their workplaces. An effective employer workplace violence prevention program should include:
 - methods for *identifying work practices* and environmental factors that may lead to violence;
 - procedures for *implementing controls* that will reduce the risks for violence; and/or
 - procedures for *responding to violence* if it occurs.

Recommended Steps to Reduce Violence in the Workplace

- Risk identification, categorization and prioritization
- Surveillance of the environment
- Employee education (awareness, safety and crime prevention)
- Prevention and control strategies
- Continuous evaluation and communication with employees and interested groups

Develop a plan and incorporate it into the organizational business strategies



Prevention and Control

- The Organizational Plan should address the following steps
 - **Primary:** pre-event actions
 - **Secondary:** early recognition and mitigation actions during the events
 - **Tertiary:** post event actions and minimizing the consequences

Addressing the Violence

Phases	Employee &/or Victim	Perpetrator	Physical Environ.	Social Environ.
Primary	Training	Policy enforcement Reporting concerns and expressing issues	Control and safety measures	Good management and workforce relationship and care
Secondary	De-escalation techniques Practice on violent- event response plan	Weapon prohibition Use of restraint	Good security force Exit avenues Alarm systems	Response plan available and understood
Tertiary	Crisis intervention and EAP	Awareness for apprehension and prosecution	Surveillance systems (cameras, visits etc.)	Cohesive and mutually supportive workforce

Adapted from Ref. 5: Halden Matrix

Pitfalls to be Avoided in the Planning & Implementation Process (Ref.5)

- Missing key core planning elements due to organizational barriers
- Profiling
- Psychological Tests leading to legal problems due to violations of
 - Confidentiality
 - Civil Liberties
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
- Poorly trained threat assessment /crisis intervention teams
- Policies excluding Union and employee participation
- Selective and/ or piecemeal application of policies
- Poor record keeping

Canadian Initiative (excerpts)

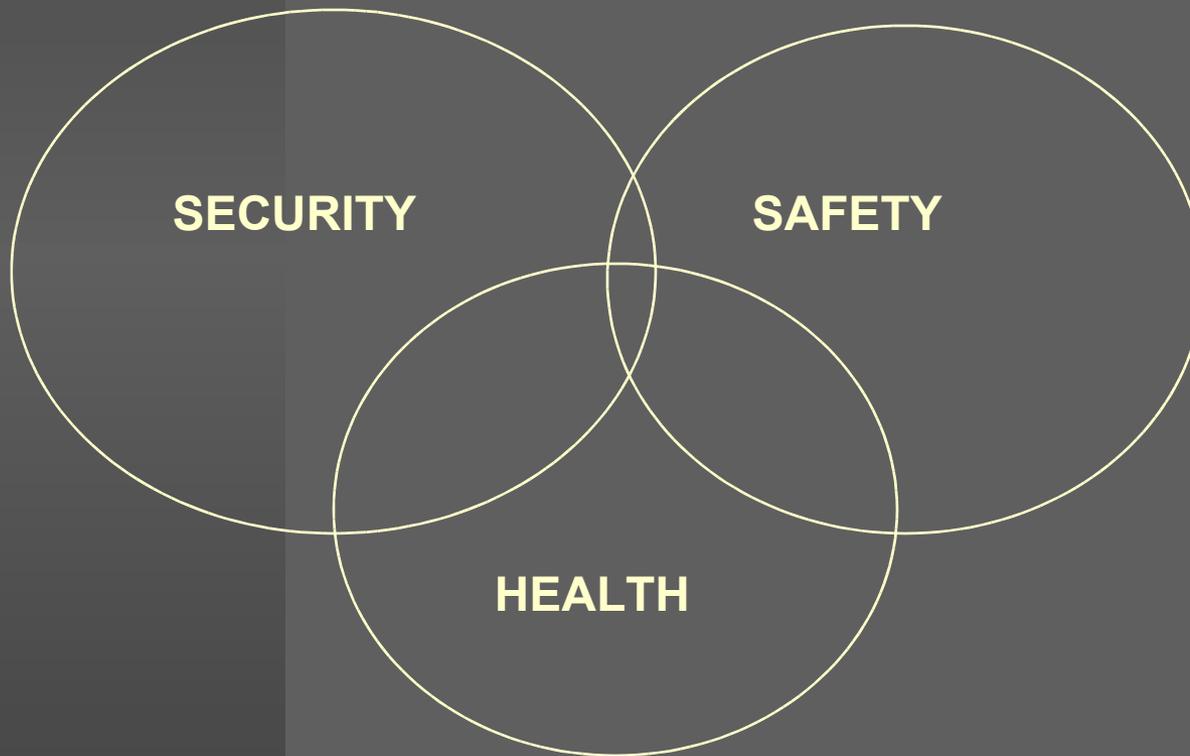
- “Prevention is the cornerstone of any workplace initiative aimed at curbing violence and aggression on the job. Simply responding to violent events after-the-fact, although necessary, is just not enough”
- Recommendations
 - Listen to employees
 - Review sources of information
 - Examine existing controls
 - Policies and procedures
 - Training and awareness
 - Conflict resolution
 - Response planning

Post 9/11

- Human Capital in the Infrastructure Protection Programs
- Senior Management Commitment
- Emphasis on Workplace Security and Health Promotion and Education
- “Health and Science” literacy emphasis in education strategies
- Balancing the needs for antiterrorism programs and prevention of violence (need not to be conflicted)
- Expanding the definition and concepts of workplace violence to include terrorism
- Urgent need to review occupational health and safety programs and policies based on available information and risk assessment
- Integration among multiple security and health programs and initiatives
- More intensive communications with and training of employees
- Employees involvement and feedback
- Protecting the customer in addition to the employees and their families

Whose Business is it?

Occupational Health and Management Leadership play a critical role to ensure success



All three disciplines working together to create a healthy, secure and safe environment

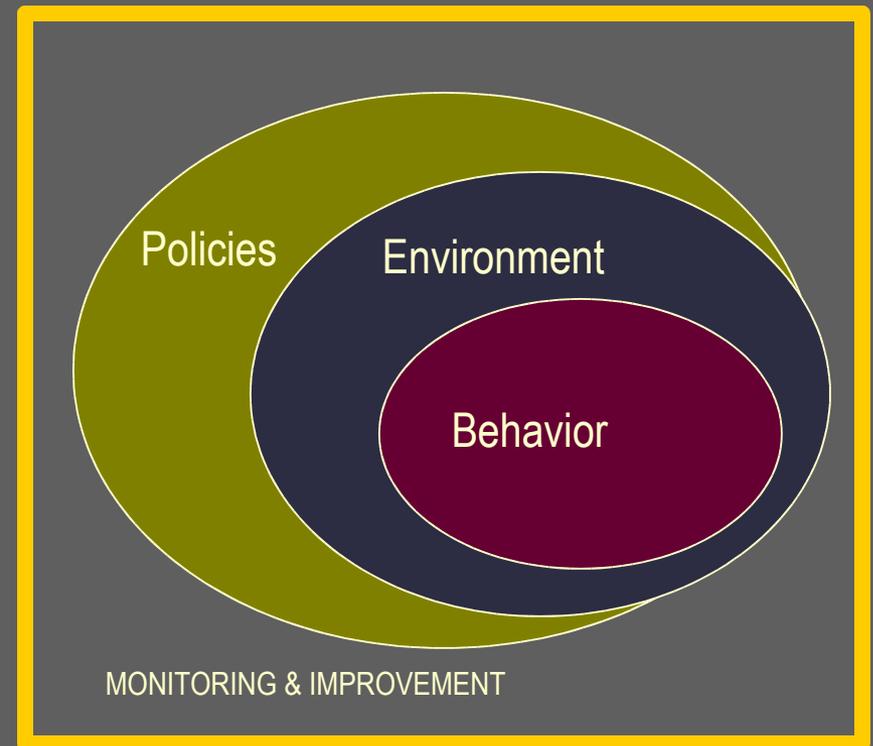
Policy Issues

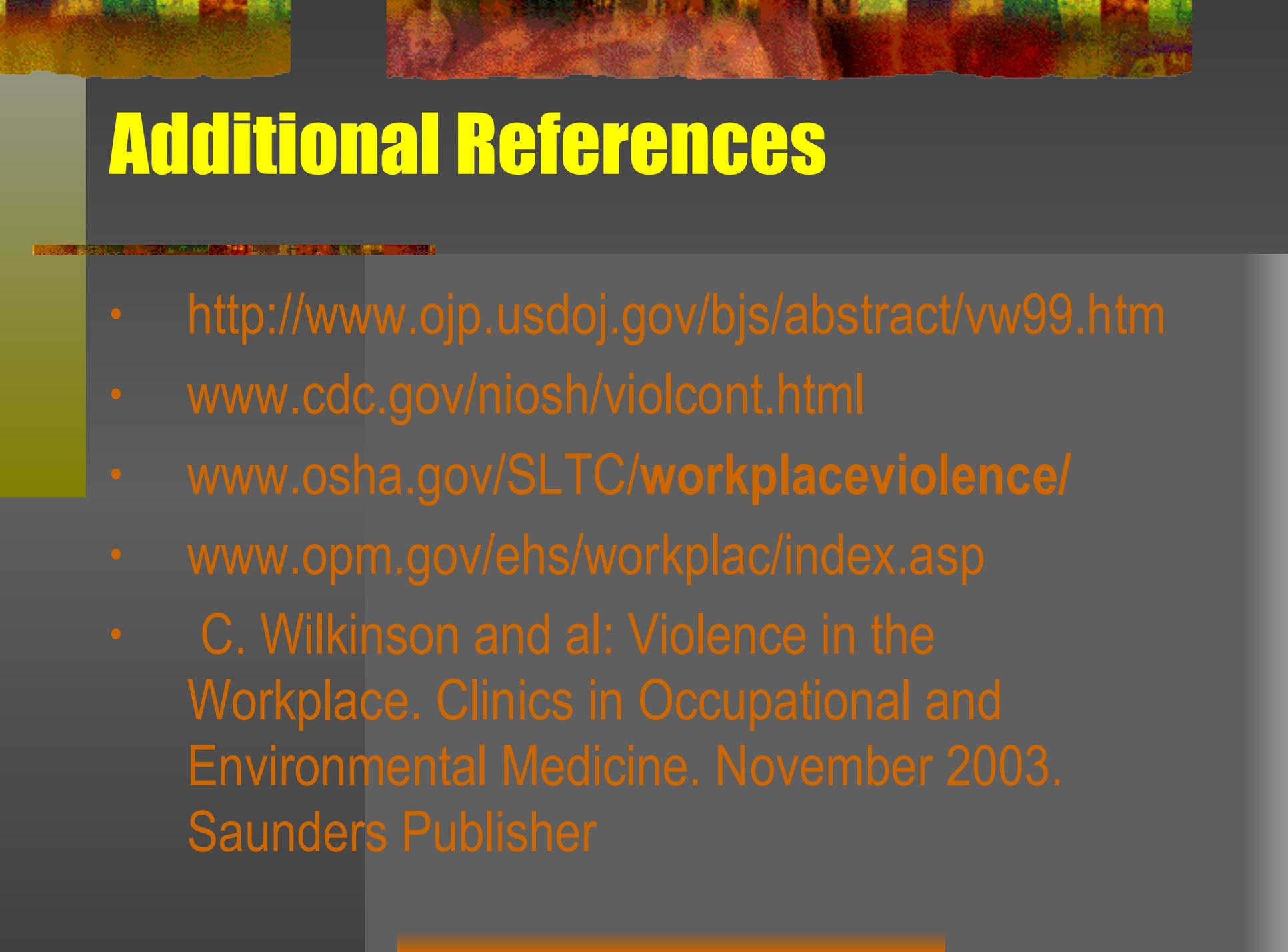
- Unfair employment practices in US or internationally
 - Illegal immigrants
 - Migrant workers
 - Off-shore Sweat Shops
- Media reporting practices
- Post 9/11 challenges in an evolving environment
- Provisions for workplace/home stress reduction and psychological help

Preventive Programs

■ Should address

- Administrative Controls
- Environmental engineering
- Behavioral strategies
- Continuous monitoring





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