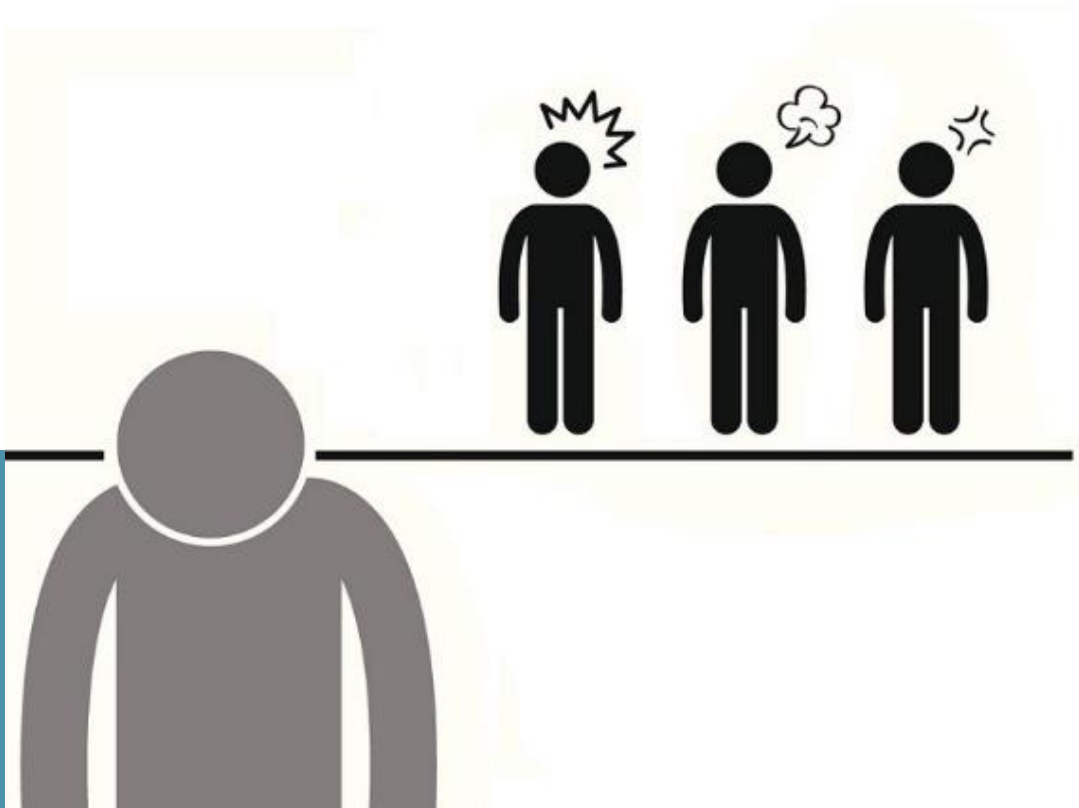


WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT

LECTURE & PRESENTATION NOTES



Reading Time: 9 minutes

COMPILED, WRITTEN & PRESENTED BY
Robert Ing, DSc, FAPSc, FInstMP(UK)

Workplace Violence & Harassment

Workplace violence and harassment is more common than many would like to believe. A 2017 survey of Canadians revealed that 60% of respondents had experienced harassment in the past 2 years.

ASSESS YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

Examine all areas of your workplace including parking lots, alleys, stairwells, entry ways, reception areas, work areas and offices.

Is the lighting adequate?

Are there convenient escape routes?

Is the area under video surveillance?

Is the area accessible to everyone or only those authorized?

Is there a way to get help?

PAY ATTENTION TO WARNING SIGNS

Many people who become violent, signal their intentions in advance.

Threats or harassment from customers, co-workers, or others must be reported immediately.

PROMOTE RESPECT

The best way to reduce violence and harassment in the workplace is to promote a day to day attitude of respect and consideration in the work environment.

Be an ambassador of respect in the workplace.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Don't ignore your internal warning system. If you sense impending danger, react accordingly.

ELIMINATE POTENTIAL WEAPONS

Take an inventory and be aware of objects in your immediate work area that could be used as potential weapons.

Remove or secure objects that could be thrown or have sharp, or pointed surfaces. Examples of these could be staplers, paperweights, scissors and letter openers.

KNOW YOUR VIOLENCE RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Violence Response Procedures are simple plans that minimize injury during a violent incident. These procedures must include a plan to summon assistance and move people to a safe area if required.

If you find yourself face-to-face with a potentially violent person; be at least beyond an arms length (not less than 1 metre/ 40 inches) distance away from the individual and position yourself so you are standing with your side, not the front of your body facing them, ideally with your back towards an exit.

USE A TEAM APPROACH

If you are in a situation where hostility could occur, use the buddy system. Always call for back-up and avoid facing a hostile person alone.

*“Our work involves us interacting with people we do not know.
We do not know their problems, what motivates them and what offends them.
Therefore, we must exercise extreme caution in dealing with any member of the public.”*

HARASSMENT

- Can be a one time or series of incidents involving inappropriate, demeaning or offensive behavior directed at a person or group of people.
- May or may not be intentional.
- May be spoken, written, non-verbal or physical.
- May be subtle or overt.
- Can be of a sexual, racist, cultural, religious, ethnic, disability or physical nature.
- Can take the form of jokes, nicknames, rumours, written or graphic depictions.
- Can be difficult to detect in some situations involving unequal treatment, withholding of work related information, or the exclusion from meetings and activities.
- Can include unwanted and inappropriate physical contact such as touching, kissing, leering, pinching, and patting.
- Also includes the misuse and abuse of authority by managers, supervisors or senior workers such as deliberately assigning punitive assignments or the creation of inappropriate situations in the workplace.



1 in 2

Women have been sexually harassed at work



2 in 3

LGBT workers have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace



4 out of 5

Don't report - it can be a confusing, isolating and traumatising experience

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

Employers, Managers & Supervisors are legally obligated to create and maintain a work environment that is harassment free by establishing a practical workplace violence & harassment policy and program that includes training for all employees.

Employers, Managers & Supervisors must ensure a zero-tolerance policy with regard to workplace violence & harassment by implementing and encouraging participation in incident reporting and incident prevention measures.

In Canada harassment is covered by human and civil rights legislation both provincially and federally under civil rights legislation such as the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and in some cases, the Criminal Code of Canada.

GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING HARASSMENT

Is the behavior based on a prejudice or stereotype?

Is the behavior unwelcome by the recipient?

Is the behavior continuous over a period of time?

Is the behavior condescending or denigrating?

Does this behavior make the recipient personally uncomfortable?

Don't YOU be a Harasser! When dealing with people, never say or do anything that you wouldn't say or do in front of your parents and grandparents.

HOW TO REPORT & DOCUMENT HARASSMENT

What to Report & Document

Prepare a written document indicating the date, time, place and individual involved (the harasser). If you don't know the individual by name, include as detailed a description of the person as possible. If there were a series of incidents list each by date, time and place.

Give exact details of what happened, what was said, what was done and include any possible witnesses, if any. Stick to the facts and let them speak for themselves. Double-check your grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Be sure to include your name. Make at least two copies of your report; one for you and one for your employer.

File your written and verbal report of the incident as soon as possible with your employer. Preferably, you want to report the incident to your employer within 24 hours of the incident.

A good written report goes beyond a verbal report and is necessary for appropriate follow-up action and the steps required to improve the safety and security of everyone in the workplace.

SOME FINAL POINTS

All employees and customers have the legal right to file a complaint if they feel they have been harassed.

Anyone may make a third party complaint under the law on behalf of an alleged victim of harassment in the workplace. If an employee is aware of another individual who is being harassed, the employee is expected to report it.

Retaliation against an individual who files a harassment complaint is legally considered a form of harassment.

Employers who allow, condone or turn a blind eye to harassment in the workplace could be considered legally liable as a party to the harassment incident.

Many times "minority" employees feel they must work twice as hard for recognition of their contribution, or to be accepted by others.



About



Robert Ing

DSc, FAPSc, FInstMP (UK)

Robert Ing is a forensic intelligence specialist and has appeared on North American news networks on the issues of technology crime, computer security, privacy and identity theft. With over 25 years experience in the public and private safety and security sectors, he has worked in the biomedical, technical, privacy and risk management aspects of safety and security.

He is an approved instructor for the Ontario Security Guard Curriculum, an Ontario CPO approved training provider instructor and Ontario TSSA training program instructor.

For more articles by Dr. Robert Ing please visit www.drroberting.com