



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

Preventing Workplace Violence

Workplace Violence...

- What it is
- Where it is
- Risk factors
- Classifications
- Prevention
- Preparedness
- Response



“It's Judgment Day!”

- **April 6, 1999:** Pierre Lebrun, a 40 year old ex-employee of OC Transpo went on a shooting rampage at an Ottawa bus garage.
- He killed four employees and wounded two others before killing himself.
- He had recently quit his job after 13 years with the transit authority.
- Pierre Lebrun had long been the target of workplace bullying.

His Letter

- “...I’m going to commit an unforgivable act... I have no choice. I’m tired, exhausted and completely backed against the wall... They will never leave me alone. I can’t go on living like this! They have destroyed my life, I will destroy their life... OC Transpo and the unions can’t hide from what they do to me... They will pay dearly for what they’ve done to me... all I wanted was for them to leave me alone, not to bug me but it was too much to ask. “

At Acadia, occupational health & safety (OHS) means ...

Providing and maintaining a safe, healthful work environment for faculty, staff, administration, students and contractors.

A healthy, safe campus community is a value expressed in the University's strategic plan.

What is “Violence”?

violence means any of the following:

- threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives you reasonable cause to believe that you are at risk of physical injury.
- conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers your physical health or physical safety.

Violence is an occupational health and safety hazard!

Personal Harrassment

- *Personal harassment* can include but is not limited to physical or verbal behaviour. It includes pushing, slapping or other forms of physical assault. It encompasses communication that is perceived to be inappropriate, harsh or condemning. This may include yelling, bullying, ridicule, hazing, use of derogatory names, and threats.
- Includes ostracism and shunning.
- Bullying may easily escalate to physical violence.

Workplace Violence in Canada

- In a 2002 National Labour Survey, 66% of employers surveyed reported an increase in aggressive acts in their workplaces over the past five years
- According to a 2007 Statistics Canada report entitled *Criminal Victimization in the Workplace*, nearly one fifth of all physical and sexual assaults in Canada happen in the workplace.

Workplace Violence in NS

- From a representative group of 1400 Nova Scotians surveyed in 2007, 20% had been subjected to workplace violence.
- More than 12% had been threatened with physical assault.
- In the majority of cases, the violence originated from the public or from clients.

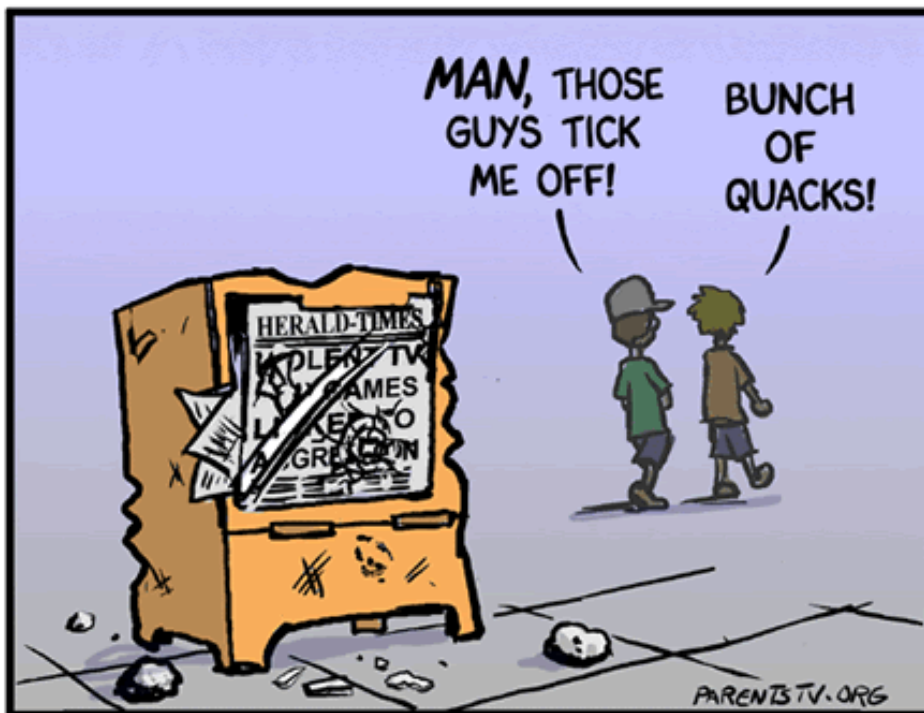
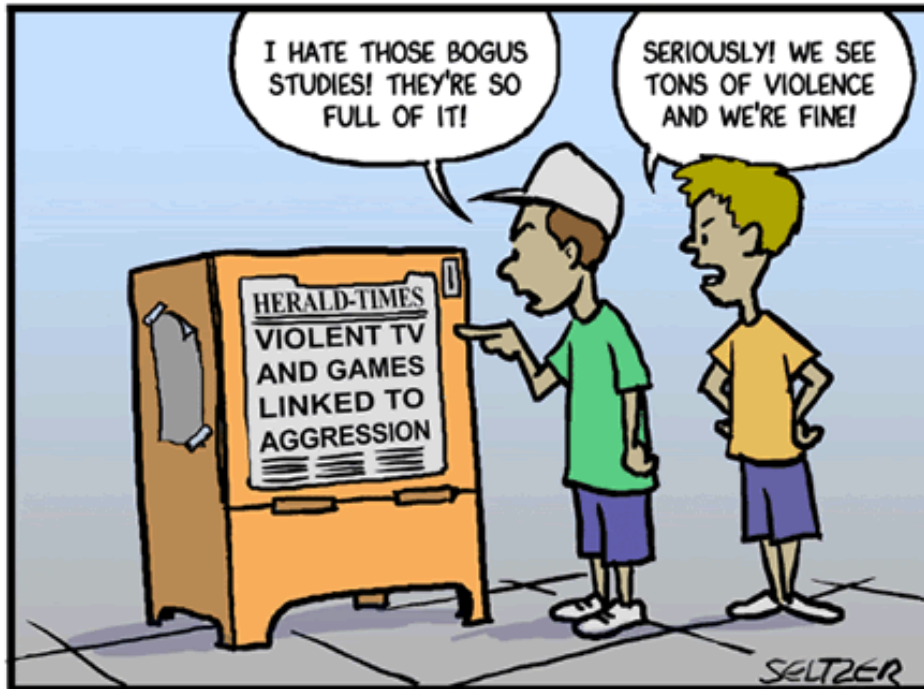
From a 2007 study conducted by Dr Kevin Kelloway and Dr. Lori Francis of the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety of St. Mary's University

The Workplace

- The workplace can be a generator of violence.



- The workplace can also be where violence built up elsewhere is eventually triggered.



Why the Increase in Workplace Violence?

High Risk Workplaces

- retail
- hospitality
- health care
- social services
- transportation
- financial institutions
- security and correctional institutions
- education



The Montreal Massacre

- **December 6, 1989:** Marc Lepine entered an École Polytechnique classroom and separated the men from the women. Before opening fire on the female engineering students, he screamed "I hate feminists."
- For 45 minutes, he roamed the corridors yelling "I want women".
- He shot 27 female engineering students, killing 14, before fatally shooting himself.

The Fabrikant Affair

- **Concordia University, August 24, 1992:** Mechanical Engineering Professor Valery Fabrikant fatally shot four fellow professors and wounded an administrative assistant.
- He then took a security guard and another professor hostage, but they eventually managed to overpower him.
- Fabrikant had long exhibited a history of threatening and disruptive behaviour.

Dawson College



September 13, 2006:
Kimveer Gill entered
Dawson College in
downtown Montreal
with three guns and
began shooting.

Dawson College

- Within minutes, 18-year-old business student Anastasia De Sousa was killed, 19 people were wounded and Gill had ended his own life.
- On a personal web page updated just hours before he started his rampage, Gill called himself "Trench" and wrote: "You will come to know him as the Angel of Death."
- "We know he was angry against the world, so it was a kind of vengeance... There is no explanation why Dawson. It could be Dawson, it could be another place".

Here at Acadia...

- What groups are at risk of violence?
- What are some locations on campus or off campus where you might expect work-related violence to occur?



Some Predictable Risk Factors

- History of previous events – here or elsewhere
- Working alone – normal or abnormal hours

Sept. 3 2007

Police search for suspect in brutal campus rape

A 23-year-old woman suffered a broken jaw and dislocated shoulder when the suspect attacked her. The assault occurred just after midnight, in a lab where she was working alone.



"Don't take this as a reflection of Carleton security, because it could happen anywhere."

Some Predictable Risk Factors

- History of previous events – here or elsewhere
- Working alone – normal or abnormal hours
- Handling cash or valuables
- Facility design and layout
- Authority/control gradient
 - supervision, security, performance assessment, discipline , court-imposed conditions, etc...
- Periods of intense organizational change
- Other events/activities that induce stress
- Exposure to persons who are troubled

Alcohol – a Significant Risk Factor



Not everyone
drinks responsibly.

Alcohol use “in the
event” is a common
factor in incidents of
violence, including
sexual violence.

Acadia's Policy Statement

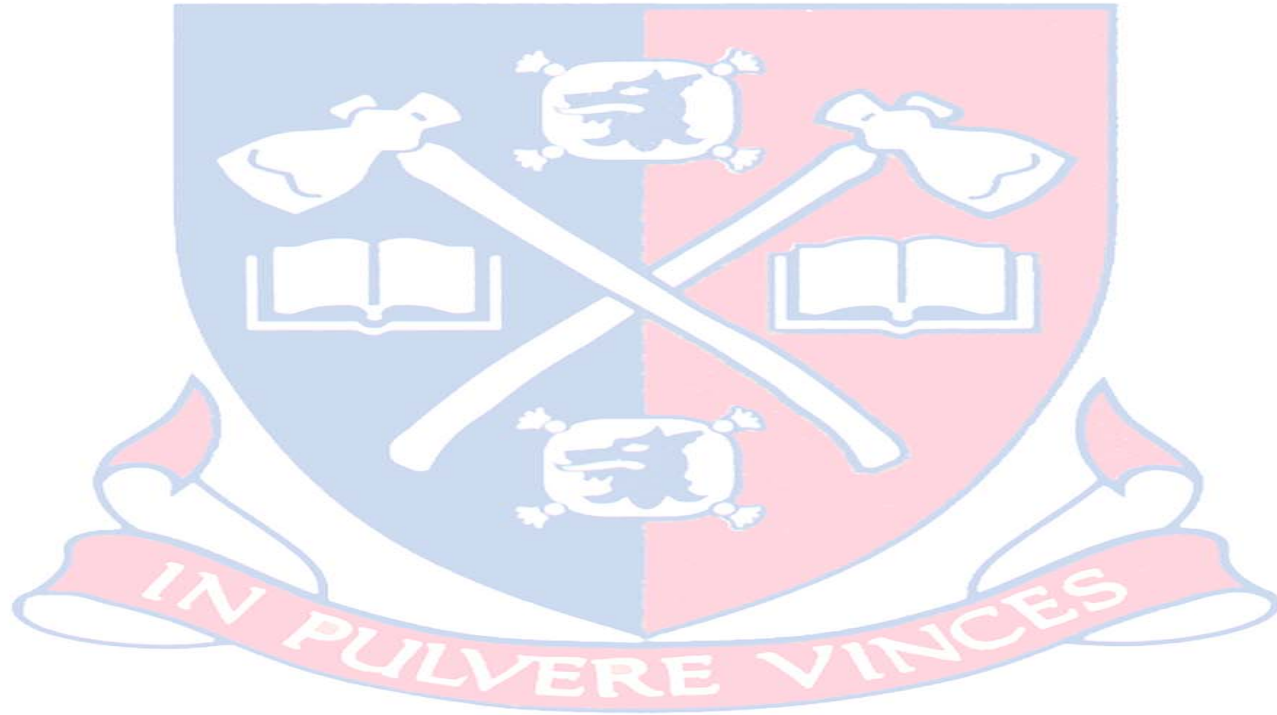
“Workplace violence is not common; however, it is important to acknowledge that physical violence in the workplace is an occupational health and safety hazard that can cause both physical and emotional harm...

Acadia's Policy Statement

...The University views any act or threat of violence in the workplace as unacceptable, and is committed to working to prevent workplace violence and to responding appropriately if workplace violence does occur. All members of the University community, including faculty, staff, students and visitors, are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe environment.”

Violence Prevention

- Risk assessments have been done.
- Additional risk assessments are required when & where there is significant change.
- Safety & Security is reviewing physical layouts that contribute to higher-risk situations.
- This session acquaints you with the basics.
- Non-violent crisis intervention training is also available.



ACADIA

UNIVERSITY

QUESTIONS?

Workplace Violence Classifications

- **Type I - Criminal Intent**
- **Type II - Customer/Client**
- **Type III - Worker-on-Worker**
- **Type IV - Personal Relationship**

Source: University of Iowa, Injury Prevention Research Center

Workplace Violence Classifications

- **Type I – Criminal Intent**
 - Perpetrator has no legitimate relationship to the organization or its employees
 - A crime is usually being committed in conjunction with the violence
 - Robbery, etc



Workplace Violence Classifications

- **Type II – Customer/Client**
 - The perpetrator has a legitimate relationship with the organization – the recipient or object of services provided by the affected workplace or victim
 - This category includes research subjects, students, parents/guardians, etc.

Workplace Violence Classifications

- **Type III – Worker-on-Worker**
 - The perpetrator is an employee or past employee of the organization who attacks or threatens fellow past or present employees
 - May be seeking revenge for what is perceived as unfair treatment
 - Includes employees at all levels

Workplace Violence Classifications

- **Type IV – Personal Relationship**
 - The perpetrator usually does not have a legitimate relationship with the organization, but has or has had a personal relationship with the intended victim
 - May involve a current or former spouse, intimate partner, relative, friend, or acquaintance

Workplace Violence Classifications

- **Type IV – Personal Relationship**
 - Domestic violence carried out at the workplace
 - The perpetrator is usually motivated by perceived difficulties in the relationship or by psychosocial factors that are specific to the perpetrator

Murder – Suicide in Windsor

- **November 12, 2005:** Nurse Lori Dupont was stabbed to death shortly after she arrived at work at a Windsor, Ontario hospital.
- Her killer was Dr. Marc Daniel, an anesthesiologist at the hospital.
- Lori had previously had a romantic affair with Marc Daniel. When she broke it off and moved on, he didn't...
- Marc Daniel committed suicide shortly after taking Lori's life.

Warning Signs

- Making inappropriate references to weapons, including threats about using a weapon to harm someone.
- Making statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem.
- Stalking.
- Inappropriate loitering.



Warning Signs

- Intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent or other inappropriate and/or aggressive behavior.
- Statements indicating desperation over family, financial, academic or other personal matters.
- Statements about contemplating suicide.
- Conflicts with others.



Warning Signs

- Veiled threats of harm.
- An elevated frustration level that clearly seems excessive.
- A pattern of pathological blaming.
- Evidence of depression and withdrawal.
- Extreme changes in behavior.
- Substance abuse.



Warning Signs

- Unexplained increase in absenteeism.
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and personal hygiene.
- Resistance and over reaction to changes in policies or procedures.
- Repeated violations of the University's policies.
- Has a plan to “solve all problems”.



The Breaking Point

The breaking point – when the rain barrel overflows – may occur when a person reaches the point of last recourse and feels that he/she is out of options.

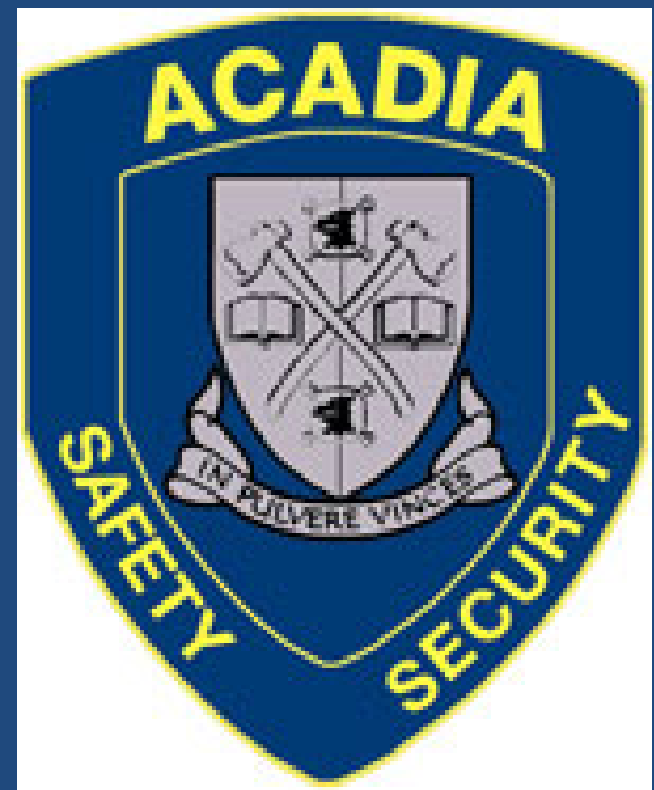
“I have no choice. I’m tired, exhausted and completely backed against the wall...”

Pierre Lebrun



What to Do - Critical Situations

- Be familiar with and follow Acadia's Emergency Procedures.
- For critical situations on campus, Safety & Security is the primary contact.

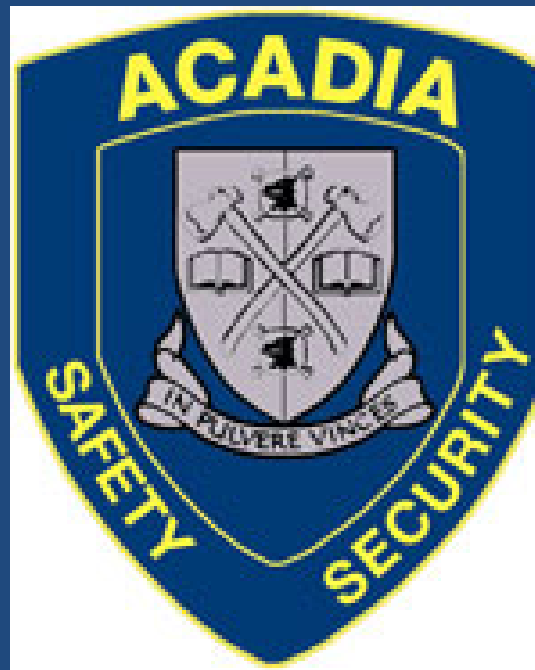


What to Do - Critical Situations

- Remain calm.
- Arrange yourself so that you have a clear exit or escape route.
- If possible and appropriate, make your exit or escape without further escalating the situation.
- Contact Safety & Security immediately.

What to Do – Escalating Signs

Threatening behavior that causes you to believe there is potential for violence needs to be reported. For most situations, **Safety & Security** should be your first point of contact.



What to Do – Escalating Signs

If you are sure that the risk is not immediate, you can report concerns to one or more of the following, as appropriate:

- immediate manager/supervisor;
- Equity Officer;
- Health & Safety Office;
- Acadia's Counselling & Resource Centre;
- Director of Safety & Security.

Prevention = Planning Ahead




Prevention = Planning Ahead

- Anticipate and recognize the risk. Expect the unexpected.
- Consider ahead of time how you will respond. Control the controllable.
- Consult with Safety & Security, HR and/or the Counselling & Resource Centre when planning higher risk activities.



Prevention = Planning Ahead

- Consider office lay-out.
- Know all exits and escape routes.
-  Know where to access a phone. Have at least one back-up. Remember emergency phones.
- Have an office plan and an “alert” system in place for coworkers.
- Ensure adequate lighting.



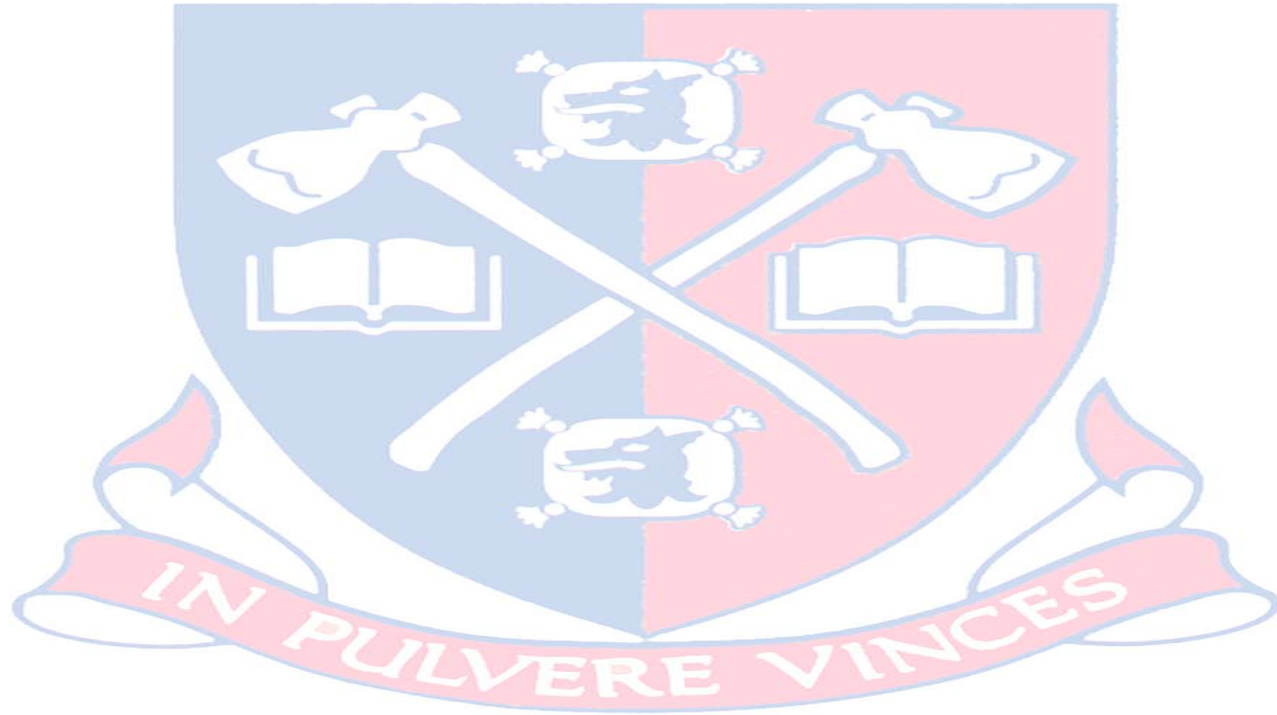
Prevention = Planning Ahead

- Eliminate or control hiding places (e.g. hedges and bushes should be trimmed).
- Consider NVCI training.
- Carefully assess the risks of working or walking alone - use the buddy system.
- Review web-based resources
- Trust your instincts!



Report situations that you believe have the potential for violence





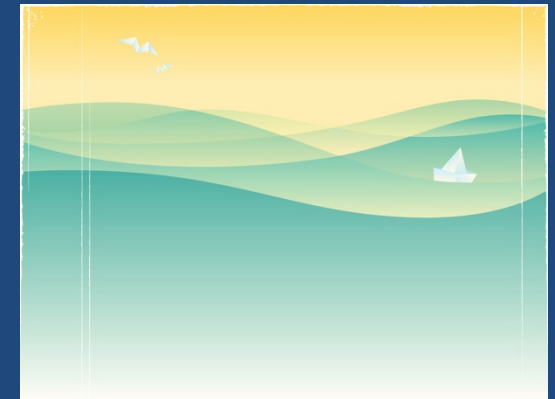
ACADIA

UNIVERSITY

QUESTIONS?

If the Bad Thing Happens...

- Reports will be taken seriously and will be investigated in the most appropriate manner.
- Faculty, staff and students who have been exposed to or affected by violence at Acadia's workplace will be provided with an appropriate debriefing. Arrangements will be made to consult health practitioners for treatment and/or counseling.



Remember Your Rights

- **To Know** about hazards and how to protect yourself.
- **To Participate** in improving health & safety through Acadia's safety committee structure.
- **To Refuse** work that you have reasonable cause to believe is dangerous.
- **To Complain** (nicely, please) if you believe that improvement is needed.

Remember Your Responsibilities

- Use any protective devices or equipment required for your health and safety,
- Consult and co-operate with your Acadia health and safety committee,
- Follow Acadia's procedures and comply with the OH&S Act and regulations, and
- If you can manage or correct hazards yourself, that should be the first choice! If you can't, then report those hazards to someone who can.

Remember Your Responsibilities



**Protect
yourself
and
others**

"Prevention is better than cure"

Desiderius Erasmus (1466 - 1536)

**...and you can make the
difference!**



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

FINAL QUESTIONS?