



What is Workplace Violence?

WorkSafe [OHS Regulation](#) defines violence as the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that the worker is at risk of injury.

Many workers may choose not to report incidents out of compassion and dedication to the people they support, worry about them losing essential services, or feel that these experiences are simply **part of working in the sector**. These feelings are natural, however it's important to recognize that workplace violence is **never 'just part of the job'** and should never be accepted as normal. Everyone deserves to feel safe at work, and it is the organization's responsibility to protect and support them.

Recognizing escalating behavior is the first step in preventing harm—de-escalation techniques help you to respond effectively.



Workplace violence can occur in different forms, such as:

Non-Physical Violence

- Threatening behaviour or intimidation
- Verbal, psychological abuse or written threats
- Harassment or unwanted behaviour
- Bullying or repeated negative behaviour
- Cyberbullying
- Creating a hostile or toxic work environment
- Sexual comments or inappropriate statements
- Racist comments or inappropriate statements

Physical Violence

- Physical assault
- Sexual assault
- Spitting

De-escalation Strategies:

- Be aware of your body language, it speaks louder than what you say
- Speak calmly and respectfully
- Actively listen and validate their feelings and emotions
- Maintain a safe distance and respect personal boundaries
- Use clear and straightforward language
- Allow time for responses – pauses can help reduce stress and confusion
- Gently guide or redirect the conversation when needed



Steps to Take if Situation Escalates:

- Call for help immediately
- Leave the area if you're in immediate danger
- Seek medical attention if needed
- Report the incident to your supervisor
- Contact 911 in an emergency



To gain comprehensive insights and practical strategies, enroll in [the Violence Prevention in Social Services course](#) available on our Learning Centre. This course goes beyond the basics to help you identify risk factors and early warning signs, apply effective prevention and de-escalation strategies, and strengthen safe work practices—equipping you to confidently recognize, respond to, and reduce the risk of workplace violence.

