



# Violence in the Workplace: What Workers Need to Know



**WARNING:** You may find this information to be upsetting because of the difficult topic. We encourage you to take any steps that you need to emotionally prepare yourself. We also encourage you to think about what care you might need after reading this. Resources for support can be found on the Law Society of Nunavut website.

**This is a module series about workplace harassment and violence.  
This module is about what workers need to know about violence in the workplace.**



## WHAT IS WORKPLACE VIOLENCE?

### Lawyer:

Workplace violence is more than actions that may cause injury to one's body. It also includes attempts and threats to cause injury.

#### • Examples of workplace violence include:

- > Hitting, shoving, pushing, kicking
- > Shaking your fist, destroying property, throwing things
- > Making a threat that you will harm someone

### Inuit Advisor:

No one goes to work expecting to be the target of workplace violence.

#### • If you do experience or witness workplace violence you may start to feel things like:

- > Headaches,
- > Muscle aches,
- > Nausea,
- > High blood pressure,
- > Joint pain
- > Other common feelings from anxiety.

## EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY

### Lawyer:

Employers have a responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy workplace for all workers, including one that is free from violence.

Employers are responsible to identify risks of violence within the workplace and tell workers about them. This means employers must think about the different kinds of violence that might occur, where violence might occur, and how to address and prevent it.

### Inuit Advisor:

We all react to stress and threats differently.

You may feel that trust (*ukpigusuniq*) has been broken, or that if you tell somebody, they won't believe you. You may have lost respect (*pikkugusuniq*) for the person who hurt you.

### Lawyer:

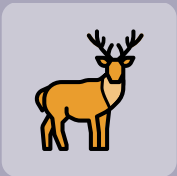
For example, if you must work closely with someone who has a history of violent behaviour, your employer may have to tell you about this risk and ensure your safety.

Or, if your employer knows that a situation of family violence may expose workers to a risk of physical injury at work, your employer must do their best to protect the workers while at work.

### Inuit Advisor:

It is important to seek help as soon as possible when experiencing violence. Listen to your body and your feelings. Reach out to talk to someone you trust about what happened. It is important to move forward (*sivumuarniq*).

Use your inner strength (*pigguniq/sannginiq*) to deal with violence. You have a right to a safe workplace free from violence.





### Lawyer:

In some situations, workplace violence can also involve a person who does not actually work at the workplace. For example, if your friend shows up to your work threatening to hurt you because you owe them money, or if your co-worker has an abusive partner who is threatening to come to the workplace to beat her up, that is considered workplace violence because the threat is happening at your work.

### Inuit Advisor:

During stressful times, it is important that you take care of yourself to maintain strength (*sanniqiniq*), resiliency (*sapiliqtailiniq*), and environmental wellness (*avatikmik kamattiarniq*). This will help you keep a balanced and healthy connection of the mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions of yourself, your work, and the community.

### Lawyer:

Your employer must make every reasonable effort to protect you at work. This might include implementing a policy workplace violence if violence has, or could reasonably be expected to occur at your workplace. A policy to deal with workplace violence will include processes and procedures on how to deal with workplace violence.

### Inuit Advisor:

Be sure to practice healthy self-care. This includes eating nutritional food; going for a walk; getting rest and doing things that bring you joy. Avoid using certain substances such as alcohol, drugs or certain prescription medication because they can cause feelings of depression or suicidal thoughts.

Speak with your medical professional if you have questions or concerns. Take your health seriously.

## WORKER RESPONSIBILITY

### Lawyer:

Workers have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the policy, if their work has one, and do their part to make sure the workplace is safe for everyone.

If you experience or witness an emergency situation of violence at work, you should consider calling the RCMP as well reporting it to your employer.

**If you feel you are a victim of workplace violence, talk to your supervisor, Human Resources or RCMP.**

**Additional resources for support can be found on: [www.lawsociety.nu.ca/en/access-legal-knowledge](http://www.lawsociety.nu.ca/en/access-legal-knowledge)**

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