Occupational Violence & Aggression (OVA) in Healthcare Campaign
Background

- Occupational violence and aggression (OVA) in healthcare is a major OHS concern.
- Up to 95% of healthcare workers experience it, only 20% report.

Claims on the rise

18% in 2005 to 25% in 2014

Healthcare 4.7x more likely to lodge OV claim

“…that the DHHS and WorkSafe, with health services and Ambulance Victoria, develop appropriate public messaging to improve community awareness of the impact of occupational violence on healthcare workers and highlight the need for appropriate and respectful behaviour when seeking medical treatment.”

Stakeholder consultation

Who:

• OVA in Healthcare Reference Group
• Health Practice (WorkSafe) Stakeholder Working Group – subgroup

These two groups include:

• Health service executives, managers, and workers, both clinical and non-clinical
• Union and employer group representatives

Provided:

• Initial insights into the problem and the campaign audiences
• Useful feedback on
  • campaign model including objectives
  • the creative concept
  • TVCs and other media
  • targeted communications materials
Pre-formative research

- Literature review and data analysis
  - Institute of Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research (ISCRR)
- Qualitative in-depth interviews with healthcare workers
- Stakeholder meetings
  - including union and employer group representatives
- Oversight committee meetings
  - WorkSafe, DHHS, and Ambulance Victoria
There is a ‘spectrum’ of violence and aggression.

Repetition of this behaviour can have major latent impact.

- **Aggressive gestures/expressions**
  - e.g. Eye rolling
  - Sneering
  - Challenging behaviour

- **Yelling**
  - e.g. Yelling
  - Swearing
  - Name calling

- **Aggression/intimidation**
  - e.g. Being in worker’s personal space
  - Standing over worker

- **Physical**
  - e.g. Biting
  - Spitting
  - Scratching
  - Pushing
  - Shoving
  - Tripping
  - Grabbing
  - ‘Obstructing’

- **Extreme violence and aggression**
  - e.g. Hitting
  - Punching
  - Strangulation
  - Kicking
  - Personal threats
  - Threats with weapons
  - Sexual assault

*Important for us to show the full spectrum to prevent opt-out from viewers*
The greatest opportunity to shift attitudes and change behaviour is within the 'person under stress' scenario.

Showing situations where patients may have limited control of their behaviour (such as when under the influence of alcohol/drugs, or suffering mental health conditions such as dementia) also provides opportunity for opt-out (focus on these situations needs to be included within more detailed messaging, not in the main campaign).
Comments from interviews and focus groups

**Community**
- “The people who commit these acts aren’t like me”
- “They’re just aggressive people”
- “Getting yelled at isn’t that bad, just ignore it”
- “This kind of stuff doesn’t happen that often”

**Workers**
- “Extreme violence is never ok, but getting yelled at is part of the job”
- “Patient needs come before my own safety”
- “Reporting every incident is too much work”
- “My employer doesn’t follow up, so I don’t bother to report”
- OVA from some people is more acceptable because of their situation or condition

**Employers**
- Managers sometimes don’t follow up on reports
- Some staff don’t feel valued and therefore aren’t empowered
- The organisation has a ‘zero tolerance’ position, but often staff don’t feel this is put into practice
- The reporting process is cumbersome
Campaign model and objectives

Awareness: OVA against healthcare workers happens
Attitudes: It’s not part of the job

Community

- STOP the behaviour
- Increase the belief that OVA is not, and should not be, part of the job for healthcare workers
- Increase perceived unacceptability of OVA
- Long-term behaviour change – Decrease the incidence rate (with a focus on mid-range OVA)

Workers

- REPORT the behaviour
- Increase perceived unacceptability of OVA (regardless of circumstance)
- Increase intention/likelihood to report

Employers

- PREVENT the behaviour and VALUE workers
- Increase perceived unacceptability of OVA (regardless of circumstance)
- Accept responsibility to prevent (regardless of circumstance)
- Support workers through reporting process (discussions, plans, resources, incident tools, feedback loop etc)
TVC – Aged Care
TVC - Paramedic
Aggression and violence against healthcare workers. It’s never OK.

Up to 50% of our healthcare workers have experienced verbal or physical assault. No matter what the situation, it’s never OK.

worksafe.vic.gov.au/itsneverok

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Focus groups conducted April 11:
- Workers (nurses, paramedics, and aged care workers)
- General public

Research indicates that the three commercials **will be successful in meeting the campaign’s objectives**.

- **Increases awareness** that OVA in the healthcare sector happens 9/10
- **Increases the belief** that OVA is **not part of the job for healthcare workers** 9/10
- **Increases belief that** extreme acts of violence **AND** yelling, threatening people, making aggressive gestures is **unacceptable** 9/10
Media channels

- TV - metro & regional
- Regional cinema
- Radio - metro & regional
- Out of home – bus panels, tram and bus stop ads near hospitals
- Online
Employer resources

Emails and hard copy packs will be sent to employers

For hospitals this includes:

- Letter from DHHS
- Next steps document
- Brochure with campaign key messages
- Case study booklet
- Posters for staff
- Posters for the community
- DHHS organisational response framework
No matter what the situation, violence and aggression against healthcare workers is never OK. Let’s work together to prevent and manage violence and aggression in our healthcare workplaces and take steps to better protect our healthcare workers and those they care for.

worksafe.vic.gov.au/itsneverok

Brochure and case studies

of our healthcare workers have experienced verbal or physical assault.

Healthcare Workers

As a healthcare worker, your focus should be on providing the best care and treatment possible for your patients and clients. You may be exposed to a number of different situations, such as working in a hospital or a community setting, in a clinic or a private practice. This can lead to interactions with people who are going through difficult times, dealing with medical emergencies, or have challenging behaviors. It is important to be able to handle these situations appropriately and professionally.

Up to 95%

The Case Studies

As a senior leader, you should demonstrate a commitment to promoting a culture where violence and aggression is not accepted as ‘part of the job’. Some examples include:

- Supporting healthcare workers who have experienced violence or aggression.
- Providing resources and training for staff to improve their ability to handle challenging situations.
- Creating a safe and inclusive workplace environment.
- Encouraging open communication and reporting of incidents.

Monitoring and addressing cases of violence and aggression

As a senior leader, you should take the lead in monitoring and addressing cases of violence and aggression. This includes:

- Reviewing reports of incidents and taking appropriate action.
- Providing support and resources to affected healthcare workers.
- Working with teams to develop and implement strategies to prevent future incidents.

By taking these steps, you can help create a safer workplace for all healthcare workers and improve patient outcomes.

Visit www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/itsneverok for more information and resources.

OVA in Healthcare

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WorkSafe’s key guidebook for health services on preventing and managing OVA has also been refreshed.
Communications toolkit

Downloadable communications toolkit to help employers generate discussion and promote the campaign at your worksites.

This includes:
• Campaign creative elements
• PowerPoint template presentation
• e-Newsletter articles
• Email signature jpg
Download or order campaign materials and communications toolkit

Download campaign and communications materials for use on your website, newsletters, or to display within your organisation.

When you use the ‘staff poster’ in your tea room, please remember to fill out the ‘How to report aggressive and violent behaviour’ section.

- Violence and aggression against healthcare workers brochure [PDF, 655kB]
- Case study brochure [PDF, 12MB]
- Community and employer posters
  - Community posters [PDF, 570kB]
  - Employer posters [PDF, 659 kB]
- Powerpoint template – to stimulate discussion in your workplace [PPT, 7.5MB]
- Campaign imagery – for use on screen savers, waiting room televisions, website
  - Aged care image [JPG, 180MB]
  - Nursing image [JPG, 140MB]
  - Paramedic image [JPG, 20.4MB]
  - Combined health services image [JPG, 10.4MB]
  - Email signature [JPG, 12kB]
  - eNewsletter articles [WORD, 83kB]

Other resources
- WorkSafe’s Guidebook: Prevention and management of violent and aggressive in health services [PDF, 2.5MB]
- DHHS’ Organisational framework: Framework for prevention and managing occupational violence and aggression [PDF, 70kB]
- DHHS’ Learning principles: Guide for violence prevention training in Victorian health services [PDF, 125kB]

Order hard-copy campaign materials

If you’d like to order some hard-copy materials for your organisation, please contact us at communications@worksafe.vic.gov.au.

Please provide your name, organisation, contact details, and the quantity and what you’d like to order from the following:

- Community poster

Additional copies of printed resources can be ordered