

What is this new training package called SOLVE?

Drugs and alcohol, violence, stress, tobacco and HIV/AIDS are major problems at work. These problems affect nearly all countries, all sectors and all categories of workers. They require immediate and effective action.

To meet this challenge, the ILO has developed a new training package called SOLVE.

It is a first step in developing action-oriented solutions to these emerging health-related problems at work. SOLVE is designed to assist governments, employers and workers with a view to:

- Improving psycho-social working conditions;
- Reducing costs and improving productivity; and
- Relieving the burden of the worker.

SOLVE consists of an integrated action manual and trainer's guide.



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International Training Centre

S tress
Tobacco
Alcohol & Drugs
HIV/AIDS
Violence



THE EMERGING
PROBLEM OF
VIOLENCE AT WORK



International Labour Office

Violence at work can be both physical and psychological. It may involve repeated actions that alone may be relatively minor but cumulatively may cause serious harm. Violence ranges from homicide and physical attack to bullying, mobbing, victimisation, sexual and racial harassment.

Who is at risk? Are women more exposed than men?

Sex, age and precarious employment are the main factors that increase a worker's risk of suffering from violence at work. At work, women are at particular risk of violence, because they are concentrated in many of the high-risk jobs such as teaching, social work, nursing and other health-care, as well as in banks and shops. The continued segregation of women in low-paid and low status jobs, while men predominate in better-paid, higher status jobs, also contributes to the problem. Nevertheless, men tend to be at greater risk of physical assault, while women are particularly vulnerable to incidents of a sexual nature such as harassment. Younger workers are particularly vulnerable to victimisation at work due to their lack of experience. Precarious employment and job insecurity can lead to situations where a worker becomes a victim of a violent act, but does not dare to report it, for fear of losing the job.

What are the results of violence?

For the individual:

Suffering and humiliation resulting from violence usually lead to lack of motivation, loss of confidence and reduced self-esteem. As with stress, if the causes of violence are not eliminated or its impact contained by adequate intervention, these symptoms are likely to develop into physical illness, psychological disorders, or tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse. These problems may ultimately culminate in occupational accidents, invalidity and even suicide.

At work:

Violence causes immediate, and often long-term disruption to interpersonal relationships, the organisation of work and the overall working environment. Employers bear the direct cost of lost work and more expensive security measures. They are also likely to bear the indirect cost of reduced efficiency and productivity, the deterioration of product quality, loss in company image and a reduction in the number of clients.

In the community:

The costs of violence include health care and long-term rehabilitation costs for the reintegration of victims, unemployment and retraining costs for victims who lose their jobs as a result of such violence, and disability and invalidity costs where the working capacities of the victims are impaired by violence at work.

What measures can be taken to reduce the risk?

Violence at work is not an isolated, individual problem but a structural, strategic issue rooted in wider social, economic, organisational and cultural factors. The response therefore needs to be directed at the causes rather than the effects of violence at work. It should concentrate on the adoption of preventive, systematic and participative interventions targeted at improving the work organisation, the working environment, job content, interpersonal relationships, dialogue and communication.