

To Stop Workplace Violence Focus on Psychological Safety, Not Shooting Sprees



The term 'workplace violence' summons up images of disgruntled employees going on shooting spree like what apparently happened yesterday at an Indianapolis FedEx Ground facility. But while they seem to happen all the time (especially in the U.S.), tragedies like these are the exception rather than the norm. For OHS coordinators charged with preventing it, the fundamental challenge posed by workplace violence isn't [active shooter events](#) but lesser forms of physical violence, along with the harassment, [bullying](#), threats, emotional abuse, intimidation and stalking that may happen in every workplace every day.

Left unchecked, these behaviours may lead to more serious violence, like the notorious 1999 [O.C. Transpo massacre](#) authored by transit worker Pierre Lebrun to wreak revenge on the co-workers who bullied him for years. But, again, these incidents are rare, not to mention impossible to predict. The best way to keep your own workers from turning into the next Pierre Lebrun is to identify and control the continuum of violent and harassing behaviours that can damage workers' [psychological safety](#).

To do this, you need a [workplace harassment and violence prevention program](#) that includes not only a [clear policy statement of commitment](#) to [psychological safety](#) but also the

[mechanisms](#) for [hazard assessment](#), training, [awareness](#), [reporting, investigation](#) and discipline necessary to make good on that commitment.

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