



# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

**A SECURE WORKPLACE FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIANS**  
is a project of WorkCover New South Wales and the National Children's and Youth Law Centre

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This Factsheet lists a range of steps that must be taken when workplace violence, bullying and harassment are identified or suspected.

For further assistance in developing a workplace violence policy, please refer to the following materials (also included in your Resource Kit):

- ◆ **Prevention Strategies for Your Business**
  - ◆ **Intervention Strategies for Your Business**
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## **1 TRIGGERS FOR INTERVENTION**

If there has been an injury, or an incident of violence or aggression (which may or may not have resulted in a disciplinary charge) or a complaint of violence / bullying / harassment, then you should intervene to deal with it appropriately.

## **2 DEALING WITH A POTENTIALLY VIOLENT INCIDENT**

Prevention is the best way of dealing with violence at work. If you see a potentially violent incident, as an employer, manager or supervisor, you have the right and the obligation to prevent it, or at least to prevent it from getting worse.

## **3 DEALING WITH A VIOLENT INCIDENT**

There are five basic principles for dealing with a violent incident:

- ◆ Take every violent incident seriously
- ◆ Investigate what happened
- ◆ If it was a grave or major incident, report it to the police
- ◆ Whether it was great or small, report it within your organisation
- ◆ Debrief in all but the most trivial cases.

#### 4 DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT OF VIOLENCE, BULLYING OR HARASSMENT

When you receive a complaint of workplace violence, bullying or harassment, the most important thing is not to panic. Make sure that you have a grievance procedure in place that will enable you to deal with the complaint effectively and efficiently.

(See the **Model Grievance Procedure** included in **Intervention Strategies for Your Business**.)

#### 5 INVESTIGATING A COMPLAINT

Some key issues to bear in mind when investigating a complaint of workplace violence, bullying or harassment are:

- ◆ Natural justice and due process  
the accused person's right to know what they are accused of, and by whom; the right to respond and give their side of the story, and the right for a decision to be made by an unbiased person.
- ◆ Barriers to communication  
for example, the "don't do" culture; embarrassment, anger, frustration and fear.
- ◆ Documentation  
it is very important that the whole investigation process is properly recorded, including the initial complaint, the explanation of the investigation process to staff, and any interviews that are conducted.

(See the **Model Protocol for Starting the Investigation of (Non-Criminal) Bullying or Harassment**; the **Model Conduct of Interview Protocol**, and the **Model Record of Interview** included in **Intervention Strategies for Your Business**.)