

# Organisational barriers to practice change

Occupational violence (OV) is everybody's business and requires a whole of service approach to ensure changes to attitudes and outcomes are achieved. Clear and consistent reporting of all OV incidents is an essential component of any strategy to address OV in the workplace. Accurate reporting ensures the healthcare service can adequately identify, address, and reduce risks and where required respond to OV incidents and provide the required support services to the affected workers or consumers.



To address OV it must first become visible across the entire healthcare system, with standardised consistent messaging identifying and defining OV, how and why it occurs, ways it can be addressed and managed and the implications for those who contribute to OV incidences. Workers need to understand the value and importance of reporting all incidents of OV.

The table below identifies typical barriers healthcare services encounter and the corresponding changes that can be made to enable mechanisms that support healthcare services, workers and consumers understand the importance of recognising, responding to and reporting of OV incidents.

| Organisational area             | Barriers to change  | Change enablers   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Logistical</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers need access to the required equipment and reporting systems to undertake and complete a report of OV.</li> <li>They also require education and training in best practice use of the equipment and reporting tools.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure workers have access to the required equipment and reporting systems to undertake and complete a report of OV, including all required education and training.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Consistency of messaging</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When there is inconsistency in messaging around OV and related behaviours, healthcare services, workers and consumers are unable to respond in a standard format to OV incidents. This causes potential confusion across the services (e.g., consumer safety is often perceived as a higher priority than worker safety).</li> <li>Everyone who engages with or enters a healthcare service needs to have a clear understanding that any form of OV is not acceptable, and that there are consequences for those who engage in behaviours or actions that result in OV. This requires a clear and consistent definition of OV, understanding of mutual behaviour expectations and clear guidelines on reporting OV incidents.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure there is healthcare service-wide messaging where OV is clearly defined that states that OV in any form is unacceptable and will be reported. This information must be available and visible in all workplaces.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Policy and/or procedures</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthcare managers, workers and consumers are unable to effectively recognise, respond, report or review OV incidents in the workplace without clear and consistent messaging, or easy access to a healthcare services frameworks, policies, and procedures.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the healthcare service has policies in place that outline the position on OV, how it will be managed and reported, and that all managers and workers receive ongoing education and training.</li> </ul>                   |

| Organisational area                      | Barriers to change  | Change enablers   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A healthcare service should ensure that workers and managers have adequate OV training and education. The healthcare service needs to be consistent in the message that reporting OV is a healthcare service requirement (as part of a whole-of-healthcare service responsibility).</li> </ul>   |   |
| <b>Worker's acceptance of behaviours</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers may perceive the OV incident as 'acceptable or expected' or an 'occurrence of unintentional behaviour or action' from the consumer. These beliefs may impact on the workers willingness or perceived need to make a report. They may feel that nothing will change with reporting, or they may not wish to progress the process because of a perception that reporting escalates the incident or creates additional work.</li> <li>There is a lack of understanding that even an unintentional behaviour or action requires reporting so that risk mitigation practices can be put in place to protect workers in the future.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure consistent, clear messaging across the healthcare service on the importance of reporting OV, underpinned by training and education to improve workers understanding of their role and responsibilities.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Outcomes</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When workers do not hear back from managers or healthcare services about reported OV incidents, the review process or any practice or policy changes that have been implemented because of the report, they are at risk of losing confidence in the system, and less likely to report in future.</li> <li>Workers may be concerned at how reporting will impact them e.g., their health or safety with exposure or risk of additional harm, or their job security with a risk of discrimination, disadvantage, or reputational damage.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a clear feedback process where details about OV incidents and outcomes are routinely shared across the healthcare service and specifically with workers.</li> <li>Make OV incident reporting a routine part of practice and an expectation.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Support</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers who are not supported by managers or healthcare systems and processes to identify, report, and respond to incidents of OV are less likely to do so.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers have a range of services and mechanisms with which to seek and obtain the support they require to deal with an OV incident.</li> <li>Make sure workers are aware of their local <b>Staff rights to a safe workplace factsheet</b></li> </ul>             |

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|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>Reporting</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OV is typically underreported across the healthcare system, especially if there is no physical violence involved.</li> <li>• There is a lack of understanding about what should be reported (e.g., reporting is believed to only be required for ‘serious incidents’ or those that result in physical harm).</li> <li>• There may be a lack of knowledge in how to use the tools to report.</li> <li>• Reporting is often seen a too complex and time consuming, especially if more than one service requires a report – e.g., healthcare service report (RiskMan), ACT Policing, and/or <u>WorkSafe ACT</u>.</li> <li>• The reporting tools are often generic in nature and require multiple data points of entry, or screen skipping.</li> <li>• Workers require support from managers and the healthcare service with training and education regarding reporting processes as well as the time and space to complete the reporting.</li> <li>• Workers may not wish to relive the incident and prefer not to progress a report, rather to just ‘let it go’ and move on.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure workers understand their right to make a report and any accompanied rights to representation, legal advice, support etc.</li> <li>• Make sure workers are equipped to recognise, respond, report and review OV incidents.</li> <li>• Make sure managers are equipped to recognise, respond, report and review OV incidents and provide support to workers.</li> <li>• Make sure the healthcare service has easy-to-use reporting mechanisms in place that workers and managers can access, either formally or informally. The need for confidentiality and/or anonymity should be considered.</li> <li>• Make sure workers and managers know how to make a report and what should be reported.</li> <li>• Make sure there are easily accessible processes and systems for workers and managers to undertake OV reporting.</li> </ul> |

Further details can be found in the ⇒ **Responsibilities factsheet**

ACT Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. ACT Health respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. ACT Health also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.

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