

# VIOLENCE PREVENTION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY CLINICS

# INTRODUCTION

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Violence against physicians is a growing and common issue that can greatly impact the physical and emotional safety of those working in healthcare. According to a Canadian survey of 720 primary care physicians, 30 per cent of respondents were exposed to aggressive behaviour in the month prior to taking the survey and 39 per cent reported that this behaviour was severe and included assault, stalking, or sexual assault. Doctors of BC has developed this guide as a resource for community physicians to prepare themselves and their office with the tools needed to prevent and respond to violent incidents.

## What is a violent incident?

For the purpose of this guide, a “violent incident” is defined as not only the actual or attempted use of physical force that causes injury, but also threatening and aggressive statements or behaviours that cause an individual to believe they are at risk of injury.

## Have a plan

**The number one thing physicians can do to prevent or respond to a violent incident is to have a plan in place.** The following guide highlights some key topics, resources, relevant services, and educational materials that will enable physicians to develop a plan for preventing or responding to a violent incident.

Preparation & Prevention

Response

Follow Up

# PREPARATION AND PREVENTION

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## TRAINING

Are you and your staff prepared to prevent or respond to a violent incident?

**Here are some key steps that you and your staff can follow:**

- Discuss roles and responsibilities to prevent or respond to a violent incident
- Put violence prevention and response policies in place, such as ensuring that no staff work in the clinic alone
- Ensure that important contact information is available and accessible
- Integrate violence prevention, response training and information into on-boarding of new staff
- In addition to these tips, there are educational resources available to help you and your staff learn how to prevent or prepare for a violent incident:
  - [Improving Risk Assessment and Management of Violence Toolkit](#): This is a continuing medical education course that will provide you with increased knowledge, skills, and tools to more effectively assess and manage the risk of violence in your workplace.
  - [HEABC E-Learning Modules on Violence Prevention](#): These are free online learning modules that address violence prevention in the healthcare setting generally and include education on risk-assessment, de-escalation, and behavioural care plans.

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## COVERAGE

If a violent incident does occur and results in injuries or illness, are you and your staff covered for medical and wage-replacement costs?

**Here are some key considerations to ensure that you are covered:**

- Confirm you have adequate insurance to cover medical costs and wage loss
- Ensure your practice meets responsibilities as an employer to provide coverage for your staff
- Ensure that you and your staff know how to make a claim if there are injuries or illness resulting from a violent incident
- Some key coverage options include:
  - [WorkSafeBC](#): physicians that meet the registration criteria and are registered with WorkSafeBC will receive coverage for medical costs and wage loss (up to a certain amount) for themselves and their employees. PH: 1-888-992-6622
  - Not all physicians meet the registration criteria and may need to register for [Personal Optional Protection](#)
- Doctors of BC Insurance: provides personal disability insurance that covers workplace and non-workplace illness and injury. WorkSafeBC coverage places a cap on wage replacement benefits (\$84,900 for 2019). Doctors of BC insurance can supplement this so that physicians are covered for additional wage replacement beyond the WorkSafeBC cap. PH: 1-800-665-2262

# RESPONSE

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## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Do you and your staff know what to do to during a violent incident if it does occur?

**To respond to a violent incident, there are some key steps that should be taken:**

- Call 911 and/or security staff if available (“Code White”)
- Ensure that you and your staff have an exit plan or a safe room/space in case a safe exit is not possible
- Document all relevant information related to the incident
- Report the violent incident and any related injuries to WorkSafeBC and/or your insurance company. WSBC PH: 1-888-967-5377
- Seek appropriate care for yourself and your staff in case of an injury

### In addition to these steps

Violence prevention training will show you and your staff how to create a plan and respond to a violent incident. This includes how to assess risk, how to respond depending on the level of risk, and roles and responsibilities during a violent incident. It will also enable you to conduct post-incident reviews and ensure a post-incident review process is in place.

# FOLLOW UP

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## REVIEW THE INCIDENT

Do you and your staff have a process to review and follow up on a violent incident?

### In addition to reporting the incident, you should:

- Review the incident with all relevant parties
- Determine if your violence prevention and risk assessment plan was followed
- Determine if changes need to be made.

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## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Are you and your staff aware of services and programs available to support you after a violent incident?

### You or your staff may need additional support after an incident including:

- Medical and rehabilitation services for injuries or illness
- Psychological services for mental health issues resulting from a violent incident
- Crisis support for emotional or mental distress immediately following a violent incident
- There are several services and programs available to you:
- [WorkSafeBC](#): may provide benefits for you or your staff to seek medical attention for both physical or psychological injuries or illness. In addition to these benefits, the following services are also available to workers involved in a violent incident:
  - [Critical Incident Response](#): provides support to workers involved in a serious workplace incident. PH: 1-888-922-3700.
  - [Crisis Support Line](#): provides support to workers and their family that are suffering from emotional distress following a workplace incident. PH: 1-800-624-2928
  - [Physician Health Program](#): provides 24/7 confidential assistance to physicians including access to mental health services as well as access to other physicians services for both you and your family. PH: 1-800-663-6729
  - [Doctors of BC Insurance](#): provides additional coverage for services or treatment you might need after a violent incident. PH: 1-800-665-2262