

CANADIAN INITIATIVE
on **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

The Role of Perceived Personal Control

Screening for Violence

Today

- Evolution of workplace violence legislation
- Violent risk assessment in the workplace
- Challenges for HR/Occ. Health practitioners
- The importance of PPC
- Introduction to the PPC Guide
- Application

The Nature of "Risk"

Two components when thinking of risk assessment

- The risk associated with an **individual** who may be potentially aggressive
- The **organizational** risks relating to design, work processes, etc.

How Legislation Evolves

- A devastating incident occurs (abuse, death, assault)
- Public attention is focused
- “Moral Outrage” takes root, followed by a demand for action
- Politicians are pressed to enact legislation

The difficulty arises when legislation outpaces our ability to fully understand the issues, particularly matters of “psychological harassment”

Moral Outrage



Growing Pressure to expand the Definition of Violence...

A Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to examine the feasibility of including domestic violence, abuse and harassment as matters subject to Ministry of Labour Investigation and Action

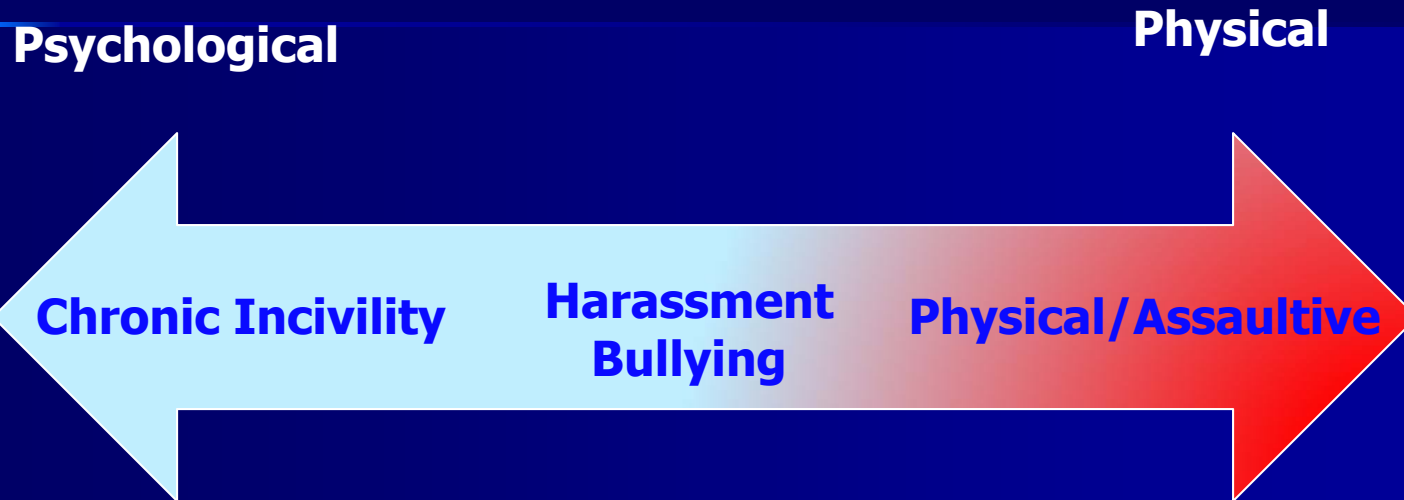
Lori Dupont Coroner's Inquest – December 11, 2007

Growing Pressure to expand the Definition of Violence...

We recommend that workplace violence be defined, not only as physical violence but also as psychological violence such as: bullying, mobbing, teasing, ridicule or any other act or words that could psychologically hurt or isolate a person in the workplace.

(OC Transpo Inquest – Recommendation #7)

A Range of Behaviours



The less “physical” the behaviour, the more care one must take in labeling the behaviour as “violence”

Current Thinking Regarding Individual Risk Assessment

- The Profiling of demographics should be approached with caution, in favour of “behavioural indicators”.
- Actuarial assessments can be limited in value.
- Violence is both situational and a process.
- Each situation is different

Guides Available

- WAVR-21 (White & Meloy)
- HCR-20 (Hart, et al)
- Mosaic (DeBecker)
- SIVRA-35 (Van Brunt)
- VRAG (Quinsey et al)

Actuarial versus Structured Professional Judgment

Violence is an Interaction

An interaction between three factors:

- Subject experiences “instability”
- Grievance (work or personal)
- Organizational inattentiveness/slow response

Perceived Personal Control

PPC is an individual's belief, whether real or imagined, that they are in "control" of their situation, as gauged by:

- How they are treated
- Available options
- Duration

"impulsivity" increases the risk

Pierre LeBrun



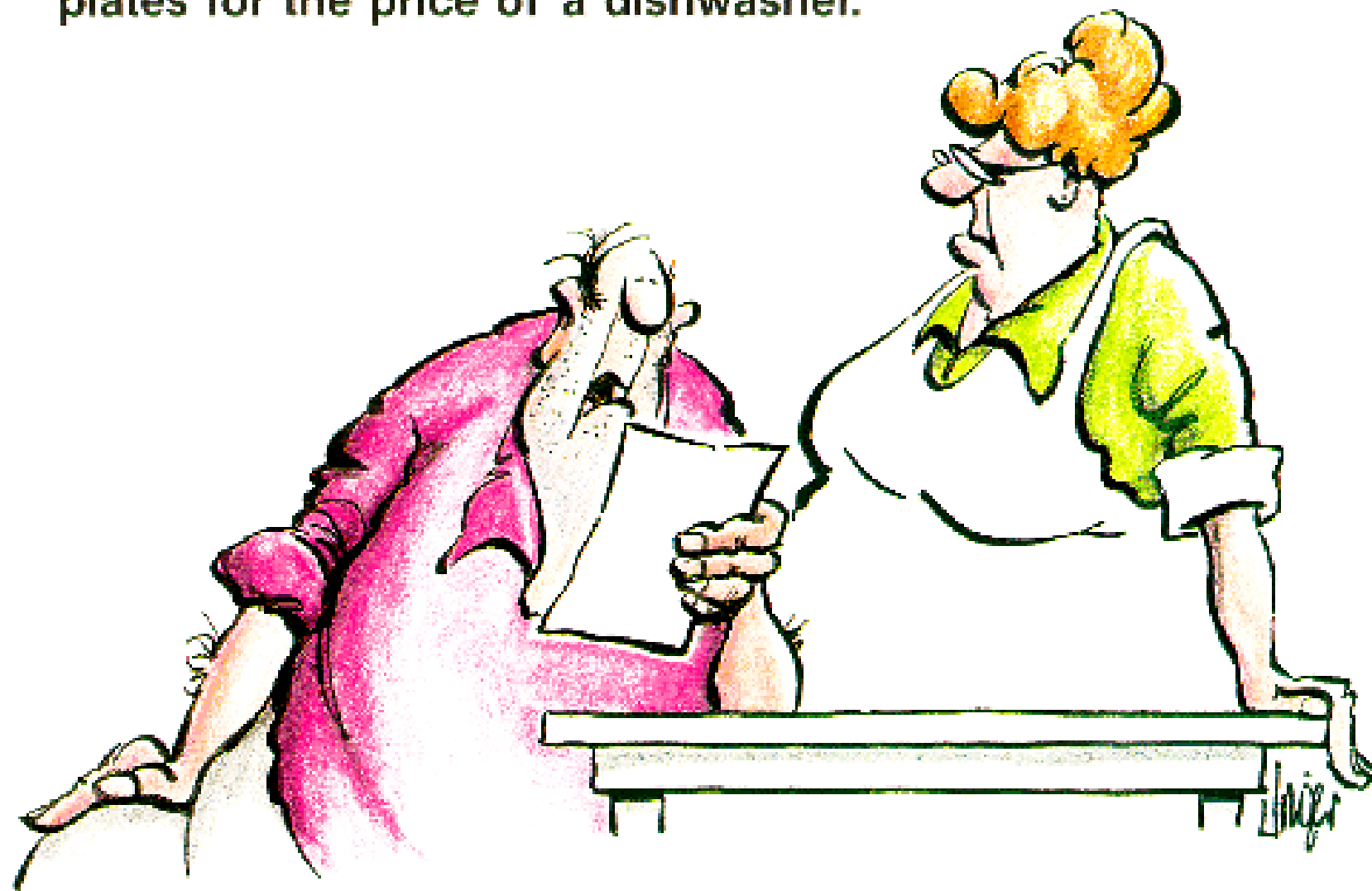
The Letter

“ ...I’m going to commit an unforgivable act...I have no choice. I’m tired, exhausted and completely backed against the wall...They will never leave me alone. I can’t go on living like this! They have destroyed my life, I will destroy their life...OC Transpo and the unions can’t hide from what they do to me...They will pay dearly for what they’ve done to me. The people who I hold responsible are: (four names listed) along with many others ...all I wanted was for them to leave me alone, not to bug me but it was too much to ask. They have spread lies, especially that I was a *rat* who denounced my own union members to try and have them stop laughing at me.”

The Balance

The task for every employer, regardless of jurisdiction, is to find that balance between being observant and reactive, while fulfilling their obligation to maintain a safe workplace.

“I just figured out, we can buy 7,800 paper plates for the price of a dishwasher.”



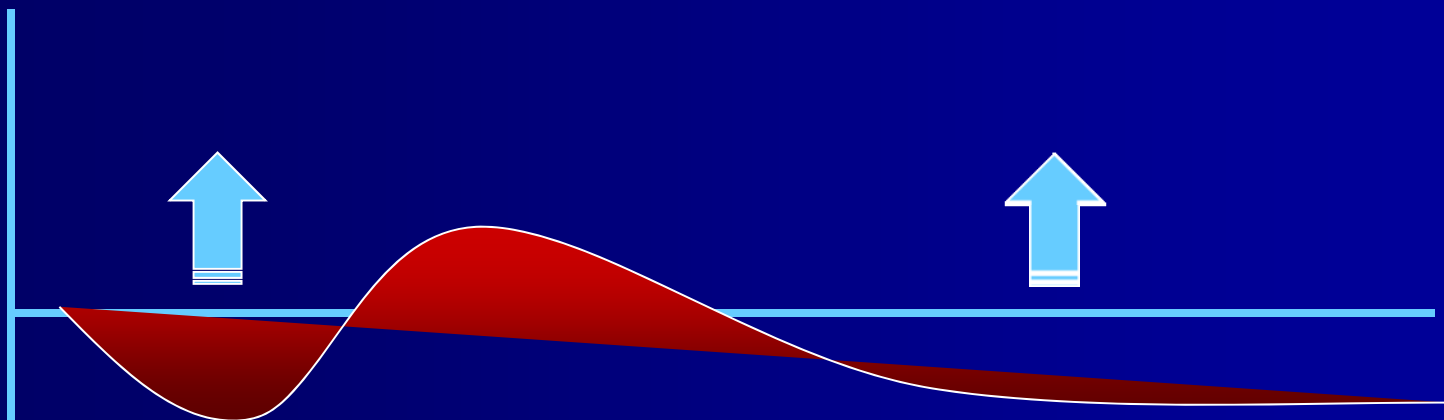


**"Herman,
you can
get in the
bathroom
now"**

Liniger

The Concept of "Control"

High Locus Control



Transitory Anxiety

Chronic Lack of Control

Perceived Injustice

Low Locus of Control

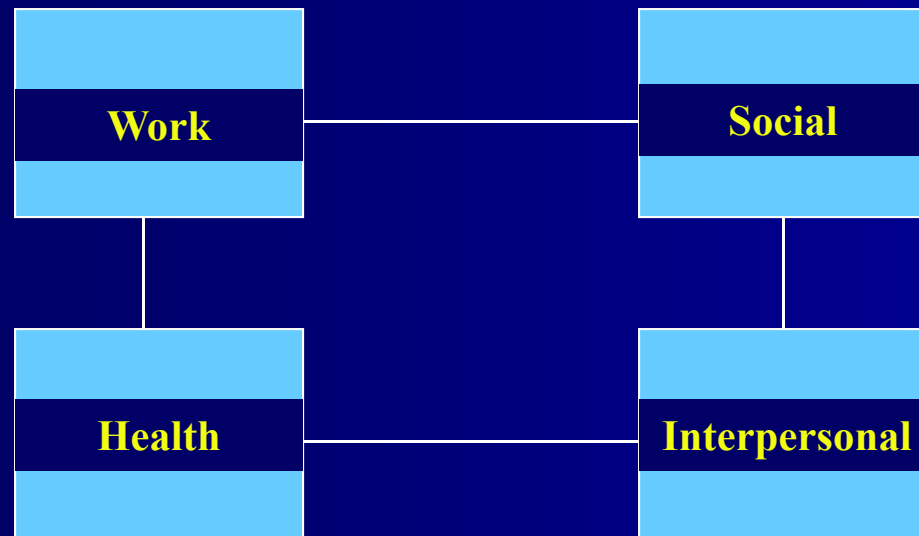
PTED

Subgroup of adjustment disorders (M. Linden, et al 2007)

- A **single exceptional negative life event** precipitates the onset of the illness;
- Repeated **intrusive memories** of the event;
- **Emotional modulation is unimpaired**, patients can even smile when engaged in thoughts of revenge,
- **No obvious other mental disorder** that can explain the reaction.

Self-blame, rejection of help, suicidal ideation, aggression, seemingly melancholic depression, somatic complaints, loss of appetite, sleep disturbances, pain. Duration is longer than 3 months. Performance in daily activities and roles is impaired.

Elements of PPC



PPC Tool

Work Elements

- **Marked Job Dissatisfaction** multiple grievances, complaints and allegations of mistreatment, etc.
- **Performance Concerns** appraisals, attitude, behaviour, suspensions, discipline, work history.
- **Overwhelmed by work** complains of too much work, unfair work assignments, persecution.
- **Feared** by others and aware of impact, socially isolated in the workplace, history of conflict.
- **Over identification with work** to the exclusion of everything else.

PPC

Social Elements

- **Impending losses/stressors** divorce, separation, death, job loss, legal and/or financial concerns.
- **Socially isolated** outside the workplace. Described as a “loner”, decreased personal support.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour** convictions, charges, stalking, fixations (violence/death/suicide), violence.

PPC

Health Elements

- **Substance abuse** alcohol, poly drug abuse, prescriptions.
- **Medical condition(s)** debilitating, changes in personality/self-care (pain, mental health).

PPC

Interpersonal Elements

- **Entitlement** self-centered, defensive, blames others.
- **Problem maintaining stability (impulsive)** affective, behavioural or cognitive impairment
- **Suspicious/fearful** ascribing to them sinister motives
- **Victim or Martyr** presents as being sacrificial

Management Strategies

