
Dealing with Violence in the Workplace: The Aftereffects

You saw, or were involved in, a violent event at work. The event is over. But it may still affect your daily life. Many people go through physical and emotional changes after seeing violence. These effects may last for weeks or longer.

A few common reactions

Below are some common reactions for people who have been through a violent event. Do any apply to you?

- The violent scene keeps running through my mind.
- I have trouble focusing.
- I feel jumpy for no reason.
- I get annoyed more easily.
- I've been eating more or less than normal.
- My sleep habits have changed.

Help is at hand

Any of the above symptoms is a normal response. But they can disrupt your life. Talking about what happened can help you feel better. If your employer sets up a meeting about the event (an incident debriefing), be sure to attend. Share information and ideas about how to avoid such a situation in the future. Or talk with your employee assistance program (EAP) or human resources (HR) representative. If a few weeks go by and you still feel upset, talk again with your EAP or HR representative. You may want to join a peer support group. Or you may seek professional counseling. Look for a professional who has experience working with victims of violence. Some people don't have symptoms until weeks or months after the violent incident. Seek help no matter when the symptoms develop. Talking about your concerns is the best way to get the help you need.