

STOP GENDERED VIOLENCE AT WORK

Gendered Violence Facts! Talking About GV at Work

It is great that you want to take action to stop gendered violence at work. Part of this action will be talking to others about gendered violence (GV) and how we can stop it.

No one wants the people that they work with to be injured at work. Yet 64% of Victorian working women tell us that they are experiencing GV at work and that this violence injures them. This means that GV is a serious OHS issue that we should all be taking action to stop.

Taking action can be as simple as putting Stop GV posters up in your workplace or just having a conversation with the people you work with. There is no right or wrong way to do this and every conversation you have is helping us build a movement to stop GV from injuring people at work. Most importantly, have a go!

Here are some useful tips for talking about gendered violence in your workplace.

1. Start by asking people what they think are the key causes of injury for women at work

Ask them if they know that:

- 64% of Victorian women have experienced bullying, harassment or violence at work
- 44% of women have experienced discrimination at work
- 19% of women have resigned from a workplace because they didn't feel safe

Ask them what they think the impact of the bullying harassment and violence women experience at work might be?

Gendered violence at work is a serious OHS issue because it causes physical and psychological injuries.

GV impacts on worker's health and wellbeing by causing:

- Physical injury and illness
- Feelings of isolation and exclusion
- Withdrawal and loss of confidence
- Economic hardship due to leaving the workplace to escape gendered violence
- Relationship breakdown & family disruption
- PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) fear and anxiety
- Suicide

2. Explaining what GV is

Tip: Putting up posters in your workplace is a great way to get people's attention and start the conversation.

Gendered violence is any action or behaviour that makes a person feel uncomfortable, unsafe, ashamed, inferior, excluded, embarrassed or humiliated for being a woman or having a different sexuality or identity. Sexism and discrimination is the root cause of GV.

Give some examples of GV relevant to your workplace or ask them to identify some examples.

Explain to people that the reason we are calling this behaviour GV is because of the way it injures women and because it is therefore a serious OHS hazard. We want everyone to understand that gendered Violence is an OHS hazard that causes serious physical and psychological injuries.

3. Not everyone will understand the issue straight away. Here are some common responses that you might get and useful ways of replying.

"it's just a joke! it's not that serious"

Why are jokes that put down or harass people funny?

How do you think jokes like that make others in the workplace including women and / or people who identify as gay, lesbian or transgender feel?

"It shouldn't be called violence because it's not that serious."

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It's a serious OHS issue.

“Gendered Violence isn’t as serious as other OHS hazards.”

- 64% of Victorian women have experienced bullying, harassment or violence at work.
- 44% of women have experienced discrimination at work
- 19% of women have resigned from a workplace because they didn’t feel safe
- Why don’t you think that GV is a serious issue?

If we worked in a workplace which had unsafe machinery that put us in danger of getting hurt we would take it seriously and remove the risk, why is GV different?

“Gendered Violence isn’t violence.”

Why don’t you think GV is violence?

Gendered violence is violence because just like all forms of violence, GV harms workers by causing the same type of physical and psychological injuries.

4. Ask the question: Do you think GV is a problem in our workplace?

Asking this question is a great way to start a conversation about GV and get a sense of how the people you work with understand and experience GV.

“GV isn’t a problem in our workplace.”

We know that GV happens in all workplaces because 64% of Victorian women have experienced bullying, harassment or violence at work.

If GV is so widespread and happening in other workplaces why wouldn’t it be happening here?

“GV happens here but it’s just the way things are and we can’t change it.”

Many people have learned to put up with GV just to get by or because they think it’s a normal part of our workplace culture.

But we know that GV causes injury. We shouldn’t just be putting up with it.

We wouldn’t do this for other workplace OHS hazards. We need to start raising the issue and working on solutions. If we don’t start working to stop GV at work no one will.