

Taking steps to prevent 'going postal'

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Workplace violence continues to be a topic of great importance to many companies, as tales of extreme cases hit the media. Today's human resources departments spend a great deal of time preparing for these cases. However, a new study in the journal *Advances in Developing Human Resources (ADHR)* questions whether time might be better invested in further investigation.

In the article "[Workplace Violence](#): Assessing Organizational Awareness and Planning Interventions," proposes that using a theory called awareness development to assess employees responses to situations can help HR departments better craft their workplace violence policies and procedures.

"The complexity of workplace violence demands a thoughtful diagnosis that provides a clear assessment of the organization's current situation so chosen strategies are appropriate," wrote author Martin B. Kormanik.

Part of that diagnosis process, Kormanik contends, is surveying employees to see where they are in one of the five stages of awareness development. These stages include pre-encounter (having little to no knowledge of workplace violence), intellectualization (having knowledge but no experience with workplace violence), encounter (having experience with workplace violence), empowerment (seeking strategies to adapt or cope after workplace violence), and integration (regaining a sense of control after workplace violence). In this study, most of the participants' organizations fell into the intellectualization stage.

Participants said "the largest percentage of the organization 'talks a good game' but has limited awareness of workplace violence issues," wrote Kormanik.

The author suggests the use of the awareness development theory to help companies assess their current status and plan initiatives based on awareness level of workplace violence.

More information: The article entitled "Workplace Violence: Assessing Organizational Awareness and Planning Interventions" from *Advances in Developing Human Resources* is available free for a limited time at: adh.sagepub.com/content/13/1/114.full.pdf+html

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