IF YOU HAVE BEEN ASSAULTED:

What to Do First

1. **Seek medical attention.** Photograph your injury. Take note of any witnesses.

2. **File a Protest of Assignment form** over unsafe conditions.

3. **Report the incident**. Many assaults that take place in healthcare never get reported. Report to your supervisor or manager. Demand that a police report be taken. Report to your NYSNA delegate or representative. Have them obtain witness statements. Have them file a grievance if there has been a contract violation.

4. **Request that Management take steps to protect you and others** from the assailant while he or she is in the hospital or returns to the hospital.

5. **File a Workers' Compensation claim**. If you have been injured on the job, all immediate and future medical costs should be covered under Workers' Compensation. A portion of lost work time may also be reimbursed by Workers' Compensation. While you have up to two years to file a claim, you must notify your employer of the incident within thirty days, and it is advisable to start your claim as soon as possible.

6. **Assaulting nurses is now a felony under New York State law.** If security, police or the assistant district attorney discourage you from filing felony charges, insist on your right to do so and contact your NYSNA representative or NYSNA Health and Safety for assistance.

7. **Any assault can be traumatic, involving emotional as well as physical recovery.** Your contract may address leave provisions for workers who have been assaulted on the job.

Remember to Follow the Three Rs

Recognize Warning Signs...

Assaults can come without warning, but usually there are behaviors that precede violent actions:

- Increasingly agitated behavior
- Increased use of profanity or sexualized language
- Increased motor restlessness
- Inability to comply with simple and reasonable requests
- Recent episode of violent behavior
- Verbal threats or gestures signaling intent to do harm or intimidate

Respond Quickly...

- Respect the person's personal space
- Verbally and physically set boundaries for behavior
- Maintain a calm and even tone
- Acknowledge the person's feelings
- Assume the person's concerns are valid and try to meet reasonable requests
- Offer easily understood alternatives
- Summon a trained response team if necessary to control the situation

Remember Other Ways to Protect Yourself...

- Establish your exit route and try to stay oriented to it
- Remain out of arm's reach of the individual
- Don't turn your back to the person or let him or her get between you and the exit
- Call for backup or security if the situation continues to escalate

The best way to deal with workplace violence is to prevent it. Your employer is required to provide a workplace free of hazardous conditions.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Assaulted at Work?

Steps to take if you or someone on your unit has been assaulted and preventative measures to stop workplace violence.

NYSNA
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Safe Nurses, Safe Patients, Safe Workplace.

KEY STEPS TO WIN PROTECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The ongoing conditions that contributed to the assault will continue unless we take action together to win better protections and precautions.

Consider these steps if they have not already been initiated:

✔ **Schedule a meeting with your NYSNA representative and NYSNA Health and Safety specialists to discuss the incident.** We want to debrief and discuss what can be learned from the incident and how to take action.

✔ **Consider requesting a NYSNA workplace violence risk inspection.** We can inspect the unit and talk to staff in order to come up with recommendations for improvements and protections.

✔ **Attend a NYSNA workplace violence training and encourage coworkers to do so.**

✔ **Take the issue to the NYSNA health and committee at your facility.**

Workplace Violence Controls Checklist

Measures taken to reduce the risk of workplace hazards are called "controls."

To be effective, controls should:

1. Be tailored to the issues of the specific work environment (not cookie cutter)

2. Follow the Hierarchy of Controls:
   1) elimination of risk factors;
   2) physical changes to the workplace;
   3) implementation of policies, procedures, work practices

Here are some examples of controls that can be used to reduce the risk of workplace violence. If you are interested in finding the best controls for your workplace, have your NYSNA representative contact NYSNA Health and Safety who will work with you to arrive at the best possible proposals.

Does your facility have the following controls in place to prevent violence?

Work/Patient Environment Overall

❑ Reduce overcrowding or cramped, tight areas

❑ Reduce wait times

❑ Increase staffing (RN but also ancillary and MDs)

❑ Dedicated space and policies related to psych and addiction/drug related patients

❑ Reconfigure spaces to reduce risk of staff being trapped or isolated

Engineering Controls

❑ Partitions, door locks and other barriers to limit patient/visitor access to nurses station, triage room, etc.

❑ Egress and escape options

❑ Panic alarms or buttons

❑ Enhance line of sight to security officers or other staff

❑ Security cameras and convex mirrors

❑ Lighting

Policies & Procedures

❑ Clear procedures on how to access additional assistance when a violence situation escalates beyond the ability of unit staff to control

❑ Clear protocols on how and when security intervenes with patients and visitors who are, or may become, violent

❑ Clear protocols on restraining of patients

❑ Visitation policies, taking into account past incidents, threats or potential issues

❑ "Behavioral contract" for patients with a history of violent behavior

❑ Flagging system in EMR to notify staff of patients with history of violence

For further information, contact NYSNA Occupational Health & Safety Representatives at:

healthandsafety@nysna.org