

## Text A

## Workplace Violence Is a Source of and Reaction to Stress

Violence in the workplace has become a serious and global problem. In the United States, an average of 20 people are murdered at work each week, and it is estimated that 1 million workers are assaulted 1.\_\_\_\_\_. Homicide has become the leading cause of death for women at work and is the third leading cause overall. Violent acts are estimated to cost American employers about \$4 billion a year. The rate of assaults against women and men in the workplace in Canada is even higher than in the United States.



On-the-job violence has long been a documented source of stress for police officers. Seeing violence being committed by others, having to resort to deadly force, and even 2.\_\_\_\_\_ shooting one's own partner are stressors that are unique to police work. The result can be substance abuse, marital problems, and even the use of violence within the family. Trained to control their emotions on the job, officers can find it difficult to discern an 3.\_\_\_\_\_ outlet for the feelings provoked by work violence. As a result, there has been a steady rise in the number of police departments offering psychological counseling for officers who are experiencing stress reactions.

In recent years, it has become apparent that violence on the job is not confined to police work. Violence on the job is also a problem for government workers, teachers, retail sales clerks, real estate agents, airline workers, and for those in service settings, such as hospitals, nursing homes, and social service agencies. Violence and crime have also become a particular source of stress for 4.\_\_\_\_\_ people, whether the thing being delivered is mail, pizza, or parcels. Co-workers, customers, patients, and strangers are all potential sources of violence.

Some of the most extreme examples of workplace violence have been the string of mass shootings in American post offices and in Canada, where an angry transit employee shot and killed four co-workers. These shootings (only the visible tip of an iceberg of violent acts in the post office) provoked 5.\_\_\_\_\_ stress among survivors. After an incident in Royal Oak, Michigan, a team of 100 mental health volunteers provided extensive crisis intervention 6.\_\_\_\_\_. This was followed up by sessions on communication and conflict resolution designed to get at the sources of violence.

While the fear of workplace violence is considered to be a major stressor that can 7.\_\_\_\_\_ employees' capability and willingness to perform their jobs, violence in the workplace can also be a consequence of or reaction to stress. Employees are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the stress



of work, and some are finding themselves at the breaking point. The threat of layoffs and job loss due to 8.\_\_\_\_\_ and downsizing, combined with the anxiety and pressures of constant change, has led to an increasing number of violent acts.

An increasingly common reaction to job-related stress is workplace rage, which often takes the form of a screaming fit, tantrums, outbursts, a chair through a window, assaults, or any act or threat of violence. Violence as a reaction to stress is often the result of a sense of 9.\_\_\_\_\_ or unfair treatment that produces extreme and chronic tension or anxiety. Responsibility for such an emotional state is often placed on the organization or specific managers or bosses who then become the targets of a violent act.

The issue of violence in the workplace is now receiving more attention from employers and governments who must take responsibility for employee safety. In Canada, plans are being made for a federal law on workplace violence that will require employers to perform risk assessments, 10.\_\_\_\_\_ policies for dealing with violence, and report all violent incidents in the workplace. Employers will increasingly be required to take steps to protect their employees against violence in the workplace.

(638 words)

## Exercises

Read the passage through carefully and select one word for each blank from the list of choices below. You may NOT use any of the words more than once.

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|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| A) establish    | F) injustice   | K) restructuring |
| B) considerable | G) counseling  | L) impair        |
| C) delivery     | H) appropriate | M) justification |
| D) incredible   | I) annually    | N) transferring  |
| E) normally     | J) resemble    | O) accidentally  |