

Gender-based Violence



Gendered violence in the workplace is a serious occupational health and safety issue.

What is gendered violence?

If a person is made to feel uncomfortable, unsafe, threatened, ashamed, inferior, excluded, embarrassed or humiliated because of their sex, gender, sexual orientation, or because they do not adhere to dominant gender stereotypes or socially prescribed gender role, this is considered gendered violence.

Gendered violence may include but is not limited to:

- Stalking
- Intimidation
- Verbal abuse
- Rude gestures
- Offensive language and imagery
- Sexual harassment
- Physical assault including sexual assault
- Put downs, innuendo and insinuations
- Ostracism and exclusion
- Being undermined in your work or position

Who is most at risk?

Anyone can experience work-related gender violence. However, gender violence is generally perpetrated against women in the workplace who are:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- A refugee or a migrant
- Women with disabilities

What is the cause of gendered violence?

There are several factors that cause gendered violence. Some of these include:

- Work environment where aggressive and violent behaviour is accepted and rewarded, encouraging other workers to engage in violent behaviour.
- Power imbalance between men and women.
- A culture of sexism and norms in the workplace which encourage gendered violence.



How does gendered violence impact a worker?

Gendered violence can cause physical, psychological or financial injury to workers such as:

- Feeling of isolation, loss of confidence and withdrawal
- Stress, depression, and anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Financial loss if a worker resigns from work
- Family dislocation and disruption
- Physical injury

Many workers do not report gendered violence due to fear, lack of support provided and failure of an employer to act on reported incidents. As a result, workers are continually exposed to violent behaviour and harassment at work.

Employer's duty:

Under workplace health and safety laws, it is your employer's duty to provide you and your workmates with a safe work environment by eliminating physical and psychological risks of harm.

Your employer should as a minimum:

- Maintain a safe and inclusive work environment where gender equity is promoted.
- Denounce disrespectful behaviour and take appropriate action against the perpetrator.
- Provide a clear process to employees for reporting unwanted behaviour.
- Adjust work systems and the environment to eliminate exposure to gendered violence risks.
- Support workers and provide referral information for additional support.
- Maintain confidentiality of workers who report the incident. Workers who report should not be penalised or face repercussions.
- Provide information, instruction, and training to workers in relation to gendered violence and how it can be minimised.

Take a stand against gendered violence

Don't be a silent victim or a silent witness:

- Keep your eyes open for any warning signs that gendered violence is happening in your workplace
- Report all incidents of gendered violence
- Collect evidence, keep a diary of any incidents of gendered violence directed at you and/or your workmates

Contact your AWU HSR/Delegate or Organiser, if you need more information, advice or support to stop gendered violence at your workplace.

Always call 000 in case of an emergency.