Dealing with aggression and violence: training and support

Problem

Healthcare professionals are confronted with violence in the workplace more than ever1. In daily life two natural answers come to mind when facing violence: fight or flight. However these responses are inappropriate in a hospital setting. **How can we help them deal with it?**

Answer

We developed an educational training program designed to:
- develop clinical judgment,
- improve communication skills,
- acquire de-escalation techniques,
- promote the use of risk assessment tools and related support.

Training

Several forms of training are available to best suit the needs of nurses:
- a hospital wide four day long workshop2 is offered four times each year.
- special training workshops are devised & tailored to the specific needs of nurses in a given clinical setting.
- workshops are included in specialized postgraduate training for nurses.
- special courses have been created in the aux. nurses training program.

Support

Support is essential. It’s available to healthcare workers and teams to help them cope with aggression and its sequels: PLN may be called for help by physicians, nurses or nurses auxiliaries. Other specialized personnel are accessible such as psychiatric consultation-liaison team, staff psychologist, hospital security personnel, hospital jurists and support from the Hum. Res. Dep.

A leaflet has also been published to answer questions workers may have regarding workplace violence.3

The future

Our experience shows that training helps healthcare workers. We are now working to formerly evaluate its benefits. Support is another important piece of the puzzle, as it may prevent violence or its sequels on personnel and patients.

We need to implement risk assessment tools, create protocols and procedures for departments where none already exist, and reinforce the synergy between the different actors involved. There is still a long way to go to finish the puzzle, but we are on our way. One piece after another.

References