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- **Share data among partners.** Both businesses and agencies possess data on reported WPV incidents, which if collected, combined, and analyzed, would shed light on the broader WPV experience in the United States, and could potentially enable more focused and thereby cost-efficient prevention efforts in companies or sectors.
- **Conduct economics research.** Decision makers in the private sector are accustomed to analyzing costs, benefits, return on investments—in short, examining the bottom line issues that impact their businesses. Realistic assessments of the costs of WPV to businesses and society in general, and the cost-benefit of prevention, including cost-effectiveness comparisons of effective, focused prevention options are needed.

# 5

## Linking Research to Practice

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Research that has been conducted to date must be translated into practical preventive workplace action. It is clear that Conference participants see a gap in the availability of evidence-based prevention options for industry—that is, between what is known and what is applied in the workplace. As additional evaluation studies and demonstration projects are concluded, research findings of effective preventive interventions must be proactively translated into prevention products and technologies and transferred to and implemented in workplaces. The translation, transfer, and wider implementation of prevention strategies and programs may be as or more time consuming, costly, and challenging as their initial development and validation. However, the substantial input provided by participants in the conference suggests that an excellent opportunity exists for a broad, collaborative effort to do the following:

- Take stock of the knowledge base for WPV prevention.
- Explore the gaps in that knowledge.
- Prioritize needed research and information efforts.
- Identify opportunities for wider implementation of known effective prevention

measures throughout workplaces, companies, and industries at risk.

- Identify and use existing data, findings, and knowledge that have yet to be translated and transferred to practical prevention technologies, products, interventions, strategies, programs, curricula, and recommendations.
- Collaborate and cooperate fully with potential partners to plan new research with implications for practical prevention.
- To help ensure such research, engage partners (particularly business and industry partners) earlier in the process of identifying problem areas and conceptualizing research projects and approaches.

Conference participants identified the following overarching needs in linking research to practice:

- Establish and maintain a clearinghouse of WPV-related information, particularly evidence-based programs and strategies.

As in many domains, the volume of information related to WPV risks and prevention is growing. A daunting

challenge looms in the organization, validation (assessment of reliability), tailoring, and distribution of information about WPV risks, prevention strategies and options, research findings, cost data, and other pertinent knowledge components. A key design objective should be easy access for employers and all other partners.

- Sponsor national, public information/education campaigns to raise awareness of WPV, emphasize the importance of prevention programs, and provide contact information for support services.

Wider awareness of the prevalence of WPV is needed among at-risk employers

and workers, policy makers, media, and the general public. Federal government partners should help communicate existing knowledge, including what constitutes WPV, the types of WPV, the sectors and occupations at risk, and the critical roles of research, evaluation, and company policies and programs in the prevention effort. Information about availability of support services for organizations and individuals should be included. Such information might be particularly useful to companies seeking to develop and implement WPV programs, and individuals seeking help who may be either victims or perpetrators of WPV.



# Partners and Their Roles

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Participants in conference discussions repeatedly emphasized the importance of collaborating and partnering in WPV prevention—from the interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration (so crucial to developing and implementing prevention programs) to national interorganizational partnerships (essential for advancing WPV research, implementing findings, and evaluating efforts). Partners need to be identified and engaged; roles need to be determined; agendas, strategies, and plans need to be developed; and programs need to be established, implemented, and evaluated.

This section identifies some of the partners (or types of partners) that participants suggested were necessary to the WPV research and prevention effort, as well as some of the roles and responsibilities that participants thought fit well with each based on their missions and activities.

## 6.1 NIOSH

NIOSH was recognized as a key organization, both in assuming specific roles and responsibilities suggested during the discussions and in facilitating the collective efforts of a wide range of partners. NIOSH was recognized for its current roles and activities as a leading research

center, as a voice for objectivity in research and dissemination, as a strong advocate for identifying and improving effective research and prevention approaches, and as an organization that leverages resources, engages stakeholders, and prepares and disseminates information for the business community.

In addition to the NIOSH role in conducting, collaborating in, and coordinating WPV research, the following principal roles were suggested for NIOSH:

- Developing and keeping a clearinghouse of information about violent workplace events, model programs, data collection instruments, implementation practices, and other pertinent information potentially useful to employers and other stakeholders
- Developing (1) data-gathering standards for compiling data from disparate sources and (2) a reporting system that captures all WPV events—verbal abuse and other threatening behaviors as well as injury outcomes
- Leading an effort to make the issue of WPV more visible (through public information and education campaigns, for example)

## 6.2 Other Federal Partners

Suggested roles for other relevant Federal partners (such as OSHA, BLS, the Department of Justice, the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, the Veteran's Administration, and other agencies that collect relevant data or regulate industry) in collaboration with NIOSH include the following:

- Coordinating the national WPV prevention effort over the next decade
- Forging a common definition with employer alliances and worker advocacy groups to identify the range of behaviors that constitute WPV
- Gathering data on the Federal workforce (the Nation's largest worker group)
- Implementing WPV prevention programs in Federal workplaces
- Ensuring and maintaining up-to-date statistics on WPV
- Adopting a partnership model to develop regulations addressing WPV

## 6.3 State Agencies

These roles were suggested for State agencies:

- Collaborating with Federal partners to embrace common definition(s) of WPV
- Quantifying victimizations among State workers and thereby adding to the available data
- Determining specific and relevant strategies for prevention in State government

## 6.4 Private-Sector Companies, Corporations, and Alliances

Roles suggested for private-sector companies, corporations, and alliances are the following:

- Contributing to the effort to forge common WPV definitions along with government agencies and worker advocacy groups
- Sharing data on WPV events as well as successes, problems, and methods to overcome barriers in implementing WPV prevention programs and strategies.
- Adopting WPV prevention strategies that have been recommended and verified by Federal agencies

## 6.5 Business and Community Organizations

Suggested roles for business and community organizations are as follows:

- Serving as conveners, bringing together factions of the community to engage in dialog, striving to comprehend the issue, and forging a coordinated response to WPV prevention
- Sharing prevention programs and strategies: a businesses-helping-businesses approach
- Assisting government, media, and educational institutions in increasing public awareness of WPV risks and prevention

## 6.6 Insurers

The following roles were suggested for insurers:

- Providing incentives, primarily by reducing workers' compensation premiums for employers who implement WPV prevention programs that demonstrably lower workers' compensation costs
- Supporting research that seeks economic evidence that violence prevention provides a return on investment to employers or other entities investing in WPV prevention

## 6.7 Law Enforcement

Roles suggested for law enforcement agencies include the following:

- Collecting more detailed data and standardizing definitions
- Disseminating evidence-based prevention information
- Providing assistance to businesses in taking prevention steps
- Participating in research efforts to address the prevention of workplace crime and violence
- Focusing on community-oriented policing

## 6.8 The Legal Profession

These roles were suggested for the legal profession:

- Appropriately balancing the need for collecting accurate WPV victimization data with the tangle of overlapping privacy interest laws
- Securing exemptions or waivers from existing privacy restraints in order to collect data

- Training attorneys to be sensitive and provide outreach to affected clients

## 6.9 Academic Research Institutions

The following roles were suggested for academic research institutions:

- Training new researchers entering the field
- Raising the research bar by setting the example in research and crafting violence prevention strategies based on findings
- Playing a proactive role in accessing private industry data
- Emphasizing in its law, business, and management curricula the dynamics of WPV and its impact on workers, families, and corporate health

## 6.10 The Media

The role suggested for the media was providing public service announcements (PSAs) in support of public information campaigns.

## 6.11 The Medical Community

The medical community's suggested role was to improve recognition and reporting of potential cases of injury or stress from WPV.

## 6.12 Worker Assistance Programs

Suggested roles for worker assistance programs were the following:

- Improving screening and recognition of potential WPV issues
- Being involved in response to WPV incidents to serve victim, witness, and co-worker needs

### 6.13 Social Advocacy Organizations

Roles suggested for social advocacy organizations were the following:

- Contributing to the effort to forge common WPV definitions with Federal, State, business, and labor partners
- Developing media campaigns following the model provided by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

### 6.14 Other National Organizations

The following roles were suggested for other national organizations:

- Having safety and security specialists and organizations interact with research and regulatory communities to enable research-to-practice linkage (incorporate findings in their programs and procedures) and to provide expert input to researchers and regulators
- Having academic schools of architecture, urban planning, and civil engineering to interact with violence prevention partners to provide expert input to research and regulatory efforts and to incorporate safety and security considerations into their designs

# 7

## Conclusions

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This report summarizes the discussions that occurred during the conference *Partnering in Workplace Violence Prevention: Translating Research to Practice* in Baltimore, Maryland, in November 2004. Many ideas are presented about what is missing from the national effort to study and prevent WPV. Some gaps could be addressed by increasing intervention evaluation research; improving reporting, data collection, and data sharing; facilitating and enabling organizations to foster the dynamic commitment and cooperation of employers and workers; analyzing costs and cost-benefits; and improving organization and delivery of risk and prevention information. Other gaps are more specific to the types of violence, the various roles and relations among partnering organizations, or the industries and occupations involved.

Great strides have been made over the past two decades. Likewise, opportunities exist to address the barriers and gaps outlined in this report and to achieve a more coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective national effort to understand, control, and prevent violent incidents at work. These violent incidents damage or destroy the victims' sense of security, dignity, and (too often) their well-being and their lives. They represent a large toll to our society.

The key to the utility and impact of a report such as this is the extent to which people and organizations can visualize and initiate the efforts and partnerships needed to understand and reduce the risks of WPV within their spheres of influence. We encourage your interest, involvement, and collaboration in this effort.

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