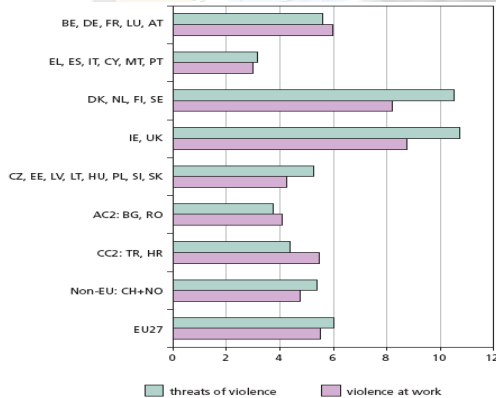


Prevention of violence and harassment in the workplace -work load and threat in public unemployment administration -

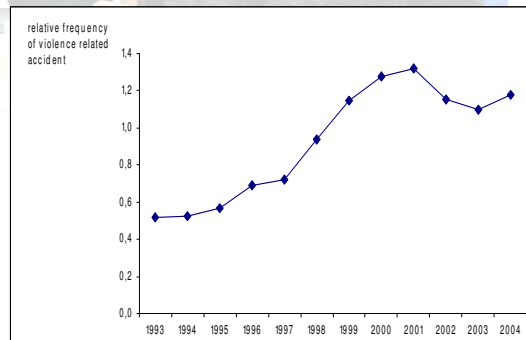
Problem

Third party violence and harassment in the workplace have become important problems in Europe during the last decades. Among the most exposed sectors are health and social work, health professionals, protective services, public administration (OSHA, 2007).

Workers subjected to violence or threats of violence, by country group (%).



Relative frequency of violence related accidents at work in public administration in Germany from 1993 to 2004 (BUK, 2005).

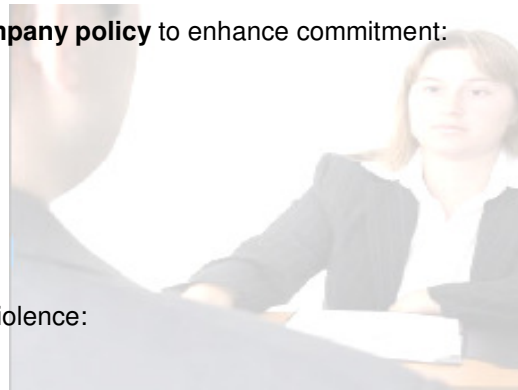


Solution

For contribution in helping affected companies (unemployment administration) and their employees to deal with this situation a project was started by public accident insurance companies in Germany.

The following principles are set up within a **company policy** to enhance commitment:

- no tolerance against aggression
- safety first for employees
- pressing charges against aggressor
- systematic documentation of events

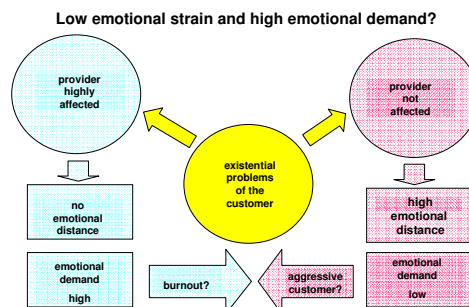


Several **measures** help to prevent third party violence:

- technical i.e. barriers, emergency call ...
- organizational i.e. not working alone, customer leading systems ...
- personal i.e. training counselling skills, reducing personal stress ...

Results

Employees in public social services often suffer from work load, work-private conflict and lack of commitment. They are confronted to people drinking alcohol, being aggressive and sometimes they are exposed to sexual aggression. More surprising they show low emotional strain and high emotional demand! Our model shows how this can be explained. Avoiding emotional strain crude may enhance aggressive behaviour by the customer.



Conclusion

Prevention of third party violence in addition to technical and organizational measures like reorganization of tasks needs to improve the employees' counselling skills and commitment to task!