

Howard, R., Rose, J., & Levenson, V. (2009). The psychological impact of violence on Staff working with adults with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*. 22; 538-548.

The prevalence of aggressive behaviour within a population of individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) ranges from 18%-23%. For staff members that work with individuals with ID, aggressive behaviour can be associated with staff stress, burnout which is characterized emotional exhaustion, a reduced sense of personal accomplishment and depersonalization of clients. This study aimed to determine the factors that affected the relationship between experience of violent events and burnout. Staff from a medium-secure setting which experienced a high incidence of violence and staff from a community setting which experienced a low incidence of violence completed questionnaires that assessed levels of burnout, staff support, self-efficacy and fear of violence.

Key Findings:

- Medium-secure sample showed lower levels of fear than the community sample
- Higher self-efficacy scores were found in staff in the medium-secure setting in comparison to those in the community setting
- Higher levels of staff satisfaction with support is related to a higher sense of personal accomplishment
- Levels of emotional exhaustion increased as staff experienced higher levels of physical and verbal aggression
- Staff that reported higher numbers of threats of violence from those with ID had lower levels of fear of violence
- There is a relationship between physical violence and burnout, however as self-efficacy increases, the significance of the association decreases.

Conclusion

Reduced levels of fear in setting where there is a high incidence of violence can be accounted for by the training and preparation for violence with staff that work in such an environment. Managing violence in individuals with intellectual disabilities can assist in decreasing levels of staff burnout and increase levels of self-efficacy.