
The logo consists of a dark purple square with a white diagonal shape on the left side. The text "HARASSMENT & VIOLENCE AGAINST EDUCATORS" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters across the square.

**HARASSMENT
& VIOLENCE
AGAINST
EDUCATORS**

**FACING THE FACTS:
THE ESCALATING CRISIS OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
EDUCATORS IN ONTARIO**

*“While the search for answers about how to help these kids
and the political battle over responsibility wages on,
teachers and children are left on the frontlines
with no back up, lots of blame and criticism,
and a complete feeling of utter failure.
They are the casualties of this war.”*

~ Grade 2 Teacher

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Foreword

This report, which presents the results of the December 2017-2018 *Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey*, is organized into six substantive sections: (a) *Harassment and violence in Ontario elementary schools: What does it look like?* draws on qualitative data to describe educators' experiences; (b) *Frequency of harassment and violence* reports on the quantitative analysis of violence and harassment rates; (c) *Impact and implications* examines the effect harassment and violence has on the health and wellbeing of educators and students as well as broader economic and societal implications; (d) *Context and risk* examines the quantitative and qualitative data through an intersectional gendered lens; (e) *Reporting and reprisals* describes reporting rates and considers impediments including the risk of reprisals, and, finally; (f) *Resources and training* presents what educators indicate they need. The report concludes with recommendations on how to address the escalating crisis of violence against educators in Ontario.

Methodological notes

Between the 4th and 21st of December 2018, 1,688 educators participated in the *Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey*. Ontario elementary school educators (contract and occasional teachers, PSP/ESPs, ECEs/DECES, and other educational professionals) were asked about their experiences of a broad range of workplace harassment (e.g., slurs, insults, and put-downs) as well as threats, attempts, and acts of physical aggression in the 2017-2018 school year. In addition to documenting experiences, the goal of this research was to examine the frequency, impact, and response to harassment and violence against educators in publicly funded elementary schools in Ontario and to consider how experiences of harassment and violence are impacted by intersecting factors.

Consistent with the 2011 survey conducted by the American Psychological Association Task Force on Violence Directed Against Teachers, we asked educators about harassment and violence from multiple sources, including students, parents, colleagues, and administrators (i.e., principals). We also included in our survey a number of specific types of harassing behaviour, including feeling “ganged up on,” false accusations, and rumours. This research is, to the best of our knowledge, the first that tracked false accusations and experiences of being ganged up on and one of the few surveys to deploy both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data analysis for this paper was generated using SAS/STAT software, Version [9.4] of the SAS System for Windows 10. The open-ended questions were thematically coded using NVivo software, Version [12] and subsequently subject to a horizontal and vertical analysis. In the interests of confidentiality, all quotations are presented in italics but without other identifiers (e.g., grade taught, gender, role).

The investigators

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Acknowledgements

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Key findings

- Results of the study suggest that there has been *an almost seven-fold increase in the experience of violence against educators in the past 12 years* when the first Canadian surveys examining violence against educators were conducted. In a 2005 study of Ontario school teachers, 7% of educators reported experiencing violence at some point in their careers; in the current study that rate has ballooned to 54% in a single school year.
- There are alarmingly high rates of violence in Ontario's elementary schools. 54% of educators reported experiencing one or more acts of physical violence (during the 2017-2018 school year; 60% reported one or more attempts to use physical force and 49% experienced one or more threats. Overwhelmingly, this violence was student perpetrated.
- Levels of harassment are unacceptably high. 72% of respondents reported experiencing explicit verbal insults, putdowns, and/or obscene gestures from a student in the 2017-2018 school year; 41% experienced this sort of behaviour from a parent.
- Vulnerability to harassment and violence is conditioned by intersecting factors. For example, rates of harassment and violence from students are statistically higher among educators identifying as racialized, disabled, women, or LGBTQ; educators who are racialized, disabled, or identify as LGBTQ experience elevated levels of reprisals from administrators (i.e., principals). Women with disabilities experience the highest levels of harassment and violence.
- Educators reported that harassment and violence were repetitive, frequent, and ongoing occurrences. Educators who experienced harassment report an average of 8.5 occasions of *insults, put-downs, obscene gestures* from students, 2.77 from parents, 3.98 from colleagues, and 4.21 from administrators in the 2017-2018 school year.
- Qualitative data revealed that educators often feel unsupported by administrators, that common strategies (e.g., Personal Protective Equipment) are addressing symptoms rather than root causes, and that there is a disturbing normalization of violence in Ontario's elementary schools.
- The impact of harassment and violence is long lasting. Higher levels of either harassment or physical violence are associated with diminished physical and mental health as well as lower job performance even when assessed months after the school year in which the harassment and violence occurred.
- The financial impact associated with harassment and violence is considerable. Educators report taking an average of 6.84 days off work following their worst instance of harassment in the past year and an average of 5.18 days off work following their worst instance of physical violence. It is estimated that the costs associated with lost time due to harassment and violence against public school educators in Ontario is in excess of 3 million dollars annually.
- Almost half of educators did not report their worst incident of workplace violence in the past year. Reasons for not reporting are varied, including a lack of time, being discouraged to do so, and concern about repercussions.
- Harassment and violence against elementary school educators is gendered violence. Not only are upwards of 85% of these workers women but gender is evident in the nature of the violence (language deployed, the mobilization of gendered tropes, microaggressions, and sexual harassment) and in the institutional response including the routine responsabilizing and blaming of educators for the harassment and violence they experience.
- Only 36% of educators are confident in their ability to deal with an incident of physical violence; the majority would welcome social-emotional learning programs (68%) and non-physical intervention programs (55%).
- Educators overwhelmingly identify the need for more and better allocation and access to staff, supports (e.g., educational assistants, mental health specialists), and the earlier identification of student needs. They also note the need for more educational resources, clear policies that are followed, consistently applied consequences for violent, harassing, and inappropriate behaviour, and better trained, supportive, and more responsive administrators.

The escalating crisis of violence against educators: What do we know?

Violence in schools is usually framed in terms of student-on-student bullying. Schools are, however, also workplaces for teachers, early childhood educators (ECEs), educational assistants (EAs), and a host of other (predominantly women) educators—workers who are entitled to a safe and violence-free workplace. As this research and others demonstrate, this is not the case.

Over the last several years there have been periodic media exposés of student-precipitated violence against elementary school educators highlighting that the environment is increasingly neither safe nor violence-free. These articles draw attention to the high rates of violence (e.g., Rosella, 2017; van Rooy, 2017; Miller, 2019a; Millar, 2019), the protective clothing, including Kevlar, worn by teachers and EAs (e.g., Miller, 2019b; Shahzad, 2017; Westoll, 2017), the impact ranging from fear, stress, and instability to serious debilitating injuries (e.g., Burke, 2017; Latchford, 2017). In 2019, CBC's *Sunday Edition* aired a series of programs on the issue. In short, there is growing media acknowledgment of the workplace violence experienced by educators.

In addition to media accounts, studies undertaken by organized labour provide insight into the scope and nature of the issue. For example, a 2017 survey (OECTA, 2017) by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association of 2,300 teachers found that 60% had experienced, and 70% had witnessed, student-perpetrated violence. Similarly, a large survey by the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO, 2018) indicated that 70% of teachers had experienced or witnessed violence against educators. Overwhelmingly, respondents perceived that violence was increasing both in terms of number of incidents and severity (79% and 75% respectively). Research conducted by CUPE Ontario (2017) also found that “fifty-eight percent of EAs were injured by a student during an 18-month survey period. Almost half required hospitalization or other medical attention beyond workplace first-aid” (np). The most recent Canadian Teacher Federation report (CTF, 2019) on violence against educators revealed that between 40% and 90% of educators have experienced violence at some point in their careers (see also BCTF, 1999; CTF, 2019; OSSTF, 2005; STF, 2016). The high rates of violence against educators that these surveys document has served as the impetus for unions and federations to lobby for more special education resources and to advocate for fundamental changes in the response to violence against educators. Despite the

development of policies and guidelines detailing the importance of addressing violence, and mandatory province-wide reporting requirements, rates of violence have continued to rise.

Surprisingly, the workplace violence experienced by educators has received limited scholarly attention in Canada. A recent systematic review of peer-reviewed literature, from 1988 to 2016 (Reddy et al., 2018), identified only 37 articles on violence against educators, with the majority completed in the past few years, and only one conducted in Canada (Wilson, Douglas & Lyon, 2011). By contrast, studies examining bullying, harassment, and violence *against students*, number in the thousands. The studies that have examined violence against educators are difficult to synthesize in part because they have employed a variety of different definitions and methodologies. For example, the American Psychological Association Task Force Survey, asked educators about violence over both the current and past year (McMahon et al., 2014); the ETFO Workplace Survey asked educators about violence that they had personally experienced or witnessed; and the work-related violence survey of Minnesota educators (Gerberich et al., 2011) defined a physical threat on the basis of perceived intent (i.e., “when someone used words, gestures, or actions with the *intent* of intimidating, frightening, or harming them physically or otherwise” p. 294).

Despite the challenges of comparing and reconciling the methodological differences of the (few) studies conducted to date, results of this research speak to extraordinarily high rates of workplace violence in the educational sector. In 2011, the American Psychological Association Task Force on Violence Directed Against Teachers conducted one of the few national studies devoted exclusively to examining the prevalence of violence against teachers during the current or previous school year (McMahon et al., 2014). Results of this study showed that 80% of teachers in the United States reported at least one instance of victimization; 75% of teachers experienced at least one instance of harassment, and 44% reported at least one physical attack. The only peer-viewed study on violence against teachers completed to date in Canada showed that 80% of respondents experienced some form of violence at one point in their careers and that 40% had experienced non-physical violence (e.g., personal insults, name-calling, rude or obscene gestures or remarks) within the past year (Wilson et al., 2011).

Definitions of harassment and violence

The *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* was designed to assess the frequency of various forms of harassment and physical violence, their impact on the health and well-being of educators, and how they affect the learning environment of the classroom. Definitions for harassment and violence were adopted from those of the Ontario Ministry of Labour.

Physically violent and threatening behaviour is ...

The exercise, attempt, or threat of physical force, or a statement or a behaviour that could reasonably be interpreted as a threat to exercise physical force. Examples include:

- exercising physical force (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling, being hit by a thrown object, sexual assault);
- an attempt to exercise physical force (e.g., trying to hit, kick, bite, or throw an object);
- any threat to exercise physical force (e.g., verbal threats, shaking a fist in someone's face, wielding a weapon, leaving threatening notes or sending threatening e-mails).

Workplace harassment is ...

Unwelcome words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, or demeaning to a worker or behaviour that intimidates, isolates, or discriminates against the targeted individual(s). It includes bullying, psychological harassment, and sexual harassment. Examples of workplace harassment include:

- verbal taunts and put-downs;
- remarks, jokes or innuendos that demean, ridicule, or offend;
- offensive phone calls, texts, social media posts, or e-mails;
- leering or inappropriate staring;
- unnecessary physical contact of a sexual nature;
- comments about someone's physical characteristics, mannerisms, or conformity to sex-role stereotypes;
- homophobic taunts;
- bullying;
- false accusations or spreading rumours.

Inappropriate behaviours are ...

Actions and/or words that may not meet the threshold for harassment but are nonetheless not acceptable behaviour in an educational setting. Unlike workplace harassment, inappropriate behaviour is not addressed in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario*. Examples include:

- obscene gestures;
- a single verbal insult;
- disrespectful attitude or actions (e.g., not recognizing the educator's authority or expertise, belittling)
- individuals "ganging up" against the target.

Demographics of the sample¹

Personal demographics

Age: most participants were between the ages of 41-50 (38%) or 31-40 (32%); 19% were over 50, and 10% under 30; the remainder chose not to disclose.

Gender: 14% of the sample identified as male, 85% as female, 0.24% as non-binary; the remainder chose not to disclose.

Race/ethnicity: most participants identified as white (82%); 7% as Asian, 3% as Indigenous, 1.5% as Black, 1% as Middle Eastern, and 0.5% as Latin American. Notably, 2.5% of respondents indicated none of the categories applied; the remainder preferred not to answer the question.

Dis/ability: 8% of respondents indicated they identify as having a disability, 90% indicated they did not; the remainder preferred not to answer.

LGBTQ: only 4.5% of the sample identified as being part of the LGBTQ community; 94% indicated they were not; 1.5% preferred not to answer.

Education: most respondents indicated they had a Bachelor of Education (73%), 18% had a graduate degree, and 5.5% had attained a college degree. The remainder had an undergraduate degree in something other than education (2.5%) or some other training/accreditation.

Experience: The average number of years worked in the education field was 14.6 years. Approximately 12% of the sample had been working for five or fewer years, 21% for 6 to 10 years, 32% for 11 to 17 years, and 11% for 25 or more years.

What demographics don't capture: the complicity of the classroom environment

“Out of my 24 students this year, six are non-readers at Grade 4. Two are English Language Learners, one has Down Syndrome, one has autism, six have ADHD. I have NO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT in the room.”

Professional Demographics

Primary position: most respondents (84%) were contract teachers; 6% were long-term occasional teachers, 3.5% permanent designated early childhood educators (DECE/ECEs), 3.5% were short or long term supply, daily, or DECE/ECEs; the remainder were educational support workers (1.25%), professional support workers (0.2%), or indicated “other.”

Type of program: most respondents taught in a regular school program (60%); others were in: French immersion (12.5%), special ed/resource classrooms (9%), special needs programs (7%), alternative (2.5%), gifted (2%), or other (7%).

Workload: The overwhelming majority (90%) of participants worked full-time.

Grades taught: Participants were fairly evenly distributed in terms of grades taught: approximately 10% in each grade from Junior Kindergarten to grade 5 with somewhat lower rates for grades 6, 7, and 8 (appx 8%); 4.5% of respondents worked in split classes.

Student contact: 44% of respondents worked with between 21 and 40 students a week; 27% with more than 41 while 7% worked with 10 or less; 10% worked with between 11 and 20 students, and 12% worked with between 41 and 70 students.

School size: most respondents worked in schools of 251-500 students (40%) or 501-750 students (27%); only 17% worked in schools of less than 250 students, and the same percentage (17%) worked in schools of over 750 students.

Community size: Most participants worked in communities of between 500,001-1,000,000 (27%) or 100,001-500,000 (20%).

Catchment area: Most respondents described their school's catchment area as middle class (54%), poor (26%), or very poor (6%); 13% described the catchment area as well off, and 2% considered it to be extremely well off.

¹ Percentages have been rounded up or down.

1. Harassment and violence in Ontario elementary schools: *What does it look like?*

1.1 Harassment in elementary schools: Key issues

When asked about their worst incident of harassment or inappropriate behaviour in the 2017-2018 school year, just under half of respondents indicated that the perpetrator was a student (48.2%). The remainder were roughly evenly distributed between parents (16.1%), administrators (15.3%), and colleagues (15.3%).² The distribution of perpetrators may, in part, speak to the number of interactions an educator has with different populations. For example, a classroom teacher has prolonged daily contact with their own students and frequent contact with students from other classes. By contrast, the ‘pool’ of parents and colleagues is much smaller. Considered in this way, the number of educators who indicated that administrators initiated the worst incident of harassment is strikingly high – after all most schools have two administrators (a principal and vice-principal). Unsurprisingly, emergent themes vary significantly across perpetrator types.

Student-initiated harassment was predominantly comprised of disrespectful behaviour, verbal abuse, and taunts which – in keeping with the vulnerability rates identified elsewhere in the report (see page 22-24) – sometimes mobilized sexist, racist, homophobic, and Islamophobic tropes. For example, one educator told us about “*Student-created graffiti of swastikas on desks, walls and textbook pages in the classrooms that I teach in, comments from students such as ‘I believe in Hitler’ and who have used Jew in a derogatory manner, single raised-arm with open palm Nazi/white-power salutes during Phys. Ed. class, chants of ‘KKK!’, and ‘build the wall!’ during class.*” Another recounted: “*The most significant issue was not the most violent I experienced during the 2017-2018 school year. I was supplying in a mainstream classroom when I shared [that] I was an immigrant and a student became very angry. The student then told me to get out of their country, that I did not belong, and they were not going to listen to me.*”

Parent-initiated harassment often took the form of challenging educators’ professional competency, questioning their judgement, and/or accusing them of bias – this played out in confrontations, verbal abuse, intimidation and pressure tactics, insults, and sometimes the malicious spreading of vexatious false information. For example, “*parent and grandparent of a student repeatedly wrote notes telling me how to run the class, sent numerous emails to admin complaining about my teaching practices, and on several occasions were overheard talking to parents about me in the community outside the school.*”

“Parent yelled at me for 1/2 an hour about progress reports – I gave ‘progressing well’.”

Colleague-initiated harassment can take a range of forms including exclusion, bullying, disrespect, intimidation, spreading of rumours, verbal aggression, and what one participant described as “*doing ‘mean girl’.*” All of these interactions were stressful and impacted educators’ experience of the workplace; many also undermined educators’ confidence: “*Constant bullying and belittling by a colleague!! Broke me mentally and emotionally, which in turn affected my physical health. I had to work under very stressful situations!*” Here, as elsewhere, we see the themes of disrespect for professionalism and the reproduction of racist, homophobic, ableist, lookist, and sexist tropes; we also see age discrimination both in the dismissal/discounting of new teachers and those with many years of experience: “*On numerous occasions I have been told that I must retire or leave so that younger staff are not excesses in the school.*”

“You need to know that as a lesbian, I feel threatened daily by one particular colleague who has made my life and many others uncomfortable. [...] His lies excuse or deny his behaviour – and so it continues.”

² 3.89% choose not to respond while 1.16% selected “other.”

Administrator-initiated harassment described by survey participants was overwhelmingly bullying behaviour (an issue we examine below). That said, educators also wrote about ‘one-off’ acts of exclusion, negation, disrespect, and wildly inappropriate comments (e.g., “told not to ‘act so gay in front of the parents, it’s embarrassing”) that left the educator destabilized: “My principal called me into his office at the end of the day and I thought we were going to discuss the logistics of the school pageant. Instead, he closed the door to his office (I was a new teacher and didn’t know that I had the right to ask for it to be left open) and then proceeded to [...] yell at me after school hours and behind closed doors.”

“Told by administrator to repeat their exact words. Told I could not leave until it was word for word the same. There was yelling involved in a demeaning manner. I was forced to do it four times.”

“Harassment by principal - comments, being told I can leave if I don’t like it, seeking me out, constant calls over schoolwide PA system, movement of grades as retaliation, lies...”

Types of harassment

When we foreground educators’ experiences and appreciate that harassment can be a layered experience involving multiple differently positioned individuals, the importance of focusing on types as opposed to perpetrators comes into sharp focus. To that end we here unpack incivility and three types of harassment – threats and false accusations, sexual harassment, and bullying.

Incivility is defined as “low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect” (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457); it is inappropriate behavior that may not meet the threshold for harassment but is nonetheless not acceptable “behaviors [...] that display a disregard for others, including giving curt answers, making negative faces, or giving one the silent treatment” (Sguera, 2016, p. 115). The seemingly ubiquitous cursing as well as other defiant and disrespectful behaviour by students was by far the most frequent form of incivility noted by participants.

“A student swearing at me, calling me a liar and involving his parent in this treatment. She [the mother] also called me names and harassed me verbally.”

That said, students were certainly not the only source; many educators described ‘off hand’ comments by colleagues, rude and unprofessional behaviour by administrators, and disrespect from parents – the “small, day to day slings and arrows [...] that wear teachers down.” Comprised of ‘little things’, incivility can have significant and lingering repercussions. It has been identified as a growing workplace problem and one that has a significant impact on the wellbeing, job satisfaction, stress, mental (and relatedly physical) health, and the efficacy of workers (Sguera et al., 2016).

“[The] ongoing, persistent patterns of unsafe and aggressive behaviour which may not be defined as harassment, threats or violence but are nevertheless detrimental to the learning environment, climate, and well being of the students and teachers involved.”

Threats and false allegations: In the context of ‘no touch’ policies (in many Ontario school boards), the potential for a child protection hearing by the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) and the possibility of disciplinary action by the Ontario College of Teachers, administrators, and/or board officials, educators are restrained and cautious in their physical interactions with the children under their care. This regulatory context also renders educators particularly vulnerable to false allegations from students, parents, and/or administrators. While the data does not permit us to determine the extent to which false allegations were initiated by students and subsequently perpetuated by parents and administrators, the research does support the view that false allegations are, with disturbing frequency, not only threatened but mobilized by students in an effort to control and/or ‘punish’ the educator. When false allegations are ‘picked up’ and championed by parents and (sometimes) administrators who “approach the issue with the presumption of guilt” the risk to the educator increases exponentially. Indeed, even in the absence of formal action, social media can be weaponized by parents; this not only has a devastating impact on the educator but precludes resolution, as one educator explained “[I had] no recourse. [There was] nothing to make them accountable for the lies that they spread. I felt totally helpless and alone.” Such false allegations can have significant and long-lasting impacts on educators’ emotional well-being, mental health, and

“One student at the school frequently threatened to report and/or tried to insinuate that I was touching him in a sexual or violent manner.”

careers. Educators described a range of personal and professional implications including unjustified disciplinary letters, being put on home assignment pending investigations, elevated stress, inhibited ability to do their jobs, and fear. In the words of one educator: *“It made me reconsider everything - why am I teaching? What is going to happen to me? Am I going to be able to feed my child if I lose my job over a lie? It was awful.”*

“Student physically hurt me and classmates. His mother dismissed us all as lying. He then claimed that I hit him. The allegation was found to be false, but I was on home assignment until cleared.”

Sexual harassment is defined, in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome” (10(1)(e)); behaviour that is based on an individual’s sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Sexual harassment is an alarmingly frequent characteristic of Canadian workplaces (Hango & Moyser, 2018). It is not surprising, if nonetheless disturbing, that educators spoke of sexual harassment including *“inappropriate questions about my sex life,” “sexual innuendos such as calling me darling, beautiful, good looking,” “sexual advances,” “suggestive comments,”* and *“absolutely inappropriate sexual comments”* from administrators, parents, and colleagues. A handful of educators also described behaviour that would appear to meet the criteria for sexual assault. In almost all cases of adult-perpetrated workplace sexual misconduct, educators took no action; in the few cases where they did access formal mechanisms, their complaints were ultimately abandoned.

Educators are not only subjected to sexual harassment from administrators, parents, and colleagues but also from students who use sexualized language, deploy inappropriate and highly sexualized taunts (e.g., *“suck my fucking ball sack”*), touch educators in sexual ways, and subject them to concerted efforts to humiliate (e.g., *“students singing inappropriate songs referring to my behind”*). Student-initiated sexual harassment is notable both for how often it appears to occur and the ambivalence with which the behaviour is met by administrators: *“A grade 8 student repeatedly calling me MILF every time I turned around to write on the board. The principal was not supportive and said he didn’t know what it meant.”*

Workplace bullying is the “repeated and patterned [...]

psychological violence that involves power over another that is employed to victimize, undermine or intimidate [...] [and] incorporates [...] incivility, harassment, counterproductive behaviour and aggression” (Hutchinson, 2013, p. 563). Given the distinguishing characteristics of bullying – repetition, the creation of a negative environment, and real or perceived power imbalance (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012) – it is perhaps unsurprising that it was administrators who were most consistently identified as the perpetrators. Educators described horrific cases that included many ‘classic’ bullying behaviours (see, for example, CCOHS, 2017) such as belittling, yelling, intimidation, threats, spreading rumours, over-work, persistent criticism, blocking access to advancement opportunities, withholding information, and undermining work. Of course, the authority vested in administrators – including determining *“teacher assignments, timetabling (workload), type and number of students in the class, opportunities for improvement (workshops), and initiatives”* – are not only exploited by administrator-bullies but also function as a powerful disincentive to speaking out. As one educator noted: *“despite the board having ‘a policy’ and everyone agreeing to it electronically, there is no recourse for teachers to deal with psychological distress from their administrator other than to document absolutely everything and to consider a formal complaint, which you are publicly discredited and dressed down for – not career suicide at all!”* The impact of ongoing bullying by administrators on educators is profound, including stress, anxiety, and mental health struggles. As one educator noted: *“these [individual incidents] don’t sound that bad in writing, however the constant worry about where fault would be found despite my best efforts took a serious toll on me last year.”*

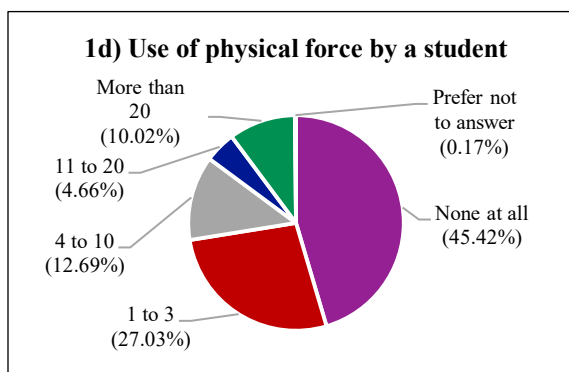
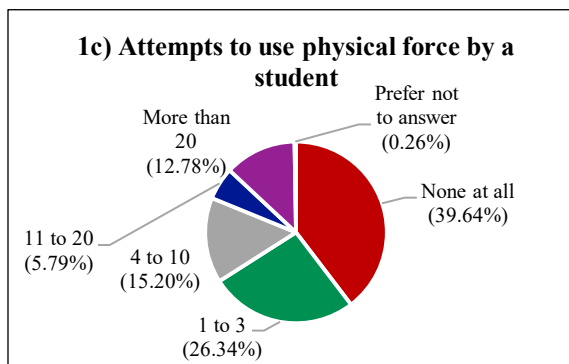
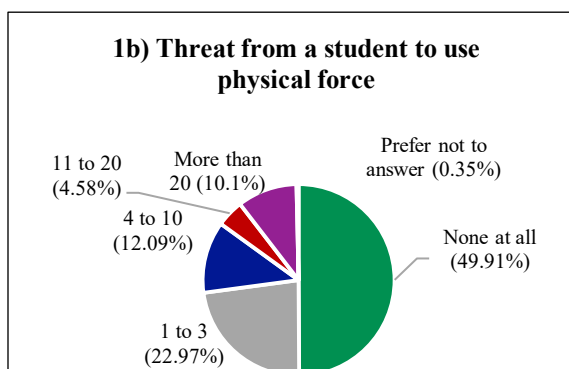
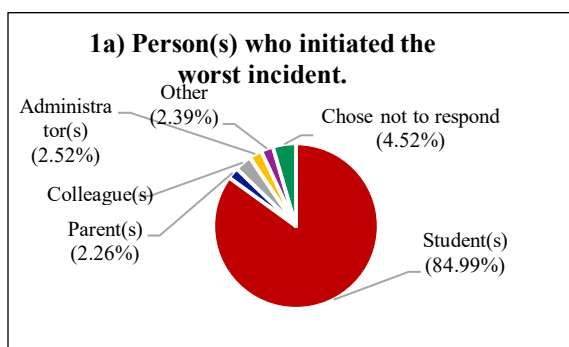
“The principal at my previous school was a bully and that is why I finally had the courage to leave. She would call my EA and I out in front of the staff. Go behind my back trying to ‘nail me on health and safety’. Would change our work partnerships just because! And then when I sent in my letter declaring myself excess and she found out I had three interviews she said, ‘you know you do need to use me as your reference’. She was caught saying things and sharing information that she shouldn’t have. [...] It took me a decade to get out of the abusive relationship as I felt I was not good enough. [...] On the last day that I was there she pulled me into her office and again tried to tear me down. I had had enough, and I let her have it!”

1.2 The nature of threats, attempts, and acts of physical violence

Most educators identified a student as the perpetrator in their worst experience of a physical violence (see Figure 1a). They detailed a wide range of experiences that speaks to the myriad, and shocking (both in frequency and nature) ways physical workplace violence manifests in Ontario’s elementary schools. Educators described receiving death threats against themselves and their families; being threatened with knives, scissors, glass shards, razors, school supplies, furniture, and fists; they wrote about being punched, elbowed, pushed, slapped, bitten, hit, kicked, spat on, chased, grabbed, shoved, scratched, headbutted, kneed, pinched, tripped, knocked down, jumped on, and stabbed; they also described having objects – furniture (e.g., chairs, stools, tables), scissors, toys, shoes, pencils, books, binders, whiteboards, water bottles, sticks, backpacks, and rocks, thrown at them. They explained that the physical violence was often accompanied by verbal aggression including the screaming of (sometimes decidedly gendered) expletives (e.g., “*bitch*,” “*cunt*”). They spoke at length about having their classrooms “*trashed*” — windows broken, equipment and technology smashed, personal and school property destroyed, and classroom materials ruined. They described suffering physical injuries (e.g., concussion, broken bones), debilitating stress, and mental breakdowns (see Impacts and implications of harassment and violence against educators on page 17) and having to evacuate classrooms to protect themselves and the students under their care; indeed, for some educators both violence and classroom evacuations occur with distressing regularity: “*Since I have had so many instances of threats and actual acts of physical violence directed at me this school year, it is very hard to remember all the specific times it happened last year. It was also very common, almost a daily basis, in which a student would threaten to hurt me in some way. At least once a week, I was asked to stand in front of a door while a student pushed on the door.*”

A number of interrelated themes emerged from the qualitative data – educators responsibility for the wellbeing of their students increases their vulnerability; existing response strategies are inadequate; many educators do not feel supported; and the violence educators experience is negated and minimized at the same time as educators are blamed.

“On a daily basis, I came home with bruises from being punched or from blocking punches.”



Figures 1a-1d: Type of perpetrator of incidents of violence (1a), threats (1b), attempts (1c), and use of physical violence (1d).

Educators' responsibility for the wellbeing of their students increases their vulnerability

While self-evident, it is nonetheless worth noting that it is precisely the responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of the students in their charge that renders educators vulnerable. In boards with “hands off” policies (“We can NEVER touch a student. If we do, we can be charged with assault”), educators place themselves physically between a violent student and others: “Evacuating my students and protecting them from a violent outburst while they were evacuating. I stood in the way so the violent student could not attack them and received the brunt of the attack as a result.” Not only can this be dangerous, and of course terrifying, educators’ responsibility – in the ever-present risk of a violent outburst – further exacerbates workplace stress: “The biggest mental stress is not only my own safety but the difficulty in keeping my students safe.” Another educator explained that after a particularly significant incident, “I had nightmares for weeks that he would assault a child and do serious harm, and I felt ill-equipped to protect them.”

“The most terrifying part was being chased down the hall and feeling conflicted, as my job was to ensure the safety of others, while I was simultaneously terrified. I immediately broke down when I reached the safety of a room and was able to lock the student out.”

Educators (often) feel unsupported by administrators

Many educators wrote about the support afforded by colleagues, family, and ETFO. Some also noted that their administrators were not only caring and empathetic but also offered concrete actions including the implementation of strategies to mitigate the risk of future violence. For example, “excellent support from administrators. Safety plans and strategies put in place. Lots of debriefing with student, parents, and team. Structure to ensure safety of all students.” In other words, some administrators are effective and supportive.” That said, a recurring theme was a decided lack of support and respect from administrators. Educators reported a number of issues ranging from failure to check in with educators after violent incidents (i.e., not undertaking the mandated debrief), to offering questionable ‘advice’ to minimize the violence (e.g., “do not stand so close”), to negating educator’s concerns (e.g., “just deal with it”), to failing to take appropriate (or sometimes any) action (e.g., not even responding to calls for assistance during an assault) – all of which not only left educators feeling

“abandoned” but undermined their sense of security, prevented them from speaking with their administrators (see Reporting and reprisals, page 27), and did little to reduce their vulnerability to future violence.

“The student kicked me in the head. No first aid was offered, no medical offer of support was offered, no break was offered, no support of any kind was offered. I am still suffering from long-term brain damage and cannot work.”

Existing strategies are addressing symptoms, not root causes

High rates of harassment and violence are the result of several factors, including mental health difficulties, that are compounded by larger structural issues, such as high student-educator ratios, inadequate or non-existent special education resources, and a lack of mental health supports. In this context, personal protection equipment (PPE) and additional training are stopgaps; they are not, and indeed cannot be, solutions. Not least because they imply that “abuse and aggression are now part of the job.” As one educator noted: “What bothers me is they give us PPE [and] CPI training and then no one seems to care that I go to work everyday knowing a student is going to be violent towards me. [It’s as if] this is okay. As a special education teacher this doesn’t mean it’s ok or [that] I’m ok with having to deal with extremely aggressive behaviour towards me on a daily basis.” In other words, PPE and/or training, will not solve the bigger issues at the root of much of the violence – struggling students, who may or may not have a diagnosis, who are not receiving the support they require to self-regulate – support that educators have neither the competencies nor the capacity (time) to provide. The following quotation reflects a sentiment expressed by many respondents: “We require intervention for students’ suffering from various types of mental illness. It is a HUGE need. We as teachers do not have the skill set to support children who feel the urge to act out based on emotions/thoughts that we cannot understand or control. It is VERY stressful as a teacher knowing you are doing everything you can but cannot support a student because their needs are outside your sphere of control.”

“My class of 20 students this year contains about 18 kids with some type of need. There are many specialists TELLING me what to do with these kids but much of it needs to be done one-on-one with the child. One person cannot do it all!”

Normalization and responsabilization of violence

According to educators, there is an increasing normalization of violence on the part of administrators and school boards including reframing violence as, for example, “*blowing off steam*,” “*learning frustration*,” or “*misplaced aggression*” and, relatedly, accepting violence as a ‘normal’ aspect of an educator’s job: “*Administration says to staff that we knew what we were getting into when we became teachers.*” In this context, educators who challenge the new normal, who follow protocols and conscientiously fill out violent incident reports, and who advocate for change sometimes find their concerns negated; those who turn to administrators for help may feel dismissed, belittled, and explicitly or implicitly blamed for their inability to ‘cope’: “*I went to the office for support because I was overwhelmed with the behaviours of two students. I was told that I have a lot on my plate and should call employee family services. So instead of offering support for student behaviour, I was told to seek therapy.*” At the same time, it would appear that some administrators endeavour to minimize the documented scope of workplace violence (e.g., by advising educators that only ‘serious’ incidents need

to be reported or discouraging reporting all together) and discount the impacts of violence in schools. However, when undeniably serious violence occurs, administrators – as evidenced in quotations throughout this report – routinely fault the educator, alleging they lack skills, competencies, or caring; they are asked “*what they did to precipitate the abuse*,” publicly shamed (e.g., “*told by an administrator in front of colleagues that a student’s violent behaviour was due to my poor class climate*”), and their work ethic questioned (e.g., “*it’s inferred that I’m just being lazy and not wanting to deal with it, rather than stating that the situation isn’t safe and it’s not from an lack of my efforts or abilities*”). A number of educators noted that the “*blame the teacher*” narrative is one that is reproduced by parents: “*Parent support for teachers has decreased dramatically over the last decade. Parents seem to blame teachers for their children’s behaviour and lack of academic success.*”

“*Teachers who complain too often end up being targeted as ‘unable to manage the students’, so it’s unwise to push the issue.*”

“*Why is it taking so long for the general public to realize how physically and emotionally unsafe our schools have become? Principals have their hands tied by bureaucratic crap and superintendents who are unwilling to walk the walk. Policies and processes are only as good as the paper they’re printed on. It’s heartbreaking to see how much we have to contend with on a daily basis. Teachers are afraid to cause a fuss. We feel completely unsupported.*”

Personal Protective Equipment

“*We had to wear Kevlar last year. The kids hurt the EAs a lot.*”

Some educators noted that despite repeated requests they were not provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); others, however, flagged that PPE was sometimes simply repurposed sporting equipment and/or did not offer fulsome protection: “*A student threw a chair at me which hit me in my ear/side of my head. While I was wearing PPE-jacket and arm guards I was not provided anything to protect my head. It was extremely unexpected (student didn’t appear escalated) therefore I was not able to move out of the way.*” Of course, as other authors have noted (see, for example, Woodacre, 2016), PPE not only makes it difficult to do the job (e.g., by restricting movement, creating barriers with children who are intimidated by the clothing) it is also uncomfortable: “*We wear PPE every single day (this year it includes gloves, arm guards, jackets and hats) because one student is so aggressive. It is extremely uncomfortable and very hot, causing you to sweat significantly the whole day (and it is only winter!). The expectation is that we wear this all year round as safety takes precedent, but our personal experiences are not considered (e.g., medical conditions where heat affects health etc.).*”

2. Frequency of harassment and violence

2.1 Alarming high rates

The *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* was designed to assess the frequency of various forms of harassment and physical violence, their impact on the health and well-being of educators, and how they affect the learning environment of the classroom. Participants in this survey were asked to indicate how often they experienced harassment and violence in a multiple-option format (e.g., none, 1 to 3, 4 to 10, 11 to 20, more than 20 times). From these responses (see Figures 1b - 1d), we were able to calculate the proportion of educators who experienced any harassment or violence at all but also estimate the overall frequency of different forms of harassment and violence.

Rate of physical violence

The proportion of educators experiencing different forms of harassment and violence are depicted in a series of figures on page 15. These findings show that 54% of educators report experiencing violence in the form of physical force (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting, hit by a thrown object) during the 2017-2018 school year. Results also show that 60% report one or more attempts to use physical force and that 49% experienced one or more threats to use physical force during the same time period. These rates are alarmingly high. Expectedly, the proportion of educators experiencing threats, attempts, and acts of physical force from parents, colleagues, and administrators was low, but not insignificant. Indeed, one in twenty teachers experienced a threat to use physical force from a parent during the 2017-2018 school year. Threats to use force from colleagues and administrators were extremely low but nonetheless still present.

Rate of harassment

Consistent with the approach taken by the APA Task Force Survey (McMahon et al., 2014), we surveyed educators concerning their experiences of harassment and verbal violence. Findings showed that certain forms of harassment and verbal violence, such as insults, put-downs and/or obscene gestures from students, are experienced by 72% of the educators, whereas other forms, such as comments that ridicule, demean or offend (58%), being ‘ganged up’ on (22%),

and spreading false accusations (20%) are experienced less frequently.

While physical violence from parents, colleagues, and administrators was rare, reports of harassment and verbal violence, from parents, colleagues, and administrators, was substantially higher. Indeed, one in six educators experienced false accusations from parents; one in seven educators experienced false accusations from colleagues, and one in ten educators experienced false accusations from their own principals. Reports of feeling “ganged up” from colleagues, parents, and administrators were also made by approximately one in ten educators. These findings suggest that educators are likely to experience harassment and verbal violence as often as they experience physical violence, but that they are likely to experience harassment and verbal violence from a range of individuals, including parents, colleagues and administrators.

Frequency of harassment and violence

In addition to estimating the proportion of educators who experience any harassment and violence, we also calculated the frequency of these behaviours throughout the school year. Previous studies (Wilson et al., 2011) have generally focused on the overall rates over a given period of time, rather than on frequency over the course of a year.

The mean number of incidents for various types of harassment from different sources, including students, parents, colleagues, and administrators is reported in Table 1 (page 14). These results show that educators, who experience harassment, report 8.5 occasions of *insults, put-downs, and gestures* from students, 2.77 from parents, 3.98 from colleagues and 4.21 from administrators in a given year. The mean number of jokes or innuendo intended to demean was also similarly high. In contrast, the mean frequency of *false accusations and rumours* experienced from students (3.01) was higher than the mean frequency experienced from parents (2.02), similar to the mean frequency experienced from colleagues, but lower than the mean frequency experienced from administrators (4.55).

Estimates concerning the frequency of harassment and violence indicate that for most educators who experience harassment and violence, these are repetitive occurrences rather than isolated incidents. Educators who experience harassment and violence

are likely to experience multiple instances of different types throughout the entire school year. These results speak to the fact that harassment and violence is very much an ongoing experience.

Table 1: Frequency of harassment and physical violence from students, parents, colleagues and administrators

| | Student | | | Parent | | | Colleague | | | Administrator | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------|------|--------|------|------|-----------|------|------|---------------|------|------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | M | SD |
| Insults, put-downs, gestures | 1042 | 8.53 | 8.01 | 595 | 2.77 | 3.97 | 350 | 3.98 | 5.27 | 273 | 4.21 | 5.86 |
| Jokes or innuendo that demean | 847 | 7.28 | 7.51 | 445 | 2.58 | 3.51 | 519 | 3.71 | 5.23 | 344 | 3.88 | 5.34 |
| Authority, expertise disrespected | 1117 | 10.95 | 8.39 | 818 | 3.47 | 4.86 | 579 | 4.12 | 5.74 | 597 | 4.65 | 6.18 |
| Being ‘ganged up’ on | 332 | 4.72 | 6.13 | 145 | 2.21 | 3.31 | 181 | 4.07 | 5.47 | 164 | 4.50 | 6.10 |
| Threats of false accusations | 397 | 3.48 | 4.84 | 249 | 2.29 | 3.30 | 190 | 3.72 | 5.29 | 150 | 4.49 | 6.34 |
| Actual false accusations | 302 | 3.01 | 4.53 | 247 | 2.02 | 3.04 | 193 | 3.33 | 4.99 | 148 | 4.55 | 6.28 |
| Use of physical force | 10 | 4.20 | 6.39 | 10 | 1.60 | 1.26 | 0 | . | . | 6 | 2.00 | 1.55 |
| An attempt to use physical force | 698 | 6.78 | 7.46 | 10 | 2.90 | 6.01 | 7 | 2.86 | 3.76 | 5 | 1.60 | 1.34 |
| A threat to use physical force | 578 | 6.52 | 7.39 | 59 | 1.31 | 0.91 | 17 | 1.71 | 1.31 | 16 | 2.19 | 2.64 |

How do educators view their experiences of violence?

Although virtually all the various forms of violence surveyed in the *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* would meet the definition of workplace violence in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* of Ontario, not all incidents were necessarily viewed as instances of workplace violence. Results in Figure 2 show that less than a quarter of respondents considered every threat, attempt, or act of physical aggression to be instances of workplace violence.

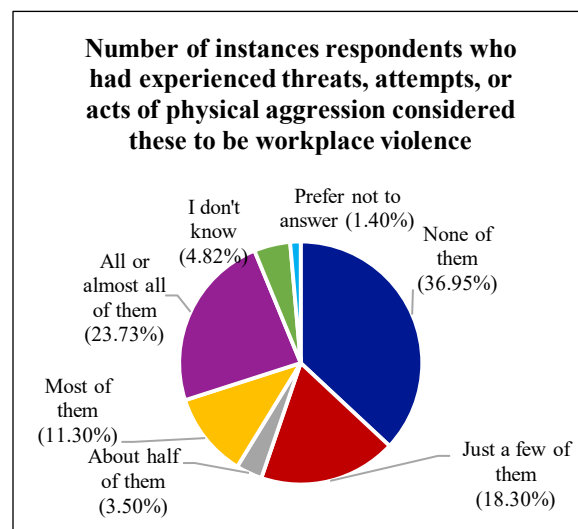


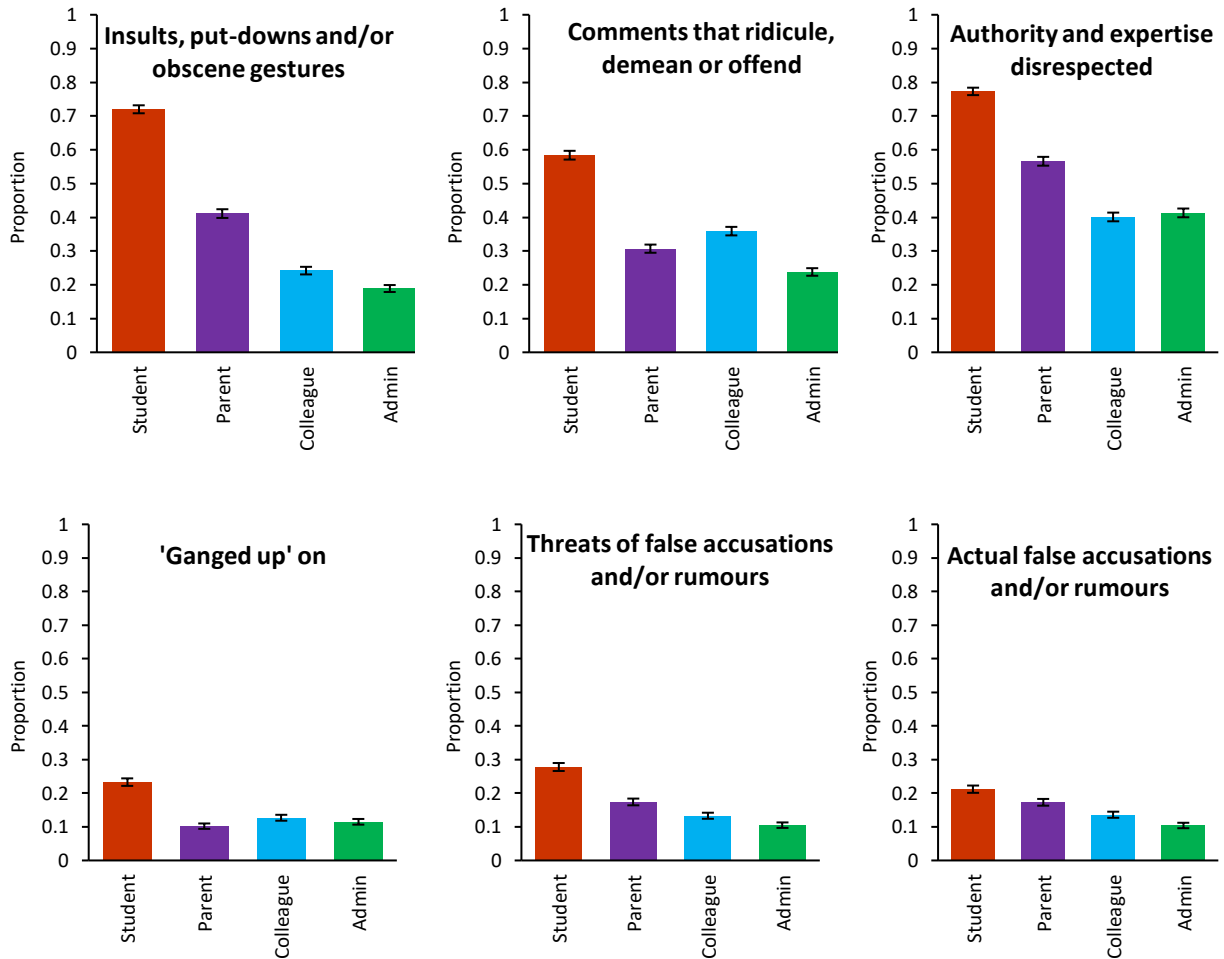
Figure 2: Number of instances considered these to be workplace violence

“While I didn’t experience any violence in 2017-18, a student grabbed my breast and refused to let go. This was part of a game among a bunch of students to garner points for sexually explicit touching which the principal knew about and did nothing to stop or address.”

“It took until almost August before I could plan for this year. I still felt sick to my stomach driving to school in August to set up my class. The effects of these violent behaviours last longer than the actual incident.”

“I was pregnant last year and had to hide in the cubbies with my kindergarten class while another child from the school tore apart our classroom and aggressively lunged at our little kindergarten kids. We had to crouch up on the benches because the aggressive child was crawling and lunging at legs to take people down. 45 minutes. 2 EA’s, 2 teachers, no control. No support from Admin. It’s chaos.”

Rates of harassment and verbal violence



Rates of physical violence

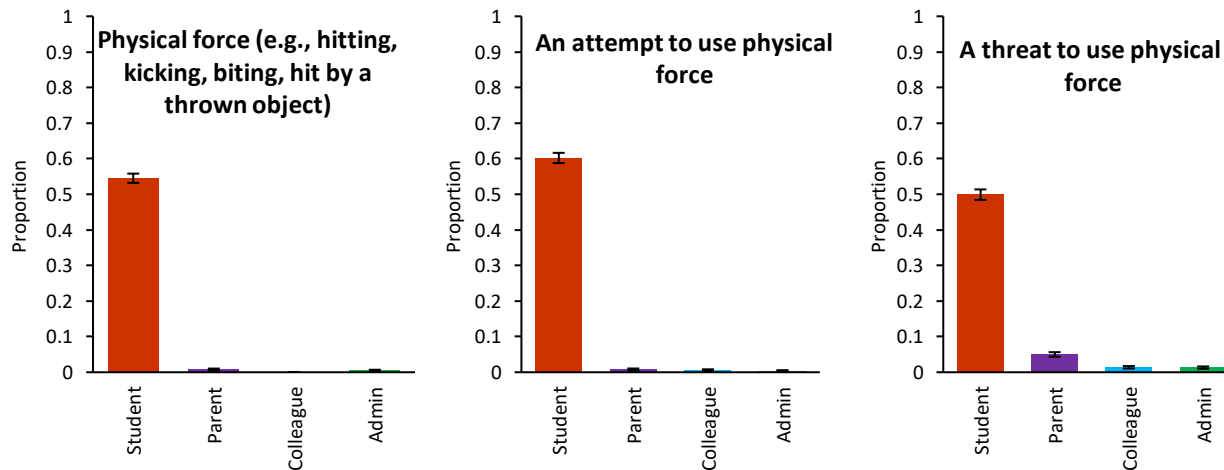


Figure 3: Rates of harassment and violence experienced by educators.

2.2 Increasing rates

Virtually all educators participating in the *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* indicated that the levels of harassment and violence have increased in the past ten years, with the majority – around 70% – stating that levels of harassment and violence have increased a lot.

The scarcity of historical data on harassment and violence makes it difficult to calculate exactly the degree to which harassment and violence against educators has risen. We do, however, have studies from which rates can be extrapolated. One of the earliest surveys on violence against educators in Ontario was conducted in 2005 on behalf of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA). Over 1200 members of the three organizations were contacted by telephone and interviewed in March 2005 with respect to their experiences of being bullied, which was defined as “‘persistent or repeated verbal abuse, threats, insults or humiliation’ that has the specific intent of hurting others” (p. 4). Results from the 2005 survey showed that some 36% of secondary school educators had been bullied by a student and that 22% had been bullied by a parent at some point in their careers. Exact comparisons with results from the *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* are difficult to make, given that the 2005 survey investigated instances of bullying at any point in the participant’s career. However, respondents in the current survey reported higher rates of harassment *within a single year* in 2017-2018 (see

Figures 4 and 5) than what was reported by participants in the earlier study reported *over their entire career*.

The 2005 study also found that 7% of educators indicated that they had been a target of physical violence (at some point in their careers). This stands in dramatic contrast to the current study in which 54% of participants reported experiencing violence in the form of physical force (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting) in the 2017-2018 school year alone. While caution should be exercised in comparing results, there would appear to be an almost seven-fold increase in the experience of violence in the past 12 years, even without considering the very different time frames used (one year versus career).

Similarly, results reported in a study conducted on behalf of the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF, 1999) found lower rates of harassment and physical violence as compared to results of the current study. This 1999 study showed that fewer than 5% of educators experienced some form of physical violence during the 1997–98 school year; in other words, *roughly one tenth of the rate indicated in the current study*. Together, the current and previously conducted Canadian studies suggest that rates of harassment and violence have increased significantly in the past two decades. Examining these earlier studies in relation to the *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey*, we feel confident in asserting that rates of harassment and violence are escalating – precisely what an overwhelming number of educators reported in the current study.

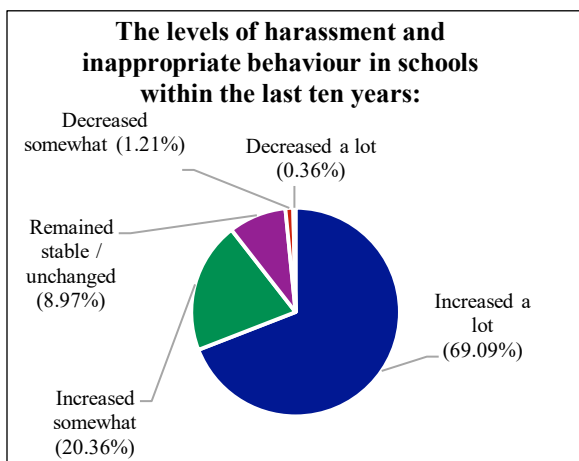


Figure 4: Trends of levels harassment and inappropriate behaviour in past ten years.

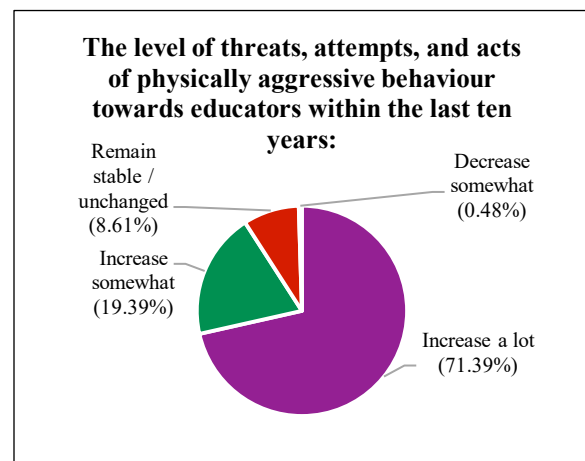


Figure 5: Trends of threats attempts and acts of aggressive behaviour in past ten years.

3. Impacts and implications of harassment and violence against educators

“The effects of these violent behaviours last longer than the actual incident.”

3.1 The toll on the health and well-being of educators

The impact of physical and verbal aggression and the way it is – or is *not* – being addressed reverberates through the personal and professional lives of educators, their students, and ultimately, society at large. The data allows us to expand and reflect on the nature of these ripples and reverberations.

Physical Health

Participants wrote about lingering consequences to their physical wellbeing, including permanent brain damage, mobility challenges, chronic pain, and stress-induced physical illness (e.g., digestion ailments, high blood pressure). One educator described her experience: *“I was assaulted by a student. I was punched in the jaw and punched under my eye which knocked me out and then I hit my head on the floor resulting in a concussion. I have a brain injury, jaw injury, neck pain, and ongoing headaches.”*

“It was physically unhealthy for me to be in this toxic environment. I went through a panic attack on the second day of school. I'd easily break into tears. My white blood cell count was so high that for three weeks I was tested with the suspicion that I had a serious illness; it turned out to be stress.”

Mental health

Educators described being *“broken”* and reported significant mental health challenges as a result of the violence and stress-filled work environment. These illnesses ranged from general malaise, sleeplessness, and (sometimes crippling) self-doubt to depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts severe enough to require medication. Importantly, as several educators noted, the mental health of other (bystander) educators is also impacted by violence: *“The stress of hearing the violence in other classes or experienced daily by our EAs and our CYW is also stressful. It's like second-hand violence being a witness. I don't have to be hit to be impacted by the blow.”*

“This year is a good year, but on two assignments I was so stressed that I was physically ill. At one school with ineffective, inexperienced administrators, the environment was so stressful that I sometimes considered driving into the bridge over the 401 instead of taking the off ramp.”

Social and personal relationships

Stress, mental health challenges, and physical health concerns inevitably impact educators' social and personal interactions and even what they can, and cannot, do in their leisure time. Partners, children, family, and friends not only worry about their loved ones, but they also become secondary victims when educators find themselves unable to fulfill their familial and social obligations.

“The emotional and mental abuse that I have been subjected to on a daily basis and the physical toll it has been taking on my body is unbelievable. The amount of attention to self-care that I need to give to myself, to undo the damage done by the students of these two years, has left me very little time for a personal and family life.”

Fear and anxiety

Educators wrote about how *“the mental anguish was felt by not being safe in my work environment”* and documented the way the ‘routine’ harassment and violence they experience engenders fear and anxiety. They described *“feeling sick to my stomach driving to school,” “dread[ing] going in,”* and *“becoming anxious when I get to school.”* They also noted that the fear for their own safety was compounded by their concern for that of their students which put them in an untenable position. It is deeply concerning that educators write about *“just wanting to feel safe in my job and like I'm not going to be harassed every day.”*

Increased workload

Many survey respondents noted that workplace expectations have increased exponentially over the last 10 to 15 years. One educator described task-creep that included “counting money, completing IEPs (Individual Education Plans), differentiating lessons for students of different learning styles, modifying programs up to four grade levels and dealing with an increase in mental health issues in my students”; indeed today’s educators are certainly expected to “deal with many issues in the classroom that are above and beyond the curriculum.” In relation to violence in particular, we see increased workload associated not only with managing potentially volatile classroom situations but also with the need to develop contingency lesson plans (in case a crisis disrupts the planned activities) and deal with the aftermath of violence, including filling out forms, collaborating with colleagues and administrators to develop/revise safety plans, and cleaning up classrooms that have been damaged or destroyed. It also entails providing support for other students in the classroom: “It was traumatizing to the young children in our classroom and we had to have lots of debriefing about the incident.”

Frustration and perception of career

Educators, the harassment and violence they experience notwithstanding, continue to care and care deeply. Indeed, an overriding theme of the comments was the commitment to the students they teach. Over and over they told us that they love their job, are committed to the profession, and to “each and every student.” Indeed, it may be precisely the care and dedication of these professionals that increase

frustration and undermine their mental health – “I have so much love and respect for my students but my inability to meet so many high needs is literally going to kill me from stress,” ultimately eroding their capacity to maintain the enthusiasm that drove them to be educators in the first place: “I wanted to be a teacher since I was in grade 11. When I began teaching in 2000, I thoroughly enjoyed teaching, but with the current climate in schools, I am counting down the days until I can retire, not even sure I will make it that long.”

Economic Impacts

There are, as we detail below in Section 3.4 on page 20, broad economic costs to workplace violence in elementary schools; notably, however, there is also the potential for direct economic impacts on educators. Here we can think of the financial costs of replacing supplies or property purchased by the educator. After all, when a student “destroys the classroom and many personal and school materials” resources must be replaced. There is also the expense associated with therapy and treatment which may not be covered through health plans (“I not only received the bullying but had to pay to get better”) and lost income when educators are obliged to go on long term disability, retire early, reduce their workload, or retrain for another occupation. For example, an occasional teacher noted, “After I resigned from the position, I had to take time off and seek psychological counselling for anxiety brought on by the harassment.” And a contract teacher explained, “I decided to go to a half time role and take on a second, less stressful (and less pay) half time job so that I can keep my mental and physical health in a reasonable space.”

“Students have wrecked every resource in the room, including the hundreds of dollars worth of resources I’ve bought myself.”

3.2 The magnitude of the impact on educators’ health and well-being

The magnitude of the effect of harassment and violence against educators was evaluated in the 2017-2018 *Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* in a number of ways. We asked educators to estimate the impact of their worst incidents of harassment and violence during the 2017-2018 school year on (a) their physical health, (b) their mental health, (c) the learning environment in their classrooms, and (d) their perceived ability to do their jobs. These questions were designed to estimate

the impact of the incident on their functioning in the days and weeks following their experience of harassment and violence. We also asked educators about their physical and mental health in the two weeks prior to completing the survey. This question was designed to provide some initial evidence regarding whether an event experienced during the 2017 (Sept) to 2018 (June) school year still exerted an effect on functioning several months later, in December 2018, when the survey was conducted.

Table 2: Relationship between total amount of harassment and violence and variable assessing impact on health, well-being.

| | Total amount of harassment and verbal violence | Total amount of physical violence |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Harassment negatively affected ... my physical health | 0.43*** | |
| Harassment negatively affected ... my mental health | 0.41*** | |
| Harassment negatively affected ... my ability to do my job | 0.42*** | |
| Harassment negatively affected ... the learning environment of the classroom | 0.36*** | |
| Violence - affected my physical health | | 0.42*** |
| Violence - affected my mental health | | 0.45*** |
| Violence - affected my ability to do my job | | 0.42*** |
| Violence - affected the learning environment of the classroom | | 0.45*** |
| Overall mental health, in the last month? | -0.26*** | -0.09** |
| Overall physical health, in the last month? | -0.25*** | -0.11** |
| Overall performance at your job over the past year? | -0.25*** | -0.08** |

Note: *** p < 0.0001; ** p < 0.001

The results presented in Table 2 show that the total amount of harassment and verbal violence (e.g., insults, innuendo, disrespect, false accusations, feeling ganged up on) was positively correlated with poorer levels of physical and mental health following the incident, as well as with lower levels of performance at work and a diminished learning environment. Similarly, results presented in Table 2 also show that the total amount of physical violence (i.e., attempts, threats, and acts) was again positively correlated with poorer levels of physical health and mental health following the incident, as well as with lower levels of performance at work and a diminished learning environment. These findings suggest that the impact of harassment and violence has lasting effects on mental health, physical health, and job performance. Higher levels of harassment and verbal violence, as well as higher levels of physical violence, were associated with diminished physical health, diminished mental health, and diminished job performance even when assessed some six months after the school year in which harassment and violence occurred.

Impact of different types of violence

Survey results demonstrate that the impact of harassment and physical violence is similar. Both are associated with diminished mental health, physical health, and performance at work. Subsequent analyses showed that every type of harassment and each type of physical violence was negatively related to overall functioning (i.e., physical health, mental health, and the ability to perform duties at work) months after educators experienced harassment and violence. Specifically, nine different types of harassment and violence, from four different sources (i.e., students, parents, colleagues, and administrators), yielded 36 correlations all of which were negative, indicating that harassment and physical violence were adversely related to overall functioning; 30 of these correlations were statistically significant. This is an extremely important finding in that it suggests that in terms of impact, some forms of harassment (e.g., a put down) that tend to be frequent, commonplace, and descriptively less severe, are as significantly related to health and well-being as descriptively more severe, albeit less frequent, forms of harassment (e.g., false accusations).

3.3 The toll on students in the class and school

While attention is rightly given to the impact of bullying on children, much less focus is put on their experience of witnessing verbal and physical violence, how evacuations and other strategies deployed to keep them or their educators safe (e.g., Kevlar clothing and other personal protective equipment) affects them, and the impact of witnessing violence directed at their educators. Three issues, which desperately need further research, were a preoccupation of survey respondents, namely student learning, the normalization of violence, and trauma.

1. Student learning

Increased workplace expectations on educators coupled with the need to manage real or potential violence undermine educators' ability to teach. When educators are *triaging* crises, it is inevitable that attention is diverted away from the curriculum since "*dealing with one challenging student constantly with a lack of proper support means that all other students (and their learning) are put on hold as the team deals with a single student*" – this is particularly detrimental for those students who are lagging behind and would

benefit greatly from additional personal attention/or tutoring. Moreover, violence in the classroom is distracting and disruptive: *“I had a student who would scream and make threats – and sometimes throw things. [...] The students were all very affected by this girl. She dominated the classroom. [...] You couldn’t ignore the show and threats she was putting out.”* Clearly, evacuations and other disturbances inevitably interrupt learning – *“It is impossible to teach when you have to evacuate the class on a daily (and often several times daily) basis.”* Notably, students in other classes in the school can also be impacted. One educator told us *“a child at my school routinely trashed the room and the rest of the class had to evacuate. My room became the safe room for the rest of the class, which meant I couldn’t do my groups and had to shut my program down. This happened weekly.”*

We can also consider the impact of educator turnover on student learning when educators choose *“flight over fight”* and transfer out of schools where they are subject to high levels of violence and unsupportive (or even abusive) administrators or when (as some participants had, or were considering) educators abandon teaching, retire early, or reduce their workload. Research has consistently demonstrated that the loss of high-quality experienced educators negatively impacts student learning (e.g., Curran, Viano, & Fisher, 2017; Wilson et al., 2011).

2. The normalization of violence

When students witness repeated assaults on their teachers or other educators, including EAs, when they are obliged to evacuate their classrooms because it is unsafe to remain, and/or when ‘hold and secures’ means they are locked into their classrooms (and unable to leave even for washroom breaks), as *“lengthy (hour at a time and longer) restraints [are] taking place directly outside our classroom door on almost a daily basis where our students could hear the student being restrained yelling things like ‘you are*

hurting me’, ‘fuck off’, ‘I’m fucking dying’ etc.,” there is a real, and deeply troubling, potential that violence will become normal, mundane, and unexceptional. *“I see the normalization of violence against women happening as children see their teachers and EAs (mostly women) being harmed daily. I wish that I could tell parents what is happening to their kids at school, and how many times their lessons are interrupted for a classroom evacuation, but I would lose my job if I did.”*

“I am sad for the little students that know no other way, they think this is what school is all about, peers hitting/hurting teachers, and flipping furniture and evacuating classrooms.”

3. Traumatized students

Over and over again, educators expressed concern for the emotional well-being and physical security of all the students in the class (and indeed the school), noting for example: *“All adults in the room have to wear protective equipment yet the children have nothing to keep them safe.”* They also worried about the stress, anxiety, and fear engendered by witnessing outbursts, harassment, and violence. One educator noted, *“The children almost have their own terror threat level everyday and we don’t have to wonder what this kind of anxiety on a daily basis in a 7-year-old can lead to. [...] I would just hate to see the report you do not look at the huge impact violence has on the other kids and the snowball effect that may ensue!!!!”*

“Every time I am hit as a teacher – which is AT LEAST once a month – it is awful. I never entered this profession expecting to be assaulted. The WORST part? The terror of the other kids as they witness the violence, the disruption to their learning when THEY have to evacuate the classroom. Even though I am the one being assaulted, it is just as - if not MORE traumatic - for these children to witness. They are victims, too.”

3.4 Economic Costs: Days off work and associated costs

In this survey, educators were asked if they took time off work because of their worst incident and if so, how much time. In addition to estimating the number of days that educators are likely to be absent from the classroom, we were able to estimate the financial costs that would be incurred by a school board to hire a replacement for the day.

Not all educators who experienced harassment and violence took time off work because of their experiences. Of the 989 individuals who reported a significant incident of harassment in the 2017-2018 school year, 249 individuals (25.1%) took time off work. The mean number of days off work for these 249 individuals was 6.84 (SD=7.54). Using the per diem

rate of \$240.74³, the average cost associated with hiring a replacement for each of these educators was \$1,652.31 (per incident). Similarly, of the 703 individuals who reported a significant incident of physical violence in the 2017-2018 school year, 135 individuals (19.2%) reported taking time off work. The mean number of days off work was 5.18 (SD=6.86). Using the per diem rate of \$240.74, the average cost associated with hiring a replacement for each of these educators is \$1,247.39 (per incident).

Here again, we see that the impact of harassment and physical violence are equitable. Not only, as we saw above, are both harassment and violence associated with diminished mental health, physical health, and performance at work, but the financial costs of both are comparable. Indeed, these results suggest that one in four educators who experience harassment or verbal violence and one in five educators who experience physical violence will take some time off work.

Not all educators who take time off work will be replaced by an occasional teacher, EA, or ECE/DECE that incur a per diem expense. Still, these costs, when extrapolated across the entire workforce of publicly funded educators within the province of Ontario, are considerable. In our survey, 54% of respondents

reported that they experienced one or more incidents of violence and 72% reported that they experienced one or more incidents of harassment or verbal violence. While these rates may be higher than the actual rate in the entire population of educators, given that participants were not randomly selected, even a low rate of harassment and violence is assumed, say just 10% (which is *less than one fifth of the rate reported in this survey*), that would still involve some 8,000 educators in any given year. If we assume that 25% of those take time off, then 2,000 educators would be expected to take an average of 6.84 days off work at a cost of \$1,652.31 each, amounting to over \$3 million dollars annually. It is important to keep in mind that this estimates a very low rate of exposure to harassment and violence and estimates only the costs associated with a single incident in any given year.

“We are struggling. One of our teachers is off on stress leave, one spoke to me the other day and she needs to go as well to get better, and one of our ECEs is also currently off on a 3-week stress leave. One of our other ECEs has been off for about 8 weeks now.”

3.5 Societal Impacts rippling through lives, time, and space

The above-noted impacts, while differentiated for the purposes of presentation, are profoundly intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Moreover, as an educator who was quoted above noted: *“there is a snowball effect.”* The workplace violence educators experience not only has significant economic costs (both for society and the educators themselves), but also has an impact on their health, wellbeing, careers, and relationships, which reverberates through their personal and professional lives and in turn through the

lives of their families, their colleagues, and the students they teach – creating more ripples that impact other families and indeed the broader community and society. Moreover, as the data on wellness demonstrates, they also ripple over time – a case in point, as we saw above, six months or more after the harassment and violence the impact is still affecting educators. Appreciating the multilayered impacts affirms the importance of recognizing that workplace violence is a significant and urgent social problem.

“These kinds of incidents are so normalized in my school that I feel like it's my fault for being impacted by them. I even feel like it's my fault that they happen in the first place. I feel like being a teacher means that it's ok for students to treat me abusively and disrespectfully so long as they are not hurting other students, and even when they are hurting other students, it doesn't seem like there are strategies in place for our most challenging students to shift the behaviour, just to manage it. [...] I'm left feeling like it's my fault, like it's my failure, like I just have to put up with it and if I'm finding it difficult, it's because I have a problem. I don't know of many professions where it would be ok for people to go to work and be treated this way.”

³ Per diem costs is calculated as the average cost across all school boards in Ontario.

4. Context and risk

4.1 Intersections and vulnerability to harassment and violence

Results of the survey show that educators, as a group, experience high rates of harassment and violence and that many experience multiple instances within a single school year. However, the frequency of harassment and violence is highly variable, with some educators experiencing none or just one or two incidents during the 2017-2018 year and others experiencing more than 20 during the same period of time. In this section of the report, we examine the extent to which vulnerability to harassment and violence is conditioned by gender, race, and sexual orientation, as well as by age, dis/ability, and working in a school with elevated rates of incivility.

Race, gender, dis/ability and orientation

We examined rate differences for racialized individuals, individuals with disabilities, women, and individuals who identify as LGBTQ⁴. For the purpose of these analyses, respondents were designated as racialized if they identified as non-white, which included those who identified as Asian, Black, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and Indigenous.⁵ Importantly, individuals from these populations reported higher levels of harassment and violence, in many, but not all, instances. The clearest differences were evident in relation to dis/ability and racialization. Results for all instances of harassment and violence

are reported in the Appendix. We highlight a few of these differences here.

Results for experiences of insults, putdowns, and obscene gestures from both students and colleagues are depicted in Figures 6 and 7. Rates of harassment and violence from students were statistically higher among educators identifying as racialized, disabled, LGBTQ, or women than among educators who did not identify with those groups. Similarly, rates of harassment and violence from colleagues were statistically higher for educators identifying as racialized, disabled, or women than for educators identifying as white, not disabled, and men. Failure to find a *statistically* significant difference between groups of individuals who do and do not identify as LGBTQ is likely the result of the relatively small number of LGBTQ-identified individuals in the study (N=63). With a larger group of individuals from the LGBTQ community, this difference would be statistically significant. Speaking to the importance of an intersectional analysis, results of this kind need to be interpreted with caution given that any overall main effect may be the result of high levels of harassment or violence directed towards one population (e.g., disabled persons) within a large group (e.g., women). Results in Figure 9 show that women with disabilities report significantly higher levels of total harassment (i.e., across all types of harassment and verbal violence) than do women without a disability or men with or without a disability.

“Harassment by principal [...] related to my mental disabilities/illness/struggles. Felt targeted. Subjected to threats and implied threats. Constant innuendo and passive aggressive statements. So much so other staff would come to check on me after incidents. Some of these instances were in front of others.”

“Student swearing at me with extremely vulgar language that was sexual in nature. Being called a ‘cunt’ by a student. When agitated he would use his size to create a threatening environment to myself and other students around him.”

“Too many too include all: Non-support when students are name-calling, using racial slurs directed towards me or belittling of the experience or incident by admin or staff by claiming it is ‘silly’. Students singing racial chants.”

⁴ The *Employment Equity Act* defines women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities as designated groups.

⁵ The small sample size necessitated collapsing racialized and Indigenous populations.

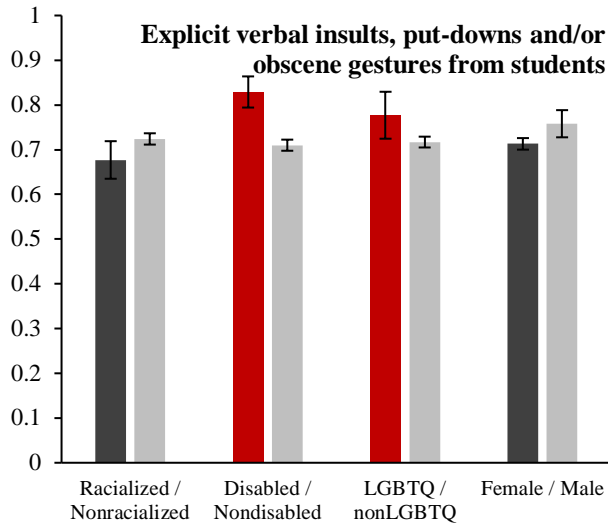


Figure 6. Proportion of educators experiencing verbal insults, put-downs and/or obscene gestures from students. Significant differences are demarcated in red.

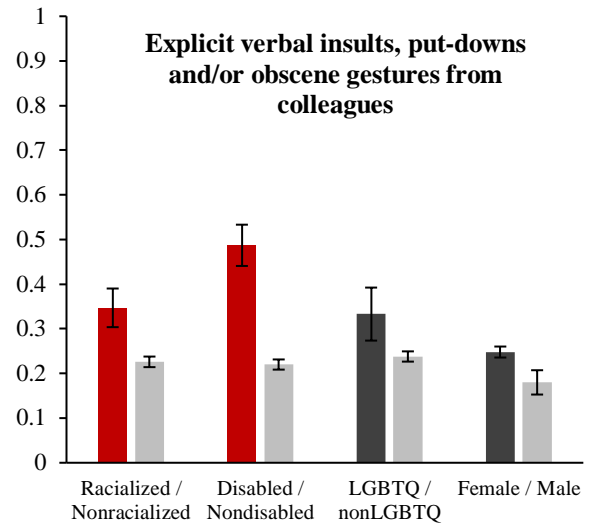


Figure 7. Proportion of educators experiencing verbal insults, put-downs and/or obscene gestures from colleagues. Significant differences are demarcated in red.

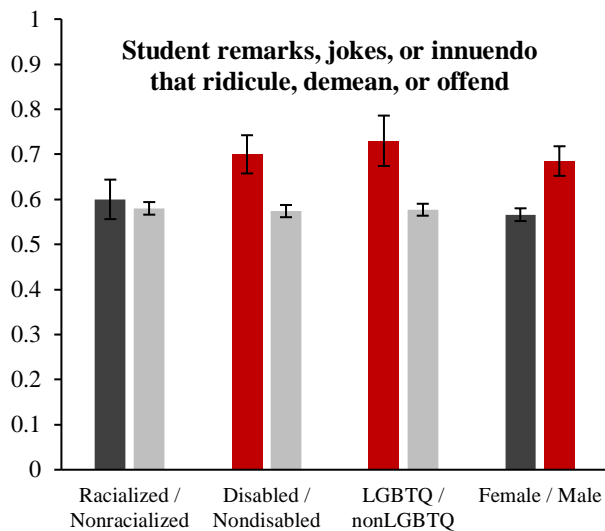


Figure 8. Proportion of educators experiencing remarks, jokes, or innuendo that ridicule, demean or offend from students. Significant differences are demarcated in red.

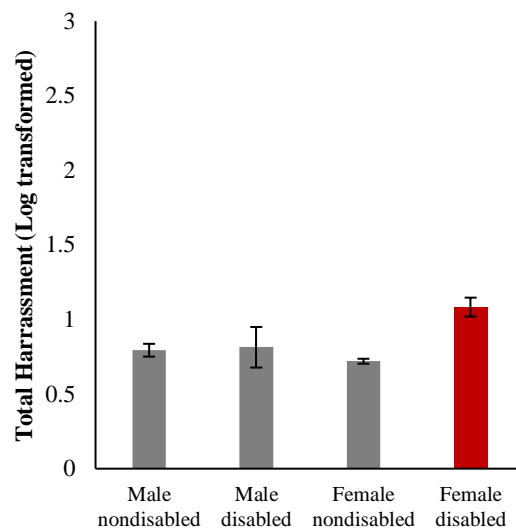


Figure 9. Mean levels of total harassment and verbal violence experienced by men and women, with and without a disability. Significant differences are demarcated in red.

Educator age and experience

Figure 10 depicts the mean frequency of total physical violence (i.e., attempts, acts, or threats of physical violence) in different age groups. Results show that the frequency of physical violence was lower in educators in their 40s and 50s as compared to educators in their 20s and 30s.⁶ Interestingly, no difference in rates of harassment and verbal violence (e.g., insults, put-downs, obscene gestures, disrespectful comments, feeling ganged up on) was reported across different age groups. It is not clear as to the reasons that younger staff are prone to experiencing higher rates of violence, possible explanations include higher rates of placements in challenging classrooms by administrators (early career teachers' job insecurity may inhibit their willingness to challenge classroom compositions), an unwillingness to reach out for help for fear of being perceived as unable to do their job, or less training and experience in dealing with students.

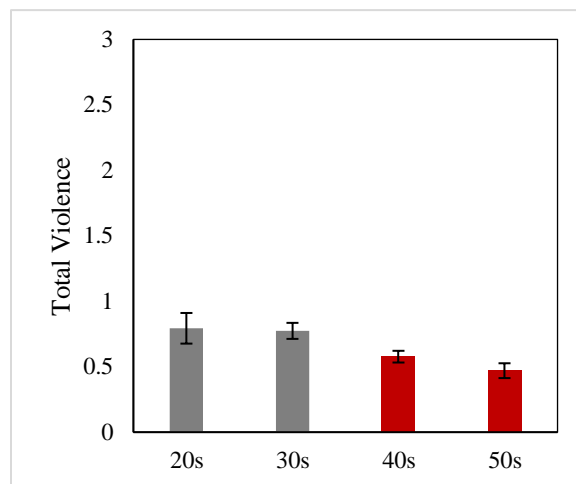


Figure 10: Mean frequency of total physical violence across age groups. Significant differences are demarcated in red.

School context

Importantly, the research demonstrates that levels of disrespect and incivility in the classroom are positively associated with the total amount of harassment, verbal violence, and physical violence experienced by educators. In addition to reporting experiences of harassment and violence, educators were also asked to report on the level of incivility among students in their schools, whether or not they personally experienced any harassment and/or violence. These questions were designed to evaluate the general school environment in which specific instances of harassment and/or violence are experienced by educators. Results, presented in Table 3, show that the total amount of harassment, verbal violence, and physical violence experienced by individual educators is positively correlated with overall levels of student disrespect and incivility.

Findings from the current study suggesting that violence against educators is impacted by the level of student disrespect or incivility is consistent with existing scholarship (e.g., Espelange et al., 2013; Huang, Eddy, & Camp, 2017). Our results not only speak to the importance of contextualizing harassment and violence but have important implications for how violence against educators is addressed. Reducing student incivility may mitigate the frequency of harassment and violence against educators. This suggests an additional point of intervention that does not rely entirely on curtailing the behaviour of students who are verbally or physically violent at the same time as it raises the possibility that failing to address levels of incivility among students may hamper the effectiveness of other interventions.

Table 3: Relationship between total amount of harassment and violence and variables assessing impact on health, well-being.

| | Total amount of harassment and verbal violence | Total amount of physical violence |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| School context - Total amount of disrespect, gang activity and theft | 0.42*** | 0.27*** |
| School context – Degree of disrespect and incivility | 0.28*** | 0.24*** |
| School context – Degree of gang-related behaviour | 0.25*** | 0.11** |
| School context – Degree of theft | 0.40*** | 0.21*** |

Note: *** $p < 0.0001$; ** $p < 0.001$

⁶ Rates of total violence were expressed and analyzed as log transformed total counts. Log transformed values provide a

statistically more robust analysis. However, significant differences were also observed with non-transformed scores.

4.2 A Gender analysis of risk and repercussions

According to Statistics Canada (2014), 84% of elementary school educators are women. On that basis alone the high rates of harassment and violence documented in this report and elsewhere (e.g., CUPE, 2018; ETFO, 2018; OECTA, 2017) suggests workplace violence in elementary schools, to the extent that it impacts more women than men, is a gender issue. It is worth noting that while we tend to assume that workplaces conventionally coded as male (e.g., police, firefighting, construction) are more likely to be risky, it is the woman-dominated occupations of education, health care, and social work where we see the highest rates of situational violence⁷ (Perreault, 2015). Thinking about the data through an intersectional gendered lens highlights other ways that gender and intersecting identities condition vulnerability to harassment and violence, the nature and characteristics of the harassment and violence, how the issue is framed by administrators and school boards, and the institutional and interpersonal response.

Vulnerability to harassment and violence

Risk of workplace harassment and violence is not evenly distributed. As we have already seen (page 22), racialized, dis/abled, LGBTQ, and/or women experience higher rates of both harassment and violence than do their non-racialized, non-dis/abled, heterosexual and/or women counterparts. Importantly, as we examine later in the report, dis/ability and racialization are also correlated to increased risk of reprisals from administrators (see page 29).

Characteristics and nature of the harassment and violence

The language that accompanies much of the physical aggression - and violence in its own right - is frequently gendered, racialized, and homophobic. For example, not only are highly gendered expletives “*bitch*,” “*fucking cunt*,” “*whore*,” “*slut*,” and “*hag*” ubiquitous, but educators also report that racist, homophobic, and ableist taunts occur with disturbing regularity.

*“A 6-year-old student in my class physically attacked other students in the class, the EA, and attempted to attack me. This student also called teachers ‘n*** cunts’.”*

Microaggressions are racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic, or intersectional insults that pivot on stereotypes (Sue et al., 2007). These brief ‘every day’ and often subtle exchanges – which are not necessarily intentionally offensive – may not meet the bar of harassment but profoundly impact the victim. Examples from the research included:

- *“Telling me I was doing a good job as a Learning Resource Teacher but it was likely due to my [...] heritage.”*
- *“My impairment is difficult for all parties involved, eyes have been rolled and comments made questioning the validity of accommodations.”*
- *“My teaching partner stated that even though I was ‘different’ [i.e., gay], she had nothing against me personally.”*

Gendered tropes and narratives that, for example, women are less competent professionals, hysterical, and overly emotional, are mobilized by harassers to offend, undermine, embarrass, humiliate, and/or demean their victim. For example, *“A male colleague tends to talk down to less experienced female staff. He enjoys making people feel small and unimportant. He calls us out in front of students, he makes jokes about us being ‘grumpy’, he talks about how we don’t understand the level of his grade, he also overrides many discipline or classroom management decisions. He makes us feel insignificant and dumb.”*

Sexual harassment has been examined earlier in the report, but it is worth noting that while it can impact both men and women, women workers report significantly higher rates (CWF, 2016). Importantly, women educators not only experience sexual harassment from administrators, colleagues, parents, and students but many report an absence of support from their administrator. For example, one educator told us *“A student told me to ‘suck his dick.’ When sent to the principal’s office, admin screamed ‘mitigating circumstances,’ walked him back to class, and told him to just carry on. No consequences or apology.”*

“Called a fucking bitch and asshole and told I’d be fucked up the bum. This happened a number of times over a day but admin did nothing except tell me to wait and it would be over at 3:30.”

⁷ Situational violence are aggressive acts perpetrated during the course of a work-related exchange (Leblanc and Barling 2004)

Framing of the violence (by school boards and administrators)

Normalization of violence against educators is evident in the reframing of violence as “*misplaced*” or “*normal*” aggression by school boards and administrators. In this context, as previously noted, ‘dealing’ with violence becomes an unremarked upon “*part of the job.*” A number of respondents commented that violence should never be an anticipated consequence of going to work and noted that “*in any other profession it would not be acceptable.*” Indeed, the normalization of violence against (predominantly women) workers begs the question, to what extent is the willingness to accept workplace violence in elementary schools related to the fact that it is a woman-dominated occupation? In other words, is the passive acceptance informed by the societal devaluation of women and the work they do?

“Teachers should not feel that it’s normal to feel unsafe at school.”

Negation of harm is related to normalization. At the same time as violence is rendered invisible through language of ‘normal aggression’ we see negation in the refusal by school boards and many administrators to accept the seriousness of the violence and the profound impact it has on the mental and physical well being of educators. Indeed, there is a subtext that the educator who is impacted and who *does* think it is a big deal is somehow lacking in resilience: “*These kinds of incidents are so normalized in my school that I feel like it’s my fault for being impacted by them [...] like it’s my failure, like I just have to put up with it and if I’m finding it difficult, it’s because I have a problem.*” Here

“I was told that I should have been able to anticipate the incident by my administration and prevent it from happening. As a brand-new teacher, because of the way the incident was handled and the fact that I received no proactive follow-up from my administrators, I felt like it was my fault. I had bad dreams and significant anxiety for weeks afterwards. Most of my support came from friends and family.”

“Teachers are abused on a daily basis by students, parents, administrators and superintendents. I believe this is done in large part because the population of teachers is comprised mainly of women. If there were more males in this profession, I do not think the level of abuse would occur. The most troubling aspects of this for me is that on a daily basis, students are witnessing events of verbal and physical violence against female teachers. What is this doing to them developmentally?”

we see echoes of the failure to acknowledge the profound impact of the violence women experience in their personal lives (e.g., the rape myth that sexual assault does not cause lasting harm).

“When I went to the office to complain [about the violence and lack of support] the principal and vice principal insinuated that I had an anger problem and they didn’t understand why I’d be upset.”

Institutional and interpersonal response

Blaming and responsabilizing educators for the violence they experience was a recurring theme in the research. Participants noted that administrators routinely fault the educator for their inability to ‘cope’ as well as their alleged lack of skills, competencies, and/or the most gendered of traits, *caring*. When educators are habitually asked “*what you do to precipitate the violence,*” or “*why were you not able to stop and de-escalate the situation,*” or “*why were you standing there*” the subtext is that they must have done something *wrong*. Not only does this once again evoke the trope of women as less competent, but also it echoes the ‘classic’ response to the violence women experience (e.g., the rape myth that implicates a woman’s attire). In short, violence against educators follows the gender script of responsabilizing women to protect themselves and blaming them when they are unable to do so. Blame quickly slides into shame, when shame is coupled with the potential for reprisal it is a powerful disincentive to reporting victimization.

5: Reporting and reprisals

5.1 Under reporting

Reporting physical violence is mandated under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* of Ontario. Indeed, there has been a concerted effort on the part of federations and unions representing educational workers to encourage their members to document workplace violence. Nonetheless, our research reveals low rates of formal reporting of workplace violence by educators. Workplace Violence, Safe School, or Violent Incident Reports were completed for just slightly more than half (53%) of all instances of violence.

Why not tell administrators about harassment?

Participants indicated a number of reasons for not telling an administrator about the harassment they experienced, including that it was too minor (11.72%), they could handle it on their own (15.89%), they lacked the time due to routine workplace demands (6.74%), or they were embarrassed/did not want the administrator to know (6.43%). They also, however, reported that talking to their administrator was not helpful (21.83%), they were uncomfortable talking about these kinds of incidents with their administrator (16.69%), and indicated “other” reasons (20.71%). These responses beg the question: How are administrators not helpful and educators not comfortable and what other reasons factor in? Here the qualitative data provides some answers.

1. Administrator(s) was the source of, or complicit in, the harassment

It is perhaps unsurprising in light of the previously noted issues around bullying (page 9) that 60% of the respondents’ comments indicated that administrators were either the perpetrator, or complicit in the harassment. Evidently turning to the harasser (or their colleague in the case of administrative teams) for support or resolution is simply not viable, and indeed may set the educator up for further abuse and, as we examine on page 29, reprisals, “[The] administrator was the instigator and not supportive. Other colleagues including myself were scared of reprisals.”

2. The incident involved colleagues

When the perpetrator is a co-worker, educators indicated they were hesitant to bring the wrongdoing to the attention of the administrator(s) for fear of creating conflict and potentially exacerbating the situation: “If I give a negative report about a peer, I

also have to tell the harasser. That would just cause more harassment.”

3. Administrators are unwilling to address these situations

Significant numbers of educators indicated that based on previous experience – their own or that of colleagues – they did not believe that their administrator(s) was prepared to take workplace harassment seriously. “Common occurrence, same outcome every time – that is no outcome at all. More serious incidents have occurred with other staff members in full view of the entire school and nothing is done.” Indeed, a number of respondents noted, evoking a theme we have seen elsewhere in this report, that the risk of being blamed for the harassment functioned as a powerful disincentive to addressing the issue with their administrator(s): “There is no point bringing it up as you are made to feel like you should have dealt with it on your own and that ‘that student’ has a history of doing that so for whatever reason that makes it ok.”

Why not tell administrators about physical violence?

Based on the same pre-determined categories noted above in relation to harassment, participants indicated they did not tell their administrators about physical violence because: it was too minor (13.58%), they could handle it on their own (11.92%), they lacked the time due to routine workplace demands (12.25%), or that they were embarrassed/did not want the administrator to know (4.64%). Here again, participants indicated that talking to their administrator was not helpful (27.81%), they were uncomfortable talking about these kinds of incidents with their administrator (11.59%) and indicated “other” reasons (18.21%). The qualitative data spoke to a number of issues including fear of reprisals and blame, however the most common reason given for failure to report violence was lack of confidence. As was the case with harassment, educators’ perceptions that administrators were either unable or unwilling to address the issue diminished the value of sharing their experiences of physical violence. Here educators asserted that “administration does not do anything.” Describing their experience, one educator wrote: “I told my principal what had occurred. She said, ‘thank you for letting me know’. Nothing was done, as it was an ongoing issue with a student with special needs.” In some cases, participants highlighted the excessive workload of administrators: “Our administrators are overworked and do not have enough time to address all these issues. The board does not respect the needs

of admin” and/or acknowledged the limited tools at administrators’ disposal (in particular when mitigating circumstances were at play). At other times, however, a less generous explanation was put forth: “I felt my administrator did not care about me or for me.”

“When I talk with admin I continually get the same answer and appear to be bothering them with my concerns.”

“I have a student who is physically aggressive towards other students and I communicated that to my principal/vice-principal. It wasn’t until a parent contacted the school saying they were upset with this child bullying/hurting their child that any action was taken. Until that time, I was exhausting myself trying to keep my eyes on this child constantly in fear of him/her hurting others. It’s as if my words didn’t matter.”

Why are educators not filling out violent incident reports?

Almost half (47%) of respondents did not complete a Safe School, Workplace Violence, or Violent Incident Report for their worst incident of workplace violence. The principle reasons indicated in the pre-existing list were:

- A lack of time either because of the demands associated with the incident (13.67%) or routine workplace demands (18.67%);
- The incident was as too minor to warrant a report (24.69%);
- The educator was discouraged by their administrator (7.96%);
- Concern about potential career repercussions (6.12%);
- Inability to access the form (3.27%).

Notably, in spite of administrators’ efforts to shift blame onto educators (e.g., assuming the educator either provoked or, at a minimum, failed to deescalate the situation), only a handful of respondents indicated

“I have never been asked to fill out a form, nor has a single principal asked about my well-being. As an occasional teacher I feel less than dirt on many occasions when there should be proper protocol and respect given to me.”

“I love teaching. I find myself crying a lot more than I have in the past. I find myself becoming anxious when I get to school. There are many days I dread going in. I have been told my administrators that I need to deal with more on my own in the classroom. I am being told not to send them to the office for racist comments directed at another student in the classroom, for students rude, disruptive behaviour that causes the others not to learn, for a chair being 'tossed' if it wasn't thrown at someone. And they do not want someone who is about to snap because they haven't done anything yet – I suppose I should just wait until someone gets hurt.”

they did not fill out a form because they blamed themselves (1.84%) or were embarrassed (1.43%). Educators were asked for other reasons they did not complete a report. Here three categories, presented in order of prevalence, are notable.

1. Unaware the forms existed and/or the expectations around their completion

A number of educators indicated that they were unaware of the reporting process: “I did not know about it. I only learned fully about this process this year after having dealt with at least one dangerous episode from a new student this year.”

2. Perception that completing a report was either not necessary or inappropriate

In some cases, educators felt that their administrator’s resolution of the issue was adequate and in others educators made a decision based on age, mitigating circumstances (e.g., “student profile, diagnosis, safety/behaviour plans, etc.”), or their own assessment of the situation/student (e.g., “I feel the student was crying out for help. He never got into a fight, so I never thought he would actually follow through on the threats”). Importantly, in other cases the decision not to complete a report pivoted on the educator’s (mis)perception that reports were only required in the case of ‘serious’ incidents (e.g., “There was no physical harm done to me or students, just threatening behavior”) or because they were under the impression that violence was an anticipated aspect of their job: “I have been told that this is part of the job (student with ASD/DD) and not a reason to fill out the forms.”

3. Belief that filling out forms was futile

Many educators indicated that “there is no point because nothing will be done about it.” A number of educators were explicit about their frustration, “I used to fill out those forms each time a violent incident occurred, but the frequency of these incidents has only increased so it feels pointless to continue filling them out,” another noted, “I do not feel confident that these reports do anything other than take my time.”

5.2 Reprisals for reporting

Workplace retaliation is any negative response against an employee who was engaging in a legally protected activity (e.g., refusing to provide unsafe work, requesting adherence to occupational health and safety laws, reporting occupational health and safety violations). One in eleven educators (11.57%) reported experiencing a reprisal in relation to their worst instance of harassment (and one in eighteen, 5.71%, in the case of physical violence). The high rates of ‘prefer not to answer’ responses (10.44% and 8.27% respectively) is also suggestive. It is also worth reflecting on the fact that some educators indicated they did not report workplace harassment or violence

for fear of reprisals – in other words, there were no reprisals precisely because educators, in an attempt to protect themselves, did not ‘rock the boat’.

Notably, rates of reprisals and sanctions were elevated in a number of populations. Results presented in Figure 11 show that individuals identifying as disabled experienced disproportionately more reprisals following instances of reporting of either harassment or physical violence. Similarly, individuals identifying as racialized (i.e., non-white) experienced disproportionately more reprisals following instances of reporting harassment. Unexpectedly, the results from this survey also showed that men reported disproportionately more reprisals following instances of reporting harassment than did women.

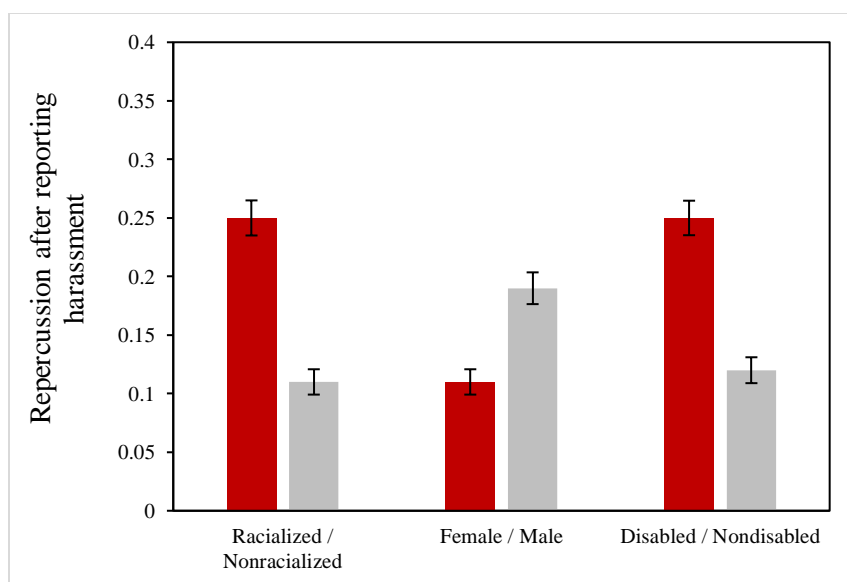


Figure 11: Proportion of individuals in racialized and non-racialized, female and male, disabled and non-disabled groups reporting repercussions following instances of harassment that were experienced and subsequently reported. Significant differences are demarcated in red.

What do workplace retaliations look like?

The qualitative data provides an indication of the nature of retaliations and reprisals. While some educators described disciplinary actions (e.g., letters of reprimand, failed evaluations), the most frequently noted repercussions were harassment, employment-related retaliation, and ostracization – all of which are, of course, characteristic of bullying:

Harassment

Educators described a range of harassing behaviour, including threats (e.g., “to reassign my position”), false allegations (e.g., “I was accused of being the

aggressor after I repeatedly reported being harassed

by a grade 7 student for 6 weeks”), ridicule and belittlement both personally (e.g., “she told me I should ‘act like an adult’”) and professionally (e.g., “she questioned my professionalism on a daily basis from November to the end of May”), and increased surveillance and monitoring (e.g., “she visited my classroom frequently and remained there for much longer than for my colleagues”).

Employment-related retaliation

Educators described a range of work-related reprisals including being given undesirable or unsuitable

teaching assignments, the denial of professional development opportunities, having working conditions eroded, and being pushed or transferred out of the school.

- *“I was refused my top three assignment requests year after year. They were given to staff with much less seniority. I was given stacked classes [...] I was the only teacher with no say in my class composition. I was refused supplies for my class so I had to buy my own (I wasn’t even allowed to have paper boxes to move classrooms each year). I was refused testing for my students with no explanation. I was a scapegoat and used to set an example for what would happen if you stood up to admin.”*
- *“Each time I spoke up, I was given a more difficult class of students and a more inappropriate assignment, as well as being indirectly told that I am not a good teacher. At one of the staff meetings I was ridiculed by the principal saying, ‘I didn’t know we were talking about feelings’!”*

- *“I was not allowed to be considered for any PD (professional development). Any suggestion was ignored, and any event I ran in the past was cancelled.”*

Ostracization and exclusion

Ostracization and exclusion can be powerful, if somewhat nebulous, tools of retaliation. Approximately a quarter of the comments to this question included a reference to being excluded from social or work-related activities. One educator *“was actively left out of meetings and discussions that were a part of my job”* and another described her experience of *“unprofessional and unsupportive attitude by the principal such as ignoring me when I spoke, not making eye contact with me, making comments directed at me in front of others, not supporting or ignoring requests for classroom support.”* Exclusion not only undermines an educator’s ability to do their job but erodes confidence and has a detrimental impact on mental health: *“[It] may seem very subtle, but it is very stressful and discerning to be excluded. Told to retire or leave due to my age.”*

“My principal made numerous sexual advances towards me, including inappropriate remarks. When I reported him, he accused me of being incompetent and continued to accuse me of events that did not occur. I eventually dropped my complaint.”

“I was expected to take 30 students into a room that was suited for 20. I was told I was being insubordinate when I asked to use the usual room for those students. I was told that I should stop whining.”

6: Resources and training

6.1 What do educators think needs to be done?

The 2017-2018 *Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* asked educators “What other resources do you or your school require to effectively address the educational and/or emotional needs of students?” In the context of the current research and speaking to the apparent relationship between students’ wellbeing and violence, many respondents addressed broader issues implicated in workplace violence. The qualitative data was quantified in order to convey response rates and subsequently analyzed qualitatively. The key findings are presented below in frequency order.

#1 More resources and support to address student needs was overwhelmingly identified as essential. Indeed, 47% of the comments focused on the importance of having more – and better allocation of and access to – staff and supports (e.g., guidance counsellors, social workers, behavioral and educational teaching assistants, Indigenous support workers, mental health specialists, psychologists, Special Education Resource teachers), earlier identification of student needs and, relatedly, better access to appropriate professionals including psychoeducational consultants. A number of educators also drew attention to the importance of matching allocation with regional issues/resources. The following quotations speak to some of these concerns:

- “We have one certified counselor that works on site to support and provide counseling services to our students. We need at least three of these to properly meet the needs of our students. The number of students in our school that have experienced trauma (or still are) is overwhelming. We need more EA’s, smaller classrooms/more teachers, and more support staff to deal with the daily issues we face here in the far north.”
- “[We need] mental health resources to recognize signs and symptoms of mental disorders (depression, anxiety, mood, eating, OCD, etc.) and get immediate intervention/help.”
- “There is not enough support for the behavioural, autistic and special needs students. We have students who need support not receiving it and students allocated support not receiving it because it goes to the highest needs and that’s often the high behavioural and safety issues which means students who are quieter are getting the support that they should be and are entitled to. A shared support model does not work when some students require support in order to function in a school setting and therefore someone loses out.”

#2 More (and better) general educational resources was noted in 10% of the comments. Here educators drew links between harassment/physical violence and high educator/student ratios, the dearth of alternative classrooms, split and triple grade classrooms, lack of physical space (e.g., for rooms for students who are frustrated), limited opportunities for physical activity, dilapidated buildings, and a lack of (relevant) educational material. For example, one educator noted: “If we had the resources to keep kids engaged in the classrooms, there would be far fewer behavioural problems. But the tech is old and slow, the pencils scarce, and most of the textbooks are nightmares.” Another explained, “Our school/board even limits photocopies and we each received a box of photocopy paper at the beginning of the year and that is it. How to engage students without handouts or worksheets – especially for our ELL (English Language Learners) and special needs learners who benefit from highly visual materials.”

#3 Clear policies and consistently applied consequences for violent, harassing, and inappropriate behaviour was mentioned in 9.5% of the comments. Educators were frustrated with the lack of consequences and argued that “progressive discipline is not working and is jeopardizing the wellbeing of educators and students who repeatedly witness violence and have normalized it.” Many pointed out that rewarding a child (e.g., treats, playing on an iPad) did nothing to discourage the behaviour and in fact may reinforce it (and may even encourage other children to mimic the disruptive behaviour). Relatedly, educators also argued for the establishment of, and/or adherence to, clear protocols to deal with harassing and violent behaviour: “At minimum, adherence and response to the policies currently in place to address violent incidents in schools.”

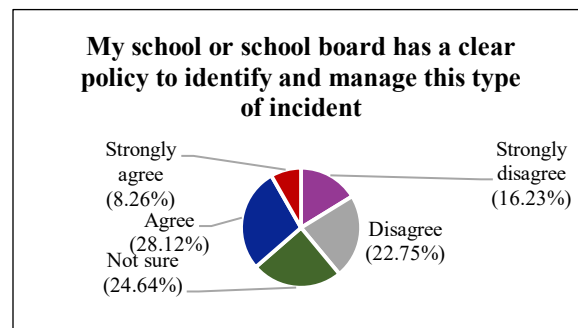


Figure 12: Proportion of educators who agreed/disagreed that their schoolboard had clear incident policy.

#4 Better trained, supportive, and more responsive administrators was the focus of 9% of the comments. Here educators highlighted the importance of a strong, empathetic, fair, on-site, available, and competent administrator. An individual with a strong background in teaching as well as leadership skills, a commitment to communicating with faculty, willingness to “*listen to staff concerns or what staff have already tried before telling staff they are not doing things properly or are not doing enough,*” and trained in how to “*deal with harassment and violence in immediate and effective ways.*” Speaking to the importance of supportive administrators, one educator wrote: “*I left the school because of violence and unsupportive and unkind administrators. I am at a better functioning school with capable admin. However, there are still incidences of aggressive student behaviour although not in classes I teach. With less competent admin it is probable this school would also sink into chaos.*”

“The tone of each school is really directed by the personality and beliefs of the principal/administrators and their belief in staff as professionals, which ultimately has an impact on students and their school career. Not sure that the personality of a principal should determine the well being of several hundred people.”

#5 Appropriate Professional Development: only about 5% of comments indicated additional training for educators was a significant resource-need. Of these, the majority either did not specify or flag the need for “*training for explosive and unpredictable students who are in need of mental health support,*” “*mental health training and identification,*” and “*teaching self-regulation.*” That said, about a quarter of the comments spoke to a *different* sort of professional development including training in restorative justice, unconscious bias/cultural sensitivity, suicide intervention, the legal rights of educators, how to communicate with aggressive parents, self-care, and coping strategies. Importantly, however, almost a third of the comments referring to training explicitly spoke against additional training. These educators questioned its efficacy and highlighted the diversionary potential: “*we do not need*

“I have seen a large increase in violence in schools over the past 13 years. I mostly see students in Kindergarten who are aggressive, defiant, swearing and lack the skills to be ready for school. This takes a huge toll on the Kindergarten teachers, then the grade one teachers when those students move forward. In the primary/junior grades I have witnessed more swearing and threatening behaviours. There is a lot of ethnic and religious slurs said between students, as well in the junior grades. When I have told parents of their child's inappropriate or racist comments, they shrug it off or just say ‘ok’. My colleagues are exhausted and feel overwhelmed by student behaviours, and often feel resentful because they genuinely want to teach but they can't as they are stuck managing behaviours and monitoring for student safety. The needs of students have also increased over the years, not just behaviours. There are also more students with identified Learning Disabilities, little/no English, Physical Disabilities all in one classroom.”

training, we need fewer students in one classroom.” Participants also noted the risks of additional training, including the very real possibility that it would justify downloading (even more) responsibility onto teachers at the same time as increasing their workload: “*it will make them freer to put higher needs children in our rooms because now that we have been trained, we can handle it”*

“I need training in how to deal with these situations, so I do not bring it home with me or feel worn out at the end of the day.”

#6 Other themes: three other resource-needs emerged as recurring themes. The first, **parents need to be ‘on side’** reflected educators’ perception that their professional expertise was not always respected and, instead of working together, parents deny their child’s challenges and/or refuse the recommended course of action: “*We need students’ parents to trust us.*” Second, and speaking to the costs of social inequity, educators spoke of the need for **greater supports for parents** including crisis intervention, counselling, interpreters, mental health supports, access to medical services, mechanisms to ensure that the basics of life are met, and parenting skills classes: “*Our students are in a crisis at home. That crisis comes to school. They need help. Their families need help. We need help.*” Third, noting the impact of workplace violence on educators’ mental health, participants indicated the need for **greater recognition of, and support for, the mental health needs of educators:** “*Too often, teachers are offered snippets of how to deal with student mental health (often 20 min at a staff meeting). There is very little out there about our mental health. I've watched many good friends/ colleagues come to the end of their ropes physically and mentally due to student behavior.*”

“One of my students had very unpredictable violent behavior. He choked me. He regularly pinched me and attempted many times to bite me. He exhibited this behavior towards everyone in the classroom. [...] Parents refused to even consider a contained class.”

6.2 Educator confidence in dealing with harassment and violence

Results of the *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* show that only 36% of educators feel confident in their ability to deal with an incident of physical violence and that only 50% feel confident in their ability to deal with an incident of harassment. Despite the presence of formal policies and guidelines, our findings show that only 20% of educators agree that their school or school board has a clear policy to identify and manage harassment and only 25% has a clear policy to identify and manage physical violence.

6.3 Educator Training

In the *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey*, we asked participants about a variety of programs that they would participate in if they were offered as part of/during professional development/instructional days; the majority of

educators indicated they would welcome social-emotional learning programs (68%) and non-physical intervention programs (55%).

We also examined the desire for these programs as a function of age. Results, presented in Figures 13a through 13d, show that the proportion of individuals welcoming training in non-physical interventions did not differ significantly across age groups (Figure 13a), but the proportion of individuals welcoming training in *physical* interventions declined significantly with age (Figure 13b). Similarly, the proportion of individuals welcoming training in social-emotional learning skills remained high for educators in their 20s, 30s and 40s but dropped off significantly among educators over 50 (Figure 13c). Finally, the proportion of individuals welcoming training in Behaviour Management Systems increased amongst educators in their 20s, 30s and 40s, but dropped off significantly among educators over 50 (Figure 13d).

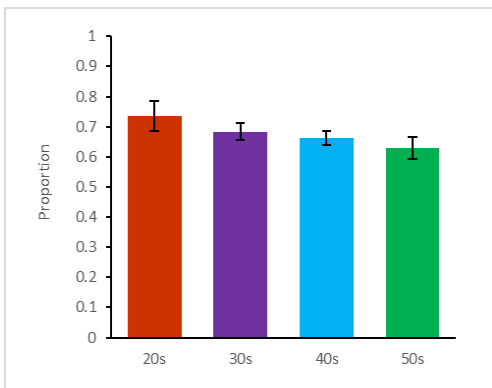


Figure 13a: Proportion of educators that would welcome training in *non-physical* interventions.

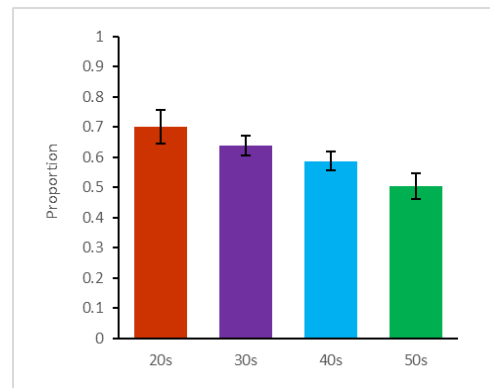


Figure 13b: Proportion of educators that would welcome training in *physical* interventions.

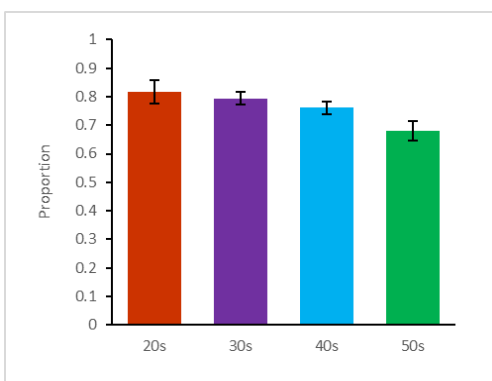


Figure 13c: Proportion of educators that would welcome training in social-emotional learning skills.

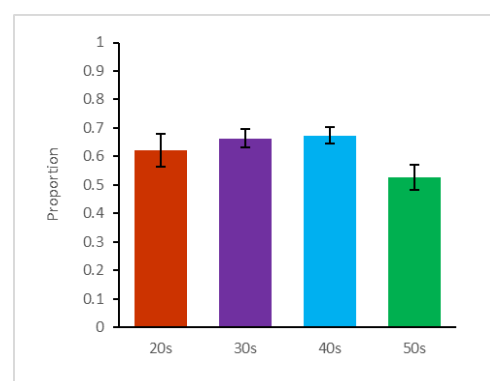


Figure 13d: Proportion of educators that would welcome training in Behaviour Management Systems

Addressing the escalating crisis of harassment and violence against educators

“The violence needs to stop. [...] The problem is getting worse by the day. Let’s take the results of this survey and actually do something with them.”

Results of the *2017-2018 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey* support the view that a crisis of harassment and violence against elementary school educators in Ontario has emerged and intensified over the past 15 years. There are a number of reasons for declaring this an escalating crisis. First, rates of harassment and violence are critically high. Results from the survey suggest that in a single year, as many as one in two educators will experience violence, as many as 70% will experience harassment from students, and as many as 40% will experience harassment from parents, colleagues, or administrators. Second, rates of harassment and violence have increased dramatically. Compared to surveys conducted on the behalf of Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA), rates of harassment have at least doubled, and rates of physical violence have increased seven-fold. Third, there is a disturbing normalization of violence against educators by administrators, educators, and students. Fourth, there appears to be widespread minimization and/or denial of the extent of violence and its multifaceted impacts on educators and students. Fifth, findings from our survey indicate that workplace violence is being underreported, and when reported, is all too often accompanied by blame and reprisal. This suggests that official rates underestimate the true prevalence and speaks to an organizational culture that is ill-equipped to address the issue. Sixth, the results of the qualitative analysis suggest that there are few consequences for harassing and violent behaviour by students. While school boards have embraced the language of progressive discipline mandated under the *Education Act*; educators told us that, in practice, there are few consequences for students’ harassing and violent behaviour. Finally, findings from the current study suggest that many educators feel neither adequately supported nor prepared and trained to deal with the student-initiated harassment and physical violence that they are experiencing.

The past 15 years has seen significant changes in society including growing income disparity, social inequality, and economic stress, a rise in both moderate and severe mental health difficulties among children (Boak et al., 2018), and the ubiquity of electronic devices, all of which have increased the needs of students in Ontario’s elementary schools. At the same time, we have seen significant shifts in the province’s education policy, including mainstreaming – placing special needs students in regular classrooms – accompanied by a commitment to integration (and correspondingly decreased use of segregated classrooms), standardized testing (EQAO), institutionally structured “corrective and supportive” progressive discipline policies (Ontario, 2012, p. 2), two year all-day kindergarten (introduced in 2010), as well as ministry-mandated “Education for all” (Ontario, 2005) and “Learning for all” (Ontario, 2013) approaches based on the recognition that “all students learn best when instruction, resources, and the learning environment are well suited to their particular strengths, interests, needs, and stage of readiness” (Ontario, 2013, p. 8). To be successful, these evidence-based practices require significant investment in infrastructure, materials, professional development, and human resources. Unfortunately, as needs and expectations increase, funding formulas have not been recalibrated. Indeed, the impact of deep funding cuts introduced under the Mike Harris government (1995 to 2002) continue to echo (Mackenzie, 2018). In elementary classrooms across Ontario educators are scrambling to meet ever expanding expectations (e.g., more Individual Education Plans, more children in the classroom, standardized testing requirements) with decreasing levels of support and resources. The result is entirely predictable – frustrated struggling children whose needs are not being met ‘lashing out’.

“We need Educational Assistants for our students who are struggling, so they can feel supported and successful. Those positions have been cut dramatically over the years, so those students are left to flounder. We are far from a city centre, so our students also miss out on access to special supports like mental health services and specialists, or classrooms for students with learning disabilities.”

The high rates of harassment and violence also speak to the need for urgent intervention. In January 2013, the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (CSA Group, 2013) was introduced in Canada, in part, to address the increasing social and economic costs of mental health difficulties in the workplace. The National Standard sought to define, for the first time, the characteristics of a healthy workplace and the types of workplace hazards that could be expected to undermine the mental health of employees. The National Standard defines a “psychologically healthy and safe workplace” as a workplace that “actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health, including in negligent, reckless or intentional ways, and promotes psychological well being”

(CSA Group, 2013). The Standard is intended to provide guidance to employers and unions on how to identify, assess, eliminate, and control psychological hazards, and how to foster and promote psychological health and safety in the workplace (CSA Group, 2013). In light of the high rates of harassment and violence experienced by educators in the performance of their duties, it is reasonable to expect that most educators will suffer a mental injury of some kind, at some point, during their careers. Given the impact that harassment and violence has on the health and wellbeing of educators, both immediately and over the long-term, adequate resources (e.g., access to mental health professionals) are essential to ensure that educators who have experienced harassment and violence have the opportunity to address any mental or physical injury that they have sustained, as well as to learn the skills needed to cope with ongoing exposure to harassment and violence.

“The biggest problem with the training overall, though, is that it's dependent on having the time to observe and work one-on-one with a student; the opportunity to drop everything else and focus on the situation at hand for potentially long periods of time; and a supportive team. Teachers have none of these three vital resources. Training teachers may actually backfire because what's needed are human resources in the building who are properly educated, available, and assigned to do this work. [...] By training teachers, that ends up being just one more thing we're expected to take on.”

Harassment and physical violence coupled with a fear of reprisal for reporting, inadequate (and potentially declining) resources to meet the needs of students, the normalization of harassment and violence against educators, low levels of support, increasing levels of incivility, uncertainty of how to effectively respond to harassment and violence, and an unwillingness on the part of administrators to consequence inappropriate behaviour is having detrimental impacts on the health and well-being of educators, the classroom learning environment, and elementary school students in Ontario. It is a crisis that is only likely to worsen. It is time to take action.

Addressing this significant problem will require a commitment to immediate action, including:

- Increased resources to ensure the most vulnerable students are getting the help they need and that *all* elementary school students are getting the support they require to flourish and learn. This will require, among other things, augmented health services (e.g., early diagnosis and interventions), additional educational supports (e.g., EAs), and smaller classes to facilitate the individualized attention mandated by the *Education Act*.
- Resources to support educators and address their mental and physical health needs in the context of the escalating harassment and violence they are experiencing.
- Additional training for administrators to ensure that they have the skills to adequately address harassment and violence in schools and provide meaningful support to educators who experience harassment, and/or violence.
- Support for teachers to enable them to manage the increasing breadth and intensity of needs in their classrooms.
- Ensuring that policies and protocols concerning harassment, and violence are understood and consistently applied including the implementation of student consequences that are appropriate and effective.
- Ongoing monitoring of workplace harassment and violence including the development of strategies to address the heightened vulnerability of designated groups (e.g., racialized, Indigenous, disabled, women, and LGBTQ).
- Adoption of a population health approach that examines and addresses the broad range of factors influencing harassment and violence against educators in elementary schools.

“Public understanding of the true working environment - respect from the community at large would enable a more collaborative working framework - we are in this together to raise these people, our future. If education was respected and the people who provide this supportive and caring environment to nurture these individuals...I believe this would go a long way. Educators are mocked openly, but the public truly does not understand what we do.”

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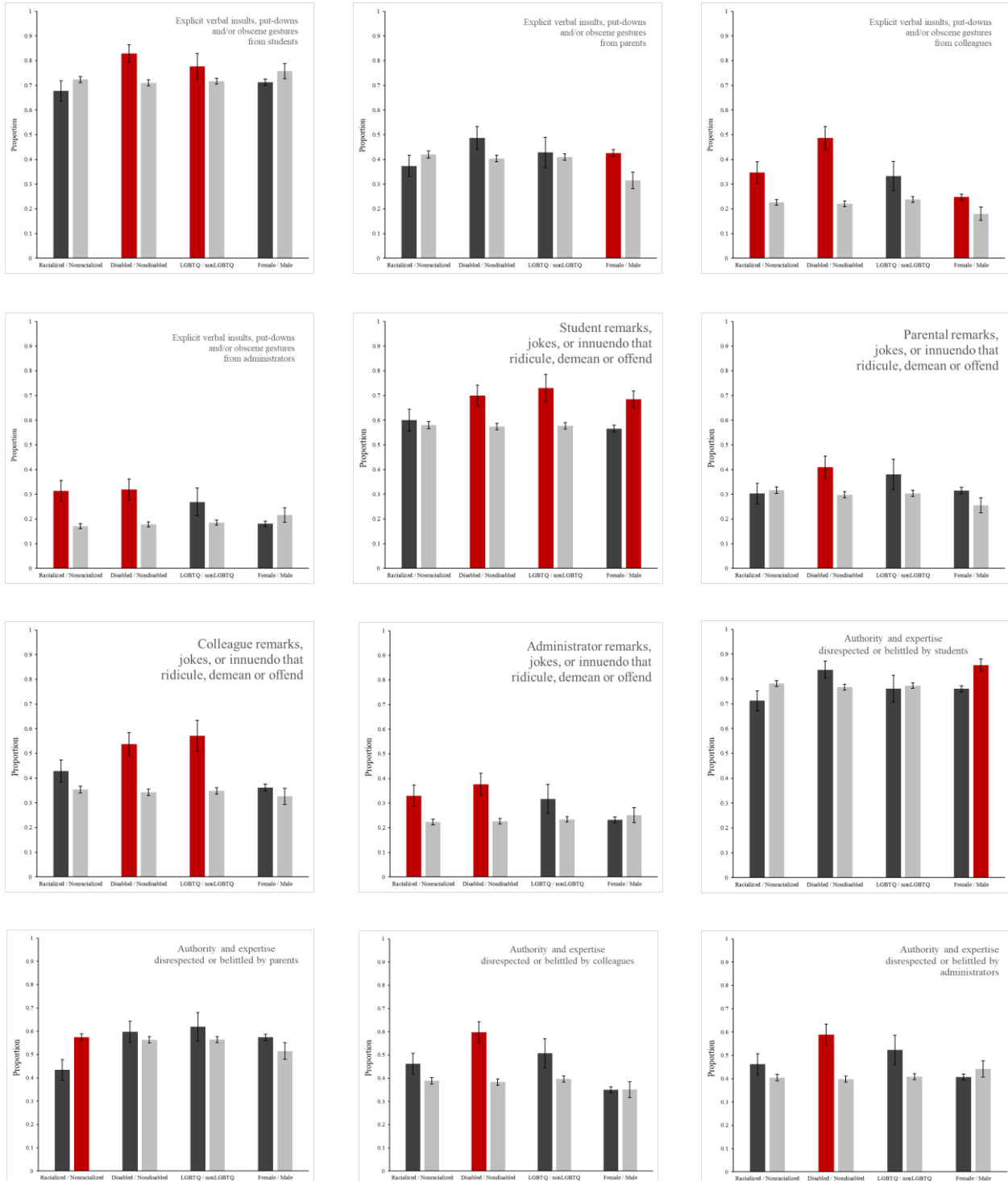
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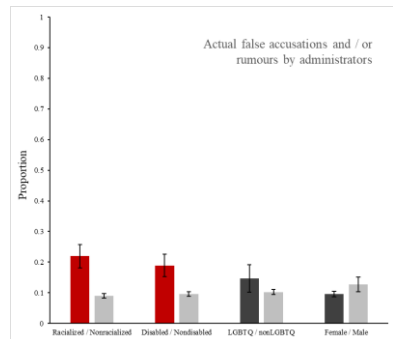
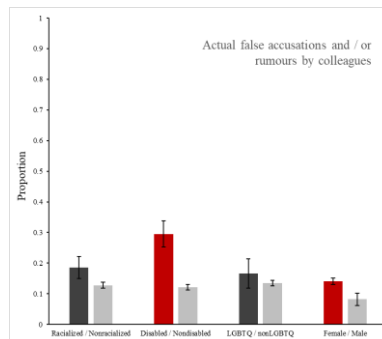
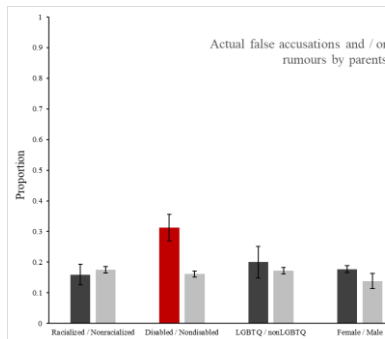
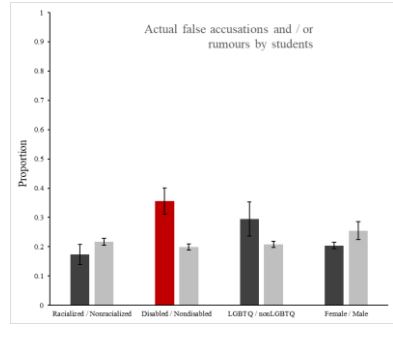
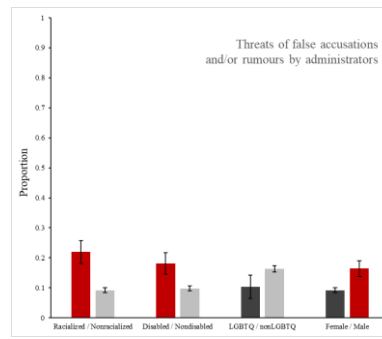
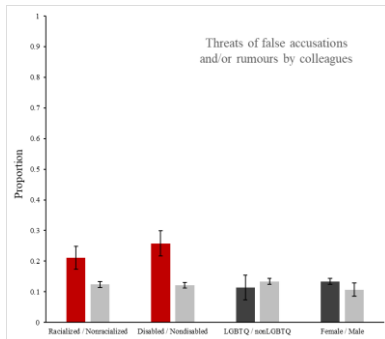
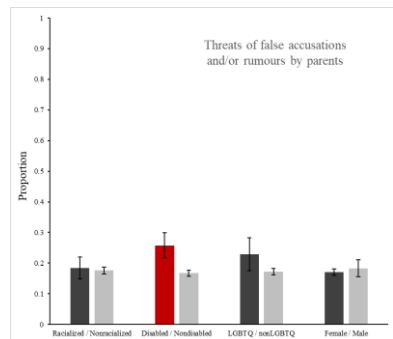
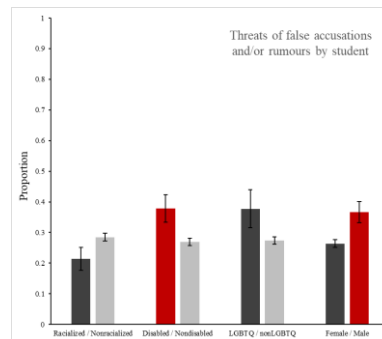
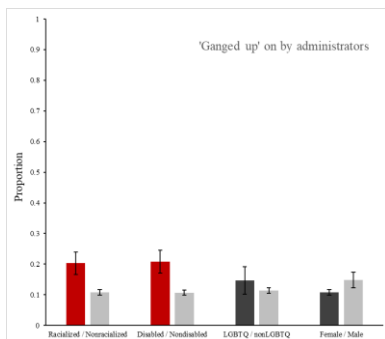
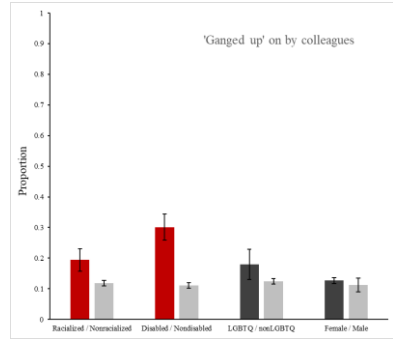
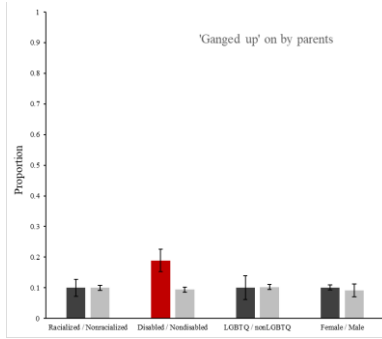
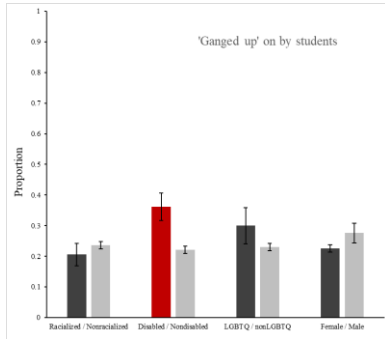
Appendix

Rates of harassment and verbal violence for groups at heightened risk (i.e., women, as well as racialized, disabled, and LGBTQ individuals) are presented in the following figures. Significant difference is demarcated with a red bar. Not all large differences were significant due to small sample sized.

Rates of harassment and verbal violence



Rates of harassment and verbal violence (cont'd)



Rates of physical violence

