

# Position Statement on Assessing the Risk for Violence

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### **Position:**

During their careers most psychiatrists will assess the risk of violence to others. While psychiatrists can often identify circumstances associated with an increased likelihood of violent behavior, they cannot predict dangerousness with definitive accuracy. Over any given period some individuals assessed to be at low risk will act violently while others assessed to be at high risk will not. When deciding whether a patient is in need of intervention to prevent harm to others, psychiatrists should consider both the presence of recognized risk factors and the most likely precipitants of violence in a particular case.

### **Authors:**

This position statement was proposed by the Workgroup on Violence Risk of the Council on Psychiatry and Law. Members of the Workgroup are Alec Buchanan, MD (Chairperson), Michael A Norko, MD, Renee L Binder, MD, and Marvin Swartz, MD.