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My name is Corrine Cavanaugh, live in central Maine and work for Riverview Psychiatric Center. I've worked for RPC for a little over a year and on the 'good' days I see patients thriving in a safe environment, making meaningful relationships with staff and peers, and cruising along the road of recovery. As with any job there are of course 'bad' days, however these types of days for a Mental Health Worker (MHW) often come along with extreme situations that can, and have, ended in hospital trips for staff. As MHW's, we are the front line for the hospital. If there is an unsafe situation with a patient, we are the ones de-escalating, or at times going hands-on when there is an assaultive or otherwise aggressive patient. Although we all know what we signed up to do, it is an incredibly physically and emotionally taxing job. Being verbally assaulted for up to 12 hours per shift, seeing co-workers be harassed or assaulted or injured, or literally standing between/in front of violent patients are all things I have personally witnessed or have happened to me. As with many other places of work we are short staffed, but that can be unsafe for those working the floor. Another side-effect of being short staffed is having to potentially be mandated which I have personally experienced. Getting a call at the end of a long 12 hour shift only to hear that I'm required to stay for another 4 hours is certainly not ideal. As MHW's we all do our best to provide and maintain a safe environment for unsafe patients to recover in, but ultimately this job comes with risk and at times extreme physical and/or emotional risks. While we all do our best to minimize these events, to stay positive, and to leave work feelings at work, I know we all take some of these feelings home with us, or bring them into work the next day. I find myself unable to sleep after harder shifts, sometimes kept awake by anxiety and adrenaline, sometimes by pulled muscles and bruised limbs, sometimes even by my worry for coworkers who were punched, kicked, scratched or bitten during shift. While we enjoy what we do, this job takes a huge toll on all of us in every way imaginable. Thank you for your time.