

Workplace Violence Prevention for Employees

Participant Packet

Solutions to Everyday Problems

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www.concern-eap.com



Workplace Violence Prevention for Employees

OVERVIEW

Learning Objective: You will learn how to help prevent violence in the workplace. Our purpose is to help you, as an employee, contribute to a safe and secure workplace.

Agenda Topics:

- Welcome & Overview
 - Workplace Violence Prevention
 - Questionnaire
- Explanation of Workplace Violence
- Small Group Awareness Exercise
- Company Policy & Procedures
- Recognizing the Aggressive & Potentially Violent Employee
 - Early Warning Signs
 - Escalation of Aggression
 - Immediate Danger
- How to Respond
 - What to Expect When Reporting
 - What to Do When You Witness a Violent Act
- Wrap-up & Evaluation

Seminar Length: Approximately 1 hour

What is Workplace Violence?

Workplace violence includes more than just rampages, shootings and assaults. Violence in the workplace includes those individuals who create an atmosphere of distress and stress (mild to severe) by their overt and covert hostile and aggressive behaviors. It includes such things as angry and sarcastic remarks, threats, fear, intimidation, harassment, pushing and shoving. Workplace violence can be thought of in terms of a range of threats, from inflicting low level distress on others to severe threats and actions. The most severe incidents are what we hear about on TV or immediately think about when we hear the term “going postal.”

Interestingly, workplace violence has been recorded since 1911. Our general recollections date back to 1986 with the Edmund, Oklahoma post office shooting where the term “going postal” was first initiated. Over the years, research has given us some basic information on the perpetrator. We know that perpetrators of workplace violence include co-workers, past employees, students, clients, customers, the employee’s spouse or significant other or other identified relationship, or someone who has no legitimate business interest with the company. They come from all demographic backgrounds. Although they are primarily male, women have played a role in workplace violence as well. Additionally, perpetrators almost always have a certain degree of success in their lives (work, home, family, school and community) and generally set and maintain clear boundaries in their relationships. Thankfully, most of the aggressive and hostile behaviors that you will see on campus will be what we will refer to in this training as low level. It is the escalated aggressive behaviors that are infrequent and result in death and destruction at the work site.

Research also tells us that the weapons used in workplace violence are primarily firearms (75%), but also include piercing instruments (knives, ice picks) and much less frequently, toxins and poisons.

Rest assured no one just goes off the deep-end. Although we cannot with 100% accuracy predict human behavior, we can definitely identify the many clues and behavioral indicators that will point to a very troubled employee and/or a potentially explosive situation. It is the clues that provide the early warning signals and help to answer the question, “How can we prevent something terrible from happening?” These clues, which occur over a period of time, include verbal statements, physical obsessions, often bizarre and strange remarks and other behavioral indicators. If we pay attention to our co-workers and students, we will see and hear their distress signals.

Your responsibility is to be aware of patterns of inappropriate and problematic workplace behavior and notify appropriate people within your company who can help, like your supervisor and Human Resources. We cannot stress enough that recognition and intervention early on is the key to prevention.

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

- Discuss the incidents you have read about or have personal knowledge of.
- What were the interventions that were used, if any, to diffuse or handle the problems?

Company Policy and Procedures

- Workplace Violence Prevention Policy and Procedures
- Threat Management Team
- Education and Training
- Workplace Security Measures

Recognizing and Responding to the Aggressive and Potentially Violent Employee

Early Warning Signs

- Direct or indirect sarcastic, hostile, angry comments to co-workers, supervisors
- Excessive use of profanity toward co-workers, the company, supervisors
- Intimidating body language: stance, glare, arm or hand gestures
- Frequent open displays of frustration and anger as evidenced by inappropriate outbursts, red face, tight jaw, clenched fists
- Instigating harmful rumors
- Argumentative, “chip on shoulder” attitude
- Negative attitude toward co-workers
- Arrogant and self-righteous attitude
- Sense of entitlement with regard to benefits, bending company rules
- Excessive and often unrealistic demands upon supervisor/manager or co-workers
- Failure to cooperate with supervisors and managers
- Inability to be a team player
- Negative attitude toward policies and procedures, especially changes to existing policies and procedures
- Inappropriate sexual overtures or comments (initial stages of romantically obsessed behavior)
- Expressing feelings of persecution by others (not necessarily co-workers)
- Expressing suicidal thoughts (I’d be better off dead)
- Expressing thoughts of hurting others (he/she would be better off dead)
- Statements of blame and accusation; not taking responsibility for actions, mistakes, errors
- Boundary probes, i.e.. telephone, attempts to enter building, driving by work/car, park/stand near building, approach/walk-by

Escalation of Aggression

- Deliberate disregard for company safety practices and repeated incidences that jeopardize co-worker's safety
- Acting impulsively with extreme shifts in mood and emotion
- Making suicidal remarks or attempting to inflict harm on self
- Bragging remarks of previous experiences of hurting others ("You should have seen what I did to that guy.")
- Voicing specific ways of doing harm to others whom they feel are treating them unjustly or unfairly ("I would get_ in a corner and then they would be sorry.").
- Openly hostile to co-workers, supervisors/managers
- Obsessive thinking – preoccupation with a "love object"
- Vandalizing or stealing company property or proprietary materials
- Sabotaging company materials, property, proprietary material or information
- Sending sexual or violent notes to co-workers, supervisors/managers
- Increase in boundary invasions: stalking and stalking related behaviors
- Carrying and hiding weapons in automobile, on their person, locker, desk drawer, purse or satchel

Immediate Danger

The following signs indicate immediate danger:

- Destruction of property - arson, explosives
- Physical assaults - hitting, biting, fighting
- Assault with weapons, explosives, poisons, toxins, knives
- Attempting or committing suicide or homicide
- Brandishing a weapon
- Armed robbery
- Direct personal boundary invasions: kidnapping, wire tapping

Notify security and or law enforcement immediately if a weapon or any device is present that could cause harm to others or property.

If anyone makes a threat on someone's life, notify law enforcement immediately.

What to Do?

- Recognition
- Documentation
- Take action and report to designated person (generally Human Resources)

What to Expect When You Report

- You will be thanked for sharing your concerns.
- Your concerns and information will be taken seriously and kept confidential. Only those who need to know will be informed.
- The situation will be investigated as discreetly as possible by Human Resources or, if needed the Threat Assessment Team.
- You will be informed of the outcome, if requested.

The goal is to identify the problem at the earliest stage possible to allow for the least intrusive intervention, and to handle the situation as quickly, respectfully and safely as possible.

What to Do if You are Witness to a Violent Act

- If someone is actually harming someone else or presents a viable and immediate threat, call the police, then call security. If your company does not have security, someone or a small group in the company should be designated to respond to a critical incident.
- Afterwards, document what occurred, i.e. who, what, where and when, so that you will have accurate facts if an investigation occurs.
- If the event was traumatic and you are having a difficult time, call the EAP to debrief and to work through your upset feelings.

Wrap Up and Evaluation

- No company is immune from workplace violence.
- Employees have important responsibilities in maintaining a safe and secure workplace, which include enforcing policy, and to recognize and report concerns regarding a potentially violent employee or situation.
- Realize that there is a continuum of threatening behaviors. The goal is to identify and take action at the earliest stage possible, to prevent escalation and to allow for the least intrusive intervention.
- Take advantage of the CONCERN:EAP staff for consultation.

Seminar Evaluation Form

CONCERN: Employee Assistance Program

Please fill out and return to presenter or HR Representative. Your feedback is very important to us. Thank you!

Seminar Title Workplace Violence Prevention for Employees Date: _____

Company: _____ Presenter: _____

Regarding the Seminar	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1. How well were the seminar objectives met?					
2. Usefulness of seminar information?					
3. Length of seminar?					
4. Effectiveness of exercises?					
5. How would you rate this seminar overall?					

Regarding the Presenter	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Presentation skills?					
2. Ability to answer questions?					
3. Knowledge of subject?					
4. Use of time?					
5. Overall assessment of presenter?					

Additional Comments

1. What would you recommend to make this seminar more effective? _____

2. What part of the seminar did you find most helpful? _____

3. Additional comments/suggestions for speaker's improvement? _____

Thank you for your feedback.