

Violence In The Workplace



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Introduction

Goals

To enlighten attendees with respect to the possibility of violent situations arising in the workplace which could result in serious injuries or death.

To provide information for prevention of and reaction to situations of workplace violence.

Objectives

Make attendees more aware of Violence In the Workplace by identifying the following:

- ◆ Types of violence
- ◆ Causes of violence
- ◆ Warning Signs
- ◆ Prevention of workplace violence
- ◆ Resolution (conflict)
- ◆ Personal Safety
- ◆ Response

Statistics

- ◆ 1 in 4 will be a victim of violence at some point in their work life.
- ◆ Over 1 million crimes occur annually in the workplace; 100,000 involve firearms.
- ◆ An average of 20 workers are murdered each week.
- ◆ More than 80% of victims at work know their assailants.
- ◆ During the past three years, the largest increase in workplace violence from employee to supervisor.
- ◆ Violence is the number one cause of death in workplace for females
- ◆ Violence is the number three cause of death in workplace for males

Understanding Workplace Violence

◆ What is a threat?

Any verbal or physical conduct that threatens property or personal safety or that reasonably could be interpreted as an intent to cause harm.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT IN THE GREAT MAJORITY OF CASES, A THREAT WILL NOT LEAD TO A VIOLENT ACT. THE THREAT ITSELF, HOWEVER, DAMAGES WORKPLACE SAFETY AND MUST BE RESPONDED TO

Understanding Workplace Violence

Types of Violence

◆ Robbery

Convenience stores, banks, commercial establishments, private residences.

◆ Attacks

Violence by one employee to another employee (this could include battery, criminal restraint, criminal threats, harassment by telephone, stalking, trespassing, damage to property and violation of a no contact order.)

Types of Violence

◆ Domestic

Females/males killed at work-carried over from disputes at home or other places away from work by spouses, boy/girl friends.

◆ Schools

In the media a lot the last few years.

◆ Terrorist

Violence projected by groups for purposes of political or possibly religious motivations.

Causes of Violence

◆ Violent Employees

- ◆ *Employees are hired without an extensive background check.*
- ◆ Has history of complaints or newly developed pattern of complaints.

◆ Substance Abuse

- ◆ Employees may bring their drug/alcohol problem into the workplace. Abuse of drugs and alcohol, both on and off the job, can induce workplace violence.

Causes of Violence

◆ Radical Management

- ◆ Authoritarian style of management feeds violence related incidents. No employee participation in management breeds contempt.

◆ Management Intimidation

- ◆ Making subordinates feel worthless. Management should not tolerate intimidation, harassment or coercion in the workplace.

Causes of Violence

◆ Minority Resentment

- ◆ Resentment of one person against another because of their race, ethnic, or gender group – could include old versus young with regard to thinking. Ever increasing number of minorities and women in the workforce

Causes of Violence

◆ Revenge

- ◆ Taking retaliatory action for some type of perceived wrong doing. Could be directed at person or company. Employees may feel a loss of self-respect due to disciplinary action (feel betrayed) and vow to take revenge against another employee, supervisor or organization property.

Causes of Violence

◆ Heightened Media

- ◆ Kids and adults (mostly kids) tend to “copy cat” what they observe or learn from media coverage. The media can and does “plant ideas”.

◆ Financial Gain

- ◆ This entails kidnapping or extortion of an employee or family member of an employee for financial gain. Usually a higher paid member of the organization.

Reporting

◆ Threats

◆ Report all verbal/physical threats, and take them seriously – don't ignore any threats. A couple of examples of these are:

◆ Verbal- Dave leaned over, pointed his finger at me and said “Bruce will soon realize he can't treat me like this”.

◆ Physical- “Randy walked up to me and grabbed my arms and threw me against the door

Reporting

◆ Behaviors

- ◆ Make your supervisor and/or upper management aware of employees who are:
 - ◆ feeling personal guilt if someone is killed or harmed and/or
 - ◆ if someone is acting strangely after disciplinary action
 - ◆ or if you have an active protective order

Reporting

◆ Documentation

- ◆ Even if a report should be the responsibility of someone else to document, take the initiative to make sure it gets done. You may need this to support some type of action at a later date.
- ◆ Supervisors especially should document all incidents.

Reporting

◆ Repercussions

- ◆ Don't fear repercussions – Most workplace policies require reporting, and you are only doing your job by reporting incidents of potential or actual workplace violence

Personal Safety (Tips)

◆ Internal Violence

- ◆ Best protection is to report ALL threats or behaviors that you believe could lead to an outburst of violence. If a situation has gone beyond reporting, and your well being is being threatened, then talk the person into calming down if possible.

Personal Safety (Tips)

◆ Internal Violence

- ◆ Empathize and sympathize. Ask the person what you can do to help him or her. Make sure they know you understand their position by re-stating what it is they're upset about.
- ◆ Focus on the behavior and not the person. Definitely call for help when necessary.

Response

- ◆ Handling a crisis
 - ◆ If you are faced with a co-worker with a gun, what would you do?
 - ◆ What does your training tell you to do?
 - ◆ Is there a difference with a co-worker with a gun or a person you don't know?

Response

- ◆ Most workplaces have policies for dealing with workplace acts of violence, and all employees and supervisors should become familiar with that policy. The following are additional steps to follow when dealing with potential violence:
 - ◆ **Call 911 immediately**
 - ◆ **Be prepared to answer, who, what, where, when, and if person has a weapon**

Summary

- ❖ Although workplace violence is increasing, you can decrease the odds that you'll be a victim. Keep in mind that verbal threats are as much a form of violence as physical attacks. Don't ignore angry outbursts. Know that workplace stress and conflicts can cause a violent incident.

Summary

- ◆ Most importantly, report any violence that occurs in your workplace. Don't worry about being a "tattle-tale". By informing your supervisors of potentially dangerous individuals, you could save many lives...even your own.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

A BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE



Pat Sullivan
Blue Beacon International, Inc.

Workplace Violence Defined

- Beatings
- Stabbings
- Suicides
- Shootings
- Rapes
- Near Suicides
- Psychological Traumas
- Threats or Obscene Phone Calls, Texts, Pictures or Videos
- Intimidation
- Harassment of Any Nature
- Being Followed, Sworn At or Shouted At

Why Be Concerned?

- It is the right thing to do!
- Negligent hiring/retention
 - All employers may have a duty to warn an individual that he or she may be in danger.
- OSHA
 - Employers may be liable under the “General Duty” clause.
- Workers’ Compensation
 - Employers are liable for on-the-job injuries.

Workplace Violence Activity

- Simple Assaults: 1.5 Million
- Aggravated Assaults: 369,000
- Rapes/Sexual Assaults: 51,000
- Robberies: 84,000
- Homicides: Nearly 1,000
- Harassment: 43,800
- Threats: 16,400
- Costs 500,000 employees 1,175,000 lost work days each year

Scariest Statistic

- According to a Northwestern National Life Insurance Study:
 - 58% of those employees who were harassed
 - 43% of those who were threatened
 - 24% of those who were physically threatened

...did not inform anyone!

Two Constants

- Violence is the end-stage of a series of neglected indicators.
- Efforts at prevention are more effective than cleaning up the mess.

Warning Signs (Moods)

- Depression
- Despair/Blue
- Anxious
- Irritable
- Anger
- Fatigue
- Poor Concentration
- Loss of Motivation
- Poor Memory
- Disturbed
Appetite/Sleep

Warning Signs (Behavior)

- Marked change in usual manner, patterns, mood, behavior or grooming.
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs.
- Recklessness in driving, spending, gambling or sex.
- Avoidance of situations and social withdrawal.

Warning Signs (Behavior)

- Consistently resistant or uncooperative.
- Strained relationships.
- Problems with performance despite adequate training and motivation.

Who Commits Acts of Workplace Violence?

- Profile
 - White male, 35-45 years old
 - Transient job history
 - A “loner” with little or no family or social support
 - Chronically disgruntled
 - Externalizes blame
 - High maintenance employee
 - Fascination with weaponry



...no substitute for reading signs!

Most Common Errors By Businesses

- Ignoring or neglecting threatening behavior.
- Failing to document misconduct.
- Failing to coordinate information and connect the dots.
- Escalating risk through confrontational approaches.
- Expecting troubled employees to change personality.
- Failing to involve the police at an early stage.

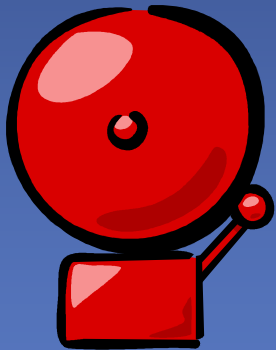
What Should You Do?

- Have a workplace violence policy.
 - Include:
 - Name a Crisis Management Team
 - Include people from all geographical areas of facility
 - Include people who are leaders within the company
 - Include people who work well under stress
 - Include people willing to be trained
 - Include people who are willing to be part of a team that could be called upon under very stressful situations



What Should You Do?

- Have a workplace violence policy.
 - Include:
 - Create a Communication Plan
 - Decide if you should have a visual and/or audio warning signal
 - Decide who will make decisions for the company and include several alternates to cover for vacation and travel of main decision-maker
 - Decide how information will be communicated
 - Decide if you can lockdown or if you have a safe room



What Should You Do?

- Have a workplace violence policy.

- Include:

- Give training on employee expectations

- » Employee safety first
- » Remain calm
- » Do as instructed by either Crisis Management Team or intruder
- » Follow instructions by police or other trained personnel
- » Don't be a hero or take risks
- » Escape when you determine it is safe



What Should You Do?

- Have a workplace violence policy.
 - Include:
 - Have a plan to deal with aftermath
 - Secure the premises
 - Safeguard evidence
 - Cooperate with authorities
 - Know what professionals need to help employees
 - » Arrange for company meetings
 - » Work with professionals to accommodate employee needs
 - Have a plan to deal with media
 - Consult with legal counsel

What Should You Do?

- Have a workplace violence policy.
 - Include:
 - Create a Recovery Team
 - Key personnel from Operations, Information Systems, and Human Resources
 - Make a plan to continue the operation of business

What Should You Do?

- Have a practice drill
 - Sound the warning sign
 - Utilize the Communication Plan
 - Move employees around
 - Poke holes in your plan
 - Rework the policy

Sample Policy

Pick up a sample policy before you leave!

