



An Employee Approach to Preventing Workplace Violence



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Training Objectives

Part I – What is Violence?

- Types of Violence
- Motivation for Violence
- Categories of Violence

Part II – What Are the Signs of Violence?

- The Critical Signs (Personal/Action and Physical Signs)
- Four Stages of Assault/Threat

Part III – What Can I Do?

- Methods to Resolve a Situation
- The CAP Tools
 - **C**ommunication
 - **A**ttitude
 - **P**revention

Statistic:

1999 - About 1.7 million people were victims of workplace violence.



Part I

What is Violence?



What is Violence?

Definition: Intense, turbulent, or furious and often destructive action or force.

It can happen in any environment and can range from threats and verbal abuse to actual physical assaults including homicide.

Types of Violence

Three types of Violence:

1. Verbal Abuse/Threats
2. Threatening Behavior
3. Physical Assault

Statistic:

2008 – Over 2 million people were victims of workplace violence in North America. 75% of instances were classified as assaults, 19% were aggravated assaults, and less than 1% were homicides.



Verbal Abuse

Definition: A negative defining statement with intent to inflict harm on another person.

Examples:

- Bullying
- Profanity
- Name Calling
- Abusive Anger
- Undermining
- Judging
- Criticizing
- Blaming
- Blocking
- Accusing



Threatening Behavior

Definition: The intentional behavior that would cause a person fear of injury or harm.

Examples:

- Bullying
- Coercion
- Menacing
- Intimidation
- Demoralization
- Emotional Blackmail



Physical Assault

Definition: A physical act of creating apprehension or an imminent harmful or offensive contact with a person.

Battery:

A violent act done for the purpose of causing a harmful or offensive contact with another person.



Aggravated Assault:

Stronger form of assault usually involving a deadly weapon.

Statistic:

Physical assaults represent 71% of all incidents of workplace violence.



What triggers/motivates violence in the workplace?



- A Desire to Embarrass
- A Desire to Get Revenge
- To Show Power Over Another
- To Reduce Boredom
- To Harass
- A Desire to Become 'Famous'

Motivation for Violent Acts

Virginia Tech Shooting



April 16, 2007:

- A Senior at Virginia Tech shot and killed 32 people and wounded 17 others.
- The deadliest shooting incident by a single gunman in US history.

- Perpetrator suffered from anxiety and other mental health issues.
- Had a background of being bullied as a youth.
- FBI profiled him as a “Collector of Justice.”
- Desire to get revenge was the primary motivator.



Four Categories of Violence in the Workplace

1. Violence by Strangers (Criminal Intent)
2. Violence by Customers
3. Violence by Co-Workers
4. Violence by Personal Relations

Statistic:
66% of violent workplace incidents
were committed by someone known
to the victim.



Violence by Strangers

Definition: Any violence that is committed by an assailant who has no legitimate business relationship with the workplace or the worker.

Statistic:

Strangers committed the greatest proportion of nonfatal workplace violence against males (53%) and females (41%) between 2005 and 2009.

Robbery is the most common form of Violence by Strangers.

All workplaces have the possibility of Violence by Strangers.



Violence by Customers

Definition: Violence by an assailant who either receives services from or is under the custodial supervision of the affected workplace or the victim.

Examples:

- Current/Former Customers
- Passengers
- Patients
- Students
- Inmates
- Criminal Suspects
- Prisoners

Violence by Co-Workers

Definition: Violence by an assailant who has some employment-related involvement with the workplace.

This includes former employees, managers and supervisors.

Revenge is frequently the motivation with Violence by Co-Workers situations.



Violence by Personal Relations

Definition: Any incident between two people that have a personal relationship outside of the workplace.



Examples:

- Spouses (Current and Former)
- Lovers
- Relatives
- Friends
- Acquaintances

Discussion

Have you, or someone you know ever been involved in an instance of workplace violence?

Can you identify the type of violence and the category?

Please share your experiences

Part II

What are the signs of Violence?



men



36%

were most likely
to fall victim to a
workplace homicide
committed by
a robber

women



39%

were most likely to fall
victim to a workplace
homicide committed
by a *relative or
domestic partner*

Critical Signs

Critical Signs are indicators for a potential threat

Two Types:

1. Personal or Action Signs
2. Physical Signs



A single Critical Sign does not necessarily indicate a potential threat. Many times this can be an indicator that a person is under a high amount of stress.



Critical Signs: Personal/Action Signs

Personal or Action Signs that can Indicate a Potential Threat:

- Loss of Significant Other
- Loner
- Collects/Talks about Weapons
- Talk of frustration/retaliation
- Has no Empathy
- Jealousy
- Describes Explicit Plan
- Documents/Blames Others
- Availability of Means (Weapons)
- Veiled or Direct Threats



Critical Signs: Physical Signs

Physical Signs that can Indicate a Potential Threat:

- Clenching Fists
- Cracking Knuckles
- Angry Face/Clenching Jaw
- Change of Appearance
- Change of Hygiene
- Flared Nostrils
- Long Stares
- Tapping Fingers
- Self Isolation



Four Stages of Assault/Threat:

1. Anxiety Stage
2. Defensive Stage
3. Physically Acting Out Stage
4. Tension Reduction Stage

Stage 1: Anxiety Stage

A person that is showing signs of high anxiety.

Most Important:

Do Not Ignore Them!

- Communication is your best tool to resolve the situation.
- Seek a supervisor or Human Resources for help with the person.



Stage 2: Defensive Stage

A person showing small signs of non-physical aggression.



- Communication is your best tool, but body language will play an important role.
- Approach the situation with the goal of helping the person with the problem (root of the issue).
- Requires a resolution to the problem to remove the possibility of a threat.



Stage 3: Physically Acting Out Stage

The point where a threat becomes a bigger issue involving physical contact.

- Evade the situation and get help.
- Contact a supervisor, security, or police if needed.
- In extreme situations don't hesitate to call 911.



Stage 4: Tension Reduction Stage

After an incident when the person is physically spent.

- Resolve the situation without re-escalation.
- Don't leave the person alone. This can lead to re-escalation.



Avoid:

- Statements that appear cold, hostile, condescending, etc...
- “I know how you feel” or “Calm Down”





Part III What can I do?

Methods to Resolve a Situation

Two Methods to Resolving a Situation:

1. Physical Solution

A Physical Resolution involves physically restraining the assailant. This technique should only be used in most extreme of circumstances. Rarely works (less than 10% of the time).

2. A Verbal Solution

With a Verbal Solution the goal is to voluntarily get the assailant to comply.

Actively hostile individuals can be calmed down which helps bring a resolution to the situation.

This technique works 90% of the time.



Methods to Resolve a Situation

Biggest Mistakes

1. We minimize the potential for violence.
2. We fail to report it.

Statistic:

It is estimated that the aggregate cost of workplace violence to U.S. employers to be more than \$36 billion as a result of expenses associated with lost business and productivity.



Methods to Resolve a Situation

Consider the Aggressive Person

- Many times the root of the problem for the aggressive person is not you, but directed at the institution.

- Treat the aggressive person like a "Customer."

- Define their problem. Keep in mind that their problem is a real issue to them.

- Meet their needs.



Methods to Resolve a Situation

Assessing the Threat



- *What is the nature of the threat?*
- *Who is involved?*
- *What is happening?*
- *How is this affecting our environment?*
- *Who is involved in the situation?*
- *What are the circumstances surrounding the threat?*
- *Who are the witnesses to the threat?*



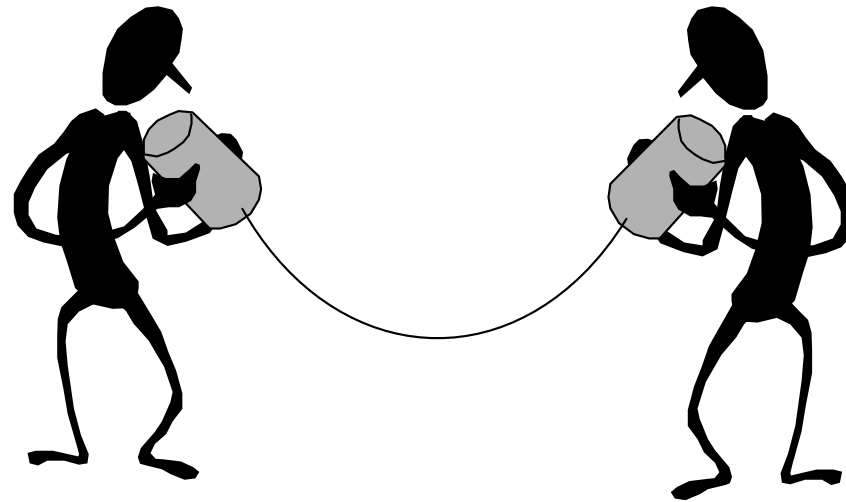
Methods to Resolve a Situation

The CAP Tools

These three tools can serve you the best in preventing Workplace Violence (CAP Tools):

- Communication
- Attitude
- Prevention

Communication



Communication is your most valuable tool!

Communication Tactics

Talking

1. Keep them talking.
2. Use open-ended questions.
 - *Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How*
3. Clarify implied statements.
4. Do not use the word “but.”
 - *Anything before the word “but” will be ignored.*



For example: “I know that the supervisor is bothering you, but he is just following orders.”
Instead, use: “I know that the supervisor is bothering you. Keep in mind that he is following the company policy.”



Communication Tactics

Talking

5. Use positive statements.

Rule of Five:

- This includes statements that use Five Words or Less.

For example: “We can make this work” or
“I can tell you are upset.”



Communication Tactics

Talking: Areas to Avoid

A “trigger” can lead an aggressor to re-escalate a situation.

Areas to Avoid:

- “I know how you feel”
- “Calm Down”
- Any cold, hostile, apathetic, condescending, or going by the rules statements.
- Losing your cool
- Making false promises
- Criticism, ridicule, or insults



Communication Tactics

Listening

1. Hear, but don't judge.
2. Allow them to vent.
3. Paraphrase

Example: "What I hear you saying is ____, and I understand, and what I need you to do is ____."

**Notice the use of the word "and" and no use of the word "but."*



Communication Tactics

Non-Verbal Tactics

1. Attitude: Control the way you sound and look by controlling your attitude.
2. Smile: Smiling is voluntary compliance and agreement.
3. Voice: Inflections in your voice have 5 times more impact than words alone.

Communication Tactics

Non-Verbal Areas to Avoid

- Toe-To-Toe
- Crossing Your Arms
- Having Your Hands Behind You
- Unsolicited Personal Contact
- Pointing

Do:

- Have your hands at your sides
- Stand at a 45° angle to the aggressor



Communication Tactics

Differences

Consider and give weight to the differences of the aggressor.

- Cultural
- Ethnical
- Gender
- Religious
- Personality
- Sexual
- Age



Attitude

- It can happen to me!
- Zero Tolerance
- The use of Profanity is considered harassment.
- Encourage yourself and others to act.
 - *Report and Assess Threatening Behavior*

The majority of victims of workplace homicide from 2005 through 2009 were male and middle-aged.

The most common reasons for reporting workplace violence to the police were to stop or prevent an incident from happening (31%), prevent future incidents (21%), and stop attacker (20%)



Prevention

Attitude

- Zero Tolerance
- No “It can’t happen to me” attitude
- Minimizing the Potential for Violence
- Don’t Ignore the Warning Signs
- Trust Your Instincts
- Keep an Eye out for Critical Signs
- Failure to report a potential Issue

Prevention

Environment

1. Foster a healthy environment for all
2. Encourage yourself and others to act



Reporting a Critical Sign is the first step to getting someone help!

Part IV Case Studies



Case Study #1

An employee is working in the warehouse of company Y-Part Manufacturing. The service garage door is open and it is a beautiful day out. The employee hears some banging noises coming from the storage yard outside. As he walks outside he sees two unknown men quickly throwing some of the company products stored on a palette into the back of their truck.

The employee yells, getting the attention of other workers in the warehouse, and runs to confront the two men. One of the men pulls out a knife. The employee tries to restrain the man with the knife and is stabbed. The two men jump in the pick up truck and flee.

Case Study #1 - Questions

1. What category of violence is this?

Violence by Strangers

2. What criminal act is in progress?

Robbery and Aggravated Assault

3. What error did the employee make in this situation?

Trying to Physically Resolve the situation by himself.

4. What would be a better approach as the employee in this situation?

Avoid a physical situation. Send someone for help from security and get a detailed description of the two robbers and their license plate.



Case Study #2

Frank, who is a former vendor for the company Y-Part Manufacturing, walks through a back door that is open for ventilation in the plant. As you approach Frank, who you are familiar with, you recognize that he is visibly upset. He is angry about something and keeps banging his clenched fist on the machine.

Frank demands to speak with Sheila, his former girlfriend, who transferred to the corporate office last week. He keeps shouting and refuses to accept that Sheila is not there.

Case Study #2 - Questions

1. What category of violence is this?

Violence by Customer or Personal Relations

2. What Critical Signs were being displayed by Frank?

Angry, Clinched Fists

3. From the Critical Signs being exhibited by Frank, what Stage of Assault was he demonstrating?

Defensive Stage

4. What would be the best approach as the employee in this situation?

Signal another employee to go get help and use Communication Techniques to try and calm Frank. Talk with him to search for the root of his problem until help arrives.



Case Study #3

Joe is the supervisor for a small manufacturing company operated by the company Y-Parts Manufacturing. Joe got word from upper management that the productivity needs to drastically increase to keep the plant running and everyone employed.

Feeling the pressure from above, Joe starts to discipline workers that he thinks are slacking on the job and not producing enough. When Joe meets with Evan he starts to yell at Evan. He threatens to discipline him for his performance and insults him and his work. Evan becomes angry and starts shouting back at Joe. The situation escalates with Evan pushing Joe and the two men get into a fist fight.

Case Study #3 - Questions

1. What category of violence is this?

Violence by Co-Workers

2. What Critical Signs lead to the escalation of the situation?

Joe Threatens Evan and Insults Him

3. Was this an issue of Verbal Abuse/Threat, Physical Abuse, or Threatening Behavior??

Instances of all three are present in this situation.

4. If you were an employee observing this issue, what would be the best approach to help resolve this situation before it turned to a physical altercation?

Signal another employee to get help and step in during the shouting to prevent any further escalation of the situation.



This brings an end to this training.
Does anyone have any last questions
or comments to wrap up?

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Citations

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Images:

- All images were obtained through Google and Bing image searches. All images were labeled "Free for Reuse."

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