Workplace Violence

An Overview

MCCCD Department of Public Safety
Workplace Violence Defined

• Any act where a person is abused, intimidated, threatened, or assaulted in the workplace.
• Not just assaults or shootings!
• Threats.
• Harassment.
• Stalking.
• Damage.
Four Types of Workplace Violence

The person committing the crime:

1. Has no relationship to the workplace (random).
2. Is the recipient of a service, or other outside connection (vendor, etc.)
3. Has an employment relationship (current or past).
4. Has a personal relationship with an employee (current relationship or past relationship).

Your workplace assessment and programs should address incidents of all four types.
The Riskiest Jobs

- Police officers.
- Security guards and prison guards.
- Taxi drivers.
- Bartenders.
- Mental health professionals.
- Gas station attendants.
- Convenience store and liquor store clerks.
- Teachers.
No Workplace Connection

• On July 20, 2012, James Holmes committing a mass shooting inside an Aurora, Colorado movie theater.
• He killed 12 people and injured 70 others.
In January, 2015, Chicago cab driver Chinedu Madu was shot and killed in a robbery. The suspect, with five drug convictions on his record, got away with less than $100.

In April, 2015, 35 year-old Seth Martin killed Phoenix Circle K clerk John Still, age 46. Martin was arrested after video led to leads that identified him.
Service Recipients

• 55 year-old Stephen Pasceri shot 44 year-old heart surgeon Michael Davidson, in a Boston hospital, before committing suicide.

• Davidson had been the surgeon for Pasceri’s mother, who later died.
Employment Related

- His act resulted in the term “going postal.”
Employment Related

- On December 7, 1987, Pacific Southwest Airlines former employee David Burke killed the pilots of a commuter jet, crashing the plane, and killing all 43 people on board.
In 2011, 44 year-old Scott Dekraai killed his ex-wife and seven other victims inside a Seal Beach beauty salon.
Impact of Workplace Violence

• Some 2 million people each year report some type of workplace violence.
• Employers lose an estimated 1.8 million work days each year due to workplace violence.
• The average cost to American businesses each year lost to workplace violence is estimated at $36 billion.
• It’s estimated that 25 percent of workplace violence goes unreported.
Why Be Concerned About Workplace Violence?

- It avoids exposure to liability and litigation.
- A good program contributes to the safety of employees.
- Employers have a duty to provide a safe work environment.
- It makes sound business sense.
Legal Issues Involved In Workplace Violence Lawsuits

• Lawsuits often involve:
  • Negligent hiring.
  • Negligent retention.
  • Negligent supervision.
  • Inadequate security.
OSHA Duties

• Each employer:
  • Shall furnish to each employee a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.
  • While not specified, this includes prevention and control of workplace violence.
Elements of a Workplace Violence Prevention Program

- Management commitment and employee involvement.
- Strong policy.
- Worksite analysis.
- Hazard prevention and control.
- Training and education.
- Record keeping and evaluation.
- Employee assistance programs.
Management-Employee Commitment

- Essential for an effective program.
- Create a clear policy prohibiting any form of violence.
- Encourage reporting.
- Prohibit reprisals to those who report acts.
- Maintain zero tolerance for violent acts.
- Investigate and take action on all reports.
- Maintain a culture of respect.
Multidisciplinary Threat Assessment Teams

• Threat assessment vs. behavioral intervention.
• A good team requires a number of business disciplines:
  • Police (or security/public safety).
  • Management.
  • Legal support.
  • Human resources.
  • Student affairs (schools).
  • Psychological services.
The following characteristics are the most common in those who commit workplace violence

- History of violent behavior. This includes any involvement with the criminal justice system
- Middle-aged white male
- Upset with only having low-level tasks to do
- Bitter and unhappy
- No job security
- Problems growing up, including bad grades in school, abusive parents, etc.
- Substance abuse, including taking heavy medication
General Suspect Factors

- Mental illness.
- Substance abuse.
- Bullying behavior.
- History of violence or bad employment behavior (proper screening can prevent this).
- Lack of respect for rules or authority.
- Life changes (job, school, relationships).
- Threats or fascination with violence or weapons.
The Pathway to Violence

- The “grievance”.
- Violent ideation.
- Research and planning the attack.
- Pre-attack preparation.
- Probing and breaches.
- Attack.
The Grievance

• Sense of Injustice.
• Sense of Mission.
• Sense of Loss.
• Sense of Destiny.
• Desire for Revenge.
• Desire for Recognition or Fame.
Violent Ideation

- Discusses with others.
- Identification with other assassins.
- Violence is the only alternative.
- Fascination with weapons.
- Fixation on anniversaries.
Research and Planning

• Stalking.
• Target research.
• Suspicious inquiries.
• Information gathering.
• Surveillance.
• Boundary probing.
• Testing security.
Pre-Attack Preparation

- Acquiring weapons.
- Assembling equipment.
- Arranging transportation.
- Observing significant dates.
- Conducting final-act behaviors.
- Costume.
Probing and Breaches

- Circumventing security.
- Lethal approach.
- Surreptitious approach.
- Boundary probes.
- Surveillance.
Threat Evaluation

• Remember JACA.
• Evaluate whether the person feels:
  • Justified in their use of violence.
  • Alternatives to their use of violence.
  • Consequences are not feared.
  • Ability to carry out the threat.
The Threat Assessment Process

• Identify the person(s) of interest.
• Gather information (investigate).
• Assess and evaluate the information.
• Manage the situation:
  • The subject.
  • The circumstances (stress factors).
  • The victim(s).
  • The target(s).
Threat Enablers

• Violence Preoccupation.
• Intent and threats.
• Others are concerned.
• Recent or impending losses or significant stress.
• Entitlement and negative attitudes.
• Noncompliant or menacing behaviors.
Threat Enablers (con’t)

- Capacity and actions preparatory for violence.
- Extreme moods.
- Real provocations or destabilizers.
- Irrational thinking.
- Substance abuse.
- Known history of violence, criminality, or conflict.
Threat Inhibitors (Stabilizers)

- Positive personal attachments.
- Remorse is genuine for transgressions.
- Obeys limits set by employer or authorities.
- Takes sanctioned actions to address “wrongs” and setbacks.
- Enjoys life and freedom.
- Coping skills are positive.
- Treatment compliance.
Behavioral Intervention

• Don’t tolerate bad behavior - it escalates.
• Use a multi-disciplinary team to manage behavior:
  • The police (if acts approach criminal violations).
  • Management.
  • Human Resources.
  • Behavioral health professionals.
  • Legal advisors.
Behavioral Intervention

- Intervention can include many actions:
  - Discipline.
  - Referral for behavioral health counseling.
  - Suspension.
  - Termination.
  - Arrest.
What To Do During An Act Of Violence

• Run
• Hide
• Fight
• Discussion...
Safe Terminations

• Prepare and plan:
  • Will the employee react emotionally (history?)
  • Who will conduct the termination meeting?
  • Who should witness the meeting?
  • What will be done with the employee’s personal possessions?
  • When will the employee be told of the meeting? (Planned versus surprise).
  • How will remaining staff be told?
During The Termination Meeting

• Make a written script - keep it brief.
• Don’t use your office - choose space with escape options and privacy.
• Consider a panic button and CCTV.
• Ensure security is available if necessary.
• Be calm and respectful.
• Answer questions promptly.
After The Termination Meeting

- Collect keys and employer property.
- Allow the employee to retrieve personal property.
- Severance pay.
- Continue medical benefits and other assistance programs.
- Separation agreement.
- Be respectful in front of other employees.
Physical Security

- Evaluate potential threats to the workplace.
- Evaluate the need for open access versus ability to control access to a workplace (this depends on the business).
- As appropriate, employee access control.
- Enforce ID policies for access.
- Evaluate security for property border, fences and gates, parking lots, entrance doors, and interior doors.
- Evaluate need for safe rooms.
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

- CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design.
- Natural environment, barriers, and lighting are all factors to assess to design a safe workplace.
- Establish barriers to prevent access by cars.
- Secure entrances.
- Minimize locations criminals can hide.
- Perimeter barriers can be man-made (fences or walls) or natural (hedges, canals, etc.)
Discussion and Questions

Questions?
Active Shooter/Emergency Response Guides

Scottsdale Community College
Active Shooter Response Guide
SAC Public Safety: 480-633-4775

CRITICAL ACTIONS TO TAKE

FIGURE OUT
Those who decide their options are most effective.
1. STAY CALM — your behavior & actions will influence others.
2. Figure out what’s going on, or happening.
3. Trust your instincts.
4. What is the threat?
5. Know the threat.
6. Know the number of people involved.
7. What is the threat?

GET OUT
If you have to leave, use the stairway.
1. Call 911 or SAC Public Safety.
2. Give the dispatcher the following information:
   a. Your name.
   b. Your location.
   c. Number of people involved.
   d. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   e. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   f. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   g. Other relevant information — victims, etc.
   h. Other relevant information — victims, etc.

HIDE OUT
If it is safer to shelter-in-place because the threat is too close:
1. And just as importantly to move the threat out.
2. Look outside to control the situation.
3. Call 911 or SAC Public Safety.
4. Give the dispatcher the following information:
   a. Your name.
   b. Your location.
   c. Number of people involved.
   d. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   e. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   f. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   g. Other relevant information — victims, etc.
   h. Other relevant information — victims, etc.

TAKE OUT
If faced with an imminent attack, take steps to protect and distance yourself.
1. Remain calm.
2. Go to a safe place and call 911 or SAC Public Safety.
3. Provide the following information:
   a. Your name.
   b. Your location.
   c. Number of people involved.
   d. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   e. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   f. Number of injuries sustained by you or others.
   g. Other relevant information — victims, etc.
   h. Other relevant information — victims, etc.

Silence will shame...
New Active Shooter Response

• Run
• Hide
• Fight
Active Shooter / Emergency Response Guides