



# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE:

## AWARENESS PREVENTION RESPONSE

Presented by: The Guam Police Department

# OBJECTIVE

- Educate employees in order to minimize the likelihood of violence in the workplace.
- Define key terms related to workplace violence.
- Identify potential risk factors and recognize the warning signs of violent behavior.
- Responding to incidents of workplace violence effectively.

# KEY TERMS

- **Workplace** : any location either permanent or temporary where an employee performs any work-related **Workplace** duty.
- **Workplace Violence** : any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting.
- **Domestic Violence in the Workplace:** Violence that occurs in the workplace between intimate partners

# WORKPLACE INCLUDES

- The buildings and the surrounding areas, including parking lots, field locations, Clients' or customers' homes, and traveling to and from work assignments.



# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INCLUDES

- Beatings
- Stabbings
- Suicides
- Shootings
- Rapes
- Near-suicides
- Psychological traumas
- Threats or obscene phone calls
- Intimidation
- Harassment of any nature
- Being followed, sworn or shouted at.



# THE FOUR TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

1. Violence committed by customers or clients.
2. Violence associated with criminal acts.
3. Violence among co-workers or managers.
4. Domestic violence that carries over into the workplace.



# TYPES OF ABUSE

- Physical abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse

# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE ON GUAM

Jan Rubenstein

SDA Clinic Shooting







# THREE PRIMARY TRIGGERS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- The person feels the circumstances are unfair
- The person feels the circumstances are out of his or her control
- The person feels the circumstances are personal

# SIGNS AND AWARENESS

- Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism.
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene.
- Depression/ withdrawal.
- Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy and procedure.
- Repeated violations of company policy.
- Increased severe mood swings.
- Noticeably unstable and emotional responses.
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation.
- Behavior which is reflective of paranoia ( “everyone is against me”).
- Escalation of domestic problems into the workplace; severe financial problems.
- Empathy with individuals committing violence.

# PRIMARY TRIGGERS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

- Divorce proceedings
- Infidelity accusations and jealousy (jealousy and infidelity accusations—was the trigger that most often initiated the violence)
- Chronic drug and alcohol abuse
- Untreated mental health issues – depression, preoccupation with suicide

# DIRECT SIGNS AND AWARENESS

- have injuries like bruises, black eyes or broken bones, often explained by “falls,” “accidents” or “being clumsy”
- wear clothing that is not appropriate for the season, such as long sleeves and turtlenecks in summer, or wear heavy makeup (may be covering injuries)
- have an increased number of phone calls, e-mails or faxes; have a strong reaction to these calls or a reluctance to talk with the caller
- experience disruptive visits to the workplace by a present or former partner
- refer to bad moods, anger, temper, alcohol or drug abuse by partner
- receive insensitive or insulting messages
- minimize or deny harassment or injuries
- receive flowers and gifts after what appears to be an argument between the couple.



# INDIRECT SIGNS AND AWARENESS

- be absent or late for work more often (could indicate disruptive incidents at home)
- show signs of anxiety, fear, emotional distress or depression
- show a change in job performance, such as poor concentration, more errors, slowness or inconsistent work quality
- make special requests, such as leaving early
- be withdrawn, unusually quiet or keep away from others
- have irrational fears about losing the job (job loss could be even more disastrous for someone in an abusive situation)
- show no outward signs, but use enormous energy to maintain the appearance that all is well.

# PREVENTION

- Outline a comprehensive plan for maintaining security in the workplace.
- State in clear terms your organization's view toward workplace violence and harassment, and its commitment to prevention.
- Precisely state the consequences of making threats or committing violent acts and enforce a strict anti-violence policy.
- Develop a threat assessment team to address concerns.
- Develop a confidential reporting process to ensure prompt and accurate reporting of concerns or instances of violence.
- Lead by example; treat all employees with courtesy and respect.
- Conduct thorough background checks on all new employees.
- Encourage all employees to accept and be understanding of individual differences.
- Identify organizational risk factors that could lead to violence

# PREVENTION CON'T

**Develop proactive policies** that outline how issues of family violence will be addressed in the workplace. These policies could include:

- flexible leave for employees trying to relocate or dealing with court issues
- flexible shifts (where possible) for victims of abuse ·
- appropriate referrals to help within your organization as well as community resources
- increased worksite security, such as relocating offices for at-risk employees or ensuring they are accompanied to and from their vehicles.
- Legal Protection Orders

# RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

## DURING

- Levels of Violence
- Call 911 immediately and try to remain calm.
- Run, hide, or fight!
- Always follow commands from Law Enforcement officials at the scene.

## AFTER

- Request medical assistance as needed.
- Review previous incidents and reevaluate threat assessment plan.
- Develop a Trauma Plan and provide a group debriefing.
- Support the prosecution of the offender(s).

# WHAT CAN THESE EMPLOYERS DO TO HELP PROTECT EMPLOYEES?

- Provide safety education for employees so they know what conduct is not acceptable, what to do if they witness or are subjected to workplace violence, and how to protect themselves
- Secure the workplace. Where appropriate to the business, install video surveillance, extra lighting, and alarm systems and minimize access by outsiders through identification badges, electronic keys, and guards
- Provide drop safes to limit the amount of cash on hand. Keep a minimal amount of cash in registers during evenings and late night hours.
- Equip staff with cellular phones and hand-held alarms or noise devices, and require them to prepare a daily work plan and keep a contact person informed of their location throughout the day. Keep employer provided vehicles properly maintained.
- Develop policies and procedures as it relates to workplace violence
- Make information, such as posters, pamphlets and brochures, available to all employees



# RESOURCES

- The Society for Human Resources Management: Understanding Workplace Violence
- The U.S. Department of Labor Workplace Violence Program
- Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OHSA)

# QUESTIONS???

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