



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 Rubenstien

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???

