Workplace violence

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Class rules

Please interrupt me!!!

- If I’m going too fast, tell me to slow down.
- If I’m going too slow, tell me to hurry up.
- If you don’t understand, please ask questions.
- If you want to interject, please do so.

I like interaction with the audience
Facts

- Homicide is the 4th leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the US.

- In 2008 there were 517 workplace homicides. (Down 18% from 2007)
  - 1994 – 1080 workplace homicides

- Less than half of all threats are reported annually.

(Source – Bureau of Labor Statistics)
**Workplace violence defined**

• Workplace violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting.

• A workplace may be any location either permanent or temporary where an employee performs any work-related duty.
Types of workplace violence

- **Internal**
  - Insider/employee of the organization causes harm/violence.

- **External**
  - Outsider to the organization causes harm/violence.

- **Domestic**
  - Occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate or harm the other.
Types of physical violence

- Homicide
- Hitting
- Shoving
- Pushing
- Kicking
- Sexual assaults

- Usually directed to an employee, supervisor or customer
Verbal violence

- Threats
- Harassment
- Abuse
- Intimidation

Often signals more serious violence to come
Possible internal causes of workplace violence

- Unstable economy
- Job layoffs
- Labor – Management disputes
- Job stress
- Pressure for increased productivity
- Psychological instability
- Lack of individual responsibility
- Marital or family problems
- Alcohol/drug problems
Other signs usually accompany a threat.
A potentially violent person:

- Is unusually argumentative
- Has a problem with authority figures
- Frequently blames others for his or her problems
- Displays marked changes in work patterns like tardiness or absenteeism
- Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- History of violence
- Resistance and over-reaction to changes in procedures
- Repeated violations of company policies
- Increase of unsolicited comments about firearms and other dangerous weapons
- Escalation of domestic problems
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation
Keep in mind

- A person may not exhibit all of these signs
- Do not make hasty judgments
- Use common sense and avoid stereotyping
Risk factors

- Isolated work areas
  - (Remote locations: on campus or in a building)

- Solo work
  - (Night class instruction or working late hrs.)

- No means of communication
Risk factors

- Financial responsibilities
  - (Making deposits)

- Nature of service or responsibility
  - (Student’s Grades)

- Unrestricted movement in the workplace
Safety tips

- **DO:**
  - Be aware of your surroundings
  - Know where your exits are
  - Implement a "buddy system"
  - Leave with keys in hand
  - Consider workplace layouts

- **DO:**
  - Maintain the ability to communicate
  - Report all incidents
  - Inform management of restraining orders
  - Secure your workplace daily
What to look for

- Obsessive behavior
- Increased absenteeism
- Chemical dependency
- Verbal threats or threatening actions
- History of discipline problems
- Depression & isolation
- Defensiveness
- Emotional outbursts
- Interests in weapons
- Self-destructive behavior
- Affiliation with gangs
Things to remember

- Do NOT get physical
- Do NOT over-react
- Do NOT take the challenge
- Be a good listener
- Know what is really being said
- Give them space
- Watch what you say non-verbally
- Speak of consequences NOT threats
Possible Violence If Any of These Conditions Exist:

- Verbal abuse
- Excessive profanity
- Consistently argumentative
- Failure to cooperate
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Instigating harmful rumors
- Expressing suicidal thoughts
- Frequent displays of anger, such as clenched fist, tight jaw, red face (also known as posturing)
- Negative attitude toward policy/procedures
Strong Threat

- Expressing a desire or intent to harm others
- Open disobedience of policy/procedure
- Vandalizing/stealing property for revenge
- Expressing feelings of persecution by others
- Sending sexual/violent notes
- Making suicidal threats or gestures
- Consistently acting out anger such as shouting, throwing or pushing objects, slamming doors, punching walls
Call 911 Effectively

- Stay calm.
- Know the location of the emergency and the number you are calling from.
Call 911 Effectively

- Wait for the call-taker to ask questions, then answer clearly and calmly.

- If you are in danger of assault, the dispatcher or call-taker will still need you to answer quietly, mostly "yes" and "no" questions.
Call 911 Effectively

- Let the call-taker guide the conversation.
  - He or she is typing the information into a computer and may seem to be taking forever. There's a good chance, however, that emergency services are already being sent while you are still on the line.

- Follow all directions.
  - In some cases, the call-taker will give you directions. Listen carefully, follow each step exactly, and ask for clarification if you don't understand.
Call 911 Effectively

- Keep your eyes open.
  - You may be asked to describe victims, suspects, vehicles, or other parts of the scene.

- Do not hang up the call until directed to do so by the call-taker.
By being proactive, working together and raising awareness to the stresses that can come into one's life, we can prevent violence from occurring and ensure a safe and pleasant work environment.
Deputy Les Wiemers

If I can be of any help please let me know.

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Thank you