

# Workplace Violence: Prevention and Intervention

Presented by

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Employers & Lawyers. Working Together

# Today's Agenda

- Identify the 4 TYPES of workplace violence
- Discuss the 'Behavioral Markers' that suggest an increased risk
- Suggested employer actions

# Disclaimers

- Language
- Humor
- Questions and Comments

# Is Workplace Violence a Real Issue?

- Annually there are over 1.2 incidents of workplace violence
- This number accounts only for those reported incidents
- 43% of those threatened and 24% of those attacked don't report the incident

# Is Workplace Violence a Real Issue?

Workplace homicide has been described as the fastest growing form of homicide in the country

# Is Workplace Violence a Real Issue?

The number one leading cause of death on the job for women is homicide

The number two leading cause of death on the job for men is homicide

# Is Workplace Violence a Real Issue?

- One in six violent crimes occurs at work
  - 7% of all rapes
  - 8% of all robberies
  - 16% of all assaults

Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Center For Disease Control

# Is Workplace Violence a Real Issue?

A workplace homicide typically costs an employer between \$250,000 and \$1 million

*Sources: Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Study on Workplace Violence, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Labor, National Safe Workplace Institute, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)*

# Is Workplace Violence a Real Issue?

The national tab for all workplace violence is between \$175 - \$200 billion a year

*Sources: Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Study on Workplace Violence, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Labor, National Safe Workplace Institute, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)*

# Cost to Employers

- Security
- Building repair
- Business interruptions
- Loss of productivity
- Lost time
- Employee turnover
- Increased workers' comp claims
- Increased medical claims
- Litigation expenses

# Understanding Violence

- Often, we fail to identify inappropriate behavior in the earliest stages...
- Sometimes, our definition of workplace violence is too narrow...many believe that workplace violence is synonymous with workplace shooting
- Because of this, we don't see the connections between certain behaviors and violence

# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE DEFINED

- Workplace Violence is . . .

. . . any act of aggression, or threat of an act, that threatens the safety, security, or well-being of an individual who is at work or on duty.

# TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- Type 1 – Criminal Intent
  - Aggressor has no legitimate relationship to the workplace;
  - largest number of workplace incidents
- Type 2 – Customer/ Client/ Patient
  - Aggressor is recipient/object of service provided (patients, clients, customers, passengers, etc.)

# TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- Type 3 – Co-worker/Employee
  - Aggressor has employment-related involvement with the workplace
- Type 4 – Personal
  - Aggressor does not work within business but is known to/has personal relationship with an employee

# BEHAVIORAL MARKERS

- There are certain behaviors which are known to have a high correlation to incidents of violence
- Often, one or more of these ‘Behavioral Markers’ are often present prior to incidents of violence

# BEHAVIORAL MARKERS

- Fascination with weapons
- Substance abuse
- Performance problems
- Refusal to accept responsibility for actions (blaming others)

# BEHAVIORAL MARKERS

- Fascination with prior acts of violence
- Social isolation/poor peer relationships
- Poor personal hygiene
- History of bullying others

# Be Sure Not To Underestimate The Significance Of Bullying

- Often, the relationship between Bullying and Violence is misunderstood...

# Definition

- Workplace Bullying
  - Repeated infliction of intentional, malicious, and abusive conduct which interferes with a person's ability to do his/her work and is substantial enough to cause physical and/or psychological harm and a reasonable person would find hostile or offensive

# Some Commonly Reported Behaviors

- Glared at
- Excluded from work-related social gatherings
- Others storm out of area when you arrive
- Others consistently late for your meetings
- Given the “silent treatment”
- Treated in a rude or disrespectful manner
- Others refuse your request for assistance
- Others fail to deny false rumors about you
- Given little or no feedback
- Others delay action on matters important to you
- Yelled or shouted at in a hostile manner

# More Commonly Reported Behaviors

- Negative comments about intelligence
- Consistently failed to return calls or emails
- Contributions ignored by others
- Someone interferes with your work activities
- Subjected to mean pranks
- Been lied to
- Others fail to give you important information
- Denied a raise without valid reason
- Subjected to derogatory name calling
- Target of rumors or gossip
- Show little empathy when you were having a tough time

# Workplace Bullying Statistics

- 43% of bullying from co-workers
  - 36% Supervisors
  - 12% Customers
  - 5% Subordinates
  - 4% Others
- 25% of bullying targets have protected status\*
  - (\* other than gender)

# Workplace Bullying Statistics

- 80% of those reporting bullying are women
- This is a problem...this might suggest that men are taking matters into their own hands

# What Should Employers Do?

- 5 'Must Haves' for employers:

# What Should Employers Do?

- Workplace Violence Policy
  - Must be zero tolerance for violence
  - Must explain the company's position on bullying
  - Must explain that discipline (up to/including termination) can be the result

# What Should Employers Do?

- Crisis Management Team (CMT)
  - Too often issues go unaddressed as employees are not certain where to direct their concerns
  - Should be a multi-discipline team with advanced knowledge about workplace violence/bullying, in-house resources, available assistance (EAP, local law enforcement, etc.)
  - Should include HR, Legal, Security, amongst others

# What Should Employers Do?

## ■ Supervisor Training

- Eyes and ears of the organization
- First level supervisors are in the best position to notice changes/escalation in employee behavior as they have the most face time with employees
- Must know the ‘Behavioral Markers’ and when to get CMT involved

# What Should Employers Do?

- Require Customer/Client/Vendor Compliance with the same policy as employees
  - Although it has not been our focus today, a significant portion of workplace violence occurs at the hands of those with no employment relationship with your organization
  - Having vendors sign off on your policy is a good way to gain their compliance

# What Should Employers Do?

- An 'Active Violence' Plan
- Having a plan is key
- Make sure your employees know what you want them to/not to do

# Tools – Emergency Response Plan

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- Your emergency response plan is a guide for your employees during an emergency
- Often, incidents of violence are made worse (increased number of injuries, for example) by an ill-advised response



# Tools – Emergency Response Plan

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- It is important that we respond appropriately during an emergency
- It is also essential that we encourage employees to respond appropriately during an emergency



# Tools – Emergency Response Plan

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- The primary responsibility during a violent emergency is to **Remove Oneself From Harm's Way (RUN)**
  - As you are exiting the troubled area, warn as many people as you can
  - Do not linger and explain details
  - Do not argue with those who choose not to follow your advice
  - Call 911 only when it is safe to do so

# Tools – Emergency Response Plan

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- Do not run into the vicinity of danger (gun fire for example)
- If your only exit route would take you into the line of fire, you should **Shelter In Place (HIDE)**
  - Lock doors
  - Silence phones
  - Do not emerge until law enforcement (or other authority clears you to do so)

# Tools – Emergency Response Plan

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- In the event that it is impossible to run or hide, do all that you can to make sure you are not subjected to physical harm
- As a last resort, **Act Aggressively Toward the Aggressor (FIGHT)**



