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Incident Management Team

Theimt.org

**248-217-1677**

**Assessment, Management and Prevention**

**of Workplace Violence**

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**I. DEFINITION OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

1. Any act which is physically assaultive.

2. Behaviors indicating potential for violence (throwing objects, shaking fists, destroying property, etc.).

3. Any substantial threat to harm another individual or endanger safety of employees.

4. Any substantial threat to destroy property.

5. Disturbed behavior that might signal emotional distress.

**II. POSSIBLE BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF THE POTENTIALLY AFFRESSIVE INDIVIDUAL**

The first question many people ask when starting to develop a workplace violence prevention program is, ***How can we identify potentially violent individuals****?* It is understandable that people want to know this - and that “early warning signs” and “profiles” of potentially violent employees are in much of the literature on the subject of workplace violence. It would save time and solve problems if managers could figure out ahead of time what behaviors and personality traits are predictive of future violent actions.

No one can predict human behavior and there is no specific “profile” of a potentially dangerous individual. However, indicators of increased risk of violent behavior are available. These indicators have been identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Profiling and Behavioral Assessment Unit in its analysis of past incidents of workplace violence.

These are some of the indicators:

- Direct or veiled threats of harm;

- Intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior;

- Numerous conflicts with supervisors and other employees;

- Bringing a weapon to the workplace, brandishing a weapon in the workplace, making inappropriate references to guns, or fascination with weapons;

- Statements showing fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides;

- Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide;

- Drug/alcohol abuse; and

- Extreme changes in behavior

Each of these behaviors is a clear sign that something is wrong. **None should be ignored.** By identifying the problem and dealing with it appropriately, managers may be able to prevent violence from happening. Agency planning groups should ensure that the appropriate staff member (or an incident response team) is prepared to assist supervisors and other employees in dealing with such situations. Some behaviors require immediate police or security involvement, others constitute actionable misconduct and require disciplinary action, and others indicate an immediate need for an assessment referral. (From U.S. Government, OPM Workplace Violence Task Force Agency Planners Manual, 1999)

A. Basic Criteria and Variables

1. Male/female

2. Ages 20-40

3. Socioeconomic status

4. Marital/Relationship status

5. Moral/ethical convictions

B. Moderately Significant Criteria

6. Recent behavior changes

7. Alienation, "loner"

8. Excessively bitter

9. Mental health/Substance abuse

10. Irrationality/grandiosity

11. Active delinquency as child

12. Externalizes/projects responsibility for own behavior

13. Raised in abusive/dysfunctional family

14. Sexual fetishes/fantasies

C. Significant Criteria

15. Grudge over loss or threat of loss

16. Recent loss of significant other

17. Emotional mood swings

18. Fascination with violence/pornography

19. Self- destructive behavior/mutilation

20. Sexually/physically abused as child

21. Severe intoxication

22. Expresses "fear of losing control"

23. Rages

24. Abusive to opposite sex

25. Symbolic dehumanization of others

26. Harassment of others

27. Lack of empathy coupled with intense anger

28. History of violence

- recent acts

- incarcerated for violence

- against animals

- breaking/smashing objects

- made threats

29. Collects weapons/military training

30. Pathological jealousy

31. Stalking

32. Making veiled or conditional threats

33. Expresses explicit plan/intent

34. Fascination with/displays weapons

35. Reckless disregard for safety of others

36. Intense sense of "injustice" or "entitlement"

37. Describes method

38. Availability of means

39. Sees violence as "only" solution

40. Paranoid obsession/documents, makes "lists", surveillance of others

41. Expresses futility of living

42. Precipitating "self-perceived unjust" act

43. Loss of:

- job

- promotion

- arbitration

- status e.g. discipline (Addis and Associates)

D. Obtaining History of Violence

1. Date of onset

2. Frequency and target(s) of violent behavior

3. Recurring patterns and escalation

4. Severity of injuries to others

5. Symptoms associated with violent episodes

6. Previous diagnostic testing (to obtain records)

7. History of impulsive behavior

- suicide attempts, destructiveness

- driving, criminal offenses

-fire-setting, acting out

8. History of familial violence as a child

9. History of head injury, birth complications, developmental problems childhood diseases

10. Past and current medical problems

E. Substance Abuse Related to Violence

F. Disorders Causing Possible Violence

G. "Uncomfortable” Behaviors requiring further assessment

1. "Veiled" or indirect threats

2. "Conditional" threats, direst threats

3. Excessive and intimidating references to other violent events or perpetrators

4. Special, excessive interest in police, military, survivalist activities

5. Inappropriate communications to co-workers

- "I’m losing it"

6. Intimidating or frightening comments about weapons

- not just gun collector

7. "Documenting" of other people who are "causes" of one's problems

- keeps "notes"

- makes "lists"

- conducts "surveillance", "interviews"

8. Paranoia

- plots, conspiracies

- "stealing" of loved one

- externalizes, blames others

9. Repeatedly accusing others for causing one's problems

10. Depression, suicidal thinking

11. Non-specific anger, resentment, irritability

12. Litigious, filing of numerous grievances and lawsuits

13. "Loner"

14. Narcissism, Extreme inflexibility

15. Specific threats of harm to identifiable targets

16. Threats through social media, email, voicemail, drawings, letters

*It is important to remember that correlation is not causation.*

Note: These training materials are general in nature and have been designed and developed to facilitate discussion and to promote learning. The print materials are presented with the understanding that they are not to be construed as the direct rendering of, or as a substitute for, legal, security or protective, or personal safety case management advice. All incidents have to be assessed on their individual merits and circumstances of facts.

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**The Incident Management Team is available to help your organization:**

* Conduct On-Site Active Shooter Drills and Exercises
* Comprehensively review your existing Health and Safety Workplace Violence Prevention Program
* Design and develop comprehensive workplace violence prevention programs
* Train your Threat Assessment Team
* Plan Post-Incident Crisis Response protocols and actions to reduce the impact of trauma if violent incidents or workplace emergencies occur at your facility
* Train your employees, supervisors and Workplace Threat Assessment Team on how manage and respond to incidents of violence.
* Conduct security audits, surveys, review access control/ visitor management / emergency alert notification systems