

Workplace Violence: Prevention Strategies

A sound prevention plan is the most important and, in the long run, the least costly portion of any agency's workplace violence program. Your company should have the following programs in place to help prevent workplace violence:

- **Pre-employment Screening:** A company should determine, with the assistance of legal consultation, the pre-employment screening techniques it will utilize, such as interview questions, background checks, reference calls and drug testing. The company should decide which is appropriate for the each position and ensure that it complies with federal laws & regulations.
- **Security:** Maintaining a safe workplace is part of any solid prevention program. There are a variety of ways to help ensure safety, such as employee photo identification badges, guard services and individual coded keycards for property access. Different measures may be appropriate for different locations and work settings.
- **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):** This program is most effective in resolving disputes when a conflict has been identified early and one of the following techniques is used: ombudspersons, facilitation, mediation, interest-based problem solving, and peer review.
- **Threat Assessment Team:** This interdisciplinary team will work with management to assess the potential for workplace violence and, as appropriate, develop and execute a plan to address it.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** A company should ensure that all employees know how to access CARE's WorkLife Solutions and supervisors should know how and when to both formally and informally refer employees to the program. All supervisors should complete part one and two of the on-line supervisor training on the CARE's WorkLife Solutions website (onsite supervisory trainings are available upon your request).

Awareness and Training

One of the most critical components of any agency's prevention program is training for all employees and supervisors that may be involved in responding to an incident of workplace violence. By participating in training sessions, employees become more confident in dealing with issues of conflict and security and will be more likely to recognize, respond to or confront potentially violent situations.

All employees should know how to recognize and report incidents of violent, intimidating, threatening, and disruptive behavior. All employees should have phone numbers for quick reference during a crisis or an emergency. Workplace violence prevention training should include:

- Programs operating within the company that can assist employees in resolving conflicts (e.g., CARE's WorkLife Solutions, alternative dispute resolution, and mediation)
- The company's workplace violence policy
- Encouragement to report incidents and the procedures to do so
- Ways of preventing or defusing volatile situations or aggressive behavior
- Ways to deal with hostile and angry people
- Techniques and skills to assertively resolve conflicts
- Stress management and conflict resolution training
- Personal security measures and security procedures



The same approaches that create a healthy, productive workplace can also help prevent potentially violent situations. It is important that supervisors are on the same page with setting clear standards, addressing employee problems promptly and using the probationary period, performance counseling, discipline, and other management tools conscientiously. These interventions can keep difficult situations from turning into major problems. Supervisors do not need to be experts in dealing with violent behavior but they do need to be committed and willing to seek advice and assistance when needed.

**We Can Help - Family Problems - Child Care - Personal/Job Stress - Alcohol/Drug Abuse - Marital Tension
Elder Care - Emotional Problems - Legal and Financial Referral - And Much More!**

CARE's WorkLife Solutions - Services are FREE and confidential to employees, their spouses and dependents. Call Toll Free 866.888.1555 or www.caresworklivesolutions.com

Identifying Potentially Violent Situations

If you ever have concerns about a situation which may turn violent, alert your supervisor or Human Resources immediately and follow the specific reporting procedures provided by your agency. It is better to err on the side of safety than to risk having a situation escalate.

The following are warning indicators of potential workplace violence:

- Intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior
- Numerous conflicts with customers, co-workers or supervisors
- Bringing an unnecessary weapon to the workplace or being unusually fascinated about guns
- Making idle threats about using a weapon to harm self or someone
- Statements showing fascination with incidents of workplace violence or the use of violence to resolve a problem
- Statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides
- Statements indicating desperation over work, family, friends, health, financial and other personal problems
- Direct or veiled threats of harm
- Substance misuse and abuse
- Extreme changes in normal behaviors

Once you have noticed a subordinate, co-worker, or customer showing any signs of these indicators, you should:

- notify your Human Resource Department immediately of your observations
- notify the employees supervisor immediately if she or he is not your direct report
- evaluate the situation by taking into consideration what may be causing the employees problem

It is very important to respond appropriately and immediately while not overreacting. Never ignore a situation as it will most likely only escalate. Sometimes it may seem difficult to determine whether the situation requires and intervention but it is always better to be cautious. Managers should discuss the situation with expert resource staff to get help in determining how best to handle the situation.



**CARE's WorkLife Solutions Presents:
Communities in Crisis: Preventing,
Responding and Recovering from
Economic Trauma**

**September 30, 2010
8:00 am - 4:00 pm**

**Assumption Cultural Center
St. Clair Shores**

**Tickets: \$79
(\$59 for groups of 3 or more
or for Early Bird Registration)**

Contact Kim LaBara at 866.888.1555 ext. 218
or klabara@careswls.com for more info

CARE's WorkLife Solutions is hosting its Bi-Annual Spotlight on Safety Conference on September 30, 2010. Business and school leaders will come away with specific action steps to help "humanize" the workplace again and take away the fear. In this current economy, employees are at a "breaking point" with high stress levels in adjusting to the workplace that is now being referred to as: "The New Normal".

Presenters will demonstrate how to put the pieces back together and move forward with the added frustrations of today's reality, such as doing more with less. Ideas on how to really make a difference in helping ourselves and our employees maneuver through our economic crisis, while maintaining safety and minimizing risk, will be offered. The speaker line-up includes:

Sheriff Mark Hackel, Macomb County Sheriff
Dr. Suzanne Klein, Superintendent, Grosse Pointe Schools
Barbara Rossman, President and CEO, Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals
Dr. Bill Steele, Founder and Senior VP of The Institute for Trauma and Loss
Dr. Judy Jacobs, Nationally Recognized Lecturer & Consultant
Nancy Buyle, Safe Schools/Student Assistance Specialist, MISD
Alan Jacob, Director, Service Delivery for Greyhound Technologies
Mary Jo LeFevre, Account Executive, AGIS
Brenda Szalka, Director, CARE's WorkLife Solutions
Paddy Laske, Trainer & Consultant, CARE's WorkLife Solutions
And more!

Meals and Continuing Education Units are included.

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