

## VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation. Featured are:

**INTRODUCTION:** A brief description of the program and the subject that it addresses.

**PROGRAM OUTLINE:** Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

**PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION:** These sections will help you set up the training environment, help you relate the program to cite specific incidents, and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:** Questions may be copied and given to participants to document how well they understood the information that was presented. Answers to the review questions are provided separately.

**ATTENDANCE RECORD:** Document the date of your presentation as well as identify the program participants. The attendance record may be copied as needed.

### INTRODUCTION

Workplace deaths due to violence rank second only to vehicular accidents in causes of on-the-job fatalities. One out of every five occupational deaths results from workplace violence. Those who work alone, at night, handle money or deal directly with the public are more likely to be attacked on the job. Three-quarters of all job site homicides are related to robbery, while other employees are simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

To avoid the consequences of these violent acts, the employee must be able to recognize the signs of violence and how to guard against it. This program will show the viewer these skills as well as the importance of following a crisis plan for responding to all types of aggression in the workplace.

### PROGRAM OUTLINE

#### WARNING SIGNS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- Recognize that workplace violence is a problem and don't ignore it.
- Feelings of vulnerability to violence can distract one's attention from working safely and effectively.
- Contributing factors of workplace violence include
  - 1) external factors such as availability of weapons
  - 2) widespread acceptance that violence is a part of life
  - 3) personal factors such as background and relationships
  - 4) stress caused by downsizing, poor workplace communication and poor supervision.
- Warning signs make a violent attack less surprising and are often present a long time before a violent act occurs.
- Signs include a history of intimidating or violent behavior, a troubled domestic relationship, misuse of drugs or alcohol and financial or legal problems.

#### RESPONSE TO VIOLENT ACTIONS

- Report any acts or harassment or intimidation by co-workers immediately to a supervisor.
- Never retaliate, because that will only make the situation worse.
- Try to resolve the problem before it gets out of control.

- Changes in behavior such as angry outburst or complete withdrawal should be reported to management, even if they aren't accompanied by outright threats.
- Immediately report anyone who has brought a weapon to work.
- Develop conflict communication skills to help you defuse threatening situations.
- Learn company security procedures and the crisis plan.
- Report harassment or stalking from outside the workplace.

#### **USE COMMON SENSE TO PROTECT PERSONAL SECURITY**

- Park in a well-lit section of the parking lot that is close to the building when having to work late at night.
- When working in an area that can be secured, lock it after regular business hours.
- Inform security people that you will be working late and what time you expect to leave.
- Have a security guard or someone you know accompany you to your car after working late into the night.
- While walking to your car at night, have keys ready to unlock the door and check inside, around and under the car for anyone hiding. Drive away as soon as possible.
- Back off from your vehicle if you see anyone loitering around it; if approached near your car, challenge the intruder or scream.
- Don't let anyone who says they need help into your car; call 911 once away from the area.
- Use the same practices when away from work, such as when you are at the mall.

#### **ENHANCE WORKPLACE HARMONY**

- Be sensitive to the customs and culture of others and remember that not everyone thinks and acts alike.
- Use prescribed company channels for handling complaints; do not use verbal or physical abuse.

#### **SUMMARY**

- Recognize that violence in the workplace is a real problem.
- Learn to spot the early warning signs.
- Report any violent incidents or unusual behavior to your supervisor.
- Never retaliate against intimidating or violent behavior.
- Develop conflict communication skills to defuse threatening situations.
- Learn your organization's crisis plan.

## **PREPARE FOR THE SAFETY MEETING OR TRAINING SESSION**

Review each section of this Leader's Guide as well as the videotape. Here are a few suggestions for using the program:

Make everyone aware of the importance the company places on security and safety and how each person must learn and follow the company's crisis plan.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Copy the review questions included in this Leader's Guide and ask each participant to complete them.

Copy the attendance record as needed and have each participant sign the form. Maintain the attendance record and each participant's test paper as written documentation of the training performed.

### **Here are some suggestions for preparing your videotape equipment and the room or area you use:**

Check the room or area for quietness, adequate ventilation and temperature, lighting and unobstructed access.

Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the videotape program.

Place or secure extension cords to prevent them from becoming a tripping hazard.

## **CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION**

Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

Explain that the primary purpose of the program is to alert employees about the warning signs of violence in the workplace and what actions to take to prevent violence from occurring.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline. Lead discussions that focus on how acts of violence that have occurred in the workplace may have been prevented and how future violent situations can be avoided.

After watching the videotape program, the viewer will be able to explain the following:

- The warning signs of workplace violence;
- How to respond to violent actions;
- Why common sense is important in protecting personal security.

**VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE  
REVIEW QUESTIONS**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*The following review questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.*

1. The leading cause of workplace fatalities is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. violent acts
  - b. vehicular accidents
  - c. robbery
  
2. A leading factor of increased workplace violence is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. availability of weapons
  - b. substance abuse
  - c. spousal abuse
  
3. Warning signs of potential violence are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. usually only obvious just before a violent act occurs
  - b. very seldom evident and often surprises the victim
  - c. often present a long time before an accident occurs
  
4. If you become a victim of harassment or intimidation, you should immediately \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. retaliate against the perpetrator
  - b. exercise conflict communication skills
  - c. report the incident to your supervisor
  
5. The best way to defuse threatening situations is to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. resolve the problem by force if necessary
  - b. back off and leave the employee stewing
  - c. apply conflict communication skills
  
6. If you are a victim of stalking, you should \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. obtain a court injunction against the stalker
  - b. report the incident to your supervisor
  - c. call 911 each time you are confronted with the problem.
  
7. The best way to be prepared for the threat of violence is to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. learn the company's crisis plan
  - b. always carry a can of mace
  - c. learn karate or tae kwon doe
  
8. When working late at night, you should \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. bring a meal so you don't have to leave the area
  - b. be as quiet as possible to avoid detection by intruders
  - c. lock your area after everyone leaves and inform security

***ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUESTIONS***

1. b

2. a

3. c

4. c

5. c

6. b

7. a

8. c