

## **I COULD HAVE SAVED A LIFE THAT DAY**

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 site-specific incidents, and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Discussion questions may be copied and given to participants.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This video tells the story of an employee who failed to take action when witnessing the warning signs of impending workplace violence. His decision to "look the other way" not only ended in the senseless death of a co-worker, but also resulted in a fellow employee spending the rest of his life behind bars. Viewers will also see how the behavior of other key characters contributed to the escalation of events that led to the shooting.

Much like its predecessors "I Chose To Look The Other Way" and "It's Up To Me," this powerful video is based on a safety poem by Don Merrell. Brought to life through the blending of poetry and video, the program's dramatic storyline teaches compelling lessons about responding to signs of potential violence and makes clear that violent tragedies in the workplace can be prevented.

### **PROGRAM OUTLINE**

#### ***THE POEM***

#### **"I COULD HAVE SAVED A LIFE THAT DAY"**

**I could have saved a life that day,  
If I hadn't looked the other way.  
I saw the risk and should have called,  
But I didn't want to get involved.**

**I'd known the man for quite a while,  
And never saw him laugh or smile.  
He was a quiet, moody type,  
Who always seemed to have a gripe.**

**I knew he was upset with work,  
He considered his boss to be a jerk.  
And often he was heard complain,  
That there wasn't a manager with half a brain.**

**And then one day he started in,  
About his boss being after him.  
And I heard him say - If he had the nerve,  
Someday they'd get what they deserve.**

**Some months before, they'd explained to us all,  
Behaviors to watch for, and the people to call.  
But I told myself, that it wasn't that bad,  
He was just spouting off, because he was mad.**

**His boss wasn't there, when he came in that day,  
But she was there, and in his way.  
With his anger and rage, I don't know why,  
But he thought that somebody had to die.**

**Now my life will never be the same,  
For I'll always know that I'm to blame.  
That she could be alive today,  
If I hadn't looked the other way.**

**If you see someone who's so distraught,  
That you question if they are safe or not.  
Talk to someone, place a call,  
Get help for them, and protect us all.**

**If you hesitate and look away,  
Then hope you never have to say,  
I could have saved a life that day,  
But I chose to look the other way.**

## **SYNOPSIS OF STORY**

### ***The Incident***

The program opens with one plant employee being led away in handcuffs and the sheet-covered body of another being carried out on a gurney. News accounts and company reports indicate a shooting has occurred at the plant. Weeks later, Brian, a co-worker of those involved in the incident, recalled the events of that day:

Stephanie, a company secretary, had just confirmed evening dinner plans and set her desk clock for 4:45 as a reminder to meet her family for dinner. She then entered the office of her supervisor Barry to enter some data into his computer. While there, she receive a message that John, a co-worker, had called in sick. When she completed her work, she began to leave Barry's office when John met her outside his door. "Hey John, I thought you called in sick," she said. He explained that he had called in sick, but really needed to speak with Barry. When Stephanie told him Barry wasn't in the office, John said "Look, don't go fighting his battles for him. I just want to talk to him!"

After Stephanie reiterated that Barry wasn't in, John angrily responded, "Oh, I see—you're in on it too, aren't you?" When Stephanie tried to calm him down, he accused her of covering for Barry and then pulled out a pistol. Stephanie was struck by the gunfire and died at the scene.

After recalling the incident, Brian said, "I never thought something like that could ever happen—not here, not with me, not with anyone I know."

**Brian:**

**I could have saved a life that day,  
If I hadn't looked the other way.  
I saw the risk and should have called,  
But I didn't want to get involved.**

**I'd known the man for quite a while,  
And never saw him laugh or smile.  
He was a quiet, moody type,  
Who always seemed to have a gripe.**

### ***One Week Before The Incident***

John had completed some paperwork that Barry had requested and gave it to Stephanie. While looking the documents over, she noticed that John hadn't signed some of them and asked him to do so. "Why do I always have to jump through these hoops? Do you and Barry get a kick out of telling me what to do all the time?"

After Stephanie told him that everyone had to sign them, John said "Well it doesn't seem that way. You and Barry take my overtime away. I've got three weeks worth of work on my desk and the people who don't want to work get more hours. That ain't right!" Stephanie sympathized with Barry, but told him she had nothing to do with the scheduling. "I know, you've always got someone else to blame. It's never your fault," John replied sarcastically.

When John left the office, Brian approached Stephanie and asked her about the incident. Stephanie told Brian that John seemed to be angry all the time and that he needed help. Brian said he didn't think they "should stir up a lot of commotion." Stephanie agreed, but said "I would want people to help me if I needed it." She agreed with Brian that they not get involved, hoping that it was just a phase.

**Brian:**

**I knew he was upset with work,  
He considered his boss to be a jerk.  
And often he was heard complain,  
That there wasn't a manager with half a brain.**

### ***Two Weeks Before The Incident***

John was in the company break room, apparently talking on the phone to his wife about selling some of the couple's belongings. Just as Brian walked into the room, John angrily shouted "Look! Just let me handle this. This is all I can do for now, unless they start giving more overtime."

After John posted the list of things he was selling on the company message board, Brian approached him to inquire about the situation. Brian asked him why he was selling all of his tools and if he was moving somewhere. "I wish!" John exclaimed. "I have to get rid of it all because that jerk Barry is taking all my overtime away from me. Can you believe that? I have three week's worth of work on my desk and they take my overtime away from me," he said. John added that Barry didn't like the way he did things and got a kick out of giving him a hard time. This conversation ends with John making a direct threat against Barry and Stephanie.

**Brian:**

**And then one day he started in,  
About his boss being after him.  
And I heard him say - If he had the nerve,  
Someday they'd get what they deserve.**

### ***One Month Before The Incident***

Barry approached John to explain some new work procedures that would require some paperwork. "You know we've had to make some adjustments to the procedures on starting up the production line," John said. Obviously overwhelmed, John asked how long these procedures would add to the start up.

Barry told John that they would have to wait to find out those kind of specifics, but that he needed Barry to look over the procedures, sign and date them and then turn them into Stephanie or him. "Look, Barry, you've cut my hours a great deal and now you're adding procedures that will take even longer to get production running. When do you plan on letting me get anything done?" John asked.

Barry explained that he understood John's concerns, but these changes had come from the corporate office. "Can you just sign the papers and give them back?" he asked. Sarcastically, John replied, "Yeah, whatever you want." After Barry thanked him, John looked at the papers for a moment and then slammed his pen down in anger.

### *Two Months Before The Incident*

Barry and Stephanie had attended a training session about workplace violence. During the session, they were told who to call if a co-worker was exhibiting signs of potential workplace violence.

**Brian:**

**Some months before, they'd explained to us all,  
Behaviors to watch for, and the people to call.  
But I told myself, that it wasn't that bad,  
He was just spouting off, because he was mad.**

### *The Night Before The Incident*

Barry and Stephanie were preparing to leave the office for the day. Barry told Stephanie that he would be late the next day because he would be picking up a cake for a co-worker's retirement party. "What do you want me to do in the morning 'til you get here?" she asked. He told her to enter the new paperwork on his computer. They then went home for the day.

### *Brian Interview*

**Brian:**

**His boss wasn't there, when he came in that day,  
But she was there, and in his way.  
With his anger and rage, I don't know why,  
But he thought that somebody had to die.**

**Now my life will never be the same,  
For I'll always know that I'm to blame.  
That she could be alive today,  
If I hadn't looked the other way.**

"The saddest thing about the whole situation is that we lost two employees, and I could have saved both of them but I didn't," said Brian.

**Brian:**

**If you see someone who's so distraught,  
That you question if they are safe or not.  
Talk to someone, place a call,  
Get help for them, and protect us all.**

**If you hesitate and look away,  
Then hope you never have to say,  
I could have saved a life that day,  
But I chose to look the other way.**

### *Conclusion*

Brian reads the entire poem to conclude the program.

## **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 health and safety and how each person must be an active member of the safety team.

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

Make an attendance record as needed and have each participant sign the form. Maintain the attendance record 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 show viewers the warning signs of potential workplace violence and to make clear that tragedies such as the one portrayed in the video can be prevented.

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

Lead discussions about your facility's policies for responding to warning signs of potential violence. Use some or all of the discussion questions at the end of this Leader's Guide to get feedback from your employees about the program and what they would do in situations similar to those presented in the video.

**I COULD HAVE SAVED A LIFE THAT DAY**  
***DISCUSSION QUESTIONS***

1. What lessons can be learned from the incident portrayed in the video?
2. What could Brian have done to prevent the shooting? At what point do you think he should have responded to the situation?
3. Brian saw the warning signs, but dismissed them even when Stephanie expressed concerns. Have you ever dismissed a co-worker's concerns because you didn't want to get involved in a situation?
4. Stephanie also saw warning signs, but allowed Brian to convince her not to report the situation. What would you do differently if you were in a similar situation? Why?
5. Do you think Barry, as John's superior, contributed to the escalation of events in his dealings with John? If so, what should he have done differently?
6. How would you respond if you saw a co-worker exhibiting behavior that could possibly lead to violence?
7. Sometimes we don't take our training seriously because we don't think these types of events could happen at our jobsites. Is there any reason to think that this type of incident couldn't happen where you work?