Three Rivers Community College Workplace Violence Prevention

Discover the Marcum Difference

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MARCUM GROUP MEMBER

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WVPI Standards Committee

ASIS and SHRM constituency reflects an interdisciplinary objective. Committee members represent the following sectors:

- ➤ Security
- ➤ Human Resources
- ➤ Psychology/Psychiatry
- ➤ Law
- ➤ Occupational Safety and Health
- ➤ Law Enforcement
- ➤ Academia
- ➤ Social Services (domestic violence)

Standard Scope and Purpose

Given the prevalence of "workplace violence," to provide private and public-sector organizations with "best practices" they can adopt to:

➤ More effectively prevent threatening misconduct and violence affecting the workplace; and

➤ Better respond to and resolve incidents involving threatening misconduct and violence.

Some Key Objectives

- Adopting an appropriate definition of "workplace violence".

- Providing the right level of detail.

- Achieving consensus regarding "best practices" for prevention and intervention.

The Workplace Violence Spectrum

FIGURE 1. THE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE SPECTRUM

Behaviors of Concern	Threatening Behavior	Physical Injury	Death

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Elements of the Standard

1. Workplace Violence – An Important Concern for Employers

- ➤ Definition of "workplace violence"
- ➤ Workplace violence typology
- ➤ Statistics (prevalence and impact)
- ➤ Awareness and action (attention garnered)
- ➤ Legal obligations for employers

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Elements of the Standard

2. The Need for an Interdisciplinary Approach: Numerous "Stakeholders"

- ➢ Security personnel
- ➢ Human resources
- ➢ Legal counsel
- ➢ Executive management/business owners
- ➢ Occupational safety and health personnel
- ➢ Union leaders
- ➢ EAP
- ➢ PR/corporate communications
- ➢ Risk management professionals

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Elements of the Standard

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3. Preparedness and Prevention

- ➢ Needs assessment/organizational gap analysis
- ➢ Behavioral "warning signs" and opportunities for violence prevention
- ➢ Elements of a formal Workplace Violence
- ➢ Prevention Program
- ➢ Strategies for successful Program implementation

8

Elements of the Standard

4. Threat Response and Incident Management

> ➢ Incident notification
> ➢ Initial data gathering and assessment
> ➢ Intervention strategies for designated threat
> ➢ Management Team
> ➢ Violence risk assessment
> ➢ Incident resolution
> ➢ Responding to a violent incident

Key Stakeholders

➢ Security

➢ Human Resources

➢ Legal

- Employee Rights to Privacy
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Due process
- Discrimination
- Rights under a collective bargaining agreement

Other Important Stakeholders

➢ Faculty and Managers

➢ Occupational Safety and Health Personnel

➢ Union Leaders

➢ Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

➢ Public Relations/Corporate Communications

➢ Risk Management and Crisis Management Professionals

Workplace Violence Defined

"...any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting. It includes, but is not limited to: beatings, stabbings, suicides, shootings, rapes, near suicides, psychological traumas, such as threats, obscene phone calls, an intimidating presence, and harassment of any nature, such as being followed, sworn at, or shouted at."

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Violence

The term "violence" refers to a range of inappropriate behaviors that include but are not limited to the following:

- Intimidating or threatening behavior

- Physical or Verbal Abuse

- Vandalism

- Arson

- Sabotage

- Carrying or possessing weapons of any kind on property owned/leased or otherwise controlled or occupied by the state, unless properly authorized

- Using such weapons

- Any other act(s) which a reasonable person would consider as inappropriate and/or posing a danger/violence in the workplace

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Prohibited Conduct

- **P**hysical assault, threat to assault, stalking.

- Possessing a weapon or threatening with a weapon.

- Aggressive or hostile behavior

- Harassing or intimidating statements, phone calls, etc.

- Racial or cultural epithets.

Executive Order No. 16

The State of Connecticut has adopted a statewide <u>zero</u> <u>tolerance</u> policy for workplace violence.

Except as required as a condition of employment:

• No employee shall bring into any state worksite any weapon or dangerous instrument.

• No employee shall use , attempt to use, or threaten to use any such weapon or dangerous instrument in a state worksite.

• No employee shall cause or threaten to cause death or physical injury to any individual in a state worksite.

Executive Order No. 16

Any employee who feels subjected to or witnesses violent, threatening, harassing, or intimidating behavior in the workplace must immediately report the incident or statement to their supervisor, manager, or the Human Resources office.

Any employee who believes there is a serious threat to their safety or the safety of others that requires immediate attention must notify proper law enforcement authorities and his or her manager or supervisor.

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What is a weapon?

"**Weapon**" means any firearm, including a BB gun, whether loaded or unloaded, any knife (excluding a small pen or pocket knife), including a switchblade or other knife having an automatic spring release device, a stiletto, any police baton or nightstick, any martial arts weapon, or electronic defense weapon.

What is a Dangerous Instrument?

"**Dangerous Instrument**" *means any instrument, article, or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury.*

4 Types of Perpetrators

1. Strangers

2. Students/Visitors

3. Employees

4. Personal relations

Implications of Key Findings for the Use of Threat Assessment Protocols

- Incidents of targeted violence at school rarely are sudden, impulsive acts.

- Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack.

- Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.

- There is no accurate or useful "profile" of students who engage in targeted school violence.

- Most attackers engaged in some behavior, prior to the incident, that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.

Implications of Key Findings for the Use of Threat Assessment Protocols

- Most attackers had difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Many had considered or attempted suicide.

- Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.

- Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.

- In many cases, other students were involved in the attack in some capacity.

- Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most attacks were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention and most were brief in duration.

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Early Warning Signs of Workplace Violence

The Challenge

Differentiating between

the "difficult" individual

the individual who poses an immediate threat

3 Types of Threats

1. Direct Threat

2. Conditional Threat

3. Veiled or Hidden Threat

- **_Keep in mind that some persons:_**
- *threaten and actually carry threats out*
- *threaten but do not carry threats out*
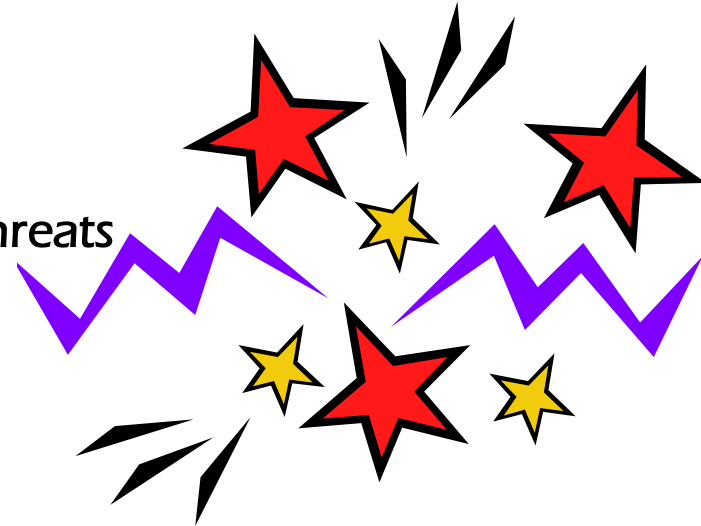- *commit violence but never make a threat*

Recognizing Threatening Behavior

Verbal and Non-Verbal Threats

Intimidating Behavior

Recognizing Threatening Behavior

A threat is a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on another person. A threat can be communicated either verbally or by gesture, or a combination of the two. If sufficiently egregious, a threat can constitute a criminal act (See, e.g., Section 53a-62 of the Connecticut General Statutes

Recognizing Threatening Behavior

A threatening situation is a situation where one person, through intimidating words or gestures has induced fear and apprehension of physical or other harm in another person but there is no immediate danger of such harm being inflicted

3 Goals of a Threat Assessment
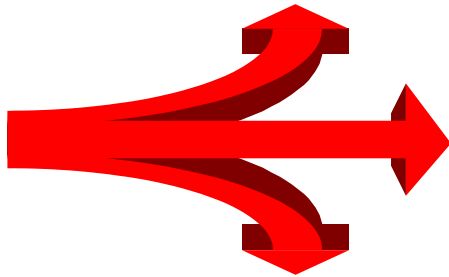
1. Identify potential perpetrator

2. Evaluate risks posed by a given individual

3. Manage both the individual and the risk posed to employees

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3 C's of Investigative Management

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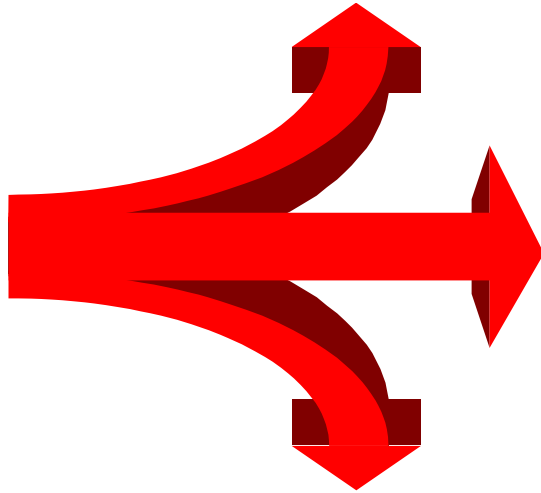
- Competence

- Corroboration

- Common Sense

Levels of H.A.R.M.

Harassment

Aggression

Rage

Mayhem

Harassment

Irritating behaviors that may or may not cause harm or discomfort for another person, but that are generally inappropriate in the workplace.

- Being condescending to a customer
- Banging on an office door
- Storming around the office
- Shaking a fist at another employee

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Harassment

- Staring at another employee
- Continually interrupting co-workers
- Lying about another co-worker
- Moving office supplies, so no one can find them
- Playing "practical jokes"

Aggression

Hostile behaviors that certainly cause harm or discomfort for another person or the company, and that are absolutely inappropriate in the workplace.

- Shouting at a customer
- Slamming a door in someone's face
- Slamming a door or banging file cabinets and phones

Aggression

- Yelling and poking at another employee

- Staring angrily at another employee

- Incessantly interrupting a targeted co-worker

- Spreading rumors about a co-worker

- Damaging someone's personal belongings

Rage

Intense behaviors that often cause fear in other persons, and that may result in physical and/or emotional harm to people or damage to property.

- Pushing and shoving a student

- Throwing books, files, or phones across the office

- Shoving an employee

Rage

- Going nose-to-nose in a threatening manner

- Sabotaging a co-worker's presentation

- Actively destroying a co-worker's reputation

- Breaking minor equipment

- Leaving "hate" statements on someone's desk

Mayhem

Violent destruction of people or property.

• Choking/slapping/knocking down a student

• Using a door/equipment to injure people

• Completely ransacking an office or laboratory/etc.

Mayhem

- Knocking down and pummeling
an employee

- Landing a co-worker in the hospital because of physical harm

Levels of H.A.R.M.

Harassment

Aggression

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Mayhem

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7 Steps to Disaster

1. An individual experiences trauma, creating extreme tension or anxiety

    One major event (layoff or termination; actual or perceived)

    Cumulative minor events

2. Perception that problems are unsolvable

3. All responsibility is projected onto the situation

Source: "Breaking Point: The Workplace Violence Epidemic and What To Do About It" by Joseph A. Kinney

7 Steps to Disaster

4. Frame of reference becomes increasingly egocentric

5. Self-preservation and self-protection become the sole objectives

6. Violent act is now perceived as the only way out

7. Violent act is attempted or committed

Source: "Breaking Point: The Workplace Violence Epidemic and What To Do About It" by Joseph A. Kinney

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Group Exercise

Reporting

Employees who feel subjected to any kind of inappropriate behaviors listed in the previous section must immediately report the incident to their supervisor.

Employees may also contact the HR office directly. Supervisors and managers who receive such reports shall seek advise from the HR Director or designee regarding investigating the incident and initiating appropriate action.

Emergencies

Minor Emergency: Any incident, potential or actual, which will not seriously affect the overall functional capacity of the College.

Major Emergency: Any incident, potential or actual, which affects an entire building or buildings, and which will disrupt the overall operations of the College. Outside emergency services will probably be required, as well as major efforts from campus support services. Major policy considerations and decisions will usually be required from the College Administration during times of crisis.

Emergencies

Public Health Emergency: *An occurrence or imminent threat of a communicable disease, except sexually transmitted disease, or contamination caused or believed to be caused by bioterrorism, an epidemic or pandemic disease, a natural disaster, a chemical attack or accidental release, or a nuclear attack or accident that poses a substantial risk of a significant number of human fatalities or incidents of permanent or long-term disability.*

Building Emergency: A condition during which a specific building and its occupants are *subjected to, or potentially subjected to, special precautions/actions necessary to maintain order and to safeguard College personnel and property.*

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Emergency Procedure

INITIAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The initial point of contact for reporting College emergencies during the normal operating hours is the Security Desk. Emergencies should be reported to the Security Desk by calling the Emergency Hotline, extension 5555 from interior phones, (860) 885-2322 from outside landlines or cell phones or from the exterior Blue Emergency Phones located throughout the campus.

The Norwich Police Department and the Connecticut State Police, Troop E, maintain the Security Desk phone number for reporting incidents which could possibly impact the campus during normal hours of operation; and, the home and cell phone numbers of the Coordinator of Public Safety and Environmental Health for emergency reporting during off hours.

Emergency Procedures

EMERGENCY LEVEL

- Call 911 immediately.

- Notify the Security Desk on the Emergency Hotline, Extension 5555

- If unable to make contact with the Security Desk, contact one of the following TRCC officials in the most expeditious fashion to initiate Lock Down Procedures:

    - Michael J. Lopez, Dean of Administration;

    - Stephen Goetchius, Dean of Information Technology;

    - Robert Martineau, Coordinator of Public Safety and Environmental Health.

- Be thoroughly familiar with and follow the Lock Down Procedures as described in the next section of this plan.

- Take steps to ensure your own safety and the safety of others.

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Emergency Procedures (Cont.)

PRIMARY LEVEL

▪ Notify the Campus Security via the Emergency Hotline, Extension 5555 for their assistance and to make notification to the following college officials.

- Coordinator of Public safety and Environmental Health.

- Dean of Administration, Dean of Information Technology, Dean of Students, Academic Dean and the Director of Human Resources.

- After normal operating hours, the Evening Services Assistant.

Dealing with Angry Workers, Students or Family Members

WAYS TO DEAL WITH AN ANGRY PERSON

Stay calm yourself

Phrase questions so they encourage talking, try not to put the other person on the defensive

Address the substance, not the symptoms of anger

Allow the other person to "save face" when at all possible

Don't try to resolve the crisis at this anger stage

Give limited options

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50

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HOW TO INTERVENE OR DE-ESCALATE IMMEDIATELY

- Move angry person to a neutral environment

- Create a cooling-off period

- Stay out of the angry person's physical space

- Use non-threatening words, tone of voice and body language

- Respect that the angry person's perceptions are real to him/her

HOW TO FOLLOW-UP AFTER AN ANGRY SCENARIO HAS BEEN DIFFUSED

- Follow-up on the episode after a designated period of time

- Help the rest of the employees get back to work

- Don't avoid the angry person after the episode

- Reinforce appropriate behavior

- Eliminate the conflict conditions that may have caused the outburst

- Choose behaviors that reduce anger

- Be both tough and tender

- Practice tolerance

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HOW TO DEAL WITH THREATS

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- Take all threats seriously

- Have a plan in place in your organization/unit to develop a plan on how to address threats

- Train all employees to recognize danger signs and how to obtain assistance

When threatened:

- Always report it

- Provide for clear follow-up procedures which address the behavior with the employee

Defining Workplace Violence

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