Expecting the Unexpected: How to Prepare You and Your Staff for Violence in the Workplace

Tuesday, August 20, 2013
12 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.
McAuliffe CLE Center
4201 N. 24th Street, Phoenix

Violence in the Workplace Program Agenda

• 12:00- 12:05 pm Introduction – Defining the Scope of the Problem
  Susan Wissink, Fennemore Craig
  John F. Phelps, CEO/Executive Director, State Bar of Arizona

• 12:05-12:20 pm Identifying Volatile Individuals and Situations
  Amy D. Paul, Psy.D

• 12:20-12:45 pm Safety Evaluation of Your Workplace
  Emergency Preparedness against Violent Individuals
  Sgt. Phil Brailsford, City of Mesa Police Department
  Douglas C. Northup, Fennemore Craig

• 12:45 – 1:05 pm Tips for Reacting to a Dangerous Situation
  Sgt. Phil Brailsford, City of Mesa Police Department
  Douglas C. Northup, Fennemore Craig

• 1:05- 1:15 pm Reviewing Resources and Q and A
  Susan Wissink, Fennemore Craig

Identifying Volatile Individuals and Situations

• Risk factors
• No matter your employment position, there are common cues to recognize
• Behavioral cues
• Precipitating factors
Risk Factors (CDC-NIOSH)

• A number of factors may increase an individual’s risk for violence in the workplace
  – Contact with the public
  – Exchange of money
  – Delivery of passengers, goods, or services
  – Having a mobile workplace such as a taxi or police cruiser
  – Working with unstable or volatile persons in health care, social service, or criminal justice settings

Risk Factors (CDC-NIOSH) Continued...

  – Working alone or in small numbers
  – Working late at night or during early morning hours
  – Working in high crime areas
  – Guarding valuable property or possessions
  – Working in community-based settings

Behavioral Cues – What to Look For

  – Tearful, fearful, paranoia, guarded
  – Speaking to others that are not present
  – Daring eyes and looking elsewhere
  – Angry or irritable, teeth and hand clenching
  – The individual repeats questions, you may have to repeat questions/requests, they do not seem to process information/instructions
Precipitating Factors

- Mental Precipitants (Perception of the World)
  - Loss or perceived loss
  - Maintain self-esteem

- Emotional
  - Fear
  - Displaced anger
  - Despair/hopelessness (increases risk for suicide or suicide by cop)

Precipitating Factors Continued...

- Psychological/Physiological
  - Drug induced
  - Pain
  - Insomnia
  - Poor judgment/impulse control
  - Emotional Instability

Precipitating Factors Continued...

- Social Precipitants
  - Presence of others (“saving face”)
  - Attention seeking
  - Power struggles
  - Invaded space
Preventing Workplace Violence

- Your safety is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

Workplace Inspection

- Assign a person to be responsible for building security & liaison with local law enforcement.
- Many law enforcement agencies will conduct a security assessment free of charge.
- Consider hiring security, even if only for part-time work. Most law enforcement agencies permit the hiring of “off-duty” police officers.

Workplace Inspection Continued

- If there is a potentially dangerous or confrontational situation, ensure you use a “buddy system.”
- Trim trees and foliage to permit an unobstructed view of the approach to the workplace.
- Consider security measures for people who work late at night.
Workplace Inspection Continued

- All visitors should be escorted to offices for appointments.
- Consider a badging system for employees and visitors.
- Keep employees informed of potential violent situations (past client behavior, restraining orders, etc.).

Training

- Have a plan for dealing with workplace violence & ensure all employees are familiar with it. At a minimum the plan must include:
  1. Escape routes.
  2. Law enforcement notification.

Training Continued

- Above all, ensure that the person who greets people (security, secretary, receptionist) has situational awareness.

- They need to know when to call police. They need to be aware of potential situations (i.e. argumentative, threatening client is coming in that day).
Facility Design

- Know how to get out. Odds are you won’t be able to escape via the front door.
- Ensure exit doors can only be opened from the inside to prevent unauthorized entry.
- If possible, separate public areas from employee-only work areas.

Facility Design Continued

- Grant access to work areas only through a reception area.
- Reception and work areas should be designed to prevent unauthorized entry.

Facility Design Continued

- Door locks
- Secured entry (buzzers)
- Panic buttons
- Alarm system
- Metal detectors
- Phones with outside lines programmed to call 911
Workplace Parking

• Ensure there is adequate lighting.
• Parking reserved for employees only.
• Consider security escorts to walk employees to their car.
• Keeping parking lot area free of bushes & other hiding places.

Situational Awareness

• Where do I sit in depositions, meetings, etc.?
• Read body language.
• Don’t push a tense situation.

Don’t Bring it on Yourself

• How do my actions affect others?
• Adversarial system ≠ rude and abusive.
• Everyone should be treated with professionalism and respect.
Reacting to Active Shooter Situations

Definitions

• **Active Shooter**
  - Suspect(s) activity is causing the immediate death or serious injury of multiple victims. The situation is not contained and there is substantial risk of ongoing danger to other victims.

Active Shooter Incidents

• Occur where we:
  - Shop: 2007 a gunman killed 5 and injured multiple others at a Utah mall.
Active Shooter Incidents

• Public locations: 2011 U.S. Representative Gabrielle Gifford shot while meeting with constituents at a market. 6 killed & 3 others injured.

2012 Aurora, Co.
12 killed. 58 injured.

Active Shooter Incidents

• Schools:
  o 1999 Columbine HS. 12 students & 1 teacher killed.
  o 2007 Virginia Tech. 32 killed & many more injured.
  o 2012 Sandy Hook. 26 killed.

• Work:
  o 2010 Manchester, Conn. Beer distributor. 8 killed, 2 injured.

Active Shooter Incident

• Unfortunately, there is no sign that Active shooter incidents are becoming less frequent.

• In the year since the Century 16 movie theater shootings in Aurora, Co., 23 mass killings in 19 states have taken the lives of 126 people.
Police Response

• **Your life is in your own hands.**

  • It will be several minutes before police arrive.

  • Officers are taught to NEVER make entry alone. They will be in groups of 3-5.

Police Response

• The primary mission of the first officers on scene is to stop the threat.

• Only after the threat has been neutralized will rescue and medical aid commence.
Police Response

• Responding officers will likely be patrol officers, not SWAT.
• They will not have up-to-date information.
• They will have inaccurate information.

Police Response

• They are dealing with:
  – Gunfire from the suspect(s)
  – Noise (alarms, people screaming, etc.)
  – Confusion (lack of info)
  – Frightened victims (some will not respond to officer’s commands)
  – Carnage
  – Explosives (Columbine had 99 IEDs)

• They will be terrified…just like you.
Your Response

- You have 3 options:
  1. Run – priority
  2. Hide – if you can’t escape
  3. Fight – as a last resort

Run

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others escape, if possible.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Warn individuals not to enter an area where the active shooter may be.
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.

Run

- Do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Keep your hands visible.
- Follow the instructions of any police officers.
- Call 911 when it is safe to do so.
Leave Belongings Behind

• You should only take your cell phone when evacuating.

• **DO NOT CARRY ANYTHING IN YOUR HANDS.**

Hide

• Stay out of view.

• Lock your door.

• Turn off the light.

• Silent your cell phone.

Call 911

• Provide law enforcement or 911 operators with:

  • Location of shooter
  • Number of shooters
  • Physical description of shooter(s)
  • Type of weapons
  • Number of potential victims
Fight

• As an absolute last resort:

• Fight as hard as you can.

• Use improvised weapons.

Police Arrival

• Once police arrive, avoid the urge to rush to them.

• Keep your hands empty, fingers spread, and do as the police tell you.

• Don’t scream, yell, or otherwise be distracting.

• If you aren’t already outside, move in the direction law enforcement just came from and proceed outside.

Violence in the Workplace Online Resources

2. https://www.llis.dhs.gov/content/active-shooter-2
5. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcncA_Cq_Csk
Violence in the Workplace

• QUESTIONS?

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