Objectives

• Define workplace violence
• Know the Warning Signs
  – Behavioral
  – Physical
• How to respond
• What your company can do
• What you can do
• Cost to companies

• What is workplace bullying?
• Bullying warning signs Impact on the company and employees
• Who gets targeted?
• Why bullying persists?
• Developing a policy against Workplace Bullying
• What to do if you are targeted
Definition of Workplace Violence

• Violence or the threat of violence against workers
• Can occur at or outside the workplace
• Can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide
Statistics on Workplace Violence

- Workplace shootings account for roughly 10% of all work-related deaths per annum in the United States.
- On an average working day, three people will be murdered on the job in the U.S.
- Homicides are now the second highest cause of work related deaths in America.
- The average retail employee is more likely to be shot fatally by a co-worker than a construction worker is to fall to his death, or be killed by operating heavy equipment.

U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics
July 2010, recently published fact sheet:
Know the Warning Signs

Beware of employees who…

- Use intimidation, harass, bully, display belligerent behaviors
- Talk about weapons, carry weapons
- Exhibit paranoid or anti-social behavior
- Feel they’re not being heard by the company
- Exhibit extreme signs of personal desperation
- Obsesses about their problems
- Are loners and don’t fit in with the group.
- Seem like their anxiety is getting more frequent or more extreme in nature
More Warning Signs

Employees who…

- Yell, slam doors
- Are inflexible and controlling
- Take no responsibility for their actions
- Blame others for their mistakes
- Have many conflicts with customers, co-workers or supervisors
- Become fixated on an idea and/or an individual
- Have a history of violence
- Suddenly behave in ways that are out of character and extreme
Physical Warning Signs

• Perspiring and red face
• Clenched jaw or opening and closing fists
• Raised voice
• Rapid breathing
• Staring
• Talking too close to you
• Repetitive movements such as running fingers through hair
• Pacing
How to Respond

• Do not overreact
• Do not ignore a situation
• If you see something say something to your managers
• Managers should discuss situations with trained supervisors to determine how to best handle
• All employees should know who to go to/phone numbers/resources should a tense situation start to escalate
What Your Company Can Do

• Stress importance of training
• Appoint a group to examine violence in the workplace
• Create policies to prevent workplace violence
• Review and update current policies and training as it relates to workplace violence and bullying
• Open the lines of communication
• Develop a reputation for zero-tolerance with regard to an intimidating work environment
What Your Company Can Do (cont.)

- Write a violence response protocol make it visible to all employees
- Document all facts related to a violent or escalating episode
- Follow up with immediate consequences
- Institute a termination procedure specifically for violence
- Make sure all entrances and loading docks are secure
- Know who is in the building at all times
- Consider implementing identification badges and sign in procedures
- Examine parking lot(s) to see whether there might be a benefit to hiring security personnel
- Include your EAP in these discussions to help insure support should the need arise.
Importance of Pre-Screening

• Institute a rigorous method of pre-employment screening
• Contact all references
• Test for substance abuse
• Do a background check – including researching public records that may show previous arrests of convictions related to violent behavior
• Conduct at least two interviews
• Fingerprint applicants
What You Can Do

If confronted by a very angry employee or potentially violent situation:

- Do not respond with anger
- Talk softly and gently
- Use reflective listening
- Empathize
- Talk about EAP
- Document in detail
- Talk to a supervisor, manager or HR rep
- Have a safety plan
Cost of Workplace Violence

Estimated cost of workplace violence to U.S. businesses at $36 billion per year including:

• Medical and psychiatric care
• Lost business and productivity
• Repairs and clean up
• Higher insurance rates
• Increased security costs
• Loss of valued employees
Workplace Bullying

According to the *FBI*:

- Workplace Bullying is *repeated mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators*
Workplace Bullying

Workplace Bullying takes one or more of the following forms:

• Verbal abuse

• Offensive conduct/behaviors (including nonverbal) which are threatening, humiliating, or intimidating

• Work interference — sabotage — which prevents work from getting done
Bullying Warning Signs

- Nit picking, sarcastic putdowns and criticizing
- Undermines target’s value and potential
- Humiliation, belittling, yelling at target in public
- Threatening, intimidating
- Marginalizing, ignoring or sidelining co-worker
- Taking credit for your work
- Piling work onto employee unnecessarily
- Takes pleasure in employee’s fear
- Has unrealistic goals or deadlines
- Rallies others to ridicule co-worker
- Starts cruel rumors
- Tries to get the target fired
- Uses profanity
Impact on the Company

Costs to the company that result from bullied employees who experience:

• Cardiovascular problems
• Impaired immune system
• Debilitating anxiety
• Post-traumatic stress disorder
Impact on Employees

An "unhealthy" workplace can have many effects

• Increased absenteeism
• Increased turnover
• Increased stress
• Increased costs for employee assistance programs
• Decreased productivity and motivation
• Decreased morale

Source: "Violence in the Workplace Prevention Guide” CCOHS, 2001
Who Gets Targeted?

Targets are…

- Independent and confident on the job
- More technically skilled than their bullies
- Experienced workers that junior employees turn for advice
- Popular and intelligent
- Ethical and honest
- Social, empathetic and have non-confrontational personalities

Targets will “take it”
Why Bullying Persists

- Element of personal shame involved
- Majority of bullies (72%) are bosses
- Some managers direct bullies to target particular employees
- Fear that complaints will lead to retaliation or reprisal
- Fear of loss of job
- No good protocol in place to deal with bullies
- Mediation is often used which exacerbates the situation
Develop a Policy Against Workplace Bullying - Part 1

• A definition workplace bullying (including a broad list of bullying behaviors)
• A course of action to take after the claim of workplace bullying has been made
• An outline of the immediate consequences for violators of the policy
• A clear message that workplace bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated
• Assurance that no reprisals will be made against reporting workers
• Clearly stated declaration that the policy encompasses everyone involved in the organization from bosses down
Develop a Policy Against Workplace Bullying
Part 2

- Distribute the policy to all employees
- Make it visible so all employees can see it throughout the workplace.
- Make sure it is posted on the businesses’ website emailed to employees
- Take all complaints seriously
- Be respectful of the target employee - it feels risky to him/her to disclose bullying.
- Encourage reporting of all incidents of bullying
What To Do if You are Targeted

- Keep a detailed log of all bullying episodes
- Seek the advice of a trusted mentor
- Talk to your manager, supervisor or HR person
- ONLY if it is safe, talk to the bully in a calm manner
- Describe what has been happening and how it is affecting you
- Tell the bully to stop
- Don't allow the bully to undermine you
Summary

• Bullying must be treated with **zero** tolerance
• No one should ever feel subjected to intimidation, fear or humiliation in the workplace or anywhere!
• Do not allow anyone in your company to bully
• Take action immediately
• Review EAP Resources
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