Maintaining a Safe Work Environment
Objectives

• To define a safe working environment
• To recognize unacceptable behavior
• To learn how to handle workplace disruptions
What is a safe work environment?
Who Is At Risk In An Unsafe Work Environment?

Those who:

- exchange money
- deliver passengers, goods, or services
- guard valuable property or possessions
- have contact with the public
- have a mobile workplace such as a taxicab or police cruiser
- work with unstable or volatile persons in health care or social service
- work alone or in small numbers
- work late at night or during early morning hours
- work in high-crime areas
- work in community-based settings

(Source: Collins and Cox 1987; Davis 1987; Davis et al. 1987; Kraus 1987; Lynch 1987; NIOSH 1993; Castillo and Jenkins 1994]
How Is a Safe Work Environment Created?

• Establish rules of conduct for visitors
• Establish consequences for unacceptable behavior
• Leadership commitment
• Employee involvement
• Increase staff presence
• Receptionist
What Is Unacceptable Behavior?

• Yelling or screaming
• Persistent and unreasonable demands
• Intimating or harassing words or actions
• Words or actions that cause fear
• Threats of physical assault
• Threats of violence
What May Cause a Person To Be Disruptive? (Employees or Visitors)

- Abusing alcohol
- Argument with spouse
- Anger or Frustration
- Adolescent child out of control
- Emotional problems
- Financial problems
- Illness or injury
- Firing, lay off, or discipline
- Loss of a loved one
- Lost money gambling
- Mental illness
- Substance abuse
- Suffered an accident
- Under stress
How Do You Handle a Disruptive Person?

• Always be alert
• Act appropriately
• Address the person by name
• Be impartial and objective
• Do not return your anger
• Do not raise your voice
• Do not argue
• Listen to the upset person carefully
• Remain calm
• Show respect
• Do not stand between the upset person and the exit or cut him/her off
• Stand to the side, not in front of the upset individual
• Stand 4 feet away
How Do You Handle a Disruptive Person? (cont.)

- Ask questions until you’ve identified the issue
- Ask the complainant how he or she feels
- Acknowledge the issue is important and must be resolved
- Agree with the complainant where possible
- Echo the issue back to the complainant
- Express empathy with the complainant’s feelings
- Suggest a mutually satisfactory resolution
How Do You Handle a Disruptive Person? (cont.)

• Physical restraint
  – Use minimum force
  – Last resort
• Call for assistance
  – Other employees
  – Police
• Be aware of emergency policies in place at your worksite

*IF THERE IS A WEAPON, WITHDRAW TO COVER AND CALL THE POLICE*
Beware Of the Active Shooter

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

U. S. Department of Homeland Security
How To Keep Workplaces Safe

• Employee training
• Awareness of surroundings
  • Customer service
• Create physical security measures
  • Crisis Intervention or Workplace Violence Management Team
Documenting Incidents

• Be familiar with the requirements your company has in place
• Facts only
• Accurate
• Clear
• Concise
• Complete
• Share with the team
Summary

• A safe work environment is created by organizational leadership and staff. It involves understanding risk. It also involves defining unacceptable behavior and establishing consequences for such behavior.

• Work places are safer when employees know how to handle disruptive situations and effectively document incidents.

• Documented incidents serve as points of learning for inclusion in procedures and protocols.
Resources

• California Occupational Safety and Health Administration

• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  – Workplace Violence Prevention for Nurses
    • CDC Course No. WB1865 - NIOSH Pub. No. 2013-155
  – Workplace Violence Prevention for Nurses (online training course)
    • [http://wwwn.cdc.gov/wpvhc/Course.aspx/Slide/Intro_1](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/wpvhc/Course.aspx/Slide/Intro_1)
Resources (cont.)

• National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
  – Collins and Cox 1987; Davis 1987; Davis et al. 1987; Kraus 1987; Lynch 1987; NIOSH 1993; Castillo and Jenkins 1994].
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