WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

Advanced Guidance for Managers & Supervisors
welcome

Ellen

Jim
Jim Sporleder

- Over 25 Years in Security Industry
- Specialized in individual survival of and recovery from life-threatening, critical incidents such as Active Shooter and Hostage captivity
- Trained thousands of corporate and government employees
- Trained elite units in the U.S. Department of Defense
- He served as President of The Center for Personal Protection and Safety from 2004 to 2015
Today's Outline

1. Workplace Violence... A Deeper Look
   - Recognition
   - Nuance
   - Resilience

2. Progression of Violence
   - Stages
   - Questions
   - Action

3. Threat Awareness
   - Definition
   - Types
   - Danger?
Can you give us a quick review on what Workplace Violence is?
What Is Workplace Violence?

“A spectrum of behaviors – including overt acts of violence, threats, and other conduct – that generates a reasonable concern for safety from violence, where a nexus exists between behavior and the physical safety of employees and others (such as customers, clients, and business associates) on-site, or off-site when related to the organization.”

ASIS/ SHRM WVPI.1-2011
Workplace Violence

- Out of the blue…
- Just snapped…
- It'll go away
- Can't do anything
- Doesn't happen here
Workplace Violence Spectrum

May not be a linear progression
No profile of a violent offender

Behaviors of Concern → Threatening Behaviors → Physical Injury → Death
Sample Behaviors of Concern

- Working odd hours without need or authorization
- Verbal abuse of co-workers, associates, or customers
- Holding grudges... An “Injustice Collector”
- Outward indications of increased financial strain
Why is manager training on workplace violence so important?
Positive Effects

Increased awareness and recognition = ACTION

You know what to do... You know when to do it... You know how to do it
  ➢ Catalyzes a bias toward action

Fosters a culture of dignity and respect
  ➢ Looking out for each other
  ➢ Enhances a collective sense of safety and security

Boosts morale

Optimizes prevention
Benefits of Training

Normalized behavior in stressful situations

- Plan in place
- Persistence in the face of adversity
- Protection of self and others
- Proactive stance
- Post situation recovery
- Moral obligation met by organization

“Learned Optimism”
What happens if we don’t train our managers?
Dangers of Untrained Managers

Toxic work environment where violence is accepted

Unable to help those in need

Challenges not forwarded to senior leadership become a hidden risk

Moral obligation not met by organization
What is the role of a manager or supervisor in preventing workplace violence?
Manager’s Role at the Core

- Connect
- Ask questions
- Cultivate a work culture of dignity and respect
- Confront at-risk situations
- Know when to involve others...HR, Security, etc
How should we implement training and reinforce it?
• Incorporate training into onboarding
• Make it available anytime
• Provide basics to everyone
• Expand learning to managers
Make instruction available when it's needed most
Can you tell us more about the indicators for potential violence?
Performance vs. Stress: STEADY STATE

Stress vs. Performance graph showing the ideal balance between stress and performance.
REMEMBER...

Prevention

1. Am I seeing a CHANGE or several changes in someone?
   Behavior | Mood | Attitudes
   Work Performance | Physical Appearance

2. Is someone’s behavior making me UNCOMFORTABLE?
   Pay attention and TRUST your intuition
   Stay sensitive about uneasiness about a PERSON or SITUATION
Performance vs. Stress: CHANGE

Life Stressors
Performance vs. Stress: BOUNCING BACK

Resilience
Behaviors of Concern: Considerations

- Careful NOT to focus on “snapshots”
  - No single behavior suggests a greater level of threat
  - Significant CHANGES in PATTERNS or CLUSTERS of behavior are far more telling

- Sending out a personal “SOS” distress signal

- Your job
  - RECOGNIZE signals pointing to violence
  - RESPOND to them
Behavior “Leakage”

Intentional or Unintentional

Reveals clues or insights to **TRUE:**

- Feelings
- Thoughts
- Intentions
- Body Language
- Fleeting Expressions of Anger
Behavior “Leakage”

- Ultimatums
- Threats
- Predictions
- Innuendos
- Boasts
“Distressed” Personality

Department of Defense S.E.R.E. Psychology
Types of Stressors

Major Life Events:
- Birth of Child
- Marriage / Divorce
- Death
- Illness

Relationships
Financial
Legal
Change (good or bad)
Work
• Amount of change
• Degree to which the event is desired
• Amount of control over the event
• Number of stressors
What can “distress” look like?
Distress...

- Affects the way a person THINKS, FEELS, BEHAVES.
- Emotions control the behavior... initially.
- If a person feels they have a problem... they do.
- Warning Signs...
  S - surly
  A - angry
  D - depressed
Recognizing the Sequence

Establish a Baseline
- Define normal behavior by:
  - Specific environment
  - The individual

Recognize Boundary Probing
- Pushing tolerance levels
- Testing what will be accepted

Disrupt Boundary Probes
- If not, the new behavior becomes “normal”

Trust Your Intuition
Interrupt the Sequence

The earlier the action, the higher the probability for positive results.
How To Interrupt the Sequence

- Focus on the WHAT not WHO

- Intervention Strategies
  - CATEGORY 1 – Questioning
  - CATEGORY 2 – Confronting
  - CATEGORY 3 – Consequences

- Match intervention strategy to behavior
Post Intervention Evaluation

- Probing Behaviors Continue?
  > Choosing to disregard
  > No capacity to control actions

- Document

- Initiate a Disrupter

- Re-evaluate
What is the manager’s responsibility when someone reports “odd” behavior?
When Someone Reports “Odd” Behavior...

- Take reports seriously
- Understand the information has been “filtered”
- Find out more
- Make a note
- Monitor

Trust Your Intuition
What is the manager’s responsibility when someone reports concerning behaviors?
When Someone Reports “Concerning” Behavior...

- Take reports seriously
- Understand the information has been “filtered”
- Find out more
- Document
- Ask for help
- Coordinate a plan

Trust Your Intuition
Can you help us understand the most common path to violence?
Violence is Evolutionary

Path to Intended Violence
There is NO profile of a violent offender

Awareness and early recognition is key...

ACTION IS CRITICAL.
The Progression to Violence

Violence is a Process

Individual
- Everyone is unique
- Situations are unique
- NO PROFILE

Environment
- Unaware
- Denial
- Normalcy bias
- Helplessness

Trigger Event
- Loss
- Loss of control
- Perception of no other option

Critical Incident
Triggering Event

- Professional
  - Reprimand, Termination, Layoff

- Personal
  - Financial, Separation, Divorce, Death

- “Injustice collectors”
  - Will not forget or forgive the wrongs or the people he believes are responsible

- Typically involves LOSS or LOSS OF CONTROL
An Individual Journey

Path to Intended Violence
There is NO profile of a violent offender

Awareness and early recognition is key...

ACTION IS CRITICAL.
Progressing to the Violent Act

Human behavior is quantifiable... it is also repetitive (old habits)
Progressing to the Violent Act

A **GOOD** predictor of future behavior is…

A **BETTER** predictor of future behavior is…

The **BEST** predictor of future behavior is…
Can you explain more about each stage of violence progression?
A spontaneous, inappropriate statement is often not as revealing as a **plan**... and the **ability** to carry out that plan

The following steps often lead to violence

*As exhibited by those who have acted out violently...*
Workplace Violence
The Most Common Sequence

EXPERIENCE DISTRESS

A person experiences distress
- Single major traumatic event
- Accumulation of minor stressors

Recommended Involvement
- Co-worker awareness and observation
- Frontline supervisor awareness
- CATEGORY 1 - Question
Questions to Ask Yourself...

- Am I noticing CHANGE(S) in how someone is reacting to stressful situations?
- Does this person seem to be focusing more than usual on the things that he or she can control easily?
Workplace Violence
The Most Common Sequence

PERCEIVE NO RESOLUTION

Individual perceives there is no resolution
• Problems offer no viable alternatives
• Begins to narrow focus to look for easy controls

Recommended Involvement
• Frontline supervisor observation and possible documentation
  *(How is the individual managing stress/distress?)*
• CATEGORY 1 - Question
• CATEGORY 2 - Confront
Questions to Ask Yourself...

- Does this person seem to be avoiding or pushing back against new tasks or assignments more than usual?
**Workplace Violence**

**The Most Common Sequence**

**RATIONALIZE**

Rationalization begins to justify his position

- All problems are because of others
- All problems are due to outside sources for which he “obviously” has no control

**Recommended Involvement**

- Additional intervention recommended here
- CATEGORY 2 - Confront
- CATEGORY 3 - Consequences
- Consult with Human Resources
Questions to Ask Yourself...

- Is this person consistently seeking to justify his or her actions or position?
- Am I seeing this person blaming circumstances or other people as the primary cause of his or her problems?
Workplace Violence
The Most Common Sequence

ISOLATION

Person now believes he has a need to protect himself
• Is alone in his endeavors
• Becomes more egocentric and self-centered…to the exclusion of others

Recommended Involvement
• Consider additional options
• CATEGORY 2 - Confront
• CATEGORY 3 - Consequences
• Consult with Human Resources or Security
• HR/Security will direct further intervention
Questions to Ask Yourself...

- Is this person withdrawing from co-workers and/or workplace events?
Workplace Violence
The Most Common Sequence

VIOLENT THOUGHTS & IDEATION

Thoughts of violent acts
• Believed as the only way to:
  › Gain control
  › Be heard
• May begin talking of such acts
• May demonstrate hostile thoughts

Recommended Involvement
• Consult with Human Resources or Security
• HR and Security will direct further escalation as necessary
LATE STAGE

TRUST your intuition...

Questions to Ask Yourself...

- Does this person seem to think he has a vital need to protect himself or his position?
- Am I noticing new fascinations or obsessions with violence or violent content?
- Am I concerned about what this individual is focusing on?
Workplace Violence
The Most Common Sequence

**VIOLENT ACTION**

Violent act either attempted or committed

**Recommended Involvement**
- Immediate Emergency Response
- Contact Law Enforcement and Security
- Consult with Human Resources or Security
- HR and Security will direct further escalation as necessary

TRUST your intuition...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE &amp; DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED INVOLVEMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EARLY STAGE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience Distress</td>
<td>CATEGORY 1 - Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of No Resolution</td>
<td>CATEGORY 1 - Question, CATEGORY 2 - Confront</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MIDDLE STAGE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rationalization</td>
<td>Further intervention recommended here, CATEGORY 2 - Confront, CATEGORY 3 - Consequences, Consult with Human Resources (HR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Consider additional options, CATEGORY 2 - Confront, CATEGORY 3 - Consequences, HR/Security will direct further escalation as necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LATE STAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Violent Thoughts &amp; Ideation</td>
<td>Consult with HR or Corporate Security, HR/Security will direct further escalation as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Action</td>
<td>Immediate Emergency Response, Contact law enforcement and Security Control Center, HR/Security will direct further escalation as necessary</td>
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Can you help us understand the concepts of threats a bit better?
What is a Threat?

In the context of Workplace Violence, it has a two-fold nature…

INTENT & IMPACT

Any act or verbiage intended by the subject to elicit fear or intimidation in another

AND

The victim is fearful or intimidated by the act or the verbiage; whether direct or indirect, veiled, or conditional
# Types of Threats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>“I’m gonna’ punch you in the face!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>More vague &amp; indefinite “If I wanted to, I could hurt everybody here.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veiled</td>
<td>Tend not to threaten violence plainly “You’d better watch your back!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>Warn of violence if certain conditions are or aren’t met “If you talk to me like that again, I’ll knock you out!”</td>
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When Is A Threat Truly A Danger?

Specificity
- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- How
How well planned is the event?

Motivation
- Why
How powerful is the need to satisfy justice, revenge, or the need to be heard?

Ability
- Can
How well can the person carry out a plan? Is there access?

Accelerants
- Will
Alcohol and drugs Involved? Past history of violence? Recent change in behavior?
**THREATS**

**High Level** – Indirect or Direct, Specific, & Plausible

Threat suggests the threatener has...a detailed plan of action to carry out a threat

Plan (Specificity) | Means (Ability) | Wherewithal (Motivation)

**Medium Level** – More direct and concrete

Wording suggests threatener has given thought on how the act is to be carried out

A GENERAL indication of place and time SOME... Specificity | Possible Planning | Organization

**Low Level** – Not likely to be carried out

Lack of... Specificity | Planning | Organization

The threat is irrational
Manager’s Role at the Core

• Connect

• Ask questions

• Cultivate a work culture of dignity and respect

• Confront at-risk situations

• Know when to involve others…HR, Security, etc
Today's Outline

1. Workplace Violence... A Deeper Look
   - RECOGNITION
   - NUANCE
   - RESILIENCE

2. Progression of Violence
   - STAGES
   - QUESTIONS
   - ACTION

3. Threat Awareness
   - DEFINITION
   - TYPES
   - DANGER?
Questions?