TAKING CONTROL OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

A Training Program for Supervisors and Managers

Facilitator Guide

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Taking Control of Workplace Violence  
Second Edition  
Participant Manual  

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Nothing in these materials or the accompanying video should be construed as providing legal advice or relied upon to provide guidance in handling particular situations involving potential workplace violence. Each situation involving potential workplace violence is unique and must be analyzed in light of the individual circumstances. Prior to implementing any particular workplace violence training or responding to an individual situation, you are advised to consult with a qualified workplace violence consultant and appropriate legal counsel.
Section 1

PRE-PROGRAM PRESENTATION

This section of the Facilitator Guide is an overview of the training materials and what you need to do to prepare for facilitating the Taking Control of Workplace Violence training program for supervisors and managers.

Training Materials

The Program includes all of the audiovisual and written materials that you will need to facilitate this training program. The table below lists the materials and their location.

Program Materials

Taking Control of Workplace Violence - 21-minute VHS

Taking Control of Workplace Violence DVD

Taking Control of Workplace Violence CD-ROM

Pre-Program Preparation Section 1

Presentation Guide Section 2

Sample Workplace Violence Policy Section 3

Training Records Section 4

Taking Control of Workplace Violence Participant Manual
The CD-ROM contains PowerPoint slides to use during program facilitation. You have two options for using these slides:

1. You can use the CD-ROM in a laptop computer connected to an LCD projector for a PowerPoint slide presentation, or
2. You can print the PowerPoint slides.

You must have Microsoft PowerPoint loaded on your computer.

Directions for a PowerPoint slide presentation:
1. Insert the CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive.
2. Double-click the My Computer icon.
3. Double-click the CD-ROM drive icon.

This training program has been designed so that the facilitator can present your company's policies and procedures regarding workplace violence. If these have not yet been developed, the program can be used to introduce new policies and procedures to your managers and supervisors. A sample Workplace Violence Policy is included in Section 4 as a resource for you.
Section 1

PRE-PROGRAM PRESENTATION

To-Do List (Do at least 2-4 weeks before training program)

- Identify the area in which you will conduct the training.
- Confirm the program by sending notices to management and participants.
- Obtain appropriate number of Participant Manuals.
- Reserve TV and DVD player or VHS player.
- Reserve laptop computer (if using PowerPoint slides).
- Locate flip chart, markers and easel pad.
- Set up PowerPoint presentation.
- Review all program materials thoroughly.
- Make notes of examples specific to your workplace and anticipate questions that participants are likely to ask.
- Practice presenting the program.

To-Do List (Do at least 24 hours before training program)

- Gather all materials.
- Test the TV and DVD or VHS player with the DVD/VHS.
- Test the CD-ROM in the laptop computer with the LCD projector.
- Have the first PowerPoint slide of the program title, *Taking Control of Workplace Violence*, onscreen as participants arrive.
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

This section of the Facilitator Guide is a presentation guide to assist you with facilitating the *Taking Control of Workplace Violence* training program.

The guide is divided into two columns. The right column contains the information to present to the participants during the program. The left column lists the audiovisual materials that have been designed for the presentation, represented by these symbols:

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There are seven sections in the program. Each section name is capitalized, with its time allotment in the left column. This will help you plan your time so you can maintain the program length of two hours.
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

8 Minutes  WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

#1 Welcome the participants to the training program.

Distribute Participant Manuals.

Introduce title of program: Taking Control of Workplace Violence.

#2 Review the learning objectives.

Upon completion of this program, you will be able to:

- Define workplace violence.
- Describe the Company's commitment to controlling workplace violence.
- Describe societal, organizational and personal factors that contribute to workplace violence.
- Identify warning signs and profiles of people at risk for committing violent acts.
- Know what to do when faced with threats or threatening behavior.
- Understand the Company's Workplace Violence Policy.

#3 Describe the agenda for the program:

- Introduction
- Taking Control of Workplace Violence video
- Discussion of workplace violence and prevention
- Application of information to real-life scenarios

Review "housekeeping" details:

- Length of program: About 2 hours
- All participants need to sign attendance record (located in Section 6)
- Other details as needed (e.g., bathroom location, nearest phone, emergency exit)
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

5 Minutes WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Introduce the topic of workplace violence.

- Explain that workplace violence is a major cause of injuries and deaths in this country.

#4

- The safety and security of Company employees are of vital importance to the Company.

#5

Workplace violence consists of any real or perceived act or threat of a physical or verbal nature that is committed in the workplace.

It includes any conduct that arouses fear, hostility, intimidation, or fear of harm for an individual's personal safety or the safety of coworkers, family, friends or property.

ASK:
What are some examples of workplace violence?

- Write responses on flip chart.

25 Minutes TAKING CONTROL OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE VIDEO

Explain that they will now watch a video about workplace violence.

Point out where to take notes in the Participant Manual.

Ask participants to watch for:

- Hiring and firing procedures that help lower the risk of violence.
- Dealing with threats and threatening behavior.
- Using internal and external resources to resolve conflicts.
- Training to reduce stress and improve working relationships.
- Procedures to safely respond to emergency situations.
Show *Taking Control of Workplace Violence* video.

Summarize content:

- There are early warning signs of violence. By watching for them, you might prevent more serious problems.
- When there are problems, handle them early and quickly; get appropriate management involved as necessary.
- Provide help for troubled employees, following Company policies.

**ASK:**
What questions do you have about this information?

- Respond to questions.

**30 Minutes** REDUCING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

It is important for organizations to take practical steps to prevent workplace violence before it can escalate to a point where people are hurt or killed.

The Company has made a commitment to addressing workplace violence by presenting this training program.

Distribute copies of the Company's Workplace Violence Policy.

Review key statements or sections of the policy.

Tell them that after the training program, they should read the entire policy carefully and then review it with their employees.

**ASK:**
What questions do you have about this information?

- Respond to questions.
There are many theories as to why workplace violence is so prevalent. Some researchers believe that the workplace mirrors the general level of violence in society.

ASK:
What are some factors in our society that contribute to workplace violence?

- Write responses on flip chart.

Look for the following responses:

- Economic uncertainty
- Mental illness
- Weapon availability
- Drugs and alcohol
- Family breakdown
- Domestic violence
- Cultural diversity
- Criminal justice system
- Terrorism
- Media

Some workplace violence experts put part of the blame on the increasing stress in organizations caused by the rapid rate of change in the workplace, which results in re-engineering, downsizing and increased workloads.

ASK:
What are other activities in organizations that could contribute to workplace violence?

- Write responses on flip chart.

Look for the following responses:

- Terminations/demotions
- Preferential treatment based upon title/responsibility
- Ineffective grievance handling
- Inconsistent rules and discipline
- Lack of mutual respect between departments/employees
- Autocratic styles of management
- Lack of communication
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

#6

Explain that there are a number of personal factors that might also contribute to workplace violence. Government publications include the following "profile" of people who have been violent in the workplace:

- Males ages 35-50
- Midlife transition, dissatisfied with life
- Loner, no support system, low self-esteem
- History of being disgruntled during employment
- Projected shortcomings onto others
- History of intimidating coworkers and supervisors
- Felt persecuted, lacked empathy

#7

In many of the reported cases of workplace violence, the perpetrators showed warning signs of violent behavior. These warning signs included:

- Direct or veiled threats of harm
- Intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior
- Numerous conflicts or grievances with supervisors and other employees
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace, brandishing a weapon in the workplace, making inappropriate references to guns or fascination with weapons
- Statements showing fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides
- Statements indicating depression (over family, financial and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Extreme changes in behavior
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

ASK:
What are some warning signs from your experiences?

- Have participants share thoughts with each other.

As supervisors and managers, it is important for you to be alert for these warning signs. Some of the ways to do this are:

- Get to know your employees.
- Encourage communication and information sharing with employees.
- Set clear standards using leadership skills.
- Look and listen for direct and indirect threats.
- Intervene early and assist with problems; utilize the services of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), if necessary.
- Document and report unusual behavior.
- Be particularly alert for extreme changes in behavior or performance.

For a person at risk for violence to actually become violent in the workplace, there is often an event or experience (or series of events or experiences) that starts, or ignites, the violent behavior.

Examples of these events and experiences are:

- Termination
- Demotion
- Being upset about disciplinary action
- Situations where the person did not feel valued or that they could make a difference

Some of these events may have occurred outside the workplace. For example, the triggering event might be a divorce, financial problem, loss of a loved one, development of a mental illness, or some other significant stressor in the employee's life.

When you are faced with a potentially violent individual who is upset, agitated or threatening, specific actions can help de-escalate the situation.

ASK:
What were some of the de-escalating actions mentioned in the video, such as when the receptionist dealt with Kathleen’s ex-husband at the front desk?
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

- Write responses on flip chart.

Look for the following responses:

- Lower your voice.
- Speak quietly and slowly.
- Maintain appropriate eye contact.
- Ask open-ended questions to get the person talking.
- Get someone else involved as soon as possible.

#10

Other actions that will help de-escalate the situation are:

- Maintaining a relaxed, yet attentive posture
- Positioning yourself at an angle rather than directly in front of the person
- Acknowledging the other person's feelings
- Calmly describing the consequences of any violent behavior
- Using delay tactics that will give the person time to calm down (e.g., offering a drink of water)
- Being reassuring and pointing out choices; breaking big problems into smaller and more manageable problems

#11

Some actions could escalate a potentially violent situation and should be avoided. Some examples are:

- Using communication styles that would generate hostility or that could be perceived as a brush-off, a runaround or condescending
- Rejecting all the person's claims from the start
- Posing in a challenging manner (e.g., hands on hips, crossing arms, finger pointing, long periods of eye contact)
- Making sudden movements that could be perceived as threatening
- Trying to make the situation less serious than it is
- Making false statements or promises that you can't keep
- Invading the individual's personal space (keep 3-6 feet between you and the other person)

ASK:

What questions do you have about this information?

- Respond to questions.
Describe any other specific processes or policies that the Company has in place to prevent violence in the workplace. This may include a Company team that handles workplace violence issues, such as a Human Resources Security Committee or a Threat Management Team. Include the names and phone numbers of all resources.

Hiring Procedures

Workplace violence prevention begins during the hiring process.

- The Company requires all job applicants to be thoroughly screened.
- Human Resources uses many methods to gather information on a prospective employee before a job is offered, including performing criminal background checks and reference checks.

Termination Procedures

The termination process is a potential source of workplace violence, and can affect the likelihood that a terminated employee will become violent during or after the termination.

- When an employee is going to be terminated, determine if there are any current indications for violent behavior or if there have been any previous concerns of violence involving the employee.
- If so, the employee might be considered a high-risk termination. You should contact the appropriate Company resource for advice and/or follow any existing Company procedure.

Training

Education about workplace violence is one of the most fundamental steps for preventing it.

- All current supervisors and managers should be trained.
- Supervisors and managers should review the Company’s Workplace Violence Policy with their employees.

ASK:
What questions do you have about this information?

- Respond to questions.
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

15 Minutes SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Provide directions for next section:

Divide participants into groups.

For 15 or more participants: Divide them into at least 5 groups, with 3 or 4 in each group. For example, if you have 24 participants, divide them into 6 groups of 4.

For less than 15 participants: Divide them into the number of groups that result in 3 or 4 in each group. For example, if there are 12 participants, divide them into 4 groups of 3.

- Assign one of the following scenarios to each group, so that each one has a different scenario. (If you have more than 5 groups, assign two groups the same scenario.)
- Instruct the groups to discuss their plan of action as if they were the supervisor in the assigned scenario, keeping in mind what has just been discussed regarding workplace violence prevention and the policies of the Company. They should write the plan in the designated spaces in their manuals.
- Tell them that there are no clear-cut answers. A lot will depend on how the scenario unfolds.
- Each group should designate one person to present their ideas.
- Tell participants they now have 10 minutes for their group discussion.
- State the time when the program will start again.

Scenario #1

It appears to you that a male employee seems to be obsessed with a female coworker, although the female employee has not come to you (her boss) to complain.

Scenario #2

It has been reported to you that two employees were involved in an altercation during the shift and that it will be settled after work. One of the employees has shown aggressive and belligerent behavior recently, accusing the other employee of attempting to sabotage his employment at the company.
Scenario #3

A female employee, who is an excellent customer service representative, has been frequently absent from work in the last three months. She is also making numerous mistakes, as well as spending an excessive amount of time on the telephone making personal phone calls.

Scenario #4

The receptionist calls you to report that a male employee who was terminated two weeks ago has been seen driving through the parking lot on several occasions over the past few days.

Scenario #5

The night warehouse manager tells you that one of her employees has been making comments like "If I ever lost my job, I would go down in a blaze of glory." The manager also tells you that this same employee has been missing work lately and is currently going through a divorce.

35 Minutes SCENARIO DISCUSSION

Provide directions for discussion of scenarios.

- Discuss the scenarios in numerical order.
- Each group will present their plan of action.
- About 5-7 minutes will be spent on each scenario.

Ask for any additional ideas from other participants after each plan is presented.

Scenario #1

It appears to you that a male employee seems to be obsessed with a female coworker, although the female employee has not come to you (her boss) to complain.
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

The following points should be addressed:

- Who should raise this issue with the female employee and the male employee?
- What information should you find out when talking with either/both of these employees?
- What can you ask about behavior outside of work?
- Have there been any recent changes in either employee’s performance?
- Is the observed obsessive behavior a warning sign of potential violence?

Scenario #2

It has been reported to you that two employees were involved in an altercation during the shift and that it will be settled after work. One of the employees has shown aggressive and belligerent behavior recently, accusing the other employee of attempting to sabotage his employment at the company.

The following points should be addressed:

- Should you even be concerned if this potential altercation is going to happen outside of work?
- Should you call the police, Security or other resources?
- Who should talk to these employees?
- What should the two employees be asked?
- Is one or both of these employees' behavior a warning sign of potential violence?

Scenario #3

A female employee, who is an excellent customer service representative, has been frequently absent from work in the last three months. She is also making numerous mistakes, as well as spending an excessive amount of time on the telephone making personal phone calls.
Section 2

PRESENTATION GUIDE

The following points should be addressed:

- Should you discuss the frequent absences, numerous mistakes and excessive personal calls with her?
- What types of assistance can the Company provide for this employee?
- Should the employee be disciplined? How should you deal with her poor performance?

Scenario #4

The receptionist calls you to report that a male employee who was terminated two weeks ago has been seen driving through the parking lot on several occasions over the past few days.

The following points should be addressed:

- Should you call the police, Security or other resources?
- Why was the individual terminated?
- Has anyone communicated with the individual since his termination?
- How can you find out what his feelings are toward the Company and toward whomever was responsible for terminating him?
- Is this employee’s behavior a warning sign of potential violence?

Scenario #5

The night warehouse manager tells you that one of her employees has been making comments like "If I ever lost my job, I would go down in a blaze of glory." The manager also tells you that this same employee has been missing work lately and is currently going through a divorce.

The following points should be addressed:

- Should you call the police, Security or other resources?
- What is the employee's employment situation? Is he about to lose his job?
- Why is this person missing work? Is it related to the divorce?
- Should this employee be disciplined or terminated for making this comment?
- Is this employee's behavior a warning sign of potential violence?
End the scenario discussion by reminding participants that the responses discussed offer only some thoughts for consideration. In real-life scenarios, specific appropriate actions will depend on the particular circumstances.

2 Minutes  END PROGRAM

#14 Summarize key points for preventing workplace violence:

- Recognize changes or warning signs in employees.
- Respond to conflicts or inappropriate behavior as early as possible.
- Remember that any threat requires follow-up and investigation.
- Follow procedures in the Company's Workplace Violence Policy.

Thank participants for their attention and participation!

End the program.
This section of the Facilitator Guide contains a sample policy to use or adapt to meet the needs of your Company.
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

The safety and security of Company personnel, customers, vendors and visitors are of vital importance to the Company. Therefore, we have developed this Workplace Violence Policy to deal with intimidation, threats, harassment, potential and/or actual violence and other disruptive and aggressive behaviors in the workplace.

Zero Tolerance

The Company has a zero tolerance policy for actions, statements or other behavior by anyone that is, or is intended to be, violent, threatening, intimidating, disruptive, aggressive or harassing, as determined by the Company in its sole discretion. This policy applies to employees, temporary employees, consultants, contractors, customers, vendors, visitors and all other individuals, while on Company property (owned or leased) or while conducting Company business (including travel), or while interacting with Company employees.

No Weapons

No weapons of any type are allowed on Company premises including, but not limited to, parking areas owned or used by the Company. This applies whether the weapon is on the individual's person, carried in a container or openly. Employees traveling on Company business are prohibited from carrying or otherwise possessing or transporting weapons at any time and at any place (including vehicles). The above is subject to state law.

Company Response

The Company will not tolerate any violation of the Workplace Violence Policy and will take appropriate steps to identify the most effective approach to reducing the chance of any further violations. The Company will address any violation immediately, which might include removing an individual from the premises pending the outcome of an investigation, getting an individual the appropriate assistance, or taking disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, at the sole discretion of the Company. The appropriate law enforcement authorities might be contacted. Individual circumstances will dictate the appropriate response, with the goal of minimizing the risk of violence.
Section 3

SAMPLE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

In the case of any conflict between this policy and any other Company practice, policy or procedure, the Company will take whatever actions it deems appropriate to prevent or reduce the risk of violation of this policy.

Responsibility to Report

All employees are responsible for promptly notifying their immediate supervisor, or any member of management, including their Human Resources Manager, of any violation or potential violation of this policy, including any threats that they have witnessed, received or otherwise know about. Even without an express threat, employees should alert management to any suspicious or troubling behavior that they suspect might pose a danger to employees or any other individuals, or to Company property.

When threats are made against people or property, they must be taken seriously. The ultimate success of any program aimed at preventing violence in the workplace requires your support and participation. Please do not ignore any employee or other person who is making threats or is otherwise making you feel uncomfortable in the workplace.

For the convenience of employees, in addition to the reporting procedures listed above, a Hotline has been established for reporting workplace violence concerns. Employees may call the Hotline at ____________.

The Company will strive to handle reports made under this policy with as much confidentiality as is reasonably practicable under the circumstances.

Arrests /Convictions

If an employee becomes aware that any employee has been arrested or convicted of a crime concerning conduct that may impact the ability to perform one's job, threatens the safety of the Company's work environment or has the potential to undermine public confidence in the Company, the employee must inform a Human Resources Manager immediately. The decision as to whether an arrest or conviction will affect an employee's employment status with the Company depends on the circumstances, and such decision will be made at the sole discretion of the Company in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.
Section 3

SAMPLE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

Searches and Surveillance

The Company reserves the right to search (1) all Company property, (2) the personal belongings (i.e., pocketbook, briefcase, desk, locker) of any individual on Company property, and (3) any vehicle in a parking area owned or used by the Company. In addition, the Company reserves the right to implement any security measures deemed necessary, including video surveillance, in order to enforce this policy. Such actions will be taken by the Company in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.

Restraining or Other Orders

An employee who is protected or covered by a restraining order or other type of protective order that applies on Company property or vehicles must immediately provide a copy of the order to his or her supervisor or Human Resources Manager. The Company will strive to keep the order and its terms as confidential as is reasonable practicable under the circumstances.

Retaliation Prohibited

No retaliation will be tolerated against any person for reporting in good faith a violation of this policy or for participating in any investigation related to the policy.

Questions

If you have any questions about this Workplace Violence Policy, please ask your supervisor or Human Resources Manager.
Section 4

TRAINING RECORDS

This section of the Facilitator Guide contains a form to use for recording participation in the *Taking Control of Workplace Violence* training program.

Records should be kept of all training programs.

Prior to each program, make a copy of the form on the next page. Then fill in all requested information at the top of the form.

At the beginning of each program, instruct the participants to pass the form around so that each person can sign the form in the "Participants" section.

After each training program, make a copy of the form and sent it to whomever the Company has designated to maintain the forms.
# TAKING CONTROL OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

## TRAINING RECORD

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## PARTICIPANTS

| Name | | Name | |
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StoneArch Creative™ has been providing creative communication solutions since 1984, specializing in the health, safety and medical industries. Headquartered in historic St. Anthony Main on the Minneapolis riverfront, their experienced staff of over 50 talented individuals offer outstanding creativity combined with sound strategy and flawless execution. StoneArch Creative offer a full range of integrated communication strategies, including advertising and marketing, custom learning solutions and meetings/events. For more information, contact Judy Kessel at 612-379-4678 or jkessel@stonearchcreative.com.

John D. Thompson is a partner in the Minneapolis law firm of Rider Bennett, LLP and a nationally recognized expert in the area of workplace violence. Mr. Thompson has provided consulting, counseling, training and litigation services to numerous Fortune 500 and smaller companies, as well as the federal government, for workplace violence and related security problems. Mr. Thompson has spoken on the topic of workplace violence for a number of national groups such as the University of Virginia Institute for Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy, the Threat Assessment Group, the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals, the American Society for Industrial Security, the International Mass Retail Association, the Food Marketing Institute, and the American Bar Association. Mr. Thompson has published numerous articles on workplace violence and employment law, as well as a text on Minnesota employment law that is now in its ninth edition. Mr. Thompson may be reached at 612-340-8973 or jthompson@riderlaw.com.