Violence Prevention

For Healthcare and Social Service Workers
Session Objectives

- Realize the risks
- Identify risk factors
- Understand the effects of workplace violence
- Take effective measures to prevent violence
- Recognize signs of impending violence
- Protect yourself in violent situations
What Is Workplace Violence?

Violent acts directed toward people at work or on duty, including:

- Threats
- Physical assaults
- Sexual assaults
- Muggings
Violence in Health Care And Social Services

• One-sixth of violent crimes occur in the workplace
• Violence is a leading cause of workplace deaths
• Violence causes many serious injuries
• Almost half of workplace assault injuries occur in health care and social services

Violent Crimes

- Workplace
- Nonworkplace Settings
Who Is Most Vulnerable?

- Workers making home visits
- People who work in high-crime areas
- People working alone
- Patient care workers
- Emergency response personnel
- Facility safety and security officers
Where Is Violence Most Likely to Occur?

- Psychiatric units
- Emergency rooms
- Waiting rooms
- Geriatric units
- Pharmacies
- Isolated areas (elevators, restrooms, stairwells)
When Is Violence Most Likely to Occur? (cont.)

Healthcare workers:

- Periods of low staffing
- Mealtimes
- Visiting hours
- Patient transportation
- Coming and going
When Is Violence Most Likely to Occur? (cont.)

Social service workers:

- Home visits
- High volume times in office
- Coming and going
Who May Become Violent?

- Co-workers and former employees
- Patients and residents
- Social service clients
- Mentally or emotionally disturbed people
Who May Become Violent?
(cont.)

- Drug addicts
- Thieves and other criminals
- Family and friends of patients or clients
- Other outsiders
Other Risk Factors

- Working with volatile people
- Working when understaffed
- Working after dark
- Working where public has unrestricted access
- Attempting to set limits
- Refusing services
- Long waits for service
Other Risk Factors (cont.)

• Overcrowded waiting room
• Involuntary patient admission
• Substance abuse
• Poorly lit areas
• Extreme stress or serious personal problems
What Are the Effects Of Workplace Violence?

- Death
- Physical injuries
- Emotional trauma
- Low morale and increased stress
- Fear and lack of trust
- High turnover
**Workplace Violence Risks**

**True or False?**

- **F** You are less likely than workers in other industries to be a victim of workplace violence.
- **T** You are at greater risk if you work alone or at night.
- **F** Only patients or clients commit acts of violence.
- **F** Physical injury is the only consequence of workplace violence.
Workplace Violence Risks

Do you understand:
- Risks of workplace violence?
- Individuals who may become violent?
- Effects of workplace violence?
Security Measures

- Understand and comply with security rules
- Know how to summon help
- Protect security-related items
- Keep doors and windows locked
- Control access to work areas
Security Measures (cont.)

• Report security problems
• Report suspicious individuals or activities
• Don’t have personal visitors at work
• Keep vehicle doors locked and windows rolled up
Prevention Strategies

• Use the “buddy system”
• Keep in touch with the office
• Arrange a danger signal with co-workers
• Discuss concerns with supervisors and co-workers
• Report threats
Prevention Strategies (cont.)

- Limit visitors to permitted hours and areas
- Transfer potentially violent patients
- Stay alert if you feel uncomfortable
- Don’t meet alone with a potentially violent person
- Make sure you have a clear escape path
Look for Signs of Potential Violence

- Expressions of anger or frustration
- Threatening gestures
- Signs of drug or alcohol use
- Signs of mental or emotional disturbance
- Presence of a weapon
Try to Diffuse Potentially Violent Situations

- Present a calm, caring attitude
- Don’t threaten
- Don’t give orders
- Acknowledge feelings
- Avoid aggressive behavior
If You Can’t Prevent Violence

• Run away, if possible
• Signal a co-worker
• Back away and put obstacles between you and a potential attacker
Sexual Assault

• Stay calm and consider options
• Try to discourage attacker
• Keep assessing the situation
• Don’t resist an assailant with a weapon
Sexual Assault (cont.)

After an assault:
• Go to a safe place and call police
• Do not shower or disturb evidence
• Go to the emergency room
• Call someone to be with you
• Get counseling
Violence Prevention: Choose the Best Answer

What should you do if you see a security problem?
- a. Assume security knows
- b. Report it

How can you help prevent violence?
- a. Report threats
- b. Carry a weapon

How can you diffuse violent situations?
- a. Be aggressive
- b. Be calm and caring

What should you do if you have concerns about a patient or client?
- a. Talk to supervisor
- b. Talk to the individual privately
Violence Prevention

Do you understand:

• Security measures?
• Violence prevention strategies?
• Signs of impending violence?
• How to defuse violent situations?
• What to do in case of sexual assault?
• How to report violence or threats?
Report All Incidents And Threats of Violence

- Report incidents and threats right away
- You will be protected
- Explain what happened and who was involved
- Don’t protect potentially dangerous people
Cooperate in Incident Investigations

Be prepared to:

• Explain what happened
• Tell where and when it happened
• Identify those involved
• Give names of witnesses
KEY POINTS To Remember!

- Workplace violence is a serious safety problem
- You must understand risks and keep alert for danger
- Make sure you know security measures and violence prevention strategies
- Be prepared to deal with violent situations
- Report any violence or threats