Warning Signs That Might Lead To Physical Violence

Employee Job Issues
- Increasing impact on supervisors time
- Attendance problems
- Decreased productivity
- Poor on the job relationships
- Intimidation of co-workers
- Challenges co-workers often
- Blatant disregard for policies

Employee Personal Issues
- Unusual or changed behavior
- Evidence of serious stress
- Unshakable depression
- Continual excuses and blame
- Social isolationism
- Drug use or alcohol abuse
- Poor hygiene

Employee Actions
- Past violent behavior
- Stealing from company or co-workers
- Excessive profanity
- Identification with violent cases in news
- Fascination with weapons
- Obsession with another person
- Sexually explicit conduct
- Damages property

Termination Issues
- Train all management to treat employees with respect during a dismissal in a disciplinary situation.
- Remember that people want to be treated with civility and dignity even during adverse or stressful situations.
- Leaders should teach composure by example.

Responsibilities of a Crisis Management Team
A crisis management team is an important component of a good workplace prevention policy. It should be composed of six to ten persons - including HR, EAP, legal security and upper management.

- Tracking – A permanent clearinghouse for all incidents and warning signs that may predict violent behavior. This allows for timely intervention.
- Policy – Develops and adjusts as necessary a corporate-wide workplace violence policy.
- Training and Coaching – Trains supervisors on what to look for and provides on-going coaching on how to handle problem employees.
- Outside Liaison – Interacts with outside law enforcement, security associations and internal departments on issues and threats.
- Information Campaign – Publicizes the workplace violence policy to maintain high level of awareness.
- Threat Assessment – Brings together resources to determine appropriate mitigation.
- Trauma Response – Directs post incident efforts.

This handout provides general information and may not apply to each specific situation. It is not meant to:
- Set your organization’s standard.
- Replace legal, mental health and/or medical advice or counsel.
- Replace existing laws, rules, regulations, and directives.
- Guarantee an incident of violence will not occur.
- Protect from harm.

Remember: Intervening in threatening situations requires advice, support and help from not only your EAP, but HR professionals, security experts, and possibly law enforcement.

Source: WSD Employee Assistance Program

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