

# **Workplace Violence Reduction**

## **Recognition, Prediction & Prevention**

Prepared for Terra Staffing Group  
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# Objectives:

1. Provide education and tools to further understand, recognize, predict, and report potential violence.
2. To de-escalate risk through the use of tactical (deliberate) communication.

# Goals

- Discuss rage, the mindset, & related warnings
- Glance at levels of self-awareness
- Discuss why violence is predictable
- Understand & embrace intuition & “discomfort”
- Understand internal & external risk
- Explore tools to effectively diffuse risk
- Balance personal safety with the client experience

Common: Personal & professional application

# Problematic & Predictable Behavior

- Problem-solving is learned behavior
- Conflict & rage follow a cycle
- Rage follows the rules (cycle) of the offender
- De-escalation takes awareness & time
- Patterns are unconventional
- Interrupting patterns must also be unconventional
- Conflict & violence can be diffused!

# Laws of Violence & Prediction

## Basics: Predicting Behavior

- ***Energy follows thought!***

**Plus:** Everything a person does is created twice; once in the mind and once upon its execution.

**Meaning:** Violence is usually preceded by discussion, planning, and changes in routine, making it predictable.

# Laws of Violence & Prediction

## Basics in Predicting Violent Behavior:

- Violence is mentally planned & rehearsed
  - Rarely spontaneous
  - Includes many different rituals
- Violence includes shame, guilt & secrecy
  - The offender prefers privacy & a cloak of secrecy
  - Desire for secrecy leads to behavioral changes
- Violent individuals justify their acts
  - They have “good reasons” for violence
  - They “share” justification to bolster confidence

# Laws of Violence & Prediction

- Behavior is driven by **desire** & **opportunity**.
- **Desire** is recognized via actions & words
- **Opportunity** can be influenced, altered or blocked.
  - Keen awareness & communication is key!
  - Questions & discussion with the subject may be enough

# Internal Conflict

Where the trouble begins

- **Mental struggle:**

a psychological state of confusion resulting from often unconscious opposition between simultaneous but incompatible desires, drives or impulses.

- ✓ *Violent thoughts are troubling - most cannot hide the intense internal struggle and this leads to pre-attack indicators (cues)*



## **High Risk Areas**

- ***When and where are you most likely to encounter hostility and/or conflict?***
- ***Why discuss this first (in training)?***

## **Prediction Cues:**

- One boring piece of the puzzle,
  - Individually carry very little weight,
  - A bland & seemingly innocent ingredient,
  - Usually inconclusive, but important, and
  - Must be examined in context
- Prediction Cues rarely stand alone, but gain momentum as we discuss, compare notes, and add two or more additional cues to the mix. Awareness leads to communication, which leads to violence risk reduction

## Prediction Cues:

- 1. Nonverbal Behavioral Cue
- 2. Object or Environmental Cue
- 3. Unusual or Missing Cue
  
- Prediction cues rarely stand alone; however,
  - A stand alone cue requires no context
  - It is blatant & obvious
  - Includes actual acts, weapons, threats, etc.

# Predicting Violence

## The Cues:

### Nonverbal Behavioral Cue:

A traditional prediction: Abnormal actions, unusual reactions, agitation, twitching or “pill rolling,” isolation, unusual visitors, change in attendance, overly involved in certain campaigns, or avoiding specific company initiatives, change in pace, verbiage or movement

ANY behaviors we can describe and they **do not fit the norm** for the environment or individual.

# Cues:

## Object or Environmental Cue:

Supporting evidence: Radical change in icons, violent literature, screen saver, stickers, deviant celebrations, radicalized beliefs, reduction or elimination of general courtesy, violent anniversaries, drug paraphernalia, abnormal appreciation for violence, change in publications, trophies, reactions, and/or other physical evidence that **does not fit the norm** of the individual, the culture, or work environment.

# Cues:

## Unusual or Missing Cue:

Typically, items that belong together or in a set. One or more items may be present, but the close relative is missing:

- a. Empty holster
- b. Empty Rx Bottle
- c. Incomplete cutlery
- d. Missing pages
- e. Missing/altered photos
- f. Knife sheathe
- g. Bullet casing
- h. Icons & mementos

# Training to Predict: Proof in the Pattern ~ Use of Stories

- Approach #1:
    - **The cook in the kitchen**
  - Approach #2:
    - **Painting the house**
  - Approach #3:
    - **Preparing for a camping trip**
- 
- Pattern recognition triggers action:
    - Reporting
    - Safeguards

# **Training to Predict: Painting a Portrait of Potential Violence**

- Facilitation Approach #1:
  - **Risk of Externally Driven Workplace Violence**
- Approach #2:
  - **Escalation of Internal Risk**
- Approach #3:
  - **Evidence of Employee at Risk**



# Routines & Norming

## Behaviors we normalize:

- ✓ In the Field
- ✓ In the Office / on Work Property
- ✓ Personal or Company Vehicles
- ✓ Outside Regular Hours of Operation
- ✓ Employee Appearance & Demeanor
- ✓ Time In, Out, & Breaks

# De-escalation Failures

- *Diffusing and de-escalation failures?*

*Discussion*

# Levels of Awareness & Angst

What level is appropriate? When? Why?

**Black** = Panic Condition

**Red** = Engaged for Combat

**Orange** = Prepared for Conflict

**Yellow** = Keen Awareness

**White** = Clueless



# Are you fit to De-escalate

## Two-Part Warning System

- *What are your triggers?*
- *Internal triggers & warnings?*
- *External manifestations or warnings?*

*Discussion*

# Other Considerations

- Can it be resolved peacefully?
- Do you have an exit strategy?
- Communication strategy?
- Affirm: Resolution or being right?
- Can you manage or avoid the audience?
- When to call police and/or exit?
- Consider client impacts
- Consider all alternatives

# Steps in De-escalation!

## Rule #1: Awareness in 3 areas:

- **Active listening:** Self, agitated one, co-workers and onlookers
- **Physical self-check:** Posture (does it illustrate desire for resolution?), volume (you and the agitated one), and other non-verbal cues
- **Pre-attack indicators:** (deal breakers)

# Crucial Steps in De-escalation!

1. Social Address (often flawed)
2. Request (often forgotten)
3. Clarifying Request (asking again)
4. Pattern interruption (rage-buster):

*Acknowledgement*

*Venting*

*Questions*

*Empathy*

*Paraphrasing*

*Clarification*

5. Directive (with ultimatum?)
6. Alternatives (& Exit?)

# De-escalation!

## *Concluding the Process:*

- *Move to a new location immediately*
- *Make a call & some notes*
- *Debrief/Critique within 24 hours*



# Conclusion

- *Have a Plan*
- *Discuss Best Practices*
- *Train, Train, Train*
- *Reward Recognition & De-escalation*

***Thank you!***

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# HRCI Credit

Activity ID: 244886

Title: Workplace Violence Reduction:  
Prediction, Communication & Prevention

Start Date: 5/15/2015

End Date: 5/15/2015

Recertification Credit Hours Awarded: 1  
Specified Credit Hours: HR (General)

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