

Crisis Management

It's Not Possible to Prevent Violence

Many people believe that it is not possible to prevent violence because it is unpredictable. "He/She just snapped!" We have heard this phrase many times. But is it true? No, this is a myth and a way of avoiding the issue at hand. In fact, many statistics will say that in most situations of workplace violence, there were in fact warning signs to the impending acts and in fact preventable.

Usually these acts of violence are planned, and focused on specific targets. The perpetrator has had a long time of build of negative events such as a bad breakup, a termination, or financial problems. Very seldom is the trigger a sudden and traumatic event. Knowing this can make you more aware of others and their possible changing behavior. Being aware can not only save costs, property, but also lives.

Examples of Behavior

Other examples of warning signs that need to be reported are a sudden change in behaviors like absenteeism, tardiness, confusion and distraction. This not only costs the company money in production, but also indicates a lack of regard for the company. Someone that no longer takes care of themselves, in regards to personal hygiene, or becomes isolated, with no friends or limited contact with others are more behaviors that need to be noted.

In many cases, there have been clear patterns of warning behaviors prior to escalation. A person that has displayed violence towards inanimate objects in the past, or has a preoccupation with violence. These behaviors need to be reported to the proper manager, to be documented for future reference.



Report Extreme Cases to HR/Tip Line

Let's use an example of a co-worker is bullying customers, like always. You are the only one that sees this happen, every day. You can report your concerns to a supervisor, but if that makes you uncomfortable, or there are extreme behaviors being exhibited, you can always go the human resources department (HR), or the employee assistance program (EAP). This example is not only bad behavior on the co-worker's part, but is also a form of intimidation. The employee assumes that since you haven't reported it, you condone it. This behavior cannot go unreported, and you have to bring it to the proper department's attention.

HR, tip lines, or the EAP, all are trained to handle your situation. Your safety and wellbeing are the company's top priority. You just need to report the issues, incidents, or occurrences. Have your details ready such as date, time, other witnesses, location, etc. The company can't improve things, if they do not know there is an issue.