PREVENTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
OBJECTIVES

- Understand the nature of workplace violence
- Spot early warning signs
- Apply proven techniques to handle situations
- Sexual harassment is a form of violence
- Variations of “assault” including threats
- What to do and not do when faced with an armed assailant
- Fostering a positive work environment can reduce violent behavior and aggressive manners
STATISTICS

- Violent crime occurs every 17 seconds in U.S.
- 1 of 6 violent crimes occur in the workplace
- 15% of all violent crimes are workplace related
- Assaults account for 3 of 4 reported workplace violent acts
- Approx. 2 million per year
STATISTICS

• Murder occurs every 23 minutes in the U.S.
• 2nd leading cause of job deaths after auto accidents
• #1 killer of women in the workplace
• 75% of violent acts no weapon was used
• 54% are employee vs.. employee
CAUSES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- Downsizing, layoff, transfer, depression, paranoia
- Evaluations
- Lack of promotion or advancement
- Failure to recognize efforts
- Termination
- Domestic violence brought into the workplace
- Employees working with each other every day
- Revenge for one of the above
DANGER SIGNALS

RED FLAGS

• Disorganized behavior by the employee
• Pushy, demanding behavior
• Stalking
• Threatening behavior - never ignore it
• Depressed mood
• Talk of death or suicide
• Heightened concern from co-workers // rumor mill
CAUTION

• Don’t confuse blowing off steam for a real warning sign
• Take behavior in context
• “Just a bad day”
• Look for multiple signs, repeated behaviors or escalation
REPORTING

- YOUR SUPERVISOR
- HUMAN RESOURCES 838-8490
- EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 800-433-2320
- UNIVERSITY COUNSELING 838-8313
- CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT 8-9000 EMERGENCY 838-8481 NON EMERGENCY
ADDITIONAL REPORTING

- Threats of Violence (direct/conditional/veiled)
- Assaults of any type
- Unfamiliar or unauthorized persons in your work area
- Any type of weapon you see or hear about in the workplace
SEXUAL HARASSMENT

• Repeated unwanted behavior
• Attempt to inflict emotional, psychological, or physical harm
• Female or Male - both can be victims
• “Sexist” and sexual remarks
• Sexual advances
• unwanted or unsolicited physical contact
• Assigning menial or demeaning task due to gender
• Hazing or practical jokes based on gender
POTENTIAL VIOLENCE

• ARGUMENTS
  – resolve peacefully
  – stay calm - don’t get into shouting match
  – offer compromise
  – impartial person to mediate
  – walk away from the person and the area
POTENTIAL VIOLENCE

• AGITATED OR IRRATIONAL PERSON
  – keep 5 feet away if possible
  – maintain the spacing
  – avoid physical contact
  – keep hands and arms low and in a non-threatening manner
  – don’t argue, disagree, or be judgmental
  – if violence begins, YELL for help and GET AWAY
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

• No amount of violence is acceptable in the workplace
• Do not accept a challenge to fight
• GET AWAY and YELL for help
• Consequences for fighting
  – injury
  – disciplinary action
  – criminal charges
  – sued by your assailant
WEAPONS
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Extremely dangerous
- No sudden moves
- Keep hands visible
- Follow all instructions
- Repeat the instructions before you comply
- Don’t exceed the instructions
- IF SAFE TO DO SO - Call the Campus Public Safety
- DO NOT BE A HERO - no challenges or confrontations
CONCLUSION

• No workplace is immune to violence
• Violence is unnecessary and unacceptable
• Minor incidents are bad for morale and productivity
• Major incidents can lead to injury or even death
• Watch for warning signs of violence
• Report threats, assaults, intimidation, sexual harassment
• Report aggressive and violent behavior
• Try to resolve conflicts peacefully
CONCLUSION

• Never attempt to reason with an unreasonable opponent - walk away
• If violence comes to you - do not fight back unless your life is in immediate danger - get away and get help
• Most workplace violence begins as a disagreement between co-workers
FINAL THOUGHT

• If we treat people with respect, and refuse to tolerate aggressive behavior, we can all help to prevent incidents of workplace violence.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Campus Public Safety Department
http://www.wou.edu/admin/safety