Workplace Violence

Prediction.
Prevention.
Trauma Planning.
Workplace Violence Defined:

Any act or threat of physical aggression that occurs *at the worksite*. It’s intended target may be individual(s) or object(s) and there is reasonable potential for physical and/or psychological harm to victims and/or witnesses.
Categories of Workplace Violence

- **Type I** – Criminal Act
- **Type II** – Recipient of Service
- **Type III** – Employment Relationship

1. Current or former employee.
2. Someone who has a relationship with a current or former employee.
The Three Steps...
Prediction – Prevention - Trauma Planning

- The Time to Prepare for any Emergency is **Before** the Emergency and Not During it.
Prediction…
Who are the Perpetrators?

- Understand…It is within anyone to do an act of violence.
- Prediction is more complicated than filling out some checklist or “profile”.

But the #1 predictor of violence is “A History of Violence”!
I can’t predict behavior with 100% accuracy...

While I can’t predict behavior 100% of the time, I can get pretty close.

I can’t guarantee 100% safety and security... but we can learn how to Manage the risk!
Pre-Employment Screening
My First Prediction…

- I am predicting that the employee will be a productive employee.

- I’m also predicting that the employee will not be *Destructive*!
The Famous “Perpetrator Profile”

Understand, simply because a person displays one or more of the characteristics found in these profiles, it does not mean that they are going to become violent.
Every book, handout, or article on Workplace Violence is going to have some kind of “Profile”.

Here are some things that can be referred to as “Red Flag Indicators”.

- Threats.
- Externalization.
- Intoxication.
Something that doesn’t get a lot of attention…”Anchors”!

These are indicators of stability in a person's life.

- A secure family life.
- Drug free, no problem use of C2H6O.
- Community ties.
- Stable finances.
- Good work history.
Suggestions for Screening Law Enforcement Candidates.

While not all inclusive, I like the concept of the “Three C’s”.

**Competency** – The ability to do the job or the demonstrative potential to learn.

**Character** – The persons history. Are they honest? Did they steal from an employer?

**Chemistry** – The ability to adapt to this environment.
Testing...used to determine *Competency*.

- A general knowledge test should be given. I recommend you look at items such as reading comprehension and simple math problems.

- A physical agility test. A complete and comprehensive physical.

- A psychological test/evaluation.
Background Investigation... used to determine *Character*.

- First thing I am going to look for is *disqualifiers*. Items like criminal history, domestic violence convictions, a history of mental health issues.

- A polygraph can be used to determine truthfulness.

- We check references.
The Oral Interview is what I use to determine Chemistry.

I want to know if this applicant can:

- adapt to this environment?
- work well within the agency and community?
- think on their feet?
PREVENTION...

To protect and to provide a safe workplace is a combination of two disciplines...

- **Administrative Policy.**
- **Physical Security Measures.**
Administrative Policies...

- We’ve looked at **PREDICTION**, now let’s look at those policies we can use to **PREVENT** workplace violence.

- Administrative Policy will prevent 90 to 95 percent of your internal problems but never forget, **there is no such thing as a bullet-proof document**.

You must include your physical security measures into your overall plan.
My Recommendation to Employers …

From the initial hiring and periodically through the employees career…

- Explain the organizations policy on employee conduct.
- Train and equip the employee for the job.
- Leave them alone!
  - Because if we’ve done our job, we’ve selected employees who will make us a good hand!
The Cardinal Rule of the Workplace...

- Treat people fairly with respect for their dignity.
Your policy needs to address...

- Inappropriate behavior.
- Threats and/or assaults.
- Drug and alcohol.
- Racial and sexual harassment.
- Weapons.

And that compliance with these policies is a condition of employment!
Options…

We didn’t hire folks to fire them…
- If we can salvage an employee, we want to do that.
- Sometimes good employees do bad things.
- If you have an Employee Assistance Program…it’s an avenue used to provide help for the employee and, it’s an excellent resource for management.
Safety Education

- We need to train employees the rules of conduct.

- We need to train employees on how to report a threat or incident.

- We need to train the employee on what to do in the event of an emergency.
Incident Specific Response Procedures
Evacuate or Lockdown?
How to Respond…

You have to quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your life.

*If there is an escape path evacuate the premises.*
Shelter in Place…
Preventing the shooter from entering…

Lock the door.

Blockade the door with heavy furniture.

If your facility has a “safe room”, go there.
If Evacuation or Sheltering in Place is not possible... Hiding is an option.

- Remain Calm.
- Find a place where you’re hidden from view.
- Turn off radios, televisions, cell phones and pagers.
Take Action Against the Active Shooter...

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressive as possible against him/her.
- Throwing items and improvised weapons.
- Yelling.
- Committing to your actions.
It ain’t a perfect world...

You do the best you can with what you got!

- Evacuation is preferred...
- Sheltering in place may be your only option...
- If you choose to fight, you must fight with intent and will...totally committed to your actions.
Security is classified as either Category I or II.

- **Category I** – those measures implemented to reduce the risk.

- **Category II** – those measures implemented to reduce anxiety.

- Both are important but you have to decide how valuable they are in relationship to your available resources.
Physical Security

- **Security Officers** - Armed or Unarmed.

- **Visitor control** – This includes visitor badges, sign-in/out procedures, and escorts.

- **Visitor Access** – We limit the access the public has to our facilities.
Legal issues...

The litmus test used in workplace violence litigation is usually Section 5a of the General Duty Clause of the OSHA standards.

- That standard says:
  - It is the employers responsibility to provide a safe working atmosphere for the employee.
ACTS OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE ARE NOT ACTS OF GOD.

THEY ARE ACTS OF MAN AND ARE PREVENTABLE.
Courts in most states have ruled that employers have a duty of care to their customers and employees to prevent violence on their premises AND by their employees.
Three areas of litigation are...

- Negligent Hiring.
- Negligent Retention.
- Premises Liability.
The third part of the plan... 

Trauma Planning.

We’ve tried to Predict it, we’ve tried to Prevent it, but low and behold...it happens.

The **Trauma Plan** is a pre-designated set of response options used for dealing with an emergency and, for managing the aftermath.
Suggestion…

- Structure the plan much like the FBI’s “Bomb Threat Checklist”.

- Checklists and flowcharts are one way we insure that vital issues are not overlooked during the incident.
Trauma Plan issues

- **Prompt Notification** – of Police and EMS.

- **Counseling** – for employees and families.

- *Who will handle the press?*
We Do Not Have To Live Our Lives In Fear!!!

We all must take some responsibility for our own safety, and having a plan in place is the best way to reduce your risk of being a victim.
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