







Violence Prevention

For Healthcare and
Social Service Workers





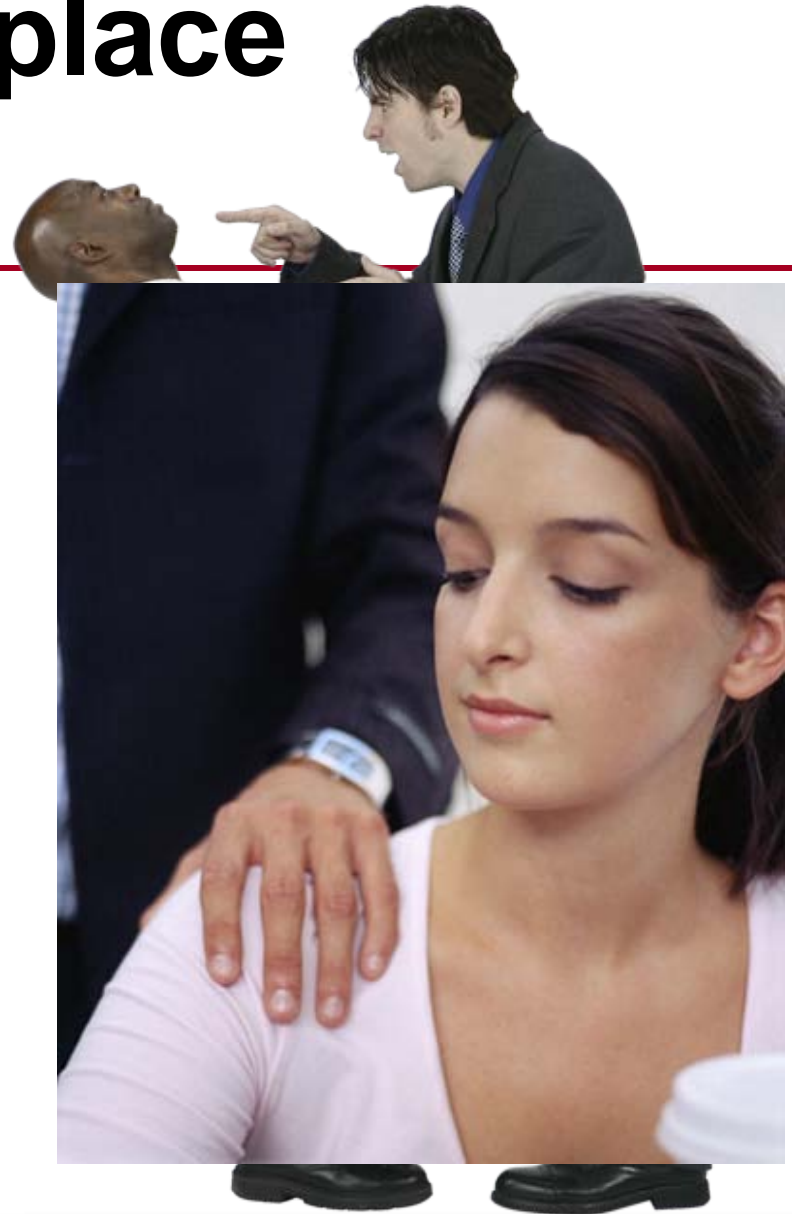
Session Objectives

-  Realize the risks
-  Identify risk factors
-  Understand the effects of workplace violence
-  Take effective measures to prevent violence
-  Recognize signs of impending violence
-  Protect yourself in violent situations

What Is Workplace Violence?

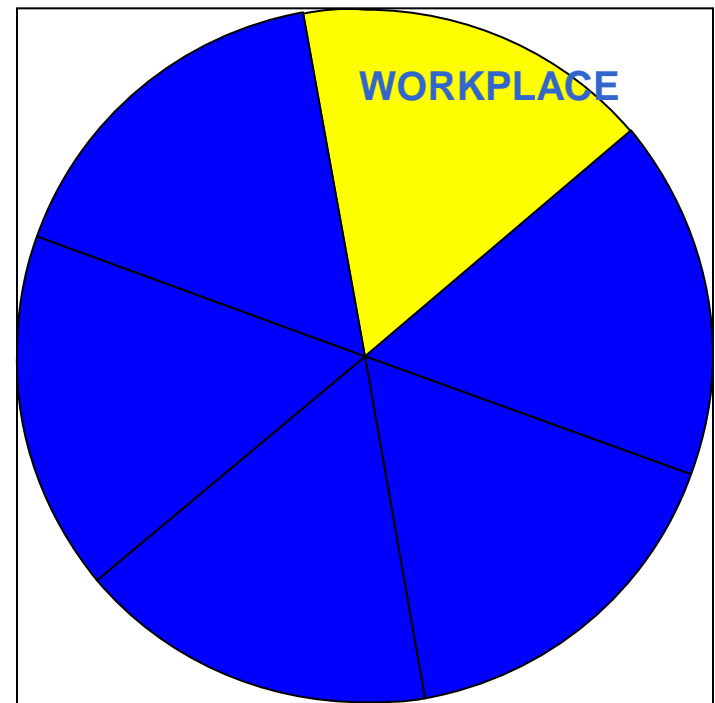
Violent acts directed toward people at work or on duty, including:

- Threats
- Physical assaults
- Sexual assaults
- Muggings



Violence in Health Care And Social Services

- One-sixth of violent crimes occur in the workplace
- Violence is a leading cause of workplace deaths
- Violence causes many serious injuries
- Almost half of workplace assault injuries occur in health care and social services



Violent Crimes

■ Workplace ■ Nonworkplace Settings



Who Is Most Vulnerable?

- Workers making home visits
- People who work in high-crime areas
- People working alone
- Patient care workers
- Emergency response personnel
- Facility safety and security officers

Where Is Violence Most Likely to Occur?

- Psychiatric units
- Emergency rooms
- Waiting rooms
- Geriatric units
- Pharmacies
- Isolated areas
(elevators, restrooms,
stairwells)



When Is Violence Most Likely to Occur? (cont.)

Healthcare workers:

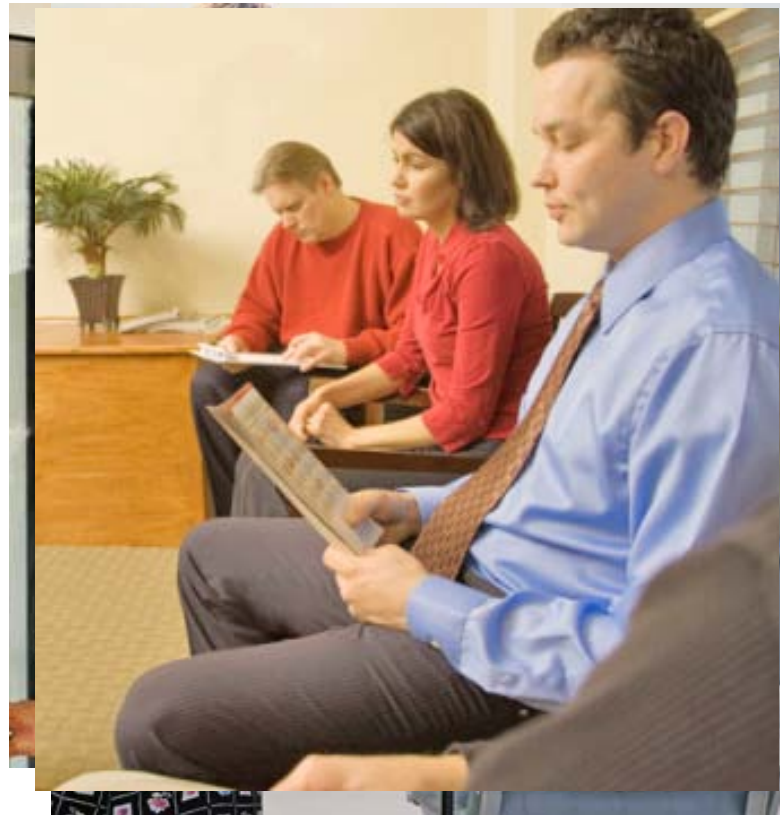
- Periods of low staffing
- Mealtimes
- Visiting hours
- Patient transportation
- Coming and going



When Is Violence Most Likely to Occur? (cont.)

Social service workers:

- Home visits
- High volume times in office
- Coming and going



Who May Become Violent?

- Co-workers and former employees
- Patients and residents
- Social service clients
- Mentally or emotionally disturbed people





Who May Become Violent?

(cont.)

- Drug addicts
- Thieves and other criminals
- Family and friends of patients or clients
- Other outsiders

Other Risk Factors

- Working with volatile people
- Working when understaffed
- Working after dark
- Working where public has unrestricted access
- Attempting to set limits
- Refusing services
- Long waits for service



Other Risk Factors (cont.)

- Overcrowded waiting room
- Involuntary patient admission
- Substance abuse
- Poorly lit areas
- Extreme stress or serious personal problems





What Are the Effects Of Workplace Violence?

Death

Physical injuries

Emotional trauma

**Low morale and
increased stress**

**Fear and
lack of trust**

High turnover



Workplace Violence Risks

True or False?

- F** You are less likely than workers in other industries to be a victim of workplace violence.
- T** You are at greater risk if you work alone or at night.
- F** Only patients or clients commit acts of violence.
- F** Physical injury is the only consequence of workplace violence.

Workplace Violence Risks

Do you understand:

- Risks of workplace violence?
- Individuals who may become violent?
- Effects of workplace violence?



Security Measures

- Understand and comply with security rules
- Know how to summon help
- Protect security-related items
- Keep doors and windows locked
- Control access to work areas



Security Measures (cont.)

- Report security problems
- Report suspicious individuals or activities
- Don't have personal visitors at work
- Keep vehicle doors locked and windows rolled up



Prevention Strategies

- Use the “buddy system”
- Keep in touch with the office
- Arrange a danger signal with co-workers
- Discuss concerns with supervisors and co-workers
- Report threats





Prevention Strategies (cont.)

- Limit visitors to permitted hours and areas
- Transfer potentially violent patients
- Stay alert if you feel uncomfortable
- Don't meet alone with a potentially violent person
- Make sure you have a clear escape path

Look for Signs of Potential Violence

- Expressions of anger or frustration
- Threatening gestures
- Signs of drug or alcohol use
- Signs of mental or emotional disturbance
- Presence of a weapon





Try to Diffuse Potentially Violent Situations

- Present a calm, caring attitude
- Don't threaten
- Don't give orders
- Acknowledge feelings
- Avoid aggressive behavior



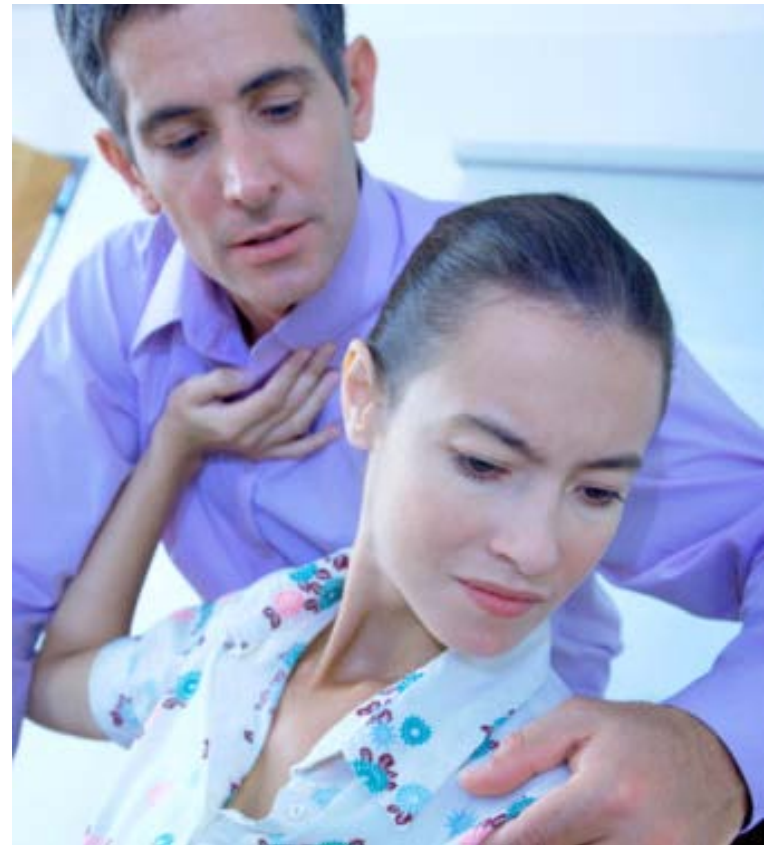
If You Can't Prevent Violence

- Run away, if possible
- Signal a co-worker
- Back away and put obstacles between you and a potential attacker



Sexual Assault

- Stay calm and consider options
- Try to discourage attacker
- Keep assessing the situation
- Don't resist an assailant with a weapon



Sexual Assault (cont.)

After an assault:

- Go to a safe place and call police
- Do not shower or disturb evidence
- Go to the emergency room
- Call someone to be with you
- Get counseling





Violence Prevention: Choose the Best Answer

**What should you
do if you see a
security problem?**

- a. Assume security knows**
- b. Report it**

**How can you help
prevent violence?**

- a. Report threats**
- b. Carry a weapon**

**How can you diffuse
violent situations?**

- a. Be aggressive**
- b. Be calm and caring**

**What should you do if
you have concerns
about a patient or client?**

- a. Talk to supervisor**
- b. Talk to the individual
privately**

Violence Prevention

Do you understand:

- Security measures?
- Violence prevention strategies?
- Signs of impending violence?
- How to defuse violent situations?
- What to do in case of sexual assault?
- How to report violence or threats?





Report All Incidents And Threats of Violence

- Report incidents and threats right away
- You will be protected
- Explain what happened and who was involved
- Don't protect potentially dangerous people

Cooperate in Incident Investigations






Be prepared to:

- Explain what happened
- Tell where and when it happened
- Identify those involved
- Give names of witnesses





KEY POINTS To Remember!

-  Workplace violence is a serious safety problem
-  You must understand risks and keep alert for danger
-  Make sure you know security measures and violence prevention strategies
-  Be prepared to deal with violent situations
-  Report any violence or threats