# Workplace Violence: Prevent the Threat

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# Introduction

- PHLY Insurance

- The role of PHLY Risk Management Services

- My role with PHLY and your organization

# Today's Topics

- Defining workplace violence

- Workplace violence statistics and facts

- Warning signs

- Best practices/policies to prevent workplace violence

- Reacting to workplace violence – active shooter scenario

# Defining Workplace Violence

- **Workplace violence**
  - Any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site
  - It can affect and involve staff, clients, visitors and bystanders

- **Workplace**
  - Any location either permanent or temporary where an employee performs and work-related duty
  - Work buildings, offices, parking lots, field locations, client homes, traveling, etc.

# Defining Workplace Violence

- **Workplace violence includes**:
  - Physical attacks: striking, shooting, stabbing, etc.
  - Non-physical violence: threats, obscene phone calls, intimidation, harassment, stalking, harmful/threatening language
  - Non-physical violence a warning sign for physical violence to come

# Workplace Violence Statistics

- CDC states workplace violence has reached "epidemic proportions"
- Around 2 million people become victims of some form of workplace violence annually
- 60.4 million Americans reported being bullied, harassed or threatened at work in 2022 alone
- Roughly 500 fatal workplace violence incidents per year
- Nearly 400,000 assaults in the workplace annually
- Workplace violence rates are highest in health care and social services organizations
  - Regular close interactions with the public and clients
  - Limited staffing
  - High stress scenarios
- Violence against these workers – 12x higher than rest of US workforce

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# Workplace Violence Warning Signs

- Often can start as small incidents – negative remarks, inappropriate behavior

- Left unaddressed – escalates and can eventually become severe – physical or psychological

- Prevent violence by stopping small incidents before they escalate

- A workplace violence crisis is often times a result of failure to take action when warning signs were present
  - Hindsight is 20/20

- Individuals won't always show the same signs, but it's important to always be on the lookout

# Workplace Violence Warning Signs

- Following signs indicate high levels of stress

- High stress levels are a top contributor to eventual violent outbursts

- Always take note if:
  - Noticeable change in behavioral patterns
  - The behaviors become disruptive to the work environment



- Behaviors include:
  - Crying, sulking, temper tantrums
  - Excessive absenteeism or lateness
  - Pushing the limits of acceptable conduct and disregarding organizational rules
  - Disrespect for authority
  - Increased mistakes or errors
  - Work quality decreasing
  - Swearing or emotional language
  - Sudden isolation
  - Placing blame
  - Major changes in personality, Major changes in personal hygiene

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# Workplace Violence Warning Signs

- Sometimes it's not what a person says, but rather their physical behavior/body's reaction to stress
- Physical warning signs:
  - Excessive sweating
  - Pacing, repetitive movements
  - Signs of extreme fatigue
  - Trembling or shaking
  - Clenching jaw or fists
  - Raising voice
  - Heavy breathing
  - Scowling
  - Violating personal space

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# What Can You Do?

- If warning signs are present, immediate action must be taken

- Concerns should be immediately reported to the supervisor and/or human resources department

- Workplace Violence Prevention Plan should be in place and followed

- If no formal plan is in place, one should be created and implemented

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# Preventing Workplace Violence

- Best practices to prevent workplace violence:
    - Management buy-in and commitment
    - Develop a workplace violence prevention program, integrate with emergency preparedness program
    - Staff training and re-training
    - Continuous improvement, self-audit

# Preventing Workplace Violence

- Management Buy-In and Commitment
  - Starts from the top down
  - Top priority to keep staff and clients safe and healthy
    - This should be reflected in the approach to violent intruder prevention
  - Create and disseminate a clear policy of zero tolerance for workplace violence
  - Ensure no reprisals are taken against employees who report incidents
  - Encourage employees to promptly report incidents and suggest ways to reduce or eliminate risks
    - Even if it's just warning signs – better safe than sorry
    - Staff involvement goes a long way in preventing workplace violence

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# Preventing Workplace Violence

- ## Management Buy-In and Commitment
  - Emphasize staff involvement
  - Make sure staff understands and complies with the workplace violence policy
  - Provide them an avenue for reporting concerns and ideas
  - Provide a means for formal reporting

# Preventing Workplace Violence

- Workplace Violence Prevention Program
  - Formalized program must be in place
  - Should clearly indicate zero tolerance for violence at work
  - Format of the policy:
    - State the policy purpose
    - Define workplace violence
    - Disciplinary action for workplace violence
    - Outline means to report a concern
    - Outline how to document an incident of workplace violence
    - Note the procedures for dealing with a workplace violence event
      - This should work together with your emergency preparedness program

# Preventing Workplace Violence

- Workplace Violence Prevention Program
  - Consult with a 3$^{rd}$ party for assistance/evaluation
    - Insurance provider – risk management department
      - Online resources available: templates, online training, etc.
      - On-site consultation
    - Local law enforcement
    - Site safety/security consultant

| | {the policy name} |
|---|---|
| ☐ | |
| ☐ | [our organization name} is committed to preventing workplace violence and maintaining a safe work environment. The following guidelines have been adopted to address threats of or actual violence that may occur onsite or offsite during work-related activities. |
| ☐ | Violent conduct has no place at {our organization name}. {our organization name} prohibits any acts or threats of violence by any employee or former employee against donors, grantees, grant partners, visitors, volunteers or employees at any time while such individual is engaged in the {our organization name}'s business. |
| ☐ | Employees are expected to use their best judgment about safety for all and to report any suspicious workplace activity, situations or incidents that they observe or know about that raise a concern of violent conduct. Examples of concerns that should be reported are: violent or aggressive acts or repeated stories about violence and aggressive conduct, belligerent, threatening or offensive comments, or remarks about firearms, weapons, or similar potentially dangerous or violent activity. |
| ☐ | Physically hostile conduct or verbal threats should be taken seriously. Such conduct will not be tolerated by {our organization name} and should be reported immediately to a supervisor, Human Resources, or any management employee. |
| ☐ | {our organization name} will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of violence or incidence of actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as possible. |
| ☐ | Retaliation against anyone who raises a good faith concern of violent conduct is prohibited and is a violation of this policy. |

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# Preventing Workplace Violence

- Training
  - The workplace violence prevention program should be acknowledged at hire and as a refresher yearly
  - The same should take place for the emergency response plan
  - Line of communication should be constant – address questions, allow suggestions for improvement
  - If possible, implement some form of hands on training on the emergency response piece
    - Local law enforcement
    - 3rd party specialty organizations: ALICE Active Shooter Training Institute
    - Allows trainees to learn by doing
    - Helps trainees to fully understand why particular actions taken

**ALICE® | TRAINING INSTITUTE**

Alert
Lockdown
Inform
Counter
Evacuate

# Preventing Workplace Violence

- ## Continuous Improvement
  - Having a program and training in place is great, but we can always improve
  - Constantly discuss opportunities for improvement:
    - Regular safety/risk management committee meetings
    - Create a workplace violence committee – program review/self-audit
      - Evaluate workplace violence reports
      - Identify areas for improvement
      - Brainstorm on possible areas of weakness and how to address
- ## Consult with a 3rd party
  - Insurance provider, specialty organization, local law enforcement
  - Policy review
  - Discussions with committee or management
  - Training
  - Physical security inspection of buildings

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# Preventing Workplace Violence

- Recap:
  - Management commitment is key
  - Formalized program must be in place, Emphasis on communication
  - Integrate with emergency preparedness program
  - Training and Re-Training – Consider hands-on option

# Preventing Workplace Violence

- ## Reacting to workplace violence

  - ### Highlighting active shooter incidents and responses

  - ### This also applies to other forms of physical violence

  - ### Importance of training, hands-on training

    - Must know how to react quickly

# Goal of an Active Shooter/Violent Intruder

- ## No intentions on negotiating

- ## Seeking to cause maximum damage

- ## They come prepared with a plan

- ## No set profile

# Active Shooter: What we have learned

- These events can happen anywhere:
  - Business
  - Schools
  - Medical
  - Social gatherings/programs
  - In homes

- Active shooter events are becoming more frequent
  - FBI study published in 2021
  - Looked at 20 years of data
  - In first 7 years, roughly 6 events per year
  - In 2021, over 25 incidents per year

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# What we have learned from prior mass shooting incidents

**Virginia Tech**

Date:          4/16/2007

Injured:       25

Deceased:      32

Duration:      11 minutes

# What we have learned from prior mass shooting incidents

**Gabby Giffords (Safeway)**

Date: 1/8/2011

Injured: 13

Deceased: 6

Duration: <2 minutes

# What we have learned from prior mass shooting incidents

**Century 16 Movie Theater**

| | |
|---|---|
| Date: | 7/20/2012 |
| Injured: | 70 |
| Deceased: | 12 |
| Duration: | <5 minutes |

# What we have learned from prior mass shooting incidents

## Accent Sign

Date:         9/27/2012

Injured:      3

Deceased: 6

Duration:    <6 minutes

# Active Shooter: What have we learned?

- First instinct – call the police and stay put
  - Average law enforcement response time: 5-6 minutes
  - Active shooter events typically last less than 10 minutes
- Lesson: You are on your own for most of the event
- Training and response is key to survival

# Active Shooter: What have we learned?

- The old strategy of shelter in place does not work as intended

- Fatality rate is far higher when response is passive vs. proactive

- Virginia Tech study is the perfect example of this

# Active Shooter: What have we learned?

# Active Shooter: What have we learned?

- The best practice to teach for active shooter, violent intruder with a weapon is Run, Hide, Fight – Department of Homeland Security Recommended

- This method allows for you to react based on the situation that you find yourself in

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# Introduction to ALICE
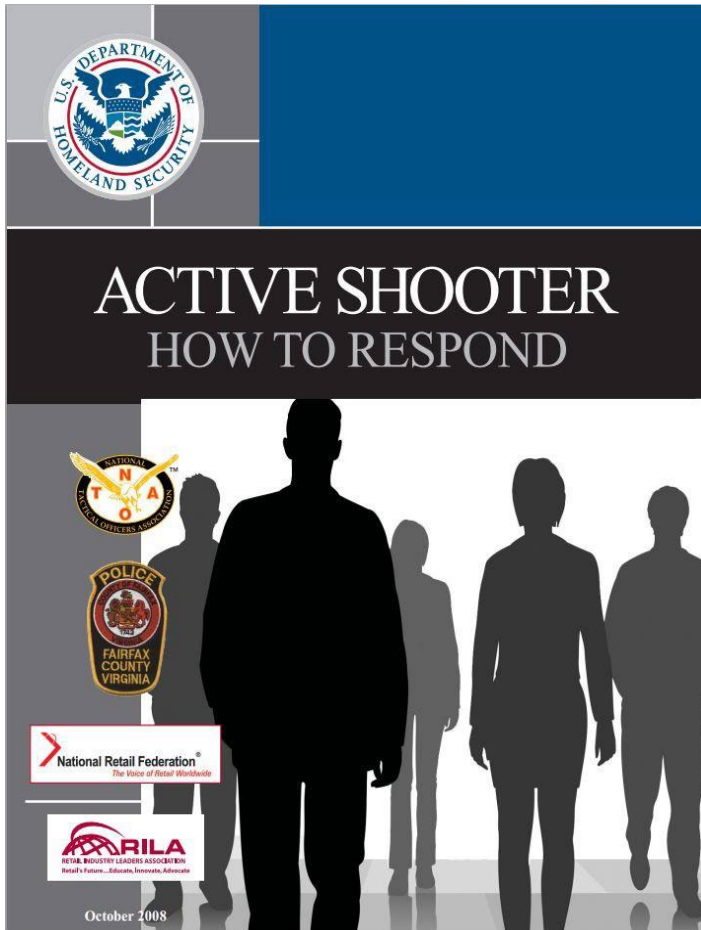


- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- October 2008
- Strategies
  - Run
  - Hide
  - Fight

# Run, Hide, Fight

# Run, Hide, Fight

- Run
  - Evacuation method
  - Base this on location of the shooter and if it can be accomplished safely

- If safe, evacuate the building – Based on the location, have an emergency evacuation assembly area identified. If this is not practical, get as far away from the building as you can and call 911 when safe.

- If necessary, work as a team – evacuate using windows if on the ground floor while trying to remain calm and quiet as possible.

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# Run, Hide, Fight

- Hide
  - If you can't evacuate, find a place to hide where the shooter is less likely to find you
  - If possible, secure the room's entrance (lock the door, barricade the door using tables, chairs, etc.)
  - Stay out of sight
  - Do not respond to voice commands from outside the door until you can verify with certainty that they are being issued by police
  - Wait for the "all-clear" message from authorities

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# Run, Hide, Fight

- Fight
  - The last resort
  - When the shooter/attacker is close range and you cannot evacuate, chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate them
  - Commit to your actions
  - Act as aggressively as possible
  - Throw items
  - Improvise weapons
  - Act as a team if others are with you in the same situation



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# Run, Hide, Fight

- Fight is usually the element that people have an issue with

- Feel as if fighting back against somebody with a weapon won't work

- The OODA Loop
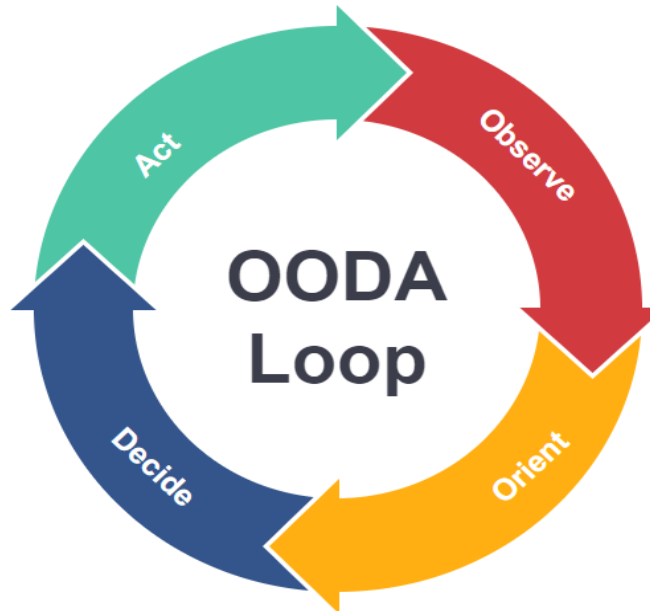
# Run, Hide, Fight

- The OODA Loop
  - Observe, Orient, Decide, Act
  - Decision cycle developed by military strategist Colonel John Boyd
  - Anybody with an action in mind has to go through this process each time
  - Everybody plans how every activity will go
    - Going to the refrigerator for a snack
    - Driving to work
    - Taking the dog for a walk
  - Even an active shooter has a plan and a vision
    - Fighting back disrupts their OODA Loop severely, causing them to start from the beginning again continually
    - Interrupt the OODA Loop as much as possible
    - Remember that they are also human – when there's unexpected stimuli, we all flinch, jump, move head, etc.

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# Run, Hide, Fight

- Interrupt the process of shooting accurately
  - Distract by throwing any items available
  - Movement
  - Noise
  - Distance

- This applies to attacks with a gun or with other weapons

# When you encounter law enforcement

- Hands in plain view with fingers spread

- No sudden movements

- Do not talk or ask questions to law enforcement

- First responding officers are not going to tend to injured



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# Active Shooter Event: Conclusion

- Proactive approach to increase chances of survival

- Empowers individuals to make the best decision under the circumstances to save their life

- Not a procedure

- Based on our natural, human responses to threats

# Wrap-Up

- Items covered today:
  - Defined workplace violence
  - Workplace violence stats and facts
  - Best practices for building workplace prevention policies and controls
  - Importance of proper training
  - Reacting to a violent intruder: Run, Hide, Fight method

# PHLY Insurance Risk Management Services

- On-site services: extra set of eyes on-site, exposure deep dives, training, participation in risk management meetings, etc.

- Online services: training, educational documents, sample policies, templates

- 3rd party partner organizations:

**PHLY**TRAC

**PHLYTrac** PHLY's telematics tool providing an online dashboard that tracks location, speeding, hard breaking, and other fleet statistics - PROVIDED AT NO COST TO ELIGIBLE PHLY CUSTOMERS!

**PHLY**TRAC

**PHLY**SENSE

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**PHLY**SENSE

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Abuse Prevention System

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