Workplace Violence: Corporate readiness for the worst-case scenario

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Learning Objectives:

- Participants will understand why confident and positive forms of leadership, supervision, and management are essential to preventing and/or reducing workplace violence.
- Participants will also learn how to identify potential employee behaviors that may be of concern (case studies presented and discussed), applying appropriate policies to address such concerns and training management staff on dealing with employee matters.
- Participants will also be able to develop proper employee awareness training and what to do in case of an active shooter incident (tactical, medical, and psychological).

I. Introduction

A. Three Keys to Organizational Success

1. Who we bring in the door.
2. Our policy and accountability standards.
3. Leadership (Without it, we really don’t have the first two).

B. Leadership in the context of workplace violence

1. Leadership is a relationship.
2. The cornerstone of leadership is trust.
3. Leadership starts at the top of the organization.

II. Presentation Body

A. Developing High Quality Emergency Action Plans (EAP) for an Active Shooter situation: Planning for the worst case scenario.
1. The Planning Process

a. Choosing the right team

b. Defining the problem

   *Note: Defining the problem is normally the most overlooked and critical step in the planning process. How can we fix a problem we don’t fully understand? In the context of workplace violence, it’s important we get it right the first time, rather than looking back to figure out what went horribly wrong.*

c. Problem Statements for the team *(just a few)*:

   i. *Trends in active shooter incidents have indicated they are becoming more frequent and lethal.*

   ii. *Case studies tell is most active shooters provided behavioral indicators prior to the attack. Note: Hindsight is always 20/20.*

   iii. *Recent trends in the courts have indicated employers should be taking reasonable steps to abate the hazard of workplace shootings.*

   iv. *Law enforcement, emergency medical first responder’s and hospitals have begun to coordinate and align themselves to improve the survivability of victims in mass shooting incidents. This alignment focuses on combat medical training and personal equipment for hemorrhage control. Should corporations consider doing the same?*

   v. *Effective policies for workplace violence indicate emphasis should be placed on prevention (i.e. pre-employment screening, identifying changes in employee behaviors which could lead to workplace violence, and coaching for more positive forms of management, supervision and leadership).*

B. Understanding the Situation: Defining the problem of Active Shooters in the workplace.
1. **Where to find information:**
   
a. Department of Homeland Security – *RUN-HIDE-FIGHT*
   
   1) Active Shooter booklet: How to respond
   2) Pocket guide
   3) Posters

   b. Federal Emergency Management Administration
   
   1) Instructor guides
   2) Student manuals
   3) PDF and Power Points
   4) Online lessons

2. **Definitions:**

   a. Workplace violence
   b. Active Shooter
   c. Active Shooter profile
   d. Mass Murder

3. **Occupational Safety and Health OSHA of 1990**

   a. General Duty Clause, Section 5 (a)(1):

4. **Going Postal:** 30th Anniversary of the Massacre at the Edmond Oklahoma Post Office

   a. Historical overview
   b. Patrick Sherrill’s work performance prior to the shooting

     1) HR Failures
     2) Management Failures
     3) Leadership Failures

C. **Workplace Violence Prevention**

1. **Who We Bring in the Door**

   a. We hire our problems
   b. A person’s past is the best indicator of future performance
   c. Structured, behavioral based interviews
   d. Pre-hire indicators: Edmond case study
2. **Best Use of Introductory Periods**
   a. The point of hire and the introductory period
   b. Edmond case study

3. **Mass Shooting research**
   a. Trends
   b. Copycat research
   c. Targets
   d. Triggering Events

4. **Behavioral indicators of workplace violence: FEMA**
   a. Case Study: WDBJ – TV

5. **Indicators of a potentially lethal employee**
   a. The effects of chronic frustration
   b. Points of intervention
   c. Point of no return

6. **Leadership in the context of workplace violence**
   a. Toxic Leadership
   b. US Postal Service Commission
   c. Developing a fair procedural justice climate
   d. Vigilante model of justice

D. **The Importance of Training**

1. **Victim employee Behaviors:** Edmond
   a. Caught by surprise
   b. Didn’t recognize the sounds of gunshots
   c. Unsure where to exit
   d. Hid in unsecure areas and/or didn’t exit the building when they had the opportunity
   e. Panicked or “froze”

   1) The Effects of Fear
   2) Fight or Flight, or Frozen

2. **Survivor employee behaviors:** Edmond case study
   a. Luck
b. Recognized threat and committed to action
c. Immediately ran for the nearest exit
d. Hid in secure areas
e. Hid in unsecure areas, but when the first opportunity arose they trusted their instinct and ran for an exit (or a more secure area)
f. Fought back as a means of last resort
g. DIDN’T GIVE UP: Having a survivor’s mindset

3. Training to Overcome the effects of fear
   a. The human body's response to fear
   b. Psychological conditioning
   c. Building neural highways
   d. Stress inoculation

4. Train the leaders
   a. Patty Husband’s Story: Edmond case study
   b. Follow the leader

III. Final Thoughts: Preparing for After the Attack
   • Psychological counseling, time and organizational recovery

IV. Conclusions
   • Remember the first key to success is whom we bring in the door. We hire our problems. Prevention remains the best method to prevent an active shooter incident. Identifying pre-employment indicators of poor performance, antisocial behaviors, and its potential for violence could prevent introducing these problems into your workforce. A person’s past is the best indicator for future performance.
   • While the development of sound policies and accountability standards are critically important to organizational success, a successful workplace violence policy is dependent on the perceived fairness of the system we create. Confident and positive forms of leadership, supervision, and management are essential to preventing and/or reducing workplace violence.
   • Most mass active shooters suffered from long periods of frustration and provided pre-attack indicators for violence (red flags). Training your
management and staff to identify and deal with potential employee behaviors that may be of concern is critically important. Merely acting on zero tolerance violations may be too late.

- Being caught by surprise increases an employee’s probability of becoming a casualty in an active shooter incident. Developing proper employee awareness training and what to do in case of an active shooter incident (tactical, medical, and psychological) is critical to employee survival in an active shooter incident.

IV. References


