WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

An Overview

MCCCD College Police

MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Chandler-Gilbert   Mesa   Estrella Mountain   Glendale   Scottsdale   Phoenix

Paradise Valley   Gateway   South Mountain   Rio Salado

Workplace Violence Defined

- Any act where a person is abused, intimidated, threatened, or assaulted in the workplace

- Not just assaults or shootings!

- Threats

- Harassment

- Stalking

- Damage

Four Types of Workplace Violence

- The person committing the crime:
  1. Has no relationship to the workplace (random)
  2. Is the recipient of a service, or other outside connection (vendor, etc.)
  3. Has an employment relationship (current or past)
  4. Has a personal relationship with an employee (current relationship or past relationship)

  Your workplace assessment and programs should address incidents of all four types

The Riskiest (high-murder) Jobs

- Police officers (129)
- Retail sales workers (118)
- Security guards (102)
- Taxi drivers/chauffeurs (89)
- Cashiers (85)
- Restaurant employees (69)
- Food service managers (52)

Source: *US Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 2011-2013

No Workplace Connection

- On July 20, 2012, James Holmes committed a mass shooting inside a theater in Aurora, Colorado
- Killed 12 and injured 70 others

No Workplace Connection (Continued)

- January 2015: Chicago cab driver Chinedu Madu was shot and killed in a robbery
  - The suspect, with five drug convictions on his record, got away with less than $100
- April 2015: 35-year-old Seth Martin killed Phoenix Circle K clerk John Still, age 46
  - Martin was arrested after video led to leads that identified him

Service Recipients

- 55-year old Stephen Pasceri shot 44-year-old Michael Davidson in a Boston hospital before committing suicide
- Davidson was the surgeon for Pasceri's mother, who later died

Employment Related

- August 20, 1986: Postal worker Patrick Sherrill pursued and shot 20 coworkers, killing 14, before committing suicide
- This act resulted in the term "going postal"
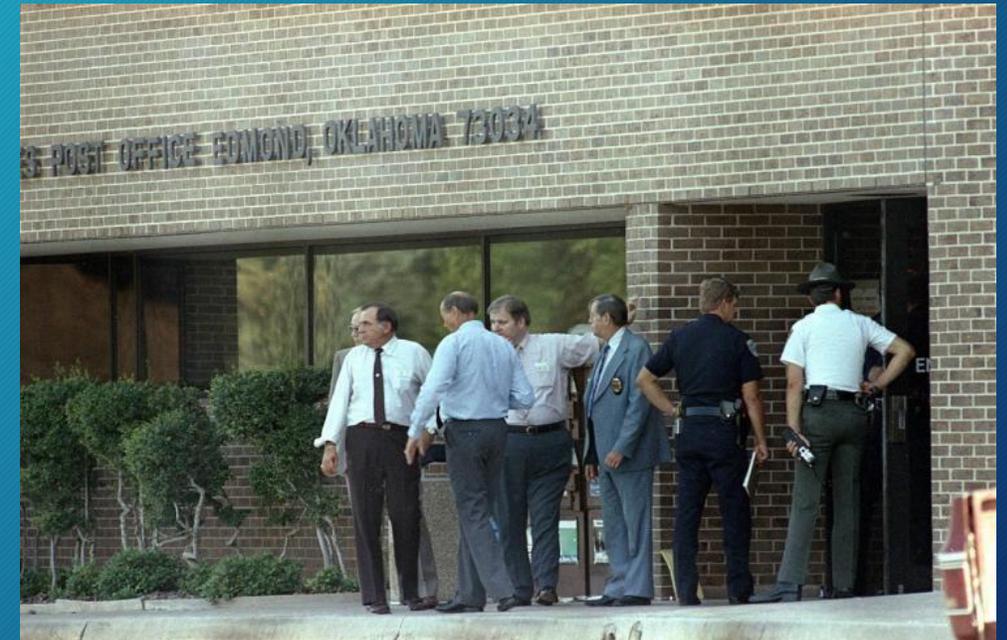
Employment Related (Continued)

- December 7, 1987: former Pacific Southwest Airlines employee David Burke killed the pilots of a commuter jet, crashing the plane, killing all 43 people on board
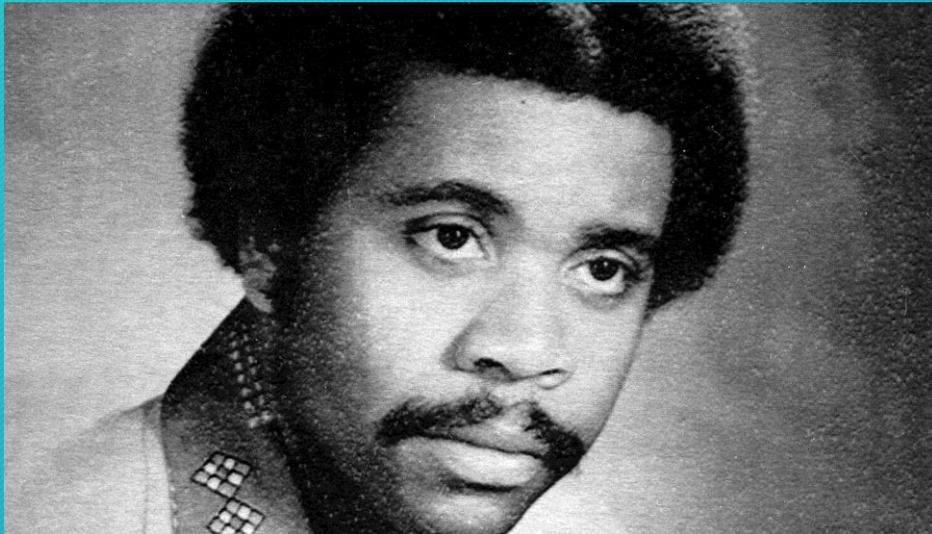
Personal Relationship

- October 2011: 44-year-old Scott Dekraai killed his ex-wife and seven others inside a Seal Beach, California beauty salon

Impact of Workplace Violence

- Some 2 million people each year report some type of workplace violence

- Employers lose an estimated 1.8 million work days each year due to workplace violence

- The average cost to American businesses each year lost to workplace violence is estimated at $36 billion

- It is estimated that 25% of workplace violence goes unreported

Why Be Concerned About Workplace Violence?

- It avoids exposure to liability and litigation
- A good program contributes to the safety of employees
- Employers have a duty to provide a safe work environment
- It makes sound business sense

Legal Issues Involved In Workplace Violence Lawsuits

- Lawsuits often involve:
  - Negligent hiring
  - Negligent retention
  - Negligent supervision
  - Inadequate security

OSHA Duties

- Each employer:
  - Shall furnish to each employee a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees
  - While not specified, this includes prevention and control of workplace violence

Elements of a Workplace Violence Prevention Program

- Management commitment and employee involvement
- Strong policy
- Worksite analysis
- Hazard prevention and control
- Training and education
- Record keeping and evaluation
- Employee assistance programs

Management-Employee Commitment

- Essential for an effective program
- Create a clear policy prohibiting any form of violence
- Encourage reporting
- Prohibit reprisals to those who report acts
- Maintain zero tolerance for violent acts
- Investigate and take action on all reports
- Maintain a culture of respect

Multidisciplinary Threat Assessment Teams

- Threat assessment vs. behavioral intervention
- A good team requires a number of business disciplines:
  - Police (or security/public safety)
  - Management
  - Legal support
  - Human resources
  - Student affairs (schools)
  - Psychological services

Common Traits of Violent Workers

- The following characteristics are the most common in those who commit workplace violence:
  - History of violent behavior – this includes any involvement with the criminal justice system
  - Middle-aged white male
  - Upset with only having "low-level" tasks to do
  - Bitter and unhappy
  - No job security
  - Problems growing up, including bad grades in school, abusive parents, etc.
  - Substance abuse, including taking heavy medication

General Suspect Factors

- Mental illness
- Substance abuse
- Bullying behavior
- History of violence or bad employment behavior (proper screening may prevent this)
- Lack of respect for rules or authority
- Life changes (job, school, relationships)
- Threats or fascination with violence or weapons

The Pathway to Violence

- The "grievance"
- Violent ideation
- Research and planning the attack
- Pre-attack preparation
- Probing and breaches
- Attack

Grievance

- Sense of injustice
- Sense of mission
- Sense of loss
- Sense of destiny
- Desire for revenge
- Desire for recognition or fame

Violent Ideation

- Discusses with others
- Identification with other assassins
- Violence is the only alternative
- Fascination with weapons
- Fixation on anniversaries

Research and Planning

- Stalking
- Target research
- Suspicious inquiries
- Information gathering
- Surveillance
- Boundary probing
- Testing security

Pre-Attack Preparation

- Acquiring weapons
- Assembling equipment
- Arranging transportation
- Observing significant dates
- Conducting final-act behaviors
- Costume

Probing and Breaches

- Circumventing security
- Lethal approach
- Surreptitious approach
- Boundary probes
- Surveillance

Threat Evaluation

- Remember "JACA"
- Evaluate whether the person feels:
  - Justified in their use of violence
  - Alternatives to their use of violence
  - Consequences are not feared
  - Ability to carry out the threat

The Threat Assesment Process

- Identify the person(s) of interest
- Gather information (investigate)
- Assess and evaluate the information
- Manage the situation:
  - The subject
  - The circumstances (stress factors)
  - The victim(s)
  - The target(s)

Threat Enablers

- Violence preoccupation
- Intent and threats
- Others are concerned
- Recent or impending losses or significant stress
- Entitlement and negative attitudes
- Noncompliant or menacing behaviors

Threat Enablers (continued)

- Capacity and actions preparatory for violence
- Extreme moods
- Real provocations or destabilizers
- Irrational thinking
- Substance abuse
- Known history of violence, criminality, or conflict

Threat Inhibitors (Stabilizers)

- Positive personal attachments
- Remorse is genuine for transgressions
- Obeys limits set by employer or authorities
- Takes sanctioned actions to address "wrongs" and setbacks
- Enjoys life and freedom
- Coping skills are positive
- Treatment compliance

Behavioral Intervention

- Don't tolerate bad behavior – it escalates
- Use a multi-disciplinary team to manage behavior:
  - Police (if acts approach criminal violations)
  - Management
  - Human resources
  - Behavioral health professionals
  - Legal advisors

Behavioral Intervention (Continued)

- Intervention can include many actions:
  - Discipline
  - Referral for behavioral health counseling
  - Suspension
  - Termination
  - Arrest

What To Do During An Act Of Violence

- Run
- Hide
- Fight
- Discussion…

Safe Terminations

- Prepare and plan:
  - Will the employee react emotionally (history)?
  - Who will conduct the termination meeting?
  - Who should witness the meeting?
  - What will be done with the employee's personal possessions?
  - When will the employee be told of the meeting (planned vs. surprise)?
  - How will remaining staff be told?

During the Termination Meeting

- Make a written script – keep it brief
- Don't use your office – choose space with excape options and privacy
- Consider a panic button and CCTV
- Ensure security is available if necessary
- Be calm and respectful
- Answer questions promptly

After The Termination Meeting

- Collect keys and employer property
- Allow the employee to retrieve personal property
- Severance pay
- Continue medical benefits and other assistance programs
- Separation agreement
- Be respectful in front of other employees

Physical Security

- Evaluate potential threats to the workplace
- Evaluate the need for open access versus ability to control access to a workplace (depending upon the business)
- As appropriate, employee access control
- Enforce ID policies for access
- Evaluate security for property border, fences and gates, parking lots, entrance doors, and interior doors
- Evaluate need for safe rooms

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

- CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design
- Natural environment, barriers, and lighting are all factors to assess and design a safe workplace
- Establish barriers to prevent access by cars
- Secure entrances
- Minimize locations criminals can hide
- Perimeter barriers can be man-made (fences or walls) or natural (hedges, canals, etc.)

Discussion and Questions

Questions?