Reducing Workplace Violence in Community Hospitals

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Program and Performance Objectives

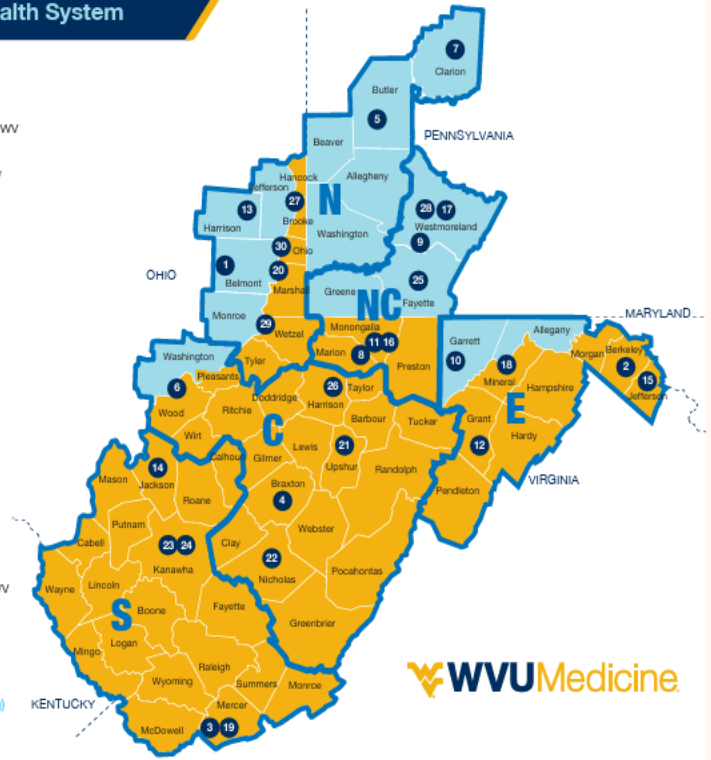
- Describe national trends and incidence rates of workplace violence in healthcare.
- Identify risk factors for violence and related patient safety risks.
- Examine prevention program structure, key components, and role in protecting staff, customers, and patients.
- Discuss how prevention initiatives affect the health system's culture of safety.
- Use verbal and non-verbal techniques to de-escalate situations.
- Foster a trauma-informed care (TIC) mindset.
- Prioritize self-care and identify resources for staff.

About Us

- WVU Medicine is the clinical and academic health enterprise of West Virginia University and stands as the state's largest health system and private employer.
- Founded in 1996 to unify academic medicine, clinical care, and community health initiatives, WVU Medicine has grown into a regional powerhouse with 30 hospitals across West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.
- Specialized Institutes:
  - WVU Cancer Institute
  - WVU Critical Care and Trauma Institute
  - WVU Heart and Vascular Institute
  - WVU Eye Institute
  - WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute
- Employs over 47,000 people
- Over 3,260 beds

West Virginia University Health System

1. **Barnesville Hospital** Barnesville, OH
2. **Berkeley Medical Center** Martinsburg, WV
3. **Bluefield Pavilion Campus** Bluefield, WV
4. **Braxton County Memorial Hospital** Gassaway, WV
5. **Butler Memorial Hospital** Butler, PA (pending)
6. **Camden Clark Medical Center** Parkersburg, WV
7. **Clarion Hospital** Clarion, PA (pending)
8. **Fairmont Medical Center** Fairmont, WV
9. **Frick Hospital** Mt. Pleasant, PA (pending)
10. **Garrett Regional Medical Center** Oakland, MD
11. **Golisano Children's Hospital** Morgantown, WV
12. **Grant Memorial Hospital** Petersburg, WV
13. **Harrison Community Hospital** Cadiz, Ohio
14. **Jackson General Hospital** Ripley, WV
15. **Jefferson Medical Center** Ranson, WV
16. **J.W. Ruby Memorial Hospital** Morgantown, WV
17. **Latrobe Hospital** Latrobe, PA (pending)
18. **Potomac Valley Hospital** Keyser, WV
19. **Princeton Community Hospital** Princeton, WV
20. **Reynolds Memorial Hospital** Glen Dale, WV
21. **St. Joseph's Hospital** Buckhannon, WV
22. **Summersville Regional Medical Center** Summersville, WV
23. **Thomas Memorial Hospital** South Charleston, WV
24. **Thomas Orthopedic Hospital** Charleston, WV
25. **Uniontown Hospital** Uniontown, PA
26. **United Hospital Center** Bridgeport, WV
27. **Weirton Medical Center** Weirton, WV
28. **Westmoreland Hospital** Greensburg, PA (pending)
29. **Wetzel County Hospital** New Martinsville, WV
30. **Wheeling Hospital** Wheeling, WV



Confidential

WVUMedicine Mission and Vision

- Mission
  - To improve the health of West Virginians and all we serve through excellence in patient care, research, and education.

- Vision
  - To transform lives and eliminate health disparities through a nationally recognized patient-centered system of care that includes:
    - An expanded regional healthcare delivery system
    - Consistent, integrated patient care recognized for delivering the right care in the right place at the right time at all sites
    - Development of new approaches to improve healthcare, including team-based models of care, expanding WVU clinical and translational research
    - Educational programs throughout the network recognized for training uniquely qualified healthcare team members and leaders
    - A culture of performance and excellence throughout the network

WVUMedicine Butler Memorial and Clarion Hospital Overview





- 2 hospitals totaling 342 beds
- 20+outpatient sites
- 20+physician practice locations
- ~3,000 employees
- ~400 medical staff (physicians & APPs)
- Residency programs
- Serves a 250,000 population across a multicounty region

Overview of Services Provided

- Bariatrics
- Behavioral Health
  - Adult and Geriatric
- Breast Health
- Cancer Care
- Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Cardiology Services
- Cardiothoracic Surgery
- Dermatology
- Diabetes
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment
- Electrophysiology
- Emergency
- Food Institute
- Gastroenterology
- General surgery
- Heart Failure Clinic
- Heart, Lung & Vascular
- Infectious Disease
- Intensive Care
- Interventional Cardiology
- Interventional Radiology
- Laboratory
- Lung clinic
- Maternity/ Obstetrical
- Neurology
- Pain care
- Palliative care
- Pelvic Health Therapy
- Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
- Physical Therapy
- Primary Care
- Pulmonology
- Primary Stroke
- Radiology & Diagnostic Imaging
- Robotic Surgery
- Sleep Medicine
- Speech Therapy
- Stroke Care
- Thoracic Surgery
- Urology
- Valve clinic
- Vascular Surgery
- Weight Management
- Women's Health Services
- Wound Care

Background and Prevalence of Workplace Violence

Definition of Violence

Workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening behavior that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers and visitors. Acts of violence is the third-leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in the United States, according to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries**



GROUP QUESTIONS

- Have you ever worked with an agitated individual?
- What causes people you work with to become distressed or agitated?
- What behaviors do you see when a person is agitated?

National Workplace Violence Statistics

Prevalence of Workplace Violence in Healthcare

- Healthcare workers experience assault rates 5x higher than other industries
  - 73% report workplace violence (24% physical; up to 67% verbal)
  - COVID-19 intensified violence toward healthcare staff
  - Nurses face more than double the physical violence rate of physicians
  - Approximately 80% of incidents go unreported

Types of Violence

- Includes physical assaults, verbal abuse, and threats impacting staff safety

High-Risk Environments

- Emergency departments and psychiatric units experience the highest rates of violence

Pennsylvania Statistics and Trends

Workplace Violence in Health Care

- 81.6% of nurses experienced at least one form of workplace violence in the past year
- Incidents range from verbal threats to physical assaults, impacting morale, productivity, and retention
- COVID-19 further heightened risks

Hospital Safety Measures (2024–25 HAP Survey)

- 100% provide staff education on safety protocols
- 99% promote respectful behavior initiatives
- 96% offer de-escalation training
- 95% have enhanced security measures
- 81% post zero-tolerance violence notices
- 63% use weapons-detection measures

High-Risk Settings

Emergency departments, psychiatric units, and long-term care facilities face disproportionately higher violence due to high-stress environments, behavioral challenges, and staffing shortages

Contributing Factors to Workplace Violence

Key Factors Increasing Workplace Violence

- Behavioral health challenges
- Understaffing
- Long wait times
- Poor environmental design



Increased Risk of Workplace Violence

- Higher incident rates
- Greater staff safety concerns

Impact of Workplace Violence on Organizations

Workforce Impact

Workforce:

- Increased stress and burnout
- Higher absenteeism and turnover
- Reduced staff morale
- Declines in quality of patient care



Financial and Organizational Impact

Financial & Organizational

- Increased medical care and injury-related costs
- Higher legal fees and workers' compensation expenses
- Operational disruptions and productivity loss
- Exposure to lawsuits and regulatory penalties
- Reputational damage affecting trust and confidence
- Need for strong risk-management strategies to mitigate consequences

"The AHA estimates the total annual financial cost of violence to hospitals in 2023 to be $18.27 billion." – Beckers Hospital Review

- Pre-event costs - **$3.62 billion**
- Post-event costs - **$14.65 billion**

Risk to Patient Safety and Role of Prevention Programs

Threats to Patient Safety



Impact on Patient Care

- Disrupted care delivery and workflow delays
- Increased medical errors due to stress and distraction
- Reduced staff responsiveness to patient needs

Benefits of Workplace Violence Prevention Programs

- Safer work environment for staff and patients
- Reduced incidents and associated costs
- Improved staff retention and wellbeing
- Enhanced patient care quality and satisfaction
- Stronger organizational culture and trust
- Ensured compliance with legal and regulatory requirements

Regulatory Requirements and Expectations

Workplace Violence Prevention

Standards & Requirements



Risk Assessment

Identify potential workplace violence hazards early



Prevention Policies

Clear policies reduce incident likelihood



Staff Training

Comprehensive training prepares employees to



Incident Reporting

Effective systems ensure timely documentation and response



State Laws & OSHA Guidelines

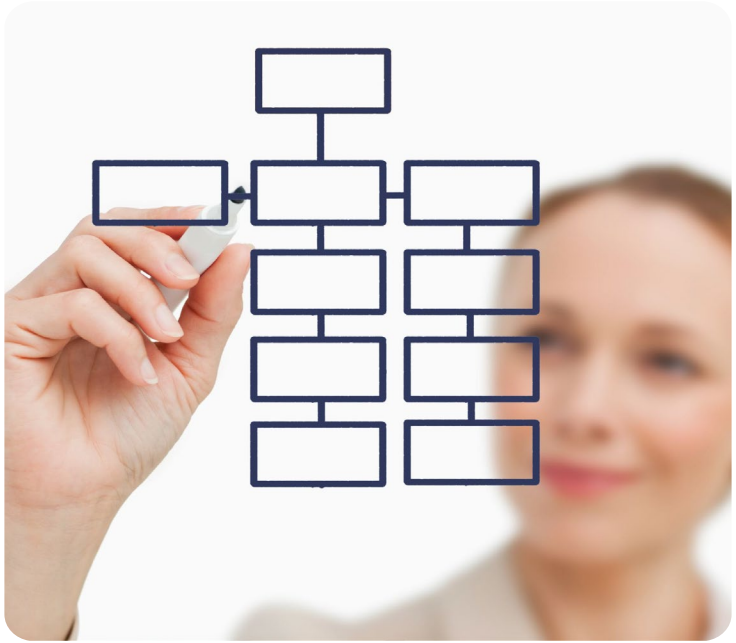
Mandate strategies for healthcare settings



Industry Best Practices

Emphasize proactive measures

Committee Team Composition & Reporting Hierarchy



Multidisciplinary Team Members

- Committees should include members from clinical, security, and administrative backgrounds to cover diverse expertise.

Clear Reporting Lines

- Well-defined reporting hierarchy enables swift decision-making and effective program oversight

Leadership Involvement and Support Strategies

Strategic Direction

- Leadership sets clear goals and vision to guide safety initiatives across the organization.

Resource Allocation

- Leaders ensure necessary resources are available to implement safety programs effectively.

Program Championing

- Leaders ensure necessary resources are available to implement safety programs effectively.

Conducting Security Risk Assessments with Community and Population Analysis

Importance of Regular Assessments

- Conducting regular security assessments ensures updated understanding of risks and vulnerabilities in the community.

Community Factors Considered

- Incorporating local community dynamics and social factors helps identify relevant security threats effectively.

Patient Demographics Role

- Analyzing patient demographics and tailor prevention strategies to specific population needs and vulnerabilities.

Tailored Prevention Efforts

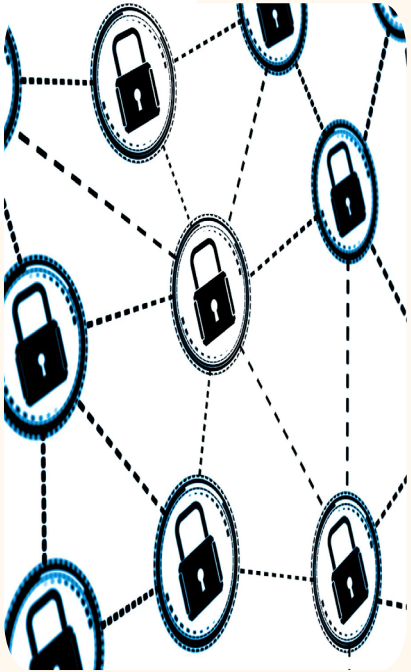
- Customized prevention plans based on community and population data improve effectiveness of security measures.

Early Risk Recognition

- Identifying potentially violent patients early during triage is critical for safety and preparedness.

Timely Intervention

- Early detection allows healthcare teams to intervene promptly to deescalate situations.



Physical and Technological Safeguards

Physical Security Measures

- Metal detectors and trained security personnel help deter weapons and respond quickly to threats in healthcare settings.

Emergency Alert Systems

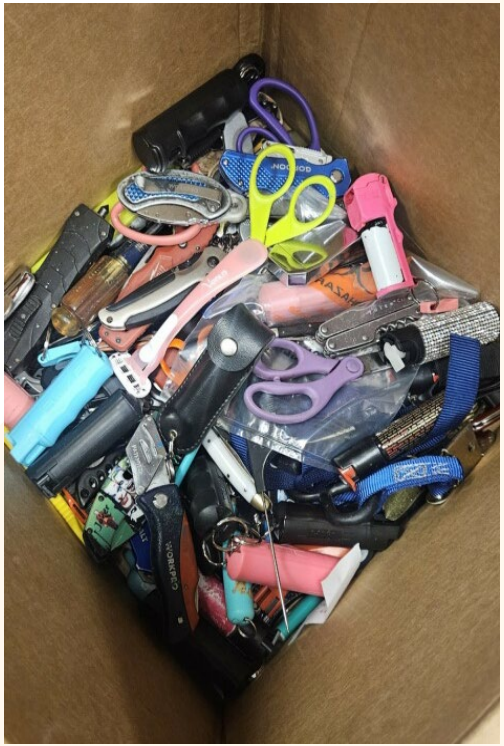
- Panic alarms placed in patient care areas allow immediate assistance requests, reducing harm and response times.

Technological Safety Enhancements

- EHR risk alerts and surveillance with real-time analytics enable proactive identification and intervention of potential threats.
- Surveillance Implementation
- Surveillance cameras provide continuous monitoring, deterring unauthorized access and enhancing safety.

Controlled Access and Training

- Visitor management systems control entry to sensitive zones, supported by staff training and communication protocols.



Development of Unit-Specific Prevention Plans with Frontline Staff Input

Frontline Worker Engagement

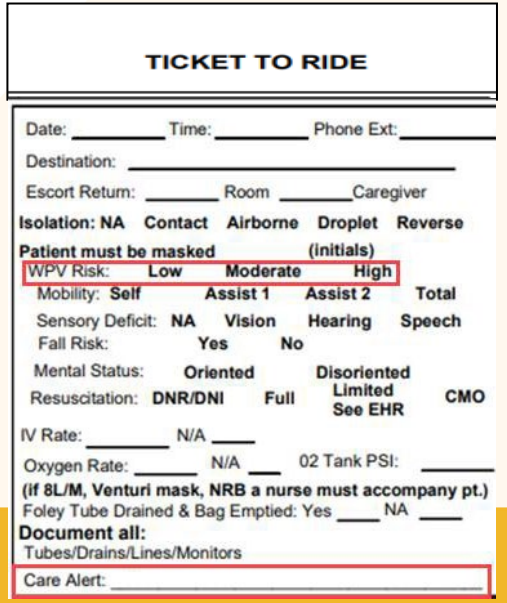
- Involving frontline staff in planning leverages their practical experience for more relevant prevention strategies.

Practical and Effective Strategies

- Collaborative input ensures prevention plans are realistic and address actual challenges faced on units.







TICKET TO RIDE

Date: _____ Time: _____ Phone Ext: _____

Destination: _____

Escort Return: _____ Room _____ Caregiver

Isolation: NA Contact Airborne Droplet Reverse

Patient must be masked (initials)

WPV Risk: **Low Moderate High**

Mobility: **Self Assist 1 Assist 2 Total**

Sensory Deficit: **NA Vision Hearing Speech**

Fall Risk: **Yes No**

Mental Status: **Oriented Disoriented**

Resuscitation: **DNR/DNI Full Limited See EHR CMO**

IV Rate: _____ N/A ____

Oxygen Rate: _____ N/A ___ 02 Tank PSI: _____

(if 8L/M, Venturi mask, NRB a nurse must accompany pt.)

Foley Tube Drained & Bag Emptied: Yes ____ NA ____

Document all:

Tubes/Drains/Lines/Monitors

Care Alert: _____

Team Approach

- Trust your instincts
- Communicate with fellow staff
- Use the buddy system
- Delegate appropriate roles
- Make sure you have enough staff to intervene safely
- Identify “Safe Rooms” for staff



How to get HELP

Internal Codes

Request Increased Security Presence

Calling Security/Local Law Enforcement

Violence Prevention Training Approaches



Verbal De-escalation Training

Builds communication skills to safely defuse conflict



Physical Defense Techniques

Teaches safe, defensive responses to aggressive behavior



Comprehensive Crisis Management (Western Psychiatric Hospital)

AVADE°: Awareness, Vigilance, Avoidance Defense, Escape

Includes internal code calls (e.g. Code Yellow)



Emergency Response Training

Prepares staff to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies

Includes internal code calls (e.g. Code Yellow)

Workplace Violence Program Best Practices

Key Elements of Effective Training Programs

- Regular training sessions reinforce skills and support continuous learning
- Scenario-based learning builds practical, real-world application
- Strong management support ensures resources and program success
- Integrating training into the safety culture strengthens organizational commitment

Evaluating Training Effectiveness

- Knowledge retention assessments measure how well staff retain key skills
- Incident rate monitoring shows real-world impact on safety
- Staff confidence evaluations gauge readiness to apply training
- Feedback collection identifies opportunities to improve training programs

Reporting, Investigation, and Communication of Workplace Violence Events

Incident Reporting Procedures

- Establishing clear reporting procedures ensures timely and accurate documentation of workplace violence events.

Investigation Process

- Thorough investigation promotes accountability and helps identify root causes to prevent future incidents.
- Debrief

Effective Communication

- Transparent communication fosters trust and continuous improvement in workplace safety measures.

Importance of Transparency

- Open reporting of workplace violence incidents is essential for identifying patterns and risks within the health system.

Fostering Safety Culture

- Sharing incident data encourages a proactive environment focused on reducing violence and enhancing staff wellbeing.



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE TIPSHEET:
DATE: February 2025

Independence HEALTH SYSTEM

Violence is *NOT* ok!!

Did you know that Verbal Abuse is the most common form of workplace violence?

Verbal abuse of healthcare workers is a form of workplace violence that can include threats, bullying, and name-calling. It can have serious consequences for the mental health of healthcare workers.

Prevention and Intervention:

- Teach healthcare workers de-escalation techniques and conflict resolution skills.
- Enhanced security measures.
- Raising awareness among healthcare workers about reporting incidents of violence and providing them with support.
- Legal and regulatory measures to prosecute individuals who engage in violence against healthcare workers.
- Encouraging healthcare workers to report incidents without fear of retaliation.

Impact on victim:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Burnout
- Decreased job satisfaction

"Changing the culture surrounding healthcare and patient expectations is crucial. Efforts should focus on promoting respect, empathy, and understanding between healthcare providers, patients, and their families."

Violence Prevention and De-escalation

BMH and Clarion

Risk Factors for Violence - Individual

- **History of Violence**
- Trauma
- Drugs and alcohol
- Medical conditions (pain, hypoglycemia, UTI, etc.)
- Lack of coping skills
- Lack of social supports
- Mental Health Crisis

What is mental health crisis?

An acute condition that involves an overwhelming disruption of an individual's normal state

Usual methods of coping and problem solving do not work

Individual loses their ability to rationalize

Risk factors for Violence - Environmental



Clinical areas



Non-Clinical areas, waiting rooms



Building safety- Badge access, Locking doors, etc.



Outside- parking lots



Security Availability- How to call for help

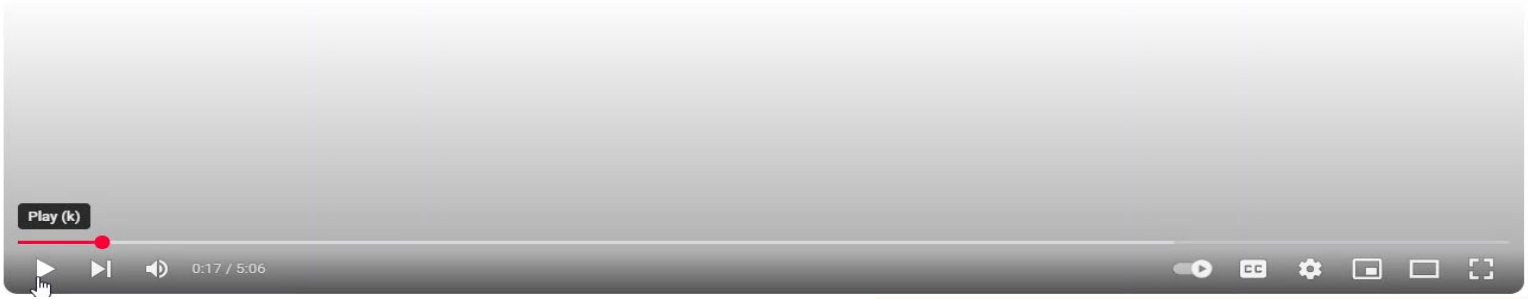

Brewer


RECEPTION

Can we be the problem?



The following video includes two scenarios. The first scenario is an example of common practice errors, the second of improved practice.



- DDCares Best Practices: The aggressive patient

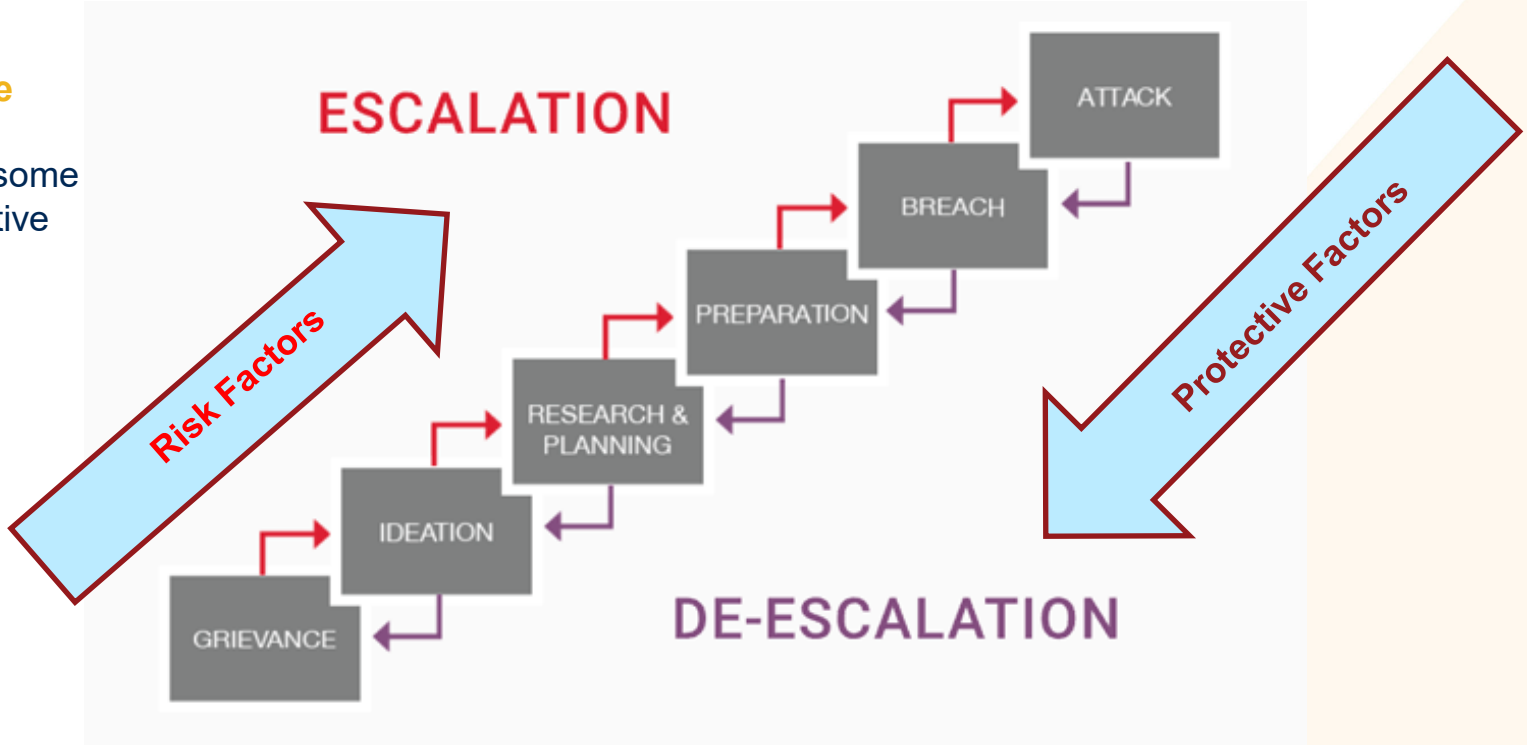
Staff Risk Factors

- Were you ever in a situation where you or a coworker caused someone to escalate?
- What would you do if you walked into the room and saw a staff member escalating the individual?
- See something. Say something.

Pathway to Intended Violence

Grievance

Experiencing some sort of negative emotion



Definition of De-escalation

The process of reducing the intensity or severity of a potentially violent or volatile situation, often through communication and behavioral techniques, to prevent escalation and promote a peaceful resolution

CISA Reference

Guidelines for De-escalation



VERBAL



NON-VERBAL



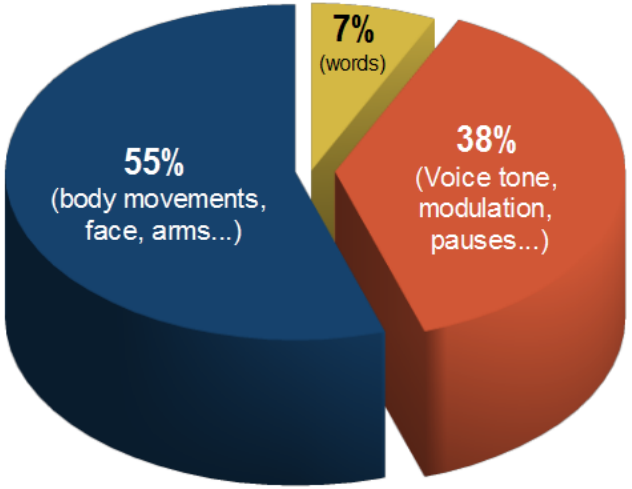
ENVIRONMENTAL

Verbal Communication Skills

- Active listening
- Offer Choices
- Empathy
- Nonjudgmental behaviors
- Tone of voice
- Limit setting
- Agree to disagree
- Be concise
- AIDET
- Distraction/ Redirection

Non-verbal communication

- The STAMP Tool assists you in recognizing an escalating patient.
- **STAMP**:
  - **Staring**
  - **Tone**
  - **Anxiety**
  - **Mumbling**
  - **Pacing**



Body language

Personal space

Facial expressions

Eye contact or lack of eye contact

Environmental Adaptations

- Remove the audience
- Decrease stimulation (turn off lights)
- Diversional activity
- Increase stimulation
- Changing the environment
- Appropriate attire
- Situational Awareness

Definition Trauma informed care

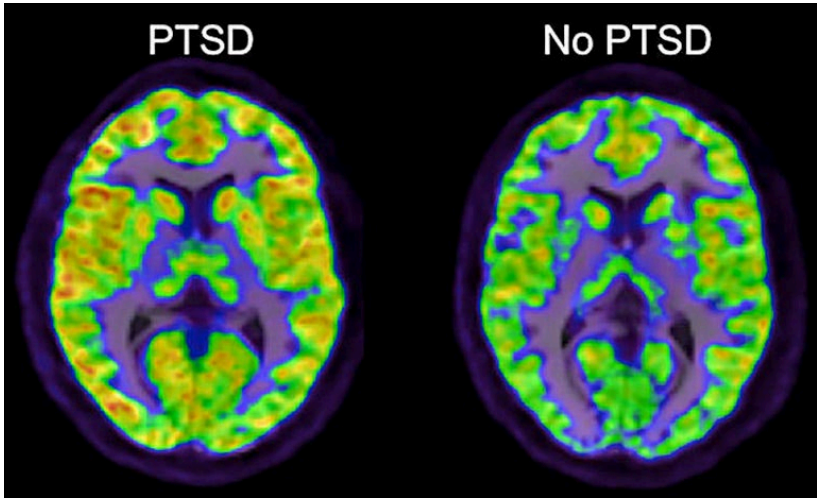
Trauma informed care is a holistic approach to delivering services and treatment that considers the impact of trauma on a person's mental, physical, and spiritual health.

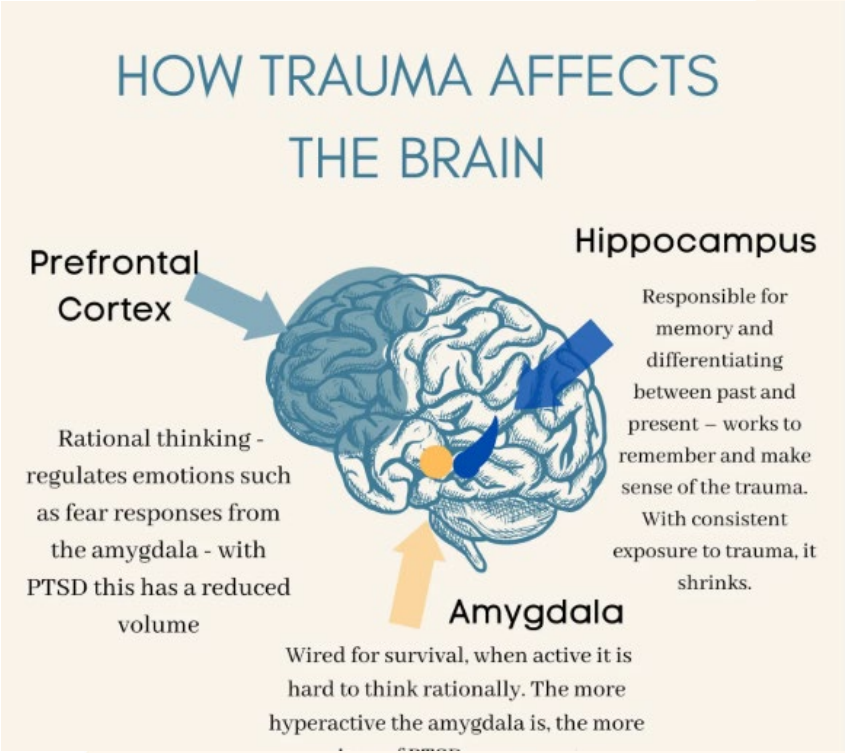


Examples of Trauma

- Abuse and neglect
- Witnessing a tragic event
- Assault
- Death of a loved one
- Being involved in an accident

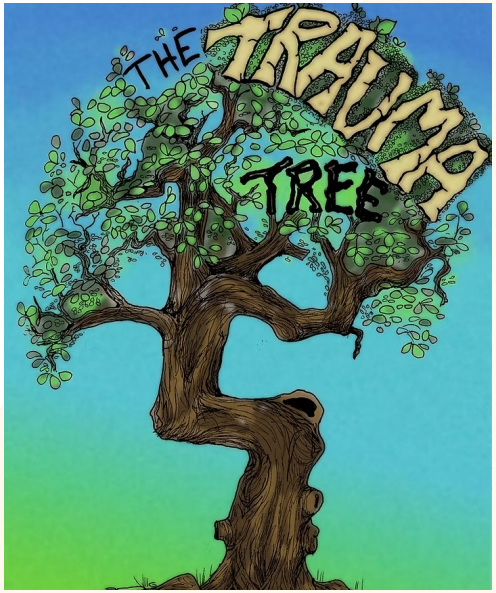
A picture is worth a thousand words!



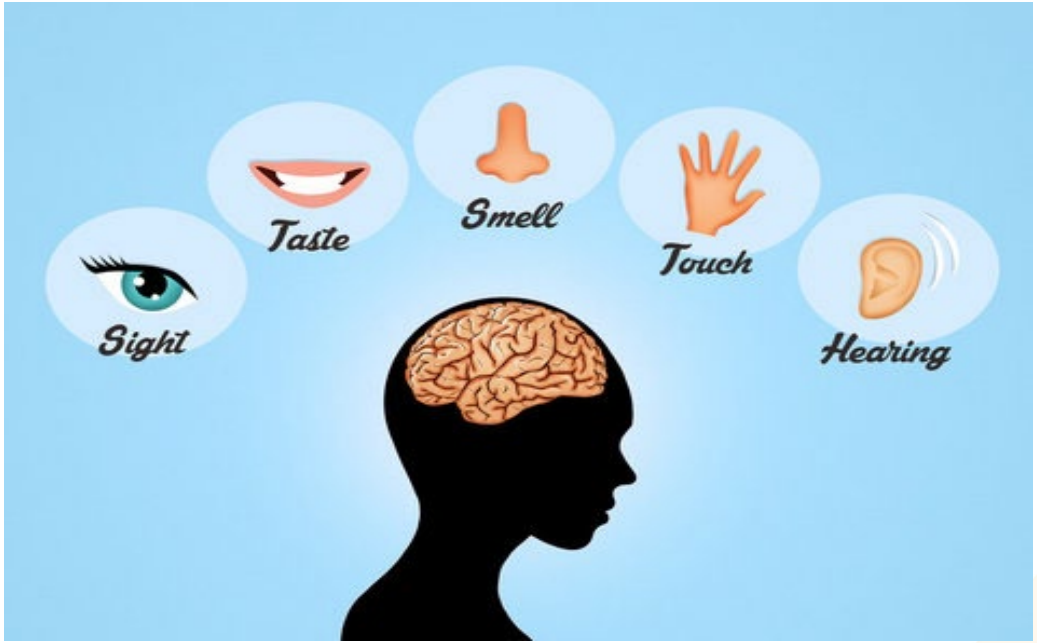


Effects of Trauma

- Increase risk of suicide
- Live in Fight/Flight
- Increased impulsivity
- Impaired decision-making skills
- Limited ability to trust
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Decreased coping skills
- Physical symptoms- overeating, high blood pressure, memory, diabetes, etc..



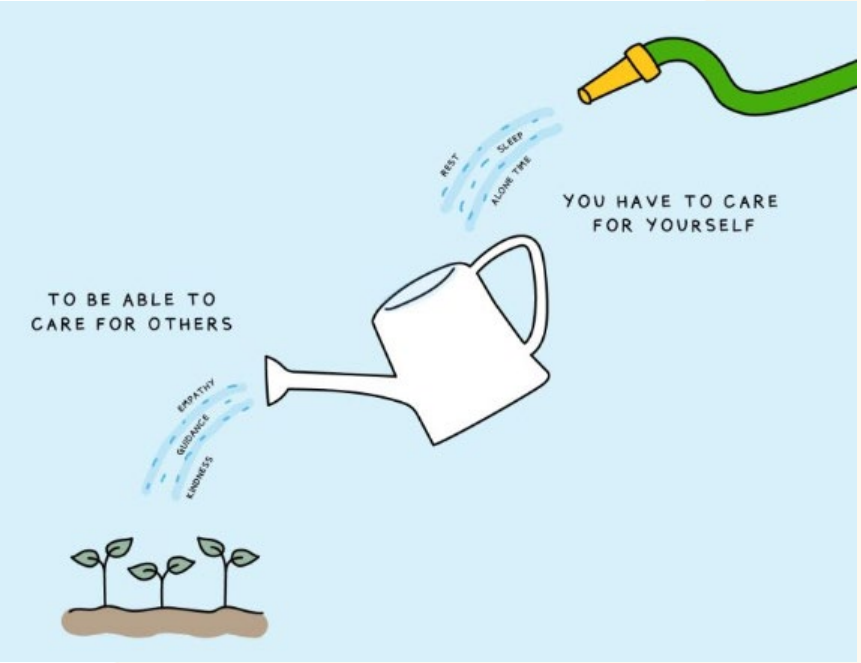
Trauma Triggers



- Auditory
- Visual
- Olfactory
- Gustatory
- Tactile

Self-Care

- Exercise
- Eating healthy
- Getting enough sleep
- Hobbies



How to take care of yourself-Self-care Assessment

Self-care activities are the things you do to maintain good health and improve well-being. You'll find many of these are things you already do as part of your normal routine. Think about how often you are performing different self-care activities. The goal of this is to help you learn about your self-care needs by spotting patterns and recognizing area of your life that need more attention.

Evaluation Criteria	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Weak	I want to improve on
Review each item and mark the appropriate box. Star the ones you would like to try to work on.					☆
Exercise					
Eat healthy foods					
Participate in fun activities					
Get enough sleep					
Take time for yourself					
Find reasons to laugh					
Get away from distractions (phone, email, social media. Etc.)					
Learn new things, unrelated to work or school					
Go on vacation or day trips					
Recognize my own strengths and achievments					
Pray/Meditate/thought and reflection					
Recognize the things that give meaning to my life					
Participate in a cause that is important to me					
Improve my professional skills or learn new things related to my profession					
Take on projects that are rewarding or interesting					
Act in accordance with my morals and values					
Spend time with people who I like					
Have stimulating conversations					
Maintain balance between my personal and professional life					
Take breaks during work					
Do something comforting (watch a movie, take a bath, read, etc.)					
Overall self-care					

Resources for Staff

Employee Assistance Program	Clergy
Private Counseling	Primary Care Doctor




Independence
HEALTH SYSTEM
Employee Assistance Program
Play
00:01
vimeo

Comprehensive Support Services



Counseling Services

- Supports emotional recovery and overall mental well-being
- Professional counseling available for staff
- Employee Assistance Program – Individual or group support



Medical Care

- Ensures treatment for physical injuries and health needs
- Access to Employee Health
- Emergency Department available for urgent evaluation

Conclusion

Leadership Commitment

- Strong leadership commitment is essential to establish and sustain workplace violence prevention programs in healthcare settings.
- Strong commitment from all levels creates safer environments for both workers and patients.

Importance of Addressing Violence

- Workplace violence prevention protects healthcare staff and patients and preserves operational integrity.
- Regular assessment identifies potential risks and vulnerabilities to prevent workplace violence effectively.

Prevention and Training

- Comprehensive prevention programs and training build safer healthcare environments.

Support

- Providing support for healthcare workers promotes a safer and more supportive work environment.

Questions?



References

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