

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AWARENESS



SDSU

Crime Prevention Unit

www.police.sdsu.edu
(619) 594-1991

Human Resources
(619) 594-6404

CALL EMERGENCY
9-1-1 FIRE
POLICE
MEDICAL



any workplaces are at risk for workplace violence and, unfortunately, a University environment is not immune. San Diego State is committed to preventing workplace violence, and ensuring a safe and healthful work environment for all members of the University community. Certain campus workplace situations are recognized as presenting significantly greater risks than others. Therefore, every campus office or department should perform an initial assessment to identify its particular workplace security issues. If that assessment determines that the University employees are at significant risk, then the responsible manager or supervisor should review the SDSU Program To Prevent Workplace Violence available from Human Resources.

- There are a number of factors that have been shown to contribute to the risk of violence in a University workplace. If one or more of the following situations or activities is present in your workplace, then consider your workplace to be at potential risk of violence.
- Exchange of money.
- Working alone at night and during early morning hours.
- Availability of valued items, e.g., money and jewelry.
- Availability of prescription drugs.
- Working with patients, clients, customers or students known or suspected to have a history of violence.
- Employees or former employees, with a history of assaults or who exhibit belligerent, intimidating or threatening behavior.
- Employees who have been the object of belligerent, intimidating or threatening behavior from family members or significant others.

RECOGNIZING INAPPROPRIATE EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR

Inappropriate behavior is often a warning sign of potential hostility or violence. When left unchecked it can escalate to higher levels. Individuals who exhibit the following behaviors should be reported to a supervisor for possible disciplinary action in accordance company policy:

- Obscene language or abusive language
- Intimidation through direct or veiled verbal threats
- Maliciously throwing objects in the workplace
- Inappropriate touching/sexual harassment
- Physically intimidating others, including finger pointing, fist shaking, "getting in your face", etc.

WARNING SIGNS OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT INDIVIDUALS

There is no exact method to predict when a person will become violent. One or more of these warning signs may be displayed before a person becomes violent but does not necessarily indicate that an individual will become violent. A display of these signs should trigger concern as they're usually exhibited by people experiencing problems.

- Increase in large muscle movements
- Physical intimidation or posturing
- Targeting glances
- Violates your safety zone
- Movements to block exit routes
- Direct or veiled threats

- Obscene or abusive language, especially that which tends to “de-humanize” the victim
- Unwarranted displays of anger
- Externalization of blame
- Un-reciprocated romantic obsession
- Fear reaction among coworkers
- Violence towards animals or inanimate objects
- Drug or alcohol intoxication
- Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence
- Expresses plan to hurt themselves or others
- Feelings of hopelessness or heightened anxiety
- Behavior, performance or attendance problems
- Steals or sabotages projects or equipment
- Boundary crossing

PERSONAL CONDUCT TO MINIMIZE VIOLENCE

Follow these suggestions in your daily interactions with people to de-escalate potentially violent situations. If at any time a person’s behavior starts to escalate beyond your comfort zone, disengage.

- Project calmness: move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently.
- Be an empathetic listener: encourage the person to talk and listen patiently.
- Maintain a relaxed yet attentive posture and position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front of the other person. Make sure there is a space of 3’ to 6’ between you and the person.
- Establish ground rules if unreasonable behavior persists. Calmly describe the consequences of any violent behavior.
- Use delaying tactics which will give the person time to calm down. For example, offer a drink of water (in a disposable cup).
- Ask uninvolved parties to leave the area to summon help if this can be done safely. Use a prearranged code word to alert your supervisor or co-worker to call the University Police. Dial 911 for emergencies or 594-1991 for non-emergencies.
- Be reassuring and point out choices. Break big problems into smaller more manageable problems.
- Accept criticism in a positive way.
- Ask for his recommendations. Repeat back to him what you feel he is requesting of you.
- Position yourself so that a visitor cannot block your access to an exit.
- Above all, trust your instincts. If the situation deteriorates to a level where your safety is in jeopardy, escape at the first opportunity and notify the University Police.



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