Handling Occupational Violence and Aggression

Presentation to Victorian Parking Steering Group
Mark White
Overview

1. **OV is incorrectly defined and therefore misunderstood in most workplaces** (Mayhew);

2. **Severity of violence determines the rate of reporting** (AIC);

3. **International research suggests around 10% of incidents are reported** (California OSHA);

4. **OV is both an employer and employee responsibility** (OH&S Act);

5. **Reporting OV makes the workplace safer** (Qld Div of WH&S);

6. **Recent research shows third party violence (witnessing or responding to violence) can impact as much as being the actual victim** (Smith USA); and

7. **OV also impacts upon victim (direct and indirect) family, friends, associates, etc.**
Five greatest risks....

1. Law enforcement, compliance and healthcare activities;
2. Working in isolation;
3. Absence of a suitable system of work;
4. Lack of appropriate training;
5. Failing to consider the potential for OV in work activities.

Minimise risk through a formalised procedures, training and education.
Anger Aggression Violence

Anger → Emotion

Aggression → Behaviour

Violence → Harming Others
Facts about Anger

- Anger is normal
- Anger is neither good nor bad – it just is!
- Most people get angry
- Understanding anger assists to manage it
Triggers for Aggression

- Provocation is a trigger;
- Aggression in others causes aggression;
- Pain or other bodily discomfort is a trigger; and
- Embarrassment or personal attack is a trigger.
Harm..

Harm that may be a result of Occupational Violence...

- **Physical Injuries** – bruising, cuts, broken bones, concussions
- **Feeling sick**, nervousness, sight of blood, conflict
- **Fear**, afraid of recurrence, working alone etc
- Sick days and **time off** to recover
- **Problems** at home dealing with **emotional consequences**
- Others?
Conflict
Levels of conflict

Physical Attack
Anticipated Attack
Overt Aggression
Verbal Escalation
Disagreement
RISK ASSESSMENT
Threat and Risk assessment

Three key areas

• The Situation/Environment
• The Client (Aggressor)
• Yourself
1 - Safety

2 - Risk Assessment

3. ACT

Preventative Measures
Tactical Disengagement
Use of Force
External Intervention
Internal Response Team
Defusing Techniques
Negotiation Techniques
Communication Skills
Verbal strategies

- Correct Choice of Words
  - Take to a level
  - Not technical
  - No jargon
- Non-Threatening
  - “It will help if you calm down” v “You’d better calm down”
- Non-Challenging
  - “What’s the matter?” v “What’s your problem?”
Para verbal strategies

- Correct Tone
  - Confident
  - Calm

- Correct Speed
  - Consciously slow it down

- Correct Volume
  - Soft
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>Yes / Positive</th>
<th>No / Negative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stance</td>
<td>• Bladed</td>
<td>• Hands on Hips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Facing</td>
<td>• Chest Out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>• Hands to Front</td>
<td>• Arms Folded</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Palms Up</td>
<td>• Hands Hidden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lean In</td>
<td>• Tilt Forward</td>
<td>• Standing Over</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Respect Body Space</td>
<td>• Touching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal Cues</td>
<td>• “Yes”</td>
<td>• Prolonged Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Mm”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Contact</td>
<td>• Regular</td>
<td>• Staring or Glaring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To The Eyes</td>
<td>• Looking Up or Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relax</td>
<td>• Smile</td>
<td>• Overt Annoyance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nod</td>
<td>• Tenseness or Snarling</td>
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Victorian Parking Steering Group
Handling Occupational Violence & Aggression.1.260710
Voluntary Compliance

- Ask: Make Request
- Explain: Give Reasons
- Options: Outline Consequences
- Confirmation: Check Understanding
- Act: Take Necessary Action
LEGAL ISSUES

Assault, Use of Force, Recording devices
How is assault committed?

Force

Punch, Kick, Bite, Head Butt, Spitting, Using Weapons, Throwing Items, etc.

Acts/Gestures of One that Causes the Other to Fear/Anticipate Immediate Force

Conduct
Threat offences

1. Threats to kill
2. Threat to inflict serious injury

(both can be intentional or reckless offences)
### Categories of assault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Assailant(s)</th>
<th>Victim</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serious Assaults</strong></td>
<td>Intentionally</td>
<td>Death</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Indictable)</em></td>
<td>Recklessly</td>
<td>Serious Injury</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negligently</td>
<td>Injury</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minor Assaults</strong></td>
<td>Intentionally</td>
<td>No Injury</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Summary)</em></td>
<td>Recklessly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negligently</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Provocation....

Is not a lawful defence to assault (Criminal or Civil)

Showing there was extreme provocation may impact on penalty but it is of itself not a recognised defence
Lawful excuse

Consent
Amicable contest
Misadventure
Execution of law
Lawful chastisement
Self defence
General provisions

Use of Force

Legal

Reasonable
• Necessary?
• Communication?
• Correct Force Option

Proportionate
To objective

Agent
Principal’s Property Only
Trespass

Citizen
Anywhere
• Prevent Indictable Offence
• Self Defence
• Prevent Suicide
• Arrest

Weapons
Restraint
Touching
Surveillance Devices

- S.6 – ...a person must not install, use or maintain a listening device to record monitor or listen to a conversation to which the person is not a party....

- This means if you can hear it normally or are a party you can record and do not need to inform other parties.
Questions?
Basic Defensive Techniques
Positioning

- “Primary Danger Area” within arms reach
- “Secondary Danger Area” where person can access with one pace

Maintain a reactionary gap of 2 metres
Key principle of personal safety

THREAT

DISTANCE

TIME

OPTIONS

SAFETY

creates

creates

creates
Assault cues

- **Strained voice** - low hoarse sound as vocal cords tighten. Common in sex assault victims unable to call for help or make any noise;

- **Repeated phrases** – common cue where person is visualising attack and not what is being said;

- **Mouth breathing** – caused by stress and leads to increased oxygenation of the blood;

- **Fist clenching** – blood flow to large muscles causes tingling in extremities and smaller muscles; and

- **Target glance** – Prior to an attack looks at area where strike is planned.
Multiple attackers

- *Secondary subject distraction* - one distracts you to give the other an advantage of attack; and

- *Subjects glance at each other* – subjects look for reassurance or the go ahead!
Breaks and escapes

- Wrist grabs;
- Front grabs;
- Hair grab;
- Headlock;
- Evading ground attack;
- Blocking strikes; and
- Blocking kicks.
Questions?