

PREVENTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Newsletter Article

The US Department of Justice reports annual figures on workplace violence: 396,000 aggravated assaults, 51,000 rapes and sexual assaults, 84,000 robberies and over 1,000 homicides each year. What causes people to become violent? In a word - frustration.

People do not "just snap" violent incidents are usually the accumulation of weeks, months or years of feeling frustrated and thinking that there is little or no hope in relief of the feelings. The continuum of aggression is: Intimidation, provoking of anger, rough language, exertion of force and violence.

The earlier a potentially violence situation is addressed; the less likely that physical violence will occur. Think about your current situation, to whom would you report your concerns about another employee? Is there anyone in your immediate area that seems more comfortable in dealing with these sorts of volatile issues? Know your resources and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Tips for diffusing a hostile situation:

- Be aware of yourself - if you are uncomfortable handling a situation get help!
- Stay calm. The situation will escalate fast if both parties are emotional.
- Remember to have an open posture, do not yell, if frightened run!
- Speak respectfully to the co-worker.
- Do not impose your personal values i.e., do not make "you should" statements.
- Listen to the persons concerns. Let them know you are listening.
- Offer to help - do not make unreasonable promises.
- Verbalize your concerns factually - i.e., "your tone of voice is loud and scary."
- Let people know your boundaries, i.e., "I feel intimidated when you stand over me."
- Step away if you notice the situation is escalating.
- Get help from supervisors and colleagues.
- Document the facts of the incident.

If diffusing does not work or is not effective discuss with Human Resources your concerns. You will be supported!

If you have a problem with your temper, or are fearful in the workplace remember EAP is a no cost confidential place to discuss feelings and improve performance at work and home. Please call: In Tucson: 575-8623 Out of area 888-520-5400.