

ABCs for Preventing Workplace Violence

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RCI's 2004 OSHA-Funded Workplace Violence Training Program

1. Geographic target: San Joaquin Valley.
2. Sectors addressed: (a) Public sector employers, (b) Health care employers, and (c) Bilingual workplaces.
3. Train the trainer model used: 15 to 25 trained in two-day trainings conducted by UC Berkeley's Labor Occupation Health Program.
4. Full curriculum provided, including sample CD with training PowerPoint (courtesy of Fresno County).

The Case for Workplace Violence Training

1. Congressional testimony at a House Subcommittee in 2002:
 - A. 18,000 weekly workplace assaults cause 500,000 employees to lose 1,751,000 days of work annually, with a loss of \$55 million in wages (3.5 days per incident);
 - B. 18% of all crimes committed occur in the workplace;
 - C. Workplace violence costs employers \$3 to \$5 billion annually;
 - D. Indirect costs such as lost productivity, insurance, loss of public image bring the total to between \$6.4 and \$36 billion;
 - E. Jury awards in workplace violence cases typically run in the millions of dollars;
 - F. Workplace violence is the number one cause of workplace fatalities for women.

Designing Your Program

1. Buy-in from top management is critical;
2. All levels of organization should be exposed to training;
3. Program must be based on your type of workplace and risk profile;
4. Conduct a systematic workplace risk assessment:
 - A. Interaction with public? What are the various interface areas and sources of risk?
 - B. Internal sources of stress among co-workers? Between managers and workers?
 - C. Physical layout of facility: What and where are the vulnerable areas?
 - D. What has been your history of WPV and the history of comparable organizations?
 - E. Is there a history or accepted pattern of verbal communication that may qualify as workplace violence?
5. Search the Web for supplemental sources, e.g OSHA and Cal/OSHA sites

Preventing Violence at the Workplace



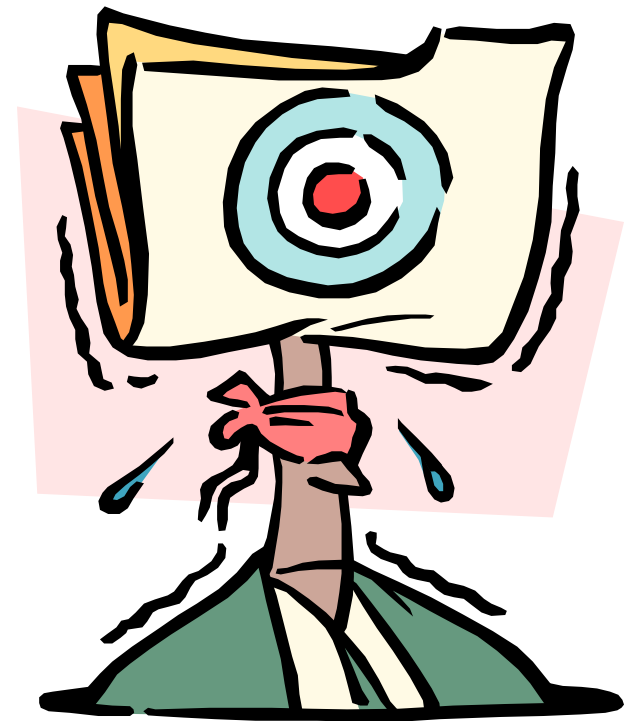
Training Objectives

1. Define workplace violence and explain the four categories of workplace violence
2. Present key facts about workplace violence
3. List risk factors for potential violence at the workplace
4. Describe several ways to prevent violence at work
5. Prioritize post-incident reporting and response procedures
6. Describe the key elements in a workplace violence prevention policy
7. Discuss how to handle an angry consumer

What Is Workplace Violence?

(Note the subjective nature of 2--4)

1. Physical Assault
2. Threatening Behavior
3. Verbal Abuse
4. Harassment



Four Categories of Workplace Violence

1. Violence by Strangers Committing Robbery
2. Violence by Customers, Clients, or Patients
3. Violence by Employees and Supervisors
4. Violence by Domestic Partners or Relatives of Employees (new category)

True or False: Violence is the leading cause of death on the job.

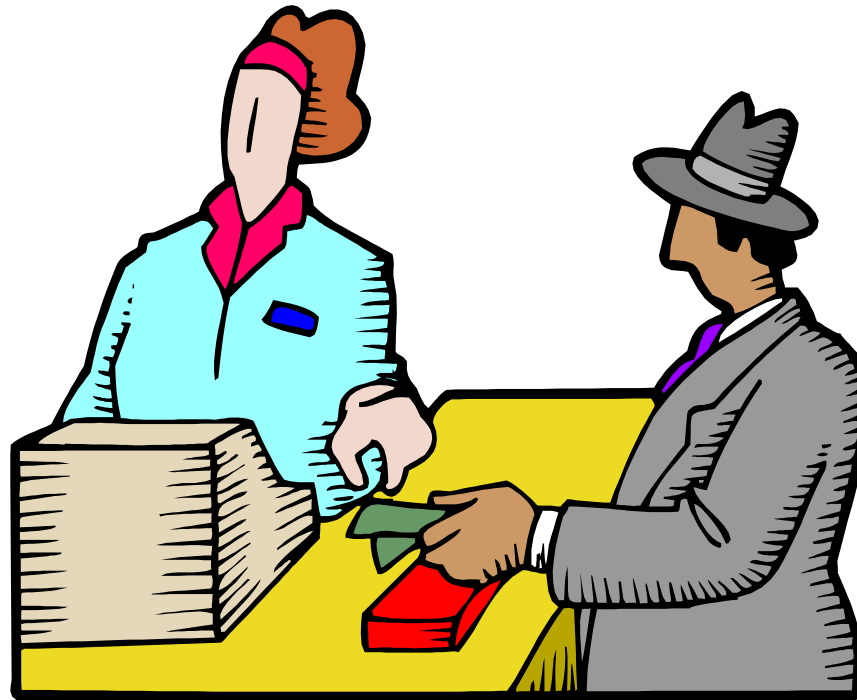
- False!
- The leading cause of death on the job is vehicle accidents.



- Violence is the **SECOND** leading cause...both in the nation and in California.

True or False: Homicide is the leading cause of death for women in the workplace.

- TRUE!



True or False: Disputes between workers and supervisors are the main motive for workplace homicides.

- False. Robberies account for the majority of workplace homicides.



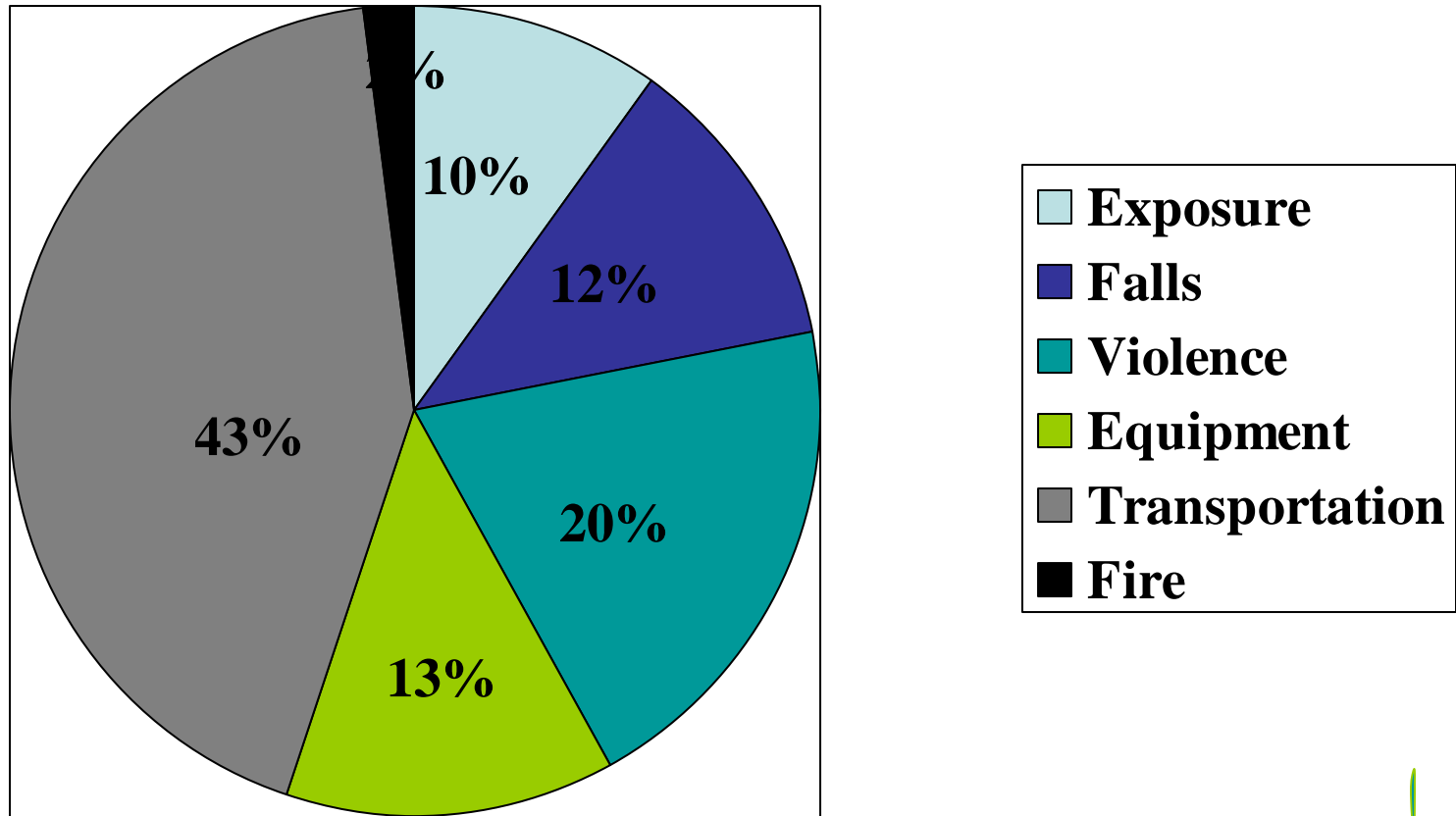
75% of the victims were shot

How many workers are murdered on the job each year in the U.S?

- According to the U.S. Department of Labor in 2002 there were 5,524 fatalities at the workplace, **609** were due to homicide.



Workplace Fatalities California 2002



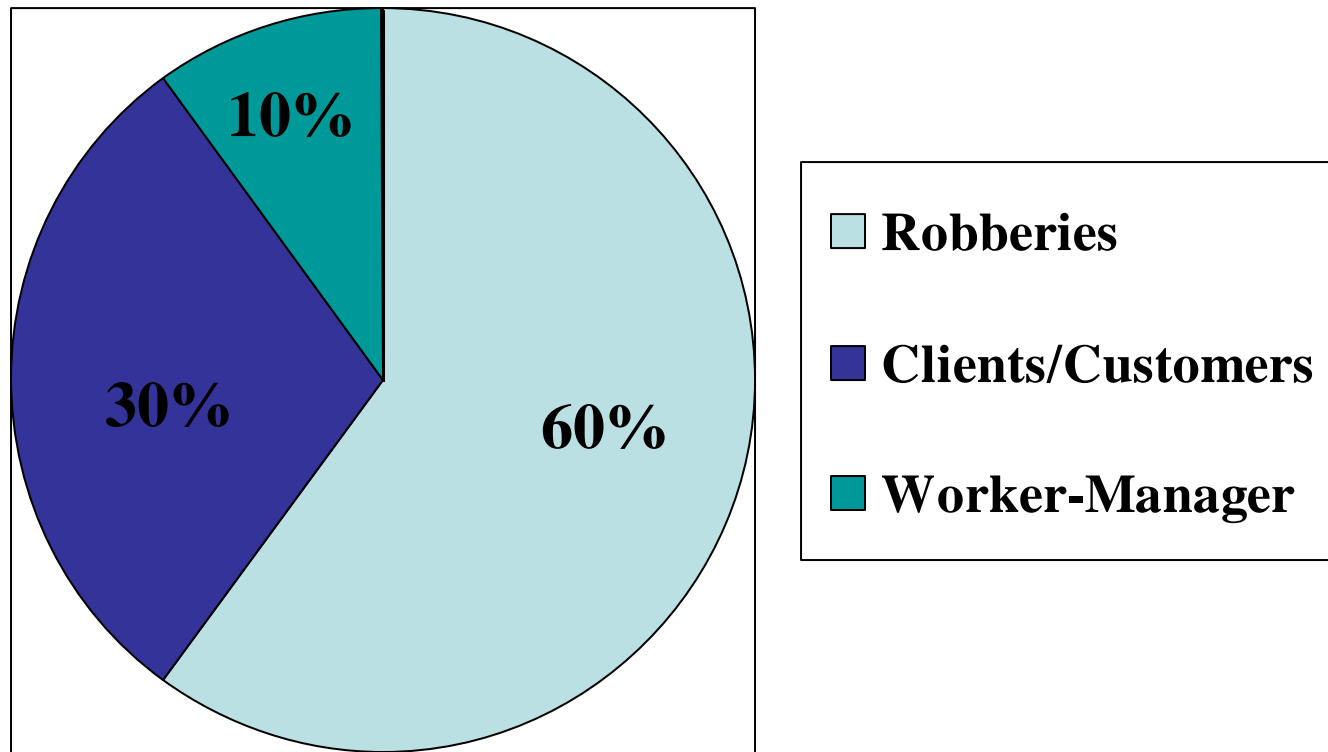
Out of 478 fatalities, 96 were due to violence!

How many people are victims of non-fatal assaults on the job each year?



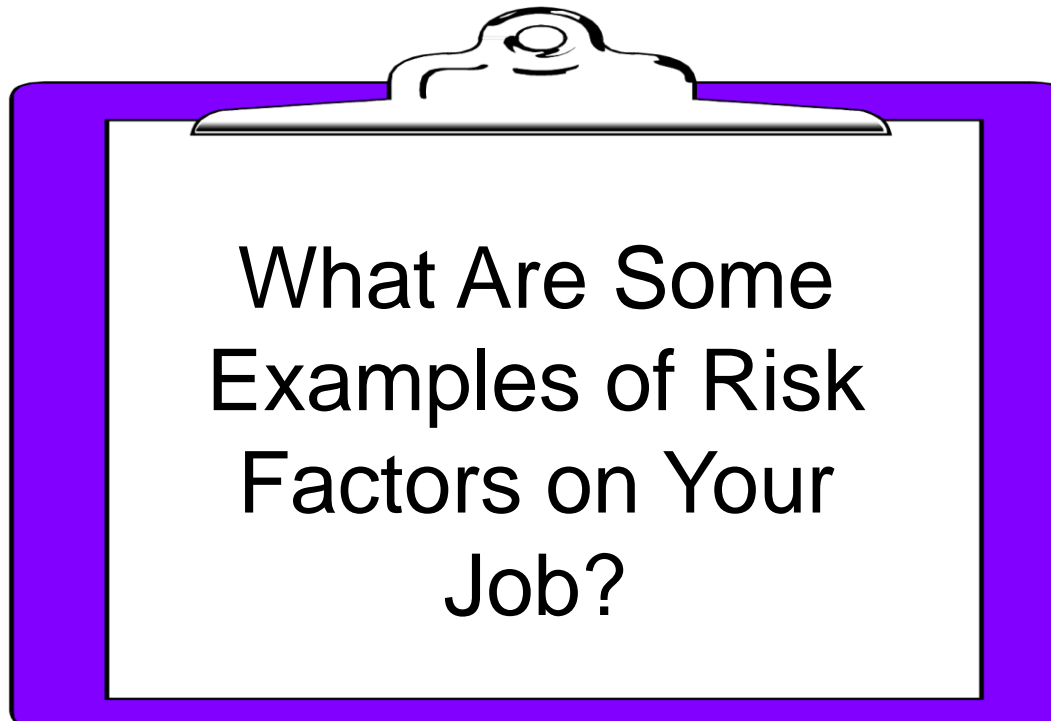
2,000,000 workers are victims each year in the U.S.

Workplace Homicides in California 2002 Total=96



A Risk Factor Is:

- Any condition that may increase a worker's risk for violence.



External Risk Factors Include:

1. Working alone or in small numbers
2. Working late night/early morning
3. Working with money
4. Delivering passengers, goods or services
5. Having a mobile workplace like a taxicab or police car
6. Working in high crime areas
7. Guarding property or possessions
8. Contact with the public

Internal Risk Factors Include:

1. Highly competitive sectors with intense workloads, e.g. food processing
2. Restructuring of an organization, e.g. impending layoffs
3. Ignoring warning signs from certain individuals who have a gripe with co-workers or management
4. Allowing an ongoing feud between co-workers to go unaddressed by management
5. Chronic verbal abuse by a supervisor towards workers
6. Denial on the part of management regarding employee tension or favoritism towards one party
7. Old school mentality by management that tolerates and enables supervisor abuse

How Can Violence Be Prevented on the Job?



Prevention Strategies (External Risk)

1. Don't work alone late at night or early morning
2. Call for a security escort if working late
3. Carry a cellular phone
4. Redesign workspace to prevent entrapment
5. Train staff in ways to diffuse violence.
6. Place curved mirrors at hallway intersections
7. Maintain good lighting indoors and outdoors
8. Prepare plan for consumers who "act out"
9. Control access to employee work areas.

Prevention Strategies (Internal Risk)

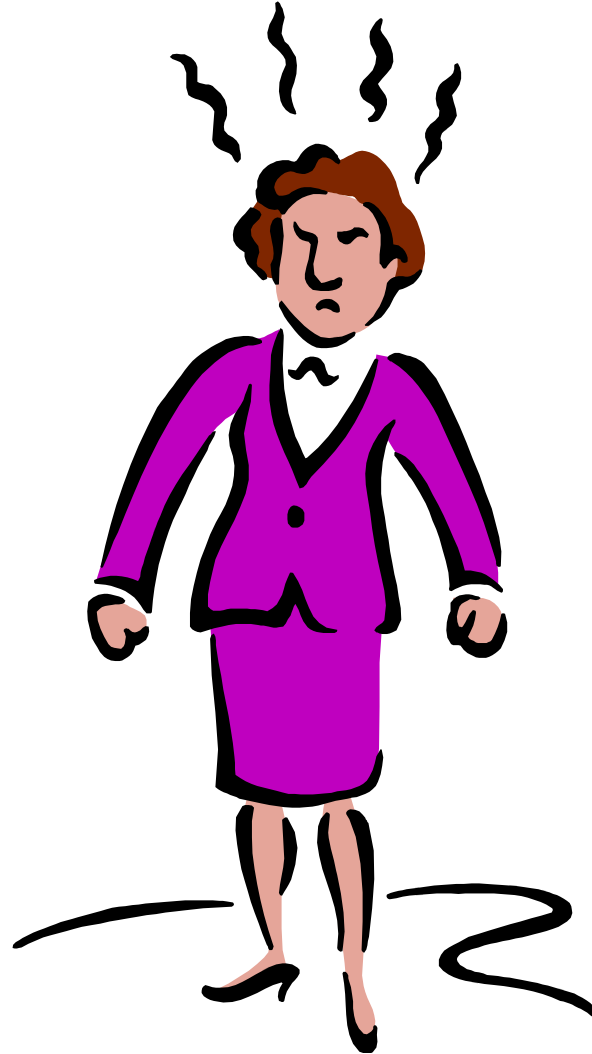
1. Risk Assessment: Confidential survey of all employees designed to uncover internal risk factors, coupled with analysis of external risk factors
2. Presentation of overall risk analysis to top management, along with supporting facts
3. WPV training for all levels of organization
4. Sensitivity training for high-risk employees as necessary
5. Follow-up survey of employees to gauge impact of training

Responding to a Violent Incident

1. Isolate/secure the work area
2. Call 9-1-1 if an emergency
3. Seek medical attention for victims
4. Report the incident to your supervisor
5. Report the incident to your shop steward
6. File an incident report
7. If psychological trauma occurs call EAP for post-incident debriefing
8. Give a referral to EAP to the victim

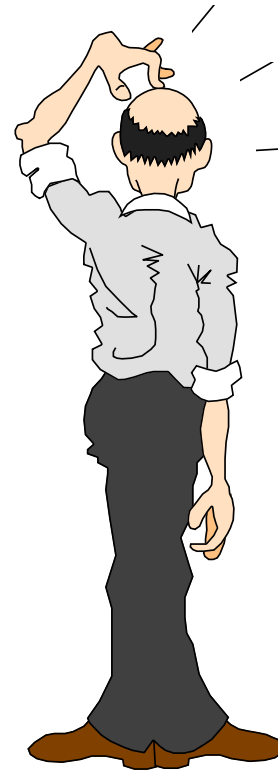
Five Warning Signs of Escalating Behavior

1. Confusion
2. Frustration
3. Blame
4. Anger
5. Hostility



Warning Signs of Confusion

- The person appears bewildered or distracted.
- They are unsure or uncertain of the next course of action.



How would you respond to a person who is confused?

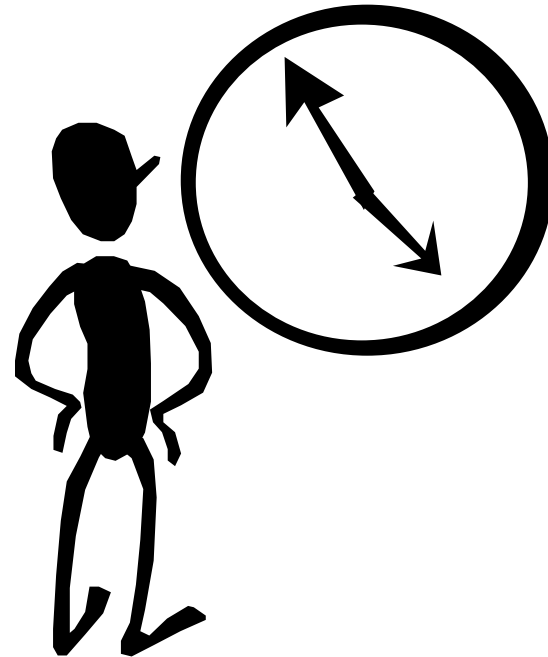
Responses to Confusion

1. Listen
Attentively to
the person
2. Ask clarifying
questions
3. Give factual
Information



Warning Signs of Frustration

1. The person is impatient and reactive
2. The person resists information you are giving them
3. The person may try to bait you



How would you respond to a person who is frustrated?

Responses to Frustration

1. Move the person to a quiet location
2. Reassure them, talk to them in a calm voice
3. Attempt to clarify their concerns



Warning Signs of Blame

1. The person places responsibility on everyone else
2. They may accuse you or hold you responsible
3. They may find fault with others
4. They may place blame on you



How would you respond to a person who is blaming?

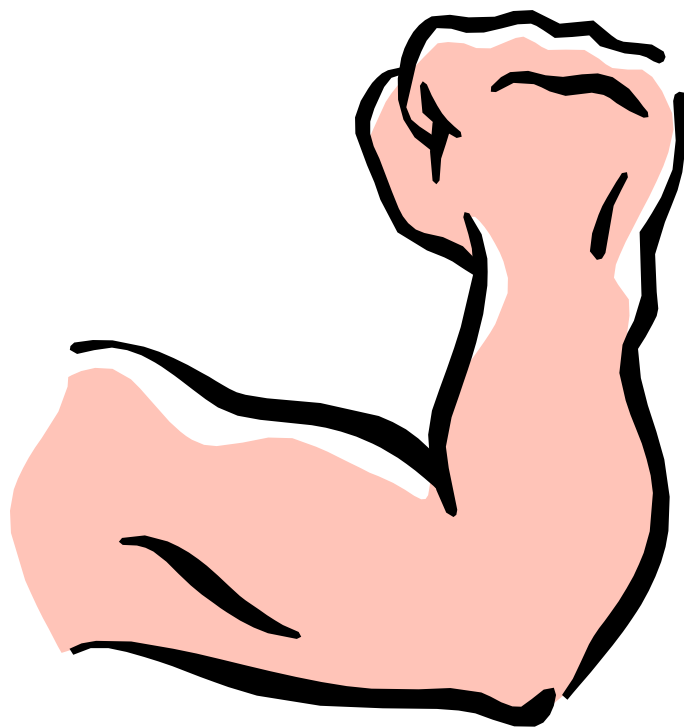
Responses to Blame

1. Disengage with the person and bring a second party into the discussion
2. Use a teamwork approach
3. Draw the person back to the facts
4. Show respect and concern
5. Focus on areas of agreement to help resolve the situation



Warning Signs of Anger

1. The person may show a visible change in body posture
2. Actions may include pounding fists, pointing fingers, shouting or screaming
3. This signals **VERY RISKY BEHAVIOR!**



How would you respond to a person who is angry?

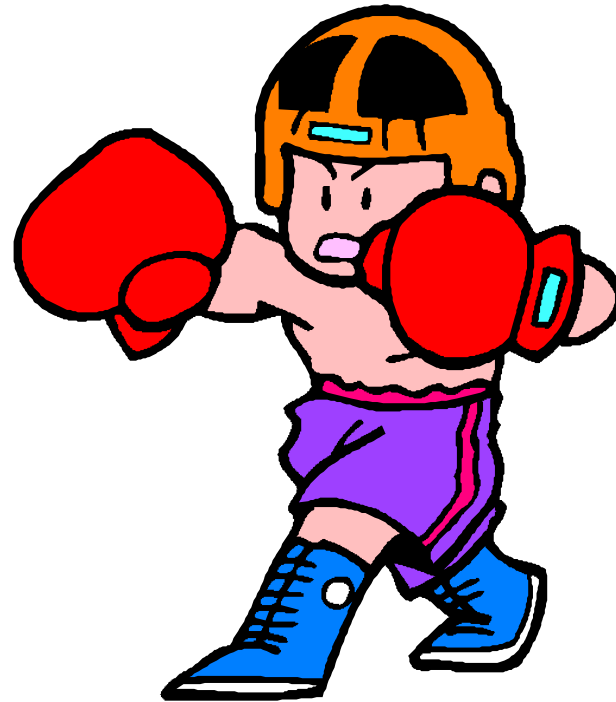
Responses to Anger

1. Don't argue with the person
2. Don't offer solutions
3. Prepare to evacuate the area or isolate the person
4. Contact your supervisor and security personnel



Warning Signs of Hostility

1. Physical actions or threats appear imminent
2. There is immediate danger of physical harm or property damage
3. Out-of-control behavior signals the person has crossed the line



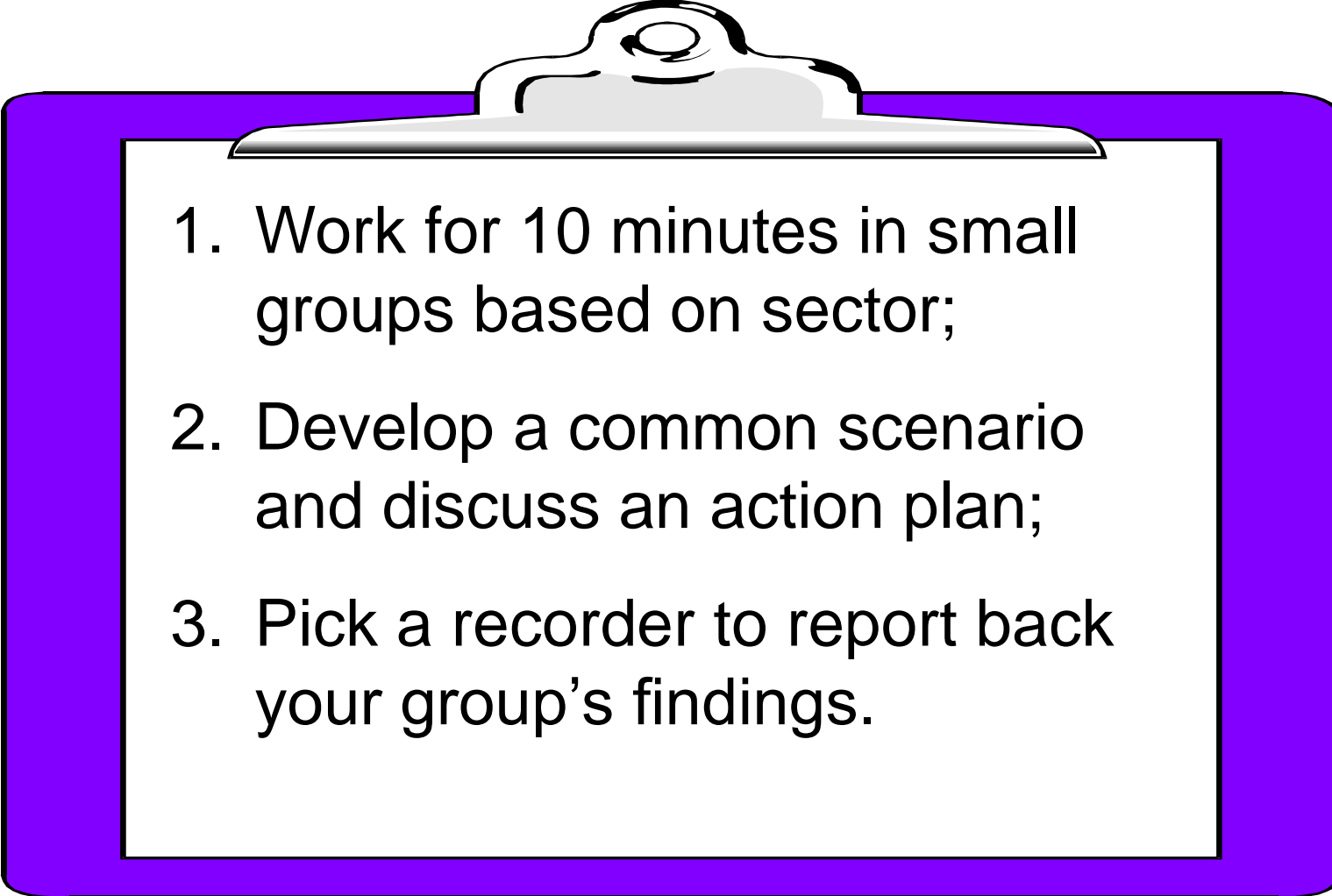
How would you respond to a hostile person?

Responses to Hostility

1. Disengage with the person and evacuate the area
2. Attempt to isolate the person if it can be done safely
3. Alert your supervisor and contact security immediately



Case Study: What is a typical WPV scenario for your organization and how might you respond proactively?

- 
1. Work for 10 minutes in small groups based on sector;
 2. Develop a common scenario and discuss an action plan;
 3. Pick a recorder to report back your group's findings.

List Your Policy Recommendations



Thank you!

- For more information about workplace violence you may visit OSHA and Cal/OSHA's websites at:

www.osha.gov

www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh1.html

- Or contact me at:

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