

# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION



The Coalition of Orange County Community Health Centers

Jason Wickham

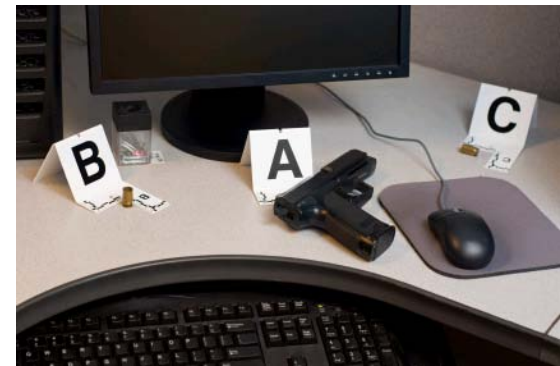
Quality Programs Coordinator

# What is Workplace Violence?

- The National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) defines Workplace Violence as **“Violent acts (including physical assaults & threats of assaults) directed towards persons at work or on duty”**
- It includes:
  - ▣ Beatings, Stabbings, Suicides, Shootings, Rapes, Near Suicides
  - ▣ Psychological trauma such as threats, obscene phone calls or an intimidating presence
  - ▣ Harassment of any nature including being followed and sworn or shouted at

# OSHA's Take on Workplace Violence

- OSHA's General Duty Clause requires an employer to furnish a workplace for their employees that is free from recognized hazards that might cause death or serious physical harm.
- The Labor Law posters in your staff lounge area specifically state that "All employers must provide work and workplaces that are safe and healthful"
- This would include the prevention and control of the hazard of Workplace Violence



# Workplace Violence Statistics



- Each day, an average of 87 people are injured and 2 people are killed due to Workplace Violence (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008)
- There are over 600 homicides in the workplace every year according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics
- Workplace Violence is the **Leading** cause of fatal occupational injuries for Women (OSHA)

# Workplace Violence Statistics



- NIOSH estimates the economic cost of workplace violence nationwide at around \$121 Billion per year
  - ▣ Includes lost productivity & wages and litigation
  - ▣ This is why Plans & Policies & Procedures are vital
  - ▣ This highlights our “Reactive” nature

# Workplace Violence Statistics



- In 2008 there were 30 multiple-fatality workplace homicide incidents, accounting for 67 homicides and 7 suicides
- In the last 10 years, 50 people were killed and 30 wounded in **35** church shootings (Source: Strategos International, security consulting firm)
- In 2007, there were six church shootings. In 2008, there were 18 (Source: Strategos International, security consulting firm)
- 76% of all workplace homicides are committed with a firearm (NIOSH)

# Workplace Violence by Type of Crime

## Average annual number, rate, and percent of workplace victimization by type of crime, 1993–99

Crime Category	Average annual workplace victimization	Rate per 1,000 persons in the workforce	Percent of workplace victimization
● All Violent Crime	1,744,300	12.5	100%
Homicide	900	0.01	0.1
Rape/Sexual assault	36,500	0.3	2.1
Robbery	70,100	0.5	4.0
Aggravated assault	325,000	2.3	18.6
Simple assault	1,311,700	9.4	75.2

Sources: Homicide data are obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. Rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault data are from the NCVS.



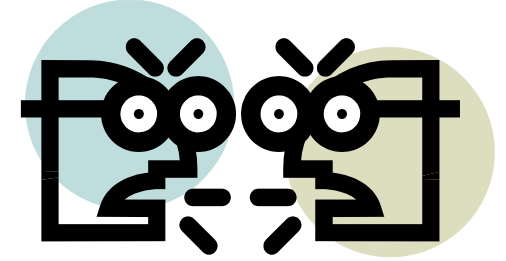
# The Four Types of WPV

## □ 1. Criminal Intent

- ▣ These are violent acts by criminals who have no other connection with the workplace, but enter the premises to commit robbery or another crime.
- ▣ This type accounts for the vast majority, nearly 80 percent, of workplace homicides.



# The Four Types of WPV



## □ 2. Customer/Client

- Violence is directed at staff by parishioners, clients, volunteers, visitors or any others for whom an organization provides services.

## □ 3. Worker-on-Worker

- Violence is committed against co-workers, supervisors, volunteer or managers by a present or former employee or volunteer.

# The Four Types of WPV



## □ 4. Personal Relationship

- Violence committed in the workplace by someone who doesn't work there, but has a personal relationship with a staff member or volunteer, such as abusive spouse or domestic partner.
- ***If an employee or volunteer has a restraining order against someone, then your organization needs to be aware of it. The work or church location should be listed in the restraining order.***

# Types of Threats

- Direct Threats

- ▣ Straightforward & explicit statements of an intention to commit harm

- Veiled Threats

- ▣ Indirect, vague or subtle statements suggesting potential harm



# Types of Threats

## □ Conditional Threats

- “if...then” statements intending to harm & specifying either conditions to be met in order to stop the harm, or conditions under which the threat will be carried out

## □ Implausible Threats

- Statements of intended harm that are unrealistic and seemingly impossible to carry out



# Making Threats is a CRIME

- California Penal Code: PC 422
  - “Any person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death or great bodily injury to another person, with the specific intent that the statement, made verbally, in writing, or by means of an electronic communication device, is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, ...and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his immediate family’s safety, shall be punished by imprisonment ...”

# Potential Warning Signs of Aggression

- Intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior
- Threatening the use of violence to resolve a problem
- Numerous, intense confrontations with supervisors and other employees



# Potential Warning Signs of Aggression

- Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide
- Identifying with perpetrators of workplace homicides
- Extreme changes in behavior
- Drug and/or Alcohol abuse

\* Source – U.S. Office of Personnel Management



# Developing a Plan



- The components of a Workplace Violence Prevention Program should include:
  - ▣ A statement of the church or organization's zero tolerance policy toward workplace violence against or by their staff or volunteers
  - ▣ A physical security survey and assessment of the premises

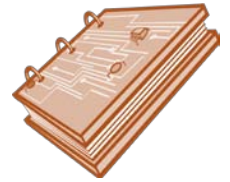


# Developing a Plan (continued)



- Encourage staff & volunteers to be “threat reporters,” not “threat assessors”
- Designation and training of an incident response team
- Procedures for addressing threats & behaviors
- Consistent enforcement of behavioral standards, including effective disciplinary procedures

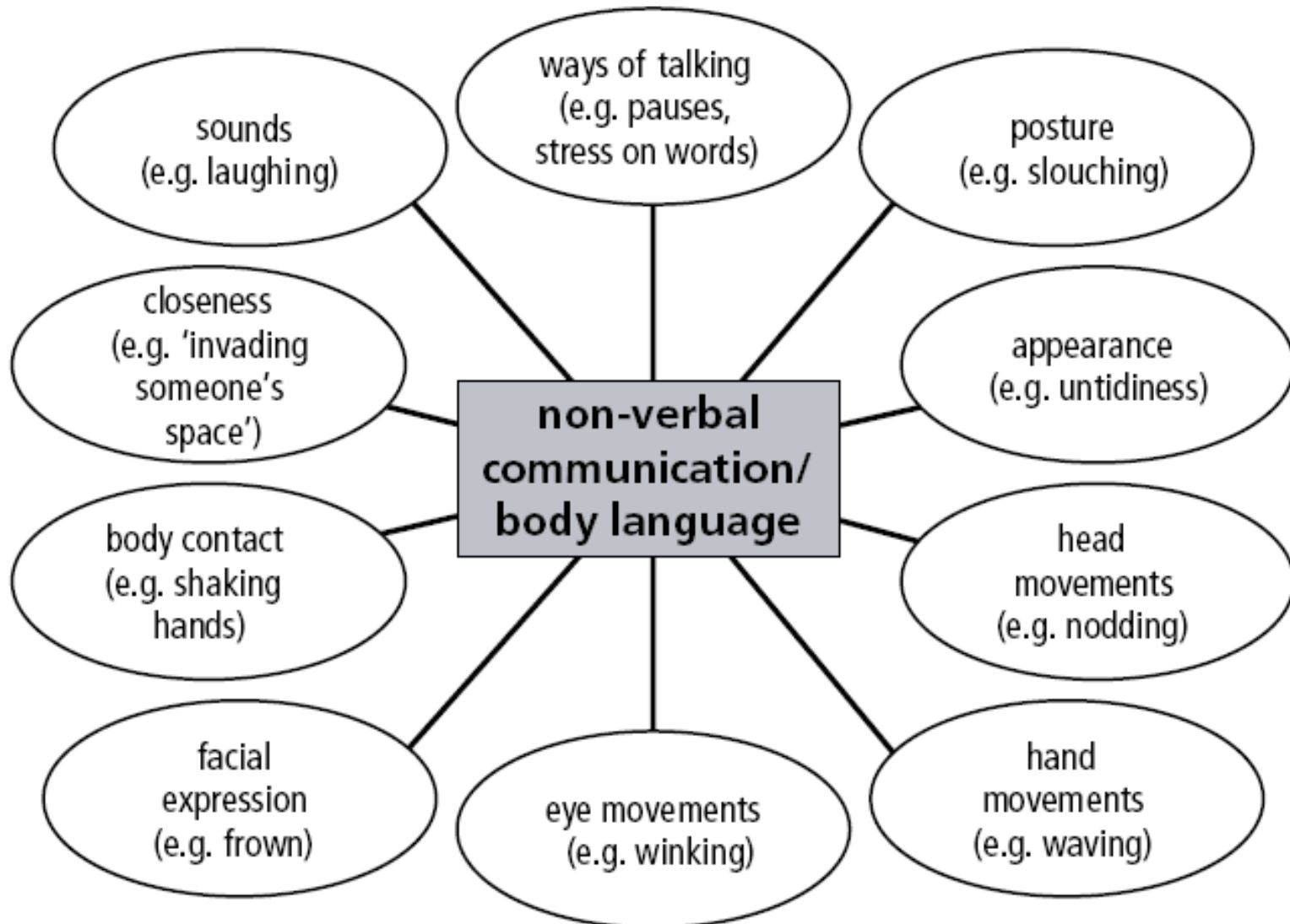
# Developing a Plan (continued)



- ▣ Training of different management and employee groups
- ▣ Debriefing and after-crisis situation response
  - Talking to local law enforcement
  - Bringing in counselors or other mental health specialists for staff

Do You Have a  
Civility Policy in  
your Administrative  
Office or Staff  
Lounge?

# Evaluating the Intruder Response



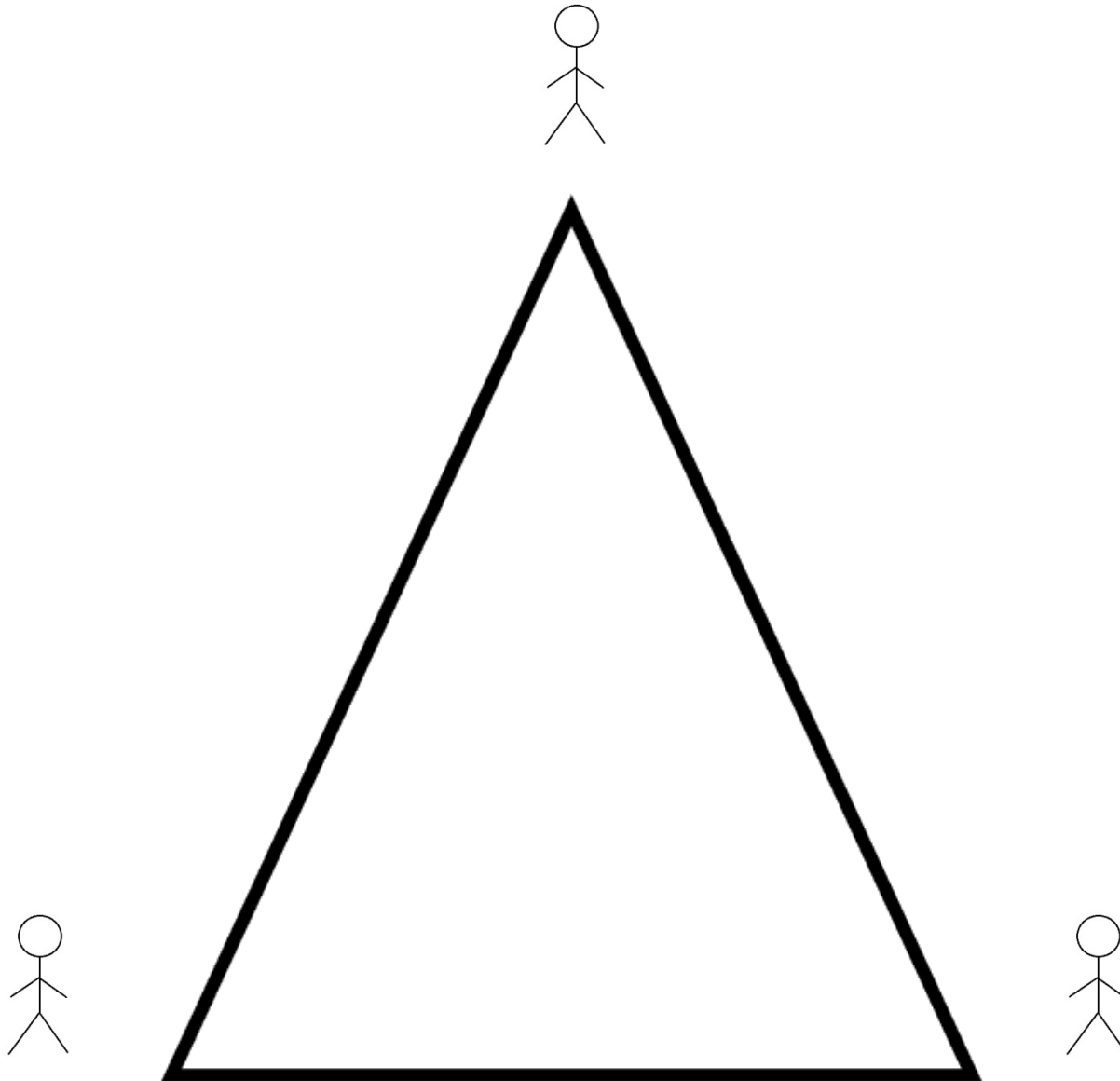
# Evaluating the Intruder Response

- The 5 Second Rule
  - ▣ A Person's body language will always tell you what type of encounter you are about to have
  
- The “Yes Person”
  - ▣ Casual, Relaxed body language, Smiling
  - ▣ Shakes your hand, will answer questions

# Evaluating the Intruder Response

- The “Maybe Person”
  - ▣ Has more questions, needs more answers
  - ▣ Will test your verbal skills
  
- The “No Person”
  - ▣ More demanding and confrontational
  - ▣ Watch their body language closely
    - Are they tense? What is their tone? Are they frustrated? Why?

# Triangular Contact Approach



\*Source – Crisis Reality Training, Inc.; Presentation by Jesus Villahermosa, Jr.

# What to Do if You're Confronted by an Armed Individual

- Maintain composure. Trying to help someone calm down cannot be achieved if you become emotional
- Try to signal for help from a co-worker who can contact management, security, or the police
- Listen attentively. The person desperately wants to be heard





# What to Do if You're Confronted by an Armed Individual

- Assume an open stance, placing the majority of your weight on your back foot
  - ▣ This looks non-confrontational and will give you more freedom to react should you be attacked
  - ▣ Remember body language, don't cross your arms
- Be courteous & patient until help arrives



# What to Do if You're Confronted by an Armed Individual

- ❑ Maintain eye contact to help calm the person and keep their attention
- ❑ If the person is threatening with a weapon follow their instructions and stall for time
- ❑ NEVER try to intercept the weapon or act aggressively against the person
- ❑ If all else fails, run in the opposite direction of the person with the weapon as fast as possible



# Hand Signs

- Hand signs can be an effective way to communicate to a co-worker the situation you are in
- They should be casual & discreet, not obvious
- There are several different hand signs that you can give, depending on the situation

\*Source – Crisis Reality Training, Inc.; Presentation by Jesus Villahermosa, Jr.



# Hand Signs

## □ One Finger



- One finger means “You can go, I am okay”
- You are comfortable in the current situation

## □ Two Fingers

- Two fingers means “Stay”
- Sign can be given up or down



- Employee receiving sign should give it back to confirm

# Hand Signs

## □ Three Fingers



- Three fingers means “We both need to leave now”
- Break off contact with the intruder when safe to do so

## □ Closed Fist

- This means there is a weapon present
- Break off contact ASAP, notify authorities & give description
- If you're alone, do not make a closed fist. Make sure the person knows that you are unarmed



## Using the “Red File” coded response

- Can be used to warn a co-worker, colleague or volunteer that you are in danger
- It appears normal
- The Aggressor will not be alarmed
- Every staff member and volunteer must be aware of the system

# “The Red File” Coded Warning System

- Casually interrupt or call a co-worker and ask them if they have seen the red file
  - “Hi Mr. Jones, there is someone up front to see you. By the way, have you seen my red file? I may have left it in your office.”
- A “yes” response by you (To a question such as “Are you in danger?”) means Call 911
- Make any code simple & easy to remember, nothing too complicated or over the top





# Parking Lot Safety Tips

- Always park in a well-lit area, close to the building you are entering if possible
- Wave to someone who is watching you from a window, wave even if no one is watching you
- Walk confidently and be aware of your surroundings
- Do not wear headphones (listen to music) or get distracted by your phone on your way to the car



# Parking Lot Safety Tips

- Have your keys ready before you get to your car
- Have a whistle or other personal security device that you can use to call for help or defend yourself
- Once you enter the vehicle, lock the doors and turn on the headlights
- If you feel like you are being followed, DO NOT go home, go to a police or fire station or a safe place

# Trust your Instincts

- Be aware of (and trust) your own internal warning system. Your body may send signals when it senses danger. Some natural responses may include:
  - ▣ An increase in breathing rate.
  - ▣ An increase in pulse.
  - ▣ A sensation of pressure on your chest.
  - ▣ An increase in perspiration.
  - ▣ A sinking feeling in your stomach.
  - ▣ An increase in sensory acuity.
- (Disclaimer) Please note: One or more of these signals may also indicate a medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention. It may be necessary to activate your local emergency medical services system.

\*Source: Crisis Prevention Institute (<http://www.crisisprevention.com/>)

# Questions?



**#1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER**

**THE  
GIFT  
OF FEAR**

*"This book can save your life."*

**AND OTHER  
SURVIVAL SIGNALS  
THAT PROTECT US  
FROM VIOLENCE  
GAVIN DE BECKER**

# Resources

- OSHA's Workplace Violence website:
  - ▣ <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/index.html>
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management WPV Guide:
  - ▣ [http://www.opm.gov/Employment and Benefits/WorkLife/OfficialDocuments/handbooksguides/WorkplaceViolence/full.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/Employment%20and%20Benefits/WorkLife/OfficialDocuments/handbooksguides/WorkplaceViolence/full.pdf)
- Bureau of Justice Statistics: WPV, 1993-2009
  - ▣ <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=2377>
- Workplace Violence, Issues in Response (FBI Report)
  - ▣ <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/workplace-violence>
- Workplace Violence Strategies and Research Needs, NIOSH
  - ▣ <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-144/pdfs/2006-144.pdf>
- WPV Toolkit: HR advice, Guidelines & Policies
  - ▣ PDF document available to be e-mailed to partners, Sample WPV P&P
- Crisis Reality Training, Inc. – [www.crisisrealitytraining.com](http://www.crisisrealitytraining.com)
  - ▣ Jesus Villahermosa, Jr., Consultant (Based out of Washington State)