



Workplace Violence Prevention Handbook

Health Care Professionals

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Workplace Violence Prevention Handbook for Health Care

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Brine Hamilton

Workplace violence is arguably one of, if not the most impactful challenges in the healthcare environment. Workplace violence is expensive and can be expressed in many different ways including but not limited to verbal interactions, threats, intimidation, and of course physical violence. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges related to workplace violence in healthcare have increased significantly. In Chapter 1, the authors bring this to the forefront, noting that a four-hospital organization documented that calls for public safety intervention to protect staff members more than doubled from 2019 to 2020. Unfortunately, this trend was not limited to a single organization.

Across North America, workplace violence figures demonstrate a widespread increase in the occurrence of violent events in healthcare facilities. The impact of workplace violence extends beyond the acts themselves. Those directly involved in the events, other staff members, patients, visitors, and, in more severe cases, the loved ones of all of those involved can be negatively impacted by workplace violence. Understanding that we have limited control over the behaviors of others, our ability to affect change, implement preventative measures, and improve event response can all be very impactful. It is evident that a proactive approach to preventing workplace violence is necessary if we hope to see a change in the current dynamics. This handbook was created to help facilitate that change.

Every healthcare organization is different. Some may be unsure where to start in terms of building a workplace violence prevention program, or some may have an established program and are seeking ways to improve upon what already exists. Whether looking to start from scratch or to enhance an experienced program, this handbook will be a valued resource, regardless of the maturity of the workplace violence prevention program. The 10 chapters in this handbook were created to support the organization and make ongoing improvements to the



workplace violence prevention program by providing principles and information that will help establish a solid foundation, regardless of your role in your organization, or the type of healthcare facility you work in.

Are you new to healthcare or newly overseeing workplace violence prevention? Chapter 1 will help you gain an understanding of the challenges involved, while Chapter 2 will establish the components of a successful workplace violence prevention program or help make the necessary revisions to one that already exists. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on two elements that in my professional opinion do not get the attention warranted, which are follow-up and data collection. These topics are both critical components of an effective workplace violence prevention program. Chapters 5 and 6 will help to ensure you are engaging the most suitable stakeholders to support the workplace violence prevention team, while establishing and managing the appropriate training. Chapters 7 and 8 provide the foundation for building a culture of violence prevention built on communication and collaboration, while Chapters 9 and 10 examine more specialized use cases and arm you with some best practices and resources. I have no doubt that no matter where your workplace violence prevention program is today, this handbook can help strengthen your program to the benefit of those who deliver and receive care in your facility.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of this handbook is the multidisciplinary team of contributing authors from both Canada and the United States. Some of the authors I've had the privilege of meeting and working with professionally include Kimberly Urbanek and Katarina Kemper, while I know of Deb Somers-Larney because of her presence in healthcare security, all three of whom are respected thought leaders in my industry. Clinical perspectives from Kyle Graham, Erica Howard, Dr. Lindsey Harrington, Laura Larkin, and the knowledge of safety professional Ravi Hookoom not only provide valuable insights with a multidisciplinary approach but also serve as a demonstration of how a multidisciplinary workforce should collaborate to enhance workplace violence prevention programs in healthcare.

As you read this book, you'll notice that each chapter begins with a list of learning objectives highlighting what you'll need to know or what you will learn from each chapter, and how it can be applied. Throughout the book you will find illustrations, tables, and examples that will benefit you as you are learning. As you conclude each chapter, you will find



references and a glossary of terms, as well as a full glossary of terms with page references at the end of the book. No matter your role in healthcare, whether you are facing the patients daily, serving in an educational capacity providing staff training, part of a workplace violence committee, a C-Suite level executive, and everywhere in between, the knowledge gained from this book will enhance your performance.

In my experience, working in healthcare facilities, volunteering with leading industry associations including the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety (IAHSS) and ASIS International, conducting podcast interviews with healthcare security leaders, and in my current roles in which I work with hundreds of healthcare leaders in the United States and Canada, I can attest that workplace violence prevention is top-of-mind on a daily basis. Adding this book to your library of resources and applying the learnings to your day-to-day operations are a positive step toward reducing the negative impacts of workplace violence prevention in your facility.

The authors, contributors, and publisher have made an important contribution to the field by bringing this project to fruition.