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Workplace violence prevention and systems management

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Workplace Violence Prevention

and

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Science in Environmental, Health & Safety Management.

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Workplace Violence Prevention and Systems Management

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Abstract

Violence in the workplace has become a major concern to labor, business, and government. In the past ten years, between 600 and 1000 work related deaths have been attributed to homicide. The repercussions of non-fatal aggression and violence in the workplace are not yet clear. What is clear is that all organizations are at some degree of risk and that regulatory and legal requirements dictate that preventive action be taken to protect employees, other stakeholders and the public from workplace violence. This thesis posits that by using a systems management approach along with the techniques of quality management, instances of workplace violence, within an organization, can be prevented, reduced or mitigated.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Violence in the workplace has become a major concern to government, labor organizations, and business in the United States as well as many other western countries. In the past ten years the number of violent incidents occurring in the workplace, causing mental trauma, physical injury and sometimes resulting in death has reached epidemic proportions. Workplace violence can include threats[1], simple or aggravated assault, rape, robbery, homicide, and suicide. The effects on employees and employers, some of which are discussed by Barling, in Violence on the Job: Identifying Risks and Developing Solutions, can be devastating. Workers who experience the violence, those who witness it and even those who only have second hand knowledge of an incident may suffer the consequences of trauma and fear which can have an effect on their emotional and physical well-being. Businesses or organizations in which incidents occur are negatively impacted in terms of image, legal liability, lost productivity of employees, employee turnover, and other economic considerations. (Bulatao & VandenBos.43)

The objective of this thesis is to propose the most effective method by which violence prevention can be integrated into the health and safety function, as well as, all other business functions. The components will be gathered from existing violence prevention plans and evaluated using literature from the behavioral sciences field, including organizational behavior, the health and safety field, the quality management field, and case law. It is proposed that by incorporating a

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[1] Threatening behavior includes any behavior that is harassing, provoking, or unsafe which by its very nature could be interpreted by a reasonable person as an intent to cause physical harm to another individual. CDC Policy on Preventing Violence and Threatening Behavior in the Federal Workplace

workplace violence prevention management system into an existing health and safety management system, an organization may significantly reduce the risk, incidence, and the deleterious effects of workplace violence.

The topic should be of particular concern to the function of Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Management. According to the most recently available data from the Department of Labor (DOL), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in the 2000 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) workplace violence is currently the third leading cause of occupational fatalities overall and the leading cause of occupational fatalities for women. The purpose of EHS management is to ensure the safety of both those who are employees of an organization, as well as, protecting the surrounding community and environment from potential ill effects caused by an organization's activity. Certainly this includes the effects of violence that enters the workplace. While the DOL, Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) has not initiated rule making that specifically addresses violence in the workplace, the agency considers that it is covered under the "General Duty Clause", Section 5, Duties of the OSHAct. "Each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees." In a Standard Interpretation publication, a letter to OSHA, produced this response to the question of whether an employer can be cited for acts of violence committed by employees, "Whether or not an employer can be cited for a violation of Section 5(a)(1) is entirely dependant upon…the recognizability and forseeability of the hazard, and the feasibility of the means of abatement." State OSHA programs have cited various public facilities and service providers for not adequately protecting employees from violence. CAL/OSHA has cited many types of businesses for failing to reduce violence hazards. (Peek-Asa.119) Based upon such actions taken by regulatory agencies, it is clearly the responsibility of the employer and/or upper management in an organization to provide environmental controls, administrative controls, training and other necessary resources to keep

the work environment safe and free of the threat of violence. Those who manage the environmental, health, and safety programs for an organization are the logical candidates to develop, implement, and oversee a centralized program, to ensure an organization is prepared to both reduce the potential for violence and to deal with the aftermath should violence occur despite efforts in prevention.

In viewing workplace violence as a health and safety issue the remedies can be developed using a synergistic approach with the other functions of business, such as, security and human resources, and integrating a violence prevention plan into the overall health and safety program. For any program to function effectively and reduce risks there must be involvement and support from all stakeholders and management must supply the necessary resources.

Ideally, the health and safety manager has involvement with all departments, units, and individuals within a company through safety committees and training programs. Traditionally, the health and safety manager has responsibility for developing and maintaining mandated programs such as the Emergency Action Plan which would logically be a major component of any effort to prevent and mitigate violent incidents. The centralized position of the health and safety function provides the best framework from which to develop a violence prevention plan. The current health and safety paradigm of integration with other business functions, analyzing and prioritizing, and using quality management techniques and philosophies to evaluate and improve through continuous feedback with employee and management involvement is best suited to acting as the central function in researching the problem of work place violence and developing solutions.

Chapter Two

Background

Violence in the workplace is by no means a recent phenomenon, nor is it limited to the United States. Violence has been associated with the workplace throughout history. Literature and historical works abound with accounts of stagecoach robberies, bank robberies, gold rush miners murdered for their discoveries and so on. Certain occupations have historically had inherent risk of violence such as law enforcement and the military. Today there is a growing recognition that workers in all occupations are at some degree of risk for experiencing violent incidents in the workplace. (Peek-Asa.109)

In most of the literature workplace violence has been divided into four categories or types; Criminal Intent (Type I) the person perpetrating the violent incident has no legitimate relationship to the business or the employee. The violence is in conjunction with the commission of crimes such as robbery; Customer/Client (Type II) The perpetrator has a legitimate relationship with the business or employee and becomes violent during the course of being served by the business and includes customers, clients, students, inmates, patients or any other group for which the business provides services; Worker-on-worker (Type III) The perpetrator is one employee who threatens or attacks another employee; Personal relationship (Type IV) The perpetrator usually does not have a relationship with the business but has a personal relationship with the victim. Domestic violence entering the workplace is most often the cause of this type.[2]

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[2] The categorization of types of workplace violence was taken from <u>Workplace Violence: A Report to the Nation</u>. While no credit is given within this document, many other sources reference Cal/OSHA as the originators of these categories.

According to "The History of BLS Safety and Health Statistical Programs", the BLS has collected and analyzed data on occupational injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in some form since 1912, although it wasn't until after the passage of the OSHAct of 1970 that the Department of Labor had the power to enforce regulations requiring employers to maintain records on workplace injuries and illnesses. The first Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries was released in 1993 based on data collected in 1992. The results of this census catapulted workplace violence into the occupational hazard spotlight.

The Department of Justice (DOJ), Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) began the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in 1973 but, it wasn't until 1992 that the first report was produced that used those statistics to focus on violent victimization at work.

Violence in the workplace is a significant problem causing personal and economic loss that is difficult to fully calculate. OSHA identifies, in the Recommendations to Prevent Violence in Late-Night Retail Establishments, as well as, other sources, the occupations associated with the highest risk of homicide. They are those in which workers are in close contact with the public and or handle cash transactions. In some cases it is the largest threat to the health and safety of workers in these occupations. The 2000 CFOI shows that job-related homicides rose for the first time since the highest number (1,080) recorded in 1994. In 2000 BLS reported 677 work related deaths ruled as homicides and another 220 deaths resulting from self-inflicted injuries. In the year 2000 workplace violence was the third leading cause of death following transportation incidents and contact with objects. The BJS, in the National Crime Victimization Survey, reports an annual average of 1.7 million violent victimizations in the workplace for the years 1993 to 1999, accounting for 18% of the total violent crimes occurring annually.

The majority of methods used for prevention of workplace violence have focused on environmental controls and increased security forces and technology with the aim of reducing losses related to robbery within the retail industry. Statistics from the CFOI show almost half of the 674 occupational fatalities in 2000 that were attributed to homicide that occurred in retail trade occupations. In contrast the majority of the 18,418 OSHA recordable injuries caused by assault and other violent acts, depicted in Table R4, were in the service industries with the bulk of incidents occurring in health care and social services. According to statistics from the data collected by OSHA from injury logs on non-fatal occupational injuries the highest risk occupations are in the service industry with 12,816 injuries involving days away from work in 2000. This figure comprises 70% of the total injuries, in private industry, resulting from assault. The majority of those incidents were accrued in the health care industry accounting for 7,438 and Social Services accounting for an additional 3,342 recorded incidents. Overall, assaults accounted for 1.1% of OSHA recordable injuries and illnesses in the year 2000.

This is illustrative of the different distribution across occupations between fatal and non-fatal violence. As was mentioned previously, the Bureau of Justice Statistics has, based on the National Crime Victimization Survey; estimated about 1.7 million people are the victims of workplace violence each year. The Bureau of Labor statistics only captures approximately 1% of these cases as recordable injuries with days away from work.

The International Council of Nurses has published a position statement in which the effects of violence on both primary victims and other employees and witnesses are discussed. When an employee experiences violence, it is not just the primary victim who is affected. Violence causes deterioration in the work atmosphere that affects the performance and productivity of all employees. The effects of violence on employees can be devastating. Injuries sustained during a violent incident reach into the psyche of the individual and are not just physical, but emotional as well. Incidents of violence can cause a myriad of reactions, not

only for the employee at whom the violence is directed, but for others in the workplace. Effects may include; feelings of guilt, anger, depression, fear, self-blame, powerlessness; increased stress and anxiety; loss of self-esteem and belief in professional competence; avoidance behavior including absenteeism; negative effects on interpersonal relationships; loss of job satisfaction; and overall morale problems. Any of the above, singly or in combination is likely to result in a loss of productivity and an increased staff turn-over.

The effects on a business are just as negative as on employees. Repercussions can include; loss of productivity; high employee turn-over; financial losses from legal and medical expenses; awards for judgments of negligence in civil suits. There is also damage to the public image of businesses that are perceived as having a high incidence of violence. Mello (54) cites an estimated $4 billion annual cost to employers due to workplace violence. The estimate does not include medical or legal expenses which can average $250,000 per incident.

The variety and number of groups expressing interest and concern on the subject of workplace violence is seemingly larger than for any other occupational health and safety risk. Concern is expressed through articles and research by organizations and professions including; security professionals; risk management professionals; insurance companies; human resource professionals; educators; facilities management professionals; property management professionals; labor unions and other labor organizations; health and safety professionals; the medical community; the United Nations (UN); the World Health Organization (WHO); the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH); the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); the Department of Justice (DOJ); the Center for Disease Control (CDC); the judiciary; law enforcement authorities at all levels; business and the organizations representing business interests.

In spite of the diverse group of professional, business, social, labor and governmental organizations that have an interest and stake in studying and preventing workplace violence, solutions are illusive. The above mentioned groups have a diversity of perspective that causes some to focus on only one narrow aspect of the problem. There are problems with a uniform method to identify victims of workplace violence existing due to the varied sources of information and the subjectivity with which it is reported. In addition, an unknown number of incidents go unreported to any authority or the employer. Peek-Asa, Runyan, and Zwerling (142) provide a fairly concise explanation of the difficulties in acquiring consistent and useable data to both fully understand all the many aspects of the problem and to formulate strategies to prevent the occurrence of violence. In the case of homicides the BLS uses sources of information to include death certificates, worker's compensation reports to OSHA, medical examiner reports, police reports, and media stories, with at least two sources corroborating the information. Identification of a homicide being work related is subject to the judgment of the one who is reporting. Other data sources of fatalities in the workplace are subject to discrepancies of definition of workplace fatality. In the 2000 CFOI, a fatality is included if meeting the following conditions: "the decedent must have been employed (that is working for pay, compensation, or profit) at the time of the event, engaged in a legal work activity, or present at the site of the incident as a requirement of his or her job". Other agencies or organizations may have broader or narrower definitions usually dependent upon the position or interest they have on the subject. The identification of non-fatal incidents of workplace violence is much more difficult. Deaths in the United States are reported and recorded in national repositories but non-fatal injuries are subject to a variety of problems. Police reports may capture a violent crime event, but may not report any linkage to employment. The same is true for physician or hospital reports. OSHA reporting logs only capture incidents that result in lost work days and are also subject to the interpretation of the reporting person.

In addition to the problem of identifying cases of workplace violence there is a scarcity of data on the effectiveness of programs that are developed to prevent workplace violence. Businesses are generally reticent about making available data that has been collected, on the effectiveness of their programs, fearing future liability. However they are the best source of data for determining the effectualness of various interventions. (Peek-Asa, Runyan, Zwerling.146)

Runyan (169) recommends that further research should include the following; 1) defining, conceptualizing, and measuring the problem of violence against workers; 2) developing strategies to prevent violence that are supported by theoretical and conceptual frameworks of intervention; 3) conducting rigorous evaluations that address outcome, impact and process; 4) viewing the multidisciplinary composition of the groups concerned with this topic as an asset rather than a liability; 5) securing appropriate support for research and intervention evaluation; and 6) ensure the results of investigations are peer reviewed and disseminated to governmental, corporate, and union decision makers.

Despite the fact that the vast majority of homicides are Type I followed by Type II, the popular media has publicized the more spectacular Type III homicides as representative of workplace violence. Beginning with the incident in Edmond, OK, in which 13 co-workers were killed by postal employee, Patrick Sherrill, the media coined the phrase "going postal". Media coverage has launched workplace violence onto the national radar, but at the same time has drastically skewed the perception of the frequency rate of different types of workplace violence. Based on coverage by the popular media one might think that the most common incident of workplace violence is an annoyed employee coming to work with an assault weapon. In the frenzy of reporting dramatic incidents and increasing ratings, the media failed to communicate the full context or to put incidents in proper perspective. (Bulatao& Vandenboss.4) In order for the public and business to fully understand the threats, costs, and repercussions of the true

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workplace violence profile, the media needs to report on the subject responsibly. The CDC has issued an "Entertainment Bulletin" that recommends the type of information that the media should clarify when reporting on incidents of workplace violence. In the communication the CDC cites example statistics to define the problem, illustrate who is at risk, and gives tips for what information should be included in the report in order to encourage viewers to raise the issues of safety in their workplace. By all appearances only a small percentage of popular media sources have followed these recommendations in their reporting.

There are numerous discrepancies that perhaps would not be expected from comparatively examining statistics of fatal or non-fatal results of workplace violence. One might logically assume that since the greater number of homicides is the result of Type I violence that the greater number of non-fatal incidents also results from Type I violence. The numbers prove to be a different story. The larger numbers of non-fatal acts, resulting in injury, are of Type II, and as shown by a survey conducted by Northwestern National Life, the greatest number of incidents, although probably of the lowest severity[3], are the result of Type III violence. In a hierarchical view point if one were a cashier experiencing workplace violence, one would have the greatest chance of death as a result of a stranger perpetrating a crime, a social service provider has the greatest chance of injury that results in time away from work due to the attack of a client, and a CPA or someone in a similar position has the greatest chance of experiencing threats, harassment, or simple assault from a co-worker. There are numerous articles and news broadcasts that miss-represent the statistics that rank workplace violence as the 2nd or 3rd leading cause of occupational death to create the perception and that most incidents involve employees angry over wage attachments or getting fired. While Type III violence is not the leading cause of workplace homicide or injury, it is the leading cause of threats and

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[3] The Northwestern National Life's survey included incidents of non-physical violence such as threats and harassment. The complete survey report was reprinted in an Appendix in the Bulatao and VandenBos book.

harassment. (Peek-Asa.114)

In the NIOSH report, "Violence in the Workplace" it is suggested that there must be a change in thinking that leads to reactionary approaches to violence prevention and instead view violence in the workplace as an occupational health and safety issue. For example, many businesses, particularly those that do not have traditional health and safety issues, view the problem as one of security. Frequently the response companies have to perceived threats is to hire more security guards. According to Somerson, a security consultant, quoted by the Bureau for Business Practices, hiring more security staff does not change the level of security, but the perception of security. There needs to an objective risk assessment that identifies and prioritizes the threats to the company and employees due to violence.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

While there are references to workplace violence prior to 1992, it was the first National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) that brought the magnitude of the problem to the attention of researchers and the media. In the last decade the subject has appeared in a diverse group of publications, has been the subject of numerous conference proceedings and papers, and has received attention in the popular press.

Definition and Scope

There are some differences in defining workplace violence across the spectrum of literature that was reviewed. Some researchers include only incidents of physical assault that results in a bodily injury; some others include verbal threats, sexual harassment, or any physical or verbal action that makes one person uncomfortable in the workplace. (Bulatao & VandenBos.2) The use of such a broad definition as "any act that makes one uncomfortable in the workplace" is too subject to wide fluctuations of individual interpretation and has the potential, if implemented in policy, to become the means of conducting a witch hunt, exercising favoritism, or the means of one employee to harass another with vague and or false accusations. It also creates a definition of workplace violence that would make it impossible to truly define and study it on a realistic level. Some of the literature discusses problems with defining workplace violence in further detail highlighting the lack of a common vocabulary to ensure consistent measurement and outcomes across environments and studies. (Runyan.169)

The most commonly used definitions are those based on the one used in the NCVS "violent acts, including physical assaults and threats of assault, directed towards persons at work or on duty". The problem with this definition and the one used by OSHA which is similar, is that it excludes situations in which the violence was precipitated by the workers job, but occurs while the person is off duty. (Bulatao & VandenBos.3) An example would be a person who is stalked by a client, patient or co-worker, and attacked at home. Bulatao and VandenBos (173) use the example of a policeman committing suicide due to job stress while off duty. Disagreement over including such a situation as an incident of workplace violence could arise because the suicide was not committed at work and therefore not directed at any individual in the workplace, where as, someone who committees suicide while at work or on duty is directing their action specifically at the workplace or someone in it.[4]

The literature is spread over a broad range of specific interests and some is narrowly focused on a particular aspect of the subject, such as only one Type of workplace violence or the particular risk associated with a specific group. What almost all sources have in common is reliance on data from three major sources in order to define the extent of workplace violence. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' CFOI and surveys of non-fatal occupational injuries, the Bureau of Justice Statistics' NCVS, and statistics collected by the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) and disseminated through the National Traumatic Occupational Fatalities (NTOF) surveillance system.

The literature is in agreement to the prevalence of the overall problem of workplace violence which is the result of the use of the same sources of data mentioned earlier. It is currently the third leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the United States and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, using the National Crime Victimization Survey, estimates 1.7 million non-fatal violent victimizations

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[4] The editors note that NIOSH considers any police fatality a "workplace fatality" regardless of how or where it occurs.

in the workplace annually. Most of the literature also accurately depicts the ratios of the types of violence across various occupations and industries. However, there are a number of articles and books that depending on the intention with which a source is quoting the available data, the depicted character of workplace violence can fluctuate drastically. In popular media accounts there are often citations of the number of workplace homicides for the most recent year available and then the article will launch into an account of whatever spectacular mass murder they are reporting on, giving the impression that the bulk of workplace homicides are the result of an employee murdering co-workers. For example, in an incident involving a woman school bus driver who shot several co-workers in California, Larry Chavez is quoted as saying "95% of workplace shootings are perpetrated by a white male who is socially isolated and outwardly angry... and that those who knew him admit they were not surprised that he exploded into a murderous rage".(Fagan.111) In the absence of other information or appropriate context, such a statement would lead the reader to believe that workplace violence mostly consisted of white men mass murdering their co-workers. In many cases an accurate reporting of the statistics is given at the beginning with the statement that most homicides occur during a robbery or other crime, but the article will go on to outline a program of prevention that is focused on employee violence. For instance, Lynne McClure, who runs a consultant company focused on workplace risks, is quoted in multiple sources as claiming the causes of workplace violence were a high risk employee, who solves problems through violence, combined with a high stress work environment and a "last straw" life altering event. (Davis)

Understanding Workplace Violence

Many authors and sources such as government agencies, workshop papers and conference reports call for further research in order to fully understand workplace violence. Full understanding of the problem and consequently developing proven methods of prevention necessitate information acquired through empirical research.

According to some sources the most effective approach involves several organized steps. The first step is surveillance to determine which populations are at risk and to identify the scope of the problem. Second, factors that place certain workers at higher risk must be defined so that employers can target those segments of the workforce; the third step involves the design and application of intervention programs followed by scientific evaluations of those efforts. (Peek-Asa, Runyan& Zwerling.141) Data is available that helps to identify those at risk of becoming homicide victims, but for other violent events identification and scope is not well defined. Also unclear are the factors that place some workers at a higher risk of experiencing workplace violence. A large portion of the problems with defining and understanding workplace violence is the lack of a common vocabulary to "ensure clear and consistent measurement of exposures and outcomes across settings and studies". (Runyan.169) In attempting to research the extent and types of non-fatal workplace violence, it is extremely difficult to make comparisons across studies. Some studies include within the scope of workplace violence; sexual harassment (a topic that is also poorly defined); offensive language; psychological violence; as well as, terms that have legal definitions such as; threats of physical assault; simple assault; aggravated assault. Other sources include thefts and other property crimes, obscene gestures, and verbal insults. (Chappell & Di Martino.11) Including incidents that are so open to subjective interpretation and then relying on self reporting further muddies the water as to the prevalence and severity of workplace violence within a particular group or setting.

Several researchers discuss the identification of general risk factors and what groups of workers can be determined to be at high risk of violent victimization, but there is little data that can be used to determine causal factors of workplace violence. (Peek-Asa.118) Most of the literature that discusses causal factors base their conclusions on anecdotal evidence which may appeal to common sense, such as; inadequate staffing in a health care setting; working alone or late at night; working in an atmosphere where performance expectation is high, but resources are limited. While most of these factors do have a high correlation with increased risk, without determining cause through well designed research, there is a probability that causal factors not yet considered will remain unknown and so unaddressed.

There are a number of hypotheses among various sources as to the root causes of workplace violence. The most common theme is that it mirrors general societal violence. There are, however, some differences that disallow such a simple explanation. While women are often the victim of violence in society in general, they are most often victimized by someone known to them or with who they are in a personal relationship. In the case of workplace violence, the perpetrator of violence against women is usually unknown. (Duhart.8) Another contradiction is the fact that most violent victimizations committed outside the workplace are not robbery related and the perpetrator and victim have some prior relationship 53% of the time (Rennison.8), where as in the workplace 56% of violent victimizations involve a victim and perpetrator have no prior relationship.(Duhart.8) So even though the rates of victimization are similar there are significant differences in the circumstances and the intent with which the perpetrator inflicts violence on the employee.

Some sources suggest that workplace violence is a trend that is increasing in the U.S. and can be expected to get worse, even though the available data has not shown a significant increase over the past ten years. Many of these sources are consultants who operate, for profit, businesses that provide violence prevention

programs to business organizations. Kinney (21) goes so far to claim workplace violence is a cultural trend peculiar, among industrialized nations, to the United States, caused by the absence or ineffectiveness of social control processes. The notion that workplace violence is an American affliction is not supported by data available for other western countries. There are numerous sources on workplace violence in the United Kingdom and other member countries of the UE, particularly in the service fields and retail trade, which indicates the problem, is just as prevalent in other industrial countries. Seventy-eight percent of respondents to 1998-99 internet survey reported they had experienced hostile behavior at the workplace; the British Retail Consortium found that more than 11,000 retail staff had been victims of physical assault and 350,000 victims of verbal threats or abuse in 1994-95; in France more than 2,000 attacks against transport workers were reported in 1998. (Chappell & Di Martino.8) These numbers are very similar to those reported by the NCVS in this country. The British Crime Survey reports 1.2 million incidents of workplace violence annually. (Hilpern) Presumably, this reflects a higher rate of workplace violence in the UK since their entire population is approximately 1/5 of the U.S.

Other causes of workplace violence that are mentioned are also connected to general societal violence such as; mass media portrayed violence; easy access to guns and other weapons; work related stressors; and bureaucratic processes that frustrate clients and/or customers.

Aggressive behavior may be viewed as the basic cause in any instance of workplace violence and it is hard to determine, in a general way, what might cause an individual to act out with physical or verbal aggression. Folger and Baron explain the origin of aggression "like other forms of complex behavior, is multi-determined. (stemming) from the interplay of a wide range of biological, individual, cognitive, social, situational, and environmental factors" (Bulatao & VandenBos.55) This explanation may be used to guide the study of and prevention of workplace violence. The factors that can be controlled by an

organization are the social, situational, and environmental factors. These factors can be altered to reduce the potential of a person acting out with physical or verbal aggression.

Perspectives

<u>Regulatory and other governmental agencies</u>

Workplace violence is not only an occupational health and safety issue; it is a part of the larger problem of general societal violence. However, as NIOSH points out, in an internet document titled, "Purpose and Scope", workplace violence cannot wait to be addressed as a social issue alone, immediate action is needed to address it as a serious occupational safety issue.

OSHA lists workplace violence as the third leading cause of occupational fatalities and notes that non-fatal incidents of violence have averaged, in the past decade, 1.7 million annually as reported by the NCVS. Based on data collected by the BLS and the NCVS, OSHA has identified various risk factors that increase the likelihood of an individual to experience workplace violence. The risk factors include; handling money; working alone or late at night; and interfacing with the public. OSHA has chosen to focus on three sections of industry and has published recommendations and voluntary guidelines for health care and social service workers, taxi cab drivers, and late night retail employees.[5] Federal OSHA, has stated in an archived document titled "Workplace Violence", that while there is no specific standard or regulation pertaining to workplace violence,

[5] OSHA. <u>Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers</u>. OSHA 3148. 1998 (Revised)
OSHA. <u>Recommendations for Workplace Violence Prevention Programs in Late-Night Retail Establishments</u>. OSHA 3153. 1998
OSHA National News Release: OSHA Recommends Protective Measures to Help Prevent Violence Against Taxi Drivers 9 May, 2000

its commitment to workers' safety in regard to violence falls under the "General Duty Clause" to "encourage employers to develop workplace violence prevention plans". All of OSHA's guidelines and recommendations are based on OSHA's Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines and contain the basic elements of: 1) Management commitment and employee involvement; 2) Worksite hazard analysis; 3) Hazard prevention and control; 4) Training and education.

Some states have promulgated regulations concerning workplace violence; among them are California and Florida. Cal/OSHA includes a workplace security assessment under its requirement for an Injury and Illness Prevention Program. (CRR Title 8, Sec. 3208)

NIOSH and the CDC make much stronger statements about the need for action to prevent workplace violence and the need to address broader social issues such as education, poverty and environmental justice as a matter of public health. Many NIOSH documents also discuss the need for further research and outline questions that need to be answered to improve understanding of the causes of violence in the workplace and to create effective prevention strategies.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics considers workplace violence enough of social threat that data from the NCVS is used to create a separate report devoted to this type of victimization. The NCVS is the primary source of data on non-fatal workplace violence and is used by almost all sources reporting on the subject. While the reports generated by BJS do not theorize about cause or recommend prevention strategies, the Office for Victims of Crimes has published recommendations for the business community to develop prevention programs and strategies to respond to workplace violence. (OCV 8/98)

Federal agencies have internal policies and prevention programs to address workplace violence. The United States Postal Service was one of the first agencies to institute a program to reduce incidents of violence and subsequently commissioned the largest most comprehensive study on workplace violence, both to ascertain the effectiveness of the program and to discover ways in which to improve. The USPS Commission on a Safe and Secure Workplace conducted the study over a two year period using a survey that included all levels and types of employees as well as focus groups. The commission evaluated all aspects of the violence prevention program and the organization as a whole and made recommendations for correction and improvement. Each aspect of USPS programs, policies, and procedures were analyzed and discussed in terms of implementation and the perception of employees, supervisors, management, and union officials. The survey data, along with specific questions used in the survey are included in the report. The questions are specific, avoiding much of the problems of subjective interpretation that questions from the Northwestern survey or NCVS have. Ironically, in light of the media hype surrounding postal workers, one result of the study concluded that postal workers experienced violence at work at a slightly lesser rate than the general workforce and they are only one third as likely to be a victim of homicide while at work.

Business

The literature that is interpreted as coming form a general business perspective has two source categories: those that have appeared in publications that cater to the business community and those produced by consultants whose professional focus is the prevention and remediation of workplace violence. The business sources include the professional journals of human resources, facilities management, and security, however even in these articles many of the same consultants are quoted frequently.

The Pinkerton Security Services Corporation performs an annual survey of the security directors of Fortune 1000 companies. For the past five years, with exception of 1998 (in which it ranked 2nd), the respondents ranked workplace violence as the number one security threat. The 2000 survey report cites a "major insurance company" (company is unidentified in the report) that estimates 30% of (non-fatal) violent incidents involve current or former employees, 45% are initiated by clients and customers, and 25% are random acts involving robbery or unprovoked assaults. Oddly enough, when the concerns of corporate security director respondents were arranged by industry, all ranked workplace violence as the number one security threat except the retail trade industry, in which it was ranked number two. The respondents from the retail trade industry ranked general employee theft as their number one concern. Their reasoning was an estimated 43% of retail theft, annually, is attributed to employees with an average loss of $1,058 per incident. The Workplace Violence Institute estimates that violent incidents in the workplace cost American business $36 billion annually. By taking that figure and divide it by the 1.7 million victims of workplace violence that the BJS estimates from the NCVS it could be estimated that each incident could average $21,000. Considering the occupations in retail trade have one of the highest rates of workplace violence, at 14.1 per 1,000 workers, following only police and mental health workers it could be argued that those in retail trade should reanalyze security priorities. In addition, when a retail worker suffers an attack the risk of a serious assault is as likely as that for a police officer where as mental health professionals are less likely to be victims of aggravated assault. (Seivold.3) The Pinkerton report focuses on employee violence with concerns revolving around; corporate downsizing; managers and supervisors expressing concern for their personal safety along with the perceptions that senior management is uninvolved; and stress related to increased performance expectations and changes in corporate culture created by the continuing spate of acquisitions and mergers. The survey had a 21.9% response rate.

Since the BLS published the first CFOI in 1993 with the information that homicide was the second leading cause of occupational fatalities an entirely new professional consultant group arose to provide services to businesses that were concerned that violence might happen within their workforce. Through reviewing this literature it is found that the general business community is overwhelmingly concerned with Type III violence, often the focus is on the possibility of an employee committing mass murder. Some of the prevention techniques frequently cited are; background checks on new hires; training supervisors and managers to observe employee behavior and analyze it for potential to commit violence; having a "zero tolerance" policy (although this is rarely defined except in the vaguest terms)(Crawford); and hiring extra security when announcing down-sizing. Another common theme is the "workplace killer" profile and the importance of having procedures in place so that employees can report an individual who begins to exhibit traits of the profile. (Prencipe & Habeeb)

Kinney (21) is one of a large number of authors who make sweeping, authoritative statements regarding the causes of workplace violence such as; entertainment and media portrayed violence; work stress; access to guns, etc., but cite no supporting literature or studies.

The most common strategies recommended by authors for prevention of violence focus on the individual, the object being to prevent some employee from perpetrating violence upon the company or other employees for reasons that are internal to the particular potential "perpetrator" . One book's authors did take a systemic approach to developing prevention strategies for Type III violence. Denenberg and Braverman (19) discuss various economic, work practices, and social reasons for workplace violence. They highlight some of the common stressors that may induce individuals under certain circumstances to react aggressively; competitive pressure; loss of personal autonomy the increasingly common practice of employee surveillance; cumulative physical and mental stressors; chronic fatigue; and changing workplace demographics. Instead of

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profiling a potentially violent individual, they focus on the root causes in management practices, company culture, and management-labor relations.

"Three conditions are necessary for violence; personality, stress, and setting. It makes more sense to ameliorate the stress and improve the setting than to exclude personalities that are presumed – on very little evidence – to be dangerous. The profile that is needed – the risk profile – focuses on the systemic failings, rather than on the flaws of individuals"
(Denenberg, Braverman.150)

The focus of general business on Type III violence is legitimate, but the concentration of so many authors on homicide is not supported by data. Many consultants produce materials that have an edge of hysteria that if taken alone would create the impression that employee-on-employee homicide is a common form of workplace violence. (Chavez) In fact Type III violence only accounts for approximately 7% of work related homicides. (Loveless.9) However, there is a consensus amongst many sources, that Type III violence is the most common source of threats, harassment, and simple assault in the workplace. While not as dramatic as murder, employees who act out aggressively towards either their employer or each other is cause for companies to be concerned enough to engage in the development of policies and programs to initiate change and prevent violence. A workplace in which employees are victimizing each other and engaging in aggressive or simply uncivil behavior is not likely to be a productive workplace. Such a work environment will have a high rate of employee turn over, low productivity, high absenteeism, and the potential for serious incidents of violence. Numerous sources, regardless of how they view problem, agree that there are high costs associated with threatening and aggressive employee behavior. Obvious costs can include; medical, psychiatric, and legal costs; increased security costs; and lost work time. There are hidden costs as well; the cost of hiring and training new employees due to high turn-over; the time spent by managers and supervisors dealing with conflicts; damage to company

reputation; inability to attract and hold good employees; and reduced productivity. (Kinney.15)

Many authors and consultants offer pre-packaged solutions that focus on the possibility of an individual employee becoming potentially violent. "Rather than focus on a balanced approach, many of these consultants focus on Type III violence exclusively, trading on the distorted stereotype of a homicidal, paranoid worker who must be stopped before he wreaks terrible vengeance" (Denenberg& Braverman.13) Despite the media attention and the marketing ploys of consultants there are sources, some of which, estimate up to 70% of businesses have not done a formal risk assessment for workplace violence. (McDonald.35) Wilkinson (156) explains the lack of action as the result of either incidents being so rare or underreported it has not occurred to management there is a potential problem or it is such a frequent event that that the employer views dealing with violence as part of the job.

What all these authors and sources do agree on is that preventing violence in the workplace requires the support of management and the commitment of necessary resources.

Labor

The literature authored by organized labor and other organizations that represent the interests of various occupations has a somewhat different view point than the bulk of material derived from a business or management consultant perspective. Most of these articles, documents, and electronic publications are products of labor unions, and professional organizations representing health care workers. All of the sources reviewed focused on a systems approach to defining workplace violence and in making recommendations for prevention.

Several authors and organizations express concern over how the media has portrayed violence in the workplace. Their view is that the sensational publicity surrounding incidents of employee homicide has resulted in perpetuating the myth that the danger to both business and employees comes from deranged individuals who, due to a lack of organizational vigilance, gain employment, and who are time bombs waiting to explode. The result is "a proliferation of management consultants focused on worker profiling to screen out workers considered to have a potential for violence". (Rosen.163) Another criticism of a worker based approach is that "Zero tolerance" policies focus on eliminating people who are at the breaking point rather than addressing sources of organizational stress that lead to conflict. (Rosen.164) The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) devotes a section in the booklet, Preventing Workplace Violence: A Union Representatives Guidebook, to outlining problems with components of a program developed as "reaction to the misconception that most violence is caused by workers". AFSCME's (28) lists of "bad elements" includes; profiling; psychological tests; zero tolerance policies; threat assessment teams; policies that exclude unions; and one-sided management policies.

The American Nurse's Association, the International Council of Nurses and several local nursing organizations are the source of numerous position statements, articles, and press releases calling for more action to end workplace violence in the health care industry. The primary concerns of these organizations revolve around staffing patterns, poor security, overly demanding workloads, unrestricted accessibility to work sites, and the isolation associated with home health care.

A number of organized labor sources and individuals are advocating the need for regulation addressing workplace violence. They are of the opinion that promulgating an enforceable standard will supply motivation to employers to collaborate with unions and employees to develop comprehensive safety plans

that incorporate violence prevention. The argument used by Rosen (164) draws a parallel to the OSHA standard for bloodborne pathogens. Despite voluntary guidelines for prevention of Hepatitis B, prior to the promulgation of the blood borne pathogens rule, the CDC estimated 6,000 to 8,000 health care workers were infected annually. Since the promulgation of the regulatory standard the number of infected workers, estimated by the CDC, has dropped to 400 per year. The International Labor Organization (ILO) notes that agencies "might be preferable even to courts as promoters of tort law reform, (in regard to benefits being denied to victims of workplace violence) since theoretically, agencies can promulgate regulations that are comprehensive and detailed". (Chappell& Di Martino. 91) However, it could be argued that each workplace and worksite has different types of risks of violence and differing levels of risk, which could make promulgating a standard that could apply to all very difficult. NIOSH Director, Linda Rosenstock is quoted in a HHS Press Release, "No single strategy for preventing occupational violence will ever fit all workplaces. Employers and workers should develop and pursue the mix of actions most appropriate for their specific circumstances"

Throughout the literature written from a labor perspective, there is strong agreement that workplace violence is a serious occupational health and safety issue and that the focus on Type III homicide will continue to be detrimental to defining the true scope of the problem and will misdirect the development of prevention strategies needed to protect workers. There is also a consensus that employers need to address the problem in greater numbers and to do so effectively a systems approach is necessary, as well as, full support from management, full employee involvement, and policies that are developed must be enforced consistently without bias.

Chapter Four

Methodology

The design of the occupational violence prevention management system was based on the outline of the American Industrial Hygiene Association's Occupational Health and Safety Management System: An AIHA Guidance Document. The AIHA management system is very like the International Standards Organization's 9000 series quality management systems. Modifications, alterations, and additions were made on the basis of the model of systems management presented by Dennis (83) and the conclusion made through research that prevention of workplace violence had to center around behavioral change more than engineering controls or design.

The rationale for using a health and safety system was the need for a basic outline that lent itself to modification, had a safety focus, would integrate into a commonly used format, and was not bogged down in prescriptive requirements but was instead flexible for use in a broad range of organizations.

Overall changes that were made to the AIHA management system include differences in organizational order and a concentration on behavior in most sections. The reason a behavior centered approach was used instead of an engineering approach (usually the first choice for hazard control) is violence has only one source – people.

There were some sections that were incorporated into the violence prevention management system with no significant changes; some sections have no corresponding section in the AIHA system, and some that were significantly altered in order to better address workplace violence.

Discussion

Management commitment, accountability, and responsibility

The importance placed on management commitment is basically the same in both systems. However, in the violence prevention management system the responsibility for the development of policy is jointly held by management and the planning group and is based on the assessment of the workplace and the resulting organizational violence risk profile. In the AIHA management system the formation of policy is the first step and is solely the responsibility of management.

Policy for violence prevention, by necessity must be specific. It is focused on behavior, whether that of employees or of outsiders, and without clear definitions lends itself to subjective interpretation. What constitutes management commitment is more defined and includes principles and ethical considerations, again because of the potential subjective nature of the behaviors that fall under the workplace violence categories.

Both systems require that employee involvement be present in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Assessment and Planning

In the AIHA system the responsibility of establishing, implementing and maintaining the management system is placed on a "management representative". In the violence prevention system management appoints a planning group that is "representative of all stakeholders" within the organization. This requirement is to ensure that the planning includes the necessary expertise as well as encourage maximum employee involvement.

Planning and assessment in the AIHA system focus on documentation requirements describing how hazards will identified, evaluated and controlled, and is inspection oriented.

In the violence prevention system assessment is not inspection oriented, nor is it possible in most cases for an assessment to focus on inspection and document review. In order to get a full picture of the problem, this process is centered on employee experience that includes past undocumented incidents, and the primary concerns of employees regarding violence. The reason for this is twofold; first, in most organizations incidents are often not officially reported to anyone, nor reported as recordable injuries (sometimes even when they should be). Second, the fears of employees also need to be addressed if the system is to be fully effective.

The planning of the components and programs, of the violence prevention system, is based on the assessment, the resulting violence profile, and definitions of unacceptable behaviors that have been identified.

Included in assessment and planning stages there are components that focus on management practices and administrative practices that are absent from the AIHA management system.

General: Violence Prevention Management System

Policy

AIHA places the sole responsibility for policy development on management and its basis is compliance and conformance with relevant standards and guidelines. In most health and safety management systems policies are usually simple statements to demonstrate the organizations commitment to the health and safety of employees and stakeholders.

In the violence prevention system policies and underlying principles are derived from the organizational violence profile and are developed jointly by management and the planning team. Policies that are part of a violence prevention system must be more defined in terms of what type of conduct is covered by the policy due to the subjective nature of what constitutes threatening and aggressive behavior.

The violence prevention management system includes detailed recommendations for what should be included in complimentary policies, supporting principles, and supplementary documentation. There is a requirement that existing policies, related to workplace violence, must be reviewed to ensure there are no potential conflicts that may undermine efforts in violence prevention.

Documenting Requirements

Documenting requirements are extensive in the AIHA system and are addressed in almost every section in some way. The requirements for documentation and data control are designed to meet the requirements of an ISO type audit.

Documenting requirements for the violence prevention system are less stringent. They are not designed to be auditable, although an organization could substitute the documentation requirements from any management system. The reason the OVPMS is not prescriptive in regard to documenting requirements to reduce the paper burden on an organization that doesn't have the resources or the desire to maintain the documentation that is required for ISO type systems.

Communication

There are some small differences, between the model system and the violence prevention management system in the requirements for communication. The violence prevention system places additional emphasis on ensuring communications go up as well as down the chain of command and includes stakeholders other than employees as targets of communication. There is a component for encouraging employees not just to report potential hazards, as in the AIHA management system, but to participate in the further development and improvement of the system. There is a requirement that organizations develop specific methods which can be used by employees to provide feedback during both the planning stage and after the system has been implemented.

Environmental design and Administrative controls

The AIHA management system include a large section on engineering controls and design since its purpose is to address all health and safety hazards for all types of organizations. It has to take into account; machinery, hazardous chemicals, and many types of physical conditions. The violence prevention system has few requirements concerning physical designs and controls since it is only concerned with one source of potential injury or illness, that which is inflicted by another person.

In assessing the environment for controllable hazards the violence prevention system requires examination in terms of two areas. The environments potential to induce stress (i.e. lack of personal space, unpleasant noise levels) and the potential to limit or inhibit physical safety in an emergency (i.e. unrestricted access to work areas, an open design with few areas that could provide cover)

The AIHA portions dealing with administrative issues center around documenting requirements for purchasing hazardous materials, inventory of hazardous materials, etc, and it is not a separate section.

The violence prevention system requires administrative practices be examined for the potential to unnecessarily induce stress on employees or clients, and then find ways to reduce or eliminate those stressors. For example, if waiting times for clients are excessive then scheduling practices should be altered or if employees cannot keep up with assigned tasks then mechanisms should be put in place ensuring that managers and supervisors keep the work flow at a realistic level and prioritize appropriately.

Security

Security is not an issue addressed by AIHA since it is traditionally a function separate from health and safety.

Education and Training

This section is not significantly different in the documenting requirements, but the prevention management system goes into considerably more detail. There is a requirement for developing a procedure for identifying and evaluating appropriate training and determining who will receive training. Many types of health and safety training are mandated by regulatory agencies and there are a host of

accepted curricula available to organizations which make targeted training relatively easy. In addition, in most traditional health and safety training programs it's fairly obvious who should get what training. For instance, it is not difficult to decide that administrative personnel do not need training in the proper use of fall protection. Deciding which personnel receive which type of violence prevention training is more complicated. While everyone at a worksite is not going to be at risk for falling off a scaffold, everyone is at some degree of risk for being exposed to harassment, aggressive behavior, and violence.

Threat Complaint / Report Response

This section has no corresponding sections in the AIHA. It is, however, analogous to the recommendation that organizations develop and document procedures for incident investigation in the inspection and evaluation section of the AIHA management system.

Workplace Violence Incident Response Plan

The AIHA system has a requirement to develop and maintain documented procedures for emergency preparedness but does not provide any further detail on what should be included. The section on incident response, in the violence prevention system, is more prescriptive and the requirements are loosely based on the elements required by emergency action plans as listed under CFR 29 1910.38

Post-Incident Response

There is no corresponding section or requirement in the AIHA system. This requirement was developed based on the consensus among both workplace violence literature and sources from the mental health field that timely post-

trauma care is essential in preventing or reducing the negative effects of a critical incident on exposed individuals.

Audits, conformance review and continuous improvement

These sections differ from AIHA very little other than the requirement for documenting these requirements is not as strictly delineated. However, it is advisable that the auditing procedure be documented so that it will remain standard across organizational boundaries and across time.

Chapter Five

Results

Behavior follows structure

- Peter Senge

The following violence prevention management system outline was developed with the goal that it could be incorporated into an existing health and safety management system or be used on its own. This allows its use by organizations, with a low risk of other types of occupational injury or illness, which may have no formal health and safety system or program

Occupational Violence Prevention Management System (OVPMS)[6]

1.0 Scope

This management system is intended to prevent instances of violence in the workplace and reduce the effects of critical incidents effectively increasing productivity by reducing or eliminating the costs, both direct and indirect that are the results of aggression and violence entering the workplace. The implementation of a violence prevention system will vary according to the type of organization, what its business is, and what types of violence present the greatest risks. The system was designed to be integrated into an existing health and safety management system or quality management system.

2.0 Definitions

Client – Refers to any stakeholder that is not a shareholder/owner, paid employees or contractor. May be used to refer to customer, student, patient, inmate, etc.

Qualified Individual – A person who has received training that bestows upon him or her, the necessary skill or knowledge to carry out a specific task or duty. This person may be either an employee or an outside contractor.

Resources – include time, materials, technical support, personnel

Shall – A statement that includes shall is equivalent to a requirement.

Should – A statement that includes should is equivalent to a recommendation.

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[6] The outline presented here is modeled on management system outlines from the AIHA Occupational Health and Safety Management System, ISO 9000 Quality Management System, and ISO 14000 Environmental Management System.

3.0 Management Commitment

In order for this system to be effectual in reducing incidents of violence or mitigating the affects of violence there must be demonstrated senior management commitment. In order to demonstrate leadership and commitment there must be a clear vision that is communicated to and shared by all stakeholders; a plan to achieve the vision; visible and active support for the system; and management accountability. (Dennis, 163)

3.1 Management will state the goals and objectives of the OVPMS.

3.2 There must be executive accountability in the design and implementation of the violence prevention management system. The organization shall designate a management representative with the responsibility to lead a representative team to develop and implement the violence prevention management system and the authority to obtain or approve necessary resources.

3.2.1 The determination of what constitutes adequate resources is based on the availability of resources and the severity and type of risk the organization faces.

3.3 Management will further demonstrate commitment by applying the rules and procedures equally within the organization and establish opportunities for line supervisors and employees to participate in the establishment and implementation of the system.

3.4 Management shall designate responsibility and appropriate authority to qualified individuals for various components of the system and its core programs.

3.5 Management shall review the system and its programs and components at regular intervals to assess effectiveness.

> **3.5.1** If an incident should occur management and the planning/response team shall conduct an analysis of systems effectiveness and how it may have failed in the primary goal to prevent an incident.

> **3.5.2** Based on the results of the analysis corrective actions shall be identified and applied.

4.0 Assessment and Planning

Management shall appoint a planning group that is representative of all stakeholders in the organization.

4.1 Violence Risk Profile The planning group shall conduct an assessment of risk or appoint qualified individuals to conduct an assessment of risk and create an organizational violence risk profile. The profile should be developed based upon organizational experience of past incidents as well as potential risk. The best way to determine past experience is through employee disclosure and record review. In regard to record review, it should be kept in mind, that it is very common for incidents to go unreported, thus the need for obtaining information and concerns directly form employees through surveys, interviews and focus groups. (Denenberg, Braverman.174)

4.2 Based on the organizational violence risk profile, management, together with, the planning group shall develop appropriate policy and supporting principles.

4.2.1 Violent, aggressive, and other unacceptable and disruptive behaviors shall be identified and defined within the policies and principals developed so that there are clear guidelines for determining what behaviors and acts will be acted upon within the scope of the prevention system.

4.3 Based on the violence risk profile, the planning group shall develop procedural guidelines for investigating allegations and responding to critical incidents. Guidelines, procedures and methods should also be developed that are aimed at preventing the escalation of hostility between co-workers, supervisors, management, and where applicable clients and other stakeholders. These guidelines shall be documented and maintained either within an occupational health and safety manual, as a violence prevention system manual, or with other documentation required by a management system employed by the organization.

5.0 General Violence Prevention Management Systems

All of the following components are not necessarily going to apply to every organization. Implementation of any or all of them will depend on the organizational structure and culture, the type of business the organization is engaged in, the available resources and the level and type of risk the organization faces as determined by the workplace violence risk profile.

5.1 Policy

The policy developed should be a clear statement that establishes the organizations commitment against violence. (ASSE.4) It must define workplace violence; prescribe a standard of conduct; and a range of consequences. It should be based on the violence risk profile and the focus should be organizational and not on individuals. (Denenberg and Braverman. 174)It must convey that the policy applies to all employees and management and that appropriate action will be taken in every instance of aggression and violence as defined by the policy. The policy must be disseminated to all employees and management and other stakeholders as appropriate.

5.2 Complimentary Policies and Supporting Principles

5.2.1 Designate the individual or unit to which problems are reported and develop documented procedures for reporting instances of violence, threatening behaviors, and aggression.

5.2.2.1 The organization should ensure that procedures and methods for reporting and investigating incidents ensure confidentiality for all parties involved and that a commitment to confidentiality is conveyed to employees.

5.2.2.2 The organization should convey within policies and supplementary principles that while there is an awareness that most instances of threats and threatening or aggressive behavior do not ultimately result in violence, that each instance will be investigated seriously. That aggressive or threatening behavior has a negative effect on the workplace and all individuals exposed and will not be tolerated.

5.2.2.3 The organization should convey to all employees that any type of retaliation, whether from employees, supervisors, or clients, for reporting problems will not be tolerated.

5.2.2 The organization should institute procedures and methods that focus on the resolution of conflict so that problems between employees and/ or customers and clients do not escalate. Examples of such methods are mediation; non-adversarial grievance procedures; dispute resolution. (University of CA at Davis)

5.2.3 Other complimentary policies to workplace violence prevention policies may include, but are not limited to; harassment policies; disciplinary policies; hiring policies

5.2.3.1 Most organizations have policies regarding harassment. These policies should be reviewed and integrated into the violence prevention management system.

5.2.3.2 Discipline policies should be reviewed to ensure they adequately address situations that result from threatening or aggressive behavior.

5.2.3.3 Hiring policies and practices should be reviewed; including requirements for references; documentation from prospective employees verifying qualifications; public record checks. Ensure that policy is adhered to in practice.

> **5.2.3.3.1** Termination practices and procedures should be reviewed to ensure they are not unnecessarily stressful or insensitive. Determine ways in which a terminated employee may be supported.

5.3 Documentation The organization shall establish and maintain procedures to control documents and data that relate to the requirements of the system.

> **5.3.1** The organization shall establish procedures for document review, identifying revision status, and approving and disseminating changes in documenting or procedures associated with the management system.

5.4 Communications Ensure there are open bi-directional pathways of communication.

> **5.4.1** The organization shall ensure all employees are aware of policies, procedures and training requirements of the violence prevention management system and their responsibilities and rights with regard to the implementation of the violence prevention management system. Institute methods of keeping employees updated on changes in the system.

5.4.2 The organization shall devise methods to communicate policies on violence prevention to clients, customers, students, contractors, and others where applicable.

5.4.3 The organization shall create the means for employees to convey feedback and suggestions to the planning team, response team, and senior management

5.4.4 The organization shall encourage employees to actively participate in the development and subsequent improvement of the OVPMS.

5.5 Environmental Design and Administrative Control

5.5.1 Based on the organizational violence risk profile the potential problems that have been identified with the environmental design and other physical aspects of the worksite and its immediate surroundings shall be prioritized and corrected.

5.5.2 Based on the organizational violence risk profile problems identified with current administrative controls and practices that have been identified as possible contributors of unnecessary stress on employees, clients, and other stakeholders, shall be prioritized and corrected.

5.6 Security Based on the violence risk profile, determine needed changes in security measures, personnel and policies. Needed changes shall be prioritized and made.

5.7 Education and Training Based on the violence risk profile determine the training needs of employees, line supervisors, the response team and management.

>**5.7.1** Training shall be conducted by a qualified individual.

>**5.7.2** The planning team shall document procedures for identifying training needs and tracking the need for refresher training and initial training for new employees.

>**5.7.3** The planning team shall develop procedures for evaluating training courses and curricula to ensure, as much as possible, that the training will be relevant, effective, and targets the risks identified in the workplace violence profile.

>**5.7.4** Minimally, training should make employees aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to violence prevention policy and risk reduction techniques.

5.8 Threat Complaint/Report Response The organization shall appoint a representative group of qualified individuals to oversee the investigation and assessment of reported threats.

>**5.8.1** The organization shall designate one or more individuals and/or mechanisms for employees to report incidents of threats, threatening or aggressive behavior. Reports and actions taken shall be documented and retained for a designated period.

5.8.2 The organization shall develop mechanisms for investigating and verifying reported threats or threatening behavior and designate responsibility for any such investigations and subsequent assessments to qualified individuals.

5.8.2.1 Employee Assessment The organization shall develop documented procedures and designate responsibility to a qualified individual to assess the risk represented by any employee who expressed threats or behaved in a threatening, aggressive or violent manner.

5.8.2.2.1 The planning team should develop guidelines for the protection of targeted individuals if deemed necessary. Plans will need to be tailored on a case by case basis.

5.8.3 Risk Assessment Based on the report of the employee assessment determine the degree of risk the employee may represent.

5.8.3.1 Possible Actions

5.8.3.1.1 The organization shall establish guidelines for interventions that would be required if it was decided that the employee could be retained.

5.8.3.1.2 The organization shall establish guidelines to be followed in the event the employee is to be separated from employment.

5.8.4 Every step and action of the above will be documented and subsequently retained for a predetermined period.

5.9 Workplace Violence Incident Response Plan Based on the workplace violence profile guidelines shall be developed to respond to possible critical incidents. Depending on the level and type of risk it may be either incorporated into an existing emergency action plan or created as a separate response plan.

5.9.1 Emergency Action Plan Response Team The organization shall appoint a team who will carry out the functions identified by the response plan.

5.9.1.1 Members of the response team shall be qualified individuals who have received appropriate training to perform their designated role on the team.

5.9.1.2 The organization shall establish communication methods for use during a critical incident.

5.9.1.2.1 There should be methods by which the response team can communicate directly with senior management.

5.9.1.2.2 There shall be means by which employees receive emergency notification in the event an evacuation of the worksite becomes necessary.

5.9.1.2.3 There should be methods by which team members may communicate with each other

5.9.1.3 The organization shall establish procedures for the evacuation of the property and a means by which those in the building can be accounted for.

5.9.1.4 In the event that employees or others in the building are unable to evacuate the organization should designate a room and make alterations to make it secure.

5.9.1.5 Contacting Emergency Responders All employees should be trained to recognize circumstances that require the notification of emergency responders such as police, fire and medical. The means to notify these emergency personnel should be readily available from all areas of the worksite.

5.9.1.6 The response team should arrange for periodic drills based on likely scenarios to test the response plan.

5.10 Post Incident Response The organization shall develop a plan for post-incident response and designate authority and responsibility to qualified individuals.

5.10.1 The organization shall designate qualified individuals to perform debriefing of employees and others who have been victimized or exposed either primarily or secondarily to a traumatic event within a designated time period. There should be periodic follow up on employees so exposed to ensure full recovery and to guard against delayed reaction.

5.10.1.1 The organization should make arrangements for short term and long term mental health care intervention for employees that may develop post-traumatic stress syndrome.

5.11 Incident Analysis Following any critical incident the event shall be analyzed for root cause and the response should be evaluated for effectiveness.

5.11.1 The organization shall implement corrective actions if called for by the root cause analysis and emergency response plan evaluation.

6.0 Audits and Conformance Review The organization should establish documentation requirements and implement internal audits of the OVPMS at established time periods. The audit should be performed by a group independent of the planning and response teams.

> **6.1** The organization shall establish measures of performance by which to judge the effectiveness of the OVPMS and to identify non-conformance.
>
> > **6.1.1** Identify the need for statistical methods for verifying the effectiveness of the OVPMS.
>
> **6.2** The organization shall prioritize for corrective action documented deficiencies found during the audit.

7.0 Continuous Improvement The organization shall maintain efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of the OVPMS.

Chapter Six

Discussion

Introduction

Upon review of the problem posed by violence in the workplace and analyzing the programs, recommendations, and services available that aim at solving, reducing or controlling the problem, it was concluded the missing element necessary to both prevention and to provide the basis for further study was a clearly defined, systematic approach. The solution was determined to be a management system that would provide the framework to treat every aspect of the problem and facilitate integration and standardization of prevention efforts into all functions of an organization.

Management Systems and Total Quality Management

The purpose of a management system is to reduce chaos, provide order, structure and an anchor for an organization. Effective systems are flexible and allow for the analysis of output to provoke changes in the system for continual improvement.(Dennis.82) The thinking that is represented by the familiar phrase "because that's the way it's always been done" is a death knell to process of continuous improvement and the goal of quality.

Dennis (31) summarizes the quality approach to systems management as the marriage of leadership, measurement and participation. The underlying principles of the quality approach are: leadership by senior management; everyone works and participates; it is systems oriented; focuses on up-stream prevention of non-conformance; aims at continual improvement; has long-term goals; bases decisions on data; and integrates business functions.

The goal of using a quality management system structure is the prevention of violence in the workplace, a very real health and safety risk, and to promote a harmonious work environment that allows for optimal productivity. This requires a focus on up-stream prevention of violence and dysfunctional reactions to conflict by eliminating or controlling root causes, so that it doesn't occur in the first place. Producing a plan for effectively responding to a critical incident, or identifying those who exhibit signs that might indicate they have the potential to commit violence is not proactive, but reactive. In accordance with theories of systems management and total quality practices a successful violence prevention management system requires the following: active and involved leadership of the upper echelons of management; the participation and input from all levels of the organization; methods by which the organization can measure progress towards goals and analyze the effectiveness of the system; and policies and goals that are integrated into all functions of the organization. It is reasonable to conclude using a management system to address the problem will both reduce the occurrence of threatening, aggressive, or violent incidents in the workplace and provide the means for accruing the data needed to both assess the prevention efforts and to contribute to efforts to define the problem.

System Weaknesses

There are weakness in this system originating from both the overall difficulty in addressing and attempting to control human behaviors and the fact that this is a first attempt (as near as can be determined) to outline a management system for violence prevention. Some of the limitations of the system include; effectual implementation is dependent on organizational culture; there is a dependence on behavioral control or modification; the subjectivity of the hazard assessment process; and a lack of identified objective performance measures by which to judge its effectiveness.

Organizational Culture and Management Practices

One of the primary weaknesses of this system is the dependence on historical relationships between management and employees, the overall social structure of the organization, and traditional practices within an organization, each of which will have direct bearing on whether the system can be used successfully. Denenberg and Braverman (173) point out, that in many organizations, the successful implementation of proactive violence prevention would require profound changes in organizational culture. A company culture that has a strict, authoritarian hierarchy and tolerates abusive management practices will not likely be successful in utilizing the type of management system presented in this thesis. The system is dependent on, demonstrated management commitment, participation from employees, and open communication and so will probably work best in organizations that practice some form of participative management.

The Quality and Productivity Management Association describes the role of management in demonstrating commitment as making something happen, via mission, vision, values, goals, policies, process improvement, financial support, measurements, communication, participative supervision, training and education, rewards and recognition, and above all, management involvement. (Vincoli.28) To implement any management system or in fact any program there must be visible and demonstrated support from senior management, otherwise there will be little effort on the part of employees to ensure the goals and objectives are realized. Management practices must reflect values that are expounded by an organization or lose the confidence of employees. In order to demonstrate commitment, management must commit adequate resources in terms of time, personnel, training, and financing, dependant on what is available and to what degree the organization is at risk. Equally important is the necessity that employees have confidence in management's ability to implement policies and programs with equity and fairness. (Cawood.130) If management decides to implement a violence prevention program, then leaves the development,

implementation, and all the responsibility to someone in middle or lower management position, with no authority to secure resources or cooperation from other departments, it will be doomed to failure. (Denenberg.Braverman.174) Employees will view such a non-effort as one more "program of the month" that is instituted on paper only and then forgotten.

An organizational culture in which managers and supervisors tend to be directive and overuse punitive reinforcement will probably not find using a management system will reduce uncivil, aggressive or violent behavior. Organizations that operate in this manner will likely be at increased risk for violence due to the stress levels employees are exposed to. Concentrating on negative reinforcement will get employees to perform at the minimum acceptable level to avoid punishment. Positive reinforcement and a participative culture is the recipe to obtain consistent high level performance from a workforce. (Daniels.43) Research in the fields of human behavior, particularly organizational behavior, can be used as a basis to design further study on workplace violence.

There needs to be research aimed at identifying management and administrative practices that may contribute to workplace violence. There are a lot of hypothesis based on common sense but little research from which scientific conclusions can be drawn, therefore solutions cannot be targeted accurately.

Behavioral Control versus Engineering Control

Violence prevention, to a very large degree, is dependent on modifying or controlling people's behavior. The normal accepted order of priority for dealing with occupational hazards within the health and safety field is; 1) Through engineering and design eliminate the potential hazard; 2) If the hazard cannot be eliminated incorporate safety devices; 3) Utilize systems to detect and warn employees of hazardous conditions; 4) Development of safe operating procedures and safety training programs; 5) The use of personal protective

equipment when none of the previous controls are adequate. (Krieger & Montgomery. 4) In the case of violence as an occupational hazard, there are not many engineering controls available outside of those used for robbery deterrence and space design to reduce the environmental stressors associated with violence. Because a set of behaviors constitute the hazard, the first order of priority must be training and administrative control of stressors that are associated with increased displays of aggressive behavior. Reliance on training presents a number of challenges. There are few, if any training programs that have been scientifically tested for their ability to deter aggressive or violent behavior. The effectiveness of training relies on the quality of the curricula, the ability of the instructors to convey the information and knowledge, and the person who has received the training to effectively utilize what they have learned in emotionally charged situations. In regard to stressors in the workplace, control may be almost as difficult. There are many job tasks that are inherently stressful, such as air traffic controller or emergency room care provider in which it is impossible to eliminate the primary stressors. Control of primary stressors is limited to staffing and scheduling practices, providing social and psychological support to stressed employees, and other actions that mitigate but do not eliminate stressors. In addition, organizations have no control over the stress employees are subject to from their personal life which is often brought to work, although support can be provided in the forms of employee assistance programs and ensuring there is adequate mental health care incorporated into health benefits.

Effective educational curriculum and training programs need to be identified. To date, there has been little research to determine what types of training and education will be the most effectual in preventing violence. The dilemma of choosing effectual training is compounded since different types of training are required based upon the sources of risk. Currently organizations have to rely on accepted communication training or they can experiment. Most of the research being conducted on anti-violence training is being conducted in public school

systems which may have only limited applicability.

Hazard Assessment and Incident Investigation

In most cases assessing the hazards represented by physical and chemical agents found in the workplace is an objective process based on facts. If a process produces dust then something has to be done to remove the possibility of employees inhaling the dust by either eliminating the dust from the process, capturing the dust before it reaches the employee, or providing personal protective equipment to employees exposed to the dust. In the case of assessing the risk that individuals may expose employees to aggression or violence there is a lack of information that doesn't allow the risk or the source to be clearly identified. Every individual reacts to stressors differently depending on their personality, the level of stress they are feeling at that particular point in time and the behaviors they have learned are effective in dealing with similar situations. When no prior knowledge of the individual exists, as is usually the case with clients, it becomes impossible to predict what degree of risk they may represent. The only method left by which the assessment of risk can be based is the past experience of the organization and assuming there won't be a great deal of deviation from the norm. Once the degree of risk has been estimated, there is the dilemma of how the various risks are to be addressed. The majority of methods by which to control the potential hazards rely on psychology; engineering and hard science has limited use.

Incident investigation involving an alleged act of violence or aggression suffers the same lack of objective methods to determine what may have actually happened as assessing who might pose a risk. Anything short of a clearly intentional physical attack is subject to some interpretation as to whether the behavior was threatening, harassing, or aggressive. All reports of threats have to be taken seriously, but there may often be disagreement as to whether a particular remark or physical act actually constitutes a threat. (Denenberg &

Braverman. 165) An investigation of a reported threat or aggressive behavior must involve the context, analyzing the perceptions of all those involved, understanding the history of personal relationships and other factors and motivators that would explain the event so that an investigator arrives at a fully informed judgment as to the potential risk represented by the incident and persons involved.

Measurement

There is a lack of objective methods for measurement that is needed throughout the system. During the initial assessment to produce the organizational violence risk profile typical measures of sick time, injuries, and incident reports are not adequate to capture the potential extent of the problem, forcing a reliance on the subjective views of individuals. The typical legal test to determine whether a behavior was aggressive or harassing is whether a reasonable person would view a behavior to be such. This leads to the question of what defines a reasonable person. This presents problems when trying to develop objective measures in which to both do the initial assessment and to judge how the system is working once implemented. Returning to the example of a dust problem, one can take air samples and determine, with a high degree of accuracy, how much dust to which an employee is being exposed. There is no objective instrumental analysis available to determine the level of violence employees are exposed to.

In addition to the need for objective assessment measurements, objective methods of measuring and rewarding performance must be developed. The use of variation from a base line number of incidents has little value for an organization that has had only a few number of clearly defined incidents or if the base line is established purely through anecdotal evidence. The most common performance measure for safety performance; "days without accidents" or "lost man days" are not appropriate performance measures for workplace violence. Imagine an organization's management providing a pizza party for the unit with

the fewest fist fights each month. Performance measures and rewards have to be based on proactive behaviors, for instance the amount of training completed within a department or the level of participation in contributing to violence prevention initiatives such as peer mediation.

Performance measurements have to be chosen carefully and the organizational response has to be carefully thought out ahead. In most cases measurement used in assessing performance related to violence prevention will be judgment based rather than counting based. Counting the number of incidents or interactions without incident would not be practical due to the relative rareness of violent incidents. The problem with judgment based measures is they are often viewed as arbitrary. (Daniels.96)

Conclusion

Despite the System's weaknesses, there are good arguments for utilizing systems management for controlling workplace violence. Many organizations have successfully used systems management for reducing other occupational health and safety hazards and for increasing safe behaviors and reducing unsafe behaviors in their workforce. Until more research has been done and provided answers, it is reasonable to apply what has worked elsewhere to this problem.

Chapter Seven

Considerations in Implementation of an OVPMS

Anger, Aggression, and Violence

Conflict is a natural occurrence where ever there are two or more human beings interacting. How the culture of an organization dictates the response to conflict will have a direct bearing on the outcome of each particular conflict and is indicative of the overall health of the organization. Conflict is often accompanied by anger and how anger is communicated and acted on will affect organizational success. (Allcorn.xii) Organizations must find ways for the constructive communication of anger and the subsequent resolution of conflict. (Alllcorn.xiv) It is anger that remains unexpressed and unresolved that frequently finds its expression in aggression and violence, very often displaced onto those who had nothing to do with its origins.

There are many definitions of aggression, for the purposes of this discussion, Kidd and Stark's (1) definition is favored as being broadly applicable to behaviors that have a negative impact on the workplace. Aggression is behavior intended to harm someone against their will and entails any form of injury, including psychological or emotional harm. Violence is a form of aggression specifically attempting physical harm. Instances of aggression and violence can be born of two different motivators. The first, instrumental aggression or violence is when the aggression or violence is used as a means to a specific end as in the commission of a robbery. The second motivator is emotional. The aggression or violence is a result of an individual's reaction to intense feelings of anger which may have its origins in causal feelings of frustration, guilt, shame, humiliation, fear or any other emotion which causes negative reactions and a desire to escape them. Denenberg, Denenberg and Braverman (2) point out that "violence

is a natural human behavior, an attempt to respond to unbearable stress. Each of us would resort to it if pushed to the limit." If thought of in this way, the concept of violence prevention can be simplified to a)creating a system that is designed to recognize and intervene during the earliest exhibition of warning signs of stress; b) trains a workforce to recognize signs of stress in themselves and others; and c) encourages and provides education in ways to de-escalate rising hostility.

Although organizations will differ in the primary risks of violence may represent, all organizations are, to some degree, at risk for all types of violence. While the violence prevention management system's policy, principles, and core programs should focus on the primary risk; secondary risks must be addressed as well. A large number of books and articles on workplace violence begin with stories of murder perpetrated by disgruntles employees (Baron.7), or an initial description of the recommended "prevention plan" plan which focuses on security measures, crisis plans, and post-incident response.(Wheeler & Baron.37) Others highlight the importance of identifying "warning signs" signaling potentially violent behavior and generally focus on the behavior of the individual, they stress the importance of background checks and pre-employment psychological testing.(Barlow.D1) Workplace homicide is certainly a fear inducing concern, but realistically most workplaces will never experience that worst case scenario of violence. Workplace homicide has hovered between 600 and 1000 instances per year since 1993, and over 80% of them involve robberies perpetrated by strangers, not gun toting disgruntled ex-employees on a rampage of revenge that the media is so fond of making news out of. However, the most insidious, and perhaps the most common form of workplace violence, is perpetrated between co-workers and workers and management. Behaviors that fall less under the legal definition of violence and more under the psychological definitions of aggression; intimidation, harassment, bullying, and general disruptive behavior that is counterproductive and costly to an organization in terms of high employee turn-over, loss of loyalty, lowered productivity, and other symptoms of dysfunctional stress. These are the types of behaviors that an occupational violence prevention

system aims to manage.

Components of a proactive violence prevention management system focus on the organization and the systems by which it operates rather than on identifying and profiling potentially violent individuals within the system. An organization that takes a systemic approach to preventing violence, and in fact any factor that can have a negative affect on productivity, will analyze early signs of stress, encourages participation from all stakeholders, and determines in advance how to deal with a crisis. (Denenberg, Denenberg, Braverman)

The discussion of the elements of the management system is by no means meant to be exhaustive. There are many differences among the needs, risks, and resources of different organizations. The intention is to provide some suggestions, direct attention to methods and measures that may not otherwise be considered, and inspire creative analytical thinking that may lead to the development of creative solutions.

Considerations in Planning

In developing an OVPMS, the first task of management is to define the objectives and goals of the system and then assign an individual with executive authority to be held accountable for the development of the system and its integration into business functions. The objective is fairly clear; the prevention of violence in the workplace. The goals and objectives of the system will need to be based upon the development of an organizational definition of violence and the degree to which violence appears to be a danger. A clear definition of violence is necessary if it is to be monitored effectively.(Kidd&Stark.131) Legally violence is defined as a deliberate attempt to inflict physical harm, but many organizations include forms of aggression that are not necessarily physical. The range of what is considered aggressive or threatening is broad; verbal or psychological abuse, sexual harassment, electronic harassment, and even passive-aggressive

behavior such as not responding to a co-worker's requests or sabotaging their work efforts.(Namie & Namie) While many think of violence as a physical act or will include the threat of physical harm, it may be useful for an organization to include the less dramatic acts of aggression since the goal of workplace violence prevention is to promote a harmonious and productive workplace. The University of California at Davis utilizes a clear definition of behavior that is deemed intolerable and referenced by there anti-violence policy.

"What is Disruptive, Threatening, or Violent Behavior?

UC Davis policies prohibit disruption and obstruction of University functions and activities, verbal threats, and behavior endangering the health and safety of any individual.

Disruptive behavior disturbs, interferes with or prevents normal work functions or activities. Examples: yelling, using profanity, waving arms or fists, verbally abusing others, and refusing reasonable requests for identification.

Threatening behavior includes physical actions short of actual contact/injury (e.g. moving closer aggressively), general oral or written threats to people or property, as well as, implicit threats.

Violent behavior includes any physical assault, with or without weapons: behavior that a reasonable person would interpret as being potentially violent (e.g. throwing things, destroying property) or specific threats to inflict physical harm." (University of CA at Davis, Workplace Violence Prevention Operations Committee)

The definitions above, of unacceptable behaviors considered aggressive, violent and damaging to the work environment are clear but not narrow or restrictive and examples are provided. Definitions that are overly defined can lead to a lowered occurrence of reporting as employees may believe that what they have experienced does not fall within the confines of the framework. (U.S. OPM.14)

The next step is for management to appoint a planning team to evaluate the workplace and plan the management system. There are almost as many different suggestions for who the team should be comprised of as there are authors who have written on this subject. Denenberg and Braverman (174) recommend the team be made up of those in leadership positions representing a range of functions and empowered to make decisions. They also recommend that the planning function should be designed as the team who will also perform the response function. Kidd and Stark (127) suggest the team should include a representative of upper management to ensure visible commitment, health and safety staff, supervisors, and employees thus ensuring a representative team and full employee participation. Then there are a multitude of consultants that believe they, as security professionals, are best suited to assess the danger of violence in a workplace.

In accordance with accepted TQM and systems management practices the planning team should be representative of different levels, departments, and areas of expertise. This ensures the 'buy in' of employees, the maximum level of participation by organizational stakeholders, and provides that the talents and skills of employees are utilized effectively. The goal of an assessment and the resulting solution must be viewed as relevant and helpful by organizational stakeholders. (Kidd&Stark.127) For instance a group of psychiatric nurses are not going to find a program that focuses on Type III homicide to be particularly relevant to their situation; their interest will be in a program that mainly addresses client perpetrated violence.

The planning team will need knowledge and expertise representing a range of business functions. The U.S Office of Personnel Management (7) recommends representation from management, health and safety, employee relations (human resources) employee assistance, law enforcement, security, medical, public affairs, legal, unions, and other employee representatives. Obviously, many organizations do not have the resources available to them that the Federal

Government possesses. The agency goes on to suggest outside resources that may be utilized for those agencies and organizations that are smaller. Those lacking a formal security department may likely find that the local police have community centered resources available. For instance the Baltimore County Police Department sponsors a program to prevent violence that is designed to aid small business owners in violence prevention.(Webster) Even if the local authorities don't have such a program, they usually have a representative who's responsibility is to act as a community/business liaison in this type of activity. Other resources that may be willing to assist with a planning group and/or perform a function on a response team are; community mental health services, experts from local universities and colleges, hospitals, and emergency crisis centers.

Employees of all levels are a valuable resource for a planning and/or response team. Canvass employees to find those with special talents and skills that are needed. Employees may be skilled in mediation, crisis intervention, investigation, etc. Identifying these individuals in advance and including them in plans for a coordinated response is an effective use of resources in the event of a violent or threatening situation. (U.S.OPM.9) The U.S. OPM (38) presents a case study in which an upset employee threatened suicide. The response team member who had been notified could not reach the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselor and instead contacted an employee in human resources who had training and experience in dealing with suicide attempts from her involvement in a community organization. She was able to recognize the seriousness of the threat and direct security to call an ambulance; she was also able to get information from the woman that she had already taken pills of some sort. This is illustrative of the need for functions on the planning/ response team to overlap and for back up to be available. No one is on the worksite 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Organizational Violence Risk Profile

Once the planning team is in place, an organizational violence profile must be done in order to determine what the risks are and what needs to be done to reduce those risks. The primary purpose of creating a workplace violence profile is to ensure that the policies and programs that are developed address the relevant issues realistically and to identify the root causes of any problems so prevention efforts are targeted effectively.

The development of an organizational violence profile is based on assessments of various aspects of the organization, some of the areas that need to be examined are; the physical plant; security measures; past experience and incidents; business operations and practices; the surrounding neighborhood and environment; organizational stressors; insurance coverage; current methods of data gathering. The assessment should be focused on the organization as a whole and not on profiling or identifying 'potentially dangerous individuals' and should reflect a systematic audit, providing data on past experiences, current exposures, and possible warning signs.(Denenberg & Braverman.174) Organizational stressors that employees are subject to should be identified and ways to relieve those stresses should be discussed. There are various sources that can be used to glean data that is useful in building the workplace violence profile and can include; incident and accident reports; sick leave records; hiring records; security incident reports and other records. It should be kept in mind that it is common for reported incidents to only reflect the tip if the iceberg. Without a formal system in place for handling incidents of violence and threats, very often only the most egregious incidents ever come to the attention of management, those that include severe physical or psychological injury and time off from work.

Many sources, Kidd and Stark (126) among them, promote employee information as the most valuable in evaluating the extent of exposure. Information gathered from employees should include opinions, concerns, and anecdotes gathered

through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The later often provides the most realistic information, as well as, valuable information on employee-management relations. Other areas that may be of concern and will have a bearing on the organizational profile are systematic issues such as safety and security concerns, the state of union or employee-management relationships, and workplace diversity.(Denenberg & Braverman.174) The information yielded in focus groups are valuable for providing insights that could be used to improve other business functions as well. In order for focus groups to yield useful information, employees have to trust the facilitator and management not to be punitive or retaliatory because they do not like what they hear.

The actual physical worksite and its surrounding environment must be assessed. There are some considerations that are not typically included in a security assessment. For example, the overall character of the neighborhood the workplace is situated in. There exist, within any society, different subcultures with different norms regarding appropriate behavior and aggression.(Kidd & Stark.4) It is not enough to only look at the crime rate statistics, the organization and its employees should be aware of the diversity issues relevant to the community. This is particularly important to any organization providing services to the surrounding community or whose customers are from the local area. The planners should become familiar with crime patterns in the neighborhood. Review and evaluate current security policies, practices and measures. Interview key personnel and employees to ascertain their concerns and experiences regarding the level and functioning of security. Traditional security measures that should be assessed and / or considered are; access control both to the property's entrance and to particular areas of the worksite; the number, distribution and scheduling of security personnel; surveillance monitoring equipment for entrances, hallways, stairwells and other potential blind spots.(Crawford)

Often an organization's solution to curing security deficiencies is to hire more security guard personnel. A scatter shot approach to security staffing is not a very effective use of resources, as Verizon discovered in their initial rush to employ more security guards after September 11. After realizing they couldn't hire enough guards to blanket all of their facility locations, they instead focused on the staffing the most vulnerable and stationing the guards at "chokepoints" such as reception areas. (Barancik.1)

The team needs to perform a review of current practices, systems and policies that address workplace violence and ascertain the effectiveness of each component. For instance, do employees know how and to whom incidents should be reported? If the organization has records or institutional knowledge regarding any past incidents of conflict and/ or violence that may have occurred, that information should be reviewed in terms of how it was handled and outcomes.

Formal grievance procedures and other methods the organization has used for resolving problems and conflicts between employees and also between employees and management need to be reviewed and evaluated. Scrutiny should focus on whether these processes are preventive in nature. If they are not capable of intervening at a point prior to the possible escalation of hostilities then there needs to be process put in place that does. Many organizations are bound to retain some of these procedures by union contracts; this does not mean that earlier informal, non-binding interventions cannot be developed.

Throughout the planning process and the development of the violence-risk profile, the team must communicate with both management and employees regarding their findings and activities. This demonstrates visible activity in the continued efforts to address the problem of workplace violence and allows for potentially valuable feedback.

Violence Prevention Policies and Supporting Principles

Once the workplace violence profile has been completed the planning team, along with senior management can formulate policies that specifically address the issues for that particular organization. The statement of policy, by management, should be brief, concise and simple. The policy will describe the intent, values and beliefs the system is designed to promote. (Dennis.83)The details of supporting policy, procedures and documentation can be presented in training venues and/or in the violence prevention manual. The policy must establish management's commitment to protecting employees and other stakeholders from all threats or acts of violence. The commitment to anti-violence must extend to all; there can be no tolerance of aggressive or otherwise unacceptable behavior by someone because they are considered a 'star performer' or important client. Any appearance of inequity in the application of policies will undermine the entire system and its programs. (ASSE.4)

It has become common for organizations to promote the "Zero Tolerance" type of policy and often fail to define either the term 'zero tolerance' or violence. Such wording in a policy does not make it clear to employees and other stakeholders what constitutes the un-tolerated behavior, and the policy's implied inflexibility may discourage employees from reporting incidents, fearing to unjustly cause a co-worker to lose their job.(U.S. OPM.15) In addition, Denenberg and Braverman (180) point out, 'zero tolerance', in a legal venue, is often construed by arbitrators and the courts as an indication that harsh penalties were imposed without regard to whether the penalty fit the offense.

There may be a wide range of differences among the needs of different organizations based upon the primary function of the organization and who its customers and clients are. Generally, the policy should convey the following tenets: all employees and management hold responsibility for maintaining a safe, violence free workplace; the acts and behaviors the policy covers and examples

of them (Which should include; not only acts of physical violence but harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior); the intention of the organization to respond appropriately and with due process and care to all reported incidents; action will be taken to stop violent and aggressive acts; the policy should cover employees and those from outside the organization who subject employees or other stakeholders to violent acts or aggressive behavior.(U.S. OPM. 13) The details of supporting principles will further develop the intent and values of the policy statement.(Dennis.83) For example, the organization has stated to employees they will not tolerate aggression or violence in the workplace. How is that to be implemented to protect employees from abusive customers? Organizations often have little control over clients and customers, however, it is important that employees reporting difficulties with clients or customers are taken seriously, supported, and that the issue gets resolved for them. The principal that the "customer is always right" should not extend to tolerating aggressive, abusive behavior towards employees.

Supporting documentation and details should be provided to employees as well through training and educational materials. The supporting principles and procedures that need to be disseminated to all employees are; the organizational arrangements that outline responsibility, authority, and accountability of relevant positions for system outcomes.(Dennis.83) definitions and examples; the range of consequences for violating policy; the reporting procedures and a firm statement that employees have the right and a responsibility to report incidents and that supervisors and managers have a responsibility to report incidents and are subject to consequences for allowing problems to continue unaddressed.(ANGRC.5) Employees must be confident that every care will be taken to ensure confidentiality for all parties concerned, during an investigation into allegations of threatening, aggressive, or violent behavior.

Communication should be bi-directional. Methods and pathways need to be established for employees and other stakeholders to provide feedback on the system and to participate in continuous improvement. There should be some form of recognition and reward for performance and contribution as it pertains to the violence prevention system.

The team develops interlocking programs that provide preventive and remedial solutions to the problem in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the policy. The strategies employed should embrace both prevention and intervention. Preventive programs and measures focus on reducing or relieving stress, hostility, and tensions in the workplace and in other aspects of employees' lives and in the early recognition of warning signs when these factors are having a negative impact on individuals. Intervention involves the prompt and effective response to threats and danger risks. (Denenberg & Braverman.198)

A common source of stress within an organization are the methods, or lack there of, for resolving disputes and conflicts. The planning team along with management should explore alternative dispute resolution procedures and techniques. Most formal grievance procedures, while better than nothing, are adversarial by nature and by the time they are implemented the parties involved have become firmly embedded in hostility and vested in the concept of winning. When this point is reached in a conflict, compromise becomes almost impossible. The organization must have methods of conflict resolution that can be employed before the problem has developed to a full blown war. (Denenberg, Denenberg, Braverman & Braverman) These alternative methods of dispute resolution must be communicated and promoted to employees, who then have to accept and trust in them, in order for them to be fully utilized.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) techniques are to be used when a problem first surfaces before behavior becomes aggressive or violent. Some examples of ADR methods are provided by the U.S. OPM. (24)

- Ombudsmen focus on mediation and problem solving and offer options to the disputing parties.

- Facilitation is the use of techniques to improve the flow of information and focuses on the process resolution.

- Mediation assists the disputing parties to voluntarily reach a solution to the dispute through suggesting processes by which they can come to agreement, often working with the parties individually to explore possible solutions or proposals that attempt to move the parties closer to agreement.[7]

- Interest-Based Problem Solving is a process that separates the person from the problem assists to define all issues clearly, and uses brainstorming and mutually agreed upon standards to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

- Peer Review is a problem solving process in which the parties take the dispute to a panel of fellow employees and managers for a decision.

There are types of assisted dispute resolution that are combinations or adaptations of those listed above that are commonly referenced; such as peer-mediation and mediation provided by employee assistance counselors. Most of them are not prescriptive in nature and none of them force solutions that are

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[7] Most other sources use the terms and the techniques of mediation and facilitation interchangeably and define them as a combination of the above to descriptions.

binding. In order for ADR programs to be effective they have to be actively promoted by management and accepted as helpful by employees. To achieve the later, employees should be involved in the choice and development of the programs.

Training employees in conflict resolution, hostility management, assertiveness, and other communication skills and strategies is prevention at the most basic level. The intent is to prevent disagreement from ever escalating to the point of requiring intervention. Shafii and Shaffi (299) describe a curriculum used in some school programs as including the following components. The provision of background education on the various causes of conflict, the different ways people of different backgrounds might respond to anger and conflict, and how conflict escalates. The active part of the training teaches the communication skills needed to resolve conflicts including; verbal and non-verbal communication; negotiation; listening skills; problem solving; critical thinking; and decision making. Training employees in conflict resolution and hostility management can prevent or reduce the severity of all Types of violence. "Most violence in the workplace begins with an individual who is unable to resolve what begins as a minor conflict. This then develops into a critical incident which leads to violence."(Salmans.54)

Another set of proactive preventive measures the planning team should explore are those that provide relief, reduction, and / or better coping strategies with organizational and personal stressors. NIOSH, in the publication Stress at Work (6) defines job stress "as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker." There are many 'harmful emotional responses' that may lead to aggression, violence and other anti-social behavior that has a negative effect on productivity and organizational health. Quick et al. (93) categorize these stressors as originating from three different sources: the physical environment; organizational management; and interpersonal relationships. The Workplace

Solutions Home Internet Home Page (http://www.wps.org) list other sources of stress from; restructuring, downsizing, and re-engineering; inter-group strains from a diversified work force; personal strains; and inter-actions from threatening non-employees. It is not enough to offer stress management training to employees if their workload is impossible, if there is an organizational habit of requiring sudden and unexpected deadlines, imposing competitive pressures on employees that require them to work so many hours they are unable to conduct a life outside of work, and so on. The areas in which management and the planning team can examine, with an eye to reducing the levels of stress on workers are; work flow - which often requires simple planning on the part of management and supervisors; the level of decision making ability imparted to employees; clearly communicated priorities; elimination of job ambiguity; promoting team work rather than pitting employees against one another as often happens, for instance, in jobs that involve sales; adequate training and developmental opportunities; and many others depending on the type of organization and it's primary operational activity.

It is vital to the success of the violence prevention management system that the supporting principles underlying the policy statement are visibly demonstrated and communicated by management.

Core Interlocking Programs

Education and Training

Education and training is one of the most important aspects of the OVPMS. Information and knowledge are powerful defenses in preventing violence from occurring in the first place, for mitigating the effects of incidents that do occur, and for facilitating recovery after an incident. Schat and Kelloway (400), found in a study performed with employees of hospitals and group homes, that the perceived control, which was higher in the group that had received training, was

associated with reduced fear and enhanced emotional well being for people who had experienced workplace violence. Another study conducted in the Florida State hospitals found a very significant difference in both assault rates and injury rates between groups of hospital staff that had received training in aggression control techniques and those who had not. The trained group experienced less assaults and no injuries resulting from assaults where as the untrained group experienced a high rate of assault and there were a substantial number of injuries sustained. (Infantino & Mustingo.1312) There numerous other studies, that while they may have no direct connection to issues of workplace violence, illustrate that perceived control positively affects the outcomes of stress. These studies examined the relationship of perceived control with the effects of stress on; job satisfaction; worker strain; physical and emotional well being; and performance and productivity to mention a few.[8] It is within reason to assume that raising the perceived control of employees will moderate the negative outcomes, that exposure to violent incidents, and fear of aggression and violence in the workplace employees may suffer. Perceived control is raised in individuals through training, development, decision making ability, and control over work factors.

The choice of training programs and curriculum, as well as, determining whom gets what training is driven by the organizational violence profile. Minimally, in every type of organization, all employees must receive training and information regarding their responsibilities and obligations as they pertain to the OVPMS. There must also be at every level; basic information on training requirements and opportunities; training that identifies the responsible parties who will receive and act on reports; explanations and examples of what behaviors should be reported (University of CA at Davis); organizational standards of conduct; practical security procedures; and conflict communication skills (Barker.35); emergency procedures; and personal safety practices. When training is conducted by

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[8] Fox et al., Jimmieson and Terry, Greenberger et al., Melemed et al., Sutton and Kahn, Spector, Barling and Kelloway (see works consulted)

qualified individuals that are from within the organization (security, employee assistance program, human resources, health and safety, etc.), there is the added benefit that employees become familiar, and therefore more comfortable and more likely to utilize as resources, those individuals and the services they provide through their business function.

Other types of training will be site or task specific.

Some examples are

- Managers and supervisors of all types of organizations should be trained in leadership skills such as goal setting; setting clear standards; addressing employee problems promptly; performance counseling, and appropriate use of disciplinary procedures. "The same approaches that create a healthy, productive workplace, can also prevent potentially violent situations".(U.S.OPM.20) Training that is specific to the OVPMS are; training supervisors in encouraging employees to report threatening incidents involving anyone within or outside of the organization (this would include potential stalkers or violently inclined domestic partners); crisis management skills; recognizing signs of stress in employees.(U.S.OPM.21)

- Employees interacting with the public and providing social or medical services should be trained in conflict management; hostility de-escalation techniques, and other communication skills. In many organizations professionals who provide services i.e. social workers, nurses etc. receive such training, but the receptionist, who is the first person the public deals with, frequently do not. Several references were found in literature originating from the United Kingdom to training in stress management, relaxation techniques and recognition of symptoms of an aroused physiological state and how to control it so as not to fuel the aggressive

tendencies of a difficult client.(Hoad.75) No specific references to this approach was found in the corresponding literature of the U.S. Considering research that has been done in cognitive behavioral theory, that focuses on aggression as the product of interpersonal interactions, (Cox,Leather.222) training employees in managing their own reactions and affectations makes a great deal of sense. All employees who come in contact with the public should receive this type of training.

- Employees who are working in retail trade or other cash handling tasks should receive the above training, as well as, training specifically geared towards maintaining personal safety during an armed robbery. Company policy should be extremely clear that the primary concern, during the threat or occurrence of robbery, is the safety of employees. Under no circumstance should the employee attempt to personally prevent the robbery.

- Organizations that have identified the primary risk, as that of inter-employee and / or employee and supervisor aggression, should focus on both conflict management training and perform further assessments designed to identify the root causes of conflict. Yamasaki, the employee and workplace intervention analyst for the U.S. Postal Service in the San Francisco district, had identified some of the contributors to a 'toxic work environment' as being authoritarian management style, changing and unpredictable supervision, supervisors demonstrating a lack of respect towards employees, increasing demands coupled with decreasing support and resources, a disproportionate discipline to positive reinforcement ratio, and strained labor-management relations.(Minton.W1)

In choosing a training program, it is important to keep in mind that its effectiveness will be dependent on several factors. First the employee must feel the training is relevant and the method of communicating the information

has to capture the attention of the participants. (Toomey, et. al.164) The training programs should contain participative components such as discussion, role playing, team problem solving, and other appropriate activities. Any organization, that habitually presents training solely in the form of badly acted videos, may as well send employees to a darkened room full of nap cots.

Employee Assistance Programs

Throughout the literature and also contained within the programs of many organizations are recommendations that an organization have some form of an Employee Assistance Program.(EAP) In addition to providing employees with short term crisis intervention, EAPs are valuable resources for implementing many of the components of the OVPMS. Many counselors who provide services for an EAP can also provide training for employees in communication skills, hostility management, and conflict resolution. (U.S. OPM.114) While some authors recommend an EAP can be used in employee assessment investigations, the U.S. OPM (114) warns that there are privilege and privacy issues that prevent counselors from assuming certain roles.

The general purpose of an EAP is to assist individuals with developing coping skills in order to reduce the effects of stress. In order that EAPs are utilized by employees they must have visible support from senior management and emphasis should be on self-referral, although managers and supervisors should be trained to recognize signs of strain in employees so that they can encourage referral. (Hoad.75) There must be trust on the part of employees that confidentiality is ensured. If there is any reason to believe that the EAP counselors report to management what clients divulge during a counseling session, the services will not be used.

Environmental Design and Administrative Control

The assessment and any subsequent changes to the worksite will be based on the workplace violence risk profile. Most organizations will have to rely on common sense, recommendations of 'experts' and some creativity as there is not a vast amount of research on what designs and controls will reduce the risks of non-instrumental aggression and violence. Most of the research on the effectualness of environmental design and the use of administrative controls has been in regard to robbery deterrence. The common measures used and studied are cash control; clear line of sight into store; prominent position of cash register; elimination of escape routes; balanced interior and exterior lighting; and employee training. The application of these measures has reduced the robbery rate in convenience stores by 50% over the ten year period between 1976 and 1986. (NACS.iii)

There are a variety of sources of stimuli in the environment and in administrative practices that can be examined for their potential to increase frustration levels and as a result increase the likelihood that someone may react aggressively or with violence. These potential frustrators have to be identified during the workplace violence profile and addressed according to organizational circumstances. The expression of aggressive or violent behavior is a function of the interaction of personality, emotional state, and environmental circumstance.(Anderson.47) An organization has no control over personality, but the environmental circumstances can be controlled so they reduce the negative impact on the emotional state of individuals.

The following are recommendations from various sources

- Public waiting areas should be designed to keep stress levels down. This is particularly important for organizations that are dealing with members of the public who are there because they are already stressed, such as;

family courts; public social service offices; emergency rooms; mental health facilities; etc. Hoad (80) suggests measures to keep noise levels to a minimum; ensure that the seating arrangement allow for adequate personal space; the presence of comfort facilities, clean bathrooms, vending machines, and pay phones; choice of soft lighting, calming colors, and visually pleasing decorative additions. These are considerations when examining the physical surrounds of employee work areas as well.

- Scheduling is also an issue for organizations that provide services to any portion of the public. Scheduling practices should be such that clients arriving on time for an appointment do not find themselves waiting inordinate amounts of time. Kidd and Stark (132) point out that the receptionist should be trained to provide information to waiting clients when there is a back up, and portray sympathy for their inconvenience. Most people, once they understand the reason for their wait, tend to exhibit more patience.

- Whether an organization provides a service to the public or not thought should be given to worksite access. Limit public access to areas of the worksite and limit the number of entrances to those that can in someway be manned. Arrange furnishings so they allow easy means of egress and provide cover in the event of weapons use.(Walton.81)

- Staffing and work scheduling, should as much as possible, be designed to prevent employees from working in isolated circumstances. (NIOSH, Occupational Hazards in Hospitals.6) There are functions within some organizations that are almost impossible to double up staffing such as home health care workers, visiting social workers, meter readers, taxi cab drivers and others who must perform their duties away from the worksite. In cases such as these the organization should provide the means of instant communication like a two way radio or direct connect cell phone.

Security

There are vast differences among different organizations in the types of security measures that are used and are highly dependent on the type of organization, what its primary function is, what resources it possesses and what the security measures are designed to protect.

Large companies and organizations may have professional security personnel who are available to participate on the planning team. Smaller and mid-sized organizations or those who have never found a need for a security staff may have to either hire a security consultant to assess the security of the worksite, arrange for training existing personnel in security procedures, or utilize local law enforcement agencies as consulting resource.

Reporting Procedures, Investigation and Response

There are many authors who place a heavy emphasis on profiling and listing the warning signs of the potentially dangerous and violent employee. They suggest that organizations train supervisors, managers and human resource staff to recognize these profiles and warning signs and act on them. The common profile that is extolled is that of the single white male with a military background, who is bitter and owns fire-arms. There is no exact statistic representing the number of citizens fitting this description, but the U.S. is the land of the Second Amendment, and bitter is a vague, subjective term. Profiles are not sure indicators that the individual is about to come to work with an assault weapon and murder co-workers. In a number of studies cited by Monahan (48) the accuracy of predictions made by forensic psychologists as to whether an individual would commit a violent act had about the same success rate of predicting whether a coin would come up heads or tails. These studies were conducted on individuals who had been incarcerated for past violent acts. If a psychiatrist cannot predict dangerousness in someone who has already

perpetrated violence, how can there be any confidence in the prediction of dangerousness of an individual who has not previously been violent?

Melton (515) discusses the differences between early warning signs and immanent danger signs and suggests the difference in the type of actions that should be taken as a result of observing these signs. Some of the early warning signs indicative of a potential problem may be; sudden changes in work habits; chronic lateness; mood swings; over reaction to disappointments or frustration; frequent conflicts with co-workers and supervisors. The list is not exhaustive and the identification of problems is dependent on supervisors and managers being familiar enough with their employees that they are aware of behavioral change. The intent of the organization, when management, supervisors, or employees becomes aware of such signs, is to get help for the individual. There are also imminent warning signs that call for immediate intervention: detailed threats of physical harm; severe destruction of property; extreme rage over seemingly minor reasons; physical aggression; position or use of weapons in the workplace; behaviors that are self-injurious or involve threats of suicide. Any signs of an imminent threat or risk justify the removal of the individual from the workplace.

An organization that will be successful in preventing violence is one that recognizes the signs of stress in its employees, regardless of the source, and has in place mechanisms and early interventions to help the employee reduce and/or cope with the stress. An organization that has effective dispute resolution methods and other methods of violence prevention in place may still face the possibility of having to deal with an individual who may represent a threat to the health and safety of employees. There are a multitude of recommendations for assessing a potentially dangerous employee.

The steps Cawood (130) outlines as a means to verifying that an individual represents a threat are illustrative of the approach commonly espoused by those consultants and experts on workplace violence whose recommendations involve

focus on the individual and ignoring organizational root causes. This approach seems to be driven by the fact that the primary job of law enforcement is to provide evidence for the purposes of obtaining a conviction. He recommends bringing in a mental health professional that specializes in threat assessment. "…by consulting an outside specialist the company demonstrates its concern over these situations. Such an evaluation could help the company defend its actions in court should any serious incident occur." Further recommendations, based on the positive assessment of dangerousness by the psychologist are conducting a background check on the 'subject' to include; a review of employment records; research the public records at the city, county, and state level for everywhere the individual has lived, paying close attention to information that may indicate stresses; how the individual responds to such stresses as marital, financial or family problems; prior violent episodes, prior or pending law suits, military service, and the collection or use of weapons. Cawood warns that the investigation should be conducted with discretion in order to shield the organization from accusations of slander or invasions of privacy. Following this investigation the organization should have the psychiatrist interview employees who can provide further information or insight about the individual and that care should be taken not to alert the subject. Then in the third stage of the investigation, the psychiatrist interviews the individual who has allegedly made the threat and regardless of the outcome the person should be sent home for the remainder of the day and instructed not to return without approval from a designated member of the threat response team. If the individual wasn't on the verge of committing a violent act prior to this sequence of events, they might be on the edge by the time they have been sent home for the day. Most of the investigative measures are intrusive and some would be considered by the courts as an invasion of privacy, depending on how the information was obtained. Regardless of the outcome of such an investigation, the individual in question is going to feel violated and humiliated and will not likely be able to remain as an employee. Others within the organization will be negatively affected as well. Except perhaps in cases where there was a serious physical assault, this

process would create an environment of paranoia, affecting interpersonal relationships so they become marked with the fear of giving unintentional offense, and becoming the subject of the next investigation. Another consequence could be reluctance on the part of employees to report incidents and concerns for fear of causing another such an ordeal.

Denenberg and Braverman (156) take an entirely different approach to assessing the employee who has been identified as having behaved in a threatening manner which is defined by the following: has actually threatened to commit violence; co-workers are fearful because of menacing behavior such as the display of a weapon or habitually talking about violent acts; worrisome behavioral changes in an employee who is being subjected to unusual stress such as disciplinary action, the possibility of job loss, or other significant pressure on or off duty. The behavior has to be placed within a personal and psychosocial context before decision can be made regarding appropriate action. The questions that need to be answered include:

- Has intent to harm or a plan been expressed?

- Does the employee have the means to carry out the threat?

- Has the employee displayed or practiced with a weapon?

- Has there been talk about guns or bombs?

- What is the record of discipline for misconduct?

- Are there documented performance deficits?

- Have there been claims for medical disability?

- Is there turmoil in the employee's personal life?

- Has he considered harming himself or attempted to do so?

- Have there been significant changes in the workplace?

- Is there a moral issue or persistent complaints about the work unit?

The authors (69) present a case study in which three men were fired after it had been reported that a group of employees were in the habit of discussing dreams in which they caused or witnessed the death of a disliked supervisor. The company in question hired an investigator who, based on interviews with a number of employees, advised senior management that there was a potential danger to the supervisor. It was unclear how the company settled upon the three individuals that were fired, but in subsequent arbitration, the employees were all reinstated based on the fact that the discussion of dreams does not constitute the voicing of a threat which, by legal definition, must include the intent to inflict harm. The company in question failed to ever look at the underlying reasons for the behavior which was caused by anger due to the abusive style of the supervisor. If there are multiple employees discussing the gory demise of another employee, supervisor, or manager, perhaps the behavior of the 'target' should be examined as part of any investigation.

Denenberg and Braverman (159) warn against precipitous action on the part of the organization such as suspension, with or without pay. In order for an assessment to yield the best information upon which to base a resolution the employee needs to stay connected to the organization and be able to participate in the fact finding. If the employee is separated from the workplace they feel they have been judged "guilty until proven innocent", their incentive to cooperate will evaporate and an unredeemable situation will develop. It should be kept in mind

that many people may verbalize threats or what may be interpreted as threatening, and they neither carry out the threat nor do they have the intention of carrying out the threat. How many times do people unthinkingly, in annoyance or anger say "I could just kill so and so" or "I'd like to punch so and so in the face". An organization should take all threats seriously, but that the initial threat assessment must include context, circumstance, and history. The initial response of those conducting the threat assessment must be "to do no harm". (Melton.515) Denenberg and Braverman (155) recommend, once the context of the threat is understood and a decision is made to continue with an assessment of the threat represented by the particular employee, that a qualified mental health professional be retained. The assessor should be someone with expertise in the workplace setting and should become familiar with the particular work site. The informed consent should be obtained from the employee who is under investigation, and the assessor should obtain collateral information from many sources, i.e. medical records, personnel records, managers and co-workers. This provides greater legal protection to the organization than "being discreet" while still demonstrating reasonable care in dealing with the potential danger.

During the assessment by the outside professional, the response team should stay actively involved and at no time should responsibility for an actionable response be turned over to the outside party. Another important part of the assessment is the determination of the root cause of the threat or threatening behavior, the investigation needs to go beyond the individual and examine the interpersonal and organizational context of the crisis. This is extremely important in terms of analyzing the situation in order to improve the prevention management system. It is analogous to the root cause analysis in other health and safety functions. It's not enough to fix the broken wheel, or discard the broken wheel, why the wheel broke needs to be discovered in order to prevent it from happening again.

Managers and supervisors should be trained and / or encouraged to have open door policies, to develop communication and observational skills that enable them to spot early signs of employee problems. When they notice changes in an employee's behavior simply being empathetic and inquiring in a caring way can make a difference in the how the employee will deal with whatever might be troubling him or her.(Barker.34) Avoiding a confrontational, disciplinarian approach, allows for a broader range of available options to unravel problems.

Emergency Response

All organizations that fall under the jurisdiction of OSHA are required to have some sort of emergency action plan which should address emergencies that the employer can reasonably expect are a possibility. The following elements must be included at a minimum: emergency escape procedures; procedures to be followed by employees who remain to conduct critical operations; procedures to account for all employees following an evacuation; rescue and medical duties for those employees able to perform them; the preferred means of reporting emergencies; names or titles of individuals who can be contacted for further information; an alarm system that complies with CFR 29 1919.165; establish the types of evacuation to be used in an emergency; the training of a sufficient number of persons to assist in the safe and orderly evacuation of employees; and requirements for when the plan should be reviewed by the employer. (CFR 29, 1910.38)

An existing emergency action plan can be modified to include provisions in the event of a violent incident. The members of the response team should have a way to communicate with each other and with senior management and there should be a designated representative to field questions from the media. Training for all employees should include occasional drills based on possible scenarios. Unlike fire drills, workplace violence drills that use role playing should never be done without prior warning.

Information, which employees must be made aware of regarding the emergency action plan should include the names and responsibilities of the response team members, the manner in which the emergency will be communicated to employees, where they should assemble in the event of an evacuation, and possible safe havens in the event evacuation is impeded or made impossible.

Post-Incident Response

In the event of a violent incident, certain post incident responses are critical in alleviating trauma experienced by employees. It is essential that employees, who have been involved with, witnessed, and in some cases have an awareness of a traumatic critical incident, have an opportunity to be debriefed following a critical incident. Research indicates that 90% of adults exposed to a traumatic event and 100% of children will exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome. Early intervention reduces the occurrence of chronic symptoms and reduces recovery time. (Freidman et. al.49) Most sources indicated that debriefing should occur prior to the passage of four days after a trauma inducing event, and the sooner the better. (Barnett-Queen.54) Services of crisis intervention counselors should be contracted before there is a need for them so that response time can be as short as possible. EAPs can often perform this function, as well as, training talented personnel to lead debriefing sessions. The purpose of debriefing is to give those who are victims and witnesses the opportunity to discuss their feelings and perceptions in a supportive atmosphere; many don't realize that what they are feeling are normal reactions to abnormal events and need to hear this validation from a third party. Others need to know they are not the only ones with certain feelings and reactions. Another consideration in dealing with trauma is that individual reactions vary, what may not be very traumatic to one may be very traumatic to another and empathy is required in interactions with a traumatized individual.

Barnett –Queen (54) divides a post-trauma recovery program into three components.

- Trauma preparation training in which employees receive information concerning the frequent consequences of trauma. Often people experiencing the effects of trauma think they are abnormal reactions and indication of encroaching mental illness.

- Post –traumatic debriefings are group meetings that provide employees with the opportunity to discuss experiences and feelings during and after the incident. The facilitators assess individuals for the need for further counseling.

- Post traumatic counseling is an extension of the debriefing process for those who need further care.

The group debriefing style that is commonly used in traumatic workplace incidents is one developed for use with emergency responders. This style of intervention may be inappropriate for use in many organizations. It was designed to be employed with homogeneous groups that function as a team and are trained to in critical incident response. Most worksites have a mixed group of people that have no prior experience with situations of physical violence and no group task orientation in relation to the incident. Care should be exercised when arranging for groups of employees to receive debriefing. In addition depending on the organizational culture and hierarchy, being mixed in a group session with management and supervisors may create extreme awkwardness for some employees. (Manton & Talbot.509) There should be several follow ups on exposed employees to monitor the possibility of delayed reactions.

Other steps and considerations, discussed by the U.S. OPM, in organizational recovery after an incident are;

- Management presence on the worksite to assure employees of their concern and to support supervisors in this role and to relieve them of unnecessary duties.

- Information about the event needs to be shared with employees as it develops and as possible legal requirements allow.

- Allow employees the time and space to meet and talk informally to further the recovery process.

- In some cases the site of a violent incident may be secured as a crime scene and / or there will be physical reminders. If someone has died in the incident the site will be a natural focus of grieving. Employees shouldn't have to come back to work and face extreme reminders of the incident (blood stains, broken furniture) but neither should the site be sanitized to the point that it appears the person never existed.(U.S. OPM.134)

Early interventions in cases of trauma are effective in reducing the likelihood of chronic post-traumatic stress syndrome. It allows for the containment of the victim's feelings, ventilation of emotions in a safe environment, and prevents phobic reactions from developing. (Manton & Talbot509) This allows for the full recovery of the organization to be speeded. When early intervention is not provided employees have longer recovery times, require more expensive after care and often never return to there pre-event productivity.

The development of appropriate and effective components to make up the programs of the OVPMS will be unique to each individual organization. The types of programs and training that will be effective will depend upon the organizational profile, the organizational culture, and the functions of the organizations business. The components chosen and the manner in which they are implemented will determine the success of the OVPMS.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

Upon reviewing the material that has been published in print or is available through consulting services it has become clear that the majority of violence prevention programs that are readily available to an organization are reactive rather than proactive. In addition, the recommendations for prevention are presented with no structural framework that allows prevention efforts to focus on identifying and eliminating root causes. Emphasis is too often placed upon identifying the employee who exhibits the "warning signs" of becoming violent rather than on identifying ways to change the circumstances that would cause an employee to experience the type of stress that may cause the behaviors that are considered warning signs.

First and foremost, proactive methods of prevention are centered on the organization as a system and not on the individual. Efforts are made to identify what aspects of the organizations functioning create unnecessary stressful conditions which have the potential to be root causes of aggressive or violent behavior. If an organization concentrates prevention efforts on identifying and removing individuals believed to be potential problems without addressing causation chances are with each employee removed another will take his or her place.

There are many authors whose recommendations begin with identifying and then preventing the potentially violent employee from being hired in the first place. Then in order to weed out those who have made it past properly conducted background checks they propose training managers and supervisors on recognizing the warning or danger signs in their employees. It has been established, through tort law, that an employer has a duty to exercise reasonable

care in the hiring and retention of employees, however, as has been mention previously, it is almost impossible to predict the future potential of an individual to become violent. It would be easy if an organization could avoid hiring any employee who has the potential to aggressive or violent, unfortunately, there is no such person. All human beings have the potential to become aggressive or violent when adequate stimuli have been exerted. Some people have a higher level of tolerance to the stressors that may incite aggressive behavior than others, but everyone has a flash point. Rather than attempting to determine who has the potential to become violent or train managers to spot the warning signs of incipient violence, the organization needs to eliminate, reduce, or ameliorate the stressors identified as being root causes of aggressive behavior and train all employees in identifying the warning signs of stress, in both themselves and others.

In order for prevention of violence to be the central goal an organization must focus on methods that are proactive rather than reactive. Proactive methods focus on eliminating or controlling the conditions that cause stress, removing positive reinforcement for negative behaviors, early detection of the signs of stress and methods by which to mitigate the stress, early intervention in disputes and the means by which disputes can be resolved in a non-adversarial manner.

It was concluded that a management system offered the most effective means to incorporate violence prevention into the overall health and safety system or program of an organization. Because organizations vary widely in their management structures, organizational culture, functions and activities, violence prevention must be tailored to the particular organization. Management systems serve as a guideline and process without requiring specific actions that may be appropriate for one business but not for another. Systems management is used to ensure that the prevention effort is organization wide and not the function and responsibility of one single department or individual. Every aspect of safety including the prevention of violence has to be owned by everyone, and violence

prevention in particular needs access to the expertise of many and the full participation of all.

All functions within an organization must have responsibility for them assigned somewhere. Accountability is provided by the management system by clearly defining who, which eliminates the "it's not my job" syndrome. Accountability is also provided through measurement of performance which is regulated by application of appropriate positive reinforcement for good performance.

Systems management is used to ensure all aspects of violence prevention are standardized across organizational boundaries. Measurement is used to; realistically establish of what the problem consists; provide the means of judging whether the actions taken are effective; and to reward performance. Continuous improvement is the natural result of measurement. For a system to survive and continue to be useful it has to evolve and become more effective and the parts that don't work or become obsolete have to be replaced with those that do work.

Despite the depiction of the problem of workplace violence in the media as perpetrated by crazed, gun wielding employees, angry over being fired or disciplined, the chances of getting murdered at work are not very high. The real costs of aggression and violence in the workplace are problems with moral; loyalty, exit intent, productivity all suffer in a workplace environment that tolerates hostile, uncivil, and aggressive behavior. It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure the workplace is not a toxic one in which people are forced to engage in unhealthy competitive behaviors under the pressure of performing a job with inadequate resources and the fear they may be discarded during the next wave of restructuring. People are the most valuable resource and assets of any organization and must come first in any supportive culture. (Vincoli.29) This cannot be demonstrated by distributing the latest program initiatives in paper form to supervisors to verbally pass on to employees. In many organizations it requires a top down paradigm change. Senge (7) describes two levels of change;

one at the personal level, both individual and collective, the learning of new skills and capabilities; the second is a function of the extent to which we organize to support learning. An organization that expends the effort to learn and acquire knowledge of what fuels aggression and violence, and employ that knowledge within the structure of a deliberately constructed system, will bring about the reduction of destructive behavior from all potential sources.

While the incident of serious physical injury due to violence is relatively low, as compared with injuries from events such as contact with objects or falls, the cost to business from the side effects of aggression and violence can be exceedingly high. Organizations at risk cannot afford to wait until some entity creates a definitive solution to workplace violence, like solutions to societal violence they may be a very long time in coming.

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