



LIFE ENRICHMENT
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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Your Employee Assistance Program NEWSLETTER

Life Enrichment is a program of The Center for Family Services of Palm Beach County, Inc.

VIOLENCE AT THE WORKPLACE

Submitted by: CLYDE A. BAILEY, PhD Clinical Therapist, The Center For Family Services

Workplace violence is generally regarded as any action or use of language that threatens the safety of an employee. These can include threats, harassments, injury, including the use of a weapon as well as acts of intimidation. Employers need to ensure that the safety of employees is a top priority and workers need to feel and know that they are safe in the work environment.

The media is replete with numerous reports of violent acts committed at the workplace. In more recent times there have been several reports of domestic violence spilling over to the workplace and particularly against women. Experts believe that this growing trend of workplace violence is triggered by several factors. Sociological issues such as poverty, unemployment, easy access to guns, and inadequate social facilities have adverse impact on many people and can lead to violent behavior. More specifically are such issues that might be more directly related to the workplace such as job termination, fear of termination or demotion, feelings of discrimination and rejection, being bypassed for promotion or job recognition, inadequate wages, poor working conditions and inadequate work resources.

No one is exempt from the possibility of workplace violence but generally people who work in highly bureaucratic environments such as factories and public utility companies, or people who interact extensively with the public such as frontline bank staff, store clerks, customer service personnel are considered to be more likely victims. People who work alone and especially in dangerous locations, teachers and law enforcement

officers and public transportation drivers are easy targets for acts of violence on the job. It cannot however, be overstated that everyone is a possible target and so management owes it to their employees to ensure that they are safe. A safe environment greatly contributes to enhanced productivity and healthy staff morale.

It is difficult to pinpoint a potentially violent person at the workplace but studies show that more than 80% of perpetrators are white males 30 years old and over. A small percentage of this group consists of former employees who return out of anger towards supervisors and/or fellow employees. Other potential perpetrators are total strangers including angry customers, and irate spouses. Research findings also suggest that there are common signs of violent tendencies such as work colleagues who tend to be 'loners' or those who have a background of violence especially from childhood days and people who have extreme positions on such issues as religion, race and politics. A colleague who shows an unusual interest in weapons could be sending a signal. Some people who have a history of rejection or who might be supersensitive are likely to become violent when provoked. It therefore is extremely important for management to be diligent in conducting thorough background checks including drug and alcohol testing, before hiring new employees. It is also critical to the safety of other workers that proper care and sensitivity is demonstrated when dismissing a worker. The worker must perceive that he was given a fair chance and that the person doing the dismissal does care about his wellbeing.

In an effort to protect the workforce, management should ensure that there is a Threat of Violence (TOV) notification system in the organization. This is a well-structured and trusted system by which complaints are treated in confidence and with utmost importance. Sometimes it is less about the intention of the alleged perpetrator and more of a perception on the part of the other party. In those instances perception can lead to discomfort and reduced productivity and so each worker regardless of gender or status should know that there is a system in place to address his or her concerns.

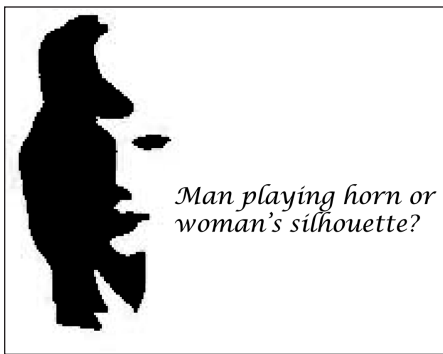
Other things that management can do to ensure safety include the dissemination of information to all levels of the organization regarding preventive measures. Companies should adopt and practice a 'Zero Tolerance' policy towards violence or the threat of violence at the workplace. This includes banning every type of weapon, as well as the use of drugs and alcohol on the job. In addition, regular small-group training sessions should be conducted by the Human Resource Department for managers and supervisors so as to adequately share the responsibility for prevention and response to threats over a wide cross-section of the organization. Management should also ensure that technical and electronic devices such as surveillance cameras, metal detectors, alarms, and proper lighting are installed and professionally maintained. It is important that multiple exits are clearly marked and that security personnel are trained and provided with appropriate resources to be

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PERCEPTION IN THE WORKPLACE

The word *perception* comes from the Latin *capere*, meaning “to take,” the prefix *per* meaning “completely.”

Many philosophers contend that perception consists of one’s interpretation of the world, but as commonality of perception trends toward 100% perception transmogrifies into reality. Case in point: is this picture a man playing a horn... or a woman silhouette?



Thus reality is merely a popular consensus of perception. All things in the universe are understood as received through the various filters of human understanding and thus are perceptions of reality. What we commonly refer to as reality is, in fact, merely an agreed upon perception.

So you say **“how does this affect the workplace?”** If you’re a Workplace Warrior – you put in your time on the job, but you don’t feel passionate about your work – you’re probably perceived by your coworkers, supervisor, and customers as dependable but unremarkable. If you’re a Management Maverick – you implement solutions without the support of coworkers, supervisors, and customers – you’re likely perceived as a rogue. Each of these perceptions damages your career and prevents you from fulfilling your potential.

Highly successful Entrepreneurs and Intrepreneurs use others’ perceptions to their advantage. By creating their own personal brand and marketing themselves-much in the same way companies position themselves and their products in the marketplace-people with career

intensity increase the perception of their value in the minds of those they serve.

When you use personal branding to define yourself in the marketplace (or workplace in our case)-either within your company or as the head of your own company, you differentiate yourself from your competition by creating value for those who use your services. Through value creation and demonstration, you will create a demand for your services, which ultimately will attract success.

Each of us has our own personal brand. Each of our target audiences has a perception of us. Sometimes this perception is exactly what we want it to be and it serves us well; other times, this perception is dramatically different from how we wish to be seen and works to our detriment.

So what does all of this have to do with you and your mission to develop career intensity? Everything! You need to start managing yourself and your career as a brand. You need to consider the perception of your target audience before you craft a message. You need to make certain that your target audience sees you exactly the way you want them to.

Personal branding is not designed to help you create a false perception. It can’t cover up the reality of who you are. The first rule of branding is to start with a quality product. You are the product and you must be able to deliver. Let’s say you are identified within your company as the person who always gets things done on time. That is your personal brand promise. Your customers are other employees. You must deliver on that promise in each and every interaction with your customers. If you fail to get a task accomplished on time for a colleague, you have broken your brand promise. You have chipped away at your customer’s perception of your value. You can’t be late. Not even once. Your personal brand is unforgiving. That’s why your brand must be

developed based upon reality.

While you can reflect upon the essence of who you are and see the positive qualities that make you a good person, most people are not fortunate enough to see your inner beauty and greatness. Instead, they make decisions based upon what they see, hear, and feel when they interact with you. If you are happy with yourself, then you should use personal branding to present your best qualities to the world. What reputation do you want to hold in the hearts and minds of your audience? What reputation will give you the greatest advantage over your competition?

What resources do you have? How can you take on the competition without a wealth of resources? The good news is that you can be as effective as the big guys. You can develop a very effective personal brand, develop a personal communications strategy, and conceive and execute creative tactics that will effectively position you exactly as your customers should see you.

Who are your customers? In this context, the term “customers” refer to anyone who has a choice for a product or service that you provide. The product could be a tangible item, a day’s work, friendship or a warm meal. If they have a choice, and there is mutual benefit in the relationship, consider them customers.

Branding is not about you; it’s entirely about your customer. The experience they have when they interact with you – whether via email, the telephone, or in person – forms an impression and creates an expectation in their mind. You want that interaction to be a positive one that leads to future interactions and referrals.

There are five rules to remember as you begin the process of developing your personal brand. They are:

You are what you are. Popeye would be proud. Anytime you represent yourself to be something you

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are not, you run the risk of losing a customer forever. Your great qualities must be your own. You must be honest with your customers and with yourself.

Consistency is critical. Your customers must be able to count on you. If you want to impress your boss – beat your deadline every time. Your boss will know that you are the go-to person if he/she must have a critical project completed on time.

There are no “do-overs.” First impressions are critical. You can’t take back something you said to a customer. Everything is on record. Your reputation takes a lifetime to build and just a few minutes to destroy. Follow the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Clarity is a gift. Too many people use complex language in order to appear intelligent and just wind up confusing others. Often, complexity makes the speaker seem pompous and condescending. Keep every interaction and every point of contact clear and simple. Be transparent. Communicate simply and directly.

Show, don’t tell. If you explain a concept to a customer, he may understand it intellectually. But, if you tell him a story, show him a picture, or perform a demonstration, he will make an emotional connection to the event, to the experience, and to you. The more of his senses you can involve, the stronger the impression you will make. The key word here is *impression*. Make an impact or you’ll fade like a distant memory.

As you move forward to craft a personal brand, everything you do should be in alignment with these rules. Likewise, once your strategy is complete and you begin to focus on creating tactics to implement it, your tactics should adhere to these five basic rules.

NOTE: *The above article had excerpts taken from the book titled, “Career Intensity: Business Strategy for Workplace Warriors and Entrepreneurs” by David V. Lorenzo. You can reach the author at www.dlorenzo.com*

WELLNESS Warriors

Anger Can Damage Your Lungs

An eight-year study of 670 men aged 45 to 86 showed that anger and hostility can speed up the rate at which lung power declines with age.

Men with higher levels of long-standing anger at the study’s beginning had significantly poorer lung function by the end.

The researchers rated anger levels with a scoring system. Lung power was tested three times over the course of the study. Even after taking into account other factors, such as smoking, the hostility and anger affected lung function.

Anger, hostility and stress have previously been associated with heart disease, asthma and other illnesses. The emotions may change biological processes, disturbing the immune system and causing chronic inflammation.

Good Bacteria Can Eliminate Sick Time Away From the Office

A new study showed that employees who take probiotics on a daily basis will miss less work time from common illnesses such as colds or gastroenteritis.

Lactobacillus reuteri: Scientists assessed the value of taking a probiotic on more than 175 factory workers, including 53 who did shift work. Once a day for 80 days, workers received either a dose of the probiotic bacteria *Lactobacillus reuteri*, or a placebo.

2.5 Times Less Illness: Those given the probiotic were 2.5 times less likely to take sick leave. Only 10 out of 94 factory workers given the probiotic took any sick time off during the study compared to 23 in the placebo group. What’s more, none of the 26 shift workers using a probiotic lost any time due to illness, compared to nine out of 27 shift workers in the placebo group.

— *The above excerpts were taken from Dr. Mercola’s website at www.mercola.com*

THE FIVE MOST EXPENSIVE ADDICTIONS

- Alcohol** – estimated annual cost: \$166 billion
- Smoking** – estimated annual cost: \$157 billion
- Drugs** – estimated annual cost: \$110 billion
- Overeating** – estimated annual cost: \$107 billion
- Gambling** – estimated annual cost: \$40 billion

— *By Tom Van Riper, Forbes Magazine*

MONTHLY OBSERVANCES

April

- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Counseling Awareness Month
- National Child Abuse Prevention Month
- 2007 Walk America – April 28th & 29th

May

- National Employee Health & Fitness Day – May 16th
- Bike to Work Week – May 14th - 18th

June

- Sun Safety Week – June 3rd - 9th
- National Men’s Health Week – June 11th - 17th

used in instances of threats or actual violence. It cannot be over-emphasized how important it is for visitors to be properly screened and furnished with clearly marked identification while they are on the premises. Some schools now provide visitors with a photo-identification to be worn while visiting the school.

Workplace violence is a growing phenomenon in the US and management has to become proactive in reducing and controlling

this horror in our society. It should be the primary goal of any employer to ensure productivity in an atmosphere of safety. In minimizing workplace violence we are promoting safety, employees’ well-being, and peace of mind.

NOTE: If you would like to schedule a worksite seminar on “Violence in the Workplace,” please call **Kaisha Thomas** at **616-1257**.



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EAP NEWS

NEW YEAR...NEW UTILIZATION

EAP is not just for counseling. Life Enrichment EAP offers many programs to assist you in your day-to-day activities. Call us at **1-800-404-7960** to schedule these services or log on to www.eaplife.org for more information.

- **CLC Consolidated Legal Concepts – legal & financial resources**
- **VIP Care Management – elder care resources & referral**
- **Worksite Seminars**
- **Health Fairs**
- **New Employee Orientation/Benefit Presentations**
- **EAP Quarterly Advisory Meetings**

C = Community – reaching out to those around us
A = Accountability – in everything you say and do
R = Respect – treat others as you would like to be treated
E = Excellence – our only standard

CUSTOMER SERVICE – in an on-going effort to extend our **C.A.R.E. Values** to you, our customers, we would like to streamline the number of staff you speak with when calling EAP for services.

Below is a staff listing and guide of services we can help you with.

Kaisha Thomas, Sr. Director of Counseling and Life Enrichment EAP: HR Professionals can contact Kaisha regarding all clinical matters, questions, scheduling of all management referrals, scheduling of CISD's, Worksite Seminars, DFWP and SAP Evaluations, Supervisory trainings and all inquiries pertaining to use of outside providers.

Michele Romaglino, Marketing Representative: HR professionals can contact Michele regarding contract renewals, yearly utilization, changes in contact information/phone numbers/email addresses, etc.; scheduling of New Employee Orientation/Benefit Presentations, Health Fairs, and Quarterly Advisory Meetings. Contact Michele for all inquiries regarding EAP Newsletter and EAP promotional materials.

Cynthia Mays, Administrative Assistant: Employees can call Cynthia to schedule counseling sessions, legal/financial inquiries and elder care inquiries.

Stacey Hunt-Wesley, Intake Coordinator: Employees can call Stacey to schedule counseling sessions, legal/financial inquiries and elder care inquiries.

REMINDERS:

SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING: the State of Florida requires training on sexual harassment for all employers with 15 or more employees. Be sure to schedule your Sexual Harassment Seminar with **Kaisha Thomas** at **616-1257**.

PARENTAL CONSENT IS REQUIRED for all children under 18 years of age for counseling. This means if you are divorced or separated from your spouse with dual custody of your child, and you wish to have your child attend EAP counseling sessions, EAP must have written consent from both parents. If you have any questions, please call **Kaisha Thomas** at **616-1257**.