



Title:	Workplace Violence				
Department/Service Line:	Administration				
Location:	WHS				
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SCOPE

To establish a policy that insures a safe environment for all staff, patients and visitors against violent or threatening behavioral from other persons including co-workers.
 This document applies to Wise Health System including Controlled Affiliates (“WHS”).

DEFINITIONS

None

POLICY

Workplace Violence Protocol Policy

PROCEDURE

OBJECTIVES:

- A. To reduce or prevent violence in the workplace which can occur between employees, employees and patients and/or employees and visitors to WHS.
- B. To obtain the support and participation of all employees in a continuing Workplace Violence prevention and education program.
- C. To annually evaluate the program for overall effectiveness in providing a physical environment free of violence to reduce the risk of human injury and continue providing effective patient care.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Administration: The function of Administration in the Workplace Violence program is to demonstrate leadership, establish program priority and to provide stimulation to assure full employee interest and participation.

B. Department Manager/Supervisor: The department manager/supervisor is the key to successful Workplace Violence prevention program. Department managers/supervisors are the lead staff of every department with day to day knowledge of potentially violent situations within the department. Department manager/supervisor responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring WHS employees have a violence free working environment.
2. Observe and investigate situations between employees, patients and employees, and visitors and employees which could escalate into a potentially more violent situation that could interrupt business and quality patient care.
3. Ensure staff is educated in Workplace Violence prevention and the proper reporting procedures.
4. Maintain confidentiality when an incident is reported by a staff member and assist in making sure the Workplace Violence reporting form is completed and submitted to the Director of Security for further investigation.
5. All WHS Employees: Every employee has the expectation of being able to work in a violence free environment. While WHS employees should work in a violence free environment, employees also have the responsibility of providing a violence free environment to other employees, patients and visitors to the facility. WHS employee responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 - a. Reporting possible violent situations or situations which could escalate into a violent situation to their supervisor.
 - b. Educate yourself and fellow employees with the Workplace Violence prevention program.

- c. Complete and submit the confidential Workplace Violence report form to the Director of Security for further investigation.
- d. Understand Workplace Violence is any threatening behavior which can include but is not limited to:
 - i. Verbal or written threats.
 - ii. Verbal abuse.
 - iii. Harassment.
 - iv. Physical attacks: biting, pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, attempts to hit or kick, etc.

C. Report: It is the responsibility of every WHS employee, who might happen to experience or observe Workplace Violence, to complete and submit the “Confidential Workplace Violence Incident Reporting Form”. This form is located on the intranet under “Administrative Forms”.

- 1. If the person causing the disruption is an employee, contractor, student or a vendor, you should document that person’s name, if known.
- 2. If the person causing the disruption is a patient of the facility, you should adhere a patient label to the bottom of the report page.
- 3. If the person causing the disruption is a visitor of a patient, you should adhere a patient label to the bottom of the page and indicate that the actor is a visitor to the patient listed on the label.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION & CRISIS DE-ESCALATION

A. Potential Violence Recognition and De-escalation Techniques The potential for violence is present in every work place across the nation. Your ability to recognize and de-escalate potential violence is vital in maintaining a safe work environment for yourself and providing a safe environment for the public as well. All employees should review the signs present in potentially violent situations and the techniques to use in minimizing this potential.

B. Usual Signs People Display When Becoming Upset or Possibly Violent:

- 1. Shouting or screaming – A person yelling, cursing or screaming has the potential to become more violent or desperate for some form of resolution or satisfaction concerning their situation. This behavior may involve frustration, anger, pain, desperation or being frightened.
- 2. Body Language – A person under stress or exhibiting one or more of the behaviors cited above may display visual changes in posture. Be aware of tenseness shown in their standing posture, arms or hands swinging in the air, making a fist, pointing fingers and pacing wildly back and forth. They may also display visible shaking and/or redness of the face and neck. If the person is upset because of time or delay factor in service, they may keep looking at the clock or their watch.
- 3. Silence – People under extreme stress may not respond to questions because of the level of their anger. However, do not use this indicator by itself. It is possible this person may be thinking about how to respond to the question or may be slow or can’t respond due to a medical condition.
- 4. Breathing – It’s not uncommon for an angry person to sigh heavily where others can hear or the person’s lips may tighten and display heavy breathing.

Most aggressive behavior can be defused with just a reassuring look of empathy from the employee. Remember, many of our customers are under severe stress due to an emergent situation. This situation may be routine to you, something you see every day. But this is not a normal day for the person facing you.

C. The following techniques may be used by WHS staff to help de-escalate potential violence and calm a person displaying aggressive behavior.

De-Escalation Techniques:

- 1. Body language** – Nonverbal communication is the most truthful form of communication. Your posture and attitude say more than your words. Any time you are confronted by someone who may appear to be angry or aggressive, maintain a safe distance between yourself and the other party. Avoid invading the person’s personal space. Try to maintain a space of three to six feet away from the person. Do not pose in challenging stances such as getting too close to their face, putting your hands on hips or crossing your arms. Avoid physical contact (unless you sense a reassuring touch from you will provide them some relief), finger pointing or long periods of fixed eye contact.
- 2. Movement** – Project calmness in all your actions. Move slowly and avoid sudden movements. Maintain a relaxed yet attentive posture and do not stand directly in front of or behind the person and never position yourself where your exit is blocked. Do not put your hands in your pockets or hide your hands intentionally. The aggressive person will also be watching you just as you are watching their movements.

3. Pay Attention – Focus your attention on that person and let them know you are interested in how they feel and listening to what have to say. Be an empathetic listener. Encourage the person to talk and listen patiently.

4. Verbal Communication – Use a soft non-threatening voice. Do not yell, curse, threaten or get into a shouting match with the person. Ask for small and specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area or asking them to please lower their voice so that you may understand them better. Acknowledge the person’s feelings. Allow the person time to answer, do not rush them. Be aware of your tone of voice.

5. Ground Rules – If your actions recommended above are not effective, establish and advise the other party of the ground rules if unproductive behavior persists. Offer to provide a supervisor for them to speak to or that security or law enforcement may be necessary if that is not satisfactory. If you reach step 5, also incorporate step 6 below.

6. Notification – Notify or have another notify your supervisor and security of the situation as soon as possible in the event further assistance is needed.

Most of the time, aggressive behavior can be de-escalated just by actively listening to the person and responding in a respectful way. Be careful not to make comments to others that can be heard by the aggressive person or make promises you can’t personally perform for them. Once you have achieved and restored calmness, periodically check on the person to see if they might need anything further. This will show them that you do care and you are concerned.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

None.

The information contained in this document should not be considered standards of professional practice or rules of conduct or for the benefit of any third party. This document is intended to provide guidance and, generally, allows for professional discretion and/or deviation when the individual health care provider or, if applicable, the “Approver” deems appropriate under the circumstances.