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Workplace Violence Toolkit

We are Here to Help.
Mental health and well-being resources to help you stay balanced during an emotionally challenging time.

What to Know About Workplace Violence and How to Address It

Workplace violence is any act or threat of physical harm that occurs at work or on company property and is a genuine threat that can have severe consequences for employees. It can range from simple verbal insults to physical assault or even murder. This behavior is unacceptable in any environment and should not be tolerated. Those affected by workplace violence can suffer long-lasting emotional and psychological damage that can impact their ability to perform well in their jobs.

Workplace violence can present in many forms:

- Physical assaults
- Verbal abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking

- Bullying
- Threats
- Gun or knife violence

Employees should know their rights, recognize the warning signs of workplace violence, and have strategies to prevent it. In this toolkit, we'll cover what defines workplace violence, the common warning signs, some preventative approaches for safety, how to handle conflicts when they arise, knowing your rights as an employee, and coping with any trauma you may experience as the result of violence in the workplace.

Warning Signs of Workplace Violence

Being able to recognize workplace violence in your workplace is a necessary learning process, and it often begins weeks or months before an event takes place.

To identify it more easily, note any changes in your coworkers' mood and behavior. These could include:

- Sudden bouts of anger
- Becoming increasingly withdrawn
- Expressions of fear and paranoia
- Lack of respect for workplace safety protocols
- Disengaged attitude
- Falling behind on work

Suppose you are aware of these changes in attitude and behaviors. In that case, it is essential to actively listen to your coworker's concerns and openly discuss any signs of possible workplace violence. A healthy workplace should be a place where everyone feels safe and respected. So, if you notice any indications of workplace violence, please do not hesitate to voice them with your supervisors and colleagues. Your Uprise Health member portal also includes resources you can use to support your coworkers.

Employees need to be aware of the warning signs of workplace violence so that they can take steps to protect themselves if necessary. Some common warning signs include:

- Aggressive behavior, such as shouting or intimidating gestures
- Threats directed at other employees
- Uncontrolled outbursts
- Excessive displays of anger
- Hostility towards coworkers or customers.

If you notice any of these behaviors in your workplace, we urge you to report them immediately so that leaders can take appropriate action.

Know Your Rights

It's also important for employees to understand their rights when preventing workplace violence and responding appropriately if they experience it firsthand or witness it happening to others.

Every state has laws regarding what constitutes "violent behavior" in the workplace. Your best resource is your human resources representative, who can give you specifics in your state. Additionally, familiarize yourself with your employer's policies related to violence prevention so that you know what steps will be taken if an incident occurs within your organization's walls.

Preventative Strategies for Safety

No workplace should ever have to deal with the trauma of workplace violence incidents, and workplaces should find ways of preventing them. Everyone has the right to be safe at work, and employers must provide practical safety guidelines for their workers. Active steps such as reaction drills, workplace monitoring systems, access to mental health and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services, and formal complaint resolution processes are all key ways company leaders can help stop workplace violence before it happens.

Everyone should be doing their part to work together and create a safer workplace for all employees. Still, there are several strategies you can use to help protect yourself from potential workplace violence. These include:

- Keeping your workspace free from clutter so that there are no possible hiding places
- Avoiding confrontations with potentially violent individuals
- Being aware of your surroundings at all times
- Having an emergency plan in place
- Taking regular breaks away from your desk if you find yourself feeling overwhelmed
- Knowing your workplace emergency exits

Employees should know the designated safety officers in case something does happen at work.

Handling Conflicts

If a conflict arises between two people in the workplace, everyone involved should remain calm and respectful toward one another.

Talk to the Person Who is Causing the Conflict
The first step in resolving conflict is to talk to the person causing the dispute and attempt to resolve the issue before it escalates into violence. Be respectful and open-minded while you're discussing the problem. Try to understand their perspective and see if there is a way to resolve the issue without violence.

Avoid Making Assumptions
While discussing a conflict, avoid making assumptions about their motives or intentions. Making assumptions can often worsen the situation and lead to better communication. Listen to what the person has to say and see things from their perspective.

Keep Communication Lines Open
Both employees should strive to keep communication lines open. This means that you should avoid using inflammatory language or making personal attacks. Instead, try to focus on solving the problem at hand. If you cannot resolve the conflict independently, you may need to seek help from a mediator or counselor.

Be Willing to Compromise
Conflict can often be resolved if both parties are willing to compromise. This means that each party must be willing to give up something to reach an agreement. For example, if you are arguing about what time you will start work each day, you may need to compromise by starting work earlier one day and later the next day. If you cannot compromise, consider other options, such as mediation or arbitration.

Seek Professional Help if Necessary
Suppose you have tried all these methods and need help resolving the conflict. In that case, you may need to seek professional help from a mediator or counselor.

Try not to take things personally even if someone is being aggressive towards you—instead, focus on staying composed and finding ways to de-escalate the situation without escalating tensions further.
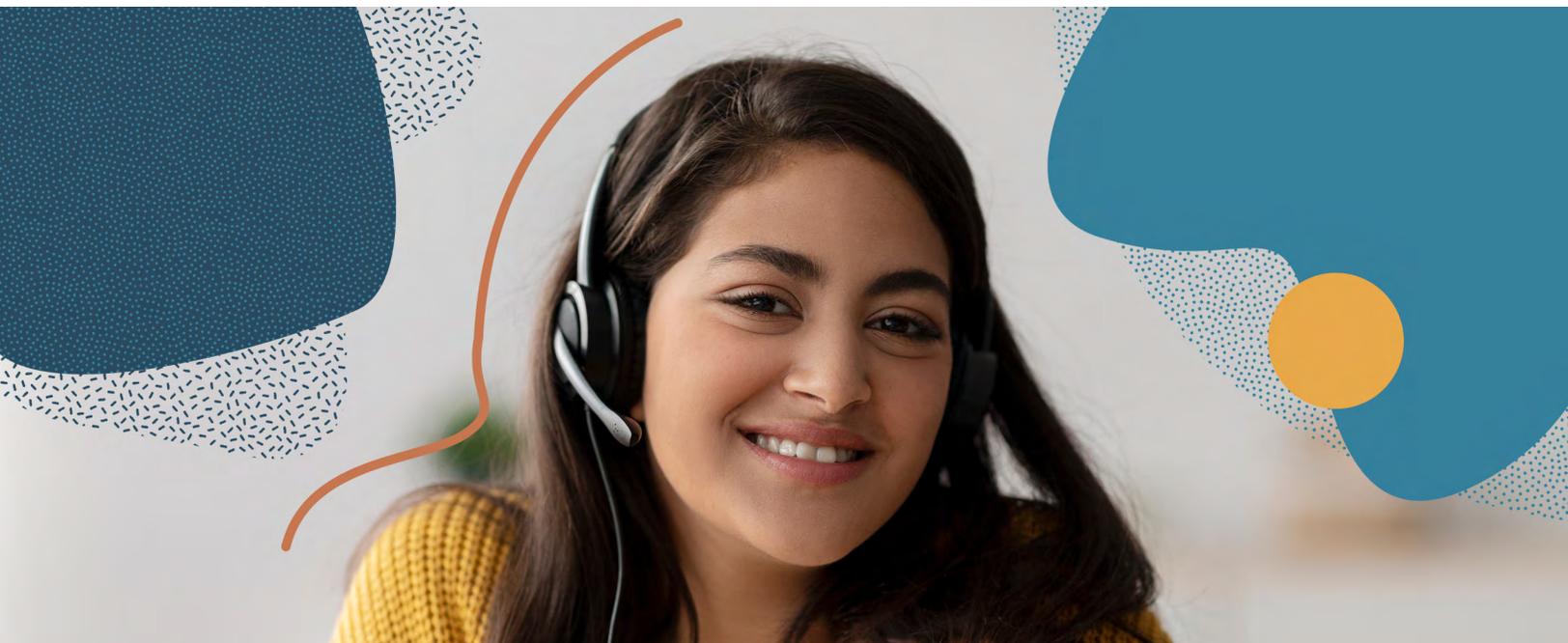
We Are Here to Help

EAP benefits are available to all employees and their families at NO COST to you. The EAP offers confidential advice, support, and practical solutions to help you through your grief and loss. You can access these confidential services by calling the toll-free number below and speaking with our care team or accessing online.

Short-Term Therapy
For a deeper level of support, members can request short-term therapy by calling Uprise Health. Our nationwide provider network of more than 60,000 counselors can be filtered by criteria including geography, clinical specialty, cultural background, and other preferences, to ensure a perfect fit for you. After speaking with our care team, you will be provided with a list of providers. You can schedule an appointment yourself or ask the care team for assistance scheduling.

24-hour Crisis Support
During business hours, members who are in crisis are connected with an Uprise Health clinician who will stabilize your situation and refer you to appropriate support. After-hours calls are answered by behavioral health professionals located within the U.S. If you are in life threatening situation, please call 9-1-1 as you would do for any other medical/life emergency.

Online Peer Support Groups
As part of your EAP program, you can request up to 10 online peer support groups where you will have a safe and confidential place to speak with others who have similar issues. Please call Uprise Health and speak with our care team to learn more about the Grief and Loss support group.

Contact Uprise Health
Call: 1-800-395-1616
Visit: members.uprisehealth.com