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A Comprehensive Checklist for Healthcare Facilities Focused on Increasing Workplace Safety

Workplace Violence Prevention Starts Here.

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AHA defines three key areas of focus to increase workplace safety:

01

Create a Culture of Safety

02

Focus on Prevention

03

Support Those Experiencing Trauma

The following checklist is meant to inspire ideas, strengthen your safety plans, and encourage joint commission compliance.

Each facility should evaluate its own needs and initiatives based on its data and best judgment.

Establish a Workplace Violence Prevention Team

This program should be collaborative, empowered, led by a designated individual, and include multidisciplinary team members that will:

- ☐ Outline a comprehensive plan to prevent and respond to WPV
- ☐ Appoint leads to oversee assessments, involving employees likely to encounter WPV
- ☐ Define a process to report incidents, analyze incidents, and track trends
- ☐ Monitor WPV processes, follow-up, and support for those exposed to WPV
- ☐ Report WPV incidents to governing bodies

OSHA believes that a well-written and implemented workplace violence prevention program, combined with engineering controls, administrative controls, and training can reduce the incidence of workplace violence.[1]

Workplace Violence Risk Assessments

Standard EC.02.01.01 states the hospital manages safety and security risks.

Risk assessments are a critical part of ensuring workplace safety and should be done frequently and collaboratively.

- ☐ Conduct regular risk assessments to identify high-risk areas and trends
- ☐ Conduct formal root cause analyses after each incident or near-miss
- ☐ Incorporate rates of violence into quality improvement dashboards for effective tracking
- ☐ Solicit employee feedback frequently (quarterly, unless more frequently is preferred)
- ☐ Utilize data to develop targeted intervention strategies
- ☐ Report incidents and trends transparently to employees

The following sources were referenced during checklist creation.

The Joint Commission. Physical and Verbal Violence Against Health Care Workers. Issue 59. Sentinel Event Alert. 2018. Accessed April 10, 2024. https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/resources/patient-safety-topics/sentinel-event/sea-59-workplace-violence-final2.pdf

The Joint Commission. Workplace Violence Prevention Standards. R3 Report: Requirement, Rationale, Reference. 2021. Accessed April 10, 2024. https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/standards/r3-reports/wpvp-r3_20210618.pdf

Jones, C. B., PhD, RN, FAAN, Sousane, Z., BS, & Mossburg, S. E., RN, PhD (2023). Addressing Workplace Violence and Creating a Safer Workplace. Patient Safety Network. https://psnet.ahrq.gov/perspective/addressing-workplace-violence-and-creating-safer-workplace

Develop Clear Policies and Procedures

Clear policies outlining workplace violence and reporting procedures, including consequences for engaging in violent behavior, will increase effectiveness.

- ☐ Adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards WPV, making it clear that any form of violence or aggression from staff, patients, visitors, etc. will not be tolerated
- ☐ Outline safe work practices such as reviewing patient profiles before meetings
- ☐ Create protocols for high-risk scenarios identified in risk assessments
- ☐ Establish standardized processes for reporting and follow-up for incidents and near-misses
- ☐ Ensure the reporting process for WPV incidents is clear and accessible
- ☐ Establish a communication plan to inform all employees of policies and procedures
- ☐ Determine a regular cadence for policy reviews and updates
- ☐ Create a Code of Conduct for Patients and Visitors

Develop a Robust Training Program

Standard HR.01.05.03 states that staff must participate in ongoing education and training.

Implement mandatory continued training for all staff focusing on a variety of topics, including:

- ☐ What constitutes WPV and the roles of leadership, clinical staff, security personnel, and law enforcement
- ☐ Conflict resolution, communication techniques, and early warning sign recognition
- ☐ De-escalation training, nonphysical intervention skills, physical intervention techniques, and emergency response

Establish Sufficient Security Measures

Standard EC.02.01.01 states hospitals must manage safety and security risks.

Ensure effective security measures exist throughout the facility, such as the presence of security personnel, surveillance cameras, and access control systems.

- ☐ Encourage staff to report any suspicious individuals or activities immediately
- ☐ Implement electronic and visual flagging systems to track patient history and potential risks
- ☐ Establish mechanisms whereby workers can summon immediate assistance if needed, including personal duress badges, controlled and accurate locating abilities, etc.
- ☐ Ensure trained responders and/or security teams are always immediately available
- ☐ Implement environmental/physical safety measures (e.g., cameras, mirrors, lighting, visibility/sight lines)

Data Collection and Continuous Improvement

Standard EC.04.01.01 states the hospital must collect information to monitor conditions in the environment.

Detailed data collection and tracking will help illuminate trends and areas of opportunity and track progress as you work to elevate workplace safety.

- ☐ Ensure the incident reporting system used to gather and track data is sufficient and accessible
- ☐ Collect data from all available sources, including systems used for security, human resources, employee surveys, etc.
- ☐ Continuously monitor and investigate incidents related to WPV
- ☐ Annually (at a minimum) assess the effectiveness of efforts to reduce WPV through a worksite analysis, and adjust plans based on findings
- ☐ Enable additional continued education for WPV Prevention Team to gather insight and best practices from other industry and community leaders

☐ Leadership Support and Communication

Standard LD.03.01.01 states leaders should create and maintain a culture of safety and quality throughout the hospital.

Communicating a dedication to workplace safety from the leadership team can increase staff morale, engagement, and wellbeing.

- ☐ Ensure leaders actively promote a culture of safety and zero-tolerance for WPV
- ☐ Deliver continuous communication to staff to share investments and improvements being made to reduce WPV
- ☐ Encourage reporting and tracking of WPV incidents for accurate risk assessment data
- ☐ Conduct check-ins with staff after an incident or near-miss of WPV
- ☐ Conduct huddles with teams treating a patient displaying aggressive behavior to express empathy and draw focus to techniques that can decrease risk of violent incident

☐ Offer Employee Empowerment and Support Services

Programs designed to build staff confidence and assertiveness, and support those who've witnessed or experienced a violent incident, will help instill a culture of safety and wellbeing.

- ☐ Implement employee assistance to act as a resource for staff exposed to WPV
- ☐ Ensure adequate, on-site counseling is available for all staff exposed to WPV
- ☐ Facilitate an anonymous reporting system for staff to report incidents, near-misses, or concerns without fear of retaliation

☐ Collaborate with Law Enforcement

Establish partnerships with local law enforcement agencies to address security concerns and proactively coordinate responses to potential threats.

- ☐ Collaboratively conduct regular security assessments
- ☐ Coordinate active shooter drills and other relevant simulations to strengthen preparedness

☐ Community and Policymaker Engagement

Engage with the local community and policymakers to raise awareness about workplace violence, encourage collaboration in prevention efforts, and inspire legislative changes.

- ☐ Share best practices, recent incidents, and trends reports with designated community partners and policymakers to improve community safety efforts
- ☐ Promote a zero-tolerance stance on violence to your patients and community and publicize the Patient and Visitor Code of Conduct
- ☐ Encourage staff and WPV Prevention Team members to share their experiences with state legislators to motivate state action